Seeking

by jaimistoryteller

Summary

John's a wolf-shifter who has just recently returned to London, Sherlock is the gifted human who just happens to need a flatmate, what happens when the two of them come in contact with each other.

Notes

It will be mostly from John’s POV but occasionally Sherlock, Mycroft, and Greg will also have their views.

There are shifters of a variety of types and humans with the physic gifts.

I will also note that there are similarities between the beginning of this story and the lovely story Werewolves in London Season One: A Study in Pink by Tiger DeRanged since we are both working with shifters of a variety, I suggest you go read hers because its well written.

Any parts from the shows transcript have been lovingly gotten from Ariane DeVere’s live journal because she was awesome enough to make a complete set.
Oh yeah, "speaking", -texting-, *telepathy-human form*, *telepathy-animal or mixed form*, "commanding", everything else

I'm American and this is un beta'd, anything that seems weird is probably due to those two fact (edit: though I recently had a lovely lady offer to beta for me, so if there are any mistakes its because I ignored her advice).

This can also be found on here: https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10439937/1/Seeking most the time at the same point

A [Chapter & Timeline](https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10439937/1/Seeking most the time at the same point) guide for those who want to know where everything falls.

That should be it for long authors notes.

Disclaimer: Sherlock does not belong to me, it belongs to BBC and Doyle.
**Introductions**

*John's POV*

He awoke with a start, claws digging into the mattress as he bolted upright from the nightmare he had been having. Shaking his head, he tries to clear his mind of the memories, focus on something else. It doesn't work and for a time all he can see in front of him is the harsh desert, the members of his squad, some of which are pack. The attack caused by insurgents, so many dying with injuries. Jacob taking to the air despite the risks to get them help, waking up in surgery, the pain in his shoulder, in his leg. Returning to London but not in a way he wanted.

Eventually he is able to break away from the memories and just sits on his cot staring at the wall. By time he was able to pull himself out of his thoughts he could see the pale light of the dawn coming. In the link that connects him to the pack he can feel Jacob distant query if he is alright. Warmth spreads through him, and he replies in kind, allowing the warmth of his personality to shine through the link before breaking away.

Later the same day, shortly after getting done seeing the psychotherapist that the military seems to think he needs to see, he is walking through a park near where he had gone to school when a familiar smell catches his attention. Glancing around, he spots a slightly heavier man sitting on a bench and grins when he recognizes him.

When he pauses the other man seems to notice him and grins, commenting, “John! John Watson!”

He turns to face him, a small smile on his face, though it does not reach his eyes, “Mike, how are you?” he queries as the man comes over to where he stands.

Grinning, he motions to a passing coffee vendor and the two friends get a drink before finding somewhere to sit down and chat for a bit. A while later, after getting past the basic catching up, Mike inquires, “What about you? Just staying in town ‘till you get yourself sorted? Have you heard from Harry yet?”

He shrugs, responding, “I can’t afford London on an Army pension.” For a moment he pauses, considering the rather frustrating call he had gotten his first day back, their uncle had died, that left him and his cousin as the next possible alpha’s but it had already been decided by the council. They preferred him to his cousin as the next alpha of the Watson pack. That meant he would have to merge his pack in with the pack of his birth. Not the easiest thing to do. “Yeah, I heard about Uncle Eric. I thought you avoided pack functions?” he asks curiously.

Mike sighs, looking out, “I do, it was embarrassing being the only non-wolf in the family, but I am still kept in the loop about important things, and the pups still like to visit.”

He nods, understanding perfectly well. Part of the reason he had entered the army was to get away from the pack’s alpha for a time. He loved his family and the pack, but some of the traditions really got on his nerves, particularly those regarding children who were not born with the wolf. Like a lot of packs, the pack was family to everyone in it. Unfortunately, for those who were not born wolves or shifters, this sometimes meant that they felt left out because they were not the same, they were different. The fact that there pack was purely wolf was also frustrating, because there were plenty of other shifters that would make good pack members even though they were different types. The pack that had formed between him and some of his soldiers from Afghanistan was not purely wolf unlike the pack of his birth. His pack was made up of three wolves besides himself, his second was a falcon, one cobra, two vipers, one great cat, and a mouse. It is a small pack by most standards but a good pack.
For a bit the two just watch people before Mike comments, “You know you couldn’t bear to be anywhere else.” He pauses for a moment before querying, “Couldn’t Harry help? Your uncle left you a fair bit if I remember her last rant about your stubbornness.”

He snorts, “Yeah like that’s going to happen, you know me.”

Shaking his head a little his friend shrugs, “I do, so why not get a flatshare or something?”

“Come on,” he responds mildly sarcastic, “who’d want me for a flatmate?”

Mike suddenly chuckles, a thoughtful look on his face as he comments, “You’re the second person to say that to me today.” Pausing he glances over, “plus you know most the pack would be more than happy to have you stay with them while you get back on your feet.”

He gives a single shake of his head, “You know I won’t do that. So who was the first?”

His packmate smiles at him, standing and motioning to the nearby hospital, “Come on then,” he comments.

It takes the two of them a few minutes to walk there and when they first get there Mike stops in his office to drop off his stuff before taking him down to the lab. The two of them move in companionable silence and without any show of who is alpha and who is not. When they get to the lab, Mike wraps his knuckles on the door once before pushing it open and going in with him close behind.

As they step through the door he takes in the change in all of the equipment, the smells, and even the layout muttering, “Well, bit different from my day.”

Chuckling, Mike replies, “You have no idea,” as he walks over and leans against the counter, his eyes sharp as they take in the scene in front of him.

“Mike, can I borrow your phone? There is no signal on mine.” A low baritone inquires from the other end of the room as the owner of it perches on a stool.

His attention is drawn to that voice, and he nearly finds himself staring at its owner. Short black curls fan around his face, the only sign of color besides the blue-grey eyes in an otherwise porcelain colored face. He’s tall, taller than nearly every member of the pack, and rather graceful with a slender nearly too thin build. Switching to his wolf sense he can tell that he is purely human despite the otherworldly feel to him.

“And what’s wrong with the landline?” Mike queries while he is studying the beautiful man.

“I prefer to text.” The human replies, still distracted.

Glancing at him, Mike comments, “Sorry. It’s in my coat.”

Wanting to get a closer look at the human, he fishes his out of his back pocket, hesitantly offering, “Er, here, use mine,” and holds it out for him.

The stranger seems startled and sends a quick look at Mike as he responds, “Oh. Thank you.”

He gets the impression that while he was brought up with manners, he probably rarely ever uses them. Standing, he walks over as Mike makes the introductions.

“It’s an old friend of mine, John Watson.” He tells the dark-haired stranger.
He nods, accepting the phone and turning a slight bit from him. Flipping it open he starts to type on the keyboard without taking a moment to pause. He finds it amusing and gets the impression that he is not used to someone volunteering to help him.

“Afghanistan or Iraq?” the dark-haired human inquires distractedly, is scent more curious now.

Frowning, he glances at Mike. Mike is just smiling mischievously, so apparently he knows something is going on or about to happen, but there is no malice or fear in the smell of the room so he decides to go along with it. Looking at the dark-haired man he questions, “Sorry?”

“Which was it, Afghanistan or Iraq?”

His scent changes, a touch of impatience joining the curiosity, so apparently he is used to people answering sooner than later. Frowning, he glances again at Mike who is still just smiling. As his impatience’s grows the dark-haired human looks up at him questioningly before returning his glance to the phone.

Finally, trying not to chuckle because he is reminded of a pup wanting something and being told he had to wait, he replies, “Afghanistan. Sorry, how did you know?” he lets his voice trail off to see what kind of answer he gets.

The human glances at him as but does not answer as his attention turns the human female who comes in and smells strongly of desire, “Ah, Molly, coffee. Thank you.” Shutting down the phone he hands it back to him, as he does so there hands touch and he is jolted by a small surge of power. His attention then turns to the human female, studying her closely as he takes the coffee and commenting, “What happened to the lipstick?”

His gaze flickers to his hand as he puts the phone away he spots the small spiral that has appeared on his wrist. His bondmate, or at least one of the two people in this world he could bondmate. That is a bit unexpected. He had not thought that he would find them here in this place.

The female smiles at him a bit awkwardly, nervousness pouring from her, “It wasn’t working for me,” she replies.

Bemused, his potential bondmate accepts the cup, turning to head back to his station and muttering, “Really? I thought it was a big improvement.” He pauses a moment, “your mouth’s too small now.”

The nervousness vanishes in disappointment, “Okay,” she eventually sighs. Radiating sadness she turns and heads towards the door.

He almost doesn’t notice that the next thing out of the dark-haired one’s mouth is for him, “How do you feel about the violin?” he queries.

He glances at the retreating figure of the young female before realizing that the question is directed at him, again he flickers a look at Mike to see that he still has the same mischievous look on his face. “I’m sorry, what?”

Lifting his laptop on to the table he types away as the human answers, “I play the violin when I’m thinking. Sometimes I don’t talk for days on end.” He pauses, glancing towards him, “would that bother you? Potential flatmates should know the worst about each other.” The smile he flashes is so obviously fake but he can tell that he would have a beautiful one if he was ever to let it be real instead.

His gaze shifts from the dark-haired human to Mike, a blank expression on his face. Knowing that Mike had not had a chance to say anything since they had just run into each other, he still comments,
“Oh, you, you told him about me?”

Mikes mischievous smile seems to get bigger, “Not a word.”

“Then who said anything about flatmates?” he asks, thinking, I wonder if he will answer me this time. I am going to have to carefully consider this situation. Flatmates with a potential bondmate? That could get into very dangerous territory or be just what is needed.

The human shuts down his laptop and then starts to put on his great coat replying, “I did. Told Mike this morning that I must be a difficult man to find a flatmate for. Now here he is just after lunch with an old friend, clearly just home from military service in Afghanistan. Wasn’t that difficult of a leap.”

He had put emphasis on the I, as if trying to prove that he did not need someone else to tell him things.

Giving him a blank look he questions, “How did you know about Afghanistan?” as he carefully smells the air again. Now that he has been identified as a potential bondmate he can smell even more from him, including the soft musk that’s purely Sherlock and an overt scent of the city.

He ignores the question, instead taking the time to wrap his scarf around his neck and picking up his phone of the table. “Got my eye on a nice little place in central London. Together we ought to be able to afford it.” he comments as he checks the phone. Turning, he walks towards him commenting, “We’ll meet there tomorrow evening. Seven o’clock. Sorry, gotta dash, I think I left my riding crop in the mortuary.” He continues pasted him, heading towards the door as he puts his phone in a pocket.

“Is that it?” he queries turning to watch him go and knowing that he really does not want this particular human to leave. He is making sure that he can trace him anywhere, getting a feel for his aura, his life presence.

While he seems outwardly calm, the scent he gives off is frustrated, almost annoyed yet full of curiosity. Turning back to him the dark-haired one strolls over towards him, his voice deceptively calm as he asks, “Is that what?”

Enjoying the scent of his frustration he replies, “We’ve only just met and we’re gonna go and look at a flat?”

“Problem?” the human's frustration seems to have gone just a bit higher.

He smiles in disbelief, eyes flickering to his childhood friend who cannot seem to get control of the mischievous look he is giving. “We don’t know a thing about each other,” he comments, “I don’t know where we’re meeting,” though that one is easily fixed by following his life presence, “I don’t even know your name.” Which happens to be really important since he likes the idea of courting his unusual possible bondmate and knowing who he is important in that concept.

His scent suddenly changes from frustrated to delighted, as if accepting a challenge and planning to enjoy it. “I know you’re an army doctor and you have been invalided home from Afghanistan. I know you got a brother who’s worried about you but you won’t go to him for help because you don’t approve of him,” he pauses, “possibly because he’s an alcoholic, more likely because he recently walked out on his wife. And I know that your therapist thinks your limp’s psychosomatic, possibly correct I am afraid.”

He glances down at his leg, not saying anything about the fact he had been slashed by an alchemic silver bullet and shuffles his feet a bit. He has got the link between them firmly established so he will always be able to discover where his dark-haired human is but before he can reply, his human
continues, his tone rather smug.

“That’s enough to be going on with, don’t you think?” again the human walks to the door, this time even managing to slip out it before leaning in, introducing himself, “The name is Sherlock Holmes and the address is two-two-one B Baker Street.” He clicks his tongue at him, winking, “Afternoon,” he intones glancing at Mike before the door slams shut behind him.

Mike’s mischievous smile changes a little as he comments, “Yeah. He’s always like that.”

Holding his wrist up he shows Mike the light spiral that has appeared, knowing that even though his friend was born human he can still see the bondmark because it is in his blood.

“Really? Now that’s interesting, what do you plan to do with that information?” his pack-mate questions as he leans a hip against the table.

A predatory smile curves his lips, “I plan to find out if we would work well together of course, only way to know if it is even worth the bonding. I guess I am staying in London after all.”

His friend grins at him with him grinning back before both start laughing. “Well I guess I will see you at the next new moon then?”

“Full, but yes, I plan to be there for the full moon.”

The two nod at each other before leaving and going their separate ways.
Seeing the Flat

John’s POV
That night as he sat in his bedsit at his desk he opened his laptop with curiosity for the first time in a long while. Normally when he did so it was out of obligation, this time it was not, it was out of need to discover all he could about the young man who could become his bondmate in the near future. Over the next several hours he looked up everything that he could on Sherlock Holmes, learning as much as possible about the human.

He was from a small family but one of one of great importance in the British government. Apparently he was the only one in several generations not to go into politics. His father was dead, his mother a noble woman who held court in her home but rarely left it, both his brothers work for the government in some form, though exactly how he is not sure yet. There are several articles on each of the Holmes brothers as children because all three were protégés. Past that he had not been able to find very much recent information on him, but all he had found made him even more intrigued.

When he was done with his research it was early morning, far too early for some but he knew his sister, she would still be awake so he sent her a text.

-Found a potential bondmate, going to stay in London to check it out.- JW

-Bondmate? Finally! I was worried that it was never going to happen. Who’s the lucky women?- HW

-Not a female-JW

-Your male potential bondmate? Intriguing. I thought you swore off blokes after that incident in uni? -HW

-Oh shut up. I just wanted to tell you before Mike did.- JW

-Okay. When will the next pack meeting be?-HW

-Looking at a place tonight. Text you after with address if it is a go. Full moon.-JW

-I’ll tell the others. Bye.-HW

After the brief chat with his sister, he lies back on his bed and stares at the ceiling considering all the new information he had received. He had sworn off sleeping with other blokes after the one in uni had tried to blackmail him, but something said that this particular bloke would be in a totally different ball park. By the way he reacted to the female at the morgue, Molly, he wasn’t really interested in females perhaps that meant he was interested in males instead. But...he mind calls up his scent. No, that’s not right, there is nothing lingering in any way about anything intimate or sexual in his scent. Is he asexual then? Not aware or not caring of his bodies needs? That could end up being interesting if that is the case because then he would have to figure out how to make him want something that has been uninteresting to him so far. Something to consider.

Drifting off his mind builds an image of him. His well defined features, piercing grey-blue eyes that saw far more than they probably should, delectable smelling and tasty looking pale skin, his tall lithe frame, and the rather fine outfit he was wearing that highlighted all his best features. Oh yes, this
could be a very good thing, and he made an attractive image for a mate.

A few short hours later and he was awake again, his body not used to sleeping more than four hours at a time. Stretching slowly, he gets off the bed and makes sure that everything he needs is packed up so that it will not take much to move. Then, because something tells him he should he digs out the small hoister for his gun and layers his clothing so it is not seeable. After thinking about it for a few minutes he grabs the two knife sheaths and connects them on the inside of his boots.

Glancing at the clock he realizes that he still has several hours to go before he needs to leave so he spends the time planning for the next pack meeting, and contacting various members of his little pack. The first one he gets in touch with is Jacob when he knows he is awake.

-Meeting at next full moon. Location being determined tonight. I will text you once I know.-JW

-Sir. I will notify the others.- BJF

-It will include both packs for merging.-JW

-Shall I expect to step down?- BJF

-No. Harry wishes to.-JW

-Sir.- BJF

Once that conversation is out of the way, he decides to take some time looking around London, reacquainting himself with the city. Of course while he is out and about he runs into several different members of the pack, all of them happy to see him home, Harry had already told relayed the message about the next full moon so every one of the ones he ran into kept it brief. Shortly after six pm he starts heading in the direction his phone says Baker Street is. He gets there just prior to seven pm and is not sure if he should knock or not, he is just getting ready to when he catches the scent of Sherlock behind him getting out of a cabbie.

Turning he briefly smiles, and walks over to him, “Ah, Mr. Holmes.” He greets him, using his last name seems off to him somehow but know it is the polite thing to do until given permission to use his first name.

“Sherlock please,” the tall human replies, shaking his hand.

Glancing around he comments, “Well, this is a prime spot. Must be expensive,” to see what Sherlock’s response will be.

Dismissively he replies, “Oh, Mrs. Hudson, the landlady, she’s giving me a special deal. Owes me a favor. A few years back, her husband got himself sentenced to death in Florida. I was able to help out.”

A curious look and he inquires, “Stopped it or guaranteed it?”

Sherlock’s lips curve into a smile, “I ensured it.”

A moment later the door is opened by a slightly older woman who opens her arms to the young human. “Sherlock, hello.” She greets him.
He turns towards her, hugging her briefly before stepping back to make introductions, “Mrs. Hudson, Doctor John Watson.”

The scent he gives off when near the older woman is familial, as if he considers a mother. Considering her scent is much like an old mother he is not surprised at all.

She turns to look at him, “Hello.”

“How do?” he politely inquires.

Smiling, she gestures him inside, “Come in.”

He inclines his head, “Thank you.”

At the same time Sherlock queries, “Shall we?”

“Yeah,” Mrs. Hudson responds.

The three head inside, with Sherlock taking the stairs three at a time, with him slowly making his way up second, and Mrs. Hudson closing the door behind them before following. When he reaches the second floor, Sherlock opens the door to the living room, stepping inside.

He takes a look around, spotting the miscellaneous place boxes. Taking a delicate sniff, he can tell that this is all Sherlock’s things, so he had already started moving in. “Well, this could be very nice. Very nice indeed.” He comments as he enjoys the scent of his potential bondmate.

“Yes. Yes, I think so. My thoughts precisely,” he states as he looks around the flat happily. “So I went straight ahead and moved in.”

He smiles at the younger man, taking in the fact that it might seem to be a mess but he is fairly certain that the young human’s mind knows exactly where everything is and the mess probably changes with his moods on a day to day bases. Glancing at the mantle he smiles at the skull he spots, and motions with his cane at it, “That’s a skull.”

Almost as if realizing he had made a mess, Sherlock glances around and mumbles, “Well, obviously I can, um, straighten things up a bit.” When the dark-haired human realizes that he is motioning to the skull, he replies to the unspoken question a bit more clearly, “Friend of mine. When I say ‘friend’ . . .” his voice trails off as he starts taking his coat and scarf off.

Mrs. Hudson had followed them up and picks up a cup with saucer off the table, inquiring, “What do you think, then, Doctor Watson? There’s another bedroom upstairs if you’ll be needing two bedrooms.”

His lips curve into a small smirk as he replies, “We’ll see if we’ll be needing two bedrooms.”

The older woman rambles on as if she hadn’t heard him, “Oh, don’t worry, there are all sorts round here.” Her voice drops to a whisper as she comments, “Mrs. Turner next door’s got married ones.”

He glances over at Sherlock to see what his reaction is to that but he seems oblivious as he halfheartedly moves things around. Well that will change with time, he thinks, for now he will use the second room but eventually perhaps they will share the same room. Patience, he reminds himself, this is going to take patience, and who has more patience then a wolf at times?
While Sherlock is moving things around Mrs. Hudson goes into the kitchen only to turn around and sigh, “Oh Sherlock, the mess you’ve made.” Before she goes to tidying things up a bit.

A sharp pain shoots through his leg, reminding him that he had been on it for longer than it wanted today. Grabbing a pillow he plumps it up before dropping it and himself into an armchair. As soon as the pressure is off his leg he softly sighs, before remarking, “I looked you up on the internet last night.”

That seems to catch his attention because the dark-haired human sets what he was doing down and turn to face him as he tucks his hands into his pockets querying, “Anything interesting?”

He smiles a bit, thinking far more than you would expect, but commenting, “Found your website, The Science of Deduction.”

A proud smile crosses his face as he asks, “What did you think?”

He replies with an amused look which seems to mildly confuse Sherlock if his scent is anything to go by, “You said you could identify a software designer by his tie and an airline pilot by his left thumb.”

“Yes, and I can read your military career in your face and leg, and your brother’s drinking habits in your mobile phone.” He replies, his tone remaining even.

Curious he asks, “How?” but does not actually expect an answer since he hadn’t got one yet to that question.

Sure enough he does not answer, instead he turns to face the window, his left hand fiddling with something as Mrs. Hudson comes out of the kitchen with a newspaper.

“What about these suicides then, Sherlock? I thought that’d be right up your street. Three exactly the same.” She comments as she folds it up and glances at him.

“Four,” he replies distractedly, his scent beginning to become excited as he walks over to the window and looks down at the street. “There’s been a fourth. And there is something different this time.”

Her scent changes, including fear in it as she repeats, “A fourth?”

A moment later he hears the front door click and the heavy steps of a person coming up the stairs. Not even a minute has passed and a serious looking fellow with silvering hair comes walking in the door even as Sherlock inquires, “Where?”

Catching his breath the fellow replies, “Brixton, Lauriston Gardens.”

He takes another sniff of the air discreetly and is mildly surprised that this fellow has shifter blood in him though it is so light as to say that he is a human child of a shifter. Jackal if he is not mistaken. That means he probably does not belong to a pack since jackal tend to get rid of all human offspring.

Curiosity pours off of Sherlock despite his outwardly calm tone, “What’s new about this one? You wouldn’t have come to get me if there wasn’t something different.”

Still breathing a little heavy he responds, “You know how they never leave notes?”
“Yeah…”

“This one did. Will you come?” there is need in his voice, acceptance even though it seems to be grudging. His scent says that he respects him to a point but is weary of him, this makes him curious why but does not plan on asking just yet.

A thoughtful look crosses Sherlock’s face as he questions, “Who’s on forensics?”

Tilting his head a bit, the stranger answers seriously, “It’s Anderson.”

Sherlock scowls a bit as his scent changes to annoyance, “Anderson won’t work with me,” he complains.

“Well he won’t be your assistant,” the stranger answers trying to cheer him up.

“I need an assistant,” Sherlock insists, frustration changing his scent again, but beneath it is happiness.

Nodding once, the fellow repeats, “Will you come?”

Fidgeting, he replies, “Not in a police car. I’ll be right behind.”

“Thank you,” he breathes in relief, giving Sherlock a small bow before taking a quick glance around the room before he heads down the stairs.

When he is gone, he can still smell the soft scent of joy from Sherlock. Before he has a chance to say anything though he spots the smile curving his lips and watches in mild confusion and amusement as he jumps in the air doing a half-circle with clenched fists as he mutters, “Brilliant!” excitedly. Landing facing the other direction his hands move as he continues to speak spinning around happily, “Yes! Ah, four serial suicides, and now a note! Oh, it’s Christmas!”

If he had seemed happy previously, he can now tell that it is more than just happiness. He is overjoyed at the thrill of the hunt, his mind fully engaged, and his scent full of curiosity. Its rather intoxicating and as he flutters into the kitchen, saying something to the landlady as he does so, he barely hears because he is too busy trying to get his hormones back under control.

Almost as soon as he gets his hormones controlled, he catches the tail end of Mrs. Hudson’s commentary, “…You rest your leg.”

“Damn my leg!” he snarls, thinking that it is really getting annoying. Immediately after he feels bad when he catches the scent of her shock, before she can say anything he apologizes, “Sorry, I’m so sorry. It’s just sometimes this bloody thing…” he allows himself to trail off as her scent shifts to understanding. He smacks his leg with the cane, frustrated.

Frowning he realizes he will have to be careful about using his sense of smell because there are also chemicals in here and he does not want to misread a situation because of the chemicals in the air. Oh brother….

Mrs. Hudson apparently feels better about his apology and takes it as an uncommon trait for him, commenting, “I understand, dear, I’ve got a hip.” Again she turns towards the door and he recalls that she had offered him a cuppa.
“Cup of tea’d be lovely, thank you.” he says, commenting on her earlier offer.

She responds but he is not really paying attention despite the fact he response. He has picked up the newspaper that speaks about Beth Davenport’s apparent suicide. With that article is another article that talks about D.I. Lestrade, identifying the human with shifter blood. He is in the process of reading it when Sherlock swings the door back open and looking at him speculatively as he pulls on a set of sleek black leather gloves.

“You’re a doctor. In fact you’re an army doctor.” He murmurs, his voice thoughtful.

He knows where Sherlock is going even before he gets there, yet he waits patiently for him to continue, standing slowly, he replies, “Yes.”

“Any good?” the dark-haired human asks curiously.

“Very good,” he responds, putting emphasis on the very.

Walking towards him, Sherlock continues, “Seen a lot of injuries then, violent deaths.”

“Mmmm, yes,” he answers him seriously, keeping his darker eyes locked on him as he keeps waiting.

Stopping directly in front of him he remarks, “Bit of trouble too, I bet.”

Lowering his voice a bit, he comments, “Of course, yes. Enough for a lifetime. Far too much.” He is thinking of the various hunters and problems that have occurred over the years. Problems with the pack he was born into, the deaths of those into the pack he had created in Afghanistan. Yes there had been problems.

Staring down at him with those beautiful eyes, Sherlock inquires, “Wanna see some more?”

Anticipation spikes through his body as he fervently replies, “Oh God yes,” and follows him out of the flat.
Sherlock’s POV
As the two of them left the apartment, Mrs. Hudson had commented, “Both of you?” to something his new flatmate had said. His mind had already been on the case, so it was her slightly higher voice that caught his attention.

Spinning on his heel, he approaches her remarking, “Impossible suicides? Four of them? There’s no point sitting at home when there’s finally something fun going on!” he had put emphasis on the fun because he was sure he was going to enjoy himself. Gently grabbing her shoulders he kisses her on the cheek noisily.

Tutting at him, she comments smiling at his exuberance, “Look at you, all happy. It’s not decent.”

He turn and heads towards the front door, replying, “Who cares about decent? The game, Mrs. Hudson, is on!”

Within moments of leaving the building he has got a cabbie to pick them up in the same style that he always does. Cabbies almost always answer his first call for a ride much to many others annoyance. Once the two of them are in and on the way he studies the information on his phone for a few minutes before realizing that his new flatmate, John his mind supplies him, keeps giving him questioning glances. Setting his phone down, he glances over at him, commenting, “Okay, you’ve got questions.”

“Why are we going to a crime scene?” the short blonde inquires, his expression serious.

“It’s what I do,” he replies, “next?”

“What you do?” he repeats, a curious written across his face. “Who are you?”

Keeping his tone neutral he challenges, “What do you think?”

Slowly, as if considering his answer, he states, “I’d say a private detective…. his voice trails off as he glances out the window.

“But?” he prompts him, impatiently waiting for him to continue. He wants to know if this flatmate will be as smart as he thinks he might be. Something tells him that there is more to John Watson than meets the eye and he wants to know what it is.

“…but the police don’t go to private detectives.” He finishes looking right at him with a sharp gaze.

“I’m a consulting detective. Only one in the world. I invented the job.” He replies with a small satisfied smile.

John keeps his attention locked on him as he queries, “What does that mean?”

Feeling quite pleased with himself he answers, “It means when the police are out of their depth, which is always, they consult me.”

Amusement colors John’s voice as he remarks, “The police don’t consult amateurs.”
Glancing over at the blond haired man, he decides to try and prove himself, with others that never works but something seems different about this one. “When I met you for the first time yesterday, I said, ‘Afghanistan or Iraq?’. You looked surprised.”

“Yes, how did you know?” his companion queries.

Glancing his way again he answers, “I didn’t know, I saw. Your haircut, the way you hold yourself says military. But your conversation as you entered the room,” he pauses for a moment remembering, “said trained at Bart’s, so army doctor, obvious. Your face is tanned but no tan above the wrists. You’ve been abroad, but not sunbathing. Your limp’s really bad when you walk but you don’t ask for a chair when you stand, like you’ve forgotten about it, so it’s at least partly psychosomatic. That says the original circumstances of the injury were traumatic. Wounded in action, then. Wounded in action, suntan, Afghanistan or Iraq.” He finishes up clicking the k sound from Iraq.

John looks out the window, muttering, “You said I had a therapist.”

Looking straight ahead he answers, “You’ve got a psychosomatic limp, of course you’ve got a therapist.” He pauses for a breath before glancing back at his new flatmate, “Then there’s your brother.”

“Hmmm?” he replies as he pulls the phone in question out.

Sherlock holds his hand out, taking it when John pulls it out of his pocket, “Your phone. It’s expensive, e-mail enabled, MP3 player, but you’re looking for a flatshare, you wouldn’t waste money on this. It’s a gift then.” He flips it around for a minute, observing it. “Scratches. Not one, many over time. It’s been in the same pocket as keys and coins. The man sitting next to me wouldn’t treat his one luxury item like this, so it’s had a previous owner. Next bit’s easy, you know it already.”

A slightly startled look crosses John’s face as he murmurs, “The engraving.”

He flips it so the engraving is visible, **Harry Watson from Clara xxx.** “Harry Watson: clearly a family member who’s given you his old phone. Not your father, this is a young man’s gadget. Could be a cousin, but you’re a war hero who can’t find a place to live. Unlikely you’ve got extended family, certainly not one you’re close to, so brother it is. Now, Clara. Who’s Clara? Three kisses says it’s a romantic attachment. The expense of the phone says wife, not girlfriend. She must have given it to him recently – this model’s only six months old. Marriage in trouble then – six months on he’s just given it away. If she’d left him, he would have kept it. People do – sentiment. But no, he wanted rid of it. He left her. He gave the phone to you; that says he wants you to stay in touch. You’re looking for cheap accommodation, but you’re not going to your brother for help: that says you’ve got problems with him. Maybe you liked his wife; maybe you don’t like his drinking.” The entire time he is speaking, his hands never stop moving because of the energy he always seems to have.

“How could you possibly know about the drinking?” John almost demands looking right at him.

He smiles, “Shot in the dark, good one, though. Power connection: tiny little scuff marks around the edge of it. Every night he goes to plug it in to the charger but his hands are shaking. You never see those marks on a sober man’s phone, never see a drunk’s without them.” He hands back the phone, gazing out the window. “There you go, you see, you were right.”

The shorter man is looking at his phone as he asks, “I was right? Right about what?” he sounds shocked on the word ‘I’.

“The police don’t consult amateurs,” he puts a bit more emphasis on amateurs then he had plans, his gaze never leaving the window as he waits, biting his lip for what the other man will say. Just once
he would like if someone actually appreciated his gift rather than mock him for it.

“That…” John begins, still looking at his phone, “was amazing.” He finishes looking up and straight ahead nodding a bit.

He knows he looks confused but he really hadn’t expected that particular answer so he glances around for a moment before settling his eyes on his companion. “Do you think so?” despite his best effort to sound steady, he can just about hear the hope in his voice.

His companions glance flickers to him and away before he replies, “Of course it was.” With emphasis on it, “It was extraordinary, it was quite extraordinary.”

Shocked, he looks back out the window, pausing a moment before replying, “That’s not what people normally say.”

He can feel John’s eyes locked on him, “What do people normally say?”

“’Piss off!’” he replies, giving him a tight smile as he looks his way.

John just smiles at back at him before both of them look out the window.

The rest of the trip is done in silence. His mind is reeling over the concept that someone appreciates what he can do. No one has appreciated it since he was a small child. His younger brother had, but he was not allowed to spend a lot of time with Aragorn because he was too different. Mycroft had left home when he was still young to pursue an education and career, coming back a far different brother than he had left. Now his younger brother barely spoke to him, and he felt his older brother was the enemy. His father had appreciated his talent as long as he was using it to his advantage, as soon as he stopped however, that’s when he had been separated from Aragorn.

Then his father died, and his mother blamed him, and she continued to keep him separate. It seemed that they turned on him, the whole lot of them. So when he graduated at sixteen he had gone straight to uni, rather than take some time to himself. The hope was he could find someone else like himself at uni only that failed too. It was then that he gave up trying to make others happy with himself, and tried to just be content because what other choice did he have?

D.I. Lestrade calls him for help, not because he wants to, but because Mycroft strongly suggested it during his dark times in order to get him away from drugs and other such things. While the D.I. grudgingly admits he has a gift, he also seems to dislike him for other reasons. The rest of the D.I.’s team actively hates him however, which just reinforces the fact he is alone.

Just before they pull up to where they are going John watches him commenting, “You had almost all of it correct, missing a few facts so it is not surprising it was not perfect, but still, amazing.”

“What? What did I get wrong?” he demands as the cabbie pulls to a stop. The two men, get out and he pays still waiting for his response. How could have gotten something wrong?

“Harry and me rarely get on, always been that way. Clara and Harry split up three months ago and they’re getting a divorce. Harry is not a regular drinker.” The shorter man answers, standing still and watching him.

He smiles to himself, sounds like he only missed one detail, but it is minor, there are some medical conditions that could cause that too, it just had not seemed likely. “Spot on, then, for the most part. I didn’t expect to be right about everything.” He starts to walk away but John has not moved.

“Harry is short for Harriet.”
Stopping dead in his tracks he turns to look at him, he still hasn’t moved. “Harry’s your sister.” He mutters, watching him, there is something more. What else is it. “What else, you haven’t moved yet, and you said I was missing facts. What facts?”

A small smile tugs at the shorter man’s lips, “Alchemic silver burns our kind, I was shot, twice, once a graze, once not.”

Alchemic silver, alchemic silver, he repeats to himself trying to think of where he heard of it before. Of course, Mycroft. When they were children a second race had come to the surface in many cultures, a race of shifters. No one knew exactly how many there were. Most never volunteered information on themselves past the fact that they could shift. There was a specially made type of silver that harmed them, called alchemic silver for the process used to make it. “Shifter?” he demands, wanting to know if he is correct.

The shorter man nods once, “Wolf, elite alpha wolf to be exact.”

For a moment Sherlock’s mind whirls with the implications, that means that he is at the head of a pack. That he is one of the fastest, strongest wolves in the packs to have elite added to his title. Yet he needed somewhere to go? Why? Of course, the head of the pack would not ask for help.

“Your sister? She doesn’t drink but has a shake like she does, why?”

He gives a small shrug, “Medical problems, plus an allergy to most types of starches.”

“Oh.” He mutters, still John has not moved, he is standing perfectly still watching him, and Sherlock realizes that he does not expect him to accept him for some reason. Doesn’t John realize the gift this is to him? Someone who actually seems to appreciate his gift, his ability? It’s so rare that there was no way he would intentionally turn him away, besides, it would give him a chance to learn more about a race that had intrigued him that his brother had not been able to learn anything about. That was always a bonus in his book. “Come on, we’ve got a murder to look at.”

That seems to startle the doctor, and he starts moving forward, “Look, what exactly am I supposed to be doing here?” he inquires, curiosity in is tone along with something else.

“Sister,” he mutters to himself annoyed that he misread it. Shaking his head a bit, he turns and heads towards where the police have it taped off. Exasperated, he continues, “There is always something.” John had said something, but he had not been paying attention because he was muttering to himself. Really though, a wolf shifter.

Chapter End Notes

I love comments, so any that are left are well appreciated, thanks to everyone who has bookmarked it so far for reading, or planning to read it.
Chapter Notes

I love comments, so any that are left are well appreciated, thanks to everyone who has bookmarked it so far for reading, or planning to read it. For those who have commented, Thank You again.

*John’s POV*

When it becomes apparent that he is not going to answer, and that he does not seem to have a problem with the fact he is a shifter, he continues towards the crime scene, querying, “No, seriously, what am I doing here?”

Again the dark-haired human doesn’t respond, moving up to the taped off area. When he gets there a lightly brown skin woman with a bushy, curly hair greets him, “Hello freak.” Her voice is lilting, and her tone impudent. He can smell the dislike pouring off of her.

Sherlock stops just before the barrier, ignoring the barb and remarking, “I’m here to see Detective Inspect Lestrade.”

“Why?” she demands.

He looks at her, replying, “I was invited.”

“Why?” she repeats herself, her tone full of malice.

Taking a deep breath, he catches the scent of the woman in front of him, a jackal-wolf hybrid. Not a very strong one, no pack connection that he can smell, so an omega then.

Sarcasm drips from his potential bondmate’s voice as he answers, “I think he wants me to take a look.”

“Well, you know what I think, don’t you?” she responds.

Sherlock’s expression remains neutral as he lifts the tape and ducts under it, “Always Sally,” he replies before intentionally sniffing the air, “I even know you didn’t make it home last night.”

“I don’t…” she stutters before noticing his approach, lifting a hand in a stopping motion she shifts gears, “Er, who’s this?”

Continuing to watch her, the dark-haired man responds, “Colleague of mine, Doctor Watson.” Pausing for a moment, he looks towards him, “Doctor Watson, Sergeant Sally Donovan,” he introduces, his voice filling with sarcasm as he continues, “Old friend.”

She just about snarls at him according to the expression on her face as she looks at Sherlock. Disbelieving, she repeats, “A colleague? How do you get a colleague?” Turning towards him she cruelly asks, “What, did he follow you home?”
The alpha in him is insulted and he responds accordingly, snapping, “No, packless omega hybrid, he didn’t. Watch your tongue.”

Her eyes widen as she stares at him. “What?” she breathes, shock pouring from her.

Glancing at Sherlock he questions, “Would it be better if I just waited and…”

Looking away, Sherlock lifts the tape, answering, “No.” he can smell the surprise coming from him, apparently that was something he was not used to.

Nodding he walks under the tape. As he does so, the jackal-wolf radios in, “Freak’s here, bringing him in.”

Before she can get more than two steps however, he snarls low in his throat and uses the control of the alpha’s gift have to force her mind into submission. She stops moving, barely breathing as the force of his will hits her. *I thought I told you to watch your tongue.* He snarls directly into her mind, as a omega without a pack, the best course of action for you would be to listen when an alpha gives a direct order.

*I …* her mind stutters before she switches to aloud, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry.”

*I am not the one you should be apologizing too. As a shifter you should know better than to be cruel to those who are different, or do you know nothing of your own kind and the hunts that have occurred over the years just because we are different?* He growls at her, still maintaining control over her.

*I will apologize,* she whispers in response. He releases her mind and she turns back towards his dark-haired human, bowing her head respectively as she does so, “I am sorry Mr. Holmes, I was out of line.”

He can feel the surprise pouring off of him, apparently he had never been apologized to before, at least not by her. Those piercing eyes lock on to him as Sherlock studies him for a moment before nodding once and heading towards the building, dismissing the situation. As he strides towards the building, he glances around taking everything in much to his amusement.

Lifting his phone, he quickly sends a text to Jacob, -there is an omega wolf-jackal named Sally Donovan, look into her.- JW.

-Sir.- BJF

Just as they reach the stairs to the building another tall, dark haired human who looks sickly comes walking out. Loathing scenting the air when he spots Sherlock as well. The two of them stop face to face, almost like two alpha’s challenging each other, but this other man is human too, nothing supernatural about him.

“Anderson, here we are again,” his dark-haired companion drawls, tucking his hands into his coat pockets.

The look Anderson gives Sherlock makes him want to snarl, but he holds his patience, this one doesn’t have any shifter blood in him, just a plain human and thus out of his domain. “It’s a crime scene. I don’t want it contaminated. Are we clear on that?”
His dark-haired companion takes another sniff of the air, looking past Anderson as he answers to Sally. “Quite clear. And is your wife away for long?”

Scowling at him with distrust, Anderson snaps, “Oh, don’t pretend you worked that out. Somebody told you that.”

Looking away from the two of them, Sherlock responds, “Your deodorant told me that.”

A confused look crosses the jack-ass human’s face, “My deodorant?” he repeats.

A sarcastic, quirky look is shot towards Anderson as Sherlock replies, “It’s for men,” as if it is the most obvious thing in the world.

“Well, of course it’s for men! I’m wearing it!” he snaps.

Smiling rather viciously at him, his dark-haired companion remarks, “So’s Sergeant Donovan.”

The pasty faced human spins to stare at the hybrid, shock and anger on his face.

Taking a deep breath Sherlock comments, “Ooh, and I think it just vaporized. May I go in?”

The human turns back to face him angrily, pointing and snapping, “Now look: whatever you’re trying to imply...” he trails of as Sherlock steps past.

As he steps by he observes, “I’m sure Sally came round for a nice little chat, and just happened to stay over.” He spins back towards the jack-ass human, and flicks a glance at the hybrids legs as he does so, continuing, “And I assume she scrubbed your floors, going by the state of her knees.”

Both the human and hybrid stare at him, the scent of fear and anger filling the air, along with Sherlock’s scent of satisfaction from putting them in their place. Smiling to himself, he follows the tall human in, intentionally glancing at the hybrid’s knees as he does so. Inside the building they come to where the detective inspector is standing, preparing to go in by dressing in a set of coveralls.

“You need to wear one of these,” his tall companion tells him, hand motioning to the coveralls as he steps past the detective inspector to grab a pair of medical gloves.

“Who’s this?” the serious man inquires as he finishes getting his coveralls on.

“He’s with me,” comes the offhanded reply as the dark-haired human strips off his heavy leather gloves and shoves them in his pocket.

“But who is he?”

His tone seems to harden as Sherlock repeats himself, “I said he’s with me.”

His dark-haired human ignores the question, and the serious human glances back at him accepting it as fact. Curious about why he is not putting on a coverall, he inquires, “Aren’t you going to put one on?” only to get a look from Sherlock that clearly asked if he was kidding.

“So where are we?” Sherlock inquires, tone even, but excitement pouring off of him.
“Upstairs.” The human jackal child replies.

The three of them make their ways up two flights of stairs to a room on the second floor. Sherlock and the detective inspector briefly discuss the situation as they climb up the steps. Upon entering the room he takes in the scene in front of him. The woman is not that old, dressed in pink including over coat and heeled shoes. For a moment he bows his head respectfully.

“Shut up.” Sherlock tells the other human.

His head jerks towards him startled, “I didn’t say anything.”

“You were thinking, it’s annoying,” comes the harsh reply as he moves forward and begins investigating the area around her.

The detective inspector glances over at him with a slightly confused look on his face before going back to watching Sherlock.

Meanwhile, Sherlock is carefully going over the woman, touching and moving things around as he feels he needs to. Sharp eyes taking in details that he is sure that everyone else would probably miss just because that seems to be the type of personality he has. Eventually he smirks as he straightens out.

The detective inspector inquires, “Got anything?”

“Not much,” he replies distractedly, pulling his phone out of his pocket.

Coming to lean against the door Anderson comments, “She’s German. ‘Rache’: it’s German for ‘revenge’. She could be trying to tell us something…” but is cut off by Sherlock shutting the door in his face.

“Yes, thank you for your input,” he mutters sarcastically as he looks something up on his phone.

The serious human inquires, “So she’s German?”

“Of course she’s not. She’s from out of town, though. Intended to stay in London for one night…” Sherlock replies distractedly as he continues to look through his phone, finally he smiles smugly, before continuing to say “before returning home to Cardiff.” Again he pauses, this time to pocket his phone, “So far, so obvious.”

He knows that there is a slightly confused look on his face as he questions, “Sorry, obvious?”

The detective inspector is giving off a frustrated scent as he asks, “What about the message, though?”

Sherlock ignores the other human to inquires, “Doctor Watson, what do you think?”

His confusion gets a bit worse, which makes him feel a bit uncomfortable since he is not used to being confused, “Of the message?” he inquires glancing at the other human in the room.

Those sharp eyes never leave his face as he is asked, “Of the body. You’re a medical man.”

Stuttering in frustration the human jackal child protests, “Wait, no, we have a whole team right outside.”
For a brief second those sharp eyes focus in on the other human as he comments, “They won’t work with me.” before they come back to rest on his face. For a moment he almost feels like he is in an alpha challenge with the focus that is on him, yet he realizes that it is not quite the same.

Open mouthed the human jackal child stares at him, pointing out, “I’m breaking every rule letting you in here.”

Again those sharp eyes flicker away for just a moment, his response practical and fact, “Yes, because you need me,” he just about hisses the yes.

Nodding once in acknowledgement, the serious human replies, “Yes I do.” He looks at the ground, frustration obvious, “God help me.”


“Hm?” he responds glancing between Sherlock and the detective inspector.

“Oh, do as he says. Help yourself.” His voice is soft, resigned as he turns and leaves the room for a moment. Stepping outside, he can hear him giving orders, “Anderson, keep everyone out for a couple of minutes.”

The two of them go over to the body of the woman, with Sherlock dropping down next to her gracefully, while it takes him a bit more to do so. The pain in his leg is shooting through him, causing him to grit his teeth but he does it anyways.

“Well?” Sherlock inquires, his voice low as he watches him.

“What am I doing here?” he inquires in response, just as softly.

Glancing at the door he answers, his voice still quiet, “Helping me make a point.”

Keeping his eyes locked on his potential bondmate he replies in a matching tone, “I’m supposed to be helping you pay the rent.”

Sherlock glances at the woman then answers him still softly speaking, “Yeah, well, this is more fun.”

Returning to his normal voice he comments, “Fun? There’s a woman lying dead.” There is something off about his potential bondmate, but he is not exactly sure what it is.

Still watching him, Sherlock remarks, “Perfectly sound analysis, but I was hoping you’d go deeper.” Just as the detective walks back into the room.

Sighing to himself, he gets his other leg to folded down and carefully examines her body, using his senses of touch, sight, and smell predominately. “Yeah, asphyxiation, probably. Passed out, choked on her own vomit. Can’t smell any alcohol on her.” he pause for a moment, his voice low, “There is something there though that caused her to vomit, some toxin in her system that is nearly completely unscentable.”

Voice still lower than normal Sherlock remarks, “You know what it was. You’ve read the papers.” His expression completely neutral as he keeps his eyes on him.
“What, she’s one of the suicides? The fourth?” he questions, glancing between Sherlock and the human jackal child.

Before the dark-haired man can reply, the human jackal child states, “Sherlock – two minutes, I said. I need anything you’ve got.”

“Victim is in her late thirties.” He begins, gracefully getting to his feet and watching as he stands a bit slower now that his leg is stiff. “Professional person, going by her clothes; I’m guessing something in the media, going by the frankly alarming shade of pink. Travelled from Cardiff today, intending to stay in London for one night. It’s obvious from the size of her suitcase” Once he is up, Sherlock turns away, walking past the detective and looking around the room as if searching for something.

“Suitcase?” the detective inspector questions even as the dark-haired human continues speaking. “Suitcase, yes. She’s been married at least ten years, but not happily. She’s had a string of lovers but none of them knew she was married.”

While the human is speaking, he glances around the room to see if he can see a suitcase or the signs of it anywhere.

“Oh, for God’s sake, if you’re just making this up...” the human jackal child exclaims, his eyes locked on the dark-haired human as he paces the room, his arms crossed across his chest. To prove his point Sherlock starts pointing out details about her, starting with her ring, “Her wedding ring. Ten years old at least.” He kneels down next to her as he points to whatever he is currently talking about. “The rest of her jewelry has been regularly cleaned, but not her wedding ring. State of her marriage right there. The inside of the ring is shinier than the outside – that means it’s regularly removed. The only polishing it gets is when she works it off her finger. It’s not for work; look at her nails. She doesn’t work with her hands,” he pauses for a moment as he stands, “so what or rather who does she remove her rings for? Clearly not one lover; she’d never sustain the fiction of being single over that amount of time, so more likely a string of them. Simple.”

“It’s brilliant,” he breathes amazed, startling himself by the fact that he had said it aloud. Apparently startling his potential bondmate too, who turns to look at him curiously. “Sorry.” He tells the detective inspector, realizing that he interrupted.

“Cardiff?” the detective inspector repeats where Sherlock had said she was from earlier. Looking at the detective inspector he questions, “It’s obvious, isn’t it?”

When neither himself or the human-jackal child immediately understand, he states, “It’s not obvious to me.”

Sherlock glances between the two men, grumbling, “Dear God, what is it like in your funny little brains? It must be so boring.” Turning back to the woman’s body he once again attempts to explain himself. “Her coat: it’s slightly damp. She’s been in heavy rain in the last few hours. No rain anywhere in London in that time. Under her coat collar is damp, too. She’s turned it up against the wind. She’s got an umbrella in her left-hand pocket but it’s dry and unused: not just wind, strong wind – too strong to use her umbrella. We know from her suitcase that she was intending to stay overnight, so she must have come a decent distance but she can’t have travelled more than two or three hours because her coat still hasn’t dried. So, where has there been heavy rain and strong wind within the radius of that travel time?” He pauses for a breath as he grabs his phone, showing the weather report to the other two so he can see how he came about the answer, “Cardiff.”
time he is speaking he uses his hands and body in order to emphasize what he is saying.

Again he is impressed by the dark-haired human’s logical and ability to comprehend. “That’s fantastic.”

Still shocked by the fact someone is praising him it seems, Sherlock turns and asks him in a low voice, “D’you know you do that out loud?”

He can feel his cheeks heat up as he replies, “Sorry. I’ll shut up.”

Giving him a slightly bemused and bewildered look, Sherlock tells him, “No, it’s fine.” With a short pause between the last two words.

The next few minutes go in a blur for him as he listens to the two humans go back and forth. First about the suitcase, then about the phone, and then about the name Rachel scratched into the floor. Unfortunately, his attention had been diverted because he was trying to understand how this brilliant man could be at such ill ease and shock over being told he was brilliant. After all, the intelligence was there, the skill was there, was nobody really paying that close attention?

Eventually he goes off on a tangent about the suitcase, just about rushing down the stairs as he speaks with the detective inspector. When he is just about to the bottom of the steps he seems to have an epiphany according to the overwhelm smell of pleasure coming from him that over lays the rest of the scents in the building, followed by his mad dash down the rest of the stairs.
Reviews are well loved, so are kudos and follows, so thank you to everyone who has done any of them.

This is not an omegaverse story, the terms Alpha (first/leader), Beta (second), and Omega (last/outcast) are used in their actual wolf meanings instead.

*John’s POV*

After leaving the crime scene he walks around for a bit, thinking about everything he had learned tonight of the man who could be his potential bondmate. He is impulsive, reckless, fast-thinking, direct, a tad bit insulting, and has a tendency to forget about others. Despite that, he had seen the way the detectives and there various people had treated him so he was not surprised that he had acted in that fashion. How lonely he must be if that is how everyone in his life treats him.

Originally he had considered getting cab but as he walks he decides against that course of action, preferring instead to just walk for a while in order to stretch his leg a bit more. Plus it gave him time to consider how he wants to deal with his new flatmate, the human with the potential to be his bondmate. First off, he determined, someone needed to show him his worth as more than just a human computer. Secondly, he needed to feel accepted, something he is sure he has never had. Third, well that might be the easiest, bring him into the pack. A pack member is always given affection by other members, and Sherlock is in dire need of affection if he can tell anything.

Finally, after a while of walking, and his leg getting ever so stiff he tries to hail a cab but cannot seem to do so. However something weird does happen to him, every pay phone he passes rings and finally decides to answer one.

“Hello?” he inquires, curious as to why the phones keep ringing. According to his senses there was no one nearby that was alerted to his presence

“There is a security camera on the building to your left. Do you see it?” a man’s voice comes across the phone, it is well cultured and even.

He frowns, again focusing his senses outwards, both his human and wolf abilities but still not seeing a person anywhere. “Who’s this? Who’s speaking?”

“Do you see the camera, Doctor Watson?” the man’s voice asks again, ignoring his question.

He looks out at a CCTV camera that is currently pointed at the phone box.

Voice soft as he focuses he replies, “Yeah, I see it.”

“Watch,” he is told and the camera suddenly swivels away, “There is another camera on the building opposite you. Do you see it?”

Annoyed with the power play of the unseen force, he hums his response rather than speaking it when
he spots the second camera.

As soon as he does so that camera also swivels away. “And finally, at the top of the building on your right.”

He glances towards it, his eyes catching it almost immediately just before it turns away. Maintaining a military calm voice he inquires, “How are you doing this?”

“Get into the car, Doctor Watson.” The man on the other end tells him as a black car pulls up to the curbside near the phone, the driver quickly gets out and grabs the door, opening it for him. “I would make some sort of threat, but I’m sure your situation is quite clear to you.” the voice tells him right before the line goes dead.

For a moment he watches the man holding the car door, eyes narrow as he considers his next motion. Taking a deep breath he inhales all of the scents in the area but focuses on those nearest him dealing with the car. The man holding the door is plain human, there is not a drop of shifter in him. There is a female scent in the vehicle, also without shifter blood, but not quite human, smells like one of the gifted, or the offspring of a gifted. Linked to that female scent is a vaguely familiar male scent that makes him curious. Narrowing his eyes he decides to follow the directive given to discover the source of the familiar scent.

When he gets into the car the first thing he spots is a dark-haired woman, carefully maintaining an even breathing pattern he takes in her scent, noticing that she is the one he can smell with gifted blood, though he cannot tell if she is gifted or not. She is also the source of where the other familiar male smell is, so it must be someone she is around a lot.

“Hello,” he greets her, being polite.

She glances up from her phone, a bright if somewhat fake smile on her face, “Hi.”

After a moments pauses he inquires, “What’s your name, then?”

Her glances flickers from her phone for a moment as she replies, “Er ... Anthea.”

Even if she had not paused before saying it, her scent gave away the fact she was lying, still might as well play dumb. “Is that your real name?”

She smiles again, “No.”

He nods, looking around and through the windows for a moment before commenting, “I’m John.” There is a possible gifted one. He uses the common telepathy link between the pack mates, directing it to the one closest to him, his watcher of the day.

I’ll follow, he hears whispering softly through his mind in response.

Be cautious, he replies.

“Yes, I know.” She tells him without her eyes leaving the phone.

Mildly sarcastic he inquiring, “Any point in asking where I’m going?”

“None at all,” she tells him, pausing for a moment to smile at him before returning to her phone,
“John.”

He gives a small smile and a nod, replying, “Okay,” and settling back into the seat. He knows that high above them they are being tracked by at least one owl who will not lose his location and will report to the others if there is any sort of problems. The really nice thing about a mixed pack, other packs never knew what to expect and the variety of missions they could do was far greater.

After a bit they pull into a warehouse parking lot, it seems to be empty. When the car stops the driver does not open the door this time, instead he stays in his spot while he opens his door and gets out, taking a deep breath as he does so. His eyes, while not as sharp as Sherlock’s still manage to take in the surroundings and every escape route he could take if needed. He can hear the soft hoot of Edward above him. In front of him is a taller man, darker haired, leaning against an umbrella with a chair in front of him. Slowly he makes his way towards him.

“Have a seat, John.” The man directs him, using his umbrella to motion towards the chair.

He ignores the directive, catching his scent on the air as he speaks. It is the same voice as the phone, and he is the one with the familiar scent though he knows he has never met him before so why? Still moving towards him he flippantly comments, “You know, I’ve got a phone.” He then pointedly looks around the warehouse area before continuing, “I mean, very clever and all that, but er ... you could just phone me. On my phone.”

Safe? Edward inquires, watching from his perch.

For now. He replies, they are both keeping it short in order to not alert the possible gifted one to their conversation. As he speaks with Edward he continues to walk, bypassing the chair and coming to stop directly in front of the man.

“When one is avoiding the attention of Sherlock Holmes, one learns to be discreet, hence this place.” The strangers voice changes from cultured to annoyed, though it is such a mild change that had he not been listening for it he probably would not have heard it as he continues speaking, “The leg must be hurting you. Sit down.”

Tone reverting to serious, he responds, “I don’t wanna sit down.”

A small smirk curves the man’s lips as he remarks, “You don’t seem very afraid.”

Eyes never leaving the man, he gives quick shake of his head, “You don’t seem very frightening.”

Apparently that amuses the stranger because he gives a short chuckle before stating, “Ah, yes. The bravery of the soldier. Bravery is by far the kindest word for stupidity, don’t you think?” His expression changes to serious as he inquires, “What is your connection to Sherlock Holmes?”

His expression stays the same flat neutral it has been since deciding to forgo the sarcasm. This stranger is not pack, despite the familiar scent, he has no claim to his knowledge, and with such, he feels no reason to enlighten him. “I don’t have one. I barely know him. I met him...” his voice trails off as if considering it, “yesterday.” He is well aware of when he met him, just as he is well aware of something going on that he was now going to have to figure out because there would be no threats to his pack and he was determined to bring Sherlock within that mantle.

“Mmm, and since yesterday you’ve moved in with him and now you’re solving crimes together. Might we expect a happy announcement by the end of the week?” the man inquires, tone slightly
“Who are you?” he inquires of the strange man, taking another deep breath. It is on the edge of his mind who he is, what the connection is but it is not clicking into place for some reason.

The cultured tones return, “An interested party.”

Keeping his tone causal despite the seriousness, he questions, “Interested in Sherlock? Why? I’m guessing you’re not friends.”

The man’s voice softens a bit, “You’ve met him. How many ‘friends’ do you imagine he has? I am the closest thing to a friend that Sherlock Holmes is capable of having.”

Because none of you fools seem to realize his worth, he thinks to himself, though aloud he queries, “And what’s that?”

“Well, thank God you’re above all that.”

As the stranger frowns at him, his text message alert goes off and he digs his phone out of his pocket. He ignores the man in front of him as he reads the message.

-Baker Street. Come at once if convenient.- SH

He smiles internally, as the man comments, “I hope I’m not distracting you.”

Glancing up he causally responds, “Not distracting me at all.” As he shifts the phone back into his pocket.

The stranger fidgets as he asks, “Do you plan to continue your association with Sherlock Holmes?”

“I could be wrong,” he pauses as he locks eyes with the stranger, “but I think that’s none of your business.”

“It could be.”

Still locked on to the stranger he states, “It really couldn’t.”

“If you do move into, um,” he starts as he is pulling a small journal like book out of his pocket, “two hundred and twenty-one B Baker Street, I’d be happy to pay you a meaningful sum of money on a regular basis to ease your way.” He snaps the book closed, putting it back within his pocket.

“Why?” is he query, eyes not yet having left the strangers face.
“Because you’re not a wealthy man.”

Right, he thinks, you want me to spy, but he keeps playing dumb, “In exchange for what?”

Again the stranger fidgets, “Information. Nothing indiscreet. Nothing you’d feel,” he pauses for a moment as if considering his words, “uncomfortable with. Just tell me what he’s up to.”

“Why?” his tone has returns to serious, the casualness gone.

“I worry about him. Constantly.” The stranger answers locking onto his eyes while replying.

Taking a breath he can smell that the stranger is being mostly truthful, but he still does not trust him, so he insincerely responds, “That’s nice of you.”

Glancing at his feet the stranger comments, “But I would prefer for various reasons that my concern go unmentioned. We have what you might call a,” he lifts his umbrella to look at the point, “difficult relationship.”

Again his phone chirps at him that he has a text, and again he pulls it out and looks at it.

-If inconvenient, come anyway.- SH

His amusing flatmate, apparently he wants something and wants it now if the text is anything to go by. He should probably learn patience, not that he thinks that will happen. “No.” he informs the stranger.

A slightly curious scent comes from him, mixed with bafflement, “But I haven’t mentioned a figure.”

Tucking the phone back in his pocket he replies, “Don’t bother.”

A dry chuckle escapes the stranger as he remarks, “You’re very loyal, very quickly.”

Looking back at him with the serious expression back on his face, he informs him, “No, I’m not. I’m just not interested.” Even if it was not his potential bondmate he would not accept the offer because it would be rude to do so.

“Trust issues, it says here,” the stranger remarks as he pulls his little journal like book out again and flips through it. “Shifter, but not what type.”

A slightly confused look crosses his face as he looks at the man, so he is someone in a place of power then. Because both of those are on his sealed file, his medical sealed file and his military sealed file. “What’s that?”

Still glancing through the notes in his books he inquires, “Could it be that you’ve decided to trust Sherlock Holmes of all people?”

Retaining his serious tone, he just about demands, “Who says I trust him?” Thinking, I trust him more than I trust you.

The stranger keeps going as if he had not said anything, “You don’t seem the kind to make friends easily.”
“Are we done?” he demands, his patience with this stranger gone. He is not accustomed to answering for his opinions and does not plan to start now.

The stranger lifts his head, looking him in his eyes. “You tell me.”

For a moment the alpha in him wishes to force this human into submission and he stands perfectly still watching him before doing an about face and walking away.

He is several feet away when the stranger’s voice floats over to him, “I imagine people have already warned you to stay away from him, but I can see from your left hand that’s not going to happen.”

He stops dead in his tracks, all visages of patience seem to be evaporating, giving a shake of his head he snaps, “My wot?” annoyed as he turns back towards the stranger, just barely keeping from baring his sharp teeth at him.

The strangers scent is full of condescendence, as he calmly states, “Show me,” motioning to his left hand and planting his weight against the umbrella.

He can tell that this man is used to being obeyed, but then, so is he as an alpha. There is no way he is going to give this particular human the upper hand, his instincts tell him not to. Instead he plants his feet and lifts his left hand up so the back of it is facing him. Currently his wrist and the potential bondmark on it is facing away from the stranger, and covered by his shirt.

The stranger steps over to him, reaching out to take his hand which he quickly jerks back, “Don’t,” but the stranger gives him a challenging look so he holds his hand out flat, palm down.

Carefully the stranger takes hold of his hand, moving it around, before watching it for a moment and commenting, “Remarkable.”

“What is?” he just about demands as he pulls his hand back, his sense of smell taking in the stranger’s and finally connecting the realization, it is familial blood scent. To be exact, brother blood scent. This is the elder brother, the one who went into politics. There are several choice things he wishes to say to him but he keeps his tongue, continuing to play dumb so that he can collect more information. His mind whirls quickly, recollecting the information. The elder is Mycroft.

Mycroft turns and walks away a bit, then he starts to speak again, “Most people blunder round this city, and all they see are streets and shops and cars. When you walk with Sherlock Holmes, you see the battlefield.” He pauses, turning towards him again. “You’ve seen it already, haven’t you?”

“What’s wrong with my hand?” he queries.

“You have an intermittent tremor in your left hand.” Mycroft answers him, “Your therapist thinks it’s post-traumatic stress disorder. She thinks you’re haunted by memories of your military service.”

He nods once in acknowledgement, though he stares off past the elder brother, a tic in his cheek the only sign of his current anger. He will have to see about getting his files better protected. When he speaks he cannot maintain a neutral tone, and his voice is full of anger, “Who the hell are you?” he snaps, taking a breath to calm himself, “How do you know that?”

Elder? Edward inquires, sending concern through the link.

I’m fine, is his tense reply.
“Fire her. She’s got it the wrong way round. You’re under stress right now and your hand is perfectly steady.” The entire time Mycroft is speaking his focus is purely on him, his voice retaining the cultured tones from the beginning of the conversation. “You’re not haunted by the war, Doctor Watson, you miss it.” he leans forward a bit, his voice lowering, “Welcome back.”

Through it, the only thing he could do was keep his temper about him, now was not the time to be showing his hand about being the alpha wolf that he was. The scent in the air was angering him almost as much as the person in front of him, particularly since he was the cause for most of it. As the elder brother walks away he holds himself still for a moment, regaining the control that was slipping a bit more than he appreciated.

As his phone trills to inform him of a third message, Mycroft calls to him, “Time to choose a side, Doctor Watson.”

The dark haired woman gets out of the car behind him, taking a few steps towards him and commenting, “I’m to take you home.”

Pulling his phone out of his pocket he checks the message, certain that he knows who it will be from.

-Could be dangerous.- SH

He smiles as he tucks the phone back in his pocket, checking the fact his hand is not trembling for the first time since he got shot. Turning towards Anthea, he heads towards the car.

“Address?” she requests as they get in.

“Er, Baker Street, two-two-one B Baker Street.” He tells her, a smile still curving his lips, life is about to get interesting.

The ride back goes quietly, his mind carefully shielded as he considers what he knows and debates about how to get more information. Information is what keeps a pack safe, and despite the fact Sherlock is not formally part of the pack yet, he is still pack, and that means information is needed to keep him safe. Perhaps he should have Cyanne find out all the information that she can, she is particularly good at it, plus has a special gift for remembering.

Since he is still playing dumb he asks them to stop off where he had been staying and rearranges his clothes to make his gun just a little more noticeable before they head off to the flat.

When he gets to the flat he inquires, “Listen, your boss, any chance you could not tell him where I went?”

“Sure,” she answers easily enough but he can smell the dishonesty in it.

“You’ve told him already, haven’t you?” he asks with a slightly frustrated look on his face.

“Yeah,” she answers with a smile, looking away from her phone briefly.

For a minute he flirts with her, mostly because it is the expected thing to do, partly because he feels like it but he knows before he even opens his mouth that nothing is going to come of it. Afterwards, when the car is gone and he is getting ready to go in he smiles again, oh yes, having Sherlock as a flatmate will be particularly interesting if this is going to be a normal day for him.
Texting the Murder

Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who has reviewed, kudos, bookmarked, or followed, you all make me feel appreciated.

John's POV

When he gets into the apartment Sherlock is stretched out on the divan, head facing towards the window on a pillow, with his jacket stripped off, and his sleeves unbuttoned. For a moment he admires the view, noticing that he is pressing his right hand firmly against his left arm just below the elbow. For some reason he keeps clinching and unclenching his fist.

Curious, he inquires, “What are you doing?”

The dark-haired human’s eyes snap open as he pushes his sleeve up, revealing three nicotine patches as he answers, “Nicotine patch, helps me think,” in a calm manner. Sighing he continues, “Impossible to sustain a smoking habit in London these days. Bad news for brain work,” clicking the k-sound in the work.

Stepping a little further into the room, he takes a quick sniff of the air, noticing no new scents that he can detect. Sherlock seems to have mellowed out a bit, “It’s good news for breathing.”

Dismissively Sherlock comments, “Oh, breathing, breathing’s boring,” as he stretches his arm out again before refolding it.

Limping from the door to where the dark-haired human is laying he inquires, “Is that three patches?” frowning as he glances at his arm with the circles on it.

Steepling his hands beneath his chin, the dark-haired human mutters, “It’s a three patch problem,” keeping his eyes closed.

For a moment he paces the room taking it in and enjoying the scent of it, familiarizing himself. Finally, after a few minutes of silence he wonders what the text message was about and stops next to the lanky human, “Well?” He remarks to the silent human, waiting a moment before continuing, “You asked me to come. I’m assuming it’s important.”

After several silent seconds while the dark human stays perfectly quiet on the sofa, his eyes snap open and he answers, “Oh, yeah, of course. Can I borrow your phone?” He stares directly at the ceiling, not once tilting his head to look towards him.

Curious, he repeats, “My phone?”

“Don’t wanna use mine. Always a chance that the number will be recognized. It’s on the website.” Sherlock still has not moved from where he is stretched out.

Glancing towards the door, he comments, “Mrs. Hudson’s got a phone.”

In a bit of a rush he answers, “Yeah, she’s downstairs. I tried shouting but she didn’t hear.”
A slightly annoyed look crosses his face as he considers the dark-haired human, slightly aggravated by the night he allows it to infuse his voice though Sherlock does not seem to notice. “I was on the other side of London.”

“There was no hurry,” he remarks mildly, contradicting what he had said in the text message when he wanted him to come sooner than later.

His eyes narrow as he considers the lanky man before fishing his phone out of his pocket to hand to him. While he is aggravated, it is more by the brother than he is by him. Most of the aggravation that he is allowing to the surface right now is to see how the tall man will react to it. So far he hasn’t, either he is oblivious or ignoring it. According to the scent in the air he is deep in thought and mildly frustrated.

“Here,” he remarks, holding it out.

Without opening his eyes, Sherlock lifts his right hand out, palm up and waits patiently for him to place it on his palm. After he does so, the lanky human refolds his hands under his jaw and continues to think with his closed.

Pacing around the room for a bit, he just about prowls. His need to get his scent in the room is driving him slightly up the wall. Finally, after he feels like it is more of a home than it was he stops and inquires, “So what’s this about, the case?”

His sharp ears barely pick up, “Her case,” as the human softly murmurs.

“Her case?” he repeats in his normal tone.

Eyes opening in a snap, the lanky human responds, “Her suitcase, yes, obviously,” he pauses eyes flickering towards him, “The murderer took her suitcase. First big mistake.”

“Okay, he took her case, so?” he queries, his voice losing the edge to it as he watches the dark-haired human think.

Murmuring to himself, Sherlock doesn’t answer, instead he comments to himself, “It’s no use, there’s no other way. We’ll have to risk it.” Stretching his arm back out towards him, he informs him, “On my desk there’s a number, I want you to send a text.”

The wolf in him raises his hackles at this human who dares to order him around. There have been too many of them today trying to do that that did not deserve to. His tone reflects that as he tightly remarks, “You brought me here,” he pauses for a breath, “to send a text.” He makes it a statement instead of a question in his frustration.

Sherlock does not seem to notice the annoyance though and repeats part of it back at him, “Text, yes. The number on my desk.”

Giving a small shake of his head, he takes the phone and glances around the room before deciding to check out the window. Directly across the way, perched on the roof is a giant dark brown owl, human eyes would not have seen it but his wolf eyes noticed it quickly. Scanning the surrounding area he checked to see if the car was anywhere nearby while his patience returned. He is an alpha, not just an alpha, but an elite alpha. The only humans he had ever taken orders from were those whom he had sworn to obey, and even then he was good at not breaking his oath while avoiding idiotic orders. It was one of his strong suits actually. Still, patience was needed. His potential bondmate seemed to have a difficult time being patient or polite, past that he got the impression that it never really went well for him on the occasions when he tried. A low growl escapes him at the idea.
of someone intentionally hurting his bondmate, even if the bond is not established yet.

For his part, Sherlock had gone back to his eyes closed, hands together position on the divan. So when he opens his eyes and tilts his head, he can’t help but admire the slender neck as he glances his way. “What’s wrong?” he asks, confusion entering the air.

“Just met a friend of yours,” he answers him.

The confusion worsens, overwhelming his other scents, “A friend?” even his voice is full of confusion.

“An enemy,” he tells him to see what the dark-haired humans reaction would be.

Immediately the confusion is gone, replaced instead by a mild case of excitement, though his voice is calm as he asks “Oh, which one?” returning to how he had been positioned.

Narrowing his eyes at the dark-haired human he decides he will have to reflect on the fact he seems more comfortable with enemies rather than friends later. “Your arch-enemy,” he pauses clearing his throat once and glancing at the floor, “according to him.” Turning from window to face him, he inquires, “Do people have arch-enemies?”

Again the dark-haired human tilts his head to look at him, this time his eyes slightly narrowed as he queries, “Did he offer you money to spy on me?”

He nods once as answers, “Yes.”

“Did you take it?” Sherlock inquires, still watching him.

“No.” he answers with a very small shake of his head.

“Pity, we could have split the fee,” he murmurs in response as he goes back to how he is laying before quickly jerking his head back towards him as he comments, “Think it through next time,” before returning to how he had his head.

Lifting his head to look back out the window, he questions, “Who is he?” as if he does not know, because he is curious whether his potential bondmate will say anything about the fact it is his brother or not.

He murmurs his answer softly, “The most dangerous man you’ve ever met, and not my problem right now.” Suddenly his voice gets a bit louder, back to its normal tone as he comments, “On my desk, the number.”

Through it his scent had went from frustrated to amused to annoyed, making him wonder why the idea of a friend confuses and frustrates him so much. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that he has a hard time connecting with people. Giving a mental shake of his head, he heads over to the desk and tracks down the number on it. “Jennifer Wilson. That was…” his voice trails off for a moment as he realizes it was the dead woman’s name. “Hang on, wasn’t that the dead woman?” he inquires just to make sure.

Without moving from his spot, Sherlock replies slightly impatiently yet still calmly, “Yes, that’s not important. Just enter the number.”

Shaking his head with a small smile, he starts entering the phone number when the dark-haired human impatiently demands, “Are you doing it?”
“Yes,” he replies as he continues.

“Have you done it?”

“Ye…” he begins snapping, “hang on!” as he finishes typing it.

He had just finished the last number when Sherlock begins to speak, “These words exactly: What happened at Lauriston Gardens? I must have blacked out.” His tone is slow and even as he speaks, and he remains perfectly still on the divan. “Twenty-two Northumberland Street. Please come.”

He had just gotten to ‘blacked out’ when he glances over at his human in concern, had he missed something? “You blacked out?” he queries softly.

“What?” the dark-haired human questions before realizing the question and tilting his head to look at him, “No. No!” Getting rapidly to his feet he walks over the low coffee table and into the kitchen, telling him, “Type and send it, quickly.” In the kitchen he grabs a small pink suitcase off of a chair and brings it into the living room, inquiring, “Have you sent it?”

“What’s the address?”

Impatiently he repeats the address while setting the case down and flipping it open to look through it again as he perches in one of the chairs.

Catching the smell of the dead woman, he turns and stares mildly shocked, at the suitcase that the dark-haired human is sorting through. “That’s…” he trails off for a moment, “that’s the pink lady’s case. That’s Jennifer Wilson’s case.” There is only two other human scents attached to the case, one is Sherlock’s, probably from handling it, the second is an unfamiliar human males. Since he is certain that Sherlock is not the killer, that means that the smell belonging to the stranger must be the killer instead.

“Yes, obviously,” the dark-haired human remarks as he stares at it, his hand resting together, fingers laced, elbows on his knees. After a moment’s silence, he glances his way and somewhat sarcastically comments while tilting his head from side to side, “Oh, perhaps I should mention: I didn’t kill her.”

Eyes narrowing on his face, he voices, “I never said you did.”

Curiosity colors Sherlock’s face as he queries, “Why not?” he take a breath and starts speaking quickly, “Given the text I just had you send and the fact I have her case, it’s a perfectly logical assumption.”

“Do people usually assume you’re the murder?” he asks the dark-haired human watching him, and keeps track of the scent in the air.

Smirking slightly, as if he is used to it, he bounces up, using his hands on the arms of the chair to perch in the seat on the balls of his feet as he responds, “Now and then, yes.” Again he clasps his hands together beneath his jaw.

“Wrong scent,” he informs him as he walks around to the other chair, “Okay,” he begins before dropping into the armchair, “How did you get this?”

Again his scent changes to curious for a moment before refocusing on the case, “By looking.”

“Where?” he asks, intrigued by his mind.

Using his hands to emphases what he is saying, Sherlock responds, “The killer must have driven her
to Lauriston Gardens. He could only keep her case by accident if it was in the car.” He glances towards him, eyes bright with excitement, “Nobody could be seen with this case without drawing attention, particularly a man, which is statistically more likely, so obviously he’d feel compelled to get rid of it the moment he noticed he still had it.” Again he glances his way, “Wouldn’t have taken him more than five minutes to realize his mistake. I checked every back street wide enough for a car five minutes from Lauriston Gardens, and anywhere you could dispose of a bulky object without being observed.” He pauses again to take a breath, “Took me less than an hour to find the right skip.”

Impressed, he questions, “Pink. You got all that because you realized the case would be pink?”

“Well, it had to be pink, obviously.” The dark-haired human declares, glancing his way and spreading his hands before him for a moment as if motioning to the case.

Muttering to himself, “Why didn’t I think of that?” he wonders. His mind trying to see the connections and not getting them nearly as quickly as Sherlock had.

Absently Sherlock answers him, “Because you’re an idiot,” which causes him to jerk towards the taller human, startled. It has been a very long while since anyone has called him an idiot. Before he can make any sort of comment however, the dark-haired human is waving a hand in his direction, he can smell the minor concern coming from as he expresses his opinion, “No, no, no, don’t look like that. Practically everyone is.” His attention switches back to the case as he asks, “Now, look. Do you see what’s missing?”

Looking over the case he tries to determine what is missing but is not sure what sort of thing he is looking for, “From the case? How could I?”

The both of them glance at each other at nearly the same time, as Sherlock answers the question, “Her phone. Where’s her mobile phone? There was no phone on the body, there’s no phone in the case. We know she had one, that’s her number there; you just texted it.” He uses his body, primarily his hands and face to express himself further.

Frowning, he glances down and then back at the dark-haired human as he responds, “Maybe she left it at home,” though something tells him that is not the correct answer. Not if everything the human next to him had said earlier in the day was correct, which at this point it seemed to be.

Shifting to sit properly in the armchair again, Sherlock declares, “She has a string of lovers and she’s careful about it. She never leaves her phone at home.” Then he returns the paper with the contact information to the case and glances towards him expectantly, his scent full of energy and excitement.

“Er….” He begins, before deciding to ask, “Why did I just send that text?” as he glances at his phone. Something tells him that he just texted the person who has her phone, the person who killed her, but would his potential bondmate really do something that could be that reckless?

“Well, the question is: where is her phone now?” his expression as he inquires is the happiest he has seen it yet.

“She could have lost it,” he suggests, watching Sherlock.

“Yes or….” He trails off, his voice hissing the ‘s’.

Taking his time to answer, he slowly says, “The murderer…” he suggests, “You think the murderer has the phone?” He is startled by the fact it seems to please the dark-haired human that he has figured it out. I think I will be hunting tonight, he tells Edward, it should be safe enough.
Alright, but I will still be tracking, you know the senior gets pissy when we do not do our duty.

Comes the soft reply.

“Maybe she left it when she left her case. Maybe he took it from her for some reason. Either way, the balance of probability is the murderer has her phone.” The dark-haired human explains.

He smiles a bit, he was right as to where this is going, “So I just texted a murder and you want to try and find him using the phone?”

Before the tall human can say anything, his phone starts going off, but it does not say who is calling.

Speaking softly he comments, “A few hours after his last victim, and now he receives a text that can only be from her. If somebody had just found that phone they’d ignore a text like that, but the murderer,” he pauses for a moment, allowing the phone to fall silent, “would panic.” Flipping the suitcase shut as he stands, Sherlock grabs his jacket, heading towards the door as he pulls it on.

Well then, hunting it is, he thinks to himself staring at the phone for a moment. Out of curiosity he inquires, “Have you talked to the police?”

Slender fingers pull the jacket straight as he replies, “Four people are dead. There isn’t time to talk to the police.”

Slightly more curious, particularly since humans tend to allow the police to deal with things normally, not do it themselves, he inquires, “So why are you talking to me?”

Grabbing his belstaff off of the back of the door the dark-haired human answers, “Mrs. Hudson took my skull.”

He glances over to the fireplace where the skull had been resting, now it was nowhere to be seen. “So I’m basically filling in for your skull?”

Pulling the coat on over his suit, he flippantly remarks, “Relax, you’re doing fine.” As he tugs the last of it on and flips the collar he queries, “Well?”

He glances at him, “Well what?” As rule the shifter stay out of human affairs, unless they take a public service job such as police officer, so he is pretty much waiting for the invite he is sure is coming from the tall human to join the hunt. Part of him wonders how long it will be before his curiosity finally kicks in because he knows that will eventually occur.

“Well, you could just sit there and watch telly.” The dark-haired human observes suggestively.

He smiles to himself at the tone, “What, you want me to come with you?”

Putting his scarf on, the tall human voices, “I like company when I go out, and I think better when I talk aloud. The skull just attracts attention, so…” his voice trails off as he notices his smile, “problem?”

For a moment he says nothing, staring at his cane instead, then with a shake of his head he comments, “I keep getting warned away from you because your trouble.”

Rolling his eyes, the taller human comments, “And I said ‘dangerous’, and here you are.” He spins on his heel, heading out the door.

The lingering scent in the room is one of curiosity, frustration, and excitement with just a little bit of Sherlock’s person scent beneath it all. Life sure was going to be interesting with this particular
human in his life. Shoving to his feet using his cane, he reflects, it might be painful, but at least it will be fun, before he follows the taller man out of the flat and onto the street.
Thank you everyone for the reviews, they are well loved and appreciated, so feel free to leave more!

John’s **POV**
The taller human apparently had realized that he would come because he has not gone far when he reaches outside. For a little bit the two of them walk in silence before he inquires, “Where are we going?”

“Northumberland Street’s a five minute walk from here.” Comes the reply as the tall human fiddles with his gloves.

Curiously, he glances over at him inquiring, “You think he’s stupid enough to go there?”

The dark-haired human’s smile grows expectantly, “No, I think he is brilliant enough. I love the brilliant ones. They’re always so desperate to get caught.” He answers, excitement coloring his tone, while his scent changes to one of pleasure.

Again he looks over at him, asking, “Why?”

Tilting his head towards him, the tall human explains, “Appreciation! Applause! At long last the spotlight. That’s the frailty of genius, John: it needs an audience.”

“Yeah,” he murmurs, looking at the tall human with understanding. He knew that he wasn’t just talking about the killer in this case. His scent was resigned as if it frustrated him but he would do that as well.

As they continued to walk, the tall human spins around on the balls of his feet, looking at everything as he observes, “This is his hunting ground, right here in the heart of the city. Now that we know his victims were abducted, that changes everything. Because all of his victims disappeared from busy streets, crowded places, but nobody saw them go.” By the time he finishes his spin, most of the resigned frustration was gone from his scent, replaced instead by curiosity for who could be hunting and how to make them the hunted.

With a burst of excitement he throws his gloved hands up by his face, just about shouting, “Think!” before returning to speaking normally, if fast, “Who do we trust, even though we don’t know them? Who passes unnoticed wherever they go? Who hunts in the middle of a crowd?” his hands are still moving as he speaks and he continuously looks around.

Glancing towards him he responds, “Dunno, who?” Part of him is wondering if it is a shifter, but the second scent on the suitcase was human, not shifter, so that was unlikely.

Clasping his hands together in front of his face, the tall human shrugs with a small shake of his head, “Haven’t the faintest, hungry?” Without waiting for an answer, his hands drop and he turns across the street, heading into a small restaurant.

Upon pushing the door open, the waiter at the computer greets him, motioning him towards a table.
by the window with a smile. According to the strangers scent he knows Sherlock and likes him, but is a bit intimidated by him.

“Thank you Billy,” Sherlock distractedly tells the waiter as he removes his coat and gloves, laying them on the bench next to him as he takes a spot that allows him to see the building across the road. “Twenty-two Northumberland Street. Keep your eyes on it.”

As he sits down, the waiter removes the reserved sign that had been on the table. Taking off his coat, he queries, “He isn’t just gonna ring the doorbell, though, is he? He’d need to be mad.”

Are you still hunting? Edward asks, or would you like me to keep an eye out? Though what are you keeping an eye out for?

He chuckles mentally, responding, I am not sure what we are keeping an eye out for, but Sherlock has determined that the killer we’re hunting will show up near here, so he suggested food, and personally it is a good idea. Have you eaten or do you need something?

A snort is his response, Silly human, why hunt who you do not know? Wouldn’t it be better to know first? The impression of him shaking his head follows, followed by the answer to his question, Thank you, but no thank you, I ate prior to taking this form, plus Yana will be taking her turn guarding you soon.

Alright, he replies, have a good night Edward.

Youself as well, though may I assume that is your potential bondmate? Comes the soft remark.

Yes, he answers, still listening to Sherlock as he speaks with his pack member.

He is a good looking human, is there any shifter or gifted blood in him? The owl inquires curiously.

No, he’s purely human but has an amazing mind. He answers pride evident in his mind-voice.

Good, then he will be a good elder-second. Edward remarks before cutting the communications link for the moment.

“He has killed four people,” Sherlock responds to him, watching out the window curiously but also glancing at him.

Looking over at the tall human he murmurs, “Okay,” before taking a discrete sniff of the air. There are not many people left in here, but they all seem to be human, he cannot smell shifter or gifted blood.

Before he can say anything else or comment on the situation, a taller man who looks well groomed comes over to them and takes Sherlock’s hand in a quick shake as he greets him. There is a happiness to this strangers scent, and the desire to make others happy. There is also fondness in it, directed at Sherlock from what he can tell. “Anything on the menu, whatever you want, free.” He tells them as he sets a pair of menus down, “On the house, for you and for your date.”

Sherlock is smiling, but his scent is slightly flustered as he asks, “Do you want to eat?”

Glancing between the tall man and man standing next to him, he softly queries, “Is it a date?” when Sherlock’s scent becomes confused, he takes it as a no, and tells the human standing there, “I’m not his date.”
He is fairly certain that the stranger is not listening as he tells him, “This man got me off a murder charge,” he also waves his hands as he speaks.

Still looking out the window, the dark-haired human fills him in, “This is Angelo.” He pauses for a moment while the two men shake hands, “Three years ago I successfully proved to Lestrade at the time of a particularly vicious triple murder that Angelo was in a completely different part of town, house-breaking.”

His scent is grateful as he comments, “He cleared my name.”

Correcting him Sherlock says, “I cleared it a bit. Anything happening opposite?”

Looking over the road, Angelo answers, “Nothing,” before returning his attention to him, “But for this man, I’d have gone to prison.”

Still not looking at him Sherlock mutters, “You did go to prison.”

“I’ll get a candle for the table, its more romantic,” the grateful man tells him as he walks away.

He merely smiles a bit frustrated, he has a pretty good idea that it will not do to repeat himself. While he is not against the idea of it being a date, he is well aware that the dark-haired human he is with is. His scent had changed, more concerned than not, at the suggestion that it was date even if his outwardly appearance had remained unchanged.

Setting his menu down, his companion suggests, “You may as well eat. We might have a long wait.”

Almost as soon as he says it Angelo puts a small tea light in a bowl on the table, giving him a thumbs up. The human is excited that Sherlock seems to be here with someone, a rather fondness in his behavior.

“Thanks,” he tells him, almost hissing it.

Several minutes pass in silence as Sherlock stares out the window at the building across the street and he considers what to get to eat. After finally deciding he puts his order in and considers the tall human. He is uncomfortable with emotions, particularly emotions directed at him or expected from him. In many ways he is reminded of one of the great cats. There is a streak of independence from him several miles wide, but the style of clothing says that he is a tactile person. Thus, he thinks, he would just have to find someone with whom he felt comfortable with in order to allow that second part of his nature to come to the surface. Well it is a worthwhile goal, probably one that will take him a good long while. That’s alright though, patience is a catch word that all wolves understand.

He is still lost in his thought when the waiter sets his plate down in front of him, distractedly he thanks him. His mind still on the subject of his curiosity as the dark-haired human drums his fingers on the table. After taking a couple of bites of dinner, he comments, “People don’t have arch-enemies.”

Pulling out of his thoughts, his companion queries, “I’m sorry?” glancing his way.

Steadily he answers, “In real life. There are no arch-enemies in real life. Doesn’t happen.”

Returning to staring out the window, the dark-haired human sounds bored as he responds, “Doesn’t it? Sounds a bit dull.”

His tone is even as he inquires, “So who did I meet?”
A low amount of curiosity taints his scent as he asks, “What do real people have, then, in their ‘real lives’?” His attention comes to him in focus, though there is disdain in his tone.

Nodding and completely serious, he replies, “Friends, people they know, people they like, people they don’t like,” he pauses look down at his food, “Girlfriends, boyfriends...” his voice trails off.

“Yes, well, as I was saying – dull.” Disinterest fills his voice, along with the disdain.

“You don’t have a girlfriend, then?” he asks, completely aware that he is fishing for information and not minding one bit.

“Girlfriend? No, not really my area.” The disdain seems to have dropped from his tone, with surprise replacing it as if he was not expecting a question like that.

“Mm.” he hums in understanding before tilting his head to look at him, “Oh, right.” he pauses for a moment to consider it, “D’you have a boyfriend?”

The shock fills Sherlock’s scent as his head jerks around to stare at him, the look he is giving probably would cause a lesser person to quake.

Offhandedly he remarks, “Which is fine, by the way.”

Sharply, the tall human comments, “I know it’s fine.” While staring at him, keen eyes locked onto his face.

Smiling, he inquires again, “So you’ve got a boyfriend then?”

“No.” comes the quick response with a small shake of his head.

The two of them fall silent for a few minutes as he continues to eat, and Sherlock returns to looking out the window, a slightly confused look on his face. Turning to face him a few minutes later, he just about babbles, “John, um... I think you should know that I consider myself married to my work, and while I’m flattered by your interest, I’m really not looking for any...” his scent is full of concern and a bit of confusion as he speaks.

“No,” he interrupts the tall human before he can work himself into a panic attack, “No, I’m not asking. No.” He gives a small shake of his head, clearing his throat, “I haven’t known you long enough for one thing, and your scent says you’re not open to the idea for another,” he tells him softly. “I’m just saying, it’s all fine,” through it all, he keeps his eyes on the tall human, trying to project calming the same way he does when working in surgery.

Apparently it works because he starts to calm down, nodding once and muttering, “Good,” then a little louder, “Thank you,” before turning his attention back out to the street.

For a moment he looks at his potential bondmate with a bemused expression on his face, thinking, really, no need to panic. However that does make him feel that he might be correct in assuming that Sherlock has either never been in a relationship or the ones has had have been completely meaningless or harmful. His behavior is more like someone unfamiliar with the concept, rather than someone who had been hurt, so that is what he will continue to think.

A few more minutes pass while he eats and Sherlock continues to stare out the window. Finally, the tall human nods at the window “Look across the street. Taxi.”

Twisting around to look, he spots a taxi parked in front of the address he had texted the victims phone with its back end facing the restaurant.
Still muttering, Sherlock keeps watching, “Stopped. Nobody getting in, and nobody getting out.” His attention seems solely focused as eyes flicker. He can just about see the thoughts flying through the taller man’s head as he watches, particularly since the male person in the taxi has not moved but is looking around as if spotting for something. “Why a taxi? Oh, that’s clever. Is it clever? Why is it clever?”

Despite the fact he is speaking aloud, he is certain that he does not actually want to be answered. So instead he asks, “That’s him?” to see if had come to the right conclusion.

Distractedly, the tall human tells him, “Don’t stare.” His scent is shifting rapidly as he processes information.

Turning back towards the tall human he comments, “You’re staring.”

“We can’t both stare,” comes the reply as the dark-haired human gets to his feet, grabbing his coat as he does so.

Even before he has a chance to react further, he is on his way out the door, coat in hand as he pulls it on.
John’s POV
Growling under his breath, the alpha quickly gets to his feet, grabbing his coat and bolting towards the door without a second thought. The only thing on his mind was keeping up with his potential bondmate as much as possible to avoid something harming him. That looked like it was not going to be an easy task as Sherlock initially pulled his coat on and watched the cab carefully for a moment before heading towards it just as it began to pull away. Somehow he did not seem to notice the car that nearly smashed into him as he vaulted over the hood of it.

He apologizes to the driver of the car as he follows, trying to keep pace. A few yards down the road, his tall human stops. “I got the cab number,” he tells the tall human.

“Good for you,” comes his reply as he cups his head between his hands, muttering out loud as he figures out the route that the cabbie is going to take. He can just about see the thoughts running through the tall human’s mind as he states each and every step along the way, suddenly, he jerks upright and takes off down the sidewalk. Only years of running allows him to keep up in any form with the taller human as he races through a building, shoving a person out of the way as he goes.

“Sorry,” he tells the bloke as they rush up the steps.

From there the two of them take a variety of different buildings, ally’s stairwells, roofs, roads, and sidewalks until they catch up with the cab. At one point he had balked at jumping from one building to another, but some prompting from the tall human has him following, allowing his wolf senses to take over the human form as he jumps. Above him he can hear Andrew laughing at the sight in his mind.

When the two of them catch up to the taxi, the dark-haired human stops it by jumping in front of it and shouting, “Police! Open her up!” Breathing heavily he tugs the backdoor open and stares at the person within, sighing in exasperation as he realizes it is not the correct person. “No.” he mutters. He straightens for a moment before taking another look at him, muttering, “Teeth, tan: what – Californian?” glancing at the passengers luggage he continues, “L.A., Santa Monica. Just arrived.”

“How can you possibly know that?” he demands of his potential bondmate as he catches his breath.

You’re funny, Andrew tells him, guess what you forgot, guess you’re feeling better aye elder?

He mentally rolls his eyes at the other shifter but a scent in the air catches his attention. Looking around he tries to figure out where it is from but cannot seem to do so.

“The luggage,” the tall human replies, then turning his attention to the passenger, he queries, “It’s probably your first trip to London, right, going by your final destination and the route the cabbie was taking you?”
The man in the cab almost reeks of startledness, frustrated, and a bit fear. His voice is confused as he asks, “Sorry – are you guys the police?”

“Yeah,” the tall human at his side replies, flashing an I.D. badge, “Everything all right?”

Smiling faintly the bloke answers, “Yeah,” though his scent loses the edge of fear he and becomes more disbelieving.

“Welcome to London,” his tall companion tells the human in the cab before starting to walk away.

For a moment he stands there still until stepping forward to inform the bloke, “Er, any problems, just let us know,” before shutting the door to the cab and rejoining Sherlock where he had stopped walking part way down the block. “Basically just a cab that happened to slow down,” he comments as he tries figuring out what that familiar scent is, it has gotten fainter since walking away from the cabbie.

“Basically,” his tall companion answers frustration in his tone as he looks around carefully.

“Not the murderer,” he expresses.

“Not the murderer, no.” comes his short reply as he keeps looking around.

Glancing down he says, “Wrong country, good alibi.”

“As they go.” he mutters, his hands trading the I.D. back and forth distractedly.

Reaching for and closing his fingers around the I.D. he inquires, “Hey, where-where did you get this? Here,” as Sherlock releases it to his hand, making sure his fingers brush against those longer ones as he does so. ”Right,” he murmurs, catching the scent of shock in the air as he looks over the card, “Detective Inspector Lestrade?”

Smirking slightly, the tall human comments, “Yeah, I pickpocket him when he’s annoying. You can keep that one, I’ve got plenty at the flat.”

Looking down at the card the absurdness of it all makes him start to chuckle, and he can’t help but grin at it.

Confusion mars the tall human’s features and scent as he softly asks, “What?”

He manages to stop chuckling, but smiles up at the taller man answering, “Nothing, just ‘welcome to London’.” He gives a small shake of his head, still smiling.

Apparently the dark-haired man understands because he smiles back at him before glancing down at the end of the road where the guy with the cab is speaking with one of the police. “Got your breath back?” he queries.

Still smiling, he answers, “Ready when you are,” and the two turn, taking off again at a run.

They have just turned onto Baker Street when he slows to a walk, and Sherlock noticing, slows down to join him. “I have an offer for you,” he tells the taller human.

“What?” Sherlock inquires, curiosity changing his scent just a little from the excitement and thrill.

“I would like to offer you a place within the pack.” His tone is serious, alpha to outsider.
The tall human stops moving and stares at him for a moment. In turn, he stops directly in front of him so that they are face to face. He can just about feel the thoughts turning through the over active mind of the dark-haired human but he is saying nothing in order to give him a chance to consider it.

“Why?” Sherlock inquires in that direct manner, but he can hear the curiosity and fear that it is only a cruel joke in his tone.

“One: it feels right in my instincts; two: I think you would benefit from it; three: I am sure your curious mind wants to know everything it can on the subject and we do not allow outsiders to know anything about us; and four: it would make things a lot simpler.” He replies, listing off some of his reasoning. He could probably come up with more, like the fact that they are bondmates, the fact that he was wasted in the human world, but he prefers just to stick with the simple ones.

The tall human tilts his head sides a bit, watching him with wide eyes as he considers it. Again he can just about feel the thought processes going on in his head. “What type of responsibilities would I have to deal with?”

A smile curves his lips, he is pretty sure that the human has already decided to do it but wants to make sure that he is not signing himself up for failure. “All pack members help each other as needed, this includes with the teaching of pups. You do not speak of the pack to outsiders, which means you would know something your family would not.” He doesn’t mention the fact he already knows about both brothers, including the fact he realizes that the person who borrowed him earlier was the elder. “You do not intentionally harm the pack. That sums it up, I am the alpha so in matters of health I tend override other people when they are not taking care of themselves, the same can be said about safety matters.”

He nods slowly, eyes still wide as he considers it. Finally, a smile curves his he replies, “I’d love to.”

He nods once solemnly, “Welcome to the pack, the formal binding will happen tomorrow night, most of the senior pack members will be here, so expect a slightly full flat.”

The tall human nods, before turning and returning to running to the flat. He grins, and bolts after him, eagerly looking forward to when he has a chance to show Sherlock a run on a wolf’s back. When the two of them get into the flat, they both strip off their coats, he hangs his on a wall hook, while Sherlock hangs his off of the banister instead.

Finally, leaning against the wall, he mutters, “Okay, that was ridiculous.” Sherlock joins him, leaning against the wall as well as the two just breathe for a moment, that last little bit was more of a run then the rest it seems. “That was the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever done.”

Somewhat seriously, the tall human comments, “And you invaded Afghanistan.”

He laughs low in his throat, replying, “That wasn’t just me.” which causes the tall human to chuckle in response. “Why aren’t we back at the restaurant?” he queries, curious as to the motivation for it.

His tall companion waves a hand dismissively as he answers, “Oh, they can keep an eye out, it was a long shot anyways.”

A small frown crosses his features as he considers it, “So what were we doing there?”

The dark-haired human straightens up and clears his throat a bit, “Oh, just passing the time.” He glances towards him, continuing, “And proving a point.”

Curious, he glances at the tall human who has looked away from him, “What point?”
“You,” he shortly replies, “Mrs. Hudson! Doctor Watson will take the room upstairs.” As he says his name, Sherlock glances towards him with a small smirk.

Again the alpha in him bristles even though he had planned to do so, he really did not like being told what to do by a non-pack member. “Says who?” he almost demands.

The dark-haired human looks past him to the door, answering “Says the man at the door.”

Just as he turns, he catches the scent of others in the building and looks towards the stairs but the quick knock at the door draws his attention back. Opening it, he is slightly surprised to see Angelo standing there with his cane in his hands.

“Sherlock texted me, said you forgot this,” Angelo tells him as he hands it over.

Oh, he thinks, that’s why Edward was laughing. How did I forget the cane? Internally he starts to chuckle, because really, it is rather funny. “Ah,” he mumbles as he accepts the cane back, glancing back at Sherlock he is surprised to see the grin on his potential bondmate’s face, “Thank you,” he tells the human before stepping back in and shutting the door.

As soon as he does so, he catches the scent of other people again, this time actually identifying some of them. For some reason the detective inspector and several of men are in their flat upstairs. This is confirmed when Mrs. Hudson comes out of her flat and hurrying over to them, her scent full of sadness and confusion as she asks what he has done.

Confusion colors the taller man’s tone as he queries, “Mrs. Hudson?”

“Upstairs,” she tells him.

Taking three steps at a time, the tall human reaches the top of the staircase in nearly record time, throwing open the door to their flat as he does so. As soon as the door is open the smell of strangers becomes even more dominate and its all he can do to keep from growling in the back of his throat. It’s not often that his territory as an alpha gets invade but he really in not taking it well. Particularly since he can smell the jackal-child detective inspector, the wolf-jackal omega detective, the shady human who she sleeps with, and several other humans in it, the two should know how dangerous a game that was.

When he gets to the top of the stairs Sherlock is standing in front of one of the armchairs that the detective inspector had pulled around to face the door, “What are you doing?” his dark-haired human demands, for a human he is a lot like one of the great cats in temperament.

Lifting his hands and motioning to the room he replies, “Well I knew you’d find the case, I’m not stupid.”

I don’t know about that, he mentally replies to him, surprising the other man according to his expression as he comes into the room.

“You can’t just break into my flat,” comes his flatmate’s sharp response.

“And you can’t withhold evidence. And I didn’t break into your flat.” Comes the quick response, he can just about feel the annoyance radiating from both of the men as they face off.

Snapping at the jackal-child, Sherlock demands, “Well, what do you call this then?” as he motions to the flat and all the people in it.

The detective looks around at everyone before giving a slightly sarcastic smile, answering, “It’s a
drugs bust.”

The idea seems absurd to him, somehow he cannot picture his potential bondmate doing something so foolish, and he voices that opinion promptly. “ Seriously? This guy, a junkie? Have you met him?” his tone is incredulous as he does so.

The jackal-child gives a smile as he watches Sherlock turn to face him, his face flushed and biting his lip in a rather endearing manner, “John…” his voice trails off. He can smell the embarrassment pouring off of him along with the anger and frustration.

He still glances past dark-haired human to the jackal-child and comments, “I’m pretty sure you could search this flat all day, you wouldn’t find anything you could call recreational.”

Still embarrassed, the dark-haired human just about hisses at him, “John, you probably want to shut up now.”

His focus switches from the jackal-child to his potential bondmate, taking in the expression on his face and his scent as he does so, “Yeah, but come on…” he begins, but something in those sharp eyes he is watching makes him stop, “No.”

“What?” Sherlock demands, his anger spiked, but the embarrassment fading.

“You?” he responds, his mind whirling. He had probably done so out of loneliness, anger, frustration, sadness. It was something he had seen in shifters that were without pack, their minds would drive them insane until they would do anything to keep from feeling like that.

“Shut up,” comes the angry response before he spins back towards the jackal-child and snaps, “I’m not your sniffer dog.”

Nodding towards the kitchen he replies, ”No, Anderson’s my sniffer dog.”

“What, An…” his voice trails off as the divider between the living room and kitchen is opened to show the worthless human he had met earlier. “Anderson, what are you doing here on a drugs bust?”

Malice taints the smell in the room as he answers, “Oh, I volunteered.”

The anger pouring off of Sherlock seems to increase as he turns away, biting his lip. He is pretty sure that the tall human is having a difficult time dealing with all of the people here. Part of him wants to comfort is bondmate, another part wants to manually throw each intruder out of his territory, after ripping their throats out of course. Instead he does neither, keeping an eye out on all of the people and taking a place by the door.

Slipping his phone into his hand he sends off a couple of text messages while Sherlock deals with them.

-Jacob, find out everything you can on a jackal-child Gregory Lestrade.-JW

-Full moon meeting will be at 221B Baker Street. It is a rebonding, merging the packs.-JW he sends out the second one to everybody in the pack, happy that his sister had set his phone up for mass texting. A moment later his phone chirps several different times as he hears the various people chime in that they will be there.

-Bondmate? - HW

-He will be there, I am welcoming him into the pack but I am not telling him a thing about
bondmates. I would prefer that it is not mentioned to him because I do not want him to feel pressured. - JW

-Makes sense. See you on then.- HW

-Mouse, you have a task, you want the Sigma title and here is your chance. My bondmate is human, knows next to nothing of our kind. You get to teach him, however say nothing of each members rank within the pack or the fact we’re bondmates.-JW

-Of course! I accept Elder.- Mouse

By the time he is done with his text messaging, he is surprised to see Sherlock standing in front of him. His mind quickly replays the conversation up to the point they are at and he sighs in sadness for the loss of a child, even if the person in question is a stranger and dead.

“No, that’s not…” Sherlock’s voice trails off, “that’s not right. How…” again his voice trails off, full of confusion, “Why would she do that? Why?”

“Why would she think of her daughter in her last moments? Yup – sociopath; I’m seeing it now.” the pasty human comments snidely from the kitchen area.

His dark-haired human turns to face him, snapping, “She didn’t think about her daughter. She scratched her name on the floor with her fingernails. She was dying. It took effort. It would have hurt.” He turns and walks away from him, beginning to pace.

“You said that the victims all took the poison themselves, that he makes them take it. Well, maybe he... I don’t know, talks to them? Maybe he used the death of her daughter somehow.” He remarks as he watches his potential bondmate and aching for the stress pouring off of him.

Stopping mid step with a hand on his head, he replies curiously, “Yeah, but that was ages ago. Why would she still be upset?”

The room falls deathly silent, everyone stopping what they are doing to stare at him. The scent of disbelief and anger overriding pretty much everything else in the flat. Sherlock glances around awkwardly, realizing that something isn’t right.

Confused he asks him, “Not good?”

He glances around the room as well, taking everybody in and replying, “Bit not good, yeah.”

Coming towards him, the dark-haired human drops the tone of his voice asking, “Yeah, but if you were dying ... if you’d been murdered: in your very last few seconds what would you say?”

He gives a small shrug answering, “Please, God, let me live.”

Frustrated he looks at him funny, “Oh, use your imagination!”

Completely serious he responds, “I don’t have to.”

Shock fills the dark-haired humans scent as he realizes what he means, followed by regret that is quickly washed out by his frustration. “Yeah, but if you were clever, really clever ... Jennifer Wilson running all those lovers: she was clever.” Hands move as he speaks before he returns to pacing again, trying to think. “She’s trying to tell us something.” he mutters as he paces.

From the stairwell Mrs. Hudson comments, “Isn’t the doorbell working? Your taxi’s here, Sherlock.”
“I didn’t order a taxi. Go away.” he snaps at her as he continues to pace about.

“Oh, dear. They’re making such a mess. What are they looking for?” the older human female asks as she looks around the flat and all of the people in it.

Walking over to her, he tells her, “It’s a drugs bust, Mrs. Hudson.”

Her eyes go wide and she touches her hand to her hip gasping, “But they’re just for my hip. They’re herbal soothers.”

Finally, the frustration seems to be too much for the dark-haired human because he stops his pacing and throws his hands into the air yelling, “Shut up, everybody. shut up! Don’t move, don’t speak, don’t breathe. I’m trying to think. Anderson, face the other way. You’re putting me off.”

“What? My face is?” the human sounds insulted.

Keeping an eye on him the jackal-child barks out orders, “Everybody quiet and still. Anderson, turn your back.”

Grumbling, the pasty faced human complains, “Oh, for God’s sake!”

“Your back, now, please!” the jackal-child orders him, trying to be politer than he ever would have.

Walking across the room, he stays quite and focuses on releasing a calming aura into the room. There is way too much stress going on in this small space and his alpha instincts really want him to get all the damn people out. Since that’s not an option yet, he settles for calming them. He settles into his spot on the armchair and just focuses on relaxing.

“What about your taxi?” the older human female frets from her spot by the door.

“Mrs. Hudson!” Sherlock just about roars as he turns to face her, as the small woman heads back out of the flat a look of understanding finally crosses his face. “Oh,” he mutters, smiling in delight, “Ah! She was clever, clever, yes!” again he is talking with his hands as he paces at a slower rate this time. “She’s cleverer than you lot and she’s dead. Do you see, do you get it? She didn’t lose her phone, she never lost it. She planted it on him.” he stops glancing at all of them before continuing, “When she got out of the car, she knew that she was going to her death. She left the phone in order to lead us to her killer.”

His scent changed from frustrated to pleased in the space of that one realization.

Confusion mars the jackal-child’s voice as he inquires, “But how?”

“Wha...? What do you mean, how?” Sherlock demands staring at the jackal-child who just shrugs in response. “Rachel!” he exclaims as if it explains everything. “Don’t you see? Rachel!” Again he puts emphasis on the name. When no one seems to understand him, he snaps sarcastically, “Oh, look at you lot. You’re all so vacant. Is it nice not being me? It must be so relaxing.” He pauses, his tone getting stern, “Rachel is not a name.”

Just as sternly he inquires, “Then what is it?”

Before he takes a seat at the laptop, the dark haired human points to the suitcase saying, “John, on the luggage, there’s a label. E-mail address.”

He turns to the suit case and reads the label aloud before getting to his feet and going over to where his potential bondmate is seated. As he is doing that, the dark-haired human is quickly typing and
muttering to himself, explaining himself as he goes.

Sarcastically he states, “And all together now, the password is?”

“Rachel,” he replies, standing directly behind him.

From his spot in the kitchen the pasty faced human remarks, “So we can read her e-mails. So what?”

Distractedly he tells other human, “Anderson, don’t talk out loud. You lower the I.Q. of the whole street. We can do much more than just read her e-mails. It’s a smartphone, it’s got GPS, which means if you lose it you can locate it online. She’s leading us directly to the man who killed her.”

Once the information is entered, the dark-haired human gets to his feet, answering Mrs. Hudson who has commented again, the jackal-child, and just generally commenting. Taking his seat, he watches the little alert notice spin as it tracks it down. As a set of footsteps comes up the stairs a familiar scent catches his attention and he tunes out everything but that scent. Moments later a shrill voice echoes through his mind.

_Elder, your human is getting into a cab. What do you want me to do?_

His eyes widen as he realizes what the smell is, it’s the cab driver from earlier when they chased the car, it is also the second human scent he had identified off of the bag when Sherlock first brought it in. _Follow them, will be behind you shortly._

_Understood._
At Roland-Kerr Further Education College

Chapter Notes

I hope everyone enjoys, thank you folks for the reviews, kudos, and follows.

Sherlock’s POV
As the cab drives through the city, taking probably the worst route possible as it go, his mind whirls in the backseat. Hopefully John will understand before the detectives as to what he did and follow because he may need a bit of assistance and really does not want it from Scotland Yard. When they reach their destination the cabbie turns it off and gets out, coming around to open his door.

“Where are we?” he inquires even though he already knows the answer due to his knowledge of London.

“You know every street in London. You know exactly where we are.” The cabbie driver answers, not falling for it.

Slightly confused he responds, “Roland-Kerr Further Education College. Why here?”

A small smirk curves the older man’s lips as he answers, “It’s open; cleaners are in. One thing about being a cabbie: you always know a nice quiet spot for a murder. I’m surprised more of us don’t branch out.”

Glancing around he inquires, “And you just walk your victims in? How?”

From his coat, the older man pulls out a pistol and points it at him. Realizing that it is a fake, he just rolls his eyes and looks away, “Oh, dull,” he mutters exasperated.

Still holding the gun pointed at him, the other man comments “Don’t worry. It gets better.”

Speaking with disdain, he remarks, “You can’t make people take their own lives at gunpoint.”

“I don’t. It’s much better than that.” He pauses speaking, lowering the gun, “Don’t need this with you, ’cause you’ll follow me.” With that he turns away and walks towards the building.

Grimacing in frustration at himself he does exactly what the older man had said and follows him.

oOo

John’s POV

Elder, they are at Roland-Kerr Further Education College according to the sign. Do you want me to interfere? He hears faintly through the pack link as Yana updates him as to what is going on.
No, he answers, all of the detectives and there people had already left both the flat and the street. Stretching, he makes sure that he has the unregistered gun on him before heading out of the flat. Map please. He requests, wishing to see the route taken by the humans to where they are at. A moment later his mind is filled with the aerial route, showing him everything from above. I am on the way.

**Alright Elder, I will keep watch.**

Once he is on the street he takes off running without stopping to think about it, as he passes through a dark alley, he shifts, his rather small human body compacting and growing to become the elite wolf form that he was born with. Focusing his attention on the air around him he uses the masking ability that many of their kind are born with and few ever use.

**Do you need assistance?** He hears his beta inquire as he runs down the roads, alleys and across roofs wherever needed or possible.

No, he responds, traveling far faster than one would think a giant wolf would be able to. Hopefully he can get there before the curiosity that so fills his bondmate causes him to do something stupid.

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**Sherlock’s POV**

After walking through the college they stop in a classroom if the tables and chairs are anything to go by. Once inside it he stops to look around and the older human asks him, “Well, what do you think?” which has him just shrugging indifferently, it’s a classroom after all. There is nothing particularly special about it. “It’s up to you. You’re the one who’s gonna die ’ere.”

Turning to face the older man he replies to that comment, “No, I’m not.”

“That’s what they all say.” The cabbie informs him seriously, then motioning to one of the tables he queries, “Shall we talk?” before he takes a seat, pulling it out from the table without waiting for a response.

Pulling one of the chairs from the another table, he flips it around and reclines in it, crossing his ankles and folding his hands together as he watches the insane man. Sometimes it really is inconvenient the need to know everything, such as in this case the why. He sighs then inquires, “Bit risky, wasn’t it? Took me away under the eye of about half a dozen policemen. They’re not that stupid. And Mrs. Hudson will remember you.” As he speaks, he removes his gloves and tucks them into his pocket.

“You call that a risk? Nah.” He reaches into his shirt pocket, pulling out a small glass bottle with a silver lid and a single speckle pill inside it, “This is a risk.”

He just looks at it, assuming that it is the poison that the cabbie has been feeding to people but does not say anything about it. Generally if you sit quietly a person will talk just to tell you how smart they think they are and apparently this man was no difference judging by the fact that he does just that.

“Ooh, I like this bit. ’Cause you don’t get it yet, do yer? But you’re about to. I just have to do this.”
Then he reaches into a pocket on the other side and pulls out a second bottle. It seems to be identical to the first from what he can see at a glance. “You weren’t expecting that, were yer?” the older man leans forward, saying, “Ooh, you’re going to love this.” Before settling back against his seat.

Without moving he questions, “Love what?”

“Sherlock ‘olmes. Look at you! ’Ere in the flesh. That website of yours: your fan told me about it.” the other man’s body moves slightly from side to side as he speaks, his hands are tucked in front of him and he is doing nothing with the bottles.

“My fan?” he repeats curiously.

“You are brilliant. You are. A proper genius. “The Science of Deduction.” Now that is proper thinking. Between you and me sitting ’ere, why can’t people think?” he gives a small shake of his head, looking down as he mutters, “Don’t it make you mad? Why can’t people just think?”

When he is done speaking he looks at his face, catching his eyes. After a moment of thinking about it, he realizes that this cabbie seems to think that he is in the same playing field as him, that he is also a proper genius. Sarcasm fills his voice as he remarks, “Oh, I see. So you’re a proper genius too.”

The man continues to shake a little bit, rocking ever so slightly. “Don’t look it, do I? Funny little man drivin’ a cab. But you’ll know better in a minute. Chances are it’ll be the last thing you ever know.”

Maintaining his glaze for a moment he considers the purpose of the pill bottles. If he is not mistaken he is playing Russian roulette with them, but wants to make sure that he is reading the situation right. There is something he is missing. He is just not exactly sure what yet. Glancing down at the bottle he comments, “Okay, two bottles. Explain.”

“There’s a good bottle and a bad bottle. You take the pill from the good bottle, you live; take the pill from the bad bottle, you die.” The cabbie explains, sounding rather pleased with himself.

As he looks at the bottle he notices that there seems to be nothing particularly different about them, “Both bottles are of course identical.”

“In every way.”

“And you know which is which.” He states looking up from the bottles to the cabbie.

Annoyance begins to color the cabbies voice, “Course I know.”

Still maintaining the same tone he remarks, “But I don’t.”

The fidgeting becomes worse, along with the frustration in his tone, “Wouldn’t be a game if you knew. You’re the one who chooses.”

Raising his voice just a little as he looks at the cabbie he comments, “Why should I? I’ve got nothing to go on. What’s in it for me?”

“I ’aven’t told you the best bit yet. Whatever bottle you choose, I take the pill from the other one – and then, together, we take our medicine.” His voice goes from frustrated to cocky towards the end of the sentence, as if he is always right and no one will ever prove him wrong.
A smile curves his lips at that challenge, because that’s what it is. A challenge to whether or not he will do so, whether he will select the right bottle or not. The curious, need to know everything part of him considers doing so, while the coldly logical part tells him that it could be a trap.

“I won’t cheat. It’s your choice. I’ll take whatever pill you don’t.” the cabbie tells him seriously, losing all infection to his tone.

He tilts his head to the side, his focus coming to rest completely on the two bottles and the pills within them.

“Didn’t expect that, did you, Mr. ’olmes?”

Looking at the bottles still, he comments, “This is what you did to the rest of them: you gave them a choice.”

His glance comes up to look at the cabbie as he states, “And now I’m givin’ you one.” he fidgets around in his seat a bit, “You take your time. Get yourself together.” he pauses to lick his lips, “I want your best game.”

His voice is full of disdain as he corrects the cabbie, “It’s not a game. It’s chance.”

Placing his fingers on the left hand bottle he remarks, “I’ve played four times. I’m alive. It’s not chance, Mr. ’olmes, it’s chess. It’s a game of chess, with one move, and one survivor. And this ... this ... is the move.” Then he pushes it forward so it is closer than the other one, continuing to say, “Did I just give you the good bottle or the bad bottle? You can choose either one.” after he licks his lips again and leaves the bottle where he had just pushed it.

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John’s POV

He had just reached the college and was shifting back as an owl lands next to him, changing into a young dark haired woman.

“Elder, I did not see which building they went into, I thought it was that one,” she motions to the left, “but I cannot be sure, I am sorry.” Her voice is soft as she apologizes, bowing her head.

He nods slowly once, “It’s alright,” he tells her looking between the, the buildings are identical and her sharp eyes are not as trained as Edwards for seeing through lights. “Return to your perch, I have to call the human authorities,” he tells her as he pulls his phone out of his pocket and dials up Scotland Yard’s number.

She nods, shifting into an owl and returning to the post above, her small body nearly un-seeable in the glare of the street lamp that she is perched on.

“I need to speak with Detective Inspector Lestrade,” he tells the person who answers the phone, his tone serious. “It is important.”

The person on the other end of the line dithers for a moment so he snaps at them, “It’s an emergency!”

After a few moments the jackal-child comes onto the phone, “Detective Inspector Lestrade.”
“Hello, Detective, it’s John Watson, according to Sherlock’s laptop he is at Roland-Kerr Further Education College with the killer. The cabbie was the murder.” He tells the detective before hanging up the phone and tucking it back into the coat without bothering to wait to see if he was going to listen or not. Once the phone is in his pocket he tells Yana, *Notify me if the authorities get here before I get out.*

*Yes sir,* she replies.

Using his sense of smell he tries to determine which one they went into but for some reason he cannot get a good feel for it. To add to it, his connection to his human bondmate gives him an idea where he is but it seems to be near the middle area between the buildings, making it hard to tell which one in particular he is in. Frowning, he heads into the left one, following the link as best as he can. He debates about calling for him, but decides not to because it would ruin the element of surprise that he currently has going for him.

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*Sherlock’s POV*

The cabbie glances again at the bottle before inquiring, “You ready yet, Mr. ‘olmes? Ready to play?”

Sounding bored he replies, “Play what? It’s a fifty-fifty chance.”

The frustration is back in the cabbie’s voice as he raises it to speak over him, “You’re not playin’ the numbers, you’re playin’ me. Did I just give you the good pill or the bad pill? Is it a bluff? Or a double-bluff? Or a triple-bluff?” as he speaks he leans forward, changing the pitch of his voice.

Disinterested he comments, “Still just chance.”

“Four people in a row? It’s not just chance.” His aggravation continues to grow.

“Luck,” he states, still maintaining the same tone. The pills are not actually as interesting as how the cabbie is reacting to the implication that he is not as smart as he thinks he is.

“It’s genius. I know ’ow people think.” The cabbie insists, causing him to roll his eyes even as he keeps speaking, “I know ’ow people think I think. I can see it all, like a map inside my ’ead.” He looks like he is bored at the cabbie who just keeps on speaking, “Everyone’s so stupid – even you.” that catches his attention a little bit, not by much. “Or maybe God just loves me.”

Straightening up and leaning forward, he murmurs, “Either way, you’re wasted as a cabbie.” As he folds his hands together on the table and watches him. Leaning a little bit more forward, he lifts his hands in front of his mouth as he watches the cabbie intently, “So, you risked your life four times just to kill strangers. Why?”

The cabbie nods at the bottle, “Time to play.”

Shifting the positioning of his hands to his long fingers tucked together like in prayer, still in front of his mouth, he drawls, “Oh, I am playing. This is my turn. There’s shaving foam behind your left ear. Traces of where it’s happened before, so obviously you live on your own; there’s no-one to tell you.” he watches as the cabbie fidgets again, “But there’s a photograph of children. The children’s mother has been cut out of the picture. If she’d died, she’d still be there.” He relaces his fingers
together and keeps going, watching the reactions that the cabbie has as he speaks, “The photograph’s old but the frame’s new. You think of your children but you don’t get to see them.”

For the first time since they started this game of cat and mouse the cabbie looks away, pain flashing in his eyes as he does so. “Estranged father. She took the kids, but you still love them and it still hurts”

He unfolds only his pointer fingers, lining them up to point as he drawls, “Ah, but there’s more.” And the cabbie meets his eyes once a more, “Your clothes: recently laundered but everything you’re wearing’s at least ... three years old? Keeping up appearances but not planning ahead. And here you are on a kamikaze murder spree. What’s that about?” again the cabbie seems to have control of his emotions as he keeps his gaze on Sherlock, however all that does is allows him to figure out the next piece of the puzzle. His voice soften, barely over a whisper has he remarks, “Ahh. Three years ago – is that when they told you?”

“Told me what?” the cabbie asks flatly, but the harshness in his voice betrays the fact he is still very frustrated by his behavior.

“That you’re a dead man walking.” He replies just as flatly.

Angrily, the cabbie remarks, “So are you.”

He tilts his head to the side, his voice soft as he comments, “You don’t have long, though. Am I right?”

A tight smile pulls at the cabbies lips as he answers, “Aneurism.” He uses his right hand to tap the side of his head, ‘Right in ’ere.”

A satisfied smile curves his lips as he keeps listening to him. his motivation becoming far clearer to him. This isn’t about living, it’s about dying, and it is not about him, it’s about his children. Somehow this insane cabbie is doing what he is doing for his family.

“Any breath could be my last.” The cabbie finishes.

Frowning, he tries to understand the motive past the fact it is for his family but he is not seeing it, it’s not yet connecting. “And because you’re dying, you’ve just murdered four people.”

Leaning forward the cabbie just about snarls, “I’ve outlived four people. That’s the most fun you can ‘ave on an aneurism.”

He can tell that there is something more there, the cabbie would prefer that he thinks it is because he is dying, but that does not added up. “No. No, there’s something else. You didn’t just kill four people because you’re bitter. Bitterness is a paralytic. Love is a much more vicious motivator. Somehow this is about your children.”

Sighing, he mutters “Ohhh,” as he looks away again, licking his lips before looking back at him and remarking, “You are good, ain’t you?”

He rests his chin against his folded hands as he asks, “But how?”

Looking from side to side he answers, “When I die, they won’t get much, my kids. Not a lot of money in driving cabs.”
“Or serial killing.” He murmurs.

The cabbie smirks, “You’d be surprised.”

Dropping his hands onto the table, he commands, “Surprise me.”

The cabbie leans forward, smirking again, “I ’ave a sponsor.”

Steadily he asks, “You have a what?”

The cockiness from earlier returns, “For every life I take, money goes to my kids. The more I kill, the better off they’ll be. You see? It’s nicer than you think.”

He frowns, thinking about it for a bit, “Who’d sponsor a serial killer?”

“What if I don’t choose either? I could just walk out of here.” He glances towards the door as he says that.

The cabbie sighs, a combination of exasperation and frustration as he lifts his pistol back up and points it at him again. “You can take your fifty-fifty chance, or I can shoot you in the head.”

Sherlock smiles calmly at that, knowing that it is not a real gun in his hands, but a lighter shaped like one.

“Funnily enough, no-one’s ever gone for that option.” The cabbie tells him.

Sounding bored he answers, “I’ll have the gun, please.”

Slightly confused the cabbie asks, “Are you sure?”

His smile is much like a predator, “Definitely. The gun.”

Giving a small shake of his head he inquires, “You don’t wanna phone a friend?”

Confidently he calls the cabbies bluff, still smiling, he enunciates each word, “The gun.”

The cabbies mouth tightens annoyed as he pulls the trigger and the flame pops out of the end, frowning, he tilts it back so it is facing the ceiling and lets go of the trigger.
His smile becomes a smirk as he comments, “I know a real gun when I see one.”

Turning it sideways the cabbie remarks, “None of the others did.”

He looks back at the table before stating, “Clearly, well, this has been very interesting.” He puts emphasis on the very, because he had been intrigued for at least a few minutes. “I look forward to the court case.” With that he straightens and stand, striding confidently over to the door to leave.

The cabbie sets the lighter gun down and turns to face him, questioning, “Just before you go, did you figure it out...” his voice trailing off as he turns to face the cabbie, “which one’s the good bottle?”

Smiling to himself he answers, “Of course. Child’s play.” Just leave, his mind tells him, you have the answers you need. There is no reason at all to keep playing this idiots game. But another part of him whispers to him, you want to make sure you were right don’t you. Go on, find out if you were right.

“Well, which one, then?” the cabbie asks nodding towards them briefly, he starts to push the door open but goes no further as the cabbie continues, “Which one would you ’ave picked, just so I know whether I could have beaten you?”

He lets go of the door, allowing it to shut as he walks over to where the cabbie is and reaches for a bottle, his mind both encouraging him to do so and telling him not to all in one.

John’s POV

He had raced around most of the school, his link finally telling him he was within feet of his bondmate yet he does not see him anywhere. Finally glancing over at the other building he spots him, standing face to face with the cabbie, a pill in both of their hands. Frustrated he yells, “Sherlock!” but knows that he cannot hear him.

He watches in frustration and worry as Sherlock’s hand shakes as he holds the pill in front of his face and slowly brings it towards his mouth.

Just before that pill reaches dark-haired humans mouth, he pulls his guns and fires, the bullet traveling straight and true through both layers of glass to go straight through the cabbies chest and out his back into the wall. Sherlock’s hands are thrown up in surprise as the cabbie falls backwards, the pill flying off elsewhere.

Before he has a chance to be spotted, he tucks the gun away and retraces his path through the school getting outside and going a couple of blocks away before slowly approaching. He can hear the police cars as they blare, racing towards the scene.
Afterwards

Sherlock’s POV
For a moment he can do nothing but stare. Slipping over the table he leans over to look at the hole in the window before turning to look at the cabbie. Then the cabbie begins his death cough and he decides to try and force the information from him. With the lack of feeling that he is well known for he questions the dying man until he gets an answer to the question that is burning him up. He uses the heel of his boot to ground into the man’s shoulder to force him to speak when the dying man does not want to cooperate with him.

Once the cabbie is dead, he makes his way out of the building and finds himself surrounded by a collection of various officials including both police and medical personal. One of the paramedics takes him over to the ambulance to check him over and gives him an ugly orange blanket as Lestrade comes walking over to him, his hands in his pockets.

“Why have I got this blanket? They keep putting this blanket on me.” he asks, motioning with his hands to the ugly blanket that he does not really understand.

Nodding once, the detective inspector replies, “Yeah, it’s for shock.”

Looking around he denies being in shock.

“Yeah, but some of the guys wanna take photographs.” The inspector answers, giving him a small smile.

He rolls his eyes at them. For some reason they always want to harass him but he’s not supposed to harass them back. Changing the subject he inquires, “So, the shooter. No sign?”

Lestrade gives a single shake of his head, commenting, “Cleared off before we got ’ere. But a guy like that would have had enemies, I suppose. One of them could have been following him but...” he shrugs continuing, “got nothing to go on.”

He looks at the detective inspector like he is an idiot, replying, “Oh, I wouldn’t say that.”

This time it is the detective inspector who rolls his eyes, telling him. “Okay, gimme.”

Getting to his feet, he does so, “The bullet they just dug out of the wall’s from a hand gun. Kill shot over that distance from that kind of a weapon – that’s a crack shot you’re looking for, but not just a marksman; a fighter. His hands couldn’t have shaken at all, so clearly he’s acclimatized to violence. He didn’t fire until I was in immediate danger, though, so strong moral principle. You’re looking for a man probably with a history of military service… nerves of steel…” as he speaks he looks around and his voice trails off as he spots John, who he had wondered why he had not come. Now as he looks at his shorter flatmate the dots connect in his mind and he stops talking. “Actually, do you know what? Ignore me.”

Confused by the sudden change in pace the detective inspector questions him, “Sorry?”

“Ignore all of that. It's just the, er, the shock talking.” He says dismissively as he heads towards John.

“Where’re you going?” the confusion is still strong in the detective inspectors voice.

Saying the first thing that comes to mind, he answers, “I just need to talk about the-the rent.”
Frustrated Lestrade tells him, “But I’ve still got questions for you.”

“Oh, what now? I’m in shock! Look, I’ve got a blanket!” he just about whines, his voice showing his annoyance. He tugs on the blanket as if it proves it.

“Sherlock!” The cop groans, his tone frustrated.

“And I just caught you a serial killer...” his voice trails off for a moment, “more or less.”

For a moment Lestrade looks at him thoughtfully, crossing his arms on his chest he finally says, “Okay,” then he nods once, “We’ll bring you in tomorrow. Off you go.”

When he turns away from the detective inspector he can see the hints of a smile playing about his lips however that is not currently his problem. Once he gets to where John is standing he takes the ugly blanket off, balling it up and throwing it in the police car as he ducks under the crime scene tape. As he stands and straightens his collar out John starts to speak.

“Um, Sergeant Donovan’s just been explaining everything, the two pills. Been a dreadful business, hasn’t it? Dreadful.” As he speaks the shorter man looks around slightly nervously, hands clasped behind his back.

For a moment he says nothing, then in a low voice so not to be over heard he thanks him, “Good shot.”

The shorter man nods twice, replying, “Yes, yes, must have been, through that window.” The look he gives him is completely innocent, if he had not been paying attention to his eyes.

Still quietly he responds, “Well, you’d know.” His companion says nothing but he suggests, “Need to get the powder burns out of your fingers. I don’t suppose you’d serve time for this, but let’s avoid the court case.”

The shorter man clears his throat, glancing around at all of the officials before looking back at him.

Slightly concerned for John, he inquires, “Are you all right?”

He looks up at him answering, “Yes, of course I’m all right.”

Feeling the need to point out of the obvious he comments, “Well, you have just killed a man.”

He nods once, “Yes, I...” his voice trails off at the look he is getting before he resumes speaking, “That’s true, innit?” Smiling, he nods once more looking away for a moment before meeting his eyes again, “But he wasn’t a very nice man.”

Feeling better, he nods once in agreement, remarking, “No. No, he wasn’t really, was he?”

With a serious a look on his face John comments, “And frankly a bloody awful cabbie.”

That startles a chuckle out of him as he turns to walk away, “That’s true. He was a bad cabbie. Should have seen the route he took us to get here!”

This time it is John who chuckles while he smiles at his short companion. However he quickly gets control of his giggling and remarks, “Stop! Stop, we can’t giggle, it’s a crime scene! Stop it!”

Nonchalantly he replies, “You’re the one who shot him. Don’t blame me.” as he tucks his hands into his coat pockets.
Donavan is passing them and gives them a funny look at that announcement, which has John quickly saying, “Keep your voice down!” to him and then to her, “Sorry – it’s just, um, nerves, I think.”

He glances her way, muttering, “Sorry.”

Clearing his throat, John stops walking a bit away from the crime scene and demands, “You were gonna take that damned pill, weren’t you?”

He stops, spinning on his feet to face the shorter man, answering, “Course I wasn’t. Biding my time. Knew you’d turn up.” he tells him, only partially lying, he was seriously hoping he was going to turn up before he did something stupid, like give into that voice that drives him to do things his rational mind says is completely dumb to do.

“No you didn’t.” John just about snaps his voice very serious, his posture that of a soldier, “It’s how you get your kicks, isn’t it? You risk your life to prove you’re clever.”

Not admitting to anything he replies, “Why would I do that?”

With a lighter tone the shorter man answers, “Because you’re an idiot.”

He can’t help but smile. Here is a person who understands at least a little bit about what he is like. It will be great to have someone like that around. Maybe his off days without any murders and crimes to solve will not be as boring any more.

John’s POV

“Dinner?” the tall human suggests as he suppresses the smile from his face. His scent is pleased, content even as he turns to start walking again.

Smiling at his potential bondmate he replies, “Starving.”

“End of Baker Street, there’s a good Chinese stays open ’til two. You can always tell a good Chinese by examining the bottom third of the door handle.” The taller man comments as they go.

Not far in front of him a dark car has pulled up and Mycroft gets out of the vehicle. John acts surprised, muttering, “Sherlock. That’s him. That’s the man I was talking to you about.”

Sherlock stops walking to glance over at him, his voice low as he answers, “I know exactly who that is.” his scent changes to frustrated and angry as he walks over to his brother.

He glances around to make sure he knows where everyone is in case there is a problem. Above him he can hear the soft wing beats of Yana as she finds a new perch in order to be nearby to assist.

As they stop next to Mycroft he comments, “So, another case cracked. How very public spirited ... though that’s never really your motivation, is it?”

His voice low the dark-haired humans inquires, “What are you doing here?” as he looks around.

The elder brother looks at him, evenly answering, “As ever, I’m concerned about you.”

Eyes flickering towards him, his dark-haired human comments, “Yes, I’ve been hearing about your ‘concern’.”
The elder brother’s scent is full of frustration as he queries, “Always so aggressive. Did it never
occur to you that you and I belong on the same side?”

“Oddly enough, no!” he flippantly responds, bending his knee to lower half his body for a moment
before straightening back out.

He can do nothing more than watch as the two of them bicker back and forth. Finally, he gets tired of
it and comments, “Really, for brothers, the two of you need to work on your communication skills.”
This shut both of them up and has them both giving him nearly identical looks of shock.

The shock doesn’t last long before Sherlock recovers from his shock and sarcastically asks his
brother, “Putting on weight again?”

“Losing it, in fact.” The elder replies, his tone even but his scent embarrassed.

“So he’s not...” he begins than trails off, knowing that it will catch both brothers attention. Sure
enough they both look at him.

His dark-haired human asks, “Not what?”

A bemused look crosses his face as he answers, “I dunno – criminal mastermind?”

Glancing at his brother disparagingly the younger answers, “Close enough.”

The elder’s scent shifts again, this time including frustration in the mix, “For goodness’ sake. I
occupy a minor position in the British government.” He looks away as he speaks, as if trying to
control his tone.

Pressing the point, Sherlock continues as if his brother had not spoken, “He is the British
government, when he’s not too busy being the British Secret Service or the CIA on a freelance
basis.”

At the end of it Mycroft sighs, and he is sorely tempted to join him in doing so. These two are
something else, he thinks.

Right before he turns away, his dark-haired human bids him farewell, “Good evening, Mycroft. Try
not to start a war before I get home. You know what it does for the traffic.”

John follows him, but stops to give the elder a slightly reassuring smile, “Don’t worry, siblings
always want to take shots at each other,” he tells the taller man lightly.

“I really do worry about him,” Mycroft tells him, watching as the tall man walks away.

He nods once, “I would to,” he replies, “Goodnight.” He comments before following the younger
brother and not even bothering to say anything to the assistant with her head in her phone.

As he is catching up with his potential bondmate he can hear the two humans behind him speaking
and smiles to himself about it.

“So: dim sum.” He says when he gets right up next to him.

Smiling, his dark-haired human replies, “Mmm! I can always predict the fortune cookies.”

Evenly he replies in disbelief, “No you can’t.”

Tilting his head a little he comments, “Almost can. You did get shot, though.”
“Sorry?” he queries, the change of subject taking him a moment to catch up.

“In Afghanistan. There was an actual wound.” The taller man explains as they keep walking.

Nodding once, he responds, “Oh, yeah. Shoulder.”

“Shoulder!” he just about hisses in pleasure, “I thought so.”

Smiling again he remarks, “No you didn’t.”

“The left one,” he tall companion tells him with an air of know-it-all.

Still smiling he responds, “Lucky guess.”

Tilting his head and smiling playfully, Sherlock denies that, "I don't guess."

A low laugh escapes him as he answers, “Yes you do.” Glancing over at his companion he notices the smile that graces his face but it is not what anyone would call a friendly smile for all that his scent is pleased, “What are you so happy about?”

“Moriarty,” the tall human replies.

Curious he queries, “What’s Moriarty?”

The pleasure in his scent seems to double right before he answers, “I’ve absolutely no idea.”

The rest of the walk goes mostly quietly, both of them lost in their own thoughts.
Full Moon

Chapter Notes

So this chapter did not go at all like I expected it to, I mean seriously, in my head it was mostly fluffy, but when I started typing it decided to change its mind and here we are! Anyways, I hope everyone enjoys.

Thanks again to everyone who reviewed.

John’s POV

When they had first gotten back from Chinese restaurant he had bid his flatmate and potential bondmate goodnight and headed up to his room where he shuts and locks the door. Stripping his clothes off, he stands in the middle of the room and shifts on purpose for the first time since he had been shot besides in the alley earlier this evening.

As he changes from human to wolf he can feel every bone, muscle, and sinew morph. The energy burning through him with a pleasure he had not felt in months. He had worried that his wolf would be comprised by the wound to his shoulder. That the damage would carry over to this form. Now as he stands in the middle of his room, his form that of a dire wolf he carefully looks himself over, observing that while his shoulder fur seems slightly different than it had been, he had not lost any range of motion or maneuverability.

Smiling to himself as he shifts back into his human form he stands there for a moment before putting on his pants and pajama bottoms then going to bed.

oOo

Sherlock’s POV

The morning of the pack meeting, his flatmate had convinced Mrs. Hudson that his sister was planning on holding a massive impromptu reunion and flat warming at their flat that night. At the idea of a large group of people around she had decided that it would be best not to be home when they showed up, so she had taken off and wasn’t planning on returning until the next night.

Now as people of a variety of ages collected slowly into the flat, he was really wishing that he had the same option, but he had wanted to formally join the pack. The idea of being part of something like that was something he had dreamed about as a child when he had first heard of the shifters but as a human he had known it would never occur. Besides he liked the idea of knowing something that his brother did not, of having somewhere he belonged.

There were more people in his flat than he had ever expected to see at one time. He was surprised it was not setting his nerves on edge. Despite the amount of people in the flat however, it was mostly quiet with very little loud noises going on. There does seem to be a clear division though between two different groups. Closer to the door is the first group, a mixed group according to his keen eyes. They seem to all be soldiers. The other group, the second group seems to be different somehow but all share a common trait. He is considering trying to analyze them when the smallest of the people in either group appears at his side.

"A bit overwhelming at times I would imagine." Her voice is soft but bit higher pitched. "You must
be the gifted human the Elder said was officially joining the nest. I'm Cyanne," she introduces herself with a smile.

He glances down at her slightly startled. "Nest?" he inquires, thinking about the fact that apparently John had mentioned him as a gifted human, not just a human.

She grins up at him, "Sorry, I should say pack because it is mostly wolves but I am a mouse who grew up within a proper nest, so I still refer to the pack as a nest." She pauses for a moment her gaze sweeping the room, "Actually I am the only omnivore in my animal form."

"And your animal form is prey according to the rest of us," the darkest colored one in the group comments stopping just a few feet away. "Welcome to our pack, don't mind the rodent, she is a bit of a chatterbox. I'm Hyder."

Looking at him, he can tell that he is of mixed origins, his tone and manner of dress is that of a wealthy British citizen, yet his looks hint at Middle Eastern blood-ties. His stance is much like John's, which screams soldier, and like the rest of the group that seems mixed his eyes are always moving, well aware of where everyone in the room is. Despite the joke about Cyanne being a rodent, he can tell that there is affection for her.

She smirks at the stranger before turning back towards him, "Old joke, as the only mouse in our nest, I spent one day travelling around in each of our nest mates pockets so that they could adjust to my scent and tell me from other mice. I will probably end up doing that with all the new nest mates as well, well if the Elder thinks I should."

The mouse, as Cyanne referred to herself, is one of those people who you could read everything about in her face. She didn't seem to have a single block on her emotions. She was in the military as well, though he is not sure how with as small as she is. Perhaps a special unit?

Before he can speculate any further, one of the taller men on the side closer to the door calls for attention. Most the people listen and fall silent, but there is a small group that keeps on talking until the woman who looks a lot like John snaps at them.

"I believe the beta has called for silence," she snarls voice low, "have some respect."

The rest of them fall silent but he can tell that they do not agree with her or are not happy about the situation. A moment later John comes out of the loo, drying his hands as he does so. "Oh, good, you’re ready. First off, it’s good to see all of you again. Secondly, we will not be having the full meetings here when everyone is here after this." he pauses eyes catching the attention of those who did not listen the first time silence was called for, "Thirdly, respect Jacob, he’s got my full permission to kick your arse if you’re not. Now let’s reaffirm the bonds, combine the pack, welcome our newest members, and have a pleasant evening alright."

Before anything else can happen, Cyanne glances at him and under her breath tells him, "Unfasten your dominate hand's sleeve, the reaffirming of the bond is done the dominate wrist to wrist pulse."

He nods once, deftly unfastening his right sleeve. A moment later John is standing in front of him, left hand palm up, "Sherlock Holmes, welcome to the pack, if you accept the responsibility of being a pack-mate accept the affirmation."

His eyes flicker over John, taking every detail of him in. He is dressed in one of the nicest outfits that he has seen, though it is all black for some reason. He had said nothing of what was expected of him tonight, and he was pretty sure it was because he was supposed to do this out of the honesty within him, and not with a lot of forethought.
Lifting his right hand he looks at it for a moment before nodding once. Out of the corner of his eye, he can see Cyanne place her arms so it is wrist to wrist, on the pulse point. Understanding the message he does so with John. Almost immediately after a slight pressure seems to build up behind his eyes, before a wave of warmth goes through him.

"Welcome to the pack," John tells him as he lets lose his arm and strides over to the other side of the room and does the same thing with the one called Jacob. After that he took to standing still near the window and allowed each person to choose when they were going to do so. He could almost tell the wolves from the non-wolves because the wolves all seemed to want to be affectionate in some way during their turn.

With each person who does the reaffirmation with John he can feel the presence in his mind. It is almost overwhelming because it is a slightly warm feeling, yet at the same time he feels as if he finally belongs somewhere. Swaying a little bit the mouse puts a steadying hand on his shoulder. He hadn’t even noticed that she had left and returned because of the focus on the internal feelings going on inside.

Guiding him to one of the chairs she waits till he is seated to perch on the edge of it and begins speaking, "Most races of shifter are tactile, family orient. Our nest that formed in Afghanistan is odd in most are independents instead, with only myself and the four wolves in our nest being tactile. Great Cats can be, but generally only with their bondmates or toys. I have never heard of a tactile falcon. Vipers are with their immediate family but no one else.” Cyanne informs him softly speaking.

Once everyone has greeted his flatmate, including all of the teenagers and children that he had been originally concerned about, most of the adults with little ones bid him welcome and farewell in the same breath before herding their offspring out. The end result is only about half the people are left within the flat, all of them adults as far as he can tell.

This time when the tall man calls for attention pretty close to everyone listens, the exception being a slender boy who had faded to the background who is playing on a laptop. “Even you Eric,” the tall man comments when he realizes that the boy is not paying attention.

“I’m listening, Senior. I am also playing tag with a computer tech that is pretty decent considering,” the teen comments, his eyes never leaving the screen.

Apparently that was an acceptable answer, but why would tag on a computer be an acceptable answer he wonders? Before he has a chance to ask, his companion leans a little closer and answers the unspoken question.

“Eric is the computer tech who keeps our files out of stranger’s hands, makes sure that camera’s do not catch us shifting, and is otherwise useful.” Her voice is low, though he is certain most of the people in the room can hear her.

“Why are there two humans here?” one of the wolves, judging by where he is standing, demands.

“There is only one human here,” the tall man replies, looking over at the wolf.

The first man snorts, “I have a good sense of smell, there are two humans in the room. That man over there by the mouse, and that female over by the window.”

It is John who answers him, his voice sharper than he had expected it, “You are correct that Sherlock is human, however Maria is a multiform, which means her scent is that of a human until she chooses what form to be in.”
“Because as alpha I made that choice, you as a pack member who reaffirmed your pack link accepted.” John informs him, voice even as he stares at the belligerent wolf. “You’re still within your rights to challenge me as alpha, a bit not good to do after the affirmation, but if that’s the course you want,” he shrugs, eyes narrow.

The other wolf looks around the room for a minute before nodding once, “What do you know of running a proper pack? You’ve spent the last ten years listening to worthless humans.” He steps forward, a feral smile on his face, “Besides your nothing but an injured pup, I invoke the right of challenge.”

The female that had spoken earlier, speaks up now, “You are within your rights to do so, however be aware that doing so invokes the council.” Her voice is harsher than John’s but he can still hear and see the likeness. “Do you wish to continue?”

He nods once and John shrugs, standing at parade rest as he watches the events unfold.

She flips open her phone and makes a phone call. When she gets off of the phone, she comments, “Where shall we take this?”

“I can have this entire block shielded from view if you wish to use the street. The nice thing is its night time making it easier to make folks look away,” a slender female with light skin comments.

John nods, heading outside without another word though he gets the impression that he is having a conversation with the tall man walking to his right.

Annoyed he frowns at him, wanting to be the one who stands in the place of authority with his flatmate. What? Where did that idea come from, he wonders as he watches, the beginnings of jealousy burning low in his stomach.

The girl next to him gets to her feet and smiles at him, commenting, “Come on, this should be observed by the alpha second.”

“What?” he asks confused, who is the alpha second? Isn’t that the man with John right now?

She smiles at him, answering the question smoothly, “You’re the alpha second. He confirmed your rank with his affirmation, only the alpha second and the beta are approached by the alpha, all others approach the alpha. Now the elders will be here shortly, and that means that the two wolves will fight. My money will always be on our elder-alpha, no matter which form he is in.”

As everyone files out, she glances at him, watching them all and remarks, “This isn’t how these sort of things normally go. Most the time these meetings go along the lines of everyone gathers, the senior-beta calls for attention, the elder-alpha makes whatever announcements need to be made, any comments or concerns that nestmates have are dealt with and the rest of the night is a get together sort of thing with food and visiting. Happens once a month. It’s not a required attend for anyone except the elder-alpha and senior-beta. It is when new nest members are formally brought into the nest link as you felt.” Once everyone else is out of the flat she motions for him to go ahead of her as they head down the steps.

Outside the street is empty of everyone except for those from the pack he realizes, slightly startled. He had never seen it emptied like this, not even during a crime scene. How?

Looking around he realizes that the pack is still divided into two separate groups, the group closer to
the flat are all soldiers. Ten of them to be exact. Across from the flat are the ones he is sure are wolves. Off to the side of them is a small splinter group. He is startled to see Mike Stamford because he thought that the other man had left. Eyes narrow he realizes that there are more here than there had been a little bit ago. Most of the wolves had returned, he thinks. Why?

“Alpha challenges are rare, they are witnessed by as many of the pack as can be here before the Eldest Elders arrive.” His small companion tells him as she watches the people in front of her. “Come on, as elder-alpha second you should be with Jacob.” She grabs his arm and leads him over to where the tall man from earlier is standing.

His senses are in too much of an overload to comprehend everything and everyone. He had never been particularly good with large groups or physical contact, yet that seems to be the standard thing happening tonight and it is driving him a bit frustrated. One thing is for sure, he’s not bored.

When a shiny silver car pulls up, he is surprised to see that he recognizes two of the three men getting out. One is a member of the British government, higher ranked than his brother in fact which is a very rare thing. The other is a visiting diplomat from Germany. He has no idea who the third person is, but judging by their mode of dress and who they are with, they are just as important.

“Alpha Watson,” Mycroft’s superior intones, voice low but carrying.

“Eldest Alpha,” he replies, inclining his head.

“Jacob,” the German murmurs, his voice startled as he stares at the man next to him.

“Eldest Falcon,” comes the stiff reply from the pack’s beta.

“What are you doing here?” the diplomat inquires as he looks at him carefully.

“This is my coop,” he pauses, nodding towards John, “he is my Elder since I was disowned for refusing to take a mate who was not my bondmate and would not strengthen the ties of our community.”

There is a speculative look in the older German’s face as he studies him before nodding and turning his attention to John and the other wolf.

Now that there was a crowd, including some rather influential people, he wanted to back down. He could feel it in the link that had formed when he had been brought into the pack. However, he could also feel that the man was not going to back down. He felt that he was right in his opinion and that John should not be the alpha. So instead he stands there ready and waiting, bristling with anger.

*Drama queen, I swear wolves are the worst at times, how the hell do they manage to be at the top of the food chain if they cannot even deal with each other rationally?* he hears Eric muttering as he glances up from the laptop. *Are you shielding Daria?*

The slender woman who had commented on the block earlier nods once, lifting her left hand and etching various things into the air. Her eyes seem to glow for a moment and the air around them seems to change, a pressure being added to it that he finds hard to breathe in until he adjusts. *There, no humans who are not pack will be able to see them as long as they are within this street, camera’s perception showing only non-den, non-shifters. *

He blinks rapidly at her, he doesn’t believe in magic but that sure looked like magic. How? Turning he quickly raises an eyebrow at Mouse, hoping that she will understand because he is not sure he could figure out how to voice that question without sounding stupid, and stupid is one thing he never likes to sound.
She seems to understand because she smiles, “Here let me do the introductions. This is Jacob, the senior-beta, an elite falcon.” She points to the one who had spoke earlier. “You’ve already meet Hyder, he’s the great cat standing there looking bored. On the other side of him is Eric, computer tech and elite cobra. Those two,” she says pointing to a pair who are standing in parade rest just past the teen with the computer, “are Yana and Edward, our owly friends. Yana was actually accepted formally into the nest today, Edward’s been with us a while.” Motioning to the other side of Jacob she directs his attention to the girl he just saw use magic or something like it. “That’s Daria and her bondmate Nathan, you can see their bonding marks on their right wrists since they are both right handed, their vipers, though I could not tell you the exact type. Daria has Gifted blood, as you might have gathered from her use of the psionic talents. Those three who act like wolves really are wolves, but they are military like the rest of us on this side. The two that look similar are Trace and Damian, the other one is Scott.”

She had just finished up with the three powerful men, move to form a triangle around where John and his challenger are standing.

“Who issues the challenge?” the British wolf demands.

“I…I do, Thomas Lane,” the wolf stutters.

“Who accepts the challenge?” the German diplomat queries.

“John Watson, elite alpha wolf of the Watson mixed-pack.”

“Who witnesses the challenge?” the third man inquires, voice low.

“Jacob, elite beta falcon of the Watson mixed-pack.” The tall man answers stepping forward and taking parade rest.

“Challenge permitted, the remaining wolf will be the alpha. Form of choice, trail by combat, death acceptable.” The British wolf intones, stepping back at the same time as the other three.

The entire group is silent at that pronouncement, it is rare for alpha fights to be to the death, though he doesn’t know that. What he does know is everyone seems to be shocked. Finally the wolf who issued the challenge starts to change, his body morphing into that of a nice sized timber wolf, fur sleek as he stands there and growls.

John merely looks at him thoughtfully for a moment, before shrugging his shoulders a bit.

*What a pup,* he hears the cobra mutter, *did he not listen to the elite part of his name? Idiot.*

When Thomas lunges forward, John merely side steps, allowing the wolf who is half his size to go sailing past him. Spinning on the ball of his foot, he keeps his eyes on the wolf as he takes another lunge at him. When John’s eyes narrow he realizes that the other wolf must be speaking to him in some form but he cannot hear it. The next thing he knows, John’s form is shifting and morphing. Where moments before a rather short blonde man stood, now a massively tall golden wolf stood instead. The only reason he could easily identify this massive wolf as his flatmate was the large patch of fur that seems to be a different color in a star burst shape on his shoulder and those blue eyes that match his human form.

One moment Thomas is lunging for him, the next the smaller wolf is back pedaling, trying to get away from the much large wolf who pins him simply by swatting him with a paw and pushing down on his throat.

*Listen closely.* He hears John’s voice in his head snarling, and with a glance around realizes
everyone else there hears him too. **There will be no discrimination between any member of this pack. Do so and face my wrath, I will not tolerate it. Each member has their place which is mine to know and yours to accept. This pack is mixed. It will remain mixed. If you do not like it find a different pack. Understand?**

Every single one of the wolves that had been grumbling shift and present their throats in submission before John hops backwards returning to his human form as he does so, still fully dressed. The others slowly turn back into their human forms, most of them even managing to do so fully clothed, but there are a few who do not.

Thomas inches a little closer, his voice a low beg as he babbles at John about how sorry he is. However John’s not listening, his gaze is sweeping the area. It will be one of the few times he would see that temper he would realize years later.

“So Deal with him Jacob,” the alpha wolf comments, before flashing a smile to the rest, “Either go home or enjoy the rest of the night, the reason has already been completed. There will not be a comments time this month.”

The tall man next to him inclines his head, murmuring, “Sir,” before walking over to where the graveling man is.

The three ‘elders’ all bid farewell to John before getting back in their vehicle and leaving. Lost in thought he barely notices the passage of time once he gets back into the flat, nor does he notice that it is early morning when everyone has finally left.
Following Morning

Chapter Notes

Thanks to Taigatora for all her support, this chapter is for her.

John’s POV

The following day came early it seemed to the tired alpha as he stretched and got out of bed. He had not had a very good night’s sleep because he had been fretting about his potential bondmate who’s mind seemed to be in overload. Which due to the pack link he could feel, even though he was sure that Sherlock had not linked in with anyone else. Focusing on the pack, he allowed his thoughts to clear and checked on each member. Most of them were fine, they were startled by how the previous night had gone but had accepted as is. Nearly all the adults had noticed his wrist and the spiral bondmark on it though none of them had commented. Those of his team and his sister knew who the bondmark was in relation to but they weren’t saying a thing. He pays particular care to the link between himself and Thomas, first to see if it is still there, yep; then to see how the defeated wolf feels, upset but clear headed, not holding a grudge. Good. He would have to check with Jacob later to see what his beta had assigned for a punishment.

Grabbing his things, he heads into the shower to get cleaned up. While there he delicately reaches out on the pack link to check on his dark-haired human, who’s mind is still buzzing like there is no tomorrow. From what he can tell he had never gotten to sleep. Sighing, he finishes washing up before dressing and heading into the kitchen in order to make tea for himself and coffee for Sherlock since that is what he noticed him drinking the previous morning.

“Morning Sherlock,” he greets the tall human as he sets the cup down on the coffee table in front of the sofa near his head before retreating to his chair.

Sherlock is stretched out much like he had been when considering whether to text the cabbie or not just a few days prior.

He is not surprised by the lack of communication from the taller man, he is probably still processing. Perhaps it would be a good idea to invite Eric over, those two should hit it off rather well. Both of them are far more intelligent than him, though in different ways. Grabbing his phone he sends of a text message.

-Tech, would you mind coming over for a bit? I think Sherlock might need someone who understands him a bit better to explain things when he starts questioning.- JW

-Of course. What about Mouse?- Tech

-You’re not taking her place.- JW

-Good. I don’t have the tolerance to.- Tech

-Mouse, you can stop by to make plans as to when lessons start if you have not already.- JW

-Okay! Cya soon. –Mouse

Through all the texting Sherlock doesn’t move an inch, nor does he move when he goes to answer
the door and let Eric in. However he does move when the cobra eyes him for a moment before taking a seat in the second arm chair. It’s a little motion, just a tilt of his head, but its something.

Most of the day after that goes silently, with the two genius doing whatever it is genius do while he works on settling in his meager possessions into his room. It is shortly before dinner time when Eric pipes up with, “Umbrella boy is coming to visit,” which seems to pull Sherlock out of his mind because he glances over at him, shocked.

“And Umbrella Boy?” he repeats slowly, shifting into a seated position to look over at him.

The cobra ignores him, still typing away at his computer, in his chair John is doing the same thing, but he is watching the interactions closely. He had already determined that his mate needed acceptance and praise that was not a hard one to get when his scent always filled with pleasure when he got it. It was not hard to give either because he was bloody brilliant. He also figured that he needed mental companionship, someone who could keep up with him, and that was something that John was certain that Eric could do.

“You’re elder brother,” Eric eventually replies as he gets to his feet, “I’ll be on the roof,” he tells the room at large before vanishing to the roof top.

“How does he know?” Sherlock inquires, glancing over at him.

He shrugs, “Probably the same way he does anything, hacked the system. He gets bored easily.”

The dark-haired human stares at him when he says that seemingly shocked.

Smiling, he takes his seat in the chair he had claimed as his, happy that the cobra had not touched it. “You’re unique, amazing, and resourceful, but I got the impression you have very few people if any that can keep up. I know that my mind doesn’t move nearly as fast as yours. However Eric, well that cobra thinks far too fast and recalls way too much sometimes. Perhaps you can find a friend in that, someone who will keep easily,” he shrugs a bit self consciously, “well if not there was no harm in meeting anyways.”

At that point he falls silent, the scent of Mycroft reaching before the actual person who is actually climbing the stairs right now.

“Good evening, Doctor Watson, Sherlock. I would like a word with you.” his glance flickers to him, “In private.”

Smiling briefly, John gets to his feet before heading outside for a bit.

Sherlock’s POV

The previous night had been too much for him in such a short period of time. Since Cyanne had made sure he made it back inside, he had been lost in his Mind Palace sorting out all of the new information that he had gotten. An entire wing had been added to the palace for John in the last few days, and now another wing had appeared this one for his new pack.

Pack. He was part of a pack, human him was part of a mostly wolf pack. For the most part they had seemed to welcome him. Only that small group had tried to judge him and then it wasn’t really him that they had a problem with, it was humans. Perhaps later when he was being more himself around them they would judge him. Perhaps it would go all horribly wrong. After all things rarely went right
for him, his mind worked too fast, noticed too much, made people way too uncomfortable, yet….yet that girl had seemed relaxed in his presence. She had said he was gifted. That boy with the laptop, his eyes had seemed vaguely familiar, had he not been in over load he might have realized that his expression was much like his when he was figuring out puzzles.

As he gets the information straight in his head, he is able to figure out the life stories of each of the pack members he met. Or at least most of it. However he feels like he had missed some important details because not a one of them seemed to be having an affair or cheating on their significant other, how was that even possible for a group of that size? Then there was the fact there was a lot of single ones in the group who did not seem to be having any sort of affair at all and that was really just weird. Perhaps it had to do with them being shifters? He really did need to learn as much as possible about their customs, particularly since he had been invited into the fold.

Shifters, he thought to himself. John’s form was that of a giant golden-blonde wolf the same shade as his hair. Yet he could still clearly see every single line and inch in his mind. He had been huge, bigger than any sort of wolf he had ever heard of, standing as tall as himself despite the fact that wolves were normally small, not even reaching his waistline. His wolf form was gorgeous, he thought, perfectly shaped and proportioned, the sunburst discoloring on the wolves shoulder probably lined up with the scarring on his human shoulder. Still he can only hope that he will get a chance to study John’s wolf form a bit more in the future.

At some point the smell of fresh coffee catches his attention, drawing him momentarily out of his Mind Palace to discover John has freshly bathed and placed a cup of hot, fresh coffee near him as he murmurs his morning greetings. As John takes a spot in the seat that he is quickly thinking of as his, Sherlock allows himself to fall back into his Mind Palace and doesn’t come out of it again until he feels a cool presence entering the room.

This time when he emerges he is startled to see the kid from the previous night lounging in the second armchair, laptop resting on his legs as he types but never says a word.

Silently he studies the teenager trying to figure out what all is familiar about him besides the fact he seems to be lost in thought. He’s a slender young man, straight black hair, scale patterning down the side of his neck and jaw that he once would have thought was a tattoo but now realizes are his natural scales, light silver eyes barely leave his screen as he keeps going in a too pale of face when compared to the obsidian scales. This boy was trouble, he realized, the kind of trouble that took great pleasure in it as well.

Eventually he mutters, “Umbrella boy is coming to visit,” as he continues to type away at his laptop as if it is the most natural thing in the world to make announcements like that.

Umbrella boy? He repeats to himself, none of the members of the pack that he had meet the previous night had an umbrella, so who is he talking about. “Umbrella boy?” he repeats out loud, frustrated that he could not figure it out.

The teen ignores him for a bit before finally commenting, “Your elder brother,” he pauses momentarily, shifting his stance and moving with a liquid grace that he almost envies, “I’ll be on the roof.”

Glancing over at John he questions, “How does he know?” It is so weird to not know with just a look. How was the boy doing that?

His short flatmate just shrugs answering, “Probably the same way he does anything, hacked the system. He gets bored easily.”
He can’t help but stare. Mycroft has some of the best in the world to make sure the computers are safe, that they cannot be hacked and here is his flatmate of not even a week, his new alpha in the pack he had been accepted into telling him that that teenager was better than the best. It is discerning really.

John smiles at him as he perches in what Sherlock sees as his seat again as he remarks, “You’re unique, amazing, and resourceful, but I got the impression you have very few people if any that can keep up. I know that my mind doesn’t move nearly as fast as yours. However Eric, well that cobra thinks far too fast and recalls way too much sometimes. Perhaps you can find a friend in that, someone who will keep easily,” he shrugs looking a bit self consciously, “well if not there was no harm in meeting anyways.”

Moments after the golden wolf comments he hears the front door shift open and the familiar sound of his brother climbing the steps. It is very unusual for Mycroft to actually visit in person. He prefers to send a small team to kidnap him and meet at his leisure no matter what he was doing prior. A few seconds later the his elder brother comes striding in as if he owns the place, his sharp eyes taking everything in the room in.

“Good evening, Doctor Watson,” he drawls in that tone that never fails to annoy, “Sherlock. I would like a word with you.” his glance flickers to John, “In private.”

Smiling briefly, his flatmate gets to his feet before heading outside for a bit without saying anything.

Sighing, he shifts from his sprawled out laying down to sitting upright. He is shocked to see that John had changed out his coffee for a fresh one at some point so the one he has tastes far better than expected.

“What do you want Mycroft?” he just about snaps at his brother, he really would rather be in his head right now, working his way through the details that he had collected the night before.

“What happened here last night Sherlock? All of our camera’s that can see this place and two blocks around it went offline and when they came back on it seemed to be on some type of loop. Yet every time I sent a team they reported that there was no one here or they turned back before reaching here.” His very frustrating older brother comments. “I do not like the idea that you’re playing with the CCTV’s.”

He smiles, smirking really as he considers Eric and Daria and apparently whatever they had done had really angered his brother because it was out of his control. That was wonderful, even if there was not another perk to this pack thing, that alone would make it well worth it.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about Mycroft. John had some family over, apparently they felt he needed a flat warming party. It was nothing special and there were far too many of them.” He informs his brother loftily, internally gloating I know something that you really wish you knew.

“Sherlock.” Mycroft grumbles waringly.

He smiles again, “If you will excuse me, I have mental house cleaning to do.” With that he refocuses on his mind, falling back into his Mind Palace to keep going over the details of the previous night.

He does not hear it as Mycroft leaves, nor as John and Eric come back, he barely notices when he gets a text message, and just about forgets everything else in his single minded focus to recall and understand as much as possible.

Mouse had said that if he had any questions to get a hold of her, it was her task to help teach him the
customs though she had not said how to get a hold of her. He was ecstatic when shortly after he
smells John making dinner the chipper voice of the small female cuts through his mind. Sitting up
and stretching after being still for so long he takes in everything around him to see how things may
have changed in the forty-eight hours.

The teenager is back in the second armchair, while the mouse is in the kitchen speaking with John as
he cooks.

“Cyanne,” his voice cuts through the room, surprising her since she hadn’t noticed that he moved,
“You said you were to teach me about the pact. We begin now.”

She smiles at him replying, “Right after dinner, and you should eat too, you're far too skinny, how do
you expect to find a proper mate if you are a bag of bones?”

He blinks shocked for a moment before answering, “Why would I want a mate? I’m married to my
work.”

She shrugs answering, “For now, but I think you're like a great cat, you have your passions and
eventually your needs will assert themselves, now come eat, Elder John is an excellent cook.” She
pauses looking over at the teenager, “You too cobra.”

For such a small thing she is bossy, he considers arguing but decides not to, he wants the information
she has and he has a feeling that arguing with her will make it harder to get.
Thanks for the reviews folks! I still love them, along with the new kudos and follows too.

*John’s POV*
That first time he listen to Cyanne take his tall human to task for being so thin he had expected Sherlock to verbally rip her apart, yet he watched the calculating look that crossed his eyes briefly before he had dramatically sighed and did what she wanted. Since then the small woman had been over twice a week to work with him on his information about the difference between the various shifter races and customs. She had been adamant that he needed to understand the different customs that each of their pack members brought to the table and watching her deal with his sharp eyed and tongue-fierce flatmate was hilarious because she treated him the exact same way she treated Eric.

During the following weeks there had been seven cases that the jackal-child had asked for Sherlock’s help with. Only three of them did he actually bother to consider. The other four he had briefly listen to the file and then snapped the answers in the most insulting fashion as he could think of. Part of him was sadden by this behavior but considering the way that he had been treated at the four crime scenes he had gone with Sherlock to, he was not surprised in the least. Why make it nice for them if they were not going to be polite to him?

In order to keep from being bored he was considering getting a proper job, not that he needed one. As an alpha he would get a pension that was his to do with as he wanted. His choice? Pay bills and have Eric invest part of it in order to make extra money on it. No reason to go to a big banker when that cobra could make as much or more money off of than most of them at a fraction of the cost. Despite the fact he actually had money, he still preferred to live frugally.

Of course there was something that he ‘borrow’ money from his flatmate for, such as for food, since he had managed to get him to eat at least once every other day. He also had Eric ferreting away money for his potential bondmate to, so that if he ever wanted to be paid back, he would be with interest.

It was one of the days when Cyanne was not supposed to be over and there was no cases going on that Sherlock threw himself across the sofa and groaned, “I’m bored.” He had discovered that boredom for the genius was a lot like boredom for Eric, completely not a good thing.

When he was bored he would do a wide variety of foolish things such as experiments that he really did not want to know what they were, just please keep them to his assigned part of the fridge and counters, play the violin at all hours of the day or night, and pace in a rather feline like manner.

“Care to learn how to fight when dealing with a shifter?” he eventually asks the dark-haired man. While he was sure that he knew something of self defense, John was an alpha seeking to find an activity in order to keep him engaged. So far it seemed that Sherlock was enthralled by everything that he had learned about shifters, and like other times the shifters had been mentioned, the dark-haired human quickly came to attention. Watching him closely.

“Really?” he inquires a bit too keen it seems.
He smiles, “Yes really, your part of a pack now that means that there are occasional dangers included in that, mostly in the form of human hunters, but sometimes rogue shifters. While fighting with humans might be something you are already skilled at, I am sure you don’t have training for dealing with shifters.”

A moment later he is standing in front of him, excitement and pleasure filling his scent. “Come one,” he commands.

Standing up, he stretches a bit, looking at his human. “First off, identifying a shifter. We pass as humans because for all intent and purposes we are human, the difference is so very minor that a geneticists looking at our DNA have not yet found it. As a pack member you have the advantage, you have a pack link and you could theoretically learn to control it to feel other shifters not in the pack. If you want to, speak with Daria about that, it’s more her domain than mine. Now a sure fire way to identify most shifters without using the pack link is to look towards the wrists and the underside of the ears.” He presents first his wrists, then turns his head to show him the silvery almost not noticeable marks that are on the flesh behind his ears. “They are only seeable while alive. The wrist marks indicate bond status, though some also intentionally form their pack status on their arms too. The marks behind the ears are pack status, they allow a person within a pack to see what pack another is in, if they are in a pack, and type of pack.”

Sherlock’s long fingers brush his hair aside as the human stares at them. His marks are the palest of gold, he knows because he had used a mirror to study them when he had first discovered them. It is something taught to alpha’s but rarely anyone else because most are never allowed that close to each other. However he is well aware of his tall human’s keen eye sight so he is certain that he would be able to spot them without having to get to close.

“I can explain the different pack markers later if you would like. Though I would point out you probably have one behind your ears as well since you are pack.” He offers to the taller man.

He steps back, looking closely at him with that stare that says his mind is processing. “Continue,” he eventually demands still watching him closely.

A smile curves his lips as he does so. “Now most react like humans and fight like humans as well, but some, primarily rogues, will attack with their hybrid forms or elements of their hybrid form.” He lifts a hand allowing his claws to replace his finger nails to show what he is talking about and before he can say anything else, his human has pounced on him, grabbing his wrist and turning it in different directions as he studies the claws.

It takes a great deal of will power not to moan as those long fingers delicately explore the pads of his fingers, palm, and the back of his hand.

Finally he is released from the hold and Sherlock is back to watching him with intense focus.

“When a shifter fights using their claws they will nearly always aim for deadly spots, the arteries at the throat and leg being two of the biggest ones. Best choice is to stay out of the way and put objects between you and them. This is true for those who have animal forms with claws, though without claws tend to use other methods of fighting…”

“Various snake breeds bite or squeeze, the different types of rodents tend to set traps and work in teams, birds prefer to attack from above.” Eric comments from the door he is leaning on. “I came by to give you this handy little device,” he tells them holding up a small black stick that looks like a lighter. “It dampens signals from any device that is not coded in, pass your phones and laptops and I will make them immune, but everyone else will have difficulties using their internet here. Plus umbrella will not be able to use cameras in or near here.”
The slender cobra looks between the two before shrugging his jacket off and laying it down with his laptop by the door. “Careful of those like me who keep a permanent hybrid form. There is normally a reason for it, and it is mostly not good.” He walks over, presenting the back of his neck and allowing the scales to fade. “See the markers that run from the sides to the back? You will always see them on elites, elites are the ones you really do not want to fight. Better to use the link to call for assistance than to tangle with someone who could easily kill you, and might kill you because it is easy.” His scales return, repatterning down his neck and jaw as he grabs the laptop of the table and takes his customary seat.

For a while he works with Sherlock on learning to dodge when a hybrid form is attacking, mildly surprised at how quickly he picks up on it. While he knows he is a genius when it comes to intellectual matters, it is surprising him as to how active he is as well. By the time they are done it is nearly dinner and the tall human drops on the sofa with a satisfied look, he was moving out of the way more often than and avoiding the hits.

Right before he leaves, Eric comments, “I loaded the inventory of markers I have already compiled. Memorize them and you will be able to identify what pack, nest, coop, flight, den, or pride a shifter is from, what type it is, and what type of animal they become.”

Without saying anything else the slender shifter leaves, grabbing his jacket and laptop as he goes.

“Why do I have a hard time reading your military pack?” his tall human inquires from his place sprawled out on the sofa. “I get some of the basics, family, job, minor history but when I try to look for the things that make people interesting, the problems, I don’t see them. There is not a single case of violence between spouses, drinking, drugs, or adultery that I have found within the pack yet. Why?”

He smiles, heading into the kitchen to wash his hands and cook dinner, for a moment he considers the question before answering, “What has Cyanne covered as far as relationships among the shifters?”

He gives a small shake of his head, “Not much, I had been asking mostly about histories, structure, and different varieties, I never would have guessed there were so many types.” Comes the dark-haired man’s reply.

He nods once, thinking about it before speaking as he cooks, “First off drugs and drinking are strongly discouraged, and most shifters do not like the idea of ending up in a zoo or science lab so they tend to listen to that encouragement. Both can interfere with our ability to control the shift.” He finishes what he was working on and shoves it in the oven. “Secondly, violence between spouses is rare for a number of reasons, most don’t want to pick a fight with someone who is as strong as or stronger than them, or who can go to the alpha to have the council deal with them instead. Third adultery, those that are bonded and have children cannot commit adultery. Their bodies will not allow it. Once the bond is in place between them, the only person they can sleep with is their bondmate. Each shifter gets two bondmates to choose from, one male, one female. Children can only be conceived by bondmates, the only exception to this is those who are more human than shifter. Lestrade is a good example, he has jackal blood but is for all purposes a human, he cannot shift, he cannot scent, he lacks a pack bond. His children however could be born with the shifter traits and thus they will only be able to have children with a bondmate.”

After he gets the food in the stove he goes back into the living room and settles into his chair. For a moment he says nothing, then he shrugs, “Shifters who are not bondmated may take lovers as much as they want, they can even form unions with these lovers, however they will not produce children or long term relationships, so they are mostly discouraged.”
While he is explaining this, the dark-haired human is stretched out in his thinking position. His eyes shut and hands templed in front of him just below his jaw. When John looks over at him, he has the urge to just walk over and taste the small stretch of skin he can see between his slacks and where his shirt had rode up.

“How is a bondmate determined?” Sherlock eventually asks, opening his eyes to look over at him.

“How do you mean?” he asks, wanting him to be a bit more exact.

“Do you pick who your bondmate is or does something else do so?” comes the reply.

Frowning he answers, “Touch, physical touch, within ten minutes of skin to skin contact, no matter how brief the contact was, the mark will appear on one or both of their wrists. It is then up to them to determine if they wish to continue on or stop and try and figure out if they are a match.” He shrugs, going to check the food before returning to where he was seated, “I’ve never heard of a bad match between bondmates, so it really is a preference of gender as to which one is selected, along with whether or not both bondmates are known to the parties involved.”

“Why would only one have a mark?” the dark-haired human queries.

“That generally means that their bondmate is human or gifted. Those who are human or gifted do not have a mark appear until they accept the relationship. After all, they are not bond to it unless they accept it, so they can just ignore it and keep on with their lives as if nothing had changed.” He responds after considering what the best way to do so would be.

“You have a mark on your wrist, but I have seen you with no one, why?” the question nearly catches him off guard.

Again he shrugs, “I will not force my bondmate into a choice, if and when they are ready, they’ll let me know. Until then,” he pauses shrugging, “I will accept that I will not be sleeping with anyone. Doesn’t stop me from flirting though, got to keep in practice after all.”

Again Sherlock falls silent, when he looks over at him, he seems to be lost in his mind palace and John can do nothing more than sigh quietly as he finishes dinner up. Once it is served, he gently touches the taller human’s mind with his, murmuring, *Come out now, it is time to pretend to eat.*

It apparently shocks him because he sits upright and looks around for a minute before his gaze settles on John over in kitchen. “How?” he mutters, watching him.

He smirks at the intelligent man, motioning for him to come eat but knowing that he really will not eat much. As he watches him, he thinks to himself, I don’t think he is a sociopath, I think he has aspergers. He has emotions, he just does not seem to connect with them very well, he has a set way of doing things and patterns that he seems to need to stay stable, his mind is overly active, without the filters that most take for granted. Perhaps I should start making a list of the things he does eat, won’t touch, and will eat but doesn’t seem to like.

Smiling softly to himself, he almost misses the look of curiosity that the taller man gives him before the two of them fall into an easy conversation about the effects of the moon on a shifter.
Bill Money

Chapter Notes

Thanks to all the people who left reviews, kudos, bookmarked, or followed this story you all are awesome.

John’s POV
Several more days pass and he had been out to do the shopping when everything that could go wrong seemed to have done so. There were either more idiots out today than normal, or his patience were wearing thin because there had been several times while he was at the market that he had wanted to smack various people just for being stupid. Then when he had went to check out the lines had been super long so he figured he would use the self-checkout, cannot be that difficult, done it before, probably will do it again. Yeah, not today, today was one of those days. When he finally ran out of patience, he had grabbed his card which wasn’t working and left without bothering to put his stuff up or anything.

As he walked back he had checked it and groaned, the card had expired at the beginning of the month and he hadn’t noticed. One quick call later and the bank had promised to have him a new one by the beginning of the next week. Not that that was going to help him today though.

Upon getting back to the apartment he was surprised to see his dark-haired flatmate still seated in his chair as if he hadn’t moved. The scent in the flat said that someone else had been there but he could see no evidence of it past the smell, at least until he spotted the slender sword under the taller man’s seat that he acts like he doesn’t see. Sometimes a bloke just doesn’t want to ask if the information is not volunteered.

“You took your time,” the dark-haired human comments as he changes the page in the book he was reading.

Tensely he replies, “Yeah, I didn’t get the shopping.”

Startled, the taller man looks over the top of his book at him muttering, “What? Why not?” his scent flares indignant before going back to the satisfied it was when he first walked in the flat.

Grumbling he answers, “Because I had a row, in the shop, with a chip-and-PIN machine.”

Amusement and disbelief change the taller human’s scent as he lowers his book and queries, “You ... you had a row with a machine?”

He looks away for a moment, considering that it was probably better to get pissed at the machine then all of the stupid people he seems to be encountering today. Particularly those ones who seem to think wearing to much cologne or perfume is a good thing. “Sort of. It sat there and I shouted abuse. Have you got cash?” he answers, his tone evening out.

Even though he’s not smiling, he knows that the dark-haired human is finding way to much amusement in this, nodding towards the kitchen his flatmate answers, “Take my card.”

Walking over to the kitchen table he stops just before he gets there, the smell of stranger particularly
thick. Turning he remarks slightly frustrated, “You could always go yourself, you know. You’ve been sitting there all morning. You’ve not even moved since I left.” To see what his dark-haired human will say in response.

Sherlock’s scent changes to self-satisfied again, losing the edge of disbelief and amusement as he changes a page of his book without answering.

Returning to what he was doing, he carefully thumbs through the wallet looking for the card in question while asking, “And what happened about that case you were offered – the Jaria Diamond?”

“Not interested,” the taller human replies, marking his book and closing it, before using the heel of his shoe to push the sword he was pretending not to notice backwards. “I sent them a message.”

Finding the card he spots the gash in the table as he goes to set the wallet back down, leaning over a little he rubs at it, realizing that it is probably from that sword he is not paying attention to. “Ugh, Holmes,” he mutters as he leaves to go do the shopping again. By the door he pauses for a moment, glancing over his shoulder to comment, “Try to hide the sword better next time, or open some windows to get a breeze, it stinks of stranger in here.”

With that he trots off, leaving a baffled human in his wake according to the burst of surprise he smells right before shutting the door.

A bit later, after a return trip to the store, recollecting the shopping, and actually having it work this time when he pays for it, he catches a cab back to the flat and carefully navigates getting the door open so he can get inside. Staggering a bit at the fact he really should make two trips up the steps and doesn’t want to he carries the shopping upstairs making a slightly sarcastic comment as he passes his flatmate. “Don’t worry about me. I can manage.”

Glancing around as he enters, he notes that the taller human is no longer in his preferred armchair and is sitting at the table with a laptop that he seems to be completely fixed on judging by the fact he did not make a comeback to his comment. Setting the groceries down, he glances back over, realizing that it is his computer that this flatmate is staring at, not his own, still he asks the obvious question, “Is that my computer?”

“Of course,” comes Sherlock’s reply as he starts typing on the laptop.

“What?” he snaps in shock. There are private files on there regarding the pack and those within it. Hopefully they were not comprised.

The tall man doesn’t even flinch as he answers, “Mine was in the bedroom,” he just continues to type.

Frustrated, he demands as he strips off his overcoat, “What, and you couldn’t be bothered to get up?” he pauses for a moment to see if there is going to be any sort of response to that and when there is not, he exclaims confusedly, “It’s password protected!”

Distractedly the other man remarks, “In a manner of speaking. Took me less than a minute to guess yours.” He pauses, turning to look up at him for a moment, “Not exactly Fort Knox.”

Striding over to where the tall man is seated, he snaps, “Right, thank you,” in an annoyed voice before slamming the lid down and lifting it up. Still grumbling he sets his laptop over on his seat before checking the bills. Frowning at them, he realizes a few of them are due, possibly even late judging by the red coloring of the numbers. “Oh,” he mutters to himself, “need to get a job.”

With his hands pressed together in front of his face, staring off into space the tall man negligently
replies, “Oh, dull,” he shifts his hands to interlace his fingers as he continues to think. His emotions staying rather calm.

He is contemplating asking his flatmate to borrow some money when he realizes that the taller man seems to be lost in thought. “Sherlock,” he begins as he watches the younger man.

Tilting his head up, the younger man comments, “I need to go to the bank.” Sighing, he gets to his feet, heading straight towards the stairs as he does, and grabbing his flowing coat as he moves.

Frowning to himself, he gets to his feet and follows the taller man out of the flat. One cab ride later and they are walking into the Shad Sanderson Bank. He cannot help but look around in amazement at the impressive foyer as they hop onto an escalator. “Yes, when you said we were going to the bank…” his voice trails off as they ride the escalator to the second floor. His attention is drawn to the taller man’s demeanor, who is looking at everything and everyone, catching the smallest details.

At the top of the escalator stairs, they get off and Sherlock strides over to the receptionist desk and addresses the first available receptionist, “Sherlock Holmes.”

She quickly calls upstairs and a few moments later they are meeting with a slightly taller human with black hair.

“Sherlock Holmes,” the tall man greets him with an artificial grin.

“Sebastian,” he replies as the two of them shake hands, Sebastián encasing both of his hands over Sherlock’s.

“Howdy, buddy. How long’s it been? Eight years since I last clapped eyes on you?” the other man fidgets, glancing between the two men. His scent rather annoying with the cockiness it was filled with.

His dark-haired human’s scent however is filled with dislike, he really does not want to be around this man. “This is my friend John Watson.” He had put emphasis on the word friend which made his heart swell with joy, not that he was going to show it here.

“Friend?” Sebastian repeated, his scent full of disbelief.

He smiles tightly, responding, “Indeed.” He has already taken a dislike to this human, he really does not appreciate the fact that people seem to treat his human so shabbily.

“Right,” the human mutters shaking his hand, “right,” before glancing over at Sherlock and scratching his neck with his other hand. The disbelief in his scent becomes stronger and includes condescendence.

He watches as Sherlock’s eyes glance at him, taking in everything in a single look the way he does.

As the other human walks around to behind his desk queries, “Well, grab a pew. D’you need anything? Coffee, water?”

His dark-haired human gives a single shake of his head while he murmurs, “No.” Both of them take seats in front of the desk with him to the left, and Sherlock to the right.

“No?” he queries one last time, before the other man takes his seat as he tells his secretary, “We’re all sorted here, thanks.”

She nods and leaves.
In a matter of fact tone, Sherlock remarks as he tilts the chair back a bit, “So, you’re doing well. You’ve been abroad a lot.”

The other man gives a small shrug, “Well, some.”

“Flying all the way round the world twice in a month?” his voice is questioning, as if he wishes to be sure he is right, however his scent is full of self-assurance.

The difference between scent and tone makes him glance over at the dark-haired human questioningly, slightly confused.

Grinning in malice, Sebastian points at the taller man as he says, “Right. You’re doing that thing,” the human's gaze flickers over to him as he continues, “We were at uni together. This bloke here had a trick he used to do.”

Annoyance fills Sherlock’s scent as he softly remarks, “It’s not a trick,” he clicks the ‘k’ sound a bit more than normal.

However the other human keeps speaking as if Sherlock had not commented, “He could look at you and tell you your whole life story.”

He looks over at the taller human, a small smile momentarily curving his lips as he responds with satisfaction, “Yes, I’ve seen him do it.”

Disdain fills Sebastian’s scent as he continues, “Put the wind up everybody. We hated him. You’d come down to breakfast in the Formal Hall and this freak would know you’d been shagging the previous night.”

From the corner of his eye he can see his tall human tilt his head down, a brief expression of pain flashing across his features, his scent clouding with hurt for a moment as he regains control. Head still down, he tilts it a slight bit towards the other human, still softly speaking, “I simply observed.”

Nastily the other human, demands, “Go on, enlighten me. Two trips a month, flying all the way around the world – you’re quite right. How could you tell?” he pauses for a moment but does not give Sherlock the chance to actually do so before smugly continuing, “You’re gonna tell me there was, um, a stain on my tie from some special kind of ketchup you can only buy in Manhattan.”

He smiles to himself, ready to hear his tall human put this arsehole in his place.

“No I…” he begins but is interrupted by the other human speaking over him.

“Maybe it was the mud on my shoes!”

His tone is even as he replies, “I was just chatting with your secretary outside. She told me.”

He frowns, glancing over at the taller human in confusion, wondering why he had not put him in his place.

Sebastian laughs, clapping his hands together once before remarking, “I’m glad you could make it over. We’ve had a break-in.” getting to his feet he waits for them to stand before leading them towards another door and room, continuing to speak, “Sir William’s office – the bank’s former Chairman. The room’s been left here like a sort of memorial. Someone broke in late last night.”

Curious he asks, “What did they steal?”
Turning to face them, Sebastian answers, “Nothing. Just left a little message,” as he swipes his security card to open the door.

The shorter human steps in to the room, but to the side allowing Sherlock to move past him to study the paint on the wall and painting while he stops next to the human and observes. For a few minutes he studies the scene before the three of them return to the shorter human’s office.

Once there, he pulls up some imaging on his computer, explaining, “Sixty seconds apart,” as he shows them the before and after pictures in regards to the painting. “So, someone came up here in the middle of the night, splashed paint around, then left within a minute.”

“How many ways into that office?” Sherlock inquires, staring at the screen.

The shorter human responds, “Well, that’s where this gets really interesting,” before he shows them to the reception area and the computers there. At one of the computers he brings up a floor plan, explaining, “Every door that opens in this bank, it gets logged right here. Every walk-in cupboard, every toilet.”

Studying the layout he murmurs, “That door didn’t open last night.”

He merely listens as he stands on the other side of Sebastian watching his human’s mind whirl.

Playing with the buttons on his coat, Sebastian comments, “There’s a hole in our security. Find it and we’ll pay you – five figures.” He pauses for a moment, pulling a check out of his suit pocket, “This is an advance. Tell me how he got in, there’s a bigger one on its way.”

Evenly Sherlock remarks, “I don’t need an incentive, Sebastian.” He turns to stare at the other human for a moment before walking away.

He stares for a moment in shock out across the building before the other human turns towards him as he watches, “He’s, uh, he’s kidding you, obviously.” Shifting his positioning, he holds out his hand, “Shall I look after that for him?” Sebastian smiles again in a condescending way before handing him the check. “Thanks,” he murmurs glancing at the check in disbelief before he goes to see what Sherlock is doing.
When his flatmate had come home the first time, without the shopping, he had been sure he had done a good job of hiding the evidence of the fact there had been a fight in the flat. He had realized while John was walking over to the table that he could feel the sword under his chair, he had tried to push it back without catching his attention, because he really did not want to get asked a bunch of pointless questions. Then John surprised him, when he left he told him to either air the room better or make sure the weapon was not in sight next time and he had not known what to do.

How? He wondered for a bit before it came to him, shifter. Yet he hadn’t got all pissed at him for the fighting in the house, instead he had let the matter be. Why? Anyone else would have been all over him for that. Could it be a possible response from being in the army or was that a response due to his being a shifter? It was something he would have to explore better in the future.

Bored he had decided to use John’s laptop instead of his own, it had been a synch to get on it, yet as he explored it he realized that there were some files that he could not access and no amount of thinking could tell him what the password to those files was. Instead he had gotten online, checking John’s rather pedestrian blog before going on to check his email, he would have checked John’s out of curiosity but again he could not figure out the password. Why would he have a rather simple one to get on the laptop but the files and email were protected by advanced ones? Alpha, is mind supplied, he probably has files relating to that, Eric, his mind continued, possible that his computer tech had designed a safety program for him.

Now there was another quandary for him, he could find nothing on the other man, and he had tried. He even hacked into his brother’s files once or twice to see if he could find the information in them, and there was nothing. So either the cobra was using a different name than was his or he wasn’t a British citizen. Yet when he had initial read him, deducing what he could about the shifter he had noted that he was British. Was he a really good mimic? Perhaps he should ask, he thinks. He doesn’t like puzzles he cannot solve.

Eventually, after going through a bunch of junk mail in his email, and answering a few case questions on things that might have seemed interesting on the offset but were really not, he had gotten an email from a man he went to uni with, Sebastian Wilkes, offering to pay him to do a job. While he had not liked Sebastian, he did like the fact that he had asked for help, and if it gave him a little bit of money that was not from Mycroft to use, well that was all good to. So when John had finally gotten back he was in the process of thinking about an answer for Sebastian.

Then John had taken the laptop back rather violently and he had been startled for a moment as to why until he remembered the fact that there was locked files that he was sure he was not supposed to see on there. Of course that made him curious but he liked his flatmate so he would not push the issue. At least, not right now he wouldn’t.

In normal style he had made up his mind and went to doing what he decided, saying nothing more than, “I need to go to the bank,” before leaving to do so.

He was surprisingly pleased that John had gone with him, it would give him a chance to show someone who had always said he was friendless that he really could have a friend, on the taxi ride to the bank he had told John that he had not gotten into his private files, hoping that would make the shorter man happy but he had just sighed which confused him for a bit until John explained that he
really shouldn’t use other peoples computers without asking like that, it was not good.

When he had introduced him as his friend, he had half expected him to deny it, but he didn’t. Why didn’t he? They worked together and were flatmates, but he wasn’t sure if they were friends. Was it because he was pack? He still had not explored what all that meant, but life had been crazy and sometimes his instructor in the matter was irritating because she smiled at him when he got to thinking way to fast and waited for him to slow down before speaking again. Or she would call the cobra and he was still trying to figure that mystery out so it drove him around the bin.

Now as he sits in the office with a man he is really not fond of he takes in every detail that he can but doesn’t actually use those details, preferring instead to be ordinary about his reasoning for how he knows things, he knows that will drive Sebastian nuts. After being showed the crime scene, the camera stills, and the computer that locks everything he goes into research mode, after all he has to gather the facts before he can come up with an answer.

First thing is first, get pictures of the graffiti so he can come back to them later if he needs, or show them to someone who works with graffiti more. From there he decides to check the other entrance to the room, the door to the outside balcony that looks out at the Swiss Re Tower. The balcony is hundreds of feet above the ground and he bites his low lip as he considers the various ways one could get to it in his head. With that line of thought done he heads out on the trading floor, checking around ever desk, computer, and columns. When he finally finds the only one with a clear view of the graffiti he removes the name card that goes with it and collects John so they can leave.

They are just about to the escalators when his shorter companion remarks, “Two trips around the world this month. You didn’t ask his secretary; you said that just to irritate him.”

He smiles at the fact that his friend had realized what he was doing but does not comment.

“How did you know?” comes the soft question.

He recalls his quick study of the watch, “Did you see his watch?” he inquires.

“His watch?” his flatmate repeats, from anyone else that would bug him, but from John it is most alright because he is asking, not stating.

As they get onto the escalator he answers, “The time was right but the date was wrong. Said two days ago. Crossed the dateline twice but he didn’t alter it.”

Curious, his flatmate asks, “Within a month? How’d you get that part?”

He smiles tightly as he answers, “New Breitling. Only came out this February.”

As they step off the escalator John inquires, “Okay. So d’you think we should sniff around here for a bit longer?”

Eyes still studying everything he answers, “Got everything I need to know already, thanks.”

The shorter man makes a questioning noise as he pauses for a moment.

“That graffiti was a message for someone at the bank working on the trading floors. We find the intended recipient and…” he trails off, waiting to see if John will finish the sentence. He is rather pleased when he does.
“They’ll lead us to the person who sent it.”

“Obvious,” he states as the go to take the next escalator down.

“Well, there’s three hundred people up there. Who was it meant for?” John queries.

“Pillars,” he states, his mind going over the various items in the way of seeing the graffiti.

Slightly confused, the shorter man asks, “What?”

Looking around he answers him, “Pillars and the screens. Very few places you can see the graffiti from. That narrows the field considerably. And of course the message was left at eleven thirty-four last night. That tells us a lot.”

“Does it?”

“Traders come to work at all hours. Some trade with Hong Kong in the middle of the night. That message was intended for someone who came in at midnight.” He tells the shorter man as they go through the revolving doors and on to the street. Once outside he holds the name card up to show his companion, stating, “Not many Van Coons in the phonebook.” Spotting a taxi, he calls out, “Taxi!” as he waves them down quickly.

On the ride to Van Coon’s home, he considers why it does not bother him when John ask questions that if other people asked would anger or annoy him. The only thing he can come up with is because John seems to actually care and not treat him like a freak for his logic and mind the way others do.

When they get to the row of flats that Van Coon lives at he tries the buzzer several times before studying the building to determine what the floor layout would be. John inquires about what they should do even as he is formulating a plan for how to get into the flat.

“Just moved in,” he mutters looking at the buzzers tags, before he smile at John.

“What?” he inquires, his tone implying he does not understand.

Turning to face the intercom and the buzzer he points to the hand written label that says Wintle. “The floor above. New label.”

“Could have just replaced it.” his companion suggests.

As he presses the button his glance flickers to John, “No-one ever does that.”

“Hello?” a female voice comes from the intercom.

Sherlock looks back at the intercom camera and smiles somewhat sheepishly as he softly comments, “Hi! Um, I live in the flat just below you. I-I don’t think we’ve met.” His smile grows a bit, still a tad bit sheepish but completely friendly.

“No, well, uh, I’ve just moved in.” she replies hesitantly.

He quickly throws a I-told-you-so look to his companion before looking down and playing up the sheepish behavior. “Actually, I’ve just locked my keys in my flat.” He bites down on his lip, playing
on his ability to act.

“D’you want me to buzz you in?” she inquires politely.

“Yeah.” He replies nodding, “And can I use your balcony?”

“What?” she questions, tone confused.

Really, some people are way too simple to play with. Well at least it gives him a way to get into the flat and look around. After she lets him in he heads up to her flat while he leaves John at the door to ‘his’ flat. Once on her balcony he studies the drop between hers and ‘his’ before carefully dropping down. Carefully opening the balcony door he goes through the various rooms, noting everything. On the intercom he can hear John asking to be let in but he continues to look through the apartment instead. When he comes to the bedroom door he finds it is locked and uses his shoulder to bust it open. Laying across the bed is a dark haired man dressed in a suit and great coat, a bullet hole in his right temple.

Rolling his eyes he goes and buzzes John in so that he can call the police to come investigate the scene. Before they get there however he removes his coat and carefully studies the rest of the scene. By the time the police have gotten there he is just getting ready to look over the body and thus has to share space with the forensics photographer as he slips on a pair of gloves.

“D’you think he’d lost a lot of money? I mean, suicide is pretty common among City boys.” John remarks as he watches him, arms crossed across his chest.

Looking over at him he comments, “We don’t know that it was suicide.” He spots Van Coon luggage and carefully goes through it by sight, barely touching it so not to disturb it.

His companion sounds disbelieving when he states, “Come on. The door was locked from the inside; you had to climb down the balcony.”

He ignores that statement, reminding himself that for all John is smarter than the rest of the people here, he is still not as smart as him. “Been away three days, judging by the laundry.” He studies the indentation in the clothing, before standing to look at John. “Look at the case. There was something tightly packed inside it.”

Looking away his companion nods once, glancing back at him as he responds, “Thanks – I’ll take your word for it.”

Confusion mars his features as he queries, “Problem?”

Again John glances at him, as he answers, “Yeah, I’m not desperate to root around some bloke’s dirty underwear.”

He glances down for a moment thinking about it before he recalls that John has a far better sense of smell than him. Oh. That would explain it, walking over to the foot of the bed he absently questions, “Those symbols at the bank – the graffiti. Why were they put there?”

He can feel the shorter man’s eyes on him as he answers with a question, “What, some sort of code?”

Looking over Van Coons legs and feet, he mutters, “Obviously,” before moving on to carefully check his jacket inside pockets. “Why were they painted? If you want to communicate, why not use
Looking over Van Coon, John replies, “Well, maybe he wasn’t answering.”

He smiles to himself, as he comments, “Oh good. You follow.” He is pleased that his companion seems to be keeping up though this pleasure is short lived when John tells him he doesn’t. Shooting him a slightly disappointed look he continues speaking as he moves on to examine Van Coon’s hands, “What kind of a message would everyone try to avoid?”

The confused look John gives him is mildly frustrating but he encourages John to think it through by asking, “What about this morning – those letters you were looking at?”

“Bills,” he murmurs, his confusion clearing away according to his expression.

Prying Van Coon’s mouth open slowly he pulls a small black origami flower from inside, the sound of hissing air escapes the dead man’s lungs. “Yes. He was being threatened.”

In the other room he can hear someone he does not know giving orders. As he slowly straightens, John leans over to look at the paper flower in his hand as he puts it in an evidence bag.

“Not by the gas board,” he murmurs.

A plainly dressed man comes walking in, politely, because he has often been reminded that you’re supposed to be polite to those who you’re working with he heads over to the younger man, offering his hand to shake as he comments, “Ah, Sergeant. We haven’t met.”

He is mildly confused when the man puts his hands on his hips rather than shake the offered hand. Isn’t the polite thing to do to shake his hand? Even if he doesn’t like him?

“Yeah, I know who you are; and I’d prefer it if you didn’t tamper with any of the evidence.” The younger man just about snaps at him.

Lowering his hand, he passes him the evidence bag with the other one before querying, “I’ve phoned Lestrade. Is he on his way?”

Arrogantly the young man answers him, “He’s busy. I’m in charge. And it’s not Sergeant; it’s Detective Inspector. Dimmock.”

He knows that he looks surprised but he has a hard time controlling it as he glances over at John questioningly. A moment later Dimmock is leaving the room and the two of them follow him into the living room.

“We’re obviously looking at a suicide.” Dimmock states as he hands the bag to one of the forensics team members.

John seems to agree with him, though there is a little bit of a question to his voice when he speaks, “That does seem the only explanation of all the facts.”

Looking around the room, he takes in the fact that the room is completely set up for a left-handed person, so why would he shoot himself with his right? Since politeness did not seem to work he switches back to his normal blunt way of remarking instead. “Wrong. It’s one possible explanation of some of the facts.” He turns to look Dimmock his tone rather condescending as he continues,
“You’ve got a solution that you like, but you’re choosing to ignore anything you see that doesn’t comply with it.” he also glances over to John who is listening carefully even if he is not watching him.

“Like?” Dimmock inquires looking at him.

“The wound was on the right side of his head.” He tells him.

Confusion colors the man’s face as he asks, “And?”

“Van Coon was left-handed.” He answers, then proceeds to use a variety of bends in order to use his left hand to point at his right temple, none of them match the wound positioning. “Requires quite a bit of contortion.”


Sarcasm just about drips from his voice as he remarks, “Oh, I’m amazed you didn’t notice. All you have to do is look around this flat.” Pausing he points to the table beside the sofa, “Coffee table on the left-hand side; coffee mug handle pointing to the left. Power sockets: habitually used the ones on the left…” he trails off as he points to it and gives them a moment to look before continuing on, “Pen and paper on the left-hand side of the phone because he picked it up with his right and took down messages with his left. D’you want me to go on?” he glances at Dimmock as he stops again.

Only it is John who answers, “No, I think you’ve covered it,” with his head tilted back and his eyes closed tiredly.

He ignores that however because he is aggravated and states, “Oh, I might as well; I’m almost at the bottom of the list.” Out of the corner of his eye he sees John nod as if he knew that was going to be his answer. Motioning to the kitchen he starts back up. “There’s a knife on the breadboard with butter on the right side of the blade because he used it with his left.” Again he pauses, this time turning to face Dimmock as he remarks, “It’s highly unlikely that a left-handed man would shoot himself in the right side of his head.” Taking a breath he announces, “Conclusion: someone broke in here and murdered him. Only explanation of all the facts.”

Still confused Dimmock inquires, “but the gun, why?” his voice trails off as Sherlock snaps at him.

“He was waiting for the killer. He’d been threatened.” He walks away at that point, not wishing to speak any more with the dimwit so he goes and starts putting his scarf on.

“What?” he hears the idiot ask.

Since John is right there he answers, explaining, “Today at the bank. Sort of a warning.”

As he pulls his coat on, he remarks, “He fired a shot when his attacker came in.”

“And the bullet?” Dimmock questions, confusion seeming to be his normal tone.

“Went through the open window,” he answers as he buttons up the belstaff.

Disbelief colors the detective inspectors voice as he exclaims, “Oh, come on! What are the chances of that?”
Tugging his first glove on, he answers, “Wait until you get the ballistics report. The bullet in his brain wasn’t fired from his gun. I guarantee it.”

“But if his door was locked from the inside, how did the killer get in?” Dimmock inquires looking over at him.

Roughly pulling the second on, he condescendingly states, “Good! You’re finally asking the right questions,” before turning and flouncing away.
John’s POV
After following Sherlock out of the crime scene the two of them track down Sebastian to tell him about Van Coon. The conversation had been mostly smooth, though for some reason Sherlock had allowed him to speak for the most part, at least until Sebastian had gotten a text. The scent in the room was full of loss from the arsehole and frustration from his potential bondmate. When they had returned to the flat where Sherlock had sprawled out on the sofa, taking up the poise he had come to think of as his thinking one for most of the night. Sometime after two in the morning he had awoken to the sound of the violin being played, a slow melody, lost in thought.

Using the pack link he checks on the human downstairs who is merely trying to figure out what is going on with the case. Shaking his head, he gets comfortable and goes back to sleep listening to the sound of him playing. First thing in the morning he heads to the surgery down the road from the flat, they are currently hiring and he would like to get something to do besides chase after his mad flatmate and potential bondmate.

When he is first asked into the back office the female that he has to deal with seems startled by his mild manners and appearance, however within minutes he can smell her attraction in the air. Sighing internally, he flashes her a polite smile as she reads his curriculum vitae.

“Just locum work,” she tells him as she looks up.

He smiles reassuringly, tilting his head a bit as he replies, “That's alright.”

Glancing back at his papers mentions, “You’re, um ... well, you’re a bit over-qualified.”

His smile widens a bit, he well knows his skills, particularly the fact that his resume doesn’t even include all of them. “Er, I could always do with the money,” he tells softly.

Touching a hand to her jaw and then unconsciously brushing her hair from her face as she sets the papers down and answers, “Well, we’ve got two away on holiday this week, and one’s just left to have a baby. Might be a bit mundane for you.”

He nods once while listening to show he understands then gives another small smile as he answers, “Er, no; mundane is good sometimes. Mundane works.”

Her voice softens as she states, “It says here you were a soldier.”

Nodding once he adds, “And a doctor,” with a charming smile.

Clasping her hands in front of her she studies the papers once more, querying, “Anything else you can do?”

Trying to think of something not related to his shifter traits he replies, “I learned the clarinet at school.”
A burst of a chuckle escapes her as she murmurs, “Well, I look forward to it!” she smiles at him a bit flirty, and her scent reeks of desire.

Smiling politely he gets to his feet and inclines his head to her, telling her to have a good day. Before she can react, he is gone, out the door and out of the building into the London air. Prior to finding his bondmate he might have enjoyed playing with her for a while because she was a lovely looking woman with a decent scent, however with his bondmates scent clear in his mind, he finds her attraction to be a bit annoying instead.

During the walk back to the flat a slender dark haired teen approaches him, stopping a few feet away and inclining his head so the nape of his neck is visible. He stops, eyes narrowing on the neck, mind determining species and pack, or in his case lack of pack.

“Alpha,” his voice is soft, low so those around them pay no attention to the stranger teenager.

He lifts his head, blue eyes narrowing as he takes a careful sniff of the air. According to the markings on the boys neck he is an elite, but the type seems to be a bit off, they show as the wolf markings for the most part but the bottom of them is that of the lynx. A rather rare combination. According to the scent he had just taken in the boy was a mutt, he could smell wolf, lynx, mouse, and crow in him, though the first two are the dominate scents. He has no pack mark, the spot that generally has that is empty.

Sighing, his mind reaches for his beta, *Is someone keeping an eye on Sherlock?*

It takes a moment before the response comes through, *Of course, today is Maria, she volunteered.*

He send a mental nod in response before turning his attention back to the boy, “There is a café two blocks over, lets go.”

The boy nods once, straighten but keeping his eyes down cast. As the two of them walk he falls two steps behind, still looking at the ground. So he was raised by one of the packs that uses the old values. When they reach the small café, he opens the door but the boy does not enter, waiting instead for him. Sighing, he goes to the table he generally shares with Sherlock and takes a seat, motioning for the boy to sit across from him.

“Allright then, you’ve presented yourself to me for a reason, you can explain it while you eat, I can smell your hunger even if I could not hear your stomach growling.” He tells the teenager, watching as a blush colors his features and he quickly glances up before just as quickly dropping his gaze. “Is there something in particular you want?”

“I…” the teen mutters, clearly surprised.

When the waitress comes over she greets him as an old customer, asking if he wants his usual, he smiles at her, and nods, “Please do Anamarie,” then he motions to the kid, “for him though, I’ll eat when I get back to the flat.”

She nods and goes to put in his order.

“I…” the kid starts again, still not seeming to get pass his shock.

*Will this be easier?* He inquires using the telepathy that all shifter are born with.

The boys head jerks up and he stares at him hard. Finally he brings himself to answer, “I, no, I never learned to use the telepath. Mother’s pack thought I was not worthy.”
He nods, watching the kid, and focuses on putting him at ease using the natural pheromones that all shifters scent and alphas learn to control. “Go on,” he gently prods the teen.

He is just about to talk when Anamarie comes back over with a tray of food on it and sets it all down in front of the kid except for a second tea that she gives to John with a smile.

“This is too much,” he murmurs, shocked.

He gives a small shake of his head, smiling reassuringly at the kid, “It really is not. Now lets start simple, your name?”

“Jace,” he replies as he starts to eat, “Jace L…” he stops himself, blushing, “just Jace,” he eventually mutters.

He nods, if the boy had been raised pack with old pack values, then he would consider himself to be nameless since he is not currently in a pack. “Nice to meet you Jace, I am Doctor John Watson,” he introduces himself to the boy, not using his pack title in this situation.

The boy nods slowly, keeping his eyes on his throat.

“So of all the alpha’s out there, why me?” he inquires, watching the boy carefully.

A flush spreads across his skin as he answers, “You’re the only one I have heard of that accepts mutts.” He swallows hard, “I…” he gives a shake of his head before continuing, “I’m a mutt, too undisciplined, not fast or smart enough, but I don’t want to be packless, I would rather be an omega than packless.”

It takes everything in John not to growl low in his throat. He’s not pissed at the boy but he is definitely pissed, however like the good alpha he is, he controls his anger so it does not change his scent. Children should never be made to feel like that, particularly not for something that is not within their control.

Jacob, come to the small café by the flat. Now. Bring Daria with you, he sends the order to his beta without any of the normal politeness that he prefers to use.

Sir, is the nearly instant reply that he receives.

“Have you ever attacked a fellow pack member with the intent to do them great harm? Lied, stole, murdered, or raped someone?” he asks the boy softly.

The boy shakes his head violently, “No! I would never, no, no, no, no!” he answers, his scent full of worry and fear but completely honest.

He nods once, “Alright then,” pushing off his jacket, he deftly unfastens the buttons on his left wrist, holding it upright in the same manner as he had during the pack meeting just a few weeks prior. “It is your choice, I can tell you I doubt you would be an omega, you do not have the personality of one. Past that, I can see, hear, and smell nothing wrong with you, I am guessing that you are currently homeless or damn close to being homeless, yes?”

The boy cannot help but stare at him in shock, he can tell he had not actually expect things to go in the way he hoped. “I yes,” the boy mutters, blushing again. Slowly as if unsure he removes his coat to show rather worn and ill-fitting clothing. Pushing up his right sleeve he tentative reaches forward but stops just short as if scared.

Smiling, John completes the link, enfolding the boy within the pack and a feeling of warmth.
Apparently this surprises the boy who can do nothing but stare at him.

“Go on, finish eating.” He suggests to the boy as he releases his arm.

Slowly the teen goes back to eating, his emotions running high within the pack link as he settles into it. For the next few minutes the two of them are silent as he waits for the beta and iota of the pack. According to the boys behavior this was something that he was used to. Though he did seem to relax a bit more with some mental prompting and calm being promoted through scent.

When Jacob comes striding in, Daria and Nathan close behind him, their small group quickly makes their way over to where the two of them are seated.

Inclining his head a little Jacob greats him, “Sir,” that was unusual for you to use the link rather than the phones. He smiles up at his beta, a low chuckle escaping, “Jacob, Daria, Nathan, this is Jace, our newest pack member,” he tells the trio, his voice low so others do not listen.

Daria reaches out capturing the boys right hand, her eyes glazing for a moment as she did a rapid evaluation of his health. “Welcome to the family,” she murmurs as she releases him.

His eyes are wide as he stares at her.

“I ummm…” his voice trails off and John realizes he does not know how to address them.

“Jace this is Jacob, the beta of the pack, the lovely female you’re blushing at is Daria, the packs iota, beside her is her mate Nathan, one of the packs upsilon.” He tells the teenager, pointing at each in turn.

Blushing the boy presents his neck as he mumbles a greeting.

“None of us are wolves boy, so that is pointless to do.” Nathan informs him in his low voice.

The boys head jerks up to stare at them. “What?”

Jacob smiles at him, taking a seat, as does Daria though Nathan stays standing beside her.

“I’m a falcon, these two are vipers,” his beta tells the boy, “most members of the pack with rank, or who you will deal with the most for now are not wolves or they are mixed breeds.”

“Really?” seems to burst from his lips before he has a chance to stop himself and then he is blushing again.

Getting to his feet, John smiles at the kid, telling him, “Really, Jacob here will make sure you have somewhere to stay and will take you to get a few outfits. Tomorrow you can speak with Cyanne to see where you are in your education and whatever training you will need. Currently the alpha-second is working, however when he is done I will see if he will take you to get a proper wardrobe. In the next few weeks a permanent home will be found for you among the pack.”

The boys eyes get wide as he stares at him, disbelief and hope swamping his scent. “Jacob please make sure he has enough to eat, use my account to pay for it, Daria a word outside if you will.”

The two of them nod, with her rising to her feet gracefully to follow him out. When the two of them step outside he looks at her, the anger he had felt coming to the surface. “Well, I know that look, you’re not happy.”
“He was abused, mentally, emotionally, physically, and sexually. On repeated occasions.” She tells him bluntly, her voice a low hiss.

“Find out which pack he was born to, then give the information to Eric, I want a complete report by the time this case is done.” He orders hers, his tone cold in his fury. “Heal whatever damage you can. Make sure whoever accepts him into their family understands that he will have difficulties.”

She nods once, then comments, “He’s also been partially bound. He is trapped in human shape but his power is still there, burning beneath the surface. That’s not safe.”

“Deal with it, I believe either you or Jacob can unlock it, if not call me and I will.” He answers her.

“May I skin the person responsible for this crime? Children are supposed to be cherished.” Her hissing is more pronounced on the ‘s’ and ‘c’ a clear sign that she is extremely pissed.

“I’ll be taking them in front of the council, and if the council does not satisfy my anger, I’ll challenge them. There are very few wolves who can keep up with me in my other form.” He reassures her. “Take care of the boy, I need to go check with Sherlock to make sure he is not blowing things up.”

She nods, going back into the small café while he continues on his way home. As soon as this case was wrapped up he was going to be paying someone a visit of the unfriendly kind. It was rare for one of their children to end up in a situation like Jace was in but it still occasionally happened. Jackal’s tended to foster all non-shifter children to other non-shifter jackals that still had ties to the pack, thus if they produced shifter children it was not hard to pull them in. Nearly every wolf pack accepted children who were mixed or human as part of the pack without treating them any differently. Every species had their own standards, but one thing the councils of all the species agreed on was you did not abuse a child.

Reaching the flat, he carefully clears his mind before going in. He does not wish to distract Sherlock with his anger. This would be dealt with soon enough.
A lovely round of thank you to all the people who read, follow, bookmark, leave kudos, review, or any combination of the before this story. Please enjoy the next installment in the story.

John’s POV
Upon walking into the flat he was presented with Sherlock seated in the armchair in front of the fireplace, staring at the mirror surrounded by pictures of the crime scene. His hands are steepled just below his jaw and in the same manner as when he sprawl on the sofa to think. He smiles a little to himself as he looks him over.

“I said, can you pass me a pen?” the taller man inquires as he continues to stare at the images.

For a moment he glances around, startled and unsure whether he is talking to him or not but then he realizes that he really is. “What? When?” he inquires after dropping his coat on his chair.

“’Bout an hour ago,” comes the taller man’s answer.

Shaking his head a little, “Didn’t notice I’d gone out, then,” he mutters as he picks a pen up from the table, tossing to the other man with ease. He’s not surprised when Sherlock catches it without bothering to look towards him, that man’s reflexes are as graceful as a cat’s. A cat was actually what he considered his graceful potential bondmate to be, probably a panther or a lynx going by his personality. “Yeah, I went to see about a job at that surgery.”

The taller man does not move as he inquires, “How was it?”

Absently he responds, “It’s great. It will be just what I need.”

“Why?” the human inquires slightly confused.

He smiles, turning to look at him, “I like to feel useful,” he answers the taller human.

His dark-haired companion looks at him suspiciously for a moment, before closing his eyes and inclining his head towards his laptop where a web page is opened to.

“Hmmm?” he murmurs, curiously he walks over and looks it over. After reading it he article quickly he mutters, “The intruder who can walk through walls.”

Still staring straight at the pictures on the wall, his tall companion remarks, “Happened last night. Journalist shot dead in his flat; doors locked, windows bolted from the inside – exactly the same as Van Coon.”

Straightening, he turns to look at the dark-haired human, softly stating, “God, you think…” his voice trails off as Sherlock speaks up.

“He’s killed another one.”
A little bit later, after one short cab ride later, the two of them are standing in front of the young detective inspectors Dimmock’s desk while Sherlock is typing away on a laptop.

“Brian Lukis, freelance journalist. Murdered in his flat,” his dark-haired companion pauses for a moment to flip the laptop around to face the detective inspector, “doors locked from the inside.”

The detective inspector looks at the page in annoyance as he comments, “You’ve gotta admit, it’s similar. Both men killed by someone who can,” he hesitates a moment on the next part, “walk through solid walls.”

His voice serious and his scent full of annoyance, Sherlock demands, “Inspector, do you seriously believe that Eddie Van Coon was just another City suicide?”

The human in the seat squirms a bit, not meeting his dark-haired companion’s eyes.

Sighing, his dark-haired companion looks at the ceiling for a moment before locking his eyes on the detective inspector and commenting questioningly, “You have seen the ballistics report, I suppose?”

Nodding rapidly, the detective inspector still will not meet Sherlock’s eyes as he hums a confirmative.

Impatiently, his frustration bleeding over into his voice he demands, “And the shot that killed him: was it fired from his own gun?”

The detective inspector gives a quick shake of his head as he reluctantly admits, “No.”

Snapping at the D.I., Sherlock remarks, “No. So this investigation might move a bit quicker if you were to take my word as gospel.” As he speaks he looks around agitatedly before his gaze returns to the silent detective inspector. Leaning forward and bracing himself on the desk, his voice drops as he informs him, “I just handed you a murder enquiry.” His tone hardens, going back to normal as he demands, “Five minutes in his flat.”

Dimmock sighs, nodding once. Before he can say or do anything else, Sherlock has stood and spun on his heel, leaving the yard. Sighing again, the detective inspector quickly gets to his feet, following the tall man out into the street, and muttering, “Come one, we’ll use the regular car since you won’t get in a police car.”

He can smell the frustration from the detective inspector, just as he can smell the triumph from his dark-haired human. Sherlock nods, accepting this idea, and the three of them get into the detective inspectors vehicle with the detective inspector driving. A few minutes later the trio are on their way up a set of steps into Brian Lukis’ flat after ducking under the police tape in front of the door.

He glances around, discreetly sniffing the air and catching the scent of something familiar from Van Coon’s flat but not yet identifying it. He knew that he would be able to identify it if he was to smell it in person, it was only that there were too many human scents covering it up at this point. Keeping an eye on both the detective inspector and Sherlock he waits patiently, considering everything that he knows so far.

“Four floors up,” his dark-haired human murmurs as he looks out the window. Pausing to take a deep breath, he continues, glancing around, “That’s why they think they’re safe. Put a chain across the door and bolt it shut; think they’re impregnable.” He walks around the flat for a moment, still murmuring to himself as he goes, “They don’t reckon for one second that there’s another way in.”

The tall human spins around, looking up and he follows his gaze noticing the skylight.
Confusion pours off of the detective inspector as he states, “I don’t understand.”

Heading towards the landing with the skylight above it, Sherlock replies, “You’re dealing with a killer who can climb.”

Hopping on a stool beneath the skylight, he unhooks the window latch as the detective inspector inquires, “What are you doing?”

Voice soft, he answers, “He clings to the walls like an insect.” Shoving the window up and open he continues speaking, “That’s how he got in.”

“What?” Dimmock exclaims staring at him.

Staring at the window just above him, his dark-haired human explains, “Climbed up the side of the walls, ran along the roof, dropped in through this skylight.”

Disbelief colors both Dimmock’s tone and scent as he responds, “You’re not serious! Like Spiderman?”

Turning to face him, Sherlock remarks, “He scaled six floors of a Docklands apartment building, jumped the balcony to kill Van Coon.”

Laughing in disbelief, the detective inspector shakes his head looking down, “Oh, ho-hold on!”

His dark-haired human ignores this as he continues to speak, “And of course that’s how he got into the bank. He ran along the window ledge and onto the terrace.” Stepping off the stool he looks around, his gaze going to the piles of books as he mutters, “We have to find out what connects these two men.”

Without saying another word to the detective inspector, Sherlock bolts out the door, John following close behind in amusement over the two of them. By the time the detective inspector gets to the street, Sherlock has already hailed a cab, and he gives a small wave as he joins his tall companion in it. After a silent ride to the library that Sherlock had directed their cab to, they find themselves going to the section that the book is from after a moment’s consideration from Sherlock.

“Date stamped on the book is the same day that he died.” He murmurs as he walks along the isle, glancing at the book spine to double check its number code.

While Sherlock pulls books off of the shelf the book in his hands is from, he pulls from the rack across and one over from it. Something catches his attention behind one of the books, so he continues to tug them off muttering, “Sherlock.”

His tall companion turns, pulling more of the books off and looking at the yellow paint he is staring at. Dropping the books he pulls his phone and takes more pictures, before turning to leave.

John sighs, quickly picking them up and shoving them back on the shelf before following his focused potential bondmate back to the street to hail another cab. As they ride back to Baker Street he texts his sister.

-Do we have any cabbies in the wolf part of our pack?- JW

It is a few minutes before she replies, -I don’t think so, why?-HW

He sighs before answering her, -Sherlock likes to use a cab when he is not on foot. I was thinking it would be easier to keep track of him if one or two of us used a cab because then he would have his
protection in that form too- JW

They had just pulled up to their flat when she replies, -Do you want me to check into it?- HW

-No. I’ll have Eric do so. He can find a few trust worthy cabbies. Or ones that he can control.- JW

-Okay. Be careful.- HW

As they walk up the steps he switches to texting the black cobra of their group with some directions.

-Please find four cabbies who are trustworthy or can be made trustworthy. I will email you more details.-JW

-Please. That’s easy. Information on the boy in your inbox.-Tech

He doesn’t bother responding, knowing that the cobra does not actually expect one. Instead he listens as Sherlock downloads the pictures from his phone and prints them off before adding them to the wall where he has the others. Then the two of them stand side by side in front of it, studying them.

“So, the killer goes to the bank, leaves a threatening cipher for Van Coon; Van Coon panics, returns to his apartment, locks himself in.” his tall companion recaps as he looks between each image, “Hours later, he dies.”

Picking up where he leaves off, John states, “The killer finds Lukis at the library; he writes the cipher on the shelf where he knows it’ll be seen; Lukis goes home.”

Softly, he inquires, “Why did they die, Sherlock?”

Lifting his hand, Sherlock traces the line painted on Sir William’s face as he murmurs, “Only the cipher can tell us.” For a moment he taps his finger against the picture as he thinks about it.

His scent goes from thoughtful to delighted as he spins and heads out, grabbing his coat as he goes. Sighing, John gives a shake of his head and follows.

A brief while later the two of them are walking through Trafalgar Square, walking towards the National Gallery and Sherlock is explaining to him about codes. “The world’s run on codes and ciphers, John. From the million-pound security system at the bank, to the PIN machine you took exception to, cryptography inhabits our every waking moment.”

He nods once, “Yes, okay, but,” he trails off, waiting for his dark-haired human to continue explaining.

“But it’s all computer-generated: electronic codes, electronic ciphering methods. This is different. It’s an ancient device. Modern code-breaking methods won’t unravel it.” he completes the thought.

Curious, he glances over at him, asking, “Where are we headed?”

Looking around as if trying to spot someone, he replies, “I need to ask some advice.”

A smile curves his lips as he hears his potential bondmate admit to not knowing everything. “What? Sorry?” he queries as he tries not to chuckle.

Giving him a dark look Sherlock responds, “You heard me.”

Despite the expression on his potential bondmate’s face, his scent does not fill with any of the darker emotions and he feels safe inquiring, “You need advice?”
“On painting, yes. I need to talk to an expert.” Comes the short tempered reply as they walk around the National Gallery to the rear of the building where a young man is finishing spray painting a stenciled sketch on a grey metal door.

As the two of them stop on either side of the young man, he comments, “Part of a new exhibition.” Without ever looking away from the painting.

“Interesting,” Sherlock replies, his tone implying otherwise as he pulls his phone out and loads the pictures.

Chuckling a little the young man states, “I call it Urban Bloodlust Frenzy.”

Glancing over at it, he takes in the image of a policeman holding a rifle and a pigs nose instead of is human one. At the bottom it is signed Raz. “Catchy,” he murmurs, trying not to sneeze at the smell of the spray paint which is messing with his ability to scent things.

Still spraying, Raz comments, “I’ve got two minutes before a Community Support Officer comes round that corner.” He pauses, looking over to Sherlock, “Can we do this while I’m workin’?”

Silently his dark-haired human passes his phone to the spray painter, inquiring, “Know the author?” as the younger man flicks through the images on it.

When the younger man is done he replies, “Recognize the paint. It’s like Michigan; hardcore propellant. I’d say zinc.”

Nodding towards the phone Sherlock queries, “What about the symbols: d’you recognize them?”

Frowning the young man flips through the images again, answering, “Not even sure it’s a proper language.”

Briefly glancing towards him, the taller human leans closer to the young man, his voice taking on an edge to it as he informs him, “Two men have been murdered, Raz. Deciphering this is the key to finding out who killed them.”

Looking between the two of us, the young man holds the phone out towards Sherlock as he asks, “What, and this is all you’ve got to go on? It’s hardly much, now, is it?”

Eyes narrow, Sherlock demands, “Are you gonna help us or not?”

Raz nods once, biting his lip before replying, “I’ll ask around.”

“Somebody must know something about it,” his tall companion remarks.

Before any more conversation can be had, a man’s voice shouts, “Oi!” Sherlock grabs his phone from Raz and bolts, while Raz drops the other can of spray paint and does the same. Knowing he is not getting far, John does the same thing he would have done in a combat situation, and pulls up the shielding that makes him unnoticeable and slowly walks away as the two Community Support Officers reach the bag. The first one kicks the bag once, moving the cans before turning to walk away grumbling about kids and their paints.

He slowly sets the can on the ground a little ways away and keeps on walking.

Reaching out with his mind, he queries of Elspeth, Are you still watching the alpha-second?

Indeed. He’s fast, but not as fast as me. Good save there, Maria showed me. She replies, sending
Thanks, vanishing is something I excel at, which saved my arse plenty of times in Afghanistan. He replies as he un-shields and walks calmly down the street towards the flat.

Using his phone he accesses his email and reads all the information on Jace’s birth pack. With each word he reads his anger increases but he keeps it tightly controlled so it does not echo through the pack link. By the time he reaches the flat he is furious and wishes to get this case wrapped up soon as possible so he can switch gears.

As he walks into the flat, he slams the door in his anger.

Looking at the new sheets that he sees have been added, his flatmate comments, “You’ve been a while.”

Turning briskly he replies, “I had something I needed to think about.” His voice relays the tightly controlled emotions though he does not allow them anywhere near his link to the other members of his pack.

Glancing at him in the mirror the dark-haired human looks at him speculatively for a moment before slamming the book in his hands shut and muttering, “This symbol, I still can’t place it.”

Turning, the taller man stops him from pulling his jacket off, by pushing it back on him. John’s breath catches as he imagines the opposite in his head and he is only partially aware of what Sherlock is telling him. “No, I need you to go to the police station,” he finally catches on to what he is being told “ask about the journalist.”

Exasperated he grumbles, “Oh Jesus.” Are you still nearby?

Of course, I am actually in the flat, as a multiform it is fairly simple for me to mask my scent. I am the mouse sitting under the sofa that the alpha-second hasn’t noticed yet.

He can’t help but smile at that as Sherlock grabs his coat and heads towards the door still speaking, “His personal effects will have been impounded. Get hold of his diary, or something that will tell us his movements.”

The two of them head down stairs and he catches a glimpse of a sleek black and grey tabby shooting past them as they go out onto the street. His potential bondmate is still speaking, “Gonna go and see Van Coon’s P.A. If we retrace their steps, somewhere they’ll coincide,” with that the taller human walks off down the street, never seeming to notice the cat staying pretty much beside him.

A feeling of being watched makes him scan the area carefully as he hails a taxi. A moment later, he spots an Oriental-looking woman dressed in dark clothes and glasses taking pictures in his direction. Maria, follow that Oriental woman, he tells his guardian, showing her with his mind. I am going to the yard. Once you know where she is going or who she is get the information to Eric.

Alrighty, do you want me to call you another assistant? She replies.

No, I am fairly good at taking care of myself. Leaning down to the taxi drivers window he tells him, “Scotland Yard.” Before straightening up to get in.

“Right,” the driver comments.

As he takes a seat he cannot see her anymore but is sure that Maria will have no problems keeping
up.

The ride to the yard goes quickly, and within a surprisingly little amount of time he is speaking with Detective Inspector Dimmock. Thankfully enough the detective inspector does not seem to mind what he has asked, and fetches the box with all of the Lukis’ items in it.

As the younger man is going through the box he comments, “Your friend…” his voice trails off as if he is looking for a good way to put whatever it is he is going to say.

“Listen, I am probably going to agree with whatever you are going to say.” He inserts into the pause.

“He’s an arrogant sod,” comes the detective inspectors rest of his sentence.

Looking down at the box, he comments, “Well, that was mild! People say a lot worse than that.” Perhaps this young detective inspector is a decent sort.

Offering him the diary, the younger man gives a small smile before questioning, “This is what you wanted, isn’t it? The journalist’s diary?”

Taking the diary, he glances through it, finding a page bookmarked with a boarding pass marked Dalian DLC to London LHR on Zhuang Airlines. “Thank you,” he tells the detective inspector.

Following the events of the day, he walks to most of the places listed. When he gets to the road with a Chinese shop on it he is startled when he bumps into Sherlock because neither of them are really paying attention. Before he has a chance to say anything, the taller man is speaking rapid fire and barely breathing between sentences so he just lets him go until he pauses for a breath.

“That shop over there,” he answers the question about where he had went, pointing at it as he does so.

The dark-haired human looks between the shop and him, frowning, “How can you tell?” he finally asks, his scent filling with frustration momentarily.

Holding up the diary he replies, “Lukis’ diary,” flipping it open to the bookmarked page he shows it to the taller man, “he was here too. He wrote down the address.” Without waiting for his companion he turns and heads to the shop knowing that he would not be far behind. A small smile curves his lips that he finally got to the answer a tad bit faster than the genius.

“Oh,” he mutters, his scent clearing back up as he follows behind.

As the two of them enter the small shop which has a great many decorative cats sitting on their hind legs and waving with one front paw raised, he greets the shop keeper politely.

She tries to sell him a lucky cat but he politely rebuffs her on every turn as he looks over the items in the store. Eventually, picking one of the small tea cups and turning it over he spots the price sticker only it is not in normal numbers. It is in the code that had been left at the bank and library.

“Sherlock,” he comments, catching the other man’s attention.

Quickly setting down the small statue he had just lifted without looking at it, he comes over to were John is standing. Tilting the label towards him, he murmurs, “The label there.”

“Yes, I see it,” he answers, his tone distracted. He can just about hear the thoughts going through his mind.
“Exactly the same as the cipher.” He comments, his voice still low. He clears his throat as he sets the cup down and the two of them leave the shop.

The Lucky Cat? See the Chinese understand perfectly. He hears Elspeth comment once they are on the street.

He rolls his eyes, not replying as he listens to the tall man at his side work through the information. “It’s an ancient number system! Hangzhou. These days, only street traders use it. Those were numbers written on the wall at the bank and at the library.”

Stopping by a greengrocer’s he looks over the tags, matching the numbers from the spray paint to the tags. “Numbers written in an ancient Chinese dialect.”

Joining the taller man he looks over the tags as well, commenting, “It’s a fifteen! What we thought was the artist’s tag – it’s a number fifteen.” As he spots the one that correlates with it.

Waving one of the tags around Sherlock continues excitedly, “And the blindfold – the horizontal line? That was a number as well.” He pauses the waving long enough to show it to him before triumphantly grinning, “The Chinese number one, John.”

In the air something catches his attention again and he spots the woman from the street in front of their flat still with the camera and dark outfit. He frowns, considering going after her, but a person steps between them and when they move she is gone.

Maria are you still tracking her? he queries of the canine multiform.

Yes sir I am, I’d wave to you but she is on the move again. Comes her soft reply.

He nods, and follows after Sherlock who had walked away without ever noticing that he was being photographed. For someone so bright he sure had his thick moments.
Hiya my diligent readers who leave me lovely comments, sorry this chapter took so long, I got called into work so I had to wait until I was out again before I could finish it and then the bloody internet kept crashing. Please enjoy, as always, reviews are well loved and appreciated (along with any other sort of sign of enjoyment too)

John’s POV
The two of them head to the Piazza Espresso Bar Italiano directly across from the Lucky Cat. There they are both sitting at a table, watching it curiously while writing out notes on what is going on. Speaking softly they discuss the situation at hand, including the fact that the both of them seem to be smugglers of Chinese items and the reasoning behind why both were killed. Shortly after the waitress brings him some food, Sherlock spots something across the street, his eyes narrowing.

“Remind me when the last time that it rained?” Sherlock queries right before he gets up and leaves, heading over to the small flat across the streets door.

Sighing, he takes a couple more quick bites before dropping some money on the table and following the taller man.

When he stops next to his companion he listens as Sherlock comments, “It’s been here since Monday.” After ringing the doorbell and not receiving any sort of response he waits a couple of seconds, then looks to the right and heads off in that direction. They walk down the alley besides the flat and Sherlock remarks, “No one’s been in that flat for at least three days.”

Despite the unlikeliest of it, he still suggests, “Could’ve gone on holiday.”

Sarcastically the taller man rebukes him, “D’you leave your windows open when you go on holiday?” Without waiting for an answer he takes a short run at the fire escape, jumping up and pulling it down before quickly going up it. Almost as soon as the tall human was at the top it swung back into place. Quickly he scoots through the window.

Sighing, he calls out, “Sherlock!” before going around to the front in hopes that his partner will open the door which he does not. For a few moments he tries to get Sherlock to open the door but eventually realizes that will not happen. When he hears Sherlock weakly call his name he bolts to the back of the building again, shifting as he goes and lunging without thought at the side of it, using it as a bouncing point to get to the fire escape. As he goes through the window he goes from wolf to human, spotting the man trying to strangle his bondmate.

He sees red as he darts forward, foot connecting with the back of Sherlock’s attacker’s knee. The attacker lets go and turns swinging at him before dropping something and bolting out the window.

For a moment he considers chasing him but instead stays with his bondmate, checking his throat and using a small amount of his healing gift to clear the bruising before it can form. “You alright?” he demands, helping him to his feet.

Sherlock blinks at him a few times before answering, “Yeah,” he pauses for a moment, taking a
breath as the two of them head to the front door. “The, uh, milk’s gone off and the washing’s starting to smell. Somebody left here in a hurry three days ago.”

“Somebody?” he repeats, his mind going over the scene he was just in, that person had smelled of shifter though it was not a variety he had known. So that made it one of the Asian or American types. Considering all of the things having to do with China in this case, he was strongly leaning towards Asian.

“Soo Lin Yao. We have to find her.” at the door he stops, leaning down to pick something up. When he straightens, he is holding an envelope with writing on the back. After opening it up to see the print on it, he suggests, “maybe we could start with this.”

The two of them head out the door and down the street to catch a cab.

I did not go after him Elder, in case you need assistance or another was here. Was I supposed to? Elspeth comments as she steps up beside him, her tone is full of worry.

It’s not so much that he can feel her, because she is currently shielded, as he is aware of her in the pack link. No, he replies, you made the correct choice. Always stay with him unless I give an order otherwise.

Alright Elder, she replies, her tone more relaxed.

Once Sherlock has gotten a cab the three of them get into it, though Sherlock does not actually notice that there is three from what he can tell and they take the cab to the National Antiquities Museum. At the museum, they make their way inside to find and speak with Andy since he seems to be the last link to the missing young woman.

As he paces around the display area looking at the different displays, his dark-haired human inquires, “When was the last time that you saw her?”

Andy stands perfectly still with his hands in his pockets as he answers, his voice is full of worry, “Three days ago, um, here at the museum.” He pauses for a moment, looking between him and his companion before continuing, “Three days ago, um, here at the museum. Just left her work unfinished.” His tone says that he has a hard time believing that she left because she wanted to, that he is concern about her.

Turning to face the museum worker, the dark-haired human asks, “What was the last thing that she did on her final afternoon?”

Nodding the young man quickly takes them downstairs to the basement, explaining as he goes about what she was doing. “She does this demonstration for the tourists – a-a tea ceremony. So she would have packed up her things and just put them in here.” He leads them through the room, stopping by a stacks and beginning to open it.

Only Sherlock is drawn to something in the shadowy corner of the room and goes to look at it. Turning to see what it is that caught his dark-haired companion’s attention he is mildly surprised to see a statue of a nude woman with yellow paint on her. For a few minutes his dark-haired human studies it before turning on his heel and leaving.

When they get outside, night has fallen and as soon as they are away from Andy, Sherlock comments, “We have to get to Soo Lin Yao.”

Buttoning up his jacket, he replies, “If she’s still alive.”
“Sherlock!” a familiar voice calls as the spray painter from earlier comes trotting up.

Sighing, he remarks “Oh, look who it is."

Stopping in front of his tall companion, Roz tells him, “Found something you’ll like,” before trotting off again.

Smiling faintly, they follow, though Sherlock is a bit faster moving. A few minutes later we are passing over the Hungerford Bridge, heading towards the south side of the river.

**Elder, that female is still following you.** He hears Maria comment, as they continue down to the South Bank Skate Park.

*Thank you for telling me, keep watching her. One of her people is a shifter of some Asian variety.* He tells her as they pass across the under-croft.

**Yes Elder,** she replies before breaking the link off.

When the trio stops it is for Raz to point out an area with the yellow paint marking the Chinese symbols. Part of it has already been painted over, though not all of it. “There, I spotted it earlier,” the spray painted comments.

Studying it for a moment his tall companion remarks, “They have been here.” Then his focus shifts to Raz as he queries, “And that’s the exact same paint?”

“Yes,” the younger man replies.

“John, if we’re going to decipher this code, we’re gonna need to look for more evidence.” His companion tells him before the two of them decide to split up.

He is not worried about it because he knows that Elspeth is still watching over him. Because the one was a shifter, that means that this is a shifter matter, meaning it is more than allowable to bring the others in. He is already formulating a plan as they search as to how to track them down, though he is certain that Maria will be of assistance in that subject. Eventually he finds a wall covered in Chinese symbols painted on it and takes several pictures before trying to call Sherlock when that does not work he reaches for Elspeth to inquire where they are at. She quickly fills him in and he is shortly there, telling him about the wall and leading him back to it only for it to be repainted already.

Something that confuses him because he should have smelled the person if they were near. Unless they were a multiform or a human, his mind corrects him. Remember the only shifter smell in the flat had been male, not female, the female was human. So it is a shifter-human team, well damn that means not allowed to use old world rules to deal with it.

When Sherlock spots that the wall has been painted over he grabs his head within his bigger hands leaning towards him a bit.

“Hey, Sherlock, what are you doing?” he questions the taller man as he tries to force his body to stop reacting to the touch. He can feel the burn on his wrist as the bondmate mark changes just a little.

“Shhhh, John,” he commands him, “concentrate. I need you to concentrate. Close your eyes.”

Now that was rather silly of him, his eyes are already closed, it was the only way to keep from reacting even further to his frustrating bondmate’s touch. “Why?” he queries still keeping his eyes shut and trying to think of everything but the physical contact.

Sherlock’s hands shift from his head to his upper arms as he slowly spins them around and the wolf
in him can do nothing but laugh at his silly human. He really needs to learn to let other people speak
sometimes he thinks as he listens to him babble. “I need you to maximize your visual memory. Try to
picture what you saw. Can you picture it?”

“Yeah,” he answers.

“Can you remember it?” comes his next breathless question.

“Yes, definitely.”

“Can you remember the pattern?”

“Yes.”

“How much can you remember it?” his human demands.

“Well, don’t worry,” he begins but is cut off.

“Because the average human memory on visual matters is only sixty-two percent accurate.”

He grins carefully, breaking Sherlock’s hold and reaching a hand up to his temple. Focusing on the
image he shares it with him, showing the taller man the painting through his eyes. While he is doing
that his other hand fishes through his pocket, pulling out his phone to show him.

“I got pictures and there is that.” He tells his human with a chuckle as he stares at him in shock. One
hand slowly lifting to touch the side of his face.

“How?” the normally clearly spoken human demands to know, staring at him.

His smile grows a bit as he replies, “Pack link, I can bridge and share information with anyone
within it. We just tend not to do that often because it can be a bit annoying or awkward.” He shrugs,
still smiling, “Here’s the pictures, I thought you might want to print them off for the wall.”

The tall human nods, a light blush staining his cheeks as he looks at them. Not a word is said as they
turn to head back to the flat.

oOo

At the flat, Sherlock has taken the image and blown it up, printed it off, and wrote out what each of
the symbols on it means. As he does so he mutters, “Always in pairs.”

Sitting at the table, he has decided to cat-nap, knowing that he is not going to get a full night sleep
until this case is done. So when his bondmate starts speaking, his mind clicks on to listen, even as his
body rests.

“Numbers come with partners. Why did he paint it so near the tracks?” the tall human continues to
mutter.

Giving a small shrug he answers, “No idea.”

“Thousands of people pass by there every day,” he pauses for a moment, his voice going low and
breathy as he murmurs, “Of course. Of course! He wants information. He’s trying to communicate
with his people in the underworld. Whatever was stolen, he wants it back. Somewhere here in the
code.”

He hears him remove some of the pictures from the wall as he walks towards the door, stating, “We
can’t crack this without Soo Lin Yao.”

With his body still on autopilot he gets up to follow his mad potential bondmate, because who else thinks skipping to sleep is a good idea?

oOo

Despite the earliness of the hour, they are able to meet up with Andy back at the National Antiquities Museum in the display room they had met with him in earlier.

Standing with his hands tucked into his pockets, his dark-haired human stares hard at Andy as he states, “Two men who travelled back from China were murdered, and their killer left them messages in the Hangzhou numerals.”

He picks up where Sherlock left off, explaining, “Soo Lin Yao’s in danger. Now, that cipher – it was just the same pattern as the others. He means to kill her as well.” He stands perfectly still, arms crossed in front of his chest as he watches the younger man’s reactions.

Fear and desperation are the predominate scents that Andy is giving off as he answers, “Look, I’ve tried everywhere: um, friends, colleagues. I-I don’t know where she’s gone. I mean, she could be a thousand miles away.”

He spots that Sherlock's attention has been drawn to something in the displays. “What are you looking at?” he inquires.

He points at the tea pots in the display case, commanding, “Tell me more about those tea pots.”

Both Andy and him, turn to face the case that Sherlock is pointing at, Andy slowly answering the question, his scent now layered with confusion. “The pots were her obsession. Um, they need urgent work. If-if they dry out, then the clay can start to crumble. Apparently you have to just keep making tea in them.”

Striding over to the display case, his tall human leans over and studies them closely for a moment before commenting, “Yesterday, only one of those pots was shining. Now there are two.”

Sherlock turns to smile at him, and he can just about hear the plan whirling in his dark-haired human’s head.

oOo

Several hours have passed while they wait when a shadowy figure slowly emerges from where she was hidden to take an un-shining tea pot out and retreat to start working on it in her hidden station. The two men silently follow.

“Fancy a biscuit with that?” his tall human asks, startling the human female who smells vaguely of the shifter he could not identify yet human. She jumps, gasping and dropping the tea pot which Sherlock quickly catches before it hits the floor. “Centuries old. Don’t want to break that.” He tells her in a low, breathy growl as he looks up at her face.

Straightening up slowly so not to scare her worse, he hands the tea pot back to her then reaches out and clicks on the desk light. Smiling down at her he merely says, “Hello.”

Now that she knows that they are there, he steps out of the shadows, stepping up next to his tall human and smiling at her reassuringly.
She sets the pot down and takes a seat on the little stool. “You saw the cipher. Then you know he is coming for me,” she comments her voice serene despite the situation, her scent accepting.

“You’ve been clever to avoid him so far,” his tall human remarks watching her closely.

She looks at her pots, stating, “I had to finish ... to finish this work. It’s only a matter of time. I know he will find me.”

With a surprisingly gentle tone from his flatmate, he inquires, “Who is he? Have you met him before?”

She nods, answering him, “When I was a girl, living back in China. I recognize his,” she pauses as if looking for the right word, “‘signature’.”

“The cipher,” Sherlock states, his tone implying the question.

She looks up, staring directly at the dark-haired human as she informs him, “Only he would do this. Zhi Zhu.”

“Zhi Zhu?” he inquires, his mind quickly connecting the dots. The scent, his mind supplies, there was blood relation between this woman and the man who attempted to strangle his mate. Siblings. They are siblings.

Glancing at Sherlock he translates, “The Spider.”

Unlacing her right shoe, she takes it off and shows her heel to the two men. On it is a black tattoo of a lotus flower within a circle. “You know this mark?” she inquires, looking at dark-haired human.

He nods once replying softly, “Yes, it’s the mark of a Tong.”

Eyes narrow he makes a questioning noise to see if either will explain.

Sherlock glances his way as he does so, “Ancient crime syndicate based in China.”

He nods once to show his understanding before refocusing on the young woman. He wants to know if she is going to admit how she knows him.

“Every foot soldier bears the mark, everyone who hauls for them.” She pauses, looking away for a moment like she is lost in memory before putting her shoe back on. “I was fifteen. My parents were dead. I had no livelihood; no way of surviving day to day except to work for the bosses.”

“Who are they?” Sherlock queries, his tone still gentle.

“They are called the Black Lotus. By the time I was sixteen, I was taking thousands of pounds’ worth of drugs across the border into Hong Kong. But I managed to leave that life behind me. I came to England.” She gives a small smile, as if recalling better times, “They gave me a job here. Everything was good; a new life.”

“Then he came looking for you.”

“Yes,” she looks down again, she is clearly upset, yet her scent remains calm even as tears gather in her eyes, “I had hoped after five years maybe they would have forgotten me, but they never really let you leave. A small community like ours – they are never very far away.” slow tears fall from her face that she wipes away as she continues to speak. “He came to my flat. He asked me to help him to track down something that was stolen.”
Like his potential bondmate, he keeps his tone soft as he inquires, “And you’ve no idea what it was?”

She gives a small shake of her head, replying, “I refused to help.”

He leans forward against the table, eyes locking on her as he softly pushes for information. “So you knew him well when you were living back in China?”

She barely moves her head as she nods, “Oh yes,” she replies, looking up she continues, “he’s my brother.” After taking a deep breath she continues, “Two orphans. We had no choice. We could work for the Black Lotus, or starve on the streets like beggars.”

For a moment he is confused so he inquires, “Why didn’t you’re pack take care of you?”

She jerks a little, staring at him in shock.

“I’m an alpha, I can smell that you have shifter blood, though the variety I cannot determine. Here however, your pack, your extended family based on your shifting or parents shifting since you smell like human with shifter blood, would have taken you in.” he explains, watching the young woman closely.

It takes her a moment to answer but eventually she does so, “My mother was gibbon shifter. Her family disowned her for accepting mate that was human. Said he was not her true mate. She had my brother, who barely able to shift, and me, unable to shift.”

He nods, it was a lot like what a jackal pack would do if they thought a person was not properly bonded, though the chances of having a child with a non bondmate were so slim that some said it was impossible. There was only one recorded case of a non-bonded pair having children and that was after both the bondmates for the female had died.

“Since she was able to have you that means either both of her bondmates were dead or your father was her bondmate. There are certain healers that can manipulate a person’s bonding, but they are very rare and tend not to mess with it,” he gently explains to the younger woman.

She nods slowly, a watery smile appearing on her face for a moment. “That is comforting.” Pausing for a moment she continues speaking, “My brother has become their puppet, in the power of the one they call Shan – the Black Lotus general. I turned my brother away. He said I had betrayed him. Next day I came to work and the cipher was waiting.” Giving a small shake of her head she looks at him, her eyes pleading for understanding, “They promised help him learn his shape but never did. Now he’s theirs.”

Laying a set of pictures down, his tall companion inquires softly, “Can you decipher these?”

She nods, “These are numbers.”

“Yes, I know,” he replies.

Touching her finger to the picture she murmurs, “Here: the line across the man’s eyes – it’s the Chinese number one.”

He points to another one leaning forward a bit, “And this one is fifteen. But what’s the code?”

While the two of them speak of the code he calls out to Daria, Are you occupied right now with something important?
No. Jace has gone to bed, I am merely resting for the moment, we have decided to keep him. Why do you inquire? She replies, tone melodious in the link.

I wish to bring two new members in, however I believe one will need to be submerged and mind healed. He replies, still listening to them speak.

“All the smugglers know it. It’s based upon a book,” she tells him but cuts off as the lights click out.

Where are you? I will be there shortly with the Eric.

He shows her and tells her the name, watching as both the human and the young woman with shifter blood straighten up. Fear fills her scent, while the thrill of the hunt fills his.

Elspeth, protect this girl until Eric gets here, I will stay with Sherlock. He tells the multiform he knows must be nearby.

Understood.

“Soo Lin, I have an offer for you, a new life, a member of the pack I belong to. Do you accept it?” he tells her quickly, his right hand unbuttoning his sleeve as he speaks.

“He’s here, Zhi Zhu, he has found me.” she murmurs in fear, terror and dread pouring off of her.

“I need an answer now.” He tells her, voice full of command.

For a moment she stares at him hard before nodding once. Without waiting for her to make any other sort of response he grabs her right wrist, he had noticed which hand was her dominate earlier, pushing the sleeve up and pressing their wrists together. She gasps at the feeling but he can feel the connection clicking into place.

While he is pulling her within the link, Sherlock has taken off, he calls after him but knows that the human is not listening.

Where are you? he queries of Elspeth.

The small closet behind you, she replies.

Nodding once to himself, he pushes Soo Lin in that direction, telling her, “Come here, get in, get in. You’ll be protected.”

I’ve got her, Elspeth informs him.

Without saying anything else he bolts after his potential bondmate. Using his sense of smell to do so. There is a spurt of gunfire and by time he catches up with Sherlock the attacker seems to have vanished. He hears one more set of gunfire and the two men bolt back to the room where Soo Lin was at. She is still there, staring in shock at the slightly older man who is laying on the ground, barely breathing.

Next to him Daria stands, her slender body glowing lightly as she holds him in place.

“I can just bite him you know,” Eric tells her with a dark look. “It’d be quicker, I would rather not be here when the humans swarm.”

She flicks him an annoyed glance but nods.

Shifting almost instantaneously, he goes from human with scales to large black cobra with his hood
fully extended. Leaning down, he bites the man on the throat before pulling back and reshifting. Without another word he hefts him up, muttering, “Now can we go?”

“Elder, do you want me to take both?” Daria inquires as she glances between the two.

He nods absently, trying to figure out how they are going to make this work.

Eric rolls his eyes at him, commenting, “Hacker here, the camera is going to show them running from the building, and I will see about finding a dead person of her description in one of the morgues to be discovered dead with a flower in their hand.”

Chuckling ruefully he remarks, “I forget how scary you can be Tech.”

The black cobra shrugs, and turns on his heel walking away with the nearly dead man still thrown over his shoulder. Shaking her head, the viper gently takes the young woman’s arm and leads her after the other two.

Sherlock glances at him in mild confusion. “Why?”

“I’ll explain later,” he tells his tall companion.

He knows Sherlock is dying to question him so he is surprised when he agrees without any fuss.
I have a lovely parent, my Dad's allowing me use of his laptop while mine is waiting for a new cord, I hope everyone enjoys.

Thank you to everyone who has reviewed, followed, bookmarked, left kudos, or any combination of the before. They are well appreciated.

*John’s POV*

It was not long after the four left that the human police swarmed the building, finding only the two of them there. Dimmock demanded that they go with him to New Scotland Yard and the two of them had readily agreed to do so. By the time they had reached the Yard, he knew that Eric would have already dealt with the missing girl and her now ‘dead’ body, along with any other details that needed to be worked out.

As they were walking in his phone chirped at him, a single word message from Eric, -Done.-

He barely nods, knowing that Eric can probably see them on the city cameras and finishes going into the building. At Dimmock’s desk the two of them stand to either side of his desk while he faces away, trying to ignore them. He can smell the frustration and annoyance pouring off of the human but doesn’t care as he demands, “What happened to Soo Lin? Was she murdered as well? How many murders is it gonna take before you start believing that this maniac’s out there?”

Being ignored, or at least Dimmock is trying to ignore him, the detective inspector turns and walks between them heading for another part of the office. Before the detective inspector can say anything, a detective comes over, showing him a picture of a young Asian woman they had found with a bullet to her head and a black flower in her hand. She had been three blocks away.

Rounding on the detective inspector he snaps, “A young girl was gunned down tonight. That’s three victims in three days. You’re supposed to be finding him.”

Frustrated he takes a step back just as his dark-haired human steps between him and the other human commenting, “Brian Lukis and Eddie Van Coon were working for a gang of international smugglers – a gang called the Black Lotus operating here in London right under your nose.” Towards the end of his comment his voice lowers as he leans forward.

Glancing towards him with a raised eyebrow the human inquires, “Can you prove that?”

The scent of satisfaction comes from his potential bondmate at the question. Without saying anything further, the taller human turns and leaves. He just shakes his head, slowly walking towards the door. There are times he is rather thankful for having a pack like his, because he knows that his fast moving potential bondmate is not going to out run all of them, particularly not the two multiforms who had volunteered to be his watchers.

He had not gotten far when a text chimes his phone again, -Come to Bart’s. Now.- SH

Smiling, he gives a shake of his head, finding a dark spot to shift and shield in before taking a nice
run through the city, mostly across roofs where he does not have to worry about running into anyone. Just before he gets to Bart’s, he finds another dark alley to return to his form in before continuing on.

He is just reaching the morgue when his dark-haired human comes walking up with the detective inspector close behind. Inside he can hear Molly moving around. Without waiting for the other two, Sherlock, pushes the door open, holding it long enough for them to get in before he heads over to where Molly is standing near the head of the first body. With gloved hands she unzips the top but Sherlock quickly comments on only needing the feet. A scent of confusion comes off of her as she goes to the other end to open it up.

After showing the detective inspector the marks on the both of them, his dark-haired human snidely remarks, “So either these two men just happened to visit the same Chinese tattoo parlor or I’m telling the truth.”

Sighing the other human shortly inquires, “What do you want?”

Completely serious the two of them stare at each other for a moment before Sherlock replies, “I want every book from Lukis’ apartment and Van Coon’s.”

Confusion mars the detective inspectors scent as he queries, “Their books?”

His tall companion nods once, saying nothing else and the detective sighs, turning to walk away. “I’ll have them sent over,” he tells him as he leaves.

Sending a quick smile to Molly, though he would hardly call it nice or grateful, his tall human leaves the morgue.

“Thanks,” he tells her before turning from his spot by the door and following his tall human out.

As they walk back to their flat, he can feel the questions buzzing in the air between them. Eventually he gives a soft sighing chuckle, commenting, “Ask.”

“What were you angry about earlier? Why did you offer her a way out? Did Eric kill the assassin or not? Where did the body come from?” his tall companion rapid-fire inquires, barely pausing for breath. “How did you get to Bart’s so fast? What was the presence I felt in the cabbie earlier when the two of us got in?”

When his companion stops, a wary smile curves his lips as he begins to answer, “Pack issue, I will ask for your help on it once the case is done. Everyone deserves a second chance, it was not her fault that the pack she was born to was idiots. They should have raised them, or at least found them homes that would not include working for a crime boss.” He pauses for a breath, considering the wording for the next one. “Technically he will have died, Eric is rather brilliant when determining how strong of venom to use. So he will have killed him but kept his body just barely alive so his brain can be jump started and reset for a lack of a better explanation. At this moment though, the assassin is brain dead or close enough to be considered brain dead.”

He shrugs pausing again as he considers it. “Jacob and Daria will submerge him into the pack link. If he wakes up still homicidal, they’ll put him down humanely. I don’t ask where Eric pulls his stunts, I just know it is completely legal, mostly because he likes dealing with problems not causing them.” he grins, “You two are similar in that regard, neither of you breaking the major laws and both helping the police in one way or another.”

He shakes his head a moment before going on. “Shifter here, I am good at shielding so I can move in
my canine form which is faster without being spotted. The presence was my ‘watcher’ for a lack of a better word. I have a guard pretty much always, didn’t we discuss that previously?"

For a moment the dark-haired human considers it before nodding once, “We did, it just did not seem relevant.”

Shaking his head again he chuckles. After that the two of them fall silent as they continue walking down the streets towards their flat. They could have caught a cab and it would have been quicker but neither hailed one down. When they were about halfway home he stepped into a side alley and looked around, spotting for cameras. When he found a blind spot, he shifted, leaning his front paws down so he was lower than Sherlock.

**Would you like a ride?** He inquires of his human, offering his shoulder.

The look on the tall human’s face was priceless as he went from human to wolf in front of him. There was wonder, awe, curiosity, and something else just below the surface. Slowly, Sherlock reaches out, touching his fur around his neck with a careful touch.

**You’re not going to break me,** he tells his hesitant human with a soft chuckle.

Blinking owlishly at him, the tall human scowls after a moment, before softly commenting, “I thought shifters did not allow people to touch them in their second form.”

His fingers hand went from just sitting against the fur to actually stroking it, and he swore that if he was a cat he would have been purring. That’s it, feel the fur, pet the fur, like the fur, he thinks to himself. Well at least in this form I have better control of my impulses.

**Depends on the species,** he pauses giving a mental shrug, *most like their family, close friends, or pack touching them plus I am a wolf. I do not know if you realize this but wolves are tactile creatures. We love touch.*

“Oh…” his voice trails off and his scent changes. Question answered and he suddenly grins, eyeballing his back. “How’d I get on?”

Grinning at the human he drops down to the ground the rest of the way which puts his back even with the middle of Sherlock’s leg. **Climb on like a horse, only tuck your legs backwards so they are against my ribs not behind my front quarters.**

Nodding, the tall human does so, carefully trying to find a good spot to hold to. “Ummm.”

**The fur directly above my shoulders and right below my neck is a good place to hold.** He gives him a moment to take hold, ready?

After taking a deep breath, the tall human replies, “Yes,” a moment after that he is sprinting through the mostly empty streets with his mate firmly on his back. It is a beautiful thing. He loves the feel of Sherlock’s fingers deep within his fur, holding on as his lanky body is pressed close against his back and shoulders. Within minutes they are at the roof of their building and he is laying back down so his human get down.

“Amazing,” he breaths once his feet are back on the ground. He is pretty certain that the human is not really aware of the fact he is still petting his fur.

He grins as he shifts, reforming into his human self. “Thank you.”
As soon as he’s human, his tall companions hand drops and he flushes, his scent becoming slightly embarrassed.

“There is no need to feel embarrassed, I have soft fur.” He tells his friend before going over to the fire escape and heading down the apartment below.

A few minutes later the two of them are walking into the flat. Neither says anything as they strip of their outer wear and hand it up. Once that is done, he takes his seat in the chair and watches as his dark-haired human puts his coat on the back of the door. As he does so he listens to the tall human speaking.

“Not just a criminal organization; it’s a cult. Her brother was corrupted by one of its leaders”

He nods once, tilting his head as he watches him. “Soo Lin said the name.”

“Yes, Shan,” the tall human softly states as he straightens his suit, “General Shan.”

“We’re still no closer to finding them,” he comments.

“Wrong!” comes the sharp responds before the dark-haired human softens his voice back up, looking over at him, “We’ve got almost all we need to know. She gave us most of the missing pieces.”

He nods once and waits for Sherlock to explain. What pieces do they have that he is missing?

His excitement shows in his motions as he asks, “Why did he need to visit his sister? Why did he need her expertise?” as he speaks, his hands never stop moving.

Comprehension hits as he replies, “She worked at the museum.” Of course, she would understand how to gage rare items prices, particularly old rare items.

“Exactly,” his companion states in satisfaction.

“An expert in antiquities,” he continues, understanding perfectly well now.

Tucking his hands into his pockets the tall human continues, “Valuable antiquities, John. Ancient Chinese relics purchased on the black market. China’s home to a thousand treasures hidden after Mao’s revolution.”

As he remarks, “And the Black Lotus is selling them,” a thoughtful look crosses the humans face and he turns to stare at his computer.

The next thing he knows, Sherlock is across the room at the desk and laptop going through Crispian’s website of recent auctions and looking over the various items that have come from the Orient in recent months for sale. The two of them discuss the dates and which of the two dead men where there at the time for each. Figuring out who is who. As he stands there leaning over the back of the chair as he watches the computer screen, he cannot help but take a gentle sniff of the air. He is rather fond of his potential bondmates scent. It reminds him of a fresh breeze and old books. Currently it is filled with excitement and frustration.

Just as their discussion is finishing up Mrs. Hudson comes up the steps and knocks at the door before entering, “Ooh-ohh,” she calls in warning before opening the door the rest of the way, “Sorry. Are we collecting for charity, Sherlock?”

Turning to look at her both of them are confused for a moment before it is recalled that they asked for both dead men’s books.
“A young man’s outside with crates of books.” She tells them when she sees their blank expressions.

Smiling, Sherlock gets to his feet and goes down to let them in. The next few minutes make his nerves stand on edge as two human police officers bring several crates of books into their flat, placing them into two separate piles based on who they belong to. One quick discussion later, and his tall companion had explained how it works. Groaning internally, he picks a pile and mutters, “Okay, right. Well, this shouldn’t take too long, should it?”

As he takes a seat at the desk with a pile of books Dimmock comes walking up with an evidence bag in his hand.

“We found these, at the museum.” The detective inspector shows it to him, asking, “Is this your writing?”

He nods once, taking the bag and replying, “Uh, we hoped Soo Lin could decipher it for us. Ta.”

Soo Lin… his mind mutters, something on the edge of his awareness.

“Anything else I can do? To assist you, I mean?” the detective inspector inquires as he watches the dark-haired human sort through his box.

“Some silence right now would be marvelous,” the dark-haired man replies absently as he continues going through books.

Dimmock glances over at him, a questioning look on his face as he does so. He gives a small, apologetic shake of his head before the younger man nods and leaves.

Over at his pile, Sherlock is going through the books carefully but getting frustrated according to his scent. They spend probably three hours sorting before it clicks, Soo Lin is perfectly alive and with Daria. Glancing at his watch he sighs because of how early it is, but grabs his phone to make a quick call.

She picks up on the second ring, “Yes, Elder? Is something wrong it’s a bit early, or late depending on how you view it.”

“Daria, can you wake Soo Lin up and ask her which book is needed for the code, we want to track down the General before there are any more deaths.” He answers her, as he speaks, Sherlock stops looking through the books and comes over to where he is seated to wait somewhat impatiently.

He can just about hear the sigh as the viper replies, “Give me a minute.” A soft click tells him that she has set the phone on the table. A few minutes later she returns to it, informing him, “London A-Z, now get some rest would you?”

“G’night Daria, thank you,” he thanks the irate viper as he hangs up and tells the hovering tall human, “I am going up to bed for a bit.”

However the tall human doesn’t seem to hear him as he searches through the piles until he comes up with the right book.

oOo

When he gets up in the morning to get ready for work he can still hear his flatmate in the living room writing. Shaking his head, he sighs and dresses quickly. Going into the kitchen he makes himself and his companion some fresh tea, knowing that while he won’t eat, there is always a chance that he would sip at something to drink.
“Here,” he hands the taller man his cup, gently taking the book away. “Allow your mind to finish catching up. I am sure you are close to done.”

The dark-haired human gives him a dirty look but accepts the tea without argument, taking a slow sip. “It’s a miss print,” he mutters, “that has to be the reason the code is not work. All I have to do is find the other copy that is around here somewhere…” he trails off, setting the cup down and looking around the room.

“I’ll be back in a couple of hours,” he informs him.

He nods, barely paying attention and makes a noise of understanding.

Chuckling and shaking his head, he heads to the surgery to begin his day. The first several patients are boring simple things that can be easily dealt with. By the time lunch hits, his focus is just about gone and he starts to get tired. So over lunch he takes a brief nap in his office. He is awoken from his nap when Sarah knocks at the door, but pretends to still be asleep because he does not want to deal with her right now. After his lunch he finishes up his patients lists before putting his coat on to leave.

As he heads to the door, she waylays him, placing a gentle, if annoying hand on his arm as she asks, “Everything alright?”

He nods, carefully stepping back away, “Yes, sorry, I had a bit of a late one, there were no emergencies during lunch where there?”

She gives a small shake of her head, “Oh, right,” she murmurs before answering his question, “no, there were no emergencies.”

He nods, giving a small incline towards her before attempting to leave again, she walks beside him, inquiring, “So, um, what were you doing to keep you up so late?”

He can smell the attraction off of her and it is giving him a bit of a headache. “Uh, I was, er, attending a sort of book event.”

Flustered she remarks questioningly, “Oh. Oh, she likes books, does she, your ... your girlfriend?”

“Mmm? No, it wasn’t a date.” He mutters wistfully.

“Good,” she quickly comments before looking away and blushing as she tries to correct herself, “I mean umm…” her voice trails off.

Sighing, he stops and looks at her with what he hopes is a gentle smile before explaining. “My file, you saw where it said shifter?”

She nods once, looking up at him slowly and waiting for him to continue.

He nods, “Okay. Well shifters have bondmates, and as nice of a person as you are, you’re not my bondmate. It would be unfair to even consider doing anything because nothing would ever come of it.”

“Oh,” she murmurs, her scent edging with sadness.

He nods one more time, patting her shoulder before walking away and leaving her there. He is well aware of when she finally turns and goes back into the clinic.

When he gets back to the flat, Sherlock is playing his violin by the window, a mellow expression on
his face. Going upstairs he changes out of his work clothes and into some more comfortable clothing before coming back downstairs. Upon entering the kitchen to make tea, his flatmate stops playing and walks over to him, grabbing a piece of paper off the desk as he does so.

“I figured it out John,” the tall human tells him excitedly.

Smiling indulgently he inquires, “And what is it?”

“A jade dragon pin worth nine million pounds.” His excitement is growing, along with the pleasure of having figured it out.

He blinks up at him, muttering, “Really?”

“Yes,” there is a pause, “We need to go out tonight.”

He smiles, nodding once, “Alright, where to?”

“The Yellow Dragon Circus.”

He nods, going and changing into his preferred style of clothes for when he shifts. While he likes jeans, they can be a bit difficult when going between forms. Shortly after that he is back in the living room, well fitted black slacks and a button down blue and white shirt with his jacket over top.

“Ready.”

His companion looks at him funny asking, “Why did you change again?”

He smiles, “I foresee the need for easy shifting clothes and jeans are not as simple to work with.”

“Oh.” A blush stains his cheeks for a moment before he gives a quick shake of his head before retreating into his bedroom.

All he can do is smile at the now shut door because he had caught just the smalls scent of attraction from the taller man. Things were definitely looking up.
Shan

*John’s POV*

Once he has gotten past the tiny bit of attraction he had smelled from the human, he digs his phone out to text the only cobra in their pack.

-Were you able to discover who and what was following yesterday with a camera?- JW

-Please. Did you just ask that without checking your email?- Tech

Grinning, he walks over to his laptop, and loads it up, opening his email and carefully reading the information included. That woman was listed as Wu Lein, the announcer for the circus that they were going to be going to in a couple of hours. She was here on a special visa along with twelve other members of staff. Each of the other members was also here on special visa as well. Though according to the report he was looking at these visas were completely fake.

As far as he could discover, there was only two shifters in their group. Both are male, both subservient to Wu Lein.

Wu Lein had several different names. Though the most dominate one past her name is Shan. If they could catch her they could rid the world of a great many problems according to what he can see in the reports. She often arranged for accidents to happen to people with gifted children so that she could get her hands on the children. Train them to be whatever it is she thought that they should be without the family able to stop her. Thus she had highly loyal people who were willing to do whatever she wanted because they thought that she had saved them.

Smiling to himself he heads into the kitchen to make himself something to snack on, using the gifts besides his shifting required energy and that was something that he figured he would need tonight. If he thought it would do any good he would try and get his human to eat but he had learned early on that he was not fond of eating any more than he absolutely had to in order to survive.

Once his small meal was done he takes it to the living room and his armchair out there. He doesn’t even want to get anywhere near that table with food or his sense of smell for that matter. By the time he is done with his sandwich and tea he has come up with a plan. Since it would be night time when they did this little trip it would work best to use the mouse, two owls, and perhaps the cat multiform as his back up. The more of them that could be captured the better their chances would be of ending this particular ring.

Using his phone, he quickly sends off messages to those he had selected.

-Yana, can you help do round up duty tonight?- JW

-Of course, when and where?- Yana

-Feel like bashing some heads in?- JW

-When don’t I?- OER

-Care to do some small sized snooping?- JW

-I’m a mouse of course I do small sized snooping.- Mouse

*You on guard duty tonight?* He inquires of Elspeth, the only one without a mobile phone.
Indeed, why are we going to do something interesting and fun? She replies, eagerness he had forgotten that she had coursing through the link. About the only time I take off is the time that the Beta and Iota insist I must. Your potential bondmate is an interesting creature and I hope that when I discover mine they are just as interesting.

He sends the impression of a nod, responding, Alright, I won’t need to give you directions then will I?

Nope. Comes her pleasant answer just before the link breaks away.

To the other three he sends the same text message, -Animal forms until time to attack. The Yellow Dragon Circus. Shield carefully, there is at least one shifter in their group and possibly some Gifted.- JW

-Elder.- OER

-Alright Elder.- Yana

-Got it Captian.- Mouse

When the dark-haired human finally immures from his room, his scent subdued he explains the plan to him. Right before he goes to call and arrange for tickets there is a knock at the door, a moment before he hears it open and close downstairs. Shortly after Maria is standing at the door to their flat’s living room.

“Hello alpha, alpha-second, I have come to request to be included when hunting tonight. I spent all yesterday tracking the lady so I would like to see what happens to her.” The slender multiform tells him as she looks between two members of the pack.

He smiles at her, nodding once, and then calls for three tickets. Since he never made it to the bank about his card and forgot to have Eric fix it he uses the card that Sherlock had lent him the day before. Once that was done he went about making tea which made the multiform highly nervous according to her scent. Apparently the idea of an alpha cooking surprised her.

“Calm down, I like tea and I have the best luck getting him to drink compared to others that have tried.” He murmurs to her as he passes hers to her. She nods, and he moves on to give his dark-haired human his. Absently he takes it and sips at it while typing at the computer.

When they first arrived at the circus he glances around thinking, this isn’t a circus it’s a showroom. Aloud he mutters so that both his companions can hear him, “This is not a circus. Look at the size of this crowd. Sherlock, this is,” he glances around with distaste, “art.”

Maria chuckles from where she is at just a little behind him while Sherlock gives her a funny look.

The three of them watch the show for a bit before he feels his dark-haired companion slip off and internally sighs. When Maria goes to follow him, he grabs her wrist, stopping her.

Elspeth is with him, she tends not to let him out of her sight. He tells the concerned multiform as he listens for the alert.

She nods once but he can still feel the tension in her. Part of him understands it is a natural reaction, she was raised by jackals prior to her presenting as a multiform rather than a jackal. Jackals tend to be highly protective of their alpha family, but it does not stop him from being frustrated by it at the same
time.

As the show concludes most the people leave and he hears Elspeth’s silent warning call.

In an instant the other three pack members are there and the five of them quickly knock out most of the circus staff quickly while Mouse makes sure that they cannot go anywhere. Moments later his dark haired human is grumbling as he rejoins him, apparently the ring leader and her main assistant had gotten away. One quick message to Dimmock later and the three are ready to leave. The other three will stay until the authorities get there to deal with the gang members.

Before they head to the flat the three of them stop at the New Scotland Yard in order to make sure that Dimmock had sent a team since he had not heard from the three that a team had arrived.

“I sent a couple of cars and what did I get? Ten people tied up with no idea how they ended up in that situation and all of them babbling in Chinese.” Dimmock snaps as he storms into an office.

“If you check each of their feet I will bet they are marked with the tattoo of the Tong.” His dark-haired human tells the other human in a mild tone for him.

Sighing he states, “Lukis and Van Coon were part of a smuggling operation. Now, one of them stole something when they were in China; something valuable.”

“These circus performers were gang members sent here to get it back.” His tall companion picks up where he left off.

Looking completely serious and smelling frustrated the detective inspector demands, “Get what back?”

His dark-haired human is debating about telling him or not, eventually he mutters, “A rare and old pin.”

“What? All of this for a pin?” the disbelieving detective inspector queries, eyes flickering between the three of them, after a moment he continues, “Mr. Holmes,” he mutters as he sits down, “I’ve done everything you asked. Lestrade, he seems to think your advice is worth something. I gave the order for a raid. Please tell me I’ll have something to show for it – other than a massive bill for overtime and a few foreigners.”

Sherlock smiles at him, answering, “I am sure all of those foreigners are on Interpol’s list at least.”

Sighing the detective inspector drops his head onto his arms and just shakes his head.

They had just left New Scotland Yard when something rather frustrating happened. One minute the three of them were walking, the next Maria and him were waking up tied to a chair somewhere dark. On the chair next to him Maria is seething. He can just see the anger radiating off of her, but both these people are human, thus she knows it is against their laws to shift in front of them.

Wu Lein is speaking as his mind clears from the fog but he is not listening until she calls him by his potential bondmates name.

Frowning, he mutters, “I’m not Sherlock Holmes,” aloud as he ask Elspeth telepathically, is Sherlock alright?
He is seeking you now Elder, as soon as he picked himself off of the steps something seemed to click for him. So now he is coming after you. He stopped at the flat long enough to grab your handgun and I was unsure whether to stop him or not. The multiform cat replies.

Giving him a false smile she remarks, “Forgive me if I do not take your word for it.” Reaching inside his jacket, she pulls out his wallet. As she pulls out each item with his dark-haired humans name on it she makes a comment, “Debit card, name of S. Holmes.”

He nods once, “Yes; that’s not actually mine. He lent that to me.”

Ignoring him, she holds up her second item of ‘proof’, “A check for five thousand pounds made out in the name of Mr. Sherlock Holmes.”

Rolling is eyes, he mutters, “Yeah, he gave me that to look after.”

Then she lifts the tickets, “Tickets from the theatre, collected by you, name of Holmes.”

“Yes, okay,” he grumbles, “I realize what this looks like, but I’m not him.”

She looks at him disbelieving, “If you are not him, what happened to my assassin that I sent to deal with you and vanished?”

A rather dark smile curves his lips, “Now that’s an interesting question, about as interesting as the answer.”

She blinks at him, pulling a pistol she points it at him, “I am Shan,” she announces, “Three times we tried to kill you and your companion, Mr. Holmes. What does it tell you when an assassin cannot shoot straight?”

“That your lousy at your job?” he replies not really thinking about it. He had already determined he could break the ropes by doing a partial shift, he is just waiting to see how stupid she really is. He can smell the fact that there are no bullets in the gun because of the lack of fresh gun powder. Only two of the men here is loyal, the other four that he can see are here for the money, but that doesn’t make them innocent in all this.

She pulls the trigger and his smile just curves his lips. “It tells you that they’re not really trying.” Its about then that she realizes that he is smiling and a confused look crosses her face. “Why are you smiling?” she demands.

He shrugs his shoulders a little replying, “You really should have done your homework.” He informs her just before he focuses on only partially shifting. A moment later he is getting to his feet faster than the humans can move, still speaking, “because had you done your homework you would have realized that Sherlock Holmes’ partner is a man. That Sherlock Holmes is taller than his partner. And that the partner is ex-military.” The last is said just as he vanishes from sight, his claws slashing through Maria’s bindings.

The old woman seems to be shocked but that doesn’t bother him as he moves from one henchmen to the next, snapping their necks and letting them fall to the ground. Two of the them were taller, so he had to bring them to his height first with a well placed kick. Unfortunately, it requires him to unshield when he does break their necks so she has a moment where she can see him. Each time she tries to aim at him with the gun and fails because he vanishes again. Eventually, she is the last one standing and turns the gun that she had loaded while he dealt with the hired thugs on Maria.

Can you shield? He inquires as he watches the older woman, chances are he can get to her before
she fires but he does not like the risk to his packmate.

No. I am a female, females have no need for shielding among the jackals. She replies, her eyes wide as she stares at the gun pointed at her.

“I don’t believe you,” she tells him, “who else could be resourceful enough to do what you just did?”

He just smiles, he can feel both Sherlock and Elspeth approaching. Make noise Elspeth, he directs the multiform.

Alrighty, she replies right before a barrel gets knocked over, followed another a second in a different part of the tunnel.

As soon as Shan’s attention was pulled to the barrel, he lunged forward, wrapping his forearm around her neck and pulling up hard. An audible crack could be heard as her neck snapped and he dropped her to the ground. He probably should have handed her over to the police but that was not what an alpha protecting their pack does.

“You alright?” he asks Maria, watching her.

She nods, “I’m an empath, so all the violence, well it’s hard to deal with."

He nods once, turning to look at Sherlock who is staring at him. His scent is full of surprise. He had not expected that.
John’s POV
The trip back to the flat was silent. Apparently he had shocked his human flatmate because after they had left the crime scene, after they had dealt with Dimmock he hadn’t said a word. Even his path within the pack link was silent. It was just reaching dawn when he pushed open the door to the flat and froze, a growl low in his throat. There should not be people in their flat and he can smell several.

Before he could do anything else Jacob appears at the top of the steps, the expression on his face tense as he greets them, “Elder, Elder-second, there is a situation that needs dealt with. I apologize for the intrusion but thought it would be best as Senior.”

Jacob rarely referred to him by any of his titles, accepting long before that he preferred to go by his first name instead. So the fact that he used both of their titles was concerning greatly. Focusing on the pack he can hear the anger from most of the members but something was off. Carefully he went through each member of the pack, starting with the military pack and working his way towards the wolf pack, however when he got to Jace’s link it seemed to be missing, not broken but dampened. Like someone was trying to block it.

Once in the flat he realized that the people he smelled were mostly the military pack, plus two others that he did not know. The first stranger was a black cobra related to Eric according to the scent, the second a hawk who was keeping away from everyone else.

Upon his entry to the living room Daria was directly in front of him within seconds.

“Those creatures took my hatchling,” she tells him, her normally melodious voice cold with venom. “They attacked my bondmate and stole my hatchling. I would have already gone after them but the falcon convinced me that was a bad idea.”

Focusing on soothing those in the room, he intentionally turns his scent to calming and the effect is immediate. Once that is done he moves to stand in the middle of the room like they would have done on a mission and the others gather around. Before anyone of the pack has a chance to speak the hawk approaches and bows low.

“Elite Alpha John Watson, M.D., Captain in Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers,” the hawk states, using each of his titles, “On behalf of the Bainburn Coop I, Alexander Bainburn, Delta of the Bainburn Coop request an audience.”

Sighing, he nods once, his attention mostly on the hawk, but also on the tall human who had moved over to his spot by the window and was watching everything with thoughtful look in his eyes.

Still with his head inclined even after he straightens up he speaks, “Elite Alpha, the Bainburn Coop requests your assistance with the Wolf Pack Devon. They have been encroaching on our territory, hunting Hawks, and disrupting the balance. I am to await your answer.” Again the hawk bows,
though not as low this time and holds his placing.

I really hate the old ways sometimes, he thinks as he narrows his eyes at the hawk. “Tell your Elder that the Wolf Pack Devon will not be a problem by the upcoming full moon Delta Alexander Bainburn.” He informs the younger man, using his title as such a situation requires.

“You have our thanks Elite Alpha, I will relay the message.” The hawk replies, straightening up before inclining his head to Sherlock, Jacob, and Eric and leaving.

Snorting a little he reaches with his mind for the Eldest Alpha’s and the council. Under the old ways I declare a blood hunt on Wolf Pack Devon for assaulting a member of my pack, kidnapping a member of my pack, intentionally harming a wolf pup, disregarding the peace treaty with the Hawk Coops, and interfering in my territory.

He does not wait for a response before telling his pack members, “We will hunt them like we would an enemy pack, seek to disarm and disable, not kill. Eric and Daria, that means no deadly venoms or squeezing.” He waits until both have confirmed the order before continuing, “Daria, share the location of where your pup is then everyone divide into your teams and begin.”

She nods, focusing on the link and sharing the information on the common path that their group had developed in order to not be overheard by others.

Once the information has been spread amongst them, he walks over to Eric and gives him a questioning look, glancing towards the younger black cobra.

“Elite Elder Wolf John Watson, I present Elite Black Cobra Aidan Jefferson, currently of the Corbin Den.” Eric’s voice is low as he says the introductions. “I have asked him to run the computers during this situation.”

One blonde eyebrow arched at this, the cobra never allows anyone near his computers so that was rather unusual. Taking a quick sniff of the air he discovered that the smell was not sibling or cousin like, but parent to child like. So the younger man was his son, interesting.

“Will it be a problem if I stay here to do so?” Aidan’s voice is low, like Eric’s, its tones reflecting his American upbringing.

He smiles at the younger man, answering, “You can stay here.” Then turning his attention back to the rest and stating, “Let’s move out.”

The majority of them head out each shifting once they are out the front door and their forms are shielded. Sherlock watches all of it with the same thoughtful expression.

Giving a slight smile to his potential bondmate he queries, “Care for some potential danger?”

His dark-haired human smiles and nods once, heading downstairs to wait outside. When he gets there, John can smell his surprise that the others seemed to have vanished. Shifting and shielding, he lowers his larger body down so the human can get on before he is sprinting through the city, his mind following the trace that Daria had set up for each of the military pack to follow. Within minutes he had travelled several miles and not much longer he was outside of the city and still travelling. When he finally reached where they were going he checked in with every group not surprised to find that they had trapped the enemy pack within an abandoned barn.

Aidan says that the elders are coming, I sent directions. He hears Eric comment.

My thanks Tech. He replies stopping and lowering himself so Sherlock can hop off before he returns
to his human form. Walking with purpose into the barn, he is unsurprised to see that his small group had cornered over twenty of them -in both human and wolf form- without any sort of problems. “I am addressing the supposed alpha of this pack. You will step forward now to address the charges brought against you.”

One of the ones in wolf changes into a naked human and glares at him, demanding, “Who the hell do you think you are?”

He smiles tightly at the other wolf, but there is nothing nice about his smile. Anyone in his team would tell you that it was a dangerous smile that meant trouble for whoever he was dealing with. “I am Elite Alpha Wolf John Watson, M.D., Captain in Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, and under the old ways I find you in violation of the Pack Laws. You have the choice to submit to punishment or be executed.”

The other man stares at him in disbelief, “Who the hell do you think you are?”

“He is an Elite Alpha Wolf who will eventually take a place on the council. If he has passed judgment on you, then the council will uphold it.” A soft, posh woman’s voice replies from behind them.

He just about feels his dark-haired human tense up as he smells the three highest ranking alphas enter the building. He knows that the other three alphas would have pack members with them but they had been left outside as a show of respect for him.

The other alpha’s eyes got wide as he watched the leaders of their kind fan out watching him. Snarling the alpha lunged forward like he was going to attack him but he never had a chance. Before he had even moved two feet Eric had lashed his long black tail out, swiping the legs out from under the man with an easy that scared the enemy pack.

You did say the only thing I was not to do was sink my fangs into him or kill him, so a little humiliation while he makes up his mind how he wants to die shouldn’t matter. The cobra comments in an even, bored tone however he can hear the underlying edge to it.

He inclines his head at the cobra, “Indeed, however give him a chance to hang himself would you?” switching his attention back to the enemy alpha he remarks, “I want my missing pack member to start with, and whoever was foolish enough to touch him and his bond father should start groveling.”

Normally he was not a mean person, he was direct, he would kill, but he did not torment. This man however had allowed and encouraged members of his pack to harm a pup who had done nothing more than be born a mixed breed. Then they had foolishly taken that same pup from his new family in a rather foolish method. Justice would allow for a bit of revenge this time.

“He’s nothing but a worthless whelp, can’t even shift properly, he deserves anything that piece of trash got. Besides he’s not yours. He is packless, not even worth being called an omega.” The alpha snarls as he gets to his feet.

Apparently it annoys Eric because that long tail slashes out again, this time snapping hard against the man’s back but still knocking him to the ground. Jace. Presented before his Elder now. The cobra hissed, his torso still mostly human except he had allowed his hood emerge and his legs to shift into a massive black tail.

The alpha looked between him and Eric, fear, rage, and disbelief heavily infusing his scent. “No. I demand an alpha’s challenge if you want the whelp.”
His smile curves into a smirk as he waves the cobra back. Eric moves, retaining his mixed form and watching closely while he steps forward unbuttoning his shirt. “I don’t want your blood on this shirt, it’s one of my favorites.” He states conversationally as he strips it off and tosses it to the side. Cyanne catches without thinking about it and he continues to stalk forward. “You might want to change soon, I plan to seek justice for every single mark on Jace. Past and present.” He informs the other wolf conversationally. To Daria he comments, “Retrieve your pup and tell me what damage has been done.”

She does so without comment, Nathan at her left and Eric to her right. While she does that he prowls around the edge of the circle that had formed by the enemy pack and his pack. He is studying the various members of this pack, his sense of smell telling him which ones need to be dealt with and which ones might be salvageable. He feels the anger before he sees the young man. But it is enough that he spins, slamming his fist into the other alpha’s jaw before he has had a chance to react.

Skin that creature. He hears Daria snarl from within her mind as she focuses her attention on healing Jace once more.

Linking in, he ignores the other alpha as he studies the damage done. Pretty close all the same damage as the first time then. That really was not a good idea on their part. Carefully using Daria’s link to him he sought out the names and face of each of them responsible, they would each be dead before this was done.

Spinning back to face the other alpha his eyes harden as he speaks. “You are guilty of the physical abduction of a non-connected pack member. You are guilty of the injury of a non-connected pack member. You are guilty of pup abuse in the highest order. You are guilty of promoting the abuse of said pup in the highest order. Your sentence for such is death. There will be no chance for you to escape.” He pauses, using telepathy to signal to his three wolves who else is guilty and they make sure to separate them from their pack in a rather violent manner.

Apparently being told he was going to die was a trigger for the other wolf, because he shifted and lunged towards him, snarling and growling as the enemy wolf did so. Eyes narrow he doesn’t bother shifting, instead he watches carefully and times it so that he can use a burst of speed to snap the other wolf’s leg with a well placed strike. He falls to the ground yelping before struggling back to his feet to try attacking again even though it is futile. This time he aims for the back leg of the opposite side and smiles in grim satisfaction as he goes down and cannot get back up. With an ease born of being a soldier for more than half his adult life he walks over to where the other wolf lays and reaches down, grabbing the side of his head and twisting hard once. He had considered drawing it out but that was not his nature.

For those who were just as guilty he turned to face them.

“I’ll give you the choice, honorable death by submitting to the pup’s bond mother, or unhonorable death by having your neck snapped like a twig.”

Those that had been responsible for the damage done to Jace look at each other than at their dead alpha lying on the ground. All but two of them, go down on their knees and submit. Those other two growl and swear that there is nothing wrong with their treatment of Jace. Trace raises and eyebrow in his direction and he nods once as he retrieves his shirt from Cyanne. Turning he watches as the two wolf brothers in his military pack snap the necks on those responsible without giving them a chance to fight.

“To the rest of you. You will be submerged into the Watson pack. Be thankful for that. By the old laws all of you could be executed for your part in this.” Turning to Jacob he nods once and then heads over to where the council member alpha’s stand.
“That was mildly calm John,” Amara Wardi, the only female elder and only female elite wolf in England, comments.

He shrugs, replying, “I'm not him, I get little satisfaction out of harming others. You know I was an iota before I was an alpha.”

She nods and looks over at where Daria is kneeling with Jace firmly in her embrace. He also shifts positioning to look over at the boy and is mildly surprised to see that he is leaning towards Eric more than Daria.

The iota’s soft voice can be heard as she directs the cobra, “Guard him, I need to deal with them.”

To most watching, the fact the cobra inclined his head once and settled his long tail carefully around Jace would be a surprise in and of itself. Particularly when Jace leans into that tail, curling up like the pup he is, and passing out from the shock of it all.

Daria’s justice could be considered cruel but it is something he approves of. She traps those who had submitted to her punishment within their minds to feel every instant of pain that they had caused Jace. They would either die still trapped within their minds or they would learn to feel remorse and true guilt over their actions which would free them from their minds. It meant that they would need constant care until one of the two reactions occurred.

“We shall adjourn.” He announces.

Jacob nods once sharply before collecting the three wolves and Hyder, they will collect up all of the new pack members to be dealt with.

Eric carefully leans down and scoops Jace up in his arms before returning to the partial form that he prefers. To either side of him is Daria and Nathan. Daria is the one who informs him that they are retreating to Eric’s house before they bow out and leave, the two owls staying close with them to protect the injured pup.

Alpha Layard is the first to comment from the council as the scene breaks apart, “John, I forgot how deadly you can be at times. I trust that that the pup will be alright?”

He nods, “Indeed, his bond mother is the pack iota and she is rather skilled.”

The elder wolf nods once, smiling, “That is good.”

Amara pipes up with, “So who is the human who smells of pack and watches with keen eyes?” her voice is full of curiosity.

He smiles at her, accepting the change in topic, motioning Sherlock over he does the introductions. "Eldest Alpha Edward Layard, Elder Alpha Amara Wardi, and Elder Alpha Thomas Kinlochard this is the Watson Pack Alpha-second Sherlock Holmes."

Layard flicks a glance to him before stepping forward to shake his dark-haired human’s hand, "Welcome to the packs, Alpha-second Holmes, you wouldn't happen to be related to Mycroft would you?"

Sherlock nods once glancing at him before answering, "My older brother."

The older gentlemen smiles, "He does not know you're pack, does he?"

He shakes his head, "No, I haven't said anything to him about it, John said that only pack members
were supposed to know and I didn't see any pack marks on him the last time I saw him."

Layard nods again, chuckling, "Very true, very true indeed."

Amara steps up to the human giving him a brief hug before stepping back, "Be welcome to the packs Sherlock, may you always run true."

He had tensed up when she touched him until remembering that wolves are a very tactile group. Instead he forced himself to relax, accepting the hug.

She chuckles a low sound that makes his human blush as she comments, "Your more cat like I shall assume and prefer not to be touched by most."

Nodding a bit, he can smell that Sherlock feels a bit out of his depth.

The third man smiles at Sherlock, offering a hand, "Good to meet you, Alpha-second Sherlock, welcome to the packs, you joined one of the best."

With the introductions out of the way the council members also leave.

Turning to Sherlock he smiles slightly, "Ready to go home?"

His human nods once, and when they step outside it is full daylight.

Chapter End Notes

In case anyone is curious this takes place in a little over two hours
**Sherlock’s POV**

When they left the falling apart barn he was surprised at how little time had passed from when John had snapped Shan’s neck like it was nothing to now. According to his internal clock which was nearly never wrong it had been two hours and thirty-nine minutes. In that time he had seen his mild mannered, yes deadly but rarely a killer, flatmate snap the neck of one human and one wolf, order the death of two more, and allow another nine to be driven insane. All without ever raising his voice, most in a conversational tone that bordered on ice.

Through it all he had remained completely quiet. Not because he had to but because he was in overload and knew it yet he wouldn’t have changed a moment of it. Now, after his introductions to the council which his mind supplied him with as an important detail, according to Cyanne that finalized his place as alpha-second and all that it entitled. He was catching up with everything in that lightning like manner that his mind forever worked on.

The elders, two of them were technically nobles, blue bloods in the human society. The other was a member of the British government, just a ‘minor’ person, like his brother, which meant he was actually very important. It had been the female who spoke, she wasn’t the highest ranking, yet she was their voice. That said something, yet he could not figure out what it was it said.

John shifts almost as soon as they are outside and he approaches him slowly, studying everything he can. When he had first watched the difference between John and the wolf he had fought the night of the full moon he had thought that maybe the other wolf was on the small side, but now after seeing so many other wolves he realized that that wolf had been regular size. It was John who was the unusual size. He was massive compared to the other wolves, which was funny because his human form was fairly compact and small.

Another difference he notices is coloring. None of the other wolves have his dirty golden coloring. They are all plain browns and blacks, some grays. Not his John however, his wolf was a beautiful dirty gold color like tarnished brass. On his left front shoulder the fur is a different color, lighter in the star burst pattern and that’s when he realizes it must correlate to the gunshot wound in his human form. Then there are his eyes, they are deep, dark blue, almost gray in their tone yet unlike any other set of eyes he had seen on any of the other wolves. The only one even remotely close is that female wolf from the council.

Hesitantly, he reaches his right hand out to touch John’s fur but he is slightly worried how the wolf will react. He’s surprised to hear him speaking to him.
Go ahead, you’re the alpha-second, it is more than acceptable for you to touch my fur. His John tells him as he stands there watching.

Curiously he runs his hand down his side, then brushes upwards to see if the fur is two layered like it is in normal wolves. Gaining a bit more confidence he carefully rubs as far down his body as he can without moving before bringing his hands back up. He is considering doing more when John speaks again.

It's been more than twenty-four hours since my last good sleep and I still have to get us home, perhaps you could do that when I am more awake?

He blushes, nodding once. As the wolf lowers himself down, he carefully climbs onto his back and tries to figure out why he is blushing. He had done that a lot in the last few days but he cannot figure out exactly what it was that was causing it. He wasn’t embarrassed by anything really. He was a little self conscious for not having all the information, but that was something he planned on correcting as soon as possible.

His mind whirls as John gets to his feet and takes off at an easy loupe. As they are running he inquires, “Why was it the female wolf from the council who spoke when you said that Layard was the one in charge?”

Technically he is the one in charge, according to the ranking of who has been an elder alpha the longest. However, by the old laws which are mostly still practiced, she as an elite outranks every other member on the council since none of them are elites. John replies then continues to explain, elites come from the oldest bloodlines. You could say they are the royalty or nobles of the shifters. An elites bloodline always comes from one of the founding families, one of the first shifters. It is also common for elites to start or assume control of the pack or family they are born to. A pack like ours with six different elites is very rare. That none of us have problems over who is alpha is also rare. But then, I am not surprised to the other could be alphas are Jacob, the beta, and Eric, the nu, neither of which desires being at the head of their own pack.

“Oh,” he murmurs considering the new information. That meant even though John was not part of the council he out ranked all of them but the female. That was…enlightening.

The rest of the ride goes smoothly and John once again uses their roof as his landing place to let him off and return to his human form. However he seems to sway from the tiredness that he had mentioned.

“Come on, let’s go let Aidan get going.” John mutters as he turns back to a human.

The two of them head down the fire escape and in through John bedroom window. When they enter the flat, he takes a close look at the young man lounging in John’s chair the exact same way the other cobra does and he studies him for a minute trying to read him. The only thing he can really get is the black cobra elite from the neck markings, American from the south-west from his accent, brought up in a position of authority but has no authority according to his movements, has at least two siblings, well educated, and does not get along with his mother. He is sure there is more to him than that but it is not showing right now.

“How are you related to Eric?” he demands of the younger man as he gets to his feet, rising with the same grace as the other cobra.

The young man inclines his dark head, a moment respectively before replying, “Elder-second, Eric is my sire.”
His eyes narrow as he considers it. *Sire* the shifter word for father, used in reference to bondmate male parent.

The younger man smiles, stating, “My granddame on his side was an eastern coral snake from the States, she attended a family reunion with her youngest son in tow. That son presented a bondmate mark on the second day of the reunion to a very distant barely related cousin. However he was a black cobra, a rare breed that most other types of cobras and snakes try to avoid. Now neither of my parents likes the opposite gender, so they were able to come to a deal. My dame would produce a child for both families, one black cobra for his and one eastern coral snake for hers. I have two older sisters, the first to attempts, then there is me. Not long after my birth the bond between them was severed using the old gifts.” He shrugs, “I was raised by my dame in a den that distrusts any black cobra.”

“But he’s not old enough to have a teenage son!” he bursts out, shocked, because this boy is clearly in his late teens and he would swear that was about the same age range as Eric.

From the kitchen he can hear John chuckling as he comes back into the room. “A gift of the elite, we do not age much unless we have to spend energy on healing. Eric may be one of the youngest members of the military pack but he is still older than he appears. You would say he’s in his teens, maybe his early twenties and you would be wrong. Eric’s thirty-three or thirty-four.”

The teenage cobra nods once, “Yep, he was fifteen when he got my dame pregnant with me. I’m seventeen.” Slightly bowing first to John then to him, the young man murmurs, “Now if you’ll excuse me, I am going to head to his house for some rest.”

Without waiting for an answer he closes his laptop up and leaves.

After passing him a cup of tea, the shorter man takes his normal spot in his chair, rubbing back against it. Sipping at it he suggests, “How about we go fill Sebastian in on what happened so you can close out the case and get paid, then we can come back and rest?”

He nods and once they are done with their tea he hails them a cabbie, having it take them to the bank where he talks with Van coon’s PA while John collects there pay and reports on the situation at hand. Almost everyone in the room jumps when he tells her about the jade pin she is wearing and how much it is actually worth.

Afterwards they stop for Chinese food before heading back to the flat where John promptly goes and takes a shower in preparation for bed.

Through it, his mind is still whirling, and now that he was aware of the age, he realized which ones were elites based on the fact that they looked like they were in their twenties. John, of course, though the shoulder injury must have changed his aging. Jacob, Hyder, Eric, and Nathan. Who was the sixth? Daria’s aging was slowed cause of her mate if he understood properly. It was then he remembered that Cyanne had mentioned the elites and their aging before but he hadn’t considered it really important at the time. Important enough not to delete not so important as to actively consider it. Elites and their mates always seem physically younger than they are unless something occurs to force them into using too much of the gift. He’ll have to try and see some more necks, see if it is one of the other wolves in the pack.

With that in mind he opened the laptop to the file on the varieties and markers, going through it to realize that it covered European and American types, which did differ but that there was not any of the Oriental types on it. Soo Lin, his mind brings up. She had Oriental shifter in her, perhaps she could fill the marking sheet in or her brother since he actually was a shifter. Speaking of her, what is going to happen with her? He hadn’t heard anything else on that situation yet since John had given him the information about the book.
Giving a small shake of his head he is startled when he turns upon hearing John leave the bathroom. John’s currently in the kitchen with a towel wrapped low around his waist and that’s it. Every golden inch of his upper body is visible including a collection of scars and its all he can do not to go and touch. Somehow though, he is sure that touching would be A Bit Not Good. You don’t randomly touch your flatmat, he reminds himself as he catalogues every single mark and spot in sight. Yes John’s hands and face are a bit tanner than the rest of him but they are a brown tone, the rest of him is golden, the color of being naturally tan instead. His hair is not that combed style he generally sticks to as he moves about.

Just before his shorter flatmat is going to retreat back to his room, he states, “Tell me about Jace.”

Walking over with two mugs of tea, the shorter man hands him one before answering, “Jace is a mixed blood shifter who’s birth pack thought it would be a good idea to harm him. Technically he is a pup still, Daria has claimed him as hers.” He pauses to take a sip of tea, “I was going to ask if you would take him clothes shopping.”

“Why?” he inquires.

John smiles at him replying after he finishes his tea, “You’re good at color coordination, dressing to your advantage, and knowing how to carry yourself as if you belong everywhere and anywhere while using clothes as a means to do so.”

He blinks, he really hadn’t thought the shorter man had noticed with his jumpers and plain button downs. But wasn’t that just as much a front? His mind asked. After all, you learned tonight that he is one of the leading members of the shifters here in Britain. That has to mean something. But he is not going to reflect on it right now. Instead he tilts his head to the side, his mind absently cataloguing his flatmates reactions while he asks, “Do you know his measurements? I prefer a tailor which is all custom made.”

Standing, John walks over to where he is seat and kneels down so they are face to face, “I don’t know them, but something tells me you could figure it out from an image of him standing yes?”

He nods, waiting to see where this will go. He is well aware of all that skin just within reach and it is difficult to keep himself from touching it. He really hopes that John is distracted right now, because John will never be his, the mark his flatmates wrist promises that.

“I can show you,” comes the softly spoken offer, left hand lifted up and hovering between them but not touching. He nods once, worrying his lower lip as he leans forward just a bit and closing the distance between John’s hand and his temple. A smile curves the older man’s lips and then he can feel the brush just before the images flow through his mind of the teenager standing perfectly still, body painfully thin in his raggedy clothing.

“Thank you,” he tells the shorter man as he considers what he knows. Posture speaks of years of abuse and neglect. He’s too thin, so he has not been properly feed. Clothing is worse than most of his homeless wear. His coloring is a lot like Sherlock’s with dark hair and light skin, but his eyes seem to vary between a green color and a brown color. The marks on his neck speak of being an elite, a wolf, a lynx, and a crow, but something seems off about the combination. He doesn’t notice when John withdraws, his mind too focused on the young man and his clothing. Along with possibly some lessons in how to defend himself from that type of thing ever happening again.

When Cyanne shows up a few hours later, he’s still deep in thought, though the type of thought has changed.

“Good afternoon, elder-second,” she greeted him as she set her small bag that she carried her stuff in
It took him a moment to pull out of his mind palace enough to answer, but then he got to thinking that she would be perfect for asking questions. “Cyanne,” he greets her as he sits up, sometime during his thinking process he had sprawled out the way he always does on the sofa and now wishes to face her. “What exactly is the role of the elder-second or alpha-second?”

She smiles, perching on the armrest of the sofa as she replies, “They assist the alpha-elder in maintaining the pack.”

His eyes narrow as he considers that, “Is not the beta’s position?”

She shakes her head a bit, “They overlap. The alpha-elder is at the top, the final say in the pack. When dealing with adults, reports, protection, and territory the beta-senior assists the alpha-elder in making sure everything is run smoothly. It is up to the alpha-elder-second to help with the domestic side of things, the pups, the supplies and resources, people, distance protection such as surveillance. In that you’ve lucked out, Eric does most of it out of boredom.”

“So why is Eric not the alpha-second then?” he demands. His mind filling in placement, she had handed him a chart with the various positions within a pack and he was quickly memorizing them.

She blinks at him for a moment, glancing towards the bedroom upstairs before answering slowly, “Well he lacks the one requirement for it.”

“That is?” he drawls, low on patience.

“The potential to be the bondmate of…” she starts to tell him but is quickly cut off.

“Cyanne!” John is entering the room dressed again in his jeans and jumper but his voice still holds the edge to it.

She bows her head, not finishing the sentence. A few minutes later she excuses herself after packing everything up and bidding both of them farewell.

He really wants an answer but decides not to press the issue right now. John is definitely not going to tell him, and after that snap he is certain that Cyanne is not going to tell him either. So he will have to find a way to find out. Wait...the boy, pup, Jace. He would understand, and he probably wouldn’t think anything of telling a fellow pack member who is human about it. He’ll ask him when they go to get his clothes.

With that in mind he jumps up, and goes to his room for the laptop since John is currently using his. He needs to figure out what styles he would look best in so he can put in an order to the tailor and then take the time to take him there. He’ll just have to remember to be careful when dealing with him. For some reason he will have to consider later, he does not want to disappoint John by messing up his place within the pack when the pack had been mostly very welcoming of him in a way nowhere else in his life ever had been.
Day Out

Chapter Notes

Great big thanks to all you lovely people who read the story and click on one of the various ways to say you enjoy it. Even bigger thanks to my cheering teaming that I keep getting great reviews from, you all are awesome.

This chapters for revwog1974, I hope you enjoy.

_Sherlock’s POV_

In the following week since they had dealt with the smugglers there had been zero interesting cases. He had three of them that he had solved from home. Despite the fact it had been a week he had not had a chance to get bored because he had been busy bugging any member of the pack who he could get to the flat to teach him everything that they could. He wanted to know everything that he could about the pack. Like its alpha, the pack had its own place within his Mind Palace.

One thing that he wanted to figure out was who John’s bondmate was. None of the wolves or any other member of the pack had a matching mark on them. According to what he had learned all bondmates had identical marks. They might vary in color but that was it. Though he did not know why they would vary with color. Was there a reason for it?

It was very frustrating to him. It was important that he did not lose his John though he was having a hard time coming to understand why. There had to be a reason why he felt more focused when he was around, why he felt like he could connect better. He also was trying to figure out why he now felt attraction for a person when he had been pretty much asexual from the time he hit puberty.

When the attraction had first hit he had been confused and embarrassed by it. He hadn’t any sort of idea of what he was going to do about it. Ignore it and maybe it would go away, he had thought, but after nearly three months it had not. Instead it seemed to be growing on a regular bases. Before he had only his imaginations image of John in his head, now he knew exactly what the vast majority of his body looked like and he found he wanted to touch it and taste it, observe and learn his every reaction. It was distracting.

Shortly after lunch his phone went off, the majority of the clothes was ready, they merely needed to have the final fitting done.

Smiling, he grabs his phone, texting Daria to ask her if they could meet at the tailors so Jace could get his fitting. She had answered within moments after he sent the text that it would be acceptable much to his delight.

Originally he had considered asking the pup to tell him about pack values and ranks but had dismissed that idea almost immediately because he had been from a different pack. Who’s to say they used the same values? Besides, with what he understood of the boy he did not want to make his life any harder and he might put him at odds with John if he was to ask him.

With all of that in mind he dresses carefully, choosing to wear clothes that enhance his appeal in a friendly manner, not a sexual one. This would actually be his first meeting with Jace and the impression he wanted to leave was trustworthy ally. Once dressed he grabs his coat from the hanger.
and sends a quick text to John about where he will be in case John gets home from the clinic before he is done.

He is surprised to see a cabbie pull up almost before he has finished calling for one. However a cursory look tells him this man belongs to a pack, just not his pack. That he is fairly low level in the pack he belongs to. Is not yet bonded to anyone but does have a family according to the pictures with kids in them. His mind is just turning to take in the state of that relationship when the cabbie stops at the tailors for him.

After paying the man, he takes a deep breath before pushing open the door and taking everything in with a sweep of his eyes. First thing he spots is the pup standing close to Daria, shoulders slouched as if he is trying to be smaller than he is, his glance flickering over everything as they wait. He looks better than he did the last time he saw him, or even in the memory of his first meeting with John but he still looks a bit unhealthy. The female viper with him appears to be on alert, her eyes catching sight of him almost as soon as he enters the room.

Smiling at her charmingly, he strides over, reminding himself as he does so to keep track of his emotions. If John could smell them, so could this boy who really did not need to.

“Hello,” he greets the two of them, offering his right hand with the wrist uncovered. According to Mouse it was the proper way to greet members of the pack that you liked. It allowed the energy flow between them and that in turn strengthened the pack bond.

Daria accepts his hand with an easy smile, “Hello sir,” she murmurs in response.

He turns his smile to Jace, offering his hand, “I don’t believe we have met yet, I’m Sherlock Holmes, call me Sherlock please.”

Jace’s eyes flicker to Daria as if asking permission or if it’s safe, possibly even both before offering his hand to shake. “Jace Arden,” he replies, stumbling over the last name.

Despite the fact he shakes his hand, he does not attempt to connect their wrists in any form and he takes a moment to determine why. His conclusion is simple, he does not feel as if he belongs to the pack yet. Why? Of course, he has not formally been accepted into the pack by the alpha-second. Yes, John had accepted him into the pack but it was up to Sherlock as the alpha-second for it to be formalized. He would make sure to do that before they left here.

Moments later Jean Claude, the owner of the shop was standing beside them after giving a small bow, “Ah, Mr. Holmes! I am so pleased to see you, when I first got your order I was surprised, the measurements weren’t yours and double checked it plus the styles to make sure that it was the correct order however I believe you will be well pleased.” He smiles at him, then turns his attention to the viper and the pup, “Hello, greetings to you as well.”

“Jean,” he turns to partially face the smaller Frenchmen, “This is Daria Arden and her adopted son Jace Arden,” he introduces them, motioning to each in turn. Out of the corner of his eye he notices Jace tense up when he starts speaking and relax as he introduces the boy as her family. It might not be formal, but it is still acceptance of him into the pack.

Jean turns to Jace, looking him over carefully, “Hello Mr. Arden, from your size I would say the measurements are for you. How about we get you fitted to make sure that it will all work out?” he motions for the boy to follow but carefully does not touch him.

Jace looks nervously to Daria who nods reassuringly before slowly following the shorter man. When they reach the door to the fitting room, he balks at going in until they join him. Jean fetches him the
first outfit to try, having him go into the changing room to put it on and come back out to make sure the measurements fit. While he is doing that, he turns to the viper to ask her some questions since she is one of the few he had not had a chance to quiz.

“Do you know who John’s bondmate is?” he inquires, glance flipping between her and Jace.

Her eyes never leave her pup as she responds, “Indeed I do, I also think he is handling the situation wrong but I understand why.”

Titling his head he queries, “Really? Why?” if there is a good reason for his behavior maybe he will stop trying to pursue that line of questioning. Who’s he trying to fool? There is no way he plans to stop until he knows.

She smiles lightly, answering, “His bondmate is human, male surprisingly enough, and someone he respects greatly. He will never force the issue on him, and feels that if he was aware of the cost to John that it might influence him in his choice, something that John wishes to avoid at all costs.”

She had just paused for a moment to take a breath when Jace lets out a blood curling scream when one of the tailor’s assistance accidently brushes his arm against his behind. Trembling, he stumbles away from the man, nearly falling as he does so because he forgot the step that he was standing on. With quick reflexes born of years of running after criminals and being on the streets of London, he darts forward and catches the boy, making sure he doesn’t actually hurt himself. It surprises him when Jace curls his body into his, pressing as close as he can and crying.

He eyes narrow on Jean and he nods to the door. Moments later all the assistance are gone and the only ones in the room are Daria, Jace, and himself.

Hestiently, because he is not sure what to do, he calls up memories of how Lestrade deals with trauma victims and carefully puts an arm around the boys shoulders while he cries, his other hand gently brushing his back, while he makes what he hopes are soothing noises in his throat.

Eventually he calms down, straightening out and looking at the ground sheepishly without saying a word.

He tries for a kind smile as he uses his left hand to tilt his face up so they are looking eye to eye, “You’ll be safe, John will allow nothing less, nor would the pack. If someone tries to hurt you they will find themselves face an entire pack of soldiers and one high-functioning sociopath and I promise that is something no one wants to do.” His voice is low and rumbling as he tries to pitch his tone to help Jace relax. It seems to work, because he nods, eventually stepping back a little bit.

Daria fusses over him for a few minutes before asking if he wants to continue on. He agrees and she goes to fetch the tailors. While she is doing that, he carefully offers his arm to the young shifter, making sure to mimic John’s posture of a few months prior when he had been brought into the fold. For a minute the shifter just stares at him in shock. Then he seems to finally accept the offer because he unfastens the shirt sleeve and slowly places his arm over, his grip light as the link is formed and connected.

Not long after that, the viper returns, Jean and his assistance in tow with her.

Afterward the two of them go back to watching and softly speaking while Jace gets his fitting done.

“What’s the cost to John?” he inquires as he keeps his eyes on the pup to make sure that there is not another panic attack.

She glances at him, expression serious as she answers, “All shifters have two potential bondmates
that they can choose from, a male and a female. Sometimes a shifter who loses both mates will get a chance with a third, though it is rare.” She begins, “With wolves though, they only ever have one bondmate for wolves mate for life. If it does not work between John and his mate, then he will never have a spouse.”

What? John without a family seems extremely wrong to him even if that family would cost him his John. Despite how selfish he is, he still wants John to be happy that is another item that he will have to review later. But for now back to the question at hand.

“Oh.” He mutters in response, not sure what else to say.

“He’s also dealing with the need of the link, the desire to be with his bondmate as much as possible, the desire to make his bondmate happy, and the urge to touch, be affectionate of his bondmate.” The look she gives him speaks volumes but he is not sure he understands.

What she is saying sounds like John’s behavior with him, but when he had been at the restaurant that first night and said he was married to his Work, john had not protested. But then, he thinks about it for a bit, he had said that his scent was not open to the idea. So he had been attracted but was not pushing it because Sherlock had said no right off the bat. Since then he was sure there were plenty of times he had smelled attracted but he had always retreated to his room or the shower as soon as the feels started so perhaps john had missed them.

Was Daria saying he was the bondmate? What would that do to their relationship if he did act on it?

“However, here is where John’s behavior becomes understandable to a point. When two shifters bond they have the choice to end it if something happens to make them wish to, it is rare, very rare but it can occur. When a shifter bonds with a human that choice is gone, the bond is forever but the human always has the chance of changing, where the bond is no longer welcome but cannot escape it except in death.” She pauses, taking a look around the room before continuing, “He refuses, absolutely refuses, to put someone in a position of what he considers no choice.” She shrugs, an elegant motion that reminds him she really is a snake hiding as a human, “He will sink everything he can into the relationship without ever pushing for more because to push for more would do opposite of what he is trying to do with his behavior.”

Before he has a chance to ask any more questions he is mildly startled to see Jean come over with Jace, beaming proudly while the young man blushes.

“Wonderful choices, Mr. Holmes, they are perfect with his coloring and build. The design even allows for this young fellow to grow into them as well!” The excitable Frenchmen rumbles as they stop next to them, Jace is back in the clothes he arrived in though he has a slip of paper with him that is his receipt for delivery.

He looks over at the younger man who is standing so quietly by the viper, his posture showing that he is afraid and worried that he is going to mess up. Lunch, his mind supplies, offer lunch. It’s a good way to get to know him, though you might have to snack or he won’t eat. “Would you like lunch?” he inquires softly, looking directly between the two to keep from putting pressure on the younger man

Daria smiles at the offer, turning to softly ask him, “Are you hungry?”

He slowly nods, eyes flickering between the two of them quickly.

“Excellent! I know a restaurant right down the road from here with a wide selection.” Turning to Jean he bids the Frenchmen farewell before heading to the door with the same abruptness that he
does most everything before realizing that he almost forgot to make sure that they were coming.

When he stops to look back at them, he is almost surprised to see how close they were and Daria chuckles at him, her tone low. “Don’t worry about it elder-second, Eric is the same way.”

Flashing her the charming smile, he comments, “Call me Sherlock.”

She inclines her head, “Alright Sherlock,” she murmurs in response, her natural tendency to hiss the s making his name sound more like ssh-ure-lock.

The rest of the walk is silent as the three of them head to the small restaurant. When they get there he holds the door open politely, remembering his years of etiquette training without even trying. Once inside the hostess, a young woman who he had helped a few years back comes scurrying over, a smile on her face, “Sherlock!” She exclaims, “I have your booth available if you would like for you and your company.”

“That would be nice, thank you Tammy.” He replies as he unwraps his scarf from around his neck as she leads them to a booth near the last window. She disappears for a moment before returning with a set of menus and a large mug of hot chocolate. Nearly four years ago she had realized that he had a sweet tooth and while he did not always eat, he had not been able to turn down one of her specially made hot chocolates with its rich chocolate flavoring mixed with fresh vanilla bean, hazelnut, toffee, and cinnamon.

“That smells good,” Jace murmurs then blushes, ducking his head a bit.

Flashing a smile to the boy, he pushes the cup his way, “Go ahead, I’ll have her bring me another one. It’s delicious.”

For a minute his glance flickers back and forth before he peeks over at the viper sitting to his left. Slowly, as if making sure its not a cruel joke, he accepts the mug and takes a slow sip, eyes going comically wide as the flavor hits his tongue.

“Oh wow.”

“Do not forget to order some food,” he reminds the younger man who seems completely absorbed in the hot chocolate.

Smiling, a small laugh escapes Daria as she watches her pup.

“You should try this,” he tells her offering the mug without thinking. When she blinks at him for a moment, he blushes, and sets it down embarrassed.

She gently unfolds his fingers from their death grip on its handle as she lifts it up to take a small sip. “Hmmm, your right this is good.” Setting the mug back down, she inches the menu closer to him, “Go on, pick something to eat. You cannot have a purely liquid meal for lunch.”

He nods once, ducking his head as he blushes deeper red, though this time its not embarrassment turning him pink.

Over the next couple of hours he works towards drawing Jace out of his shell. Food and hot chocolate seem to be a good starting point, so from their he tries to keep the conversation light as he goes from that to if he is working the Cyanne to inquiring what he likes to do with his free time. Through it, Jace does mostly well but has a panic attack when a guy trips and crashes into him, knocking him off his chair before turning to yell at him. Before either Daria or him have a chance to comfort the terrified teen the manager is there, kicking the other man out and apologizing profusely.
The other instance of difficulty comes when he inquires about if the boy knows how to play any instruments or not.

While he is not sure what that was about, he sets about calming him down by asking if he had ever heard a violin in person and if he wants to, ignoring the panic attack to allow him to compose himself. It works and a few minutes later the three of them are back at the flat where he carefully lifts his Strad to just below his chin and plays softly, drawing the notes out. He might not be good at verbalizing what he is thinking but the violin does an excellent job of speaking for him. Apparently Jace is no more immune to the tones of it than anyone else who had ever heard him when he is uses it to express his moods intentionally.

That’s how John finds the three of them several hours later, with Sherlock at his place by the window, Jace perched in John’s armchair, and Daria perched on the arm of it.
Hi all, I got my new cord today so I do not have to worry about borrowing a computer again, now thank you to all those lovely people who left me reviews. Please review, kudos, follow, or bookmark to show your enjoying it. Thank you all.

John’s POV
It is not surprising that Sherlock is playing the violin when he gets back home, what surprises him is the fact that Sherlock is playing the violin with Jace and Daria listening. Daria breaks away from the performance when he walks in, coming to stand beside where he is at in the kitchen.

He is surprisingly gentle with him, she tells him, using the link between them rather than her voice. It is as startling as Eric’s behavior towards him. How both of our packmates with Aspergers manage to pull off what an entire pack didn’t seem to understand is highly amusing in a disappointing sort of way.

Glancing over at the two he understands exactly what she means. The two men with the biggest emotional blocks and least tendency towards being nice seem to be the ones who understand the teens damaged mind better than any of the other pack except maybe his bondmother who is a healer. His birth pack sure as hell didn’t understand, they were the root of the problem, though he should probably check in on what Jacob did with them.

That also reminded him, he needed to deal with Soo Lin and her brother as well. Oh brother, life just got busier it seemed.

Still, it is heartening to see, it means if we ever manage to complete the bond then bond-adoption will not be out of the question. He tells her as he watches. Is Soo Lin and her brother aware?

No. He is still in hibernation and she is sleeping deeply, not in hibernation but not awake, comes her soft response.

Alright, so that is not a situation I need to deal with yet. Do you know what Jacob did with the other pack? He queries.

She closes her eyes for a moment, thinking about each of the members before replying, He handed some of them over to me to deal with, some over to Eric, and the rest he dealt with. I do not believe any of them were executed, though with Eric one can never be sure. I do know that three of the ones given over to me required mind healing, they are currently hibernating. The other four that he gave into my care are being observed by Nathan while we are away from the house. When we are at home they are kept as far away from Jace as I can, they have not left the basement where I currently have them locked in. While I told him if he wishes to confront any of them he may, and we will back him as needed he has shown no interest in doing so. She pauses for a moment, closing her eyes and taking a deep breath, I cannot unlock his shifting. I have tried every method I was taught and he is still blocked. I can feel the pain that comes from it but there is nothing I can do about it. As iota I request the alpha’s assistance in correcting this situation.

He nods, turning to look at the two dark haired men in the living room, one playing his violin, the
other watching in rapt fascination. *I’ll unlock his ability.*

She gives a partial bow before returning her attention to his human as he finishes the melody he was on.

When he stops playing, his eyes narrow towards them as he comments, “You two are thinking loudly, not clearly, but definitely loudly.”

He smiles at his flatmates ability to notice it before turning his attention to Jace, who ducks his head a little as he stands holding perfectly still. His posture submissive, oh that will have to be changed. Wolves should never be submissive, respectful yes, submissive no.

“Would you like to learn to shift?” he inquires of the younger shifter, watching him closely.

Slowly the younger nods once, mumbling, “I would.”

His smile grows as he finishes making the tea he had been working on while speaking with the viper. Handing Sherlock a cup of tea, and then Jace, he returns to the kitchen to grab his before coming back into the sitting room area.

“Sherlock, do you know of any place where we could conceivably go that is large and without people?” he inquires of his flatmate.

For a moment the taller man considers it as he sips at his tea, then he replies, “Mycroft’s warehouse should be empty though you might want to check first.”

-Eric, check the warehouse Mycroft took me to in order to see if there is anyone in it.- JW

Less than a minute later the response chimes in, -Empty for three days.- Tech

“It’s open for use right now.” he tells the room at large, “Shall we? If you would like I can bring him home later on.”

She smiles at him but it doesn’t reach her eyes as the viper replies, “I’ll stick around, you know I have always found the various forms interesting.”

He nods, collecting up the empty cups and taking them into the kitchen to quickly wash them. Afterwards, still considering how he wishes to do this, he walks back into the living room still lost in thought. Daria he is sure could make it there without being detected, so too could he with Sherlock, but how to get Jace there is the problem at hand. He could with very little effort use the boys natural talent for shielding, but that would require him taking control of the younger shifters mind and he does not wish to do that.

“Why can’t you carry him and me? Your wolf form is more than up to it.” Sherlock suggests from his armchair.

Daria gasps at the idea, staring at him in shock, her scent is horrified. Jace violently shakes his head backing up as far as he can in the chair, terror pours off of him. A confused look crosses the tall humans while his scent is impatient.

“That’s not done! Only immediate family ever rides on an elite and even then only non-shifters or those who are too young to shift.” Her voice is low as tells him that. The idea alone has her quaking. Generally if a person not immediate family was being carried by an elite it meant they were dead or dying.
Turning his stormy eyes on him, his flatmate demands, “John, explain.”

That elects another gasp out of the younger shifter who is staring at him in outright shock and fear. Though according to his scent, he is not afraid of him, but for him. Well that is interesting. Sherlock might be a good influence on him and the other way around.

Sherlock’s eyes narrow on Jace for a moment before returning to him while waiting for an answer.

Giving a small shrug, he answers, “Traditionally an elite never consents to allowing anybody to riding them except those who are immediate family of one type or another, then it is only non-shifters or small children who do not yet have the gift, occasionally older members who’s gift is not as strong any longer or who are too weak in either form to keep up.” he pauses considering it for a moment before smiling, “Though I would say I am not the person who worries about most traditions. If I did my pack would not be what it is. So it is a good idea, particularly since I really could do so without any difficulty.” turning to look at the younger shifter he inquires, “Would you be comfortable with Sherlock making sure you don’t fall off? You’d either have to ride behind him and hold on, or ride in front and have him hold you.”

Jace’s eyes get massively wide as he stares at him considering the options. He can just about hear the wheels turning in the younger shifters head before he finally nods in consent. Despite the fact he is willing to allow the younger shifter on his back, he will only really do so with Sherlock there as well, otherwise there is something innately wrong about the entire idea.

A few minutes later finds the four of them in the alley outside of the flat. It takes him less than a thought to shift between forms. Standing there he observes the other three from his canine form, watching as Daria partially shifts and then fades from sight as she shields and Jace watches in fascination and a little bit of fear. Slowly, so not to startle the already frighten pup, he lowers himself down so the two can get on his back. Part of him rebels about the idea of someone other than his mate on his back but he suppresses that part of his nature with the ease of years of controlling it during combat.

Sherlock gets on first, offering a hand to the younger man to help him on. Biting his lip he bows low, head nearly touching his knees before he inches around to his side and takes the humans hand, swinging up on behind him. Unsure what to do with himself, he hesitantly wraps his too skinny arms around the older humans middle, trying to figure out how he is going to do this without touching the alpha-second too much while on the alpha’s back.

He can just about hear the younger shifters thoughts going a thousand miles a minute before Sherlock finally just tugs him forward so he is pressed against his back, his arms locked around his middle.

“Ready John,” his potential bondmate tells him as he pulls the shield around them.

A moment later he is sprinting over the roof tops, jumping with an ease that he had missed during his time of not shifting. When in this form he can move faster than most cars on the street because he does not have to deal with the traffic up here. In less than ten minutes he has gone across town and is silently landing after a long jump on the ground not far from the old warehouse. Trotting up to it, he uses his paw to push the door open before entering and unshielding. Daria appears by his side, still in her hybrid form as he drops downing, allowing his passengers off before he shifts back into his human form.

“Lovely run,” he murmurs smiling.

Daria chuckles at him, shaking her head, “I forget how much wolves like to run, you never join the
pack on the monthly runs."

He shrugs, “I hardly ever joined on the pack runs even before I was deployed. I’m faster and it gets dull having to circle back because the alpha feels insulted you out run them. Of course, that is no longer an issue but I am no longer in the habit of running with the pack. Jacob flies with me sometimes however since he can keep and complains when I am on my own.”

Turning to face Jace he smiles again, “Now then, the first part of the shift will burn as it unlocks, you were bound so it will not be pleasant getting rid of the bonding and for that I am deeply sorry. On the plus side, once the blockage is gone shifting will be a smooth feeling, a rush of power as you go between forms.”

The younger shifter nods once, body slightly trembling as he waits. John lifts his left hand, placing it carefully against the younger man’s temple and focuses. Falling into the wellspring of energy that is his to use, he calls on the healing knowledge that he used more regularly before becoming the alpha. Once he has the knowledge he needs called to mind, he shifts his attention to Jace’s mind, gently brushing against the edges of it as he follows his life force to the abilities that make him what he is. As he moves through the younger man’s mind, he smooths the edges out, doing a minor amount of mind healing as he reaches into his source of power. When he gets there he studies the blockage for a moment before taking his power and severing it, at the same time taking control of the younger man’s body and causing him to shift into the form he is most familiar with, that of a wolf.

Once the younger man is shifting he steps back but maintains the link between their minds, taking him through the entire process until he is standing there a large grey-black wolf with light colored eyes. Soon as his form is finished he carefully directs him back through the shifting process so he is in human form and still dressed.

The younger wolf sways and he reaches his hand back out to steady him, inquiring, “You alright?”

“Yes sir,” he mumbles, voice soft as his mind processes.

Smiling he lets go and he straightens out, blinking rapidly at him. “Call me John,” he tells the younger man, then queries, “Were you paying attention to how that felt and worked?”

The younger man nods once and he smiles then he tells him, “Alright, go from human to wolf. We’ll work on the hybrid form in a bit.”

Slowly, with his focus tuned completely inwards the younger shifter pulls the image of his wolf to the front and allows the change to happen despite the fact he smell greatly of fear. Moments later the grey-black wolf is standing in his place, panting at the energy it takes to move between forms.

“Walk around a bit, get used to moving, when your ready come back over here and we will work on bringing you back into human form without forgetting your clothing.” He tells the younger wolf.

Jace bobs his head, unfamiliar with how to use the telepathy the others take for granted. For the next half hour he wanders around the room, sometimes running, sometimes jumping, occasionally sitting. John can smell his pleasure at the freedom this form provides. Eventually he get tired and all he wants to do is rest but he can’t do that here so the young wolf returns to his alpha and waits for assistance on the shift back. Once he is in human form, still dressed though on his rump because he lost his balance, he smiles before promptly fainting.

-Send someone with a car would you?- JW

-Be there shortly.- Tech
He sends the message then checks on Jace, happy to see that he is healing at a rapid rate now that the
block is gone. Since he is unconscious, he uses it as a perfect time to work on healing just a bit more
of his mind. Taking the edge even further off of the memories that swamp him.

-I’m here? Wherever here is.- PiM

Leaning down he scoops the young man up, his shoulder complaining as he does so, “Well Daria,
your ride is here, let’s get him in the car and you two can be off.”

“Oh,” she murmurs, “who?”

“Maria, the canine multiform.” He replies as he walks out of the warehouse and into the sunlight.

Maria is standing next to a small car, holding the backdoor open when they approach.

“Alpha, I would offer you a ride as well but there is not enough space.” She greets him.

After setting Jace down he waves it off, “It’s alright, I can enjoy the trip home. Drive safely yes?”

She nods, hugging him and brushing her head against his chest for a moment affectionately before
getting in the driver’s seat. Daria inclines her head and gets into the passenger’s seat. With all three
fastened into the car they take off, leaving Sherlock and him alone.

Sniffing the air he is mildly surprised to discover that his tall companion is jealous right now, though
he is not sure of what.

Not saying anything, he reshifts into his wolf form, allowing Sherlock to get on and slowly making
his way back to the flat while shielded. He is enjoying his bondmates touch too much to rush the
process though he knows he will sleep when they get home.
Thank you to all the lovely people who reviewed, followed, subscribed, bookmarked, kudosed, or otherwise let me know you were enjoying the story.

I am considering getting a drawing of the military pack anyone have any views on that?

Enjoy!

Mycroft’s POV

He had hoped that the army doctor would be a good influence on his brother younger brother and in many ways he was. The reports showed that he was getting along better with the Yard, or at least he was not being as vicious when dealing with them. He was getting cases completed far faster and without as much drama. All of this was good, yet there was a problem too. There were times he would step outside of his flat on camera and a moment later he was gone. Missing. The camera’s could not find him anywhere and then he would reappear in the strangest places but the camera’s would malfunction and the video would stop or cut out. It was driving him insane.

He was worried about what was happening with his brother, but Aragorn could not find him either when asked to. A large part of him was terrified that he was getting back into drugs, but if that was the case Lestrade would not still be allowing him on cases. So what was he doing when he vanished from the cameras? Perhaps he should have dinner was Lestrade to discuss his brother’s behavior. It had been a few weeks since the last time they had done so.

With that in mind he quickly hacks the detective inspector’s phone, adding the appointment for dinner that night before telling Anthea to clear it on the schedule.

She mutters, “Sir,” before going back to being silent on her phone.

With that task taken care of he returns to getting his files done. The more he can get accomplished now, the less he will have to consider while he is at dinner. The more focus he will have available for the adorable detective inspector.

Shit. He thinks, there I go again. I really need to stop thinking of him like that. Nothing will ever come of it. He was married to a woman for the last fifteen years. Had two children with her, well he thought they were his, though Mycroft was fairly certain they were not. There was nothing in his history that suggested that he had ever been interested in men so why was he so stuck on the idea?

Sighing to himself, he wraps up the set of files he is on before checking his watch. He still has two hours before he needs to head out to retrieve the detective inspector for dinner. He can probably get two or three more reports done if he can only focus. Forcing his concentration back to the task at hand he carefully goes over each of the files in detail, making sure not to miss a single thing. Shortly before it is time for him to go Anthea reminds him of the time. Smiling to himself he realizes that he had actually completed five of the files, not the original three that he thought that he would.

Standing, he stretches for the first time in hours before carefully straightening his suit and heading to his car. Anthea closes the door quietly behind him before getting in on the other side of the car. The
two sit in the vehicle in companionable silence as Anthony drives them to NSY to pick Gregory up. Upon getting there, she shifts to the front of the car with Anthony, putting the divider up between them as the detective inspector slides into the car through the door she had just left open.

“Hello Mr. Holmes,” the slightly older man greets him as he sits down with a sigh.

Apparently it was a long day, he notes as he notices that the detective inspector is a bit more disheveled than when he is just doing desk work. There is a variety of mud of the bottom of his pant legs and side of his shoes that speaks of chasing someone through the underground. Since he wasn’t on camera, he must have been in the sewers for the chase, the old ones that are disused by any but the criminal element or homeless. A fresh set of bruises on his knuckles speaks of a good right hook judging by their placement. While his fingers keep reflexively opening and closing like he is still holding a pen, so they must have caught the man and finished up the paperwork.

All of this is noticed with a blink of the eye as he replies, “Good evening Detective Inspector.”

The ride to the restaurant is quiet, though he cannot determine what the feeling in the air is. It’s not the companionable silence he shares with Anthea, or the energetic silence he is used to with Sherlock, or the accepting silence that John prefers. It’s full of tension but he could not figure out the type of tension for the life of him.

Upon getting to the restaurant, the door slides open as Anthea opens it, standing as silent as she ever does when not using her phone to type. Both the tall men slide out, with Gregory thanking his PA even as he nods to her and turns towards the small restaurant. Nothing else is said as they enter, the host being well aware of who Mycroft is and quickly showing them to the best and most private table in the room.

Before they were even seated the waiter was there with a delicious mug of hot milk chocolate with coconut milk and banana melted into it for him and a dark blend coffee creamed and sugared to the level he noticed that his companion preferred after a case before retreating again. The nice thing about a place like this was they took good care of their best customers.

Gregory seems to be startled by the coffee and looks between it and him with a curious look on his face.

“I informed the host a few days ago to your preferred coffee since this is somewhere I am partial to coming due to their excellent service.” He answers the unspoken question as he takes a sip at his hot chocolate.

“Oh, well thank you,” the normally articulate man responds. After he takes a sip of it, he sighs happily, murmuring, “Why can’t I get something like this at the yard?” after another sip he speaks a bit louder, inquiring, “So what would you like to talk about Mr. Holmes? Generally these dinners are about the idiotic and foolish comings of your brother but he has been mostly behaving lately which I attribute to John’s influence on him.”

Taking another sip, he waits to answer, knowing that Aaron the head of the waiters would be there in less than a minute to take their orders. Since he hates interrupting a conversation once started he would prefer to wait. Sure enough, the slightly heavy set, mostly honest man with a decent memory for those who come through often enough. Ordering is an easy affair, he simply asks for the chef’s special and waits patiently for his companion to make his selection. He’s mildly surprised when the detective decides to do the same. Once Aaron is gone, he takes one more sip of his hot chocolate before answering the question.

“Sherlock has been vanishing for long periods of time lately. Normally I can track him in the cctv but
lately it is as if he has learned how to become invisible. I am concerned about him, since I know that Doctor Watson would not assist me, I thought to ask you if you knew anything.” He replies, then takes another sip of his nearly gone hot chocolate.

“Call me Greg or Gregory for this,” the older man comments, “because this is not going to be a work related conversation.”

That startles him, what detail is he missing? Details are so very important and he really hates not knowing them all.

“Now then,” the silvery-brown haired man stands, walking a complete circuit around the table before sitting back down. It was difficult to sit completely still with someone behind him, his training said to quickly get them back in his view. “You’re not marked so I cannot say too much on the subject. But I will answer what I can.”

Tilting his head to the side just the slightest he observes that man as he queries, “Marked?”

Before he has a chance to answer, Aaron and their waiter is back with their dinners plus drinks to go with it.

“Marked, that’s the correct word. Those who are shifters or part of one of the shifter clans are all marked, it’s not a mark that can be faked either since it is only visible to other shifters, those with shifter or gifted blood, and those within a clan.” The silver haired detective answers softly as he cuts into the well done steak before him.

Shifter. How interesting, he thinks, there is nothing anywhere in the detective file mentioning that he is a shifter, so how would he know this or see the mark that he is referring to? He is considering asking this when the detective inspector continues speaking.

“My father is a shifter, his mate, my mother a human, I took after her, so while I see the markings, I myself do not have any.”

Oh. His mind short circuits, here is a person who could teach him about the world that he knows is there cannot discover a damn thing about. That is simply a wonderful thing. He will have to make time in his schedule to do so. Immediately. “What does the shifter clans have to do with my brother?” he eventually asks.

Giving a small smile, the older man answers, “Simple enough, John belongs to one of the clans, Sherlock has been adopted into that clan, thus under the clans protection. If there is one thing I can say is clan protection is the most detailed protection you’ll find anywhere.” He pauses eating a bit more, “Your tendency to observe might be taken as a threat and thus your ability to observe interfered with. Any watchers you have on him will have problems doing so too.” He shrugs, “the clans are highly defensive of their own.”

“Oh,” the normally fluent politician is not sure what else to say. Does that mean he is no longer needed? He had always been Sherlock’s protector, even when they were children. After he had left for school it had become more difficult and Sherlock had resented him. That was actually when the feud between them had started. Sherlock had been separated from their youngest brother by their mother, and no amount of trying to talk her into allowing them back together worked. She was the one person his charms failed on.

“Any other questions I may or may not be able to answer?” the older man’s voice was light as he inquired.
“Do you know the type of protection that he has? Will they help him always in his crazy schemes? Is there any way that they will stop blocking him so much? I massively dislike not being able to track him in case of an emergency. I am going to assume that the reason I cannot get cameras to work in the flat is this protection and that is why tracking his phone has become almost impossible?” he queries.

The older man chuckles softly, giving a shake of his head, “Some would say you’re a stalker Mr. Holmes—”

He interrupts before he continue, “If I am to call you Gregory, you may call me Mycroft.”

“-alright, Mycroft. Now then, some would say you’re a stalker with that much surveillance going on with your brother, however knowing your brother even the littlest bit tells me that you are not. It is fairly well justified.” He pauses to take a sip of the wine that had come with dinner, “It is nearly guaranteed that he has a watcher or two that he is unaware of. And yes, he would be unaware of them if they are doing their job right. The clan’s computer tech is probably the reason you cannot get anything on him with technology. I believe that particular group has the best in Britain, or one of the best. I’d suggest sitting down politely with John and having a word with him about it. Not just kidnapping the way you’re so fond of doing.”

He bristles at the implication of being anything other than polite. “Thank you for the information, Gregory,” he just about purrs, watching the other mans reaction.

Good thing the silver haired detective had not been swallowing, he thinks as he watches his throat work like he is trying to swallow, his eyes barely widening and his heart rate speeding up. Wait a moment, is there a chance that the older man is attracted to him? He questions at this response. He will have to find out.

The rest of the dinner goes smoothly. He allows the conversation of the shifters to drop, knowing that there would be nothing else of true importance he could learn until he could find a way to infiltrate one of these clans. Since his brother had joined Dr. Watson’s clan, perhaps he should see about doing the same. Throughout dinner however takes the time to press a bit of a flirt to test his hypothesis that the detective found him of interest as well. By the end of it, he was sure that he was and had filed the information away for pursuing when he was not with said detective.

When dinner is done he has Anthony drive them to Gregory’s flat, where he bids the detective a good night and is mildly surprised when the older man gently squeezes his shoulder before getting out of the car and heading in. Mind reeling, it takes him a few minutes before he even realizes when he gets home.
Thank you all to everyone who has done some way of communicating their enjoyment of the story.

An image of Cyanne can be found at: http://jaemistoryteller.deviantart.com/art/Cyanne-465980993 for those who care to see it (or did not see the link in the comments from the last chapter), I will be doing Jace or Eric next.

Sorry it took longer to post than expected, yesterday was one of those days where if it could go wrong it did.

John’s POV

Another week passes in a blur for the ex-army doctor as he works at the clinic, with Jace on his shifting into a wolf, and the cases where Sherlock leaves the house to do them. Despite how busy he has been he takes the time to make a list of people he needs to talk with or deal with. That list includes the Yao siblings, what’s left of the Devon pack, Eric, Greg, and possibly Mycroft. Though that last one he is not sure about yet, Mycroft is one of those subjects that he feels the need to consider closely, possibly even have Eric do a report on him, because if there is one thing Eric excels at doing it is finding information that is not supposed to exist.

Stretching as he leaves the clinic he sends a quick text to Sherlock, inquiring if there is a case and telling him he is doing the shopping.

-No. Boring. Bring milk.-SH

-Alright.- JW

What did he do with the milk this time? He wonders as he walks from the clinic down to the Tesco. As he is walking he is joined by Mouse, her dark hair free falling today as she steps in line with him. Unlike many alpha’s he has never demanded that anyone from the pack walk behind him and he doesn’t plan to start.

“Did you know, I believe that the best use for training would be to put those two together.” she chatters, not bothering with a greeting or saying which two. It is really nothing new, for that is how the mouse shifter is.

“Why?” he inquires curious of her logic.

She shrugs, hopping over a trash collector knocked over before answering, “Simple enough, the nestling needs an example of strength and intelligence that continues despite any challenges against it,” she pauses side stepping around a man standing in her way, “while he needs a chance to adjust to the affectionate nature wolves bring to the table. Past that, they both need to learn of this pack, its values and codes, information that is best learned when working with someone else.”

He nods and the two turn into the store saying nothing else the entire time they shop though they move with a simple grace. He knows to an outsider they look like a couple well aware but never too
close but that would never be the truth. He also knows she does it on purpose, her logic simple, it
protects the pack by keeping outsiders from attempting anything that might disturb the budding bond.
He does not protest because he understands well why she does what she does. By the time they are
done, she has a small collection of fresh vegetables to cook up while he has completed the shopping
for items he has discovered he can talk his rarely eating flatmate into eating.

Upon leaving the store the two of them continue back towards his flat, her voice soft when she starts
to speak again, “Can I ask why Spathi is his protector out of all of us?”

He gives a small shrug, replying, “She volunteered and unlike many finds him to be amusing. I think
she would have stayed in the military had any of the others chosen to. But after I was invalided out,
the majority of our pack left the army to regroup here she did not. Since she feels the need to have
something to do, she picked a task that was up to her skills and a challenge.”

“Oh.” The smaller woman tilts her head sides thoughtfully. “That explains a great deal.” When they
get to the flat she stops by the door, telling him, “Our cobra wishes to train them in defense.”

His lips curl in a smirk at that, the idea of them learning defense from Eric is rather amusing.
“Arrange it, though not here, here would not be big enough for what he will teach them.”

She nods before heading off to her flat just a few miles away. Once she is gone he heads upstairs
with the groceries in his hands. They had just got off a case the night before so he knows that his
dark-haired human probably had not eaten yet. Not even bothering to put the groceries away he
quickly cleans the kitchen and most of the table, grumbling lightly about not wanting to know what
some of this stuff was before going and changing clothes. After completing that, he starts cooking
dinner, not worried about his flatmate since he can hear him in the bathroom showering.

His dark-haired human exits the bathroom with a towel low on his hips and a second around his
shoulders and nothing else on just before he finishes up dinner. Since he knows the taller man will
not eat a lot, he does not bother to make him a big plate, instead he just makes sure to make things
that he will eat.

“Dinner,” he calls out to the younger man who had retreated to his room. Personally he thinks that is
both good and bad. Good because too much prancing in that towel and dinner will be forgotten,
along with all of his good intentions. Bad because he was vastly enjoying the view the taller man
was providing.

Just a few minutes later the taller man comes out of his room wearing a pair of loose fitting night
pants, tee shirt, and dressing robe. “Smells interesting,” he murmurs as he walks into the living room.

Smiling, he carries the small plate he had made for the other man out to the sitting room with one
hand, and his in the other. After setting it down on the small table by his chair he goes and gets the
two cups of tea he had also made. His smile grows as he watches the taller man nibble at his food
cautiously.

“Well?” he inquires as he eats his dinner.

“Its,” there is a long pause as he takes another bite, “interesting, textures different.”

He nods, “Then I will add this combination to the menu that I have been working on,” he remarks as
he finishes his up and collects up his companions dishes from him.

Once that is done he sends a text to Eric. –What did you do with the Devon wolves?- JW

-Put them to use.- Tech
He can imagine the smirk that the black cobra is giving his phone with that message. Eric enjoys fast and hard training, but most will not spar with him because of how fast he is. He also had a tendency to only barely pull his hits.

-Where are they?- JW

-I allowed them to return to their day life but they are all tagged like mutts so I can track them at will.-Tech.

A moment later his phone chirps at him again before he even has a chance to consider replying.

–Tagged all of them, even the ones the viper and falcon are dealing with.-Tech

Ouch, he thinks, though for Eric that was nice. He had seen the cobra rip a person in two with his tail once because of something they had said about a child so he could easily see him doing massive amounts of damage or killing over the situation with Jace.

-Assemble them. I wish a word with that pack.- JW

-Acquire the rest as well?- Tech

-Yes. Tell me when and where you do so at.- JW

He does not get a response, but that does not surprise him. Particularly when he knows that the cobra will message him as soon as he is done. In the meanwhile he gets out his laptop to work on the blog about the cases that they had worked on. As he types on it, he keeps an eye on his dark-haired human, considering the situation that he finds himself in.

Perhaps Daria is right and he should tell him about the bond. Just get it off of his chest and allow the human a chance to consider it with all the facts before him. Yet that does not seem like the right choice. For one thing, his human is not very good with people and the emotions that goes with them. Dumping the mess at his feet would not be a very fair thing. Particularly when he can smell on regular bases the confusion that Sherlock is having over the fact that he is attracted to him.

Eventually, he thinks as his fingers fly over the keyboard. He will have to tell the dark-haired human eventually. Because eventually his behavior will force the issue. As it is there are times when he has a hard time controlling his desire to protect his bondmate, to touch his bondmate. Luckily enough the protection part is simple due to Elspeth. She makes an excellent protector due to her very nature. Of course, other parts of his nature seem to be easily controlled for now with enough other things going on in his life to make it easier still.

Eventually he gets a text from Eric about the Devon pack. The group will be gathering up at Watson Pack estates in three days. It is also the night of the new moon so he sends a message to Harry asking her to gather the wolf part of the pack at the estates as well. Might as well do this right, he thinks to himself.

He is just about ready to text Daria when he catches her scent as a soft knock sounds on their downstairs door before the viper comes up with Jace close behind.

In the few weeks since Jace had been brought into the pack fold he had went from looking like a waif lost in the storm to looking like a healthy teenager. There were still little signs of the abuse he
had suffered in the form of his posture and edginess, but it was lessening over time. He is also certain that the viper iota had been taking the time to mind heal her bondchild as well as continue to improve his body. Judging by the outfit he is wearing, it is one of the ones that Sherlock had ordered for him.

“Hello Sherlock,” the teenager murmurs softly upon sitting down on the chair that Eric and Sherlock use most.

His tall human smiles at the younger boy, “Hello Jace, how’s your studies?”

With that the two of them are off on a role conversation wise leaving Daria and him to speak in the kitchen.

“The Yao siblings are waking up,” she informs him in a low voice.

“Good,” he replies, “I was just getting ready to text you about that.”

She flashes a smile at him and nods once, “She awoke yesterday but has been staying near her brother. They are currently in the small bedroom on the second floor. I thought it best to keep him away from the Devon pack members. I also got Eric’s message about them. It is arranged for Nathan to escort them to the estate. We will be there as well, it is a new moon that night, plan to do a full meeting?”

He nods once, considering it, “I will.” He pauses a moment, eyes narrowing, “Already sent out a message to the wolf pack through Harry, figured the rest of you would show up because that’s what those two do.”

She chuckles, giving a shake of her head. “You’re gathering those involved in the situation with Jace, we would all gather for that alone.”

“Well let’s go deal with the two of them,” he tells her, walking into the kitchen he flashes a reassuring smile at Jace and a warm one to his dark-haired human before commenting, “Daria and I need to take care of some things, try not to get into trouble while we’re gone.”

Sherlock barely acknowledges that he spoke, but Jace nods earnestly before returning his attention to the dark-haired human.

*Keep an eye on them please,* he directs the multiform cat he can feel in the pack link not to far from him.

*Please, when don’t I keep an eye out for the elder-second? He’s too amusing not to.* Her soft reply echoes through his mind as she enters the flat though he cannot smell her.

*Let us see if the pup can smell me.*

He shakes his head, and motions for Daria to go through the door first. Nothing is said on the trip from his flat to her house in one of the better parts of London where there actually are houses with small yards to them. At the house she leads him upstairs to where he can smell the two Asian’s with shifter blood. By the door, she inclines her head and withdraws, leaving him to deal with them while she goes to her bondmate.

“Hello Soo Lin,” he murmurs after knocking on the door and slowly opening it.

She is perched on the armchair by the window. On the bed pressed against the furthest wall a slender but muscular young man is sitting up rubbing his eyes. Those eyes seem to lack most emotions but a quick probe into the link tells him that he is not emotionless, just trained out of most of them. Currently the male is feeling confusion, anger, betrayal, and just a tiny spark of hope.
“Good morning, Elder,” she murmurs in reply, before continuing to introduce, “This is my brother Liang.”

He turns to face the other shifter, eyes taking him in carefully even as he continues to read his emotions in the link that Jacob had formed to the pack and his scent. The other man says nothing however just locks onto him with a singly focus gaze.

“Pleasure to meet you in a less violent turn,” he states in response.

“What do you plan to do to me?” the Asian shifter asks, voice tired.

He closes the room door and rests against it casually, watching the younger man as he responds, “That depends on you. Your ties to the Black Lotus have been severed, as far as the world knows your dead. So I present you with a few options to choose from. You’ve already been submerged within the pack. You may choose to stay and become a full member of the pack. You may choose to leave, your shifting being completely bound first, becoming effectively human at which point you will be monitored and any sign of your return to the crime world would result in your execution. Or you can choose to be directly executed.” Pausing, he shrugs before turning his attention to the young woman, “No matter which choice he makes you may keep your place here with the full backing of the pack as you rebuild your life. Eric has already got the papers together so you can return to working at the museum if that is your choice. “

A flash of surprise registers in the younger man’s face at the options. He can tell that it was unexpected. He can also smell that Soo Lin is surprised as well.

“I’ll give you a few minutes to consider it.” he tells the two before turning and going out the door after opening it. He can hear the two of them speaking, but focuses his attention elsewhere, not listening in on the conversation at hand, preferring to allow them their choice in private. He has other things to consider anyways.

A few minutes later she opens the door and motions for him to come back in. When he does so, he is not surprised to see the younger man standing at the window staring out.

“Soo Lin assures me that you will be a better Elder than those of the Black Lotus,” he comments as he turns from the window, his voice gravely after so long unconscious and the venom that had ripped through his system.

He inclines his head, thinking that is really a simple one. He waits for the young man to continue.

“I would prefer to stay with my sister, however my skills are such finding a way to support myself would be difficult.” He pauses looking out the window again before turning back to face him. There is emotion running deep behind those eyes, trying to break to the surface and failing, but it is there in his scent. The younger man had accepted the offer to stay and was just trying to figure out how to say so. Striding over to where he is at, the younger man bows low, offering his right wrist as he does so. “I would accept the offer to stay.”

He smiles, unfastening his left sleeve and pressing his wrist to the younger man’s as he gently slips into his mind. Calling on his abilities as an iota he carefully works the edges of his psyche, restoring some of them to the smoothness that came before the mind damage, removing the sharp edge that had occurred due to years of conditioning. This young man had never been part of a proper pack or family so there was no previous linking to overwrite.

“Welcome to the Watson Pack,” he murmurs as he pulls him upright much to the younger man’s surprise. “Speak with Jacob, I am certain he could find you proper work or training. There is a new
moon in three days, the entire pack will be gathered, you two will need to attend to be formally welcomed into the pack. Daria can make sure a ride is arranged.” He lets go of the younger man’s arm and smiles at the two of them.

She stares at him with wide eyes, her scent full of shock at the ease of it all. She was not expecting it to go like that. Her brother hasn’t moved as he stares, the pack link sinking into the empty space that he had probably always felt but never understood. He nods to the two of them before withdrawing, a murmured farewell the only thing said as he leave the pair to discuss their new future a bit more.

Heading down stairs he stops to speak with Nathan and Daria for a bit before the two of them return to his flat so she can pick up her pup and he can see what kind of trouble his potential bondmate is considering.
Thank you to all the people who have reviewed or let me know that they appreciate/like/enjoy the story in some way shape or form.

John’s POV
The trip back to the flat was quite with both of them being lost in thought. He was almost worried about what type of chaos he was going to arrive home to find. After paying the cabbie the two of them head upstairs just in time to hear a loud popping noise. Daria’s eyes get awful wide as she glances at him before bolting up the remaining steps and shoving the lounge door open.

The entire flat is filled with smoke despite the fact the window is open. It has a peculiar smell somewhere between burnet carrots and pineapple which has them staring at the two dark haired men in the kitchen area by the stove. Both of them staring into the small pot sitting on it as it bubbles over a yellow-orange goo with a billowy fog rising from it as well. As the air clears he can also smell the baking soda and vinegar, answering the question of what they were doing.

“A volcano? Really?” he inquires as he starts chuckling. It is really rather amusing when you consider all of the options that the two of them have.

Jace turns towards him first, a smile lighting the younger shifters face, “That was fun!” he exclaims as he looks at the two of them, “Who would have ever thought of putting vinegar and baking soda together? We cooked some carrots and pineapples in some butter and then added the baking soda and vinegar and look at the lovely volcano it made. It was really pretty.”

Daria looks like she can’t tell if she is supposed to be mad or not as she takes in the mess that those two had made. “Help clean it up Jace, then we need to be going.”

The younger shifter blushes, looking around for the cleaning supplies to help out. Sherlock stares at Daria for a moment before collecting up the cleaning stuff and readying it. A few moments later the two men are quickly cleaning everything though he is sure that he will have to sterilize it when all is said and done.

Doesn’t matter, he thinks as he watches the younger men, one human and one shifter, as they get there clean up done. It is well worth it to see Jace smiling like that and Sherlock feeling more at ease with himself around another person.

Once it is all cleaned, Daria and Jace bid them farewell before they leave.

“Enjoy yourself?” he inquires of the taller man now sprawled out on the sofa.

“Yes, he’s not boring.” Comes his soft reply, a few minutes later after some companionable silence he remarks, “He’s surprisingly bright for someone raised the way he was. He is a quick study and learning faster than any other person I have met outside my family.”

Again there is a pause, this time a slightly confused look crosses the taller man’s features as he walks over to where his violin rests. He watches as the dark-haired human lifts it and gently strums a bit
before tilting his head to the side and asking, “Why does he seem to like just brushing against me?”

“Define ‘brushing against me’ Sherlock.” He tells his flatmate as he waits for his answer.

The taller human carries his violin with him over to where he is standing before brushing their shoulders together once, just barely before returning to where he normally stands while he plays. “Like that. Why?”

Unfortunately, he is trying to bring his focus back in because the jolt that went through him at the touch. “What do you know about regular wolves?” he inquires when he gets his focus back.

For a moment the taller man continues to toy with his violin, strumming soft notes here and there before he answers, “A pack is lead by an alpha couple normally, either siblings or mated that tend to the needs of the pack. Generally the alpha female is in charge of making sure that the pups of the pack have everything they need including shelter, food, and affection-” his voice cuts out as his scent changes to realization. “I’m not female.”

Chuckling, he remarks, “No you’re not, but you are the alpha second which correlates to the alpha female position.”

“Oh. So he was seeking affection from a higher ranking pack member then?”

He nods once in response, “Yes Sherlock, he was seeking affection from a higher ranking pack member. All of the pups will do that with you. Most the adults in the pack would to except I told them you are more like a great cat than a wolf since I noticed you tend not to be fond of physical touch.”

Soft trilling notes escape the violin as the tall human considers it for a while. Eventually, he stops playing and asks, “It is one of my responsibilities is it not? Being affectionate to the pups?”

He had been seated in his chair but the distress that his potential bondmate was giving off nearly forced him to his feet. He had to comfort him, standing slowly, completely in control of his body, he walks over to where the taller human is standing and lays a gentle hand against the arm holding the violin bow. “Listen, you are human, not a wolf. So never feel that you have to do anything that comes with being a wolf. Just be yourself, it is more than enough. All the adults understand that you’re like a great cat. Great cats might do affection but only on their terms, never on someone else’s. The older pups understand that as well, only the younger ones do not. I had not realized that Jace was not aware or I would have Daria mention it to him before.”

He pauses, searching the taller man’s face for a sense of what he is thinking but coming up with nothing. Even his scent seems to be subdued as he thinks, thankfully though the distress is gone. “Do not worry about it, its completely your choice whether you are physically affection like that or not, and either way you are still a member of this pack.”

The taller man nods once, then looks at the hand still resting on his arm. Flushing, he withdraws his touch before giving a small smile and muttering, “I’m going to bed, goodnight Sherlock.”

“Goodnight John,” comes the soft reply right before his tall flatmate goes back to softly playing the violin.

Morning comes far sooner than he wants for the somewhat tired alpha wolf. He had not slept all that well, his thoughts consumed with his human bondmate. Despite that, he had enjoyed listening to the soft lure of the violin even as he could not slumber. In the end he had shifted into his wolf form,
stretching out on the floor of his room and relaxing. Now as he becomes aware that he slept as a wolf he shifts to his human form as he stretches, enjoying the play of muscles.

After collecting his things up he heads into the bathroom to get cleaned up before starting his day. He has the next four days off because all the regular staff are at the clinic, but he is alright with that. There are things that need to be dealt with. From the list he had made the previous day he had already arranged to deal with the Devon pack and spoke with the Yao siblings, so what did that leave him? Eric, Mycroft, and Greg, his mind supplied him. Deal with Mycroft after the new moon, he decides, because that will probably take more focus than he cares to attempt to pull together right now. So either deal with Eric or Greg. Which will be easier? Greg. Then deal with him.

Decision made, he finishes his absent minded shower before going to make coffee and breakfast as he does every morning. While cooking, he glances around for his flatmate and is mildly surprised to see him napping on the sofa rather than in his bed. He is sure that he is napping by the fact he is curled on his side, eyes closed, breath even, soft snores occasionally escaping his lips.

He’s simply adorable, his mind tells him as he studies the sleeping human. In sleep his edges seem to be far less sharp than they are when he is awake. Shaking his head, he pulls his mind away from his base thoughts and goes back to cooking. When he is done, he makes up his plate and a second small sampler plate that he carries over to the sleeping man. For a moment he debates about waking him but the debate becomes moot when Sherlock’s light colored eyes slowly flicker open and he sits up, yawning slightly.

“What time is it?” the tall human mumbles as he glances out the window.

“Just past seven,” he replies setting the plate down on the table in front of his flatmate before fetching their teas.

Gingerly, as if unsure if he really wants to or not, Sherlock takes the fork and pokes at the food for a bit while he is eating. He does not actually expect the tall human to eat it but he figures he will offer it anyways just in case he decides to try a bite or two. Its not surprising when he does not, instead drinking his tea slowly, a small smile curving the younger man’s lips.

“I’m bored,” that same younger man mutters as he finishes his tea.

Chuckling, he sends a text off to Eric before answering.

-Do you have plans for today?- JW

-Bored.- the phone buzzes, followed shortly by, -No. Why? Is there something interesting to do?-

“How would you feel about doing a hunt with Eric?” he inquires of the tall human, glancing up from his phone.

A curious look crosses his human’s features, “A hunt?”

Nodding he explains, “Well both you and Eric are bored, he keeps complaining that there is no one in this city that can hide from him when he is hunting, or even give him a good sparing match. So I thought that you might appreciate pitting yourself against him. The both of you are intelligent enough to have creative ways of doing things. Of course the pack link would not be usable during the hunt, but you could see how long it takes him to track you or vice versa.”

If he was a lesser man the gleam that entered the tall humans eyes would have been scary. Instead it merely sent a chill down his spine.
“What would be the rules?” he demands, leaning forward and listening intently.

“No permanently harming each other, no killing each other, otherwise free form.” Comes his soft reply. It was an idea he had considered a few weeks back but this was the first time he had thought to bring it up.

“I’ll do it. When does it start?” his tall flatmate response jumping to his feet and heading into his room, his scent full of excitement.

-Feel like hunting Sherlock? No killing or permanently harming him, anything else goes.- JW

-When does it start?- Tech

He is just about to answer when his phone chirps again.

-I won’t even use the computers.- Tech

Sherlock comes prancing out of his room, all giddy at the idea of a challenge, and dressed in one of his lesser suits. “Well?”

He smiles at the impatient human, answering, “As soon as you leave I will notify him. From there its up to you two what happens.”

Nodding, the hyper human grabs his coat and leaves the flat without saying anything else.

_Elspeth, cobra is hunting Sherlock so do not interfere between them, protect him from anything else._
He tells the multiform cat that he can feel just outside of his flat.

Of course, she replies.

-He’s on the move.- JW

-Good.- Tech

Once Sherlock and Eric are off playing their game of hide and seek, he glances at the clock to see that over an hour had passed. So he takes the time to text Greg.

-Are you busy today?- JW

-Paper work only, back logging I need to get done. Why?- DIL

-Wished to speak to you of about a pack matter- JW

-If you do not mind being in the office, I can talk while doing paperwork.- DIL

-Be there in half hour.- JW

With the meeting arranged, he cleans up from breakfast before heading out. Not feeling like shielding he uses a taxi to get to New Scotland Yard. Along the way he has the cabbie stop so he can purchase two fresh coffees before continuing on. Upon getting there he passes through the office without saying anything to most of the detectives and those on staff. Sally Donovan avoids his gaze when he spots her, turning instead to look at one of the other people in the room. At Greg’s office door he knocks twice before entering, glancing about with ease at the pile of files everywhere.

“I thought you might like some real coffee,” he tells the slightly older jackal-child.
Accepting the coffee and taking a sip, he sighs in relief, “You’re a godsend John. Go ahead and close the door.”

Reaching behind him, he shoves it shut as he takes a seat in the chair closer to the desk, “Not sure about that. Are you sure that this is not going to disturb you?”

The other man shakes his head, taking another drink of the coffee. “I’m certain, what would you like to talk about? You mentioned the pack.”

Setting his cup down on a piece of desk without papers on it was a challenge, but he eventually did so. Once that was done he leans forward slightly, his tone serious as he inquires, “Would you like to be part of the Watson pack?”

It is probably a good thing he waited until the older man set his drink down before asking because the surprise of it made him drop his papers even as he stare hard at John. His scent was full of disbelief, a little bit of hope, shock, and a touch of confusion. “But I’m human.” He mutters in response, still staring.

He inclines his head in acknowledgement before remarking, “Indeed you are, but you are also a jackal-child, a decent person, and someone I would be proud to have within the pack.” He smiles at the older man, before commenting, “Think it through, you do not have to answer me today. I just wanted to extend the invitation.”

The jackal-child nods a couple of times, his mind lost in thought. John is actually considering leaving when he comments, “I would.”

Smiling, he unfastens his coat and shirt sleeves, pushing them up so his left wrist is exposed and waiting for Greg to do the same with his dominate hand. A moment later he does so, offering his arm rather hesitantly. “I’ve not been bonded to the pack before,” the jackal-child murmurs as he stares at him. Giving a small shake of his head he accepts the touch between wrists and feels the power surge between them.

A slow smirk curves his lips as he states, “You might have presented as a shifter had you been bonded, the energy is there beneath the surface though I doubt you will develop it now. That is something that has to be done in the early years of life. However you will probably slow down on aging now.”

“You mean like how all the shifters in my family seem to not age as fast?” Greg asks him as the two release the others wrists and fasten their shirt sleeves up.

“Yep,” he nods, “exactly like that. There is a pack meeting in two days at the Watson pack Estate. You are more than welcome to come, a set of directions will be sent out to everyone the morning of to make sure they can find their way there, Jacob also arranges for any rides for those who do not want to take a taxi or have other ways to get there.”

“Jacob?” the older man repeats questioningly.

“I’m the alpha as you already know, then our pack is odd in it has two non-bonded betas. The first is Jacob a falcon, the second is Eric a black cobra. My sister does some of the beta work but she prefers not to since her recent bonding. After that rank tends to get blurry because we merged two packs together, and a third is getting ready to join ours though not exactly willingly.” He explains to the other man, before taking another drink of his coffee.

For a little bit he merely watches as the older man does paper work, he is considering whether to
Explain more about the pack or not and has just decided it might be a good idea when Greg pipes up with, “I had a talk with Mycroft Holmes about the clans a few days back. He was expressing his concern for the fact Sherlock keeps vanishing. I suggested he speak with you, politely, not any of his normal kidnapping business.”

Shaking his head a bit, he chuckles, “Well I guess that means I better move him up in the list of things to deal within the next few weeks. You did reassure him that the pack protects their own right?”

He nods, “I did, he seemed to understand but he really wanted to question me and I made it clear I was not going to answer questions because he is not clan.”

Shaking his head, his chuckle turns to a full out laugh at the idea of someone turning Mycroft Holmes down when something is demand but it is reassuring to him at the same time. “I’m sorry,” he mutters when he finally catches his breath, “but the idea is just too amusing.”

The two of them visit for a bit more before he finally says he needs to go and the jackal-child promises to be at the meeting in two days time.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

If anyone is interested I have a picture of Jace & Eric and Daria & Nathan posted on the deviantart account now

**John’s POV**

He did not hear from Sherlock or Eric for the rest of the day. Had he not known that Elspeth the Spathi would protect his human at all costs he would have been more concerned.

His human, he grumbled to himself. He wasn’t his anything at this point and it really was his own fault that the two of them had not gotten past being potential bondmates and not full bondmates. However he was determined that Sherlock be adjust to pack life and accepted as himself before ever considering saying a word to him. Besides, the man was brilliant, there was always a good chance that he would figure it out on his own. Particularly since his annoying iota had given away a lot of hints to the tall human.

Shaking his head he gets his laptop out and takes the time to go through all of the information on it. Despite the fact the cobra is out hunting he has still had his computer going and making sure that there are no threats to the pack. It’s not actually surprising when he considers how often the younger shifter multitasks, his mind far too fast for most to keep up with him. Once he is done checking the pack news and relations he opens the files that the cobra had sent him about the Devon pack members.

The next several hours are spent in quiet reflection as he learns about each of the new pack members. There are twenty seven left from the original pack including the pups, eight of that number are the pups. Most the pack was low level members. All of the high ranking ones had been foolish enough to go along with the previous alpha and his abuse of Jace. From what he can tell Jace had been the only child to be abused as such. However, the four adults that Daria has in her custody had been repeatedly abused as well, though not in such a horrid fashion.

Of the newest pack members most were going to return to their regular lives, they would only have to deal with pack matters when he summoned them, otherwise, like their previous pack they would be on their own and allowed to have the small gathers that they already did. Some of them though had a harsh set of punishment coming to them.

At the top of that list was Jenna, the wolf mother of Jace who had disowned him as soon as she realized that the iota was not going to be able to force his father’s elite blood into submission. Her actions had cause Jace to be unprotected when he needed his mother to support him. She had also broken the bond with his father shortly before his father had died in a car accident that was suggested wasn’t actually an accident. From the moment she had disowned the small child he had been at the non-exsistant mercy of the alpha and his upper pack members.

The second one on the list was Talos, the pack iota who had allowed all of this to happen. The only reason he was not already dead was he had not been there when John, Trace, and Damian had been
in a killing mood. He had tried to hide but Jacob had tracked him down and tagged him. The dumb bastard should feel lucky that it was the falcon who had done so, because the cobra would not have left him alive or would have left him so broken that there would be no chance at redemption for him.

The last one he planned to make an example of was Michael. The pack omicron who had definitely not done his duty judging by the state that the pack was in. it was his job to make sure that the emotional balance of the pack was maintained and there was no way in hell what had happened to Jace and those other four qualified even remotely as the balance being maintained.

As he considered what to do with them he decided that he would hand the punishment of Jenna and Talos over to Daria to do with as she wants. As pack iota and bondmother to Jace it was well within her rights. Michael would be given over to Jeffery the packs old omicron who would deal with him appropriately. After deciding what to do with the ones that he feels needs to be dealt with, he checks the clock and is surprised to see that it is after midnight.

Shaking his head, he goes to bed, but leaves his door cracked so he can hear it when Sherlock gets back a few hours later.

oOo

It is sometime around two in the morning his eyes flickered partially open as he hears something on the steps to his room, keeping them mostly shut, he observes as his tall flatmate steps inside his doorway for just a minute before heading back downstairs. A few minutes later he hears the soft drawl of the violin, its tones questioning and mildly confused.

Sighing, he stretches out and yawns, heading downstairs to see if everything is alright with his human. “Just getting in?” he inquires as a way of greeting as he stops at the landing between the living room and the stairs.

The violin pauses for a moment as its player nods before resuming his soft melody. Going over to the sofa, he stretches out and listens, before deciding that maybe he should give his flatmate a chance to get used to his wolf form when not riding him so he gets back up and takes off his shirt and sleeping pants, leaving on only his pants before shifting. Once in wolf form he walks calmly to the door, shutting it, before going over to lay on the floor next to the sofa. Stretching out, he rests his head on his paws as he watches the human continue to play for a while longer, his eyes closed.

He knows the instance the dark-haired human opens his eyes because the music suddenly stops. Lifting his head he watches curiously as his human sets the violin down before slowly walking towards him, his scent full of curiosity.

“May I?” the human softly asks, motioning towards his fur..

*Of course, I did promise you a chance to touch my fur to your heart’s content if you will recall.* He answers softly, using one large paw to shove the small table sideways.

The next couple hours are spent with Sherlock touching his fur, hands carefully moving over nearly every inch he can reach. There is something there within his touch that calls to him, lulls him into an almost sleep. Eventually, his tall human lays on the sofa, one long finger hand carding through his fur on the back of his neck as he slowly drifts off. When morning comes he awakes to those same fingers curled tightly into his fur as soft puffs of breath escape him in little snores. He watches for a while, merely relaxing and waits until his human awakes before he finally moves.

The first sign that Sherlock has awoken is the fact those finger leave his fur. The second sign is the scent of embarrassment that fills the area as his human shifts to a sitting position.
Shifting, he stretches out as the muscles change and contort. “Morning Sherlock,” he murmurs as he collects up his clothing and heads upstairs to collect his things for his morning shower. He is pretty certain that his flatmate is in overdrive so he is giving him the space needed to process everything.

After his shower, he texts Eric and asks him to stop by or met him somewhere because he would like a word with him before the next pack meeting. He is not surprised by the lack of answer and the cobra showing up a short while later, his dark hair spiked for a change rather than laying flat as it normally does.

“You wished to speak?” he queries, his voice lower than normal, closer to a hiss than he usual would allow.

Nodding, he motions to the kitchen since his tall flatmate is stretched out on the sofa in his thinking poise with his hand steepled beneath his chin as he stares at the ceiling unseeing.

Presenting his left wrist to the shifter in the traditional greeting, he is not surprised when the cobra studies him for a moment before unfastening his sleeve to echo the motion. The contact is brief, not long enough for him to get a read on the other shifters mood.

“What is going on between you and the pup Jace?” he inquires without hesitation, not bothering to try small talk first knowing that it would be pointless. “You avoid physical contact unless it is during a hunt or sparing match, yet Daria has mentioned that he leans into you more than anyone else.”

The cobra shrugs, barely moving but completely fluid in his grace as he responds, “He seems to be reassured by my presence, I am not unaware that his needs vary from mine. Personally, I do not care one way or another for the affection,” he pauses, closing his eyes for a moment, “it is unusual, it does not bother me, but I do not seek it out.”

Frowning he considers the other shifters response and tries to determine the reasoning behind it. Cobra’s are well known for their dislike of contact from anyone but family and bondmates. Even within a family the amount of contact can be very small, nearly non-existent. The only thing he can think is they are bondmates, but wait, neither are marked. Of course Jace has not finished growing and those marks do not always show on those still developing.

“May I see your wrist?” he eventually asks, waiting patiently for the cobra’s answer.

Black eyes narrow at him as he deftly pulls his sleeve up and presents his left wrist, the edge of violence in his motions.

Barely touching the other shifter, he carefully calls to the iota gifts deep within him, sending a small tendril of power through to the other shifter and carefully feeling his life force for any sort of outside gifting. At this point there is nothing there, at least nothing new. He can feel the parental bond between him and Aiden, feel the same type of bond to two more shifters, both female. He can feel the raw, jagged edge from where he and his bondmate had snapped the link that tied them together. He can feel the various wounds caused by the deaths of his birth denmates, the gaping wounds to his spirit that had only been partly healed by the placing of a new den link.

Slowly he pulls out of the link, releasing his wrist but not moving as he watches the violence in the other shifter as he forces his natural dislike of contact down.

“Find what you were seeking?” the hiss is low, a tremble of pure fury that is barely contained.

“Eric,” his voice is soft, though he is not sure what he really wants to say. Before he can say anything more the tall shifter refastens his sleeve, bows low once and leaves. A large part of him
wishes to try and comfort his upset packmate, it is natural reaction as a wolf but he suppresses it, knowing it will help nothing. Instead he reaches for Elspeth, *Are you on watcher duty or did you take a day off?*

*The senior insisted I take a day off, the multiform canine is on watcher duty today. Why is there something my particular skill set is needed for?* She replies almost instantly and he is reminded that like Eric and Sherlock she gets bored easily though not with quite the destructive tendencies those two present.

*I believe that our cobra needs a good fight. The lets break bones kind of fight.* He answers her, not giving an order only a suggestion. Besides himself, Jacob, and Hyder none of the other pack members can even keep up with the cobra when fighting. While she is not as fast, she is resourceful and refuses to allow his speed to be the deciding factor in any matches that they have.

A chuckle fills the link as she replies, *Are you suggesting I pick a fight with the most volatile member of our den?* She pauses a moment before he gets the impression of a smile. *Or is that permission to continue our last match as long as we are not seen?*

*Take it as you will, if either of you get injured call me not Daria.* He answers, knowing that she is already getting her things together to hunt the other shifter. Those two have a long standing debate on whether her ability to think equals his and his speed. It was at a stalemate last he knew. Nothing else is said and he shakes his head, making breakfast for himself and his thoughtful human.

oOo

Several hours pass with him working on his blog, the flat, and just generally relaxing. He had not been able to get his tall flatmate to eat but he was not surprised. As a rule Sherlock did not like to eat a lot so the fact he had gotten him to eat two small meals the day before had been a major bonus to him. Instead, he was able to get him to drink a cup of sweetened tea when he had finally come out of his mind and before he had turned to working on an experiment in the kitchen.

It was just a little bit after dinner when the scent of blood reaches his nose, he is reacting before he even has a chance to consider it, tugging the flat door open to the sight of Eric cradling an unconscious Elspeth in his arms.

*She said to come to you,* he comments, not speaking aloud because then he would both smell and taste the blood in the air.

“Bring her up,” he mutters, taking the steps two at a time a head of the taller shifter. As soon as they are in the flat he feels the ripple of power as the shielding that prevents humans from seeing them is dropped. Studying the pair his eyes carefully take in the damage. Apparently it had went from their normally who’s better to a full out bloodbath judging by the amount of damage to both. “Sherlock, please grab the first aid kit.” He directs his startled flatmate who is staring at the two of them as they drip blood on the hardwood floors.

Without waiting to see if he listens or not, he touches his left hand against her throat, sinking his power into the multiform cat, cataloging each and every one of her injuries. Whatever occurred between the two of them was not pretty he decides as he notes six broken ribs, every bone in her right wrist is dust, part of her throat is collapsed, a punctured lung, and several other minor injuries. Frowning, he starts to mend the most pressing damage first, that to her lung and throat before moving on to the rest.

When her eyes flutter open she hisses at the cobra holding her, and he gracefully lets her feet hit the ground before stepping back. There is still blood dripping from several of his wounds.
Really you two, he mutters at them mentally as he continues to work on her wrist. Once everything is set in place but before he has a chance to work on her ribs she inclines her head politely before turning and leaving, shifting and healing in that manner as she goes.

Sherlock had just returned with the kit when he notices that she is gone. “Wasn’t there two of them?” he inquires, his scent full of shock.

Nodding, he replies, “Yeah, Spathi took off as soon as she was no longer dying in typical style. Don’t even bother considering to do the same, shirt off and sit.” He directs the taller shifter.

Black eyes narrow at him, as he does as directed, frowning when he sees the shape his shirt is in. Damn it. I liked this one.

What the hell happened between you two? Normally between you two the injuries are not the deadly kind. He responds as he starts to use the peroxide on the open wound in his shoulder blade where it looks like her claws ripped through the muscle.

She startled me. I did not take it very well. Granted though, prior to getting a hold of her throat she was winning. Comes the caustic reply. You sent her after me, why?

He shrugs as he keeps working, well aware of his bondmate hovering not that far away and watching with keen eyes. You needed to release the stress. She was the best choice I could think of for how to get you to relax. I had not meant to enrage you earlier, there was no accusations within my questioning, just curiosity and concern. For both of you.

No response is forthcoming as he continues to work, moving to stand behind him for a moment as he moves to clean the lower injury, “Sherlock, do you have a small amount of acid? Something organic, not chemical based, not mixed with anything?” he inquires as he realizes he is going to have to take off three of the scales where his shoulder meets his neck because of the damage to them.

His tall human vanishes for a minute to come back with a small beaker of something greenish in coloring, taking a sniff he identifies it before carefully using the scooper to dust the scale with it. A low his escapes the cobra he is working on as he hands the acid back, carefully taking the scales off with the knife in the medical kit. Once they are off, he carefully picks them up with some tweezers, before placing them in trash. Almost all the rest of the wounds he has will heal with a good sift.

“Shift,” he directs the cobra as he carefully checks him once more.

Standing gracefully, Eric’s body morphs without a word as he goes from the slender human to the massively black cobra. Turning, those hypnotic black eyes blink at him once, waiting patiently, or as patiently as he ever does while John finishes restoring the scales that had to be removed. A moment later, he is back in his human form, his hood flared out in aggravation.

My thanks, the cobra tells him before heading out without saying anything aloud.

Sighing, he gets to work cleaning the flat of all the blood, making sure to open the windows so the smell can be cleared away. He is mildly surprised when his tall human joins him the cleaning even though he does not say anything. Sherlock’s light colored eyes are far away as he works, he is sure that there will be questions once he is done processing.
Hello everyone, I hope you enjoy Sherlock's view on the last few days. As always, thank you to all the wonderful people who read, review, kudos, bookmark, follow, or otherwise let me know that they are enjoying.

Sherlock’s POV
When Jace and Daria first arrived at the flat he was not sure why they were there. As far as he knew there was no reason for them to be there. Unless John wanted a word with the viper, then she would have brought Jace because she rarely leaves him on his own. Giving an internal shake of his head, he decides to start a rather mundane conversation about how the teenager’s education is going. He is rather shocked to learn that he has taken an interest in science and math since he had started working with the tutors. Luckily he already knew how to read, so it was only the other subjects that he had to catch up on since he had not previously been allowed to go to school or anywhere near books.

So when John and the viper leave he gets a bright idea, Jace likes science, so why not make a volcano on the stove? With a mischievous smile he searches the kitchen until he finds the baking soda and vinegar, then tries considering what to use as coloring and to make the lava chunks. Jace is actually the one who suggests the cans of carrots and pineapple pieces he finds when looking to see if there is something to eat. Its perfect. He can snack on some of them and the rest can be used for the lava coloring and pieces.

Within a few minutes after the younger man eats they are standing over the stove mixing the baking soda and vinegar over the pieces of carrots and pineapples at the bottom. He is concerned that they will not get very good pressure so he makes sure that they put more than is suggested in it to ensure that it works. Then the two of them stand back watch as it bubbles, fizzes, and explodes.

Since this was a science project he got Jace a notebook and pen so he could record everything. Apparently that was the right thing to do because the teen was ecstatic as they worked on it.

For some reason that he would have to check with John about the teen kept bumping him, the first time he did it, the detective thought it was an accident, so he started keeping an eye out for it and realized that it was intentional. Why would a person who was abused in the manner he had been want to be touched? Wasn’t that opposite of how most victims acted? It will require thought, and maybe asking John.

It was rather late when his flatmate got back with the viper, and the experiment had just finished up. There was nothing else coming out of the pot any more. The last thing it had done was emitted a surprisingly loud popping noise as the last bit of baking soda finally burst after applying heat to it. Somewhere along the way the front windows were opened to allow fresh air to circulate since there was a deep fog of carrot and pineapple smoke from where some of it burnt to the pan and the volcano as well.

John had seemed amused luckily enough, when the shorter man had first entered the flat, he had suddenly been concerned about how it was going to be taken. He was thankful that it seemed to not fall in the Not Good category. When Jace is told to help clean up, he breaks his rule of never cleaning in order to help him. After all, the teen really does not need to be forced to clean up after
someone else when he had lots of help making the mess. Once it is done, the two bid them a good night before leaving.

Almost as soon as they leave he sprawls out on the sofa considering the situation. He had planned to spend the afternoon in his Mind Palace but had surprisingly enough enjoyed himself with the pup.

“Enjoy yourself?” his short flatmate inquires as he sets fresh teas down the small table between them.

Sitting up, he takes the tea and sips at it while he considers his answer, “Yes, he’s not boring.” It is actually fairly shocking how not boring the pup actually is. After all, what actually makes him interesting? It cannot be his background, his background is horrid and gives him absolutely no advantages. Sure he is now living with the viper couple, but that has only been for a few weeks and really has no impact either. Must be something innately about him them. “He’s surprisingly bright for someone raised the way he was. He is a quick study and learning faster than any other person I have met outside my family.” He eventually comments as he stands up.

He is rather certain that there is confusion on his features but he says nothing as he grabs his Strad and strums it for a little while before finally inquiring about the real point of confusion for him. “Why does he seem to like just brushing against me?”

His shorter flatmate narrows his eyes as he considers the question, then lightly demands, “Define ‘brushing against me’ Sherlock.”

Dropping his violin from his shoulder he confidently strides over to where John is standing since putting the tea cups up and brushes his shoulder against him in the same manner the pup had been doing his. Or at least as close as he can get since he is several inches taller. He watches and catalogues John’s reaction as he moves back to his music stand, replacing the violin on his shoulder as he murmurs, “Like that.”

He is intrigued by the fact that his flatmate seems to catch his breath at the contact, eyes widening ever so slightly as if he is attracted to him. It takes him a moment to find his voice it seems, “What do you know about regular wolves?”

It is not the answer he is expecting, but he carefully considers his information because he had looked it up upon discovering that John was a shifter who turned into a wolf. He hadn’t known if the information would even be useful but he still learned it in case it was. While he considers how to answer, he absently plays with the violin, coaxing soft notes out of it as he draws the information from his Mind Palace. “A pack is lead by an alpha couple normally, either siblings or mated that tend to the needs of the pack. Generally the alpha female is in charge of making sure that the pups of the pack have everything they need including shelter, food, and affection—“ he stops talking as he realizes what he is saying. The alpha second is the alpha mate or alpha female, so how could he be the alpha second? “I’m not female.”

A husky chuckle escapes the blonde man as he remarks, “No you’re not, but you are the alpha second which correlates to the alpha female position.”

If he is the alpha second doesn’t that make him John’s mate? No. John’s sibling, his mind supplies, he has a bondmate and it is not me. At least, I don’t think it is me. I would be able to tell if it was me. He thinks as he considers the statement, never considering the fact that emotions are not his strong suit and maybe he would be able to tell but maybe he wouldn’t too. “Oh. So he was seeking affection from a higher ranking pack member then?” he eventually comments, not sure what else to say.

John takes a seat in his chair, nodding once as he answers, “Yes Sherlock, he was seeking affection
from a higher ranking pack member. All of the pups will do that with you. Most the adults in the pack would to except I told them you are more like a great cat than a wolf since I noticed you tend not to be fond of physical touch.”

Returning to playing his violin for a bit, he considers this information. John is right, he does not like physical touch, to him it is used as a means of control, of persuasion. It should never be used lightly. It probably does not help that most contact can send his mind into overload because he is not sure how to deal with it, and is always trying to figure out what the contact means, because there is always a hidden meaning. Even among the wolves there is meaning to the touch, either comfort or acceptance, but still more than just being.

He now belongs to a wolf pack, perhaps he should try getting used to touching, at least a little bit. Eyes narrow he stops playing for a bit to query, “It is one of my responsibilities is it not? Being affectionate to the pups?” the idea scares him, how is he supposed to do something he knows nothing about.

Apparently his nervousness about the idea is easily read by his short flatmate who quickly stands and comes over to where he is standing, laying one small hand against his bow arm but barely touching it. His voice is very earnest as the blonde speaks, “Listen, you are human, not a wolf. So never feel that you have to do anything that comes with being a wolf. Just be yourself, it is more than enough. All the adults understand that you’re like a great cat. Great cats might do affection but only on their terms, never on someone else’s. The older pups understand that as well, only the younger ones do not. I had not realized that Jace was not aware or I would have Daria mention it to him before.”

For some reason he finds his breath has caught in his throat and he cannot seem to answer, he is willing to be affectionate to the pup, it hadn’t bothered him too much, he just does not know how. Before he is able to find his voice again, John’s eyes carefully lock with his before the shorter man remarks, “Do not worry about it, its completely your choice whether you are physically affection like that or not, and either way you are still a member of this pack.”

He nods, thankful that it will not be held against him that he does not know how to be more wolf like. Glancing down at John’s hand he considers why it does not bother him too much, he just does not know how. Before he is able to find his voice again, John’s eyes carefully lock with his before the shorter man remarks, “Do not worry about it, its completely your choice whether you are physically affection like that or not, and either way you are still a member of this pack.”

A ghost of a smile curves his lips as he replies, “Goodnight John,” before returning to playing his violin. There is a lot for him to consider.

Over the next few hours he keeps the melodies he plays light and soft as he thinks about his reaction to John’s touch. Why doesn’t it bother him and send him into overload the way most people’s touch does? It is not like the shorter man does it often enough for him to be adjusted.

Wait. Maybe he does. Nearly every time John hands him his plate or cup he brushes their fingers together. At first it would send a shiver through him but now he looked forward to those little touches, particularly since he had realized that his flatmate was not even aware of doing them. It’s because he is a wolf, his mind supplies, you heard him. Like the canines they turn into the shifter variety enjoys being touched just as much. But I do not outrank him, his mind questions. No, but the alpha shows affection to all pack members to show they are accepted, that is all it is.

Sighing, he eventually stops playing sometime around five a.m. according to his internal clock. After putting his violin down, he sprawls on the sofa, considering that fact. Eventually he starts to feel tired but does not want to go in his cold room when he is rather comfortable on the sofa. His mind is still buzzing but he allows himself to drift off. The smell of food cooking is what wakes him, and as he slowly sits up he inquires, “What time is it?” to make sure that his internal clock is still accurate.
As the blonde sets a small plate in front of him, he is answered, “Just past seven.”

Good, he thinks, its still right. Sleeping sometimes messed it up for reasons he still had not figured out. While John sits down and starts eating, he pokes at his small plate of food with the provided fork. It smells funny. No way is he going to eat it. Eventually, he pushes it aside and lifts the tea cup instead, enjoying the sweet flavor of it.

In order to keep him interested in the tea, his short flatmate had a tendency to change flavors at random intervals so it was rarely expected which flavor he would get. Then he would add various spices to it, so even if he could identify the base type, he still had to take his time to determine what the extras were. It was brilliant, a bit frustrating because he never turned down the challenge as long as he was not lost in thought, but still brilliant.

“I’m bored,” he mutters as he finishes his tea, falling back on the sofa again and looking up at the spray painted yellow smiley face on the wall.

His flatmate smiles gamely, grabbing his mobile and texting someone. Now that’s different he thinks, normally he would be trying to think of something to keep him occupied. “How would you feel about doing a hunt with Eric?” the shorter man asks after his mobile.

“A hunt?” he repeats, curious as to what that means.

Nodding the pack alpha explains, “Well both you and Eric are bored, he keeps complaining that there is no one in this city that can hide from him when he is hunting, or even give him a good sparing match. So I thought that you might appreciate pitting yourself against him. The both of you are intelligent enough to have creative ways of doing things. Of course the pack link would not be usable during the hunt, but you could see how long it takes him to track you or vice versa.”

What an intriguing idea. Why didn’t he think of it? he wonders as he leans forward, bracing his elbows against his legs as he demands, “What would be the rules?” his attention is solely on John as he waits for the answer.

“No permanently harming each other, no killing each other, otherwise free form.” His flatmates voice is soft as he replies.

He barely remembers to answer as he jumps to his feet and walks across the small table, heading towards his room, “I’ll do it. When does it start?” he wants to change into real clothes for this, not his lounging clothes. While he is changing he hears John’s mobile chirp at him several more times before he comes out dressed in one of his favorite chase suits, demanding, “Well?” because he is impatient to begin. This sounds like so much fun.

Smiling, John replies, “As soon as you leave I will notify him. From there its up to you two what happens.”

He nods, grabbing his coat and bolting out the door without saying anything else. Where to go? First of consider who he is currently trying to hide from, he has an excellent sense of smell, access to the CCTV’s, and probably his own watchers since he seems to keep a close eye on John. The sewers, he thinks, would be a perfect place to start. Particularly the catacomb systems where there are no cameras and the amount of other smells is wide and varied though not a lot of feces. For the next several hours he moves from place to place, always sticking to areas without cameras and where there are other people in order to hide his scent.

It is just about three hours later when his instincts tell him to run now so he does. Moments later he understands why as the cobra appears out of nowhere behind him, and he dodges down a side alley,
taking to climbing a fire escape to see if he can put more distance between himself and his pursuer. Upon reflection, he possibly should have not tried that, because snakes climb just as well, if not better than humans and he is just reach the top, when suddenly he is hauled onto the roof by his shoulder.

Lashing out the way John had showed him, he twists within the hold, aiming for the tender spot that is the power pool on the cobra’s wrist, only the snake is faster. However it gains him what he wants, release from the hold. Eyes quickly take in everything, finding himself a weapon would be a bright idea about now, he thinks. Ah, that will work, he decides as he spots a piece of wood leaning against the side of the heat duck top. Sprinting, he dives towards it just as the taller man nearly connects with a heavy punch. The board is in his hands the next moment and he is swinging, but the cobra is faster, at least in that instant since in the next he is successful.

He hasn’t any idea how long they go back and forth with blows. All he knows is it is thrilling and he is definitely not bored. Eventually though, he finds himself pinned to the wall, hands and feet immobile, breathing not all that easy with an arm pressed against his throat.

A smirk on his opponents face as he remarks, “I think I like you,” he drops him, making sure that he does not injure him as he hits the ground. “Care to try and track me or would you like a chance to try outwitting me?”

Coughing for a moment, he gets slowly to his feet and studies the cobra as he leans against the edge of the roof lazily.

“Give me a minute to catch my breath.” He mutters in response, considering the options. How had he managed to stay hidden for as long as he had? Perhaps they could discuss this before going on to round two. “How did you find me?” he eventually asks as he straightens his shirt collar and scarf.

The smirk shifts to a pleasant smile, a small bottle of water is tossed his way from he has no idea where, as the cobra replies, “You looped once too many in this area, so I stopped tracking for a moment to separate the scents until I realized you were closer than I thought.” He pauses shrugging, “it took far longer than I thought it would. Nor did you do horribly for a human facing off against someone faster and stronger.”

He nods, considering that and calls up a map in his mind, surprised to see he had crossed this area a total of four times, it was the only area he had done so with. Why? Because he was most familiar with this area, it is the area he had spent too much time in during his using days. Ah.

“Will you need nourishment past the water? I will not be yipped at by the pack iotas for you not eating properly during our game.” The cobra inquires.

“iotas?” he repeats, he had only met the one, the viper, was there one among the wolves that he had not realized was an iota?

“The viper is the active one, however our den has a total of three of them, including one of the wolves, not that I would let some stranger touch me if I need healed, and our elder, though he does not use his gifts as often, and I think he is more of a thera than iota.” Eric replies, pulling a small package out of his pocket and tossing it towards him.

He automatically catches it, not considering that if it was someone outside of the pack he would worry about what it was. Turning over his hand, he is surprised to see a high vitamin granola bar, homemade according to the looks of it and its packaging. Frowning, he gives the cobra a curious look but does not ask aloud.
The other man shrugs, “I have a hard time with most foods, the smells, textures, and tastes bother me, so Daria created those for me while we were in Afghanistan as a way to keep up with what she saw as my needs since I tend to ignore my body.”

Carefully, he opens it up and takes a sniff, he understands perfectly about problems with food. It was part of the reason he tended not to eat a lot. Cautiously, he takes a small bite, surprised that it actually tastes moderately decent. Shrugging, he eats the rest of it, before tucking the wrapper into a trash can that he can see by the building’s fire escape.

“I would like a chance to try and catch you,” he tells the cobra.

He nods once, before turning and vaulting over the edge of the building and out of sight.

It takes him almost six hours to find the cobra, and another hour past that to actually get a drop on him long enough to end the match. End result was he shoved him in front of a moving car. He was pretty certain that there would be no lasting damage but afterwards he worried that it was a bit not good until he found the cobra leaning against a building on the other side of the street laughing even as he holds his side.

“That’s it,” the taller man mutters as he joins him, “I don’t think I like you, I know it. Of course, you need to learn how to fight elites, we’re not like regular shifters. I think John was not considering that when he showed you how to deal with our kind.”

He smirks at the other man, pleased to have managed catching him off guard and that he wasn’t seriously injured.

“I think you may have busted a rib with that stunt, I will remember it for later so it will not happen again.” His scaled companion mutters as his fingers gently press against his side. “Care for another round? We’re currently tied.”

He doesn’t even answer past a smile as he takes off, hoping onto a passing bus and the chase is on again. He cannot recall the last time he had had this much fun.

Just after half one in the morning the cobra catches him again, this time winning by catching his jaw in his hands and freezing him in place with a carefully placed push to the side of his jaw and the nerves there. Once released he stares in shock at the taller man, startled that he had so successfully caught him.

However he also notices that he is beginning to get drowsy from all the running and adrenaline he had been using throughout the day. “I think I am done for now,” he comments after catching his breath.

The cobra inclines his head once and the two of them head towards Baker Street which is just a few blocks away. “This time I only caught you because of that fool who you startled.”

“Really?” he inquires, pleased that he had been doing so well at hiding and avoiding the cobra.

“Yep,” comes the soft reply as they stop in front of his building, “If you get bored again, we should have another match,” he tells him before turning and vanishing into the night.

Shaking his head, he unlocks the door and listens for a moment, paying close attention to the sounds of the flat. It seems that John is in bed, he thinks as he takes in the fact all but one light is off, and he can hear his flatmate upstairs. Silently making his way up the steps he by passes the living area, and
continues on to John’s room. He is mildly startled that John had left his room door slightly ajar but slips in and just observes him for a moment before deciding to head downstairs to play the violin.

His emotions are in chaos, he thinks as he considers the day. It was so different to be accepted without question for his personality and self. There was a sense of belonging that he could barely understand. He had never belonged. While he had two siblings his elder had left him behind and forgot him until he started causing problems, the other had been kept away from him until he didn’t seem to remember that there were three brothers in the family, not two. Their mother had hated him after his father’s death. He had never really had friends. His personality had been too caustic, too direct. He saw and remarked without ever thinking to use filters on himself because that was not how his brain worked.

So he had submerged any emotions he had, refusing to acknowledge them if he did not have to. The only time he allowed them anywhere near the surface was when he was playing the violin. His one release because it never said the wrong thing, unlike him. So when he felt like he was in overload, when his mind was overwhelmed by the emotions that he tried so hard to deny he would lift the violin and allow it to express himself. It helped that he played when thinking too so no one ever took notice of the fact that while thinking he would play pieces of music made by other people, when he was playing for emotions, he played his own pieces.

He closes his eyes and continues to play as he hears John come downstairs and into the living area. “Just getting in?” the soft voice inquires as its owner settles onto the sofa from what he can hear. For a breath he pauses to nod before returning to playing, attempting to control his emotions through the music. Several more notes escape the violin before he hears his flatmate moving around, only something seems off, its not the right pattern for his walking. Not the right weight. Why would it not be the right weight?

Opening his eyes he is startled into stopping by the sight of John’s wolf form stretched out on the floor between the table and the sofa, head resting lightly on his paws as his large blue eyes on him. Setting his violin down slowly, the desire to touch the wolf is almost overwhelming to the detective, hesitantly, he inquires, “May I?” as he motions to the wolf’s fur.

Of course, I did promise you a chance to touch my fur to your heart’s content if you will recall. John answers him softly, his voice echoing through his mind as the massive wolf pushes the table away and scoots so there is a small space for him to move between John and the sofa.

Eyes narrow in focus, he sinks his fingers into the fur at his neck, cataloging the difference between that fur and fur on other parts of his body as he spends the next few hours scratching and petting his flatmate. He is surprised when he realizes John is drifting into sleep but finds that he too is tired. Not wanting to lose the connection he feels building, he sprawls on the sofa, tugging on John’s fur to get him to move just a little closer, which he does.

Smiling, he drifts off to sleep, his right hand still buried in the softness at his flatmates neck. When he awakes he tries to understand why his hand is rather warm and what the feeling against his fingers is. When the previous few hours come back to him they are rather embarrassing. Quickly withdrawing his hand he blushes in embarrassment at the fact that it had felt so right being asleep with John so close.

“Morning Sherlock,” his flatmate murmurs in greeting as he collects his things and heads to his room without pressing.

John in nothing but his pants, his mind points out, how….tasty. Wait? What! Since when did he find anyone tasty? Falling back on the sofa, he steeples his hands under his jaw and considers the
implications of it. He is barely aware of when John is done shower, or when he starts breakfast, or when Eric shows up. His mind is too focused on understanding the changes going on for him to pay attention to the conversation that the two of them are having in the kitchen. Despite his distraction he is well aware of when the cobra leaves, particularly the icy feel in the room just before he does so.

Nearly the entire day is spent with him lost in his Mind Palace. When he finally emerges from it is just before dinner and John has placed a cup of sweet tea next to him. He takes several sips, breaking it down in his mind before walking over the table to go experiment on some blood cultures he had collected the week before while John makes dinner. He is not hungry, so he ignores the small plate of food left for him, but eventually snags a single bite off of it just as John bolts to the door. Since his actions are so very random for his stable flatmate, he finishes what he is doing and quickly puts it away just as he returns to their living room. The front door shuts though he can see no one and he realizes that it must be a shielded shifter than. How interesting.

When Eric appears with a golden female in his arms he is startled. For one thing he is pretty sure that the cobra does not like contract with anyone unless it is to break them into little pieces, for another it looks like the female is broken into pieces. Just a quick glance over her tells him about her many injuries, two of which could be deadly.

“Sherlock, please grab the first aid kit.” He hears John tell him even as he watches John reach out with his left hand against the dying woman’s throat. Who is the dying woman? He wonders as he fetches the kit from the bathroom. When he gets back, he is surprised to see her on her feet, albeit not stably. A few breathe later she inclines her head and leaves, without ever saying a word to either. Shocked, he murmurs, “Wasn’t there two of them?” as if he had not seen the energy pouring from his flatmate into the golden female.

He’s wondering why he has the first aid kit when John nods, answering, “Yeah, Spathi took off as soon as she was no longer dying in typical style. Don’t even bother considering to do the same, shirt off and sit.”

The cobra visibly bristles at the order, but obeys, reveling a rather slender body that still has muscle definition. Scales cover the back of the neck, down his shoulders and upper arms, they taper off in his triceps before reappearing at the crook of his elbow and vanishing again before reappearing around his wrist, covering all the delicate areas of it. How had he not noticed before?

John takes the kit from him, deftly opening it and pulling out the peroxide as he goes to cleaning the gouges running the length of his shoulder, some of his scales appear to be damaged as well.

“Sherlock, do you have a small amount of acid? Something organic, not chemical based, not mixed with anything?” his flatmate asks, pulling him out of his thoughts. He considers it for a a moment before fetching the citric acid from the lime he had been working with just a few days before, it is powdery but it should work he hopes. Amazed, he watches as his short flatmate carefully places some of it on the back of the cobra, right over the damaged scales. A low hiss escapes the cobra, but he does not moved as John takes the small scalp from the first aid kit and cuts the scales away, using a pair of tweezers to hold them before throwing them away.

Part of him screams that he wants the scales, but he ignores it as he continues to watch in fascination.

“Shift,” John orders as he puts the first aid kit back together and gives him the beaker.

Frowning, the cobra gets to his feet, still shockingly graceful for someone who was bleeding just minutes before. The next thing he knows is there is more than thirty feet of coiled black snake swaying on his floor, eyes locked onto his flatmate as he continues to work on him. Before he can
even finish processing, Eric has returned to his human form, or close enough since he still has his cobra’s hood fully extended before he pulls it back in and leaves, snagging his shirt as he does so. Shocked, he decides to help John clean up the bloody mess, but is happy that he does not have to think as he works. There is a lot for his mind to consider.
Chapter Notes

So a very big thank you to my cheering team, the four of you that comment nearly every time, I appreciate it greatly. My thanks also goes to anyone else who has commented, kudos'd. favorite, followed, subscribed, or otherwise let me know that you are enjoying.

Greg’s POV
Shortly before five p.m. a slender young woman with rich brown hair comes walking into Scotland Yard, most the men in the room stop and stare. Several of them offer her assistance but she ignores them all her eyes lighting from person to person until her eyes settle on him. When Sally makes a remark about how too many men are dogs he realizes that Anderson is also staring and thus the cause of his detectives annoyance.

Smiling, the young woman strides over to where he is waiting, stopping just a few feet away and greeting him, “You are Detective Inspector Lestrade?” she queries, completely ignoring Sally who is bristling in aggravation.

He nods, “I am.”

Her smile widens, “Excellent! I am to see if you would like a ride when you get done with work."

For a moment he does not understand before it clicks. The pack meeting is tonight after work. He is actually almost done, just wanted to cover a couple of points with Sally before he was going to leave. He had originally thought that perhaps john had not said anything to whoever it is that arranges things, because he had not gotten a message but here stood his message apparently.

“I’ll be half hour or so,” he tells the young woman.

She nods, turning on her heel, “I’ve got the blue-green car parked at the end of the lot,” she tells him before heading off, still oblivious to the stares that she is getting.

“What the hell is that about?” Sally demands as she stares at him. “You just moved out a couple of weeks ago, now this? Really?”

“Shut it Donovan,” he snaps as he picks up the case files he wanted to discuss with her. “It’s nothing personal, I was invited to join a pack, and there is a meeting tonight but it is outside of town. Since I do not have a car and was not sure I wanted to pay for a cabbie, the pack has arranged for me to have a ride.”

He keeps his voice low as he answers her, it is not most of the departments business that he is from a family of shifters or that he had been accepted into a shifters pack. Her eyes go wide as she stares at him. As a jackal she has a hard idea accepting the concept that a human could be part of a pack.

“Oh,” she mutters.

Shaking his head, he changes his focus back to the files and discusses the points that he wanted with her. By the time he is done, it has actually been forty-five minutes and he is feeling bad that he is running behind. As he walks out to the parking lot, Sally walks with him, though she gives a slightly
snide remark when they do not immediately spot the car. Almost immediately after she comments the slender female reappears at his side, a smile still on her face.

“Hello again Detective Inspector, I had to go fetch a few others, so I ended up moving the car, I apologize for the inconvenience it may have caused.” She murmurs as she tilts her head to the side as she delicately sniffs the air

“Not a problem Miss…?” he replies, voice trailing off when he realizes she had not introduced herself.

“Maria,” she replies as she leads the way to a nice sized green-blue car. It’s not very new, but it is well maintained. Inside there are three people sitting in the back, two who appear Asian and the third is an older gentlemen that is vaguely familiar. “The front seat is for you,” she tells him as she gets into the vehicle.

He nods to Sally who had walked with them before getting into the passenger’s seat and fastening up. Moments later the small female was driving with an ease of someone who drives a lot at higher speeds than he is sure is not legal but he is not looking at the speedometer. He’s off the clock. Within half an hour they are pulling up to the edge of the property, a small gate house and fence blocking the way. Without slowing or stopping he can feel the small surge of energy right before the gates open and he turns to stare at her.

“I just alerted the gatekeeper to my ranking and identity, he opened the gate accordingly.” She tells him as if reading his mind. “Right now is the pre-meeting time, food and drink, all non-alcoholic. A meet and greet if you will. Once everyone is gathered that is expected the meeting proper begins. I am curious if it will be a repeat of the last full group meeting.”

Curious, he gives her a funny look, “Why? What happened?”

She gives a small shrug as she pulls into a parking space, “An idiot wolf challenged the alpha and got his arse kicked, it was amusing to watch, but tonight is going to be full without any scenes like that.”

As the five of them get out of the vehicle he asks, “Full how?”

She shrugs a bit, leading their group towards the back of the house, “Several formal pack welcoming, dealing with the Devon pack, umm I think some of the wolves are planning to ask for formal permission of bonding, and I think one formal acceptance of pack for a new pup.”

His eyes go wide at the list that is a busy day, he only hopes that he is not adding stress to it. As much as he likes being in the pack, he really does not want to cause problems.

When they get around the edge of the house and the backyard comes into view he is slightly amazed at all the people. There are at least fifty adults or near adults and another ten to fifteen children that he can see. Some of the adults are already in their wolf form playing with the little ones, others are gathered in groups visiting. He is pleased when he spots Sherlock because he is the only familiar face in the crowd, he cannot seem to find John.

Before he has a chance to do anything a teenager comes looping over with the easy grace of someone comfortable in his skin. “Gregory Lestrade, Yao Soo Lin, and Yao Liang?”

The two with him nod, while he mutters, “Yes?”

The boy flashes an easy smile, “Mum told me to escort you three to the alpha’s greeting as soon as you arrived. You’re the last to show,” he stops, tilting his head and thinking for a minute, “Do you
need to stop for food first?”

He gives a shake of his head while he waits for the other two who do the same. Nodding the teen turns and loops away, keeping just a head but not that far. Within a few minutes he finds himself standing by a gazebo along with a group of other people. Not long after that, a tall dark colored man comes striding up, stepping on to the first step and calling for attention.

While his ability to read people is nowhere near as good as Sherlock’s he can automatically tell that this is a military man and one of the leading pack members.

Slowly all the wolves, both adults and children, gather in a semi-circle around him and those he is standing with. Almost immediately thereafter John, Sherlock, a woman with multicolored hair, and a slender dark-haired man. the tall man who had called for attention takes his place between Sherlock and the dark-haired man, making him realize that there are scales on the dark-haired man.

Scales? Doing a double take, realizing that yes, the fourth in the set has scales running the length of his neck, jaw, and on his hands. those scales are pitch black.

Shaking his head, he switches his attention to John who is speaking firmly, formal words of welcoming. “The Watson Pack formally accepts and welcomes Jace Arden, bondchild of Iota Daria Miron Arden and Tracker Nathan Arden.”

A slender teenager in a jade green two piece suit with a white silk undershirt steps forward, he can tell that the young man is nervous but determined. When a female in the group his near makes a nasty remark, he is startled when the man with scales jerks his head once at them. A moment later the female that had made the remark hits the ground with a cry.

“Eric,” he hears John murmur warningly.

The scale man merely shrugs, eyes focused ahead.

The teen smiles hesitantly, offering his wrist to the alpha with his head bowed.

John presses his wrist to the offered one before pulling the teen in for a quick hug. “Be welcome to the pack.”

The kid straightens out, moving to stand before Sherlock and offering his wrist to the taller man. He is shocked when Sherlock graces the teen with a genuine smile, accepting the wrist to wrist before gently squeezing the boys shoulder. With a large smile the teen moves to stand next to a blonde haired giant of a man who stands at military rest.

“Alice Watson Pack formally accepts and welcomes Gregory Lestrade,” he hears John call out, and he steps forward, offering his wrist but not bowing his head. John grins at him as he accepts the offered wrist and a thrill of power jolts through him much like it had two days prior when he had. Raising an eyebrow in question, John tilts his head towards Sherlock so he steps in front of him and the rush of power that he gets startles him before he steps back as well.

He can feel the link forming between himself and every member of the pack, most of them are happy, though there are a few that are afraid. The kid, Jace, seems to be one of the most dominate ones he can feel.

Slowly John repeats the process with the two Asians he had been in the car with, then with the group standing together with all but three of them, including the female who had made the remark about the boy. When he is done with the welcoming, a young woman with dark red hair with a slightly heavier man steps forward, a small child in her arms.
“Donna and Robert Nolan seek the acceptance of Rupert Nolan into the Watson Pack.” It is the male standing to the side of Sherlock who speaks, his words formal as he announce the couples intent.

He is surprised when Sherlock steps up before John, a look of concentration on his face as he gently presses his wrist to the child’s forehead, announcing in his clear baritone, “He is accepted,” before he steps back, glancing briefly at the shorter man at his side to make sure he had done the right thing.

Smiling, he nods to his tall friend, before stepping forward and announcing, “The Watson Pack gladly accepts this pup into the fold, all within the pack shall protect him as their own.” He repeats the motion that Sherlock had done before the couple with draws.

As they step back a loud cheer echoes through the pack.

“Is there anybody else who has a formal request?” the tall man who had done the announcements thus far asks. When no one steps forward or says anything his eyes sweep the gathering before stating, “The punishment of the three responsible for the harm done to the pup Jace shall now be addressed.”

John’s eyes are cold as he stares at the three that had not been formally accepted, he is surprised to see when they are shoved forward, the female harder than the two men by a group of serious looking individuals. “You have been charged and found wanting of the crime of child harm and endangerment, by pack law your punishment has been set by your alpha. As such you will be given two choices, accept your punishment or death.”

He jumps, when a small female appears at his side, “Gregory Lestrade?”

He nods distracted, staring hard at John.

“I was asked to tell you that you may leave for this if you feel it would put you at odds with your responsibility as a police officer.” She murmurs softly, her voice light.

“What’s going on?” he asks, not making a choice yet without the facts.

She tilts her head to the side, querying. “May I show you?”

He nods, offering his wrist but she ignores it, touching her fingers to his temple. The next thing he can feel, see, and hear the events of a few weeks prior. See the damage that had been done to the pup and the immediate reaction to the damage to the boy. A small part of him shivers at the violence that seems so simple for this group, including his friend, the man he thought was not violent.

“He was a soldier,” she murmurs, “everyone forgets that because of his unassuming manner, just like they forget that he is an elite alpha.”

“I will stay,” he replies, watching carefully, as long as there was no bodies he would keep his mouth shut. He understood that pack law did not always match up with human law. As a member of a pack, the pack law would actually come before the human law. It was something he had been taught since his earliest years, he was lucky that as a rule when shifters dealt in pack law, there was not generally a crime scene, victim, or evidence left behind for him to investigate.

She nods, staying where she is but keeping her eyes on the three people in the front now.

The blonde haired alpha glances at the young woman at his side with a raised eyebrow and she nods her head once. Moments later John starts speaking again. “Your punishment is as follows: Talos, Iota of the dead Devon pack, step forward.”
The oldest of the three steps forward, an arrogance on his features. “You are not my alpha,” the wolf snarls staring hard at John.

Before John responds, a long black tail slashes outwards and knocks the arrogant wolf on his face. He can see that John is trying not to laugh as he gives the fourth man over a look. “Talos, for the crimes of child abuse, child endangerment, failure to protect a child of the pack, and abuse of your rank you are stripped of all rank among all Clans, your powers to be bound, to be effectively human under the command of Iota Daria until a time that she feels you are worthy of your gifts returned. Do you accept this punishment?”

The tall man gets to his feet, snarling and shifting as he lounges forward. He does not make it far before he is held by the throat by a long black tail, the owner of that tail still mostly human though the cruelty in his eyes sends a shiver down his spine. “You were asked a question.” The snake hisses softly.

“I will never agree to be human in the service of a viper whore because of one mutt.” The snake turns his head glancing at John with his eyebrow raised, John gives a quick shake of his head and the large snake nods once. Squeezing briefly before dropping the man and allowing the guards to collect him.

Without missing a beat, John turns to the next one, a young man not far out of his teenage years. “Michael, Omicron of the dead Devon pack, step forward.”

The young man steps forward, head bowed. “Michael, for the crimes of child endangerment, failure to protect a child of the pack, and abuse of your rank you are stripped of all rank among all Clans, your powers to be bound, to be effective a human under the command of the Omicron Jeffery of the Watson Pack until such a time as he feels you are worthy of your gifts returned to you. Do you accept this punishment?”

“I do,” the young man’s voice was soft, almost un-hearable as he bows low, exposing the markings on his neck.

John places his left hand against those marks, eyes burning electric blue for a moment before the young man’s knees buckle as he whimpers and falls to the ground.

An older man with silvering hair approaches, inclining his head before he steps up. “I accept the responsibility of this human and the honor of the judgment,” he formally states, stopping next to the young man on the ground.

The blonde haired man smiles at the older gentlemen as he releases the younger man’s neck, waiting for the two of them to step back before he begins speaking again. “Jenna, daughter of the dead Devon pack, for the crimes of child abuse, child endangerment, failure to protect a child of the pack, and abuse of your responsibility as a mother are stripped of all rank among all Clans, your powers to be bound, to be effectively human under the command of Iota Daria until a time that she feels you are worthy of your gifts returned. Do you accept this punishment?”

Her eyes widen as she stares at John, a feral look crossing her features as she spins to face the boy who had been accepted into the pack at the beginning of the ceremonies, “This is your fault you piece of garbage! How dare you lie about your treatment! It was downright gentle considering what you deserved!” she screams at him. Before she has a chance to do much more than take one step forward, that long black tail slashes her legs out from under her and drags her backwards.

“Call your pet snake off,” she snarls.
“Eric, she is Daria’s to decide what to do with,” John comments, looking at the last person standing with him, the female with the multihued hair.

That female steps forward, crouching down so she is face to face with the other woman. “Your lucky you know, for the gift of my son I will allow you to live.” She pauses, her voice low so only those close can hear, he is certain that he is not supposed to but he had always been blessed with good hearing. “You are also unlucky as well, for the harm you have done to my son I give you to the Elite Black Cobra Tracker Eric to do with as he wishes as long as you do not die.”

The woman’s eyes go wide at this statement and she tries struggling but gets nowhere as that long tail pulls her to him, a moment later he sinks two long fangs into her shoulder before letting her drop to the ground unconscious.

John barely spares her a glance as he looks out at the pack and everyone within it. “Understand this. I will not tolerate abuse of any form by any pack member, no matter who the victim is. The punishment will be swift and painful. There will not be another incident like the one that has been dealt with now. Am I understood?”

A loud round of “Sirs” “Yes alpha” and “Yes elder” can be heard through the collection.

Nodding, John’s entire demeanour changes, “Now then, let us celebrate the growth of our pack and its newest members! Everyone enjoy the food, drink, friends and family.”

That seems to be a sign because the group disperses and he finds himself staring at where the shorter man had been just a few minutes prior with no one there. He nearly comes out of his skin when Sherlock appears next to him.

“Shocking isn’t it? Who would have guessed that such patient and quiet John could have such a cold side? I keep forgetting he was a soldier too.” The younger human murmurs as he watches the various members of the pack as they move around. “This pack seems to be different than any other pack, and that is according to their own admissions. John is the only wolf in the leading members despite the fact this is essentially a wolf pack. His most trusted council is a falcon, black cobra, viper, and mouse.”

For a moment the tall man pauses and he looks over at him, noticing how wide his eyes are and realizes how close to an overload he is. He is not being polite he is trying to function with his mind being overwhelmed.

“Are you alright?” he asks the taller man.

Sherlock gives a small shake of his head, “Of course,” he murmurs, but he doesn’t believe it for a moment. There had been times in the past he had seen that same look on the younger man’s features and it always came right before he exploded outward.

“How about we find somewhere quiet?” he suggests and is shocked at how quickly the taller man nods.

Before they can even move, the small female is at their side, her hand just above Sherlock’s wrist but not actually touching it, “This way, I was directed by both the Elder and Eric to see you to the library.”

Her voice is low, designed to comfort. She leads the two of them into the house, and through part of it until she throws open a pair of doors before retreating, leaving him on his own with a nearly overwhelmed Sherlock. Almost as soon as the doors close, a second person opens them and slips in,
this time the person is carrying a small case in her hands. She glances between the two of them, before narrowing her eyes a bit at Sherlock and nodding before presenting him with the case and withdrawing as well.

The curious consulting detective opens the case, staring in shock at what he pulls out. A moment later the library is filled with the soft sounds of the violin and he feels as if he is intruding so he quietly leaves, tracking down the young woman who had shared his thoughts for a brief time earlier.

Upon finding her he introduces himself and spends the rest of the night speaking with her about the pack he now finds himself in and everything that it will entitle. He is lucky that he understands most of the packs ways because of his upbringing so it is not as hard as it probably is for some. He barely notices as time flies, until the female he is speaking with, Mouse she calls herself, asks if he would appreciate a ride home because it is getting late and he realizes that is after midnight.

The next day is a long one for him, his mind keeps going back to the previous evening and how different things were within the Watson pack than they were in any jackal pack that he had ever interacted with. By the time he has completely his shift, luckily with no new murders included so mostly a day of paperwork, he has several questions he wants to ask John so after work he heads over to Baker Street, mildly surprised when the only one he finds there is Sherlock.

For a short bit he visits with Sherlock before something nagging at the back of his mind comes to the surface and he finds himself asking, “Why were you with the other high ranking members of the pack? I don’t understand.”

The younger man shrugs, replying, “I’m the alpha-second so my place is with John at those functions or so I understand from the lessons that I have been receiving from Cyanne.”

“But the alpha-second is the alpha’s sibling or mate,” he comments without thinking.

Sherlock gives him a funny look, a questioning look and he decides that he needs to withdraw. He will just text John later and that’s what he tells Sherlock who has picked up his violin and begun to play, his attention no longer on him.
John’s POV
The days following the pack meeting on the new moon were a bit stressful for him. That first day back, he had gone back to work at the clinic to discover that one of the doctors had quit so he was going to be working a bit more until they were able to hire a replacement. Over all, that would not have been a problem except when he got back to the flat he could smell that Greg had been there but Sherlock was completely locked into his mind as he slowly played the violin. Normally, his playing would reveal his mood or what he was thinking about yet it wasn’t this time. He was so deep within his mind that he didn’t seem to notice anything and that is the way he stayed for almost two days much to his dismay.

He kept leaving teas for him to drink whenever he was not in the room but he would always come back to them not touched and his tall flatmate unmoved from where he was. It was actually very concerning for him.

On the third day following the pack meeting he got home from work to the sound of gunshots ringing through the flat as his bolts up the steps to see what is going on. There are no new scents so he knows it is his flatmate up there. With ringing ears he takes the steps three at the time to spot his potential bondmate stretched out in his chair with his long legs crossed at the ankles as he fires without looking at the wall from his left hand.

“What the hell are you doing?” he demands as he stops on the landing, his voice louder than originally planned because of the ringing in his ears.

Sulkily the taller man mutters, “Bored,” in response.

“What?” he question in disbelief, having a hard time believing he had just heard him correctly.

Louder the tall human repeats himself, “Bored!” A moment later he is on his feet, jumping with the agility of the cat that he has often compared him too.

“No,” he mutters as he watches as his dark-haired human starts firing at the wall again, this time with his right hand surprisingly enough.

“Bored!” he grumbles angrily as he shoots the wall several times from a variety of different positions. Each time he shifts his stance he repeats that until he snatches the gun form the taller man. Grumbling, the dark-haired man walks over to the sofa, momentarily brushing his hand against the wall where he has a smiley face painted that is now full of bullet holes. “Don’t know what’s got into the criminal classes. Good job I’m not one of them.” He mutters as he flops down on the sofa and works towards getting comfortable while wiggling himself into place.

After putting the gun in the safe again, not that it is going to stay there knowing Sherlock, he gives his dark-haired flatmate a frustrated look he mutters, “So you take it out on the wall.” Shaking his
head he removes his coat, “Why didn’t you call Eric? I am sure the two of you could have figured out something not boring.”

Despite the fact he is not facing the dark-haired human he can just about feel the eye-roll.

“Didn’t you have a potential case if I remember correctly?” he asks as he heads into the kitchen where the table is covered again with experiments. Thank the Elder Gods he was used to this type of thing due to the packs cobra or he would be pulling his hair out about now.


While he is not happy about the gun or the mess everywhere, he is pleased to see that Sherlock has finally come out of his mind long enough to bother. He had been getting concerned about his flatmate when he had spent so long in place playing the violin.

“Ah,” he responds, his voice mildly sarcastic as he continues, “shame.” Walking past the disaster that is the table he is hoping that there is something to eat, “Anything in? I’m starving.” He mutters as he pulls the fridge door open and quickly shuts it for a moment. Closing his eyes as he mumbles, “Oh, f…”

Reopening the fridge door he looks to see if there is anything to eat but his attention keeps getting pulled back to the severed head, cut off at the neck sitting on the shelf. “It’s a head,” he grumbles, turning towards the living room he raises his voice a bit, calling out, “A severed head.”

Calmly, as if a severed head in the fridge is an everyday occurrence, his relaxing flatmate remarks, “Just tea for me, thanks.”

For a minute he stands there, his mind is warring between laughing hysterically and screaming as he decides to go inquire as to why there is a head in the fridge. With that in mind he strides back out to the living area, stating, “No,” he drawls slowly, “there’s a head in the fridge.”

“Yes,” he calmly answers as the tall man stares at the ceiling.

“A bloody head,” he grumbles. Really they need two fridges, one for the dark-haired man’s experiments and one for food.

Tilting his head towards him, the dark-haired human remarks, “Well, where else was I supposed to put it? You don’t mind, do you?” lowering his voice a bit he continues sounding bored again, “I got it from Bart’s morgue. I’m measuring the coagulation of saliva after death.”

Scrubbing a hand across his face, he counts until he has gotten his frustration under control again. It is times like this he is happy that his potential bondmate is not a shifter or he would be able to smell the frustration pouring off of him right now.

Changing the subject, his dark-haired human motions towards the laptop as he states, “I see you’ve written up the taxi driver case.”

His lips curl in a bit of a smile as he turns towards his laptop, considering the effort that he had put into it. “Uh, yes,” he mutters as he drops into Sherlock’s preferred chair rather than his own. Right now he wants the scent of his bondmate on him without wanting to touch him since he is feeling the urge to smack him. A little warning that there was going to be a head in the fridge would have been nice.

“A Study in Pink,” the tall man remarks, stating the title he had given it, “Nice.” Sarcasm almost drips from his tone.
Oh this probably is going to go downhill he thinks as he inquires as to what his flatmate thought of it. Sure enough, he was right, he’s not pleased. Apparently the idea that everyone who reads it knows that he hasn’t a clue about certain subjects is something that pisses him off. Lovely. Here he thought he was paying him a compliment with the rest of it, but he had only focused on the part that made him seem more human. The next few minutes are tense as they discuss the subjects that his flatmate cares nothing for.

When Sherlock starts to get snarly, he bites down on his lip, looking away so not to let the taller man realize how much his comment about on the Work mattering bothers him. It is moments like this that he is happy he has said nothing to the human about the potential bond between them.

As the human stops speaking he shoves the magazines on the table away from him and curls onto his side facing away from him. His scent is full of frustration and confusion as he pulls his dressing gown close around him.

Smelling that there landlady has just gotten back he decides it is best if he goes for a run rather than try and deal with this right now. For three days he had worried about the human and now he was acting like this. Yes, it would be better for him to just leave for a bit.

“Where are you going?” the tall human asks, looking over his shoulder, his scent changing again to something he cannot identify, there is a tremble in his voice.

“Out,” he replies as he heads towards the landing and pulls his jacket on, “I need some air.”

Almost as soon as he is outside he sends a message to the owl he can feel so close by, *Stay here and keep an eye on him.*

Sir. Andrew replies softly, shifting over just the slightest bit.

Once he is sure that his human will be protected he shields and shifts, taking off at a dead run while he allows his nerves to calm. He has gotten only a few miles away when he hears a loud explosion.

*Sir! The building across from yours has explode, the windows of your flat have been destroyed and your bondmate had been in front of them when the explosion occurred.* Andrew alerts him calmly, relaying the facts and images as he does so.

Spinning, he sprints back to the flat, getting there at the same time as the emergency responders. Shifting and making his way past them, he takes the steps three at a time, finding his slender human sprawled out on the floor with glass around him. Unshielding, he carefully checks him for damage before pouring a little bit of healing power into him, ridding him of the concussion that he had suffered in the blast.

“Are you alright?” he inquires as the taller man slowly sits up, somehow managing not to touch any of the glass around him.

“Of course,” he replies before heading into his bedroom and shutting the door.

Not even moments later the first responders come rushing in, buzzing about as they take in everything. One of them is foolish enough to try and speak with Sherlock and gets his head ripped off for the effort. Once the initial team is done, a secondary set is there moments later to clean it up and cover the windows in plastic.

-Need assistance?- Tech

-No. Though if you could have someone here to fix the windows in the morning with something
stronger than glass it would be appreciated.- JW

-Of course.- Tech

**I will keep watch, rest Elder, something says tomorrow will be long.** He hears Andrew remark.

Sighing, he rubs his hand across the back of his head and heads up to his room to go to bed, following the sentries advice and allowing himself to drop off into sleep quickly.

When morning comes he is awoken by an unfamiliar scent rather than a noise. It takes him a moment to realize that it is Mycroft that he smells. Not bothering to change, he goes down stairs and carefully looks around. The windows have already been replaced. According to the lingering smell, it had been done by two of the wolves from his pack. Metallic glass, he thinks to himself as he takes in the sheen to it. Good. That is harder to break than nearly any other type, made to be as sturdy as steel, though it was rare and expensive. The second thing he spots is Mycroft sitting in his chair directly across from Sherlock who is now dressed in one of his suits with his purple silk shirt on while he toys with his violin.

“John,” the dark-haired human murmurs in greeting as he glances towards him.

“Are you okay?” he inquires, making sure that he had not missed any part of the concussion when he had been healing him the night before.

“Hmm? What?” he absently queries as he looks around at the papers and mess left behind, though the glass is already gone. According to his expression he had forgotten all about it, “Oh, yeah. Fine. Gas leak, apparently,” returning to playing with his violin, the dark-haired human glances over at his brother who is staring at him rather pointedly. “I can’t.”

Incredulous, the other human repeats, “Can’t?” questioningly.

The scent of frustration, disbelief, and annoyance fills the room as the two brothers continue to speak.

“The stuff I’ve got on is just too big. I can’t spare the time.” The dark-haired man murmurs as he glances up for a moment, one hand absently tugging at the violin’s strings.

Tone flat, the ginger-haired man remarks, “Never mind your usual trivia. This is of national importance.”

Still fiddling with the violin and acting as if he barely cares that his brother is there, Sherlock sarcastically inquires, “How’s the diet?”

“What?” he murmurs absently, as if he hasn’t a clue what they are talking about.

“I’m afraid my brother can be very intransigent.”

Staring at his violin, the dark-haired human sarcastically mutters, “If you’re so keen, why don’t you
investigate it?”

Glancing at the umbrella he is slowly spinning with the tips of his fingers, the older of the two humans responds in his flat tone, “No-no-no-no-no. I can’t possibly be away from the office for any length of time – not with the Korean elections so...” his voice trails off as he realizes he was about to say something he did not want to according to the quick look that flashes in his eyes, “Well, you don’t need to know about that, do you?” the smile he gives is rather shark like, implying that even if he wanted to inquire it would be best not to.

His voice fills with disdain as he continues, “Besides, a case like this, it requires...” again he pauses as he determines what word to use, grimacing he completes the sentence, “legwork.”

“Sleep well?” Sherlock inquires as he mis-plucks the string.

“Fine,” he replies, taking a seat on the small table in front of the sofa.

He wants to laugh at the way the brothers are intentionally looking anywhere but at each other as Sherlock toys with his violin further and Mycroft alternates between the watch and the umbrella.

Eventually, the elder of the two comments, “Sherlock’s business seems to be booming since you and he became... pals.” The implications of how he pronounces pals make him want to force the human into submission for disrespecting his mate but he keeps a tight control on it. Particularly when the older human continues to speak, ignore the dark look he is being given, “What’s he like to live with? Hellish, I imagine.”

Looking around for a moment, his focus comes back to the politician as he replies, “I’m never bored.”

A condescending smile curves the human’s lips as he remarks, “Good! That’s good, isn’t it?”

Again he feels the alpha in him desire to teach this human a lesson but he ignores it, reminding himself he had dealt with the same type while he was in the army, nor reason to lose control now.

Standing, the ginger-haired human lifts a file up and offers it to his brother who ignores it with a flick of the violin bow. With his features completely void of emotion he turns towards him instead, “Andrew West, known as Westie to his friends.” he accepts the folder as it is offered to him, mildly startled, “A civil servant, found dead on the tracks at Battersea Station this morning with his head smashed in.”

Slowly he inquires, “Jumped in front of a train?” without bothering to look at the folder in his hands.

“Seems a logical assumption,” the older human replies.

His lips curl in a crooked smile as he queries, “But?”

A flash of confusion fills the ginger-haired man’s scent as he repeats after him, “But?”

Eyes flickering between the brothers and the file he replies, “Well, you wouldn’t be here if it was just an accident.”

His potential bondmate smirks as he applies a sweet smelling rosin to the violin sting, a small noise escaping him.

Tilting his head to look at his brother, the older human explains, “The M.O.D. is working on a new missile defence system, the Bruce-Partington Programme, it’s called. The plans for it were on a
memory stick.”

Chuckling lightly, he glances through the file as the tall man keeps speaking. When he catches the scent of amusement from his potential bondmate he looks up to see Sherlock smiling in agreement as he states, “That wasn’t very clever.”

Voice lowering, he can just about hear the annoyance in Mycroft’s voice as he replies, “It’s not the only copy.” Making a small noise he looks back at the papers as he waits for the other man to continue speaking, “But it is secret. And missing.”

Looking up at the tall human he questions, “Top secret?”

Inclining his head the ginger-haired human replies, “Very. We think West must have taken the memory stick. We can’t possibly risk it falling into the wrong hands.” Upon finishing that statement he tries to intimidate his brother into cooperating but that fails miserably. As he collects his coat Sherlock starts dragging the bow across the violin in annoying fashion, causing it to sound like a injured animal.

Shaking his head, he waits until the other human is out of hearing range and no longer within scent range before querying, “Why’d you lie?”

The annoyed look the dark-haired human gives him, makes him continue when he originally would not have, “You’ve got nothing on – not a single case. That’s why the wall took a pounding. Why did you tell your brother you were busy?”

Shrugging, he lowers the violin and looks over at him, “Why shouldn’t I?”

“Oh,” he murmurs before nodding, “Oh, I see.”

Nearly every time the two of them had been together it had been tense, this time was no different so he is really not surprised by the dark-haired human’s actions. He does not say anything else before the mobile in the taller human’s pocket goes off, the tone that of the detective inspector. A case, he thinks, finally.
Hi folks, sorry this is late, real life sorta said hello to me and just let go a few minutes ago, despite that, I hope everyone enjoys.

As always, thank you to all those awesome people who have been leaving me reviews, kudos, favorites, follows, subscriptions, or any other form of appreciation, I simply adore it.

John’s POV
Sometimes the tall human would say something that was depressing beyond belief and then other times he would say something completely adorable. As they head out he considers that scent he had picked up on just before he had left the previous night. Most of his flatmates scent had been frustrated and confused, but there had been something else there, something else that he had not identified then and sought to identify now. While his tall companion calls for a taxi his mind carefully goes over the scene once again.

Confusion and frustration had the taller man curled onto his side facing away. There had also been hints of sadness, longing, and just a little bit of hope now that he thought back on it but that still did not reveal the hidden scent. What detail was he missing? He had understood the fact that the dark-haired human was just about in overload. It was part of why he had felt the need to get out of the flat before anything else could happen. So what was it? Internally shaking his head, he smiles as he watches a taxi pull up.

Upon getting in, he can smell that it is a wolf, and nods once to the driver politely who smiles back at him in the mirror but tilts his head down a bit to show his neck. He belongs to Layard’s pack.

Thank you, he tells the other shifter.

Your venomous beta contacted the various shifters who drive taxi. Arranged contracts with those who he deemed worthy. Threaten those he deemed not. How did you get a venomous creature like that in your pack? The man replies as he drives, his attention almost completely focused on the road except for a small part used for the conversation.

He smiles briefly as he looks out the window, recalling his and the cobra’s first meeting. Very carefully.

Slowly the other man nods and the rest of the trip is silent. There are no dominate scents in the cabbie as Sherlock keeps most of his focus on his phone or out the window, but from time to time it seems that he glances over, giving him this unusual look like he is a riddle to be solved. Oi. They are really going to need to sit down and talk some time. Perhaps he should enlist Scott for that conversation since one of his pack duties is peacekeeping, but then so is Jeffery. Hmmmm. No. It should be just between them.

Once at New Scotland Yard, the pair heads in, he gives a friendly thank you to the driver as he pays him, though really it will be a tip, Eric had contracted out, which means that he would have arranged handsome fees for those that he considered trustworthy as incentive to keep them that way. As the
two of them walk in the door they spot Greg near the entrance, he was waiting for them.

After a polite greeting between him and the jackal-child, the three of them are walking through the building with Greg talking as he goes. “You like the funny cases, don’t you? The surprising ones.” It is both a question and a statement since it is a well known fact that he does.

Rolling his eyes the taller human murmurs, “Obviously,” as he looks around the room at the different people in it.

“You’ve love this. That explosion...” Greg starts to say and his tall human interrupt with a query.

“Gas leak, yes?” as he shares a glare with the omega jackal female.

“No,” the silver haired jackal-child replies with a small shake of his head as they enter his office.

Confusion pours off of his tall human as he repeats him questioningly.

Going around to the other side of his desk the jackal-child continues speaking, “No. Made to look like one. Hardly anything left of the place except a strong box – a very strong box and inside it was this.”

This is a white envelop that his dark-haired human is staring at as he murmurs, “You haven’t opened it?” glancing up at the detective inspector with his curiously emotionless face.

Looking rueful, the detective inspector replies, “It’s addressed to you, isn’t it?”

Even though he is sure that his dark-haired human cannot hear the implications of that statement, he does, a member of the pack never opens something that belongs to the alpha or the alpha-second. It is just not done.

Slowly, his dark-haired human reaches for it, he is pretty certain that he is considering all the ways it could be trapped without there being a single physical marker on it.

“We’ve X-rayed it. It’s not booby-trapped.” The detective inspector informs him.

Plus there are no poisons, toxins, or anything that is scented besides the paper, a vague female smell, and a phone. He tells the tall human as he takes it over to the lamp and looks it over, murmuring things that he notices as he does so.

After a few moments of toying with it, he opens it up to revel a pink phone designed to look like the phone from the Study in Pink case. Curiously, he slowly removes his gloves as he handles it, mostly ignoring the people around them and discussing it.

However he can smell his human’s embarrassment over part of the conversation. Wait. Embarrassment, the smell he could not identify before, very small amounts of embarrassment, more towards shame actually. Oh.

With that realization he turns his attention back to Sherlock who is listening to the mobiles voicemail, the message is of four short pips and one long one. Once the message is done an image loads on the screen. The image is of a room that is mostly bare except for two mirrors.

He can just about hear the wheels turning in his flatmates mind as he analyzes the picture. After a brief conversation the tall human is off, moving with his usual grace through the NSY and ignore those around him. Shaking his head, he follows his flatmate to a cabbie, with the jackal-child close behind. When they get into this cabbie, it is another shifter, this time of the crow variety.
You’re the elder of the unusual den? The stranger softly remarks on the general communications link all shifters can access.

Yes, he replies waiting to see what the crow has to say.

I would like to thank you for having contracts offered to us outside of your pack. Cabbie driving is not that good for pay, but your senior offered amazing contracts to us he decided were worthwhile. For some, those contracts are the difference between surviving and not. The crow tells him after driving for a few minutes. He can smell the truth in the words, along with the thankfulness included. Most shifter types see crows and mice in the same light, useless, so we are often ignored. So I just want you to know, us who are crows will make sure to try an always be available for yours or his needs when it comes to driving.

Thank you, he responds, understanding where the crow is coming from. It is the same view that a lot of people have towards the fact his pack is mixed. For whatever reason, many shifters feel that only their breed is worthwhile and tend to ignore the other types.

He cabbie nods, and the rest of the ride is in silence. He is mildly surprised when they pull up to their flat, he had not been paying attention to where they were going, trusting that his tall human knew where they were going. So when they get inside he is mildly surprised when he by passes their stairwell and heads towards the area with Mrs. Hudson’s door and another door directly across from it.

After studying it for a moment, the tall human calls for their landlady, getting her to come open the door so they can go downstairs. None of them really pay attention to her as the trio heads down there, instead each is taking in something different about the basement. When a pair of trainers comes into view, all three stop for a moment and give it a funny look.

“Shoes,” he murmurs with mild confusion, if there is only one key, and Mrs. Hudson has it, how did the shoes end up down here? With his mind he reaches for Eric, Can you track a mobile without knowing its number?

Which mobile? I am assuming you are not referring to yours or curly-haired, but I can see three other mobiles in your part of the building. Comes the soft reply.

He chuckles in his mind, The one closest to Sherlock’s.

Got it, iPhone correct, new only one message on it, tracing where it is from. The cobra replies, musing as he checks it. Now this is interesting, a team of humans trying to make it untraceable. Oh this ought to be fun. They will lose of course.

Are you sure it is humans? He asks the cobra even as he cautions his human about the bomber.

There is a pause before he is answered. Yes, I am digging up their files and hacking the satellites to view them as I trace it. I can see them as they try to block me, foolish little humans.

When the mobile rings, he just about jumps out of his skin internally but does nothing externally because of years of training.

Got a lock, he hears the cobra mutter as he listens to the phone conversation between his tall human and a female on the other end crying. Sending Nathan and Jacob to check the situation. The female on the phone has a bomb attached to her, she is in a parking lot, wait a moment, I think there is a sniper watching her. Something keeps flickering on the CCTV camera I am borrowing. I will have the team search for the sniper, but I am not sure they will be able to find the sniper. If the person
charge is smart at all, they will actually have a few snipers, not just one or two.

Find them, he directs the cobra, knowing that between the three men, the chance of the sniper saying invisible was slim, though not impossible in the area they were working within.

Will do, is the reply he gets as the link is cut.

Frowning, he glances at the shoes before looking between the other two men. This was going to be a long one.

OoO

After making sure that the shoes were not rigged as a bomb in any way, shape, or form Greg had retreated back to the Yard while the pair of them had gone to Bart’s where his dark-haired human was running all sorts of tests on the shoes, checking everything that he can.

He was considering asking about the woman on the phone, but had decided against it. For one thing, Eric had already located her, for another he knew that the dark-haired human did not actually care about the stranger. He was merely trying to solve the riddle placed in front of him and if it happened to help her, well that was a side point. That mind set should probably bother him but after years of working with the cobra with the same personality type, he was well adjusted to it.

When a soft buzzing noise catches his attention, his dark-haired human murmurs, “Pass me my phone,” without ever looking up from his microscope.

Glancing around, he tries to spot the phone, thinking it must be out of reach, and inquiring, “Where is it?”

“Jacket,” comes the distracted reply as he continues to work with the microscope.

Giving the human a incredulous look, he slowly walks around the table to where he is standing. With slightly stronger touch than originally planned, he places one hand on his shoulder while pulling the jacket open and rummaging around for the phone.

“Careful,” the human snaps without looking away from his project, his focus interrupted. Despite the curtness of his tone he can smell that there is an effect of some time on his flatmate, who’s scent shifts ever so slightly to curiosity.

Shifting his search from rough to gentle, he finishes pulling it out of the pocket, the back of his knuckles sliding against the human’s clothes chest as he pulls it free and looks at it. The slight intake of breath and brief flare of desire are rather enlightening as he glances at the mobile, looking over the message. It is a text from Mycroft.

“Text from your brother,” he tells the taller man as he looks over at him.

Not bothering to look away from his microscope, and sounding rather bored he remarks, “Delete it.”

“Delete it?” he repeats, amused by the fact that he is still refusing to consider it just because of where it came from. Despite that, he does as asked after checking the message out one last time. Then with a stroke of idea he pulls his phone out and texts Cyanne.

-Doing anything?- JW

A moment later his mobile chirps in response, -Not currently.- Mouse
-I am linking to send you a file, please look into it.- JW

-Of course.- Mouse

His focus turns inwards as he calls the file to mind then connects with the other shifters mind. It is not a trick most can do, but almost all the members of his military pack had learned it as a way to share information quickly about potential threats.

-Why isn’t the cobra looking into this?- Mouse

-Tracing a bomber.- JW

-Right. Got it. Will report my discovery.- Mouse

-Thank you.-JW

He has just finished messaging with the mouse when Molly comes in, followed closely behind by a human male, and the computer starts beeping that it had found its answer to the search that it was programmed for.

“Any luck?” the human queries as she bumbles over to look at the screen.

Pleasure fills the air as his tall human replies, “Oh yes,” in a pleased tone.

Moments later a second human pushes the door open, his tone surprised as he spots the fact that there is other people in here besides Molly.

“Oh, sorry, I didn’t…” he trails off as he turns towards the door as if he is going to leave.

Before he can leave the human female greets him and beckons the stranger to come in.

The soldier in him studies the newcomer, taking in the grey tee-shirt, dark tan slacks, and decently defined form. The expression on his face is supposed to be pleasant, but there is something beneath it that is not. As the stranger walks closer, he takes a delicate sniff of the air. Identifying the strangers emotions almost instantly, and recording his scent for later, because everything in him says this man could be a major threat.

“Jim, this is Sherlock Holmes,” she introduces him, her scent pleased as if she is having a great honor.

Stepping behind her the other human breaths a noise of surprise while she turns towards him and spaces out in his name.

He smiles lightly, pleased to see that his ability to fade into the background has not failed him. “John Watson, hi,” his glance is quick at the other man, but he takes another discrete sniff of the air now that the stranger is closer.

“Hi,” the human murmurs softly, before his tone changes to excited and he claps his hand together light exclaiming, “So your Sherlock Holmes. Molly’s told me all about you, you on one of your cases?”

As the stranger speaks, the fake human steps closer to his bondmate, and he steps back as he studies the situation. The fake human’s scent is full of superiority, like he is better than everyone else, and when he stops next to Sherlock it shifts to include desire in it. there is something else there as well, something at the edge of his senses that is slowly working its way through his inventory of scents.
“Jim works in I.T. upstairs. That’s how we met. Office romance.” She murmurs in explanation, the two human’s giggle at each other for a moment.

A quickly flick of a glance from his human before he mutters, “Gay,” and returns to working on his slide.

“Sorry, what?” Molly demands as her smile vanishes and she stares at the dark-haired human on the microscope.

Blinking once, his dark-haired human attempts to cover what he said, as if he realizes it might not have been the best thing to mutter, and remarks, “Hey,” then turns to falsely smile at the stranger as he repeats himself.

The fake human’s smile is admiring as he replies, “Hey,” back at him, his scent clogging the air with desire. As he cups his hands together, the fake human knocks one of the metal dishes off of the side of the counter and then makes a production of picking it back up.

Rolling his eyes, he turns away as he rubs his eyes with the palm of his hand. Oh brother, he thinks as he keeps paying attention to the interactions going on around him. Turning back towards the others he watches as the fake human walks back towards Molly, the blatantly oblivious human female, still muttering things that he really doesn’t pay attention to.

“Bye,” the fake human murmurs eyes fixed on his bondmate wistfully, “It was nice to meet you.”

“Bye,” the foolish female replies softly.

His dark-haired human just ignores it however, and he steps in, commenting, “You too.”

With a small touch of his hand against the females back, he gives one last wistful look to Sherlock before nodding awkwardly and leaving.

Almost as soon as he is out of the room, Molly turns her attention on his dark-haired human, her voice sad as she demands, “What d’you mean, gay? We’re together.”

Glancing over at her, Sherlock softly replies, “And domestic bliss must suit you, Molly. You’ve put on three pounds since I last saw you.”

The pleasant joy that had filled her scent was slowly being replaced by the sadness in her voice, “Two and a half,” she mutters.

Tilting his head a bit, he makes a noise before saying, “Three.”

Understanding that there is no way this was going to end well, he tries to stop it from going any further, murmuring, “Sherlock,” softly and hoping that he would listen.

It might have even worked judging by the look his dark-haired humans give him but Molly, the silly little human had to keep on speaking.

“He’s not gay. Why d’you have to spoil ...? He’s not.” She angrily snaps.

Snorting, he replies to her, “With that level of personal grooming?”

“He’s not!” she exclaims.

Turning towards her, the dark-haired human explains his reasoning, and she stares at him, sadness clogging the smell of the room before turning and bolting out the door. Confusion pours from his
potential bondmate as he watches the other human run.

Sighing, he murmurs, “I’ll be right back,” and he follows the girl before his bondmate has a chance to say anything more. Out in the hall he finds her leaning against the wall and trying to fight off the tears. As soon as she sees him, she straightens up, trying so very hard to pull herself together.

“Listen,” he murmurs comfortingly to the human female, “He is trying to be nice to you, I know that is not how it comes across, but that really was his motivation.”

Carefully wrapping an arm around her shoulders in a comforting manner, he makes low, soothing noises, and focuses on making his scent relaxing. While it is not as effective on humans as it is on other shifters, it still has some effect and she slowly calms down.

“But he’s wrong, isn’t he wrong?” she mutters achingly.

He rubs small circles in his back as he waits for her to work through the sadness, the both of them know that his dark-haired human is not wrong, that he is rarely ever wrong.

Eventually, she wipes at her eyes and pulls away with a watery smile, “Thank you,” she mumbles.

He inclines his head, replying, “Your welcome, now I am going to go back in alright?”

She nods and he returns to the room where his dark-haired human is sitting at the microspore but staring at the door. It looks like he hadn’t moved from his spot since he had followed her out.

When he returns to his spot beside the human he softly tells him, “While you were trying to do the right thing, perhaps the delivery of it could have been done with a bit more tact.”

Sighing, the dark-haired human pulls a trainer closer to him, changing the subject, “Go on then,” he encourages.

Making a questioning noise, his gaze flickers between the human watching him and the shoe.

“You know what I do, off you go,” is the reply he receives as his human crosses his arms and nods towards the shoes.

He makes noises of protest in the back of his throat, not feeling like having Sherlock turn that cobra sharp tongue on him, a small shake of his head, and he murmurs, “No.”

“Go on,” the dark-haired human encourages him, his expression serious as he turns his light colored eyes on him. “An outside eye, a second opinion, it’s very useful to me.”

For a moment the two of them have a staring contest before he finally decides to humor his bondmate, even knowing that there will probably be some viciousness at the end of this little experiment.

Lifting one of the shoes he starts looking it over, “They’re just a pair of shoes, trainers,” he turns them, sniffing the air and studying them carefully. “Well, they’re quite big, so a man’s,” he pauses thoughtfully.

During this pause Sherlock prompts, “But?”

“But there’s traces of a name inside in felt-tip. Adults don’t write their names inside their shoes, so these belonged to a kid. There’s well cared for but the sole has been well-worn. They have the eighties design, the smell indicates that they are not new, despite the fact they are cared for, so they might actually be from the eighties, though how they were kept in this shape I dunno.” Tilting his
head to the side he studies it for a bit, “There is mud on them, but it is dry, and feels like it has been
dry for a long while, yet the rest of the shoes are well cared for.”

“What else?” his dark-haired human asks, watching him closely.

Mildly curious as to what else there is, he takes one more sniff of the shoe, this time a bit closer to his
face then he normally would allow any piece of footwear. There is something there, the scent of old
stale air, but layered beneath it in the very fabric of the shoe is something else. Focusing for a
moment, he considers the various smells and his eyes widen a bit as he murmurs, “Pool water, the
owner of these shoes liked to swim, but he used lotion of some type, not sure exactly what kind
though.” Shrugging, he sets the shoe down and states, “That’s it.”

“That’s it?” his human repeats questioningly.

He nods querying, “How’d I do?” as a reply.

Startled, the dark-haired human remarks, “Well, John, really well,” he pauses thoughtfully for a
moment, “You missed a great deal of importance but still did better than anyone else besides me
would have.” Holding out his hand, the human seems to be waiting for something when he realizes
he wants the shoe, looking down at it in frustration he lifts the shoe and places it on his potential
bondmates outstretched hand as he switches to deduction mode and starts explaining his
observations. “Your right, the owner loved these shoes and they are from the eighties. Scrubbed
them clean, whitened them where they got discolored. Changed the laces three,” he pauses for a
moment, “no, four times. Even so, there are traces of his flaky skin where his fingers have come into
contact with them, so he suffered from eczema. Shoes are well-worn, more so on the inside, which
means the owner had weak arches. British-made.”

Stopping for a moment, the dark-haired human shoes him an image on his phone before continuing
speaking, “Limited edition: two blue stripes, nineteen eighty-nine.” He pauses, rolling the shoe over
to show the mud, “Quite a bit of mud caked on the soles. Analysis shows it’s from Sussex, with
London mud overlaying it.”

Curious how he knows where the mud is from, he queries, “How do you know?”

“Pollen,” is the answer he receives with a nod towards the computer screen and the map on it, “Clear
as a map reference to me.” Again he pauses looking straight ahead as he continues to speak, “South
of the river, too. So, the kid who owned these trainers came to London from Sussex twenty years
ago and left them behind.”

A swimming child from twenty years ago who loved his shoes and left them behind? Something
about this is edging at his mind, trying to call up a conversation that is relevant but he is not sure how
that he had had with Sherlock not long before. “So what happened to him?”

“Something bad,” he replies absently as his mind goes through things. Tilting his head a little, the
dark-haired human looks at him continuing, “He loved those shoes, remember. He’d never leave
them filthy. Wouldn’t leave them go unless he had to. So: a child with big feet gets…” his voice trails
off and his scent is suddenly full of realization. “Oh.”

“What?” he queries as he leans against the table and looks over at him.

“Carl Powers,” his dark-haired human breathes as he stares off into space.

“Sorry, who?” he responds as that feeling of knowing something on the edge of his memory gets
stronger.
“Carl Powers, John,” comes the taller man’s reply as he continues to stare into space, he gets the feeling he’s looking into the past, “it’s where I begin.”

It is at that point that the realization hits, they had discussed a child swimmer who had drown when Sherlock was a child, that no one had thought it odd except him, yet his shoes had been missing. Oh, his mind supplies as he feels rather stupid for not recalling sooner.

With that realization in mind, his dark-haired human quickly cleans up before grabbing the shoes and heading out the door. With a shake of his head he follows him, curious to see what the taller human is going to do.
Chapter Notes

Hi folks, here is the second chapter I promised today, its a little shorter but hey, its done. Anyways, hope everyone enjoys

Mycroft’s POV

His brother was absolutely infuriating at times. He had turned to him for assistance with a problem because he knew that the younger man enjoyed showing off. It was his attempt at doing something together in a backwards sort of way, yet his brother completely refused to work with him. Why? Yes they had their difficulties but really, after all this time he had hoped that things would start to calm down between the two. Particularly now that he was living with a shifter. Weren’t shifters big on family? It was his hope that Dr. Watson would encourage him to try and reconnect, not encourage him in his rebellion.

Over the course of the day he had sent eight messages inquiring about the situation he had requested assistance with. Each of those messages had gone unanswered. Finally, he had decided to text Dr. Watson, hoping that perhaps he would be of assistance. Instead what did he get? A petite, brown haired woman who was perched on the edge of his desk, watching him closely.

He hasn’t the faintest clue how she had got there. Nor can he determine why no one else seems to be able to see her as judging by the fact his PA and two others had been in his office and none of them had noticed her. He might have thought he was imagining things but he had touched her in passing and she had merely smiled at him as if amused.

Eventually taking his seat, he sighs softly, before querying, “Why are you here?”

Tilting her head to the side, she smiles before answering, “The Elder wishes a situation dealt with, since he gave it to me, after you gave it to him, I came for more information.” She flutters a hand in the air before continuing, “Normally I would have Tech find me everything there is to know about the situation but he is busy on something of greater of importance to the Elder so I decided to come to the source for the information.”

He cannot help but stare at her, frowning a bit he tries to get a reading, but gets nothing more than she is a friendly person who allows her emotions to show a bit more than he is comfortable with, past that there is nothing. There are not a lot of people who can do that. Elder, his mind processes, it is a word certain groups of shifters use to signify who is in charge.

“Who are you?” he inquires, not actually expecting a direct answer.

“I’m called Mouse,” she replies cheekily, “You should just text the Elder and get it out of the way, you know you want to anyways.”

“Who is your elder?” he queries, watching her closely.

She chuckles, shaking her head a little, “Come now, Mr. Holmes, you’re as intelligent as your brother, surely you can figure out who my Elder is without me having to tell you.”
It bristles, being challenged by such a small person who seemed to have no fear of him. No fear. Dr. Watson. Grabbing his mobile he quickly types a message and sends it off, a moment later he has a response.

-Mouse knows how to keep her mouth shut and is only asking in person to be polite.- JW

That startles him, makes him wonder what type of leak he has for her to be able to do otherwise, if this is only being polite.

“Well?” She questions a bit impatiently, “I am certain that there are other things I could be doing, such as hunting snipers with the Senior, but I was directed to assist you. Do you want the assistance or not?”

Slowly he studies her again, trying to find something, anything to go on. Still the information he seeks eludes him. Smiling faintly he nods once, “This is unusual.”

Chuckling again she asks, “Which part? The part where an unknown person appears in your office and you’re the only one who can see her? The part where you cannot get a read on said person? The part where you’re about to accept the help offered even though it makes you nervous to do so?”

grinning cheekily she pauses for a minute beforeshrugging, “I’m good at what I do, Mr. Holmes, one of the best actually, if the Elder thinks my training will be of use to you, and has decided that despite the fact you are not den to offer you assistance, you should be grateful for it.”

“If you are one of the best, then why do you not work for MI6?”

“You’ve already figured I am a shifter, why would I wish to work for humans on a regular basis? There is no need for it.” she replies, shifting to a standing position, she waits patiently for him to decide.

Well, he thinks, shifters manage to keep themselves secret, and she has been here through two meetings without anyone other than me realizing it, perhaps I should accept this assistance from Dr. Watson. After all, I do wish to infiltrate his…den. The best way to do that is to find someone who will be willing to work with me. Since I have not been able to find any other shifter who is even willing to admit to knowing him, this might be a gift horse or a complete problem.

“What do you need to know Miss Mouse?” he finally queries.

She giggles, giving a shake of her head, “Just Mouse, thank you.” Smiling, she straightens herself out, taking a military at ease stance, “I require more information about the missile plans, the human Westie, and anything else that might be of importance.”

Smiling slightly, trying for charming, he nods once as he answers, “Andrew West, called Westie, twenty-seven; a clerk at Vauxhall Cross – er, MI6. He was involved in the Bruce-Partington Programme in a minor capacity. Security checks A-OK; no known terrorist affiliations or sympathies. Last seen by his fiancée at ten thirty yesterday evening. Found at Battersea but no sign of using the train.”

She nods, eyes flickering as if she is typing something as she listens. “So the question of the day is how did he get to Battersea. Along with what happen to his copy of the plans. Alright, I will report back with answer when I have something.” Turning, she heads towards the door with an ease that startles him. Before she opens it, she pauses to smile at him one more time, commenting, “Best way to befriend any person within the shifter community is not to smell like a liar, good day Mr. Holmes.”

Before he has a chance to respond she is gone, slipped through the door and shutting it silently
behind her. Smell like a liar? Well how was he to know what he smelled like? Frowning, he taps his fingers against his desk as he considers the situation. Who does he know who is a shifter? Dr. Watson, this Mouse person, Detective Inspector Lestrade, that’s it. He can think of no one else that he can confirm is a shifter, though he has several files on different people he suspects are shifters. Perhaps he could speak with the detective inspector about it.

While he is lost in thoughts, his PA comes in with a collection of files, “Your next meeting is here sir, should I send them in?” she inquires as she hands them to him, never once looking up from the mobile in her hand.

“Anthea, any ideas on where I could find an honest shifter to speak with?” he inquires of her.

Her head jerks upwards, her dark eyes narrowing on him. “Sir?”

“Never mind, send them in,” he tells her as his mind switches gears. He will consider the shifter situation later.

Nearly four hours later he stretches as he bids farewell to the last person he had to speak with today. Carefully working the kinks out of his body, he is not surprised by how silently his PA slips into the room, or the fact her attention is on her mobile. What does surprise him is when she lowers it and looks directly at him for a bit before sighing and commenting.

“Why would you like to speak with a shifter?” she asks as she watches him.

He smiles absently at her, not shocked that she remembers but mildly shocked that she inquires about it. “There was one in here earlier today, you walked right past her without ever noticing and I wished to know if that was a common trait or not. Past that, she said I smelled like a liar, can they really determine that?”

With nearly everyone else he would have brushed them off, however Anthea was his right hand and knew more about him than anyone else except maybe Sherlock.

She nods, clearly thinking about it before replying, “There is a large sect who feels that all shifters are innately evil except for the elites. However, personal experience has shown me that they are just as varied as their human counter parts.” She pauses for a moment, glancing down, “ones like John Watson are rare, they are innately good and interact with the human world on an helpful bases. I am certain that he is a leader, particularly since he reads like an elite and I cannot see him having evil creatures in his clan.”

Curious, he raises an eyebrow as he asks, “How much do you know about John Watson as a shifter?”

She gives a small shrug, “He is a wolf, elite, quiet and unassuming, intentionally allows himself to fade into the background. There is no written history anywhere that I can find on his time in the army past the most basic of facts and reports, even though required clearance to get to. Clearance higher than I have.” She pauses to take a breath, “I know he is part of the only intentionally mixed clan in Britain. If I am not mistaken he is the leader of it, though I do not know for sure.”

“Elder,” he softly states as he listens. This is probably all in that file he had her make about the man living with his brother so why doesn’t he remember it? Oh yes, every time he had planned to read it something had come up. There had been that incident with the rogue agent, the minor embassy crisis,
that trip to China to deal with a minor treaty problem, plus a few other small events that required his personal attention.

“Elder? So did the shifter that was here indicate why it was here?”

He nods, “She was here at orders of her Elder, loaning her skills to us apparently, the only person I have spoken with lately about needing any sort of outside help is Dr. Watson and Sherlock.”

She nods once, “How did she introduce herself?” she inquires as she lifts her mobile and starts fiddling with it. A moment later she drops it, a shocked look on her normally unflappable face. “She’s nowhere on the camera’s. There is no one on any camera in the building that does not belong.”

“Mouse, she said she is called Mouse.” He answers as he listens to that. Curious about how it was possible that she had stayed undetectable. Wondering if there was any chance he could get her to teach that trick to some of his agents.

“Mouse? That’s not a title I am familiar with. Generally, they use ranking titles, stating where a person is within the clan. Not animal racial names.” She mutters as she starts typing on her phone.

He knows her, she is trying to find information on a subject she is lacking information on. “She referred to another as Tech.”

Again her head jerks up, and while he normally delighted in surprising his PA this was not one of those situations. “I’ve heard of him. He is the reason there is no information on Dr. Watson or any of the shifters in this unit. According to rumors among some of the humans that have come back and a few of the Gifted, he had been captured and when he was freed, though no one knows how, he caused a massacre of those who had held him. He’s a black cobra, the one variety of shifter I have never heard of producing a good person from.” she shudders, “I’ve also heard that he answers only to one person, though I did not know he was part of the same pack as the doctor.”

Nodding once, he remains silent and the two of him leave his office, not saying a word until they are in the car. Finally he inquires as they head towards his flat, “How is it you know so much about shifters? What is a Gifted?”

Looking away for a moment, he watches as she collects herself. With steady eyes he reads her, noticing all the little things that show tension and her desire not to speak of this. Slowly she turns back towards him, lowering her phone and answering, “I’m Gifted. For the most part I am human, I just have some very minor telepathic abilities, just enough to see the markings that proclaim when a person belongs to a clan. I have not been able to get a chart or any Intel as to what the markings mean. I can generally tell type of shifter when I am around them, though it is not completely accurate. There are some who are able to block, apparently the person you spoke with today is one of them.” She shrugs, “it’s the reason I tend not to touch people, how I know when they lie, and why I do not go with you to your brother’s flat. His flatmate might be a decent person but he still makes me nervous.”

The rest of the car ride goes silently as he considers the information that he had learned today. In two days he was scheduled to have his regular diner with the detective inspector, perhaps he can speak to him further on the matter. One thing is for sure, he really does need to find more information on shifters in general and the ones around his brother in particular sooner than later.
Chapter Notes

Hi Folks, slightly longer chapter, hope everyone enjoys!

As always all forms of communication that it is enjoyed are well appreciated.

John’s POV
For a few hours he finds himself at a loss as to what to do. He already has the Eric tracking the phone and compiling a list of people who may or may not be a problem. Jacob is tracking the snipers and planning how to save the girl incase somehow Sherlock fails. Mouse is working the weapons case in her normal effect way. That leaves him at loose ends and not sure what to do. Compulsively, he starts to clean the flat, working off the extra energy in the only way he can think to.

Somewhere around the time there was three hours left he feels the sight brush of a mind, a warning that his thoughts are about to be shared before Jacob links with him, showing him the woman, and two different snipers as he flies. Once he is done with his visual he lets my mind loose and comments, Found both the snipers, pretty sure there is only two. Since the elder-second is with you can I borrow Spathi for her skill set?

Of course, he replies, understanding that he is referring to her ability with bombs more than her ability to sneak.

I am going to have Mouse tag them, the beautiful thing about her tiny self is she excels at doing stuff like that without getting caught somehow. Has to be the innate mouse trick. His beta informs softly.

He sends a mental chuckle and nod, accepting the plan. A moment later he is startled when Sherlock suddenly exclaims, “Clostridium botulinum!”

Mrs. Hudson flees the kitchen where his dark-haired human is working in shock just as he ambles in to makes sure he had heard right. if he had, it was no surprise that it had not been noticed, it was a nearly untraceable but highly deadly poison that he had been warned about during his iota training prior to going to medical school.

“It’s one of the deadliest poisons on the planet!” the tall human continues as he jumps to his feet and wanders over to where he has the shoe laces at. “The boy suffered from eczema. It’d be the easiest thing in the world to introduce the poison into his medication. Two hours later he comes up to London, the poison takes effect, paralyses the muscles and he drowns.”

Making a noise of understand his eyes focus on the laces as he realizes that the testing had showed it in the laces, thus that is how his dark-haired human had found it. As his human explains this he finds himself watching the way the shirt pulls tight across his chest and back as he moves his arms, outline the fact that he has wiry muscles hidden beneath his almost formal wear.

Giving a small shake of his head, he continues to watch as the taller human goes over to the laptop is sitting and types something into it. A few minutes later the pink mobile is ringing. He listens as the trapped female speaks, words from the bomb and waits patiently.
As he does so, he directs a quick message to Eric, *The bomber says he is calling off the snipers. Have you found anything yet?*

*Not the main person, up to more than thirty members in his staff, including two that work for the elder-seconds brother, you may wish to inform him of that. If he needs proof I can provide it.* The cobra replies, his mind distracted as he feels him continuing to process information. *I will tell you if I get more information to work with.*

Nothing else is said as the cobra cuts the link in his normal fashion. Giving a shake of his head, he reaches next for Jacob to see how things are going on his end.

*Mouse has tagged them. I don’t even think they are aware of it because neither of them reacted to it. She got the first while he was still in his hiding place, and the second while he was leaving his hiding place. She says neither are professionals and if they are they are being very foolish.* The falcon tells him as he watches the situation from a perch high above. *Spathi has already deactivated the bomb, not that the humans are aware of that, it is mildly amusing to watch how they are edging ever so carefully towards it, there is a brief pause, I think I have spent too much time with the cobra again.*

He mentally chuckles at that, before sending his thanks and cutting the link in the morning they can go speak with Greg and the rest of the detectives.

{oOo}

The following morning brought another case to the dark-haired human by the bomber. This time there was a single sniper assigned to watch the person in question, and that sniper was just as normal as the two from the previous day so Mouse marked them while Spathi played with the bombs in a way that was purely her. Before the end of the eight hours, Sherlock had figured out that the puzzle had to do with Janus Cars and the false life that they could help a person to do. After the human had left his comment on his webpage, the bomber had allowed the boy to call and be freed.

{oOo}

The following morning they had gone to breakfast, which is to say he was eating while his companion watched. For a few minutes the two of them discuss the situation while they waited for the phone to ring. This time, when it does so, it is an elderly woman on the other end. Before the call has even ended he is calling for Eric mentally and filling the cobra in.

*His reaction is immediate and full of rage, I will find the bastard and I will gut him.*

Moments later the two of them have alerted Greg and on their way to the morgue to look at the body of Connie Prince to see what was wrong with her. She had died of tetanus but the wound that supposedly was the cause was not nearly old enough to have been the reasoning behind it. After determining that how she died must not be the apparent cause, he goes to gather more information, including visiting the Prince Household to speak with the brother Kenny.

The brother is truly full of grief, though there is relief there as well. Considering how hen-picked he was, that is not surprising. Raoul the house keeper on the other hand smells self satisfied as if all is right in his world. There is something else there as well that he can smell but he does not wish to say anything until is sure so he calls Sherlock to come confirm. After his tall human is there for just a few minutes the two of them leave and he looks over at the taller man with a smile.

“You think it’s the cat,” the dark-haired human comments as they walk away.
He shakes his head once, “Nope, it’s the houseboy, he smelled wrong to be innocent, now do you know why?”

His dark-haired companion gives him a funny look, “How? Never mind, you’re a wolf,” he murmurs before lifting his voice a bit and continuing, “It was a matter of he did not want to lose his comfy placing and he would have had the siblings split up.”

After reporting it to Greg he considers asking why he did not report it sooner than realizes that his dark-haired human was probably using any extra time he had in order to learn more about the bomber. It is the only reason he does not get frustrated by the situation.

When the call comes through from the old lady, Sherlock answers it quickly but things go downhill when the woman attempts to describe the person in question. As the line goes dead he receives on his phone.

-Snipers dead.- Tech

When they arrive back at their flat the cobra is lounging in Sherlock’s chair, his laptop on his lap as he types. “So you are aware, if I get to this piece of shit first I am going to shred his mind before ripping his throat out,” he comments in way of greeting. Standing, he inclines his head politely before heading towards the door.

His dark-haired human glance at him, his scent mildly surprised. After the cobra leaves, the two have a mostly quiet night, he decides to get some sleep now while he can because he is sure that there is more to come while his dark-haired human goes back to trying to figure out more information on the bomber.

In the morning it is on the news, twelve dead in an explosion, gas leak, as it is being reported falsely. One body found on ground not far away, looks like the person had broken their neck when they had fallen. As they continue to watch the news they see as Raoul is arrested and discuss the bomber, the Carl Powers case, and where this might be going next.

There is a part of him that is angered by his potential bondmate lack of feeling towards the people involved, yet another part of him understands perfectly well. Still, there are times it is difficult to do. As his tall flatmate continues to speak to himself he gets up and heads towards the kitchen in frustration.

“Your disappointed in me,” the dark-haired human murmurs as he watches him walk, hands steepled in front of his face, his scent hinted with shock and sadness.

He glances over at him, giving a small shake of his head, “Not really, frustrated by the situation.” Shrugging, he comments, “It’s rare that Eric cannot track a person down, so I am not happy that we are waiting the whims of a physco.”

Before anything else can be said, the pink phone chimes and an image of the Thames appears on it. Frowning, the two of them get to researching only to come up with nothing, so his dark-haired human calls Greg, asking if they had found anything on the South Bank between Waterloo Bridge and Southwark Bridge. A few minutes later the two of them are at the river bank, looking over a man who was choked to death and then dropped in the Thames. Sherlock studies the man, keeping a mental tally on the things he notices.

Once done doing so, he lists of all of his noticed facts, though he feels the urge to get a few barbs in
first at the detective inspector before he begins. Then, after completing listing the facts he goes walking off a small smile on his he takes off to get a cab. With a shake of his head, he follows the taller human.

The cabbie that picks them up is another crow, this time a female with an easy smile. Giving direction as to where to go to the driver, his dark-haired human lifts the phone and waves it around as he questions, “Why hasn’t he phoned? He’s broken his pattern. Why?” Leaning forward a bit he tells the driver, “Waterloo Bridge,” changing their directions.

“Probably not happy about the loss of one of his men,” he replies softly, knowing that the driver is not paying attention. “Where now? The gallery?”

“In a bit,” comes the soft answer.

He nods, looking out the window for a moment before querying, “The Hickman’s contemporary art, isn’t it? Why have they got hold of an Old Master?”

As his dark-haired companion pulls a pen and paper out, he response, “Dunno. Dangerous to jump to conclusions. Need data.” Once he is done writing on his paper, he rips it out of the book, folding it carefully, before calling out to the driver, “Stop! You wait here. I won’t be a moment.”

The driver nods as the two of them quickly get out of the car, approaching the homeless girl on the bench as she calls out, “Change, any change?”

His tall companion tucks his hands into his pockets as he queries, “What for?”

“Cup tea, of course,” she replies with a small smile.

Her smile grows as the tall human pulls the note he had written out of his pocket, along with his cash, stating, “Here you go, fifty,” as he holds it out to her.

“Thanks,” she replies as he walks away and she checks to see what was on the paper.

Again he considers questioning the taller man but decides against it, the homeless have useful resources for him in the past, this is probably just a continuation of that use.

As we get back into the cab, his dark-haired companion inquires, “Have you got any cash?”

He smiles and nods, and off they go, on their way again. When they get to the gallery, the dark-haired human asks him to go check on the guards home, to find any information that he can in the matter. So he checks to see which of the watchers is with his dark-haired human, pleased to discover that the answer is Elspeth. If anyone tries to harm him, they will find themselves dead quicker that a breath and since he would not put it past his human to go seeking a murder on his own, that is definitely a useful thin and since he would not put it past his human to go seeking a murder on his own, that is definitely a useful thing.

At the guards flat, he spends a bit of time speaking with the flatmate even as he prowls around checking things out. Using every one of his senses not just the human ones as he does so. What he discovers was the man was a star gazer, his flatmate had a deep crush on him, and that the guard had turned to a professor in order to speak of something. Pulling out his phone he quickly checks the logs for the nationwide reregister of professors. The one he was speaking with dealt with astronomy.

He frowns as he gets a text from Mycroft inquiring if any more had been done about Westie situation. Sending a quick text off to Cyanne, he checks in with her, discovering that she had been hovering around the flat as a mouse, that the female partner had not known or understood what was
going on, but the brother-in-law to be acting weird. While they were out she had searched both their
flats and had discovered protected flash drive in his, should she take it? his answer was an immediate
yes, along with return it to Mycroft to have it checked.

Rejoining Sherlock at the flat, the homeless woman from earlier is standing outside of it, asking
about spare change. When he gets out of the cab, he asks the cabbie to wait, and the young man
nods, showing his neck and the wolf pack markings there. For a moment he speaks with his flatmate
before they are getting into the cab and driving off. Had he considered the situation they were in a bit
more he might have grabbed his gun, instead he had went along without ever asking where or why
they were going. He really should have thought this one through a bit better.

At a place called Vauxhall they get out and start walking as his dark-haired companion buttons up
his coat. Conversation is light, mostly about the stars as the go until he starts to wonder why they are
there. It is not long after that they doing the mad dash to try and catch the assassin who had killed the
guard but he had jumped into a waiting car and drove off much to his potential bondmates
annoyance. The only good thing, apparently his bondmate had figured he might need his gun,
because he had brought it along. Shaking his head, they went to get another cab, this time heading to
the university where the professor who the guard had spoken with worked.

They got there just as the massive man started to strangle the professor and his dark-haired human’s
calling to him seemed to give him pause because one moment he was there and the next he was
gone. Pulling his gun he looks around just in time to see the massive man wrap his hands around his
humans face.

Aiming the gun at the giant he steadily commands him, “Let him go or I will kill you.”

One long breath later and the tall human is kicking his gun out of his hands and lunging for him.
Sherlock tries to fight with him but fails to the man’s much larger size. Eyeing him critically he plans
his next move with care, he is certain that there will only be one chance to do what he is planning
and he does not intend to miss.

When golem goes to press down his flatmate, leaning over him, he partially shifts, his size partly
increasing but his speed and strength doubling. With a quick jump, he springs on to the taller man’s
back, grabbing his head and twisting violently. The harsh pop of his spine snapping echoes through
the room as his body collapses. Springing backwards, he tugs the massive man sideways, before
helping his flatmate to his feet, surging a little bit of healing energy into him to make sure there is no
damage.

Sighing, he calls jackal-child, informing them of where they are at and what is going on. Then, with
a sigh he goes to check the professor. Her body is shutting down, he had crushed part of her skull
and it was killing her. Sitting down next to her, he places one hand over her heart and the other over
her forehead as he falls into the healing gift that is his by birth. Within moments the majority of the
damage is gone, though he stops just short of fully healing her so she will stay unconscious, he does
not feel like explaining how he had saved her life.

He had just rejoined Sherlock over on the stage when Greg and a team get there.

**oOo**

The following morning finds him with the detective inspector and his flatmate standing in the
Hickman Gallery with the proprietor of the gallery there. She is protesting the fact that they are there
and that his dark-haired human is calling her prized painting a fake. While she whines, his dark-
haired companion is quickly looking up all sorts of information paintings using his phone.
“It’s a fake, it has to be,” he murmurs as he scans the information.

Sounding indigent the human woman snaps, “That painting has been subjected to every test known to science.”

Not bothering to look away from his phone his human returns, “It’s a really good fake then.”

A few more minutes pass before he spins around to glare at the other human, eyes flashing, “You know about this, don’t you? This is you, isn’t it?”

She turns to the jackal-child snapping, “Inspector, my time is being wasted. Would you mind showing yourself and your friends out?”

As his tall human continues to scowl at his phone, the pink one goes off and he angrily pulls it from his pocket, clicking on the speaker phone as he answer it, “The painting is a fake.”

**Eric, he has another call.** He tells the cobra, knowing that he will discover the person who is currently being used.

“It’s a fake. That’s why Woodbridge and Cairns were killed.” The detective inspector had decided to let everyone think that the professor had died, even as she had been rushed to the hospital under a different name to be treated. There is no answer, and impatiently he continues, “Oh, come on. Proving it’s just the detail. The painting is a fake. I’ve solved it. I’ve figured it out. It’s a fake! That’s the answer. That’s why they were killed.”

Still there is no answer and he takes a deep breath, calming himself, his emotions are currently flooding the room in annoyance, anger, and frustration. “Okay, I’ll prove it. Give me time. Will you give me time?”

“Ten,” the voice of a small boy child comes across the speaker.

Almost as soon as the child spoke, his tall human had spun back to the painting examining it closely.

“It’s a kid. Oh, God, it’s a kid!” the detective inspector states in shock, looking between each person in the room.

The human woman’s eyes get slightly larger as she stares at nothing in particular, her scent changing to that of minor horror.

“What did he say?” he questions, afraid he had heard right.

“Ten,” his flatmate replies as he continues to study the image.

He can just about hear the wheels spinning his head as he figures it out, muttering as the child continues to count down. Finally he gets it, just as the child stops counting and asks if anyone is there. He is just about yelling into the phone as he figures it out, making sure that the bomber gets the message quick enough. Once the bomber has confirmed he heard, by allowing the child to ask for help, he passes the phone to the detective inspector before smiling like their packs cobra.

The trip back to the Yard is uneventful for the three pack members and their prisoner. She has not said a word since the tall human had discovered what the fake was. After a brief discussion about what she is to be charged with and she admits to the fake painting before he leaves.

As the two of them head out, his dark-haired human asks, “Whatever happened with the case
Mycroft gave us? You did nothing on it that I saw.”

Smiling he texts Cyanne before answering.

-Do you turn the drive over yet?- JW

-Nope, was on my way to get it now.- Mouse

-We will retrieve it.- JW

“The brother has it, shall we go find out why?” he asks his tall companion as they walk out of the building.

The two catch a cab to the brothers flat, and carefully break in as they had done in other times as well. Once in, they wait and confront the man. The two of them listen to his reasoning before calling Greg to allow him to come arrest the man.

That night he is chatting with Eric on the laptop while his tall bondmate yells at a foolish program on the TV. According to Eric and Mouse, he had not yet given the missile plans back to his brother, however when asked about it, he says he had. Well then, he is planning on using them to get to the bomber then. That means one more person needs to be kidnapped. Sighing, he decides that he might as well make himself available for it.

“Eric has requested that I come over for a bit, apparently there is something he wishes to show me in person.” He tells the tall human, “I’ll stop and get milk on my way home.”

“I’ll get it.” comes the quick reply.

“Really?” he questions him in disbelief, stores cause him to overload so he rarely goes into them.

“Really.”

“And beans?” he queries.

The tall human nods, staring at the TV.

He knows as soon as he leaves his flatmate will be contacting the bomber. *Stay with him Elspeth*. He gives the directive to the shifter he can feel sitting on their entryway.

*Yes sir*, she replies.
Well everyone this was an interesting chapter to write, I hope everyone enjoys.

John’s POV
He had wandered the city for nearly an hour before he had finally been caught. It had taken every ounce of training he had not to fight back or show his hand to the jackasses in question. The entire point of this was to give Eric a chance to borrow him in order to learn more about these humans. So that’s what he was going to do. It did not make it any easier. Particularly when they pressed something against his nose and mouth forcing him to breathe it in.

Lovely. Drugs. Allowing his body to burn through it he mimics the effects of it with ease. It was something he had practiced with Eric and Daria during their time in Afghanistan. The vast majority of their military pack had the ability to do so. Learned for safety reasons.

As they drag him into a vehicle he listens closely as the two men talk.

“Are you sure he was given enough? I thought that Moran said he wasn’t human?” the first one demands.

He can feel the eyes on him as he lays there, still acting as if he is out to the world. “He hasn’t moved or made a sound, I think Moran is full of shit.” The second man replies.

Sniffing the air delicately he is pleased to see that they are both human.

Eric, now or later? He queries of the cobra as he shows him what has already been going on.

Now. I am a better actor than you, his temperamental friend replies.

Allowing his mind to drift, he feels when the connection is made and when the switch becomes available. One moment he is playing like he is still under the effects of the drugs they had given him, the next he is shaking his head at the feeling of disorientation he always gets from form swapping. As the shortest bloke in their pack, it is rather odd to suddenly be the tallest. Despite the fact that they had switched, he links back up, keeping a shadow presence in his own body so that he can also view the happenings without having to have the cobra show him.

Beta, Iota, Hunter, Spathi, Mouse, Watcher, Fighters, and Cat report. He does roll call as he waits, keeping his presence shielded so that anybody watching for a surge would not see one.

Guarding the elder-second, he is on the move, and I am close behind. Spathi is the first to report in.

Flying above the elder, observing and recording, Watcher reports, showing the vehicle that he is in.

Waiting at the pool, the wolf brothers fighters respond.

Almost to the pool, comes the hunters call in.

At your flat, awaiting further need and situation, the iota states.
In the elder’s pocket, awaiting tagging for those within the building, Mouse chimes in, her tone the easiest going.

Outside of the pool, cat remarks sounding bored.

Flying to the pool, night vision is not my gig. The beta falcon answers.

Once everyone has reported in, he turns his attention back to the humans in the car. The trip seems to go rather rapidly and he does not know if it is because they did not go far or because he was allowing Eric control of his body. When they get to the warehouse where the two human’s drag him out of the car, he allows his senses to explore the area while remaining as nothing but a watcher.

Eric is playing the part of a drugged person to a tee. Allowing the humans to do all of the work in carrying him in, and setting him in a chair. For a few minutes they continue to act like they are drugged, waiting to see how long it takes before the humans think that they are supposed to come out of it and then adding a minute or two past that for good measures.

When it is time to act like he is waking up, Eric shifts to the background so he can control his own body, groaning and rubbing at his shoulder as if it hurts, which it does but not as much as he is pretending.

“Good, he’s awake,” someone murmurs from behind him.

Taking a discrete sniff of the air revels that there are eleven humans and one gifted person in the building. The gifted one and three of the humans are in the room with him. He feels as it as Mouse slips out of his jacket and down his leg completely shielded from all senses.

“Now that you’re up, you can help to strap yourself into this vest or we’ll kill you and then find every single person you have interacted with in the last year and kill them too.” A cold voice tells him.

Giving his head a small shake he blinks at the blond haired man standing in front of him. A gifted one, his mind supplies before he allows Eric to take control again in order to analyze him. Slowly, the two of them do as told, playing as if they are worried about the results of the threat, truthfully though they are using the time in order to process information.

Once he is in the vest a coat that does not belong to him and smells of human is forced on over the bomb vest and an ear piece is placed on his right ear before he is taken back to the car and driving off. Each member of the team updates them on their status. Just a few minutes before midnight and he is being shoved out of the car as the earpiece comes on.

“Now Johnny boy, do everything I say, or you know the results.” A familiar voice commands him using the head set.

Where does he know that voice from?

Dunno, do not have access to your memories right now, just your body, the cobra answers the mental query as the two of them follow the order to walk inside slowly with his hands in his pockets when not opening doors. What I do know, skinning the person sounds like fun, with the dullest knife I can come up with.

Eric you’re something else, he replies to the cobra as they step through the front door and keep walking.

When they get to the pool room, the voice tells him what to say as he pushes the door open.
“Evening,” he states softly as he looks at his bondmate. There is such a sad look on the humans face, his scent echoing disbelief as he continues speaking, “This is a turn-up, isn’t it, Sherlock?”

*I have the first sniper in my reach,* hunter remarks.

*Second sniper within claws,* the first of the wolves chimes in just before his brother says, *third sniper within range.*

"John,” his human gasps, shock still pouring off of him, “What the hell?” he demands.

"Bet you never saw this coming,” he replies, repeating what he is told.

*Awaiting orders, in pool room with elder and elder-second,* Spathi reports softly.

*Protect the alpha-second at all costs.* He orders her, not trying to figure out where she is in case the gifted on is still around.

*Understood.*

Slowly his human comes towards him, his expression lost as he looks around him as if trying to understand. Slowly he is directed to remove his hands from his pockets and open his coat so he does so, and the relief that pours from his bondmate is short lived as he tries to figure who else is there.

"What ... would you like me ... to make him say ... next?” he murmurs aloud, on script while within his mind he inquires of the other person sharing his body, *Dealt with the bomb yet?*

*Please, this was child’s work. I had Spathi teach me after the first one, along with several other interesting things. Love that cats mind.* The cobra responds sarcastically as he keeps control of the body.

"Gottle o’ geer ... gottle o’ geer ... gottle o’ geer,” he repeats, before continuing to say, “Nice touch, this: the pool where little Carl died. I stopped him. I can stop John Watson too.” He looks down at the laser pointer on his chest, “Stop his heart.”

His bondmate stops directly in front of him, snapping, “Stop it.” before looking around the room once more, his scent full of rage, “Who are you?” he demands.

"I gave you my number,” the voice is no longer in his ear, but behind him and with it, his mind clicks where he had heard it before. The fake human who was attracted to his bondmate at the morgue with Molly. Interesting. Well that just figures. “I thought you might call.” As the human walks towards them he queries in his singsong voice, “Is that British Army Browning L9A1 in your pocket,” he pauses as his bondmate pulls his gun out, “or are you just pleased to see me?”

A cold look crosses his features, as he replies “Both,” aiming the gun at the other human’s head.

"Jim Moriarty.” He introduces himself, “Hi!”

His bondmates scent becomes confused as he brings his second hand up to steady the gun.

"Jim? Jim from the hospital?” he prompts the taller man, as he slowly walks towards them, the fake human’s scent is full of arrogance and lust a little bit of lust as he continues speaking. “Oh. Did I really make such a fleeting impression? But then, I suppose, that was rather the point.”

It is probably a good thing he is not actually in control of his body at that moment because his instincts were screaming for him to destroy the human who dares to threaten his bondmate but that
would not be possible until cat found the last sniper.

As the red laser flickers over his chest and throat his human flickers his eyes towards him questioningly and he wishes that he could warn him that there were others here.

"I’ve given you a glimpse, Sherlock, just a teensy glimpse of what I’ve got going on out there in the big bad world. I’m a specialist, you see,” the fake human pauses for dramatics, “like you!”

_I have not found the sniper that is currently locked onto the elder. Still seeking._ Cat reports, his voice a hiss of anger.

Slowly and softly his human begins to speak, “Dear Jim. Please will you fix it for me to get rid of my lover’s nasty sister?” he can feel the fake human approaching his back, both shifters feeling the urge to lash out but Eric controlling his body so they do not, “Dear Jim. Please will you fix it for me to disappear to South America?”

“Just so.”

“Consulting criminal,” his bondmate breaths, “brilliant.”

Really, do they have to flirt right now? he wonders as he glances down and then back up at his human.

"Isn’t it? No-one ever gets to me – and no-one ever will.” The fake human states proudly, his scent far closer now, within easy range of attack for either shifter.

Cocking the pistol his dark-haired human responds, “I did.”

"You’ve come the closest, now you’re in my way.” The lilting voice responds there is admiration in both his tone and scent, along with that touch of lust.

Smiling slightly he replies, “Thank you.” For some reason confidence has suddenly filled his human’s scent.

“Didn’t mean it as a compliment,” he rejoins almost instantly.

“Yes you did.”

"Yeah, okay, I did.” His voice shifts to higher pitch and sing-song, making the cobra wish he was there in his natural form to rip the man to shreds “But the flirting’s over, Sherlock. Daddy’s had enough now!” Again his voice drops back to its normal as he goes back to walking even closer, “I’ve shown you what I can do. I cut loose all those people, all those little problems, even thirty million quid just to get you to come out and play.”

The wolf in him is aching to attack and it is almost strong enough to override the cobra’s cold logic. The struggle is enough that he flinches a little, catching his bondmates attention when it really does not need to be caught.

"So take this as a friendly warning, my dear. Back off.” He puts emphasis on the phrase my dear, “Although I have loved this – this little game of ours.” His accent changes for a moment, “Playing Jim from I.T.” then it returns to normal, “Playing gay. Did you like the little touch with the underwear?”

He rolls his eyes at the dramatic fake human, really wishing that cat would report that he had the last sniper so they could deal with this now.
"People have died," his bondmate states, his tone even.

"That’s what people do!” the human replies, just about screeching the last word, it echoes off of the water.

"I will stop you,” his bondmate is serious, his scent edged with something violent that reminds him of the cobra.

*I like him, did I mention that. Perhaps we should ask the Old Ones a favor.* Eric remarks in his mind even as they listen to the fake human speak.

"No you won’t.”

A quick glance from his bondmate is followed by the question, “Are you alright?”

Since it is Eric in charge of the body for the moment, the two of them decide not to say anything, no reason for anyone to discover their little secret. Instead he lifts his head just as the fake human leans forward next to him telling him he can talk in that sarcastic way. Boy does the fake human stink, both shifters think. He nods once watching as Sherlock offers the flash drive with the missile plans on it.

The fake human’s voice soften as he sees what is being offered to him, but his scent is unchanged, it was not really his goal, “Huh? Oh, that,” the fake human murmurs as he steps past him. Reaching out, the human accepts them, as he comments, “the missile plans,” he hisses out the s sounds. Bringing it to his lips, he kisses it softly before declaring in his sing-song voice, “Boring!” giving a shake of his head the human tosses the plans into the pool stating, “I could have got them anywhere.”

Losing control of the urge to protect his mate, he springs forward, wrapping an uncoordinated arm around the human’s throat. For a moment it is John back in the reigns of his body as he snaps, “Sherlock run.” Still running on instinct he does not use the alpha’s voice and later it is something that he will be pissed at himself about.

The fake human in his grasp starts to chuckle and he watches as two dots appear on his bondmates forehead after the human murmurs something about him showing his hand.

*We can take out the snipers aiming at the alpha-second,* the wolf brothers inform him.

*Where the hell is the missing sniper?* He hears cat snarl.

*He’s gifted, he might be shielding. Do we take the chance anyways?* Eric answer and questions as he retakes control of his body. *Really though, stop being such a wolf.*

He snarls at the other person sharing his body, as the frustration over takes him.

Stepping back he snarls softly aloud as he watches the human brush off his suit and mutter, “Westwood.” Then, as he lowers his hands to his side the human mutters, “D’you know what happens if you don’t leave me alone, Sherlock, to you?”

His bondmate rolls his eyes at that obvious statement, responding in kind and once more the fake human smells of lust. For a man who says he is not gay he sure is overly attracted to his bondmate.

His answer is just as bland until he gets to the end of it. “I’ll burn the heart out of you.” the human snarls heart as if he is jealous before his tone becomes regretful.

Voice low his bondmate states, “I have been reliably informed that I don’t have one.” despite his
words his scent tells a completely different story.

Shaking his head, the fake human responds, “But we both know that’s not quite true.”

His human’s gaze does not waver as the fake human glances down and then around, muttering, “Well, I’d better be off.” After looking at the various doors he comments, “Well, so nice to have had a proper chat.”

Expression hardening a bit, his bondmate raises the run, level with the forehead of the fake human inquiring, “What if I was to shoot you now – right now?”

The fake human’s scent reflects his concern even though his voice does not as he answers. Once he is done speaking he turns and walks away, heading back towards the door he had come in through.

His bondmate moves in time with him to keep him in sight as he states, “Catch you later,” a step between each word.

"No you won’t,” comes the sing-song reply as the door swings shut.

Once the red lasers have vanished Eric uses his knowledge to start unfastening the vest even as his bondmate reaches for the vest as well.

"All right?” his bondmate demands, worry in both tone in scent.

Since Eric is the one in charge he can do nothing but nod as he looks up breathing heavily.

Again his bondmate repeats the question, “Are you alright?”

Eric had finished unfastening the inner bomb and allows him access to his body again, though does not give it totally back so he can answer. They can still smell the fake human and would rather be prepared for anything. “Yeah, yeah, I’m fine.” He responds aloud.

Snap necks? One of the wolf brothers asks on the common path.

No. We are still missing a sniper. Tag them all for tracking so they can be hunted. He replies as his bondmate jumps to his feet and circles around him to tug the vest and coat off at the same time. “I’m fine,” he repeats, “Sherlock,” he murmurs trying to get his bondmates attention, “Sherlock!” he demands as he rubs a hand over his head, tugging the earpiece out. Body sharing is tiring, he thinks as he starts to stumble. Landing against the wall he asks, “Are you okay?”

His human had tried to find the other human with after grabbing his gun. Only he must not have found him because he returns a few breathes later, rubbing the gun against his head as he paces. His scent saying that his human is in overload.

"Are you okay?” he asks, knowing the answer even before it is given and knowing it is a lie.

Despite the lie he also makes a statement that says a great deal to him, when referencing the fact that he had been willing to trade his life for his.

As he is getting ready to get to his feet, the fake human comes back in just as two laser dot appear, on each of them.

Snap their necks. He orders the ones who have a sniper in their grasp even as he nods at Sherlock that his plan is acceptable. A moment later a single shot rings out as his bondmate pulls the trigger and both shifters force his tired body into motion to knock his bondmate into the water as the room
explodes.

As the two of them surface slowly, he reaches for each member of his team, making sure that they are all alright. Each and every one of them reports that they are fine though Spathi is pissed, the fake human had dove out the door he had just come in and survived the blast.

Shaking his head to clear the water out of it they can hear a phone going off, playing Stayin’ Alive. Apparently the annoyance had survived then.

However when no bullets come flying their way, he pulls the two of them out of the water, breathing heavy and the cobra retreats back to his body, knowing that there will be no more need for sharing. When he looks around for his gun it is nowhere in sight at which point he hears Spathi comment that she has it.

Outside he can hear the sound of fire trucks and other emergency vehicles as they sit there at the edge of the water.
Hi all, the long awaited conversation and its aftermath, right here, plus the reason this is a mature story not something else. Enjoy!

Reviews are lovely, thank you to everyone who leaves them along with any other form of communication that shows you like it.

**Sherlock's POV**

Before his mind can even process what had happened, first responders swarmed the pool and the surrounding area. With the first responders comes the detective inspector and his annoying brother. As the group swarms, those two are carefully helping them to our feet and out of the building to Mycroft’s waiting car. Blankets appear from somewhere to be wrapped around them, while the cars heater is cranked up to dry them off.

Almost absently, John recounts the events of the evening, including how he had been heading over to a friends for a bit when someone had surprised him, the being threaten, and everything leading up to the pool. His version of the pool is also a bit detached and he cannot help wondering why when he had been full of cold fury in his dark eyes.

Dark eyes? His eyes aren’t dark. They are blue, sometimes grey, sometimes brown, but always light. How had his eyes been dark?

The detective inspector seems shocked by the idea that he had been caught so easily while his brother is looking at him speculatively. He can tell both disbelieve the how he was caught but neither is calling him on it.

When they get back to the flat he is surprised to see Daria waiting for them, eyes narrow as she takes the shape John is in before turning her attention on him. She dismisses both men with them with an ease of someone who is used to prioritizing. Mycroft does not take it all that well as he stares after her in shock as she helps John upstairs.

“Who is that?” he demands, watching the multicolored hair viper.

“Daria, his personal doctor, they were friends in the army. Eric must have alerted her when he did not show that something was wrong.” He answers, fairly certain that it is not the truth but not wishing to mention anything about the pack to his brother.

The detective inspector looks at him curiously for a moment before glancing around and commenting, “Do you think I can call a cab? I forgot my phone in the office.”

“I can give you a ride,” his stuffy brother offers, eyes flickering over the detective inspector with ease.

The detective inspector smiles, “Thanks,” he murmurs before glancing his way and stating, “Tell John to take care.”

He nods once, watching as both men get back into the car and it drives away. Once alone, he stands
there for a few minutes, his eyes closed as he considers how close he had been to losing John. That was not acceptable. He could not ever lose him. That would just break him.

Before he has a chance to do anything about it, the slender viper comes gliding out of the flat door, a serene look on her face. “I give you the same advice I gave him, take it easy. Neither of you are teens anymore. Now go hover, I can smell that you want to.” Without giving him a chance to respond, she drifts off, vanishing from sight long before she really should.

Giving a shake of his head, he heads upstairs, surprised when he discovers that Mrs. Hudson does not appear to be home, a moment later his phone goes off, alerting him to why.

-I kindly suggested she visit her sister, and added a bit of a compulsion to make sure that she did so.-

Oh, he thinks to himself. When he gets into the flat, John is stretched out in wolf form on the floor in front of the sofa, his long body seems to have a slight tremble to it. Not really thinking about it he strides over to John and buries his face in the fur at his neck, just breathing him in. His arms wrap around the massive wolf body as a tremble over takes him, the emotions he denies having coming to the surface with a vengeance.

John seems to understand because he pushes just a little closer, not doing anything else as he tries to get himself under control. He knows he is overloaded, that there is just a very fine line between being alright and breaking completely. Tonight he had edged it far more than he ever wanted to.

“John,” he murmurs brokenly, his voice higher pitched than he ever thought it could be, his arms tightening around the wolf.

oOo

The next time he is aware, time has passed and he realizes that he had fallen asleep while holding his flatmate in a death grip. Blushing slightly, he straightens up and finds those light blue eyes watching him with a soft expression. It is not one he is familiar with, yet it seems to be familiar despite that. As he looks down at the floor, he feels more than sees as the shorter man returns to human form.

“Are you alright?” the blonde asks him softly.

He nods absently, not trusting his voice not to break again.

“Alright, how about I make some tea and you get comfortable on the sofa?” the wolf suggests gently, and he understands it is his way of giving him a chance to collect himself. Again he nods without looking at him.

Rising with more grace than expected, he watches as his John heads into the kitchen but makes sure to keep himself in line of sight as he does so. What would he have done had he lost him? They never had their talk. They really needed to talk because according to Lestrade he was John’s bondmate, not someone else. Tugging his sleeve up he looks at his arm frowning, then why didn’t he have a mark? Maybe there was something wrong with him. Shaking his head he decides that he does not want to wait, he wants to know now, while the terror is fresh in his mind, while the thrill of understanding is fresh, before he can talk himself out of saying or doing anything.

With a predator’s grace he stalks into the kitchen and grabs John by the shoulders, spinning him around to kiss him only to find himself pinned to the counter behind him by one startled soldier. As soon as John seems to realize what was going on he steps back, running a hand through his hair and
Biting his lip, he reaches again for John, this time, making sure that the shorter man can see him before he does anything and quickly lowers his head just a bit to make up the height difference to kiss him.

Since he had never actually kissed someone before, he is not sure what he is doing, but all the books make it seem so easy. Press lips together and from there your partner will just melt into it. Was John melting into it? He can’t tell. Hesitantly, because he is not sure what the proper etiquette for kissing is, his tongue runs along the shorter man’s lips and a low open mouth groan is his response.

The next thing he knows, he has been shoved back against the counter again and John had taken control of the kiss. He wasn’t going to complain, his mind was lost in a haze of emotions and reactions as the shorter man tilts his head just the slightest and opens his mouth to allow his tongue to slip out. As his partner’s tongue slides against the seam of his lips and then inside his mouth he realizes that the noises he hears are coming from him now.

Eventually, when he feels like he is going to pass out, John pulls back just the slightest, resting their foreheads together. “Sherlock?” he murmurs questioningly.

Quickly, because he is afraid that his wolf is going to start pulling away he answers him in a low but urgent voice, “John, I finally connected the dots, I do not know why it took so long, it was there to understand if I just opened my eyes. That mark on your wrist is due to me, not someone else. I was so worried that you were going to leave me and I couldn’t handle that. I…”

He is cut off by the shorter man leaning up and kissing him again, “Be quiet Sherlock, just feel for a bit, your mind is processing a lot of information right now. Never worry that I will leave, if I can deal with Eric for more than a decade I promise you’re easy to live with. I’m not going anywhere, I promise.”

Blinking, he nods slowly as he takes it in. His John has promised not to leave. He could breathe again without fretting. Taking a deep breath he keeps his eyes on his wolf. As he considers kissing him again the water pot starts to whistle, causing him to jump because he had forgot about it.

The low chuckle that escaped John was rather attractive, he thought, as the shorter man steps back and turns around goes back to making the tea. It gives him a moment to review the last few minutes and adjust his suit which has gotten surprisingly hot and tight. Shaking his head he makes himself stay even though his flight response is telling him to bolt before the other man realizes what type of effect he is having on him.

“Let’s go in the living room,” the blonde suggests.

He nods and accepts the second cup of tea, sipping at it as the two of them walking into the other room. Placing it on the coffee table in front of the sofa, he sits down slightly nervously with John, worried about the fact the shorter man hadn’t said anything else.

Turning towards him, he has just opened his mouth to start speaking when his blonde haired friend places a single finger against his lips.

“I do not want you to make a choice out of desperation,” he murmurs, his hand sliding to cup his cheek, “I know I have told you this before, and I will probably say it again, you’re human, do not feel that you have to do something a wolf would do.” He pauses to take a deep breath before continuing, “You are an amazing person Sherlock, never worry that I will leave, because I will not. I don’t want you to rush into something that you will regret later alright?” for a moment the shorter
man searches his face with his eyes, he must like what he finds because he smiles and his heart just about stops. “Now, if you want to continue, I suggest this: both of us get cleaned up and come back in here. If after you do so, you still want to continue what was started in the kitchen I will be more than open to the idea, alright?”

He nods slowly, watching as the shorter man retreats to his room to gather his things. Frowning lightly, he considers what he said, and smiles, realizing that he is trying to protect him not deny him. Though now that he thinks about it, he does notice the pool water smell along with other various odors that are sticking to him. What a mess he is!

Jumping to his feet he heads into his room to strip off the nearly ruined suit before collecting his stuff together. Biting his lip, he carefully pulls the small tube of lube he had picked up from the store three days prior out and sets it on the night stand closest to the bed. If all goes well he will be using it tonight, well this morning, he thinks as he glances out the window. As he collects his things he does a mental inventory of the suggested ways to prepare himself that he had listed from a wide variety of websites.

By the time he is in the shower, he carefully thinks it over, bowels empty? Yes, hasn’t eaten in two days. Wash body and hair carefully to remove all oils and greases? Done. Brush teeth, gums, and tongue to promote kissing? Done. Have easy access pants without a lot of buttons? Done. Have lube ready for use? Done. Blood tests to make sure neither of them have a disease? Done once daily for the last four days.

Feeling reassured that he has prepared as best as he can, he gets out and dries off, pulling his sleeping pants on but not bothering with underwear, socks, or a shirt. Slightly nervous now that he is about to do something he had been considering for the last few months he opens the bathroom door and stops dead in his tracks as he looks around the flat.

All of the lights are off, but there is a cheery fire going in the fireplace, sweet smelling candles have been carefully placed around the room in spots where the chances of them falling or catching fire is nearly non-existent. The coffee table has been cleared off of its clutter. Instead, there is a large candle in a violet hurricane lamp that is illuminating the small variety of refreshments placed there. All of them favorites of his and Johns. The normal rug that lays in front of the fire has been replaced with a plush dark colored one. A thing of lube is on the floor near the rug. The sofa and chairs have been shifted around to make extra room.

“How?” he questions as he looks around in shock, how had John done this so quickly?

John smiles, a soft chuckle escaping him, “I told the pack not to bother us for a bit while I as in my room, and when I got back down here, well you see what the girls did.” Shrugging, his smile grows, “I think it was supposed to be a hint.”

“Oh,” he murmurs, somehow disappointed, so John hadn’t done this.

Apparently John had understood his disappointment, because the shorter man strides over to him with purpose, eyes gleaming in the light, one hand lifting to brush the damp curls from his face. “Had I expected something like this to happen any time soon, I would have probably taught them a lesson or two in setting the scene, Sherlock,” the wolf informs him. “I wasn’t going to push the subject. I wanted it to be your choice.”

Without giving him a chance to reply to that frankly silly statement, the shorter man carefully pulls his head down and kisses him. If the kisses earlier were hot because of the desperation that fueled them, these kisses were even hotter because of the blatant desire fueling them. Somehow we went from standing there, lips locked together as we each explored the other’s mouth to being reclined on
that new rug, still locked together as if the only thing needed was the other one.

Moaning low in his throat, the warmth he had noticed earlier has returned with a vengeance, causing his entire body to ache in ways that he barely understands. Though John seemed to understand as his smaller hands go from cradling his face to gently touching each and every part of his body not covered by his sleeping pants. Each touch is careful, yet not, and he delights in the feeling even as his mind overloads and he stops thinking only feeling, he will process it all later when he is not enthralled by it all.

Slowly, as John shifts him back on the extremely soft rug, he finds himself begging even as John begins to kiss, lick, and nip his way across his body, paying close attention to the spots that make him arch and gasp. He had never imagined that anything would feel this good, it was even better high then the heroin. When his short friend gets to the top of his sleeping pants, he traces the edge of them, glancing up at him with passion filled eyes that are questioning. He finds he cannot answer aloud so settles for nodding as his lover slowly pulls them down.

Normally he would not have been embarrassed to be seen by another man, but this wasn’t just any man, this was John, John who was worshipping his body with his hands and lips and tongue and nose. John who’s eyes were devouring him whole even as he maintains eye contact. John who knew of his history and seemed to want him anyways.

“John please,” he finds himself gasping as the smaller man licks and kisses his way down the rest of his stomach and tracing his hip, totally ignoring the part of him that is hard and aching for attention, precum already beginning to bead on its tip. “Please,” his voice is a high pitch whine of need.

“Relax love, enjoy, I’ll not leave you needing long,” comes the breathy response against his left hip the blonde man runs the flat of his tongue down his leg to suck at the back of the knee, causing him to arch and gasp for air in need. He can feel the smile on the other man’s lips as he continues his track downwards to his foot, carefully touching every part of it before curling the tip of his tongue around his big toe before repeating that behavior with each the other ones before moving on to do the same on the other foot.

Perhaps if he was more used to the reactions that John’s touch was causing he would have been able to do more than lay there moaning and gasping, arching and begging, as his lover slowly explores every inch of him.

By the time John had gotten back to his waist he swore he could see spots, and he was wholly unprepared for the feeling of the smaller man’s lips as they brushed against his head and sent a bolt of electricity through him.

“Do you want me to continue?” the shorter man inquired, his breath ghosting against his aching member and causing it to bob with need.

“Don’t stop! Please don’t stop!” he begs, not above doing anything he has to feel that glorious sensation that had flooded his body with John’s lips against him.

Smiling against him, the blonde man settles himself between his thighs, resting his bodyweight on his elbows as one hand slowly strokes from the top of his cock down to the root and the other slowly massages his balls. Then just when he starts to adjust to that, he takes his entire length in his mouth, hollowing his cheeks and allowing it against the back of his throat.

The feeling is incredible. Unable to help himself he bucks his hips, only to find that they will not move as John shifts his elbows to rest against his legs, holding him in place as he continues to uses his hands and mouth to work him over. After what seems like an eternity but he is sure is only a few
minutes a coiling feeling builds up low in his stomach much like the feeling he gets on the rare occasions he touches himself.

“John,” he whimpers, trying again to arch, it is a warning and a plea, though why he is not sure. John merely smiles at him around his cock, the flat of his tongue running up the vein on the bottom of it to collect the precum gathering at the tip. Before he knows it, he is almost screaming in pleasure as the shorter man milks him dry, swallowing all of the cum that he has to give.

Bonelessly, he lays there, gasping for breath. It was amazing. Wonderful. Perfect. Wait. What about John’s needs?

He is just about to ask, when the shorter man changes positioning so he is kneeling with his legs on either side of his hips. “Are you sure?” the blond inquires as a low whine of need escapes his lips. Leaning forward, he kisses him slowly before kissing his way across his jaw to nibble on his ear. Huskily, voice full of need, he repeats himself, “Are you sure? You have to be sure Sherlock.”

“John!” he gasps, his erection already coming back despite the fact his body feels like an over cooked noodle. “Please, please, please, please, John,” his voice has whine to it, but has went lower than he has ever heard it pitched. Later he would be embarrassed by the fact he is begging, but not right now.

After one more nip to his ear, the shorter man sits back up, as he snags the bottle of lub and care warms some on his palm before rubbing it along his length. He can do nothing but stare at the sight, finding it to be more erotic than he ever would have guessed watching another man prepare himself to be. His eyes widen as he feels one shorter finger tracing the rim of his hole before carefully working its way in. Gasping, his hips lift though he cannot tell if he wants more or for it to stop.

The feeling of having someone touching him like that is overwhelming and for a while nothing more happens then John slowly fists himself while he moves a single finger in and out of him. At first he wonders why, then he realizes that he is making sure he is adjusted. When the sensation begins to not be enough, he pushes down on that digit seeking more and a cocky grin curls John’s lips as a second finger slips in and he starts scissoring them, widening his entrance a bit more. Sooner than he had inserted the second he inserts a third finger and that has him gasping. It’s such a different feeling, not unpleasant but not familiar.

All thoughts about it vanish as one finger starts to brush against his prostate. Again he is startled by the frankly needy sounds escaping him as the shorter man prepares him. He is just shy of coming again when the fingers suddenly withdraw, leaving him feeling empty.

“John,” he groans, voice almost unrecognizable as his own.

“It’s alright Sherlock, shhh, I’ll take care of you,” he murmurs as he stops fisting himself and lifts his hips just a bit, pulling him closer. One moment he feels empty and the next the tip of John’s cock is pushing against his entrance seeking entrance. Slowly, oh so slow that he feels every inch the shorter man slides in until he is embedded to the hilt inside him. For a moment he does not move, instead gives him a moment to adjust before slowly beginning to move in smooth slides that pull him almost completely out before thrusting back in, brushing against his prostate on each one.

He thought that the feelings had been overwhelming with just the shorter man’s fingers in him it was nothing compared to the feel of him actually inside him. The sensation was amazing in ways he could barely comprehend and he finally understood why people risked so much for this.

As his body adjusted he realized that so was John, his pace picking up ever so slightly with every thrust until he was arching and begging, pleading with him for more and more he gave. He could tell
when John started getting close because the easy rhythm he had been doing slowly gave way to something more primal and wild, one of his smaller hands slipped from where it was holding his hip to start stroking his cock in time with John’s thrusts and moments later both men were coming with blinding force and groaning the others name.

Slowly, John pulled himself out of his body, reaching for the bowl he had seen sitting under the table with a cloth beside it. Carefully the smaller man cleans both of them, before lying down beside him, resting on one arms as he brushes the curls out of his face with a smile.
Hi all, sorry this took longer than planned, Formation (the story on how the military pack formed) has been babbling at me and making it hard to focus, I hope everyone enjoys!

As always, thank you to all the lovely people who have reviewed, bookmarked, subscribed, kudos or some other way of letting me know you enjoyed it.

John’s POV
For a long while after the two of them make love on the living room floor, they lay on the comfortable rug enjoying the fire. His bondmate drifts in and out of sleep, resting with his dark-haired head on his arm. Eventually he joins him in drifting in and out of sleep. He is awoken to Sherlock jerking upright, breathing heavy, and he is awake and alert in an instance looking for the threat, when he realizes that there is nothing, he lays back and smiling.

Lifting his left wrist he studies the small circle, watching as it changes. It will be forty-eight hours before the final pattern is done. It appears as if it is going to be a spiral design. Smiling, he looks over at his lover and bondmate, studying the sharp edged man as he sits back and looks around.

“Hey, love, how are you feeling?” he inquires, sitting up and stretching.

His dark head tilts a little as he glances over at him. lifting his right arm he looks at his wrist frowning, before he reaches over to grab his, staring at the mark that is morphing on his arm. “I don’t have a mark. Why don’t I have a mark?” he mutters as he compares our wrists.

Rotating his arm around, he slips his fingers against the taller mans arm and tugs him into his embrace, “Hey, calm down, don’t worry, it will appear. If I am not mistaken it can take a little while for humans to form the mark once they accept the bond because their bodies actually have to produce the pigments. Your pack marks are made of psionic energy, the bondmark however is a permanent mark that only goes away upon the death of one of the partners.”

“Oh,” his tall bondmate murmurs in response. He looks like he is about to say something else but he ducks his head and starts blushing when his stomach starts to growl.

Smiling, he scoots closer to the table and opens one of the see-through bowels, grabbing a piece of cantaloupe and offering it to the picky man. Eyes narrow, the dark-haired human considers it for a moment before accepting it. He watches him as he chews it to see what his reaction is. When he seems to enjoy it, he picks a piece of honey-melon out and offers it to him, waiting until he has taken it before grabbing a piece for himself. Several peaceful moments pass with him alternating between eating fruit and feeding fruit to his mate.

Eventually he gets thirsty, and not wanting the water that the girls had so nicely left for them in an ice bucket on the snack table he inquires, “Would you like some tea?”

His dark-haired bondmate nods, looking around the room at the candles that do not appear to have gone down much. He can just about hear the experiment forming in the taller man’s mind. Smiling,
he kisses him slowly, until both of them are breathing heavy before he goes to make them a cup of tea each. A few minutes later, he is back in the living room, Sherlock does not appear to have moved.

Sniffing the air, he finds that his bondmate is mostly content, however he is also slightly worried and aroused as well. Well lets deal with the worry first, he thinks, then we can get to the aroused part. Handing the tall human his cup, he settles onto the comfy rug beside him and sips at his. The silence is companionable, not uncomfortable as they drink.

“So we need to have little bit better of a talk than the one we had in the kitchen, Sherlock.” He eventually states, turning to face his handsome bondmate, appreciating the fact that he has not redressed.

“Why? Hasn’t it all been covered?” the tall human inquires pouty, the worry in his scent increasing slightly.

Setting his now empty mug down he replies, “That was not really a conversation, we should have a proper conversation. First do you have any questions about the bond?”

He shakes his dark-haired head, answering, “No, both Cyanne and Daria were careful to explain the role of a bondmate, how the bond is formed, and anything else they thought might be useful for me to know. You said it could take some time for the mark to appear.”

He smiles, “Alright, now you realize it is a life-long thing, there is no breaking it except through death?”

The taller man nods, giving a small shrug. “I wasn’t attracted to other people anyways, so that is no big loss.” He pauses, a slight blush staining his skin as he looks down for a moment before looking up to comment, “I’m happy its life long, you won’t leave me for someone better, someone easier to deal with. Everyone leaves me and it ties you to me so you won’t.”

He chuckles at that, leaning forward to capture the taller mans lips in a gentle kiss, before pulling back to murmur, “Even if we were not bondmates, your pack, and pack is never left behind by choice.”

The taller man smiles, leaning forward to kiss him, one long fingered hand coming to rest against the back of his jaw below his ear, finger tips sunk into his dirty blonde hair.

When they are both breathing heavy he breaks the kiss to chuckle, querying, “Do we wish to make this public, or continue on as we have in public as if we are just flatmates?” Concern and confusion mars the taller mans scent as he considers it. Before he can get the wrong idea, he states, “I will be happy either way, I want you to be comfortable with the choice however.”

“For now let’s continue as we have been,” he answers slowly.

He nods, “Now about that little episode in the kitchen, never surprise me like that when we were just in a life or death situation, I am soldier first and foremost, if it was not for the wolf in me you would be dead.”

“But I knew you’d never hurt me,” his tall bondmate protests.

He gives the taller man a look, not saying a word aloud. Apparently he got the point because he eventually nods once, his scent accepting the truth of his statement.

“One last thing we have to cover from my end, if there is ever something, anything you are
uncomfortable with between us, I want you to tell me immediately. I don’t care how minor you think it is, tell me.” he informs the tall human.

His dark-haired human nods once, looking at him closely, before asking, “Can I touch you like you did me?”

He nods once solemnly, smiling, “Of course, explore to your heart’s content, we’ve got two days before anyone is going to bother us, Jacob, Eric, and Daria will see to that.” Stretching, he sprawls on the rug, snagging a pillow from the chair closest to him to rest his head on as he invites his tall bondmate to explore to his heart’s content.

Without hesitation, his tall bondmate leans forward to kiss him, moist of his body brushing against his as he does so, eliciting a moan out of him. Slowly the taller man kisses him with curiosity, his tongue brushing against his lips before taking the time to explore every inch of his mouth. When both of them are breathing heavily, the taller man pulls back just the slightest, worrying at his lower lip with his teeth, making him moan low in his throat. With infinite patience as if this is the most important experiment he could ever do, Sherlock moves from kissing his lips to brushing his lips over every part of his face. His tongue tracing the outline of his features even as his lips brush against them slowly.

It was pure pleasure and ever so hard not to move around because he wanted to flip his mate and take control, but one of the things he had always excelled at understanding what his partner needed. Currently his partner needed free-reign to get used to his body.

Thought however were wiped clear from his mind as Sherlock stared using his long fingers to slowly trace over every inch of his body, followed closely by his mouth, tongue, and nose. He doesn’t bother trying to control his reactions, preferring instead to show them instead. How was his bondmate ever going to learn anything without having the actual data to work with?

When Sherlock’s lips brush against the star-burst scar, he tenses up a little bit before forcing his body to relax.

“Does it hurt?” the tall man inquires as he sits up a little to look down at him in concern.

He gives a shake of his head, replying, “Not really, part of it has no feeling in it, other parts are super sensitive.” Giving a small shrug, he states, “Only Daria and I have touched it since she got me away from the human surgeons.”

“Oh,” his partner murmurs before returning to exploring his chest, the flat of his tongue running the length of every scar in sight.

Soon he is lost to the sensations of being the one whose body is being worshiped. It is such a different feeling from when he is the one doing the worshipping. While he had had lovers in the past who had explored him, they had not pay nearly as close attention to his reactions. By the time his dark-haired bondmate gets to his cock, he is breathless from moaning and groaning, enjoying every touch.

“Can I?” the tall man inquires, motioning towards his member.

He nods once, “Whatever you would like, love.”

A slow smile pulls at his human’s lips as he shifts his positioning to mimic his of earlier in the morning with his body stretched out between his legs, arms pressing carefully against his legs to hold them in place as his hands take to exploring him.
Oh, it’s going to be a long day, he thinks as Sherlock first uses his dexterous fingers on him before adding his mouth and nose to the mix to make him a mindless, whimpering hunk of flesh. Every time he thinks that he is going to get close, the taller man backs off for a bit, allowing his blood to cool before starting over.

Eventually it becomes too much and as his bondmate’s tongue takes a swipe up his length, he moans, “Sher-lock,” just before his hips arch and he comes all over his stomach as the tall human pulls back. Panting, he lays there, watching the tall man with hooded eyes.

With a curious look of focus, his bondmate slowly runs his tongue across the mess on his stomach before sitting back and losing himself in his mind. Lazily, he reaches over to the bowl of water and rag, grabbing one to carefully wipe his stomach clean before throwing the rag back in the now cool water. While his partner processes, he relaxes, drowsing because he knows that there is still more to come. Sure enough, just a little bit later, his bondmate goes back to exploring his body.

“Roll over,” he requests.

Nodding, he does so, stretching as he does so, arching his spine to show off his back muscles and ass.

Where he had included the legs and lower in his explorations, at this point, his mate is sticking only to his top half but he is being so thorough that is more than enough.

“You’re aesthetically pleasing. Gorgeous really,” his human murmurs softly against his spine as his lips ghost over him.

He smiles even as he moans at the feeling.

When one long, slender finger brushes his hole he is not surprised at it. Nor is he surprised as those same long fingers take to exploring with a keen interest until he is arcing off of the rug towards that hand.

“What? I realize I am technically the female in the bond but…” his tall human does not get a chance to finish that statement as he twists around and sinks his fingers into his dark curls kissing him silent.

“We’re equals. We are both males. If you wish to take turns with topping, that’s not a problem.” He growls huskily to his human, tongue flicking out to trace his lips for a moment before he goes back sprawling on the rug.

Again his human returns to tracing his entrance before his sense of smell tells him he has grabbed the lube and is warming it in his hands before slicking himself and fingering his hole again. Sighing, he arches into the touch, enjoying the way his partner is careful with him. Finally, when he seems as if he can get no closer, those long fingers withdraw leaving him feel rather empty. That feeling does not last long as a moment later he is there, his heaviness pressing against him before slowly sliding in, well greased by the lube.

The feeling is different than when he is inside a female, and for a moment he concentrates on it, getting used to it. Apparently so is his bondmate who has not moved yet as he holds himself above him with his long arms. Slowly though, the dark-haired human begins to slide and he finds that all forms of thought flee as he enjoys the sensations. He is actually considering touching himself when one of those long arms wraps around his waist and comes to rest so his slender fingers can touch him as he moves. It’s simply splendid and he is embarrassed by how quickly he finds himself cumming on the rug. Though he focuses on tightening his muscles and moments later, Sherlock is shouting as he comes too.
Falling to their sides, they just lay there connected for a few minutes catching their breath before his tall human pulls back and reaching for the bathing rag. With infinite care the taller man cleans both of them before tossing the rag aside and laying back on the floor tiredly.

He spins around so he is facing him and smiles at him softly. “Thank you,” he murmurs, brushing the dark curls away from his face where they have started to stick to his sweat covered body.

“Thank you?” he repeats, his tone curious.

Nodding, he uses one hand to trace patterns on his bondmates chest, not really paying attention to the fact that they are the runes for protection, good health, and love. “Yes, thank you. You didn’t have to choose this, we could have kept up with what we were doing. After all, you’re the one who told me you were married to your work,” he answers the tall human, his voice low and husky.

With his eyes partly closed, his dark-haired bondmate nods a little, “Thank you for deciding I was your match, according to Mouse you had two choices and you picked me,” there is wonder in his voice as if it is the first time has picked him.

Kissing his shoulder he lays down and pulls his tall human close, allowing for his head to lay against his shoulder as the two of them drift off to sleep again.
Together: Round 3

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John's POV

It is several hours before the two of them awaken. This time and when he does awake it is to sharp pains as the muscles in his shoulder protest his rough treatment of it. Shifting on instincts, he forgets for a moment that his lover is not used to him changing so quickly, and startles the tall human who had just been waking up. One moment his mate is beside him, the next moment, he is jumping backwards, smacking his head into the fireplace. Almost instantly he has returned to his human form, shuffling forward to check on him.

"Are you alright? I'm sorry, so sorry." His voice is worried as he carefully checks his bondmate's skull, relieved when he does not find anything wrong with him with either check. "I don't normally sleep in a room with someone who is not used to my shifting. So I forgot for a moment that you're not accustomed to me shifting between forms."

Worriedly, he uses just a touch of iota power to relieve any bruising before it has a chance to form.

"What was that?" his dark-haired bondmate demands, eyes wide as he stares at the fingers that had just left his scalp.

"Iota gift, I made sure there was not going to be a bruise since it was my fault." He replies with a small shrug.

"Oh." for a minute his human stares at him before stating, "I would like to touch your fur."

Smiling slightly, he nods before he shifts back to his wolf form. Sitting there calmly while his mate starts petting him, running his long fingers through the fur and feeling the different textures based on where the fur is at. Relaxing, he enjoys the feeling, and it takes him a minute to realize that Sherlock has figured out ever discoloration matches up with one of his human scars. He was also murmuring what he thought had made the scar, as if doing so would make them better. It was a completely adorable thing to do.

When he hears his bondmate's stomach start to growl, he chuckles even as he shifts forms, resulting in him having an arm-full of indignant human who had been shocked by the shift.

"Why'd you do that?" his dark-haired human inquires as he absently traces a scar on his stomach.

Kissing the humans shoulder he replies, "Because we're both getting hungry, and don't try telling me your not, your stomach gave it away."

The look of betrayal the tall man gives his stomach is ever so hilarious, as he lets go so he can go make some food. Checking the fridge he is surprised to find there is actually food in it and not just body parts. Got to love Daria, he thinks as he grabs some stuff out and heads to the stove. She
probably had Eric check in the back of my head while I was getting cleaned up the other night and bought food accordingly since it is all stuff that Sherlock will eat.

While he cooks, he hums, not realizing that it is one of the songs that his bondmate often plays on his violin. Apparently his mate had realized because a moment later he is playing the song that he was just humming on his violin. When the food is done, he carefully makes up a tray and carries it out into the living room to place on the table. By the time he has it all arranged, his bondmate has finished the song and carefully puts his violin up before joining him at the small table, sitting down on the rug beside him to take his small plate of food and tea.

The two eat in silence, his tall human picking carefully at the food. "John."

"Yeah Sherlock?" he replies, waiting to see what else he has to say.

"How long were you in the army? You're a captain. Which says not long, but you said you knew Eric for ten years, the math does not match." He inquires after finishing his next bite.

A wistful smile curves his lips, "I went into the army at twenty, the condition of me doing so by the pack alpha was that I had to go to officer school in order to enlist as an officer instead of a regular soldier. My first week there I was paired off with a falcon and a black cobra who had decided to team up as the only shifters in our training group. The three of us together to pull of stunts entire teams could not do and while we were in class we got along fine with each other. Outside of training and class however, Eric was a complete and utter ass. Jacob and I became fast friends, we were both elites of our varieties training with a bunch of humans with either little natural talent whose families had paid for them to go to officers training or humans who were older than us and had earned their way into the program." He pauses looking back, "Eric joined our friendship when the two of us came across him fighting with some of the regular enlisted shifters who thought it was a good idea to bait the person who could easily kill them because he was on his own. It was the first time I used the alpha gift on someone other than a fellow wolf during my training. After that, the three of us worked together in nearly everything, but we had not created the pack link at that point. That wouldn't come for another three years."

He watches his bondmate narrow his eyes, the wheels just about spinning in his head. "Captain is only two ranks higher than that, why didn't you go up in ranks?"

He chuckles, "Well technically its classified, I mean, even your brother couldn't get the files and I am sure he has already tried. I was a regular army doctor for three years, which is how I got to the rank I am at. Then there was a situation that the higher ups thought was unsalvageable, at that time the military pack had four members in it, Jacob, Eric, Cyanne, and me. We had actually only recently formed the pack bond and were still feeling it out but we decided to see if we could do what all the 'specialized' humans could not. We succeeded. When we were done, one of the commanders for the shadow units approached me about our team joining the shadow units, it meant that our ranks would not change much but we would no longer be within the normal chains of command. After a quick conference in our heads we agreed. We had actually been on a mission when I was shot."

His bondmate nods slowly as he considers it, then looking over at him smiles, "Well that explains why you seem so used to being in command and fading into the shadows." Narrowing his eyes he asks, "Can you do a mixed form the way Eric does?"

Chuckling, he shifts to the hybrid form rather than saying anything. Short, golden fur covers his entire body. His face elongates slightly as his mouth and nose become a short version of his wolf's muzzle. Pads appear on the underside of his feet and all of his nails are replaced with claws. His ears go from being regular human ears to the large wolf ears that are erect. He also grows in height by several inches and is very happy that he is not dressed at the moment since it is hell on clothing.
Well here you go, me as a hybrid. I cannot control it nearly as well as Eric, but then he is always in hybrid form, changing how much of so based on his needs, I rarely use this form. He tells him as his bondmate starts to explore his body.

Like with his wolf form, his bondmate carefully takes the time to identify every single mark on him. Long, slender fingers touch, brush, and sink into his fur as he explores his body. Only it has a noticeable effect on him, and after a while he shifts back to being fully human in order to catch his bondmate around the waist and kiss him silly.

Sherlock's long fingers came up to hold him in place as he kissed him back, both men taking the time explore each other's mouths in turn. Neither the dominate one in the exchange, instead giving and taking equally.

By the time the two of them are equally aroused, he suggests, "Shall we actually take it to the bedroom this time?" against his lover's lips. He can feel the smile in response and the two of them make it to his bondmate room in that it is the closer room.

The next several hours pass in a blur for the couple as they take turns exploring and pleasing, teasing and enjoying. They stop twice to sleep for a bit before picking up where they had left off, and once to more to eat. However by the time the forty-eight hours is up, the two of them had christened every room in the flat at least once. He was highly pleased by the fact that Mrs. Hudson wasn't home, because this was a lot like one of his weekends when he was in uni with a female wolf shifter.

Just a little bit after six p.m. there was a soft knock at the door stairs door before he heard the lock click and it slowly swing open, it was their warning to get dressed. Reaching over, he grabs a throw blanket off the back of the sofa and tosses it to his bondmate who is stretched out on the rug before shifting into his wolf form and waiting for the viper he can smell coming up the steps to get there sooner than later.

Evening Elder, Elder-second, I will trust by the overwhelming scent of you two that it has been a pleasant forty-eight hours. I am here to make sure that there was no lingering harm from the pool incident. She tells them, keeping her mouth firmly shut and using the pack link.

Check him if you'd like, but I am sure we are both fine. He replies, waving one large paw towards his bondmate.

She nods, stepping over to where the tall human is sprawled on the rug just relaxing. The scent of their last coupling is still strong in the air.

 Barely hovering her hand over top of his head her eyes glaze over and he can feel as she sends her power seeking. While he is an iota, he does not use his gifts as often, so she is insuring that he had missed nothing in his check of his bondmate. It is perfectly acceptable. Once she has done that she turns her attention to him, stepping over and placing her slender fingers against the side of his skull below his ear. After repeating the process she nods.

You're both surprisingly healthy, I would say that is your gift insuring the link. She tells them, then the link changes and he knows she is speaking only to him, his mind is fighting the bonding, the mark will not appear until he has fully accepted that you are a permanent part of his life. However the bond is still strong. Both of you should develop the bond gifts despite that. I believe his gift is going to be a minor gift of rememberancy. I cannot tell what yours is, your nature is blocking me.

Thank you Daria, now go away, we need to get cleaned up before Mrs. Hudson gets here. He replies to the viper, inclining his large golden head respectfully.
She nods, bidding both of them farewell before she leave, locking the door behind her.

"So why was she using telepathy to speak instead of talking aloud?" his tall bondmate inquires after she is gone.

Shifting, he chuckles and replies, "Snakes can smell with their tongues, even in their human forms Daria, Nathan, and Eric tend to keep their mouth shut when there are strong smells around because they notice them better than anyone else." He shrugs, "their sense of smell even out does the wolf's sense of smell. Since right now our flat smells strongly of us, she did not want to have that good a whiff."

Upon realizing what he means the tall human's light skin turns a lovely shade of pink, nearly his entire body is part of the blush which just makes him smile even more.

"Come on, we should probably get cleaned up and get back to the real world at some point in the near future. Possibly air this flat out before our landlady gets home because even with her human nose I am sure she would be able to heavily smell the sex in the air." He suggests to his lover, watching as he stands and the small blanket falls to the floor.

His dark-haired human nods once distractedly, asking, "Shower together perhaps?" with a small smirk.

He nods, grinning mischievously and accompanies him to the shower, well Mrs. Hudson isn't due back for a few more hours…

Chapter End Notes

So that's the end of the smut marathon those two were having, now back to the regularly scheduled plotline.
The following weeks after his discovery and realization about his relationship with John seem to go by in a flash for the tall man. He discovered that any time he was bored all he had to do was tell his wolf that and something was found to cure his boredom. Sometimes it was John, pushing him against the wall and kissing him until he could barely breath and was begging the shorter man to take him. Other times John would shoo him out of the flat and tell him to go play with Eric, then the two of them would take turns hunting for the other one all across London. At other times Jace or one of the other pups from the pack would show up with a violin or one of the other instruments he plays, politely asking for lessons and actually listening as he taught them. Then there were the rare occasions he was invited to Eric's home, where he had a full science lab set up, one that put the lab at Bart's to shame.

There had been four very interesting cases in the last few weeks, along with several rather bland ones. With every case, his blogger had recorded the findings on a blog. He would have thought that people would be bored by it, yet it seemed to get all sorts of hits. They had just finished solving what John had suggested calling the 'Navel Treatment' and were getting ready to leave when Lestrade makes a comment about the press.

"There's a lot of press outside, guys."

He dismisses the press as meaningless, waving it off. "Well, they won't be interested in us," he murmurs distractedly.

Rather blandly, the fellow pack member continues talking, "Yeah, that was before you were an internet phenomenon. A couple of them specifically wanted photographs of you two."

Exasperated, he glances behind him to glare at his flatmate and lover, muttering, "For God's sake!"

John's lips just curl with a quirky smile.

They are just passing a room full of dressing supplies when he spots a pair of hats, grabbing one he tosses one at him, commanding, "Cover your face and walk fast."

Tossing the hat back at him, he replies, "No, just take my wrist," and offers his left arm.

For a moment he is confused before he recalls that his flatmate is able to go effective invisible when he needs to. Smiling, he drops the ugly hats back on the wrack before taking the offered arm. A jolt goes through him at the contact, remind him it had nearly three days since the last time the two of them had spent any time alone together that was not revolving around the Work. That would have to be fixed as soon as possible.

"Still, it's good for the public image, a big case like this." The silver haired man continues on, as if he had not noticed the two of them pausing.

Grumbling, he mutters, "I'm a private detective. The last thing I need is a public image."

Pushing the door open, the detective inspector goes out first, triggering a circus of cameras as the two of them walk out. He is highly nervous about it, but still continues to hold on to John's wrist for all he is worth.

Almost all the camera users are shouting because they cannot see the detective that they are to see,
where is he at?

It's almost amusing, if not for the fact that it's really not. Sighing, he keeps hold of his flatmate's wrist until they are well away from the scene and then continues to hold on because he wants the contact though he would never admit that aloud.

The two of them make their way to Angelo's though he is not sure why, until John is pushing him into a seat, and ordering for both of them. Somewhere along the way, his mind had phased out whatever it was that his partner was saying.

"John?" he quires, as he looks over at the shorter man from his spot at the table.

"Yes, Sherlock?" he replies, eyes skimming the menu as if he is trying to decide what to get when he always leaves it up to Angelo to surprise him.

Glancing around he asks, "Why are we here?"

His partner shrugs, answering, "I haven't been to the store in two weeks, and you have not eaten in three days. Since I know you will eat the food that they sell here, and you need to eat, here we are."

He frowns, glancing down, but nods once. Normally he would try and argue the point, but he knows on this one that John is probably right. Besides, for the most part, as long as he drinks the tea that John puts in front of him, the wolf tends not to hassle him too much about eating. He is pretty certain that his doctor flatmate is making the teas with extra vitamins in them because he has been feeling a lot healthier lately, and his body, while not fat, has gained some good muscle tone.

A few minutes later their orders are taken and the two of them are sitting in relative silence, just comfortable in each other's presence. He knows that when they get home, his blogger will probably post a blog about the case, though he will not mention how they slipped past the press without getting their pictures taken, instead, he will leave it to them to try and figure out. Part of him is curious what the pictures will show since they were effectively invisible, but he does not feel like trying to break in and find out.

Apparently, he does not need to as he spots his annoying brother coming into Angelo's, umbrella firmly in hand.

"Sherlock, Dr. Watson," his brother drawls, his posh voice grating on his nerves. All he wants is some time with his lover to enjoy his meal in peace.

"Mycroft," his bondmate replies intentionally annoying the taller man by calling him by his first name.

Frowning, the ginger haired man gives his flatmate an icy look which he smiles and ignores as he sips at his tea. Upon deciding that it is not working, he turns his attention to him instead, "How did you get out of that building today without a single picture of you being taken?" he inquires, his eyes narrow as he studies him.

Shrugging, he doesn't greet his brother or ask him to sit, he is hoping he will go away quickly because he really does not feel like dealing with him right now.

"It would be in your best interest to tell me Sherlock," his brother tries to intimidate him, but it fails miserably.

Still ignoring him, he looks over at John, inquiring, "Did Eric say when he was going to be over again next?"
His flatmate smirks at him shrugging, "With him, whoever knows," he states in response.

Just about growling, his brother turns and walks away but not without giving John one last scathing look.

After he is gone, his short friend rolls his eyes, "Eric is scarier. I think your brother needs lessons."

A chuckle escapes him at the idea of his uptight brother in the same room with the sharp tempered black cobra.

The rest of their lunch goes smoothly, the two of them chatting easily about the case that they just completed and some of the cold files that they have waiting for them back home. One thing he always appreciates about his flatmate is his willingness and pleasure in discussing the Work with him. While they do talk of other matter as well, mostly pack related, the vast majority of their conversations are about cases he wishes to look into or things he desires to learn about. Another thing he appreciates is the fact that he is not forced to speak of his emotions. John allows them to just work things through, without having to talk about every little detail, though there are times when he does sit him down and force him to discuss things when they are bothering him too much.

Once they are done eating, the two of them grab their coats and bid Angelo farewell before heading out the door and down the road towards Baker Street. They are just about home when a high pitch shriek almost makes him jump.

"John!" a slender woman with very long black hair comes rushing up to them, her eyes excited as she throws her arms around his lover. "How wonderful to just see you here like this! I was going to track down Harry and see when the next pack meeting was but this is just perfect! You look great for someone who tried to die twice, let me get a good look at you!"

He growls low in his throat, not even realizing it until his lover turns to look at him from within the stranger's grasp.

"Melisa, let go," his blonde haired lover commands, voice low.

She does so, mildly shocked according to the look on her face but he can barely see it. In his mind he can see the two of them, younger than they are now, embracing, his arms wrapped possessively around her as he takes her from behind. Shaking his head to break the image, it doesn't go away, instead changing to a different time, this time they are out to eat and she is flirting with him shamelessly.

Frowning, he is startled when he realizes that his lover has taken hold of his right arm and pressed their dominate wrists together, as he murmurs, "Relax Sherlock, it will pass in a moment, whatever you see is deep in the past, nothing new."

How, he wonders for a moment before recalling the link between them. There had been several times when John had pulled him out of one of those visions by doing what he was doing right now.

The strange female is watching us, and he just wants to make her leave. To be far away from this threat to the bond he is trying to form with his bondmate. He's his. He does not intend to share him so she can just go if that's what she is thinking.

"Melisa," his lover murmurs, as he half turns, hand still grasping his, "this is my bondmate and alpha-second Sherlock Holmes, Sherlock, this is Melisa Hill, a member of the pack who has been in France for the last few years."

He looks at her, studying her for a moment and reading her entire life story as he does so. Since
being around shifter for the last several month he is finally getting a feel for reading them the same way he reads everyone else, though there are still some things that he cannot seem to grasp. She is just a little younger than John, takes care of herself, has a bondmate, at least two children, and a pet dog of a fairly large breed. According to her clothing style she is a primary school teacher working with small children.

Slowly, he shakes john's hand off in order to offer his wrist to her in the proper greeting of alpha-second to low-level pack member. Inclining her head, she politely accepts the wrist, bowing her head so he could see the pack markings on her suddenly exposed neck. He frowns when he realizes that they are not his pack markings.

"John?" he questions.

His bondmate studies her for a moment, before looking past her to where a tall man with dark brown hair and rather plain features is standing with one child beside him and another in his arms. There is worry on the strangers faces, and both children seem to be fretful as well.

"Straighten up Melisa, and explain why that child is so ill. Now." John's voice is soft but full of command.

"Elite Alpha Watson, Alpha-second Holmes, this is my bondmate Philip Hill, our daughter Mara, and her brother Paul." She introduces formally, "I have come to request on behalf of our family the re-admittance into the Watson Pack."

"Accepted, now tell me about how a pack child can be so sick, and hand him here." John tells the woman, not even waiting for a response out of her bondmate before he takes the child and heads towards their flat.

He tilts his head sideways, feeling the pull of energy that surrounds his lover every time he accesses his healing gifts.

Falling in step just a little behind and to the right, she begins to speak, "After the Flowers, I went to visit some family in Paris, brushed into this handsome bloke and felt the weirdest burn in my life. Two days later I had a mark on my wrist, but no idea who it was for. My aunt presented me to each of the local packs to see if they had any that had recently developed bondmarks but no bondmate. Took three months but I found him. Actually, it was right on time for my heat." She pauses, blushing, and Sherlock realizes that the images he had seen in his head earlier were from one of those heats spent with his John. "Formal courting occurred, and the bondmarking was accepted. It was lovely, unexpected, beautiful. Only one problem, which pack to call home? Your uncle was a very generous man but he did not want a foreign wolf in his pack, so while I was allowed to keep my ties to the Watson pack, I was not to bring my foreign bondmate. So I joined his pack instead."

She stops as they get to the flat and stays at the door until his short mate waves her in but she still does not move, she is staring at him. Then he remembers what Cyanne had said about the alpha-second spot, you're the one in charge of the domestics, if you disapprove, a person can be removed from the pack, property, or both. Rolling his eyes, he waves her in as well, telling her to continue. The small family carefully find a spot to settle but do not sit since they were not offered seats. Eventually, he gets frustrated by their standing and snaps at them to park it, and all three do, right where they are sitting.

"His pack accepted me, but only on his behalf. After all, we bonded, thus we could produce wolf children, who would want to lose them to another pack? First few years went quickly, then Mara was born, she was sickly, but the iota was able to help her. Then two years ago I got pregnant again, only it wasn't an easy pregnancy. If it could go wrong it did at least once, I had all three iota's in the
pack at their wits end. When I gave birth to Paul, we hoped that things would start looking up but he kept getting sick no matter what the iota's did. Finally one of them decided to link with him and declared he was dying, it would be better if we left him for the elements." Her eyes burn with an inner fire as she speaks.

"That night I packed all of our things while Philip was at work. When he got home I told him we were coming to my home, to my pack. I had heard that Alpha Eric had died and hoped that you would still be the same John you had been." She looks over at her bondmate for a minute with a small smile, "You always did the impossible, so I was hoping you would do so again."

As he listens, he watches the way the male hovers at her side, trying to be supportive but clearly feeling out of place. Their daughter is being much to quiet for a child, so he decides to take his time and talk to her, only a little aware of how closely her parents are watching.

"Mara," he states, holding out his right arm wrist up.

She hides behind her father's leg for a moment before sneaking a look at him. He smiles mischievously at the girl, trying for comforting. Slowly she sneaks out carefully laying her wrist against his. He feels the tingle as the pack link connects and he is almost surprised because he had never started a link before, only closed them.

He almost misses when her mother states, "When I saw you, that same easy going smile on your face, I couldn't help but be overjoyed you hadn't changed, you were still my John, and that meant my babies would be fine."

Turning, he looks over at John who is in his chair with the child laying on his knees. He watches as a soft glow comes from the hand resting on the child's forehead to envelop the entire little body. Slowly, the glow fades out and the little boy lets out a weak cry, which has both of his parents intently focused on him.

"Alpha-second," the tiny girl still holding his arm murmurs as she squeezes his arm a little.

He turns to look at her, "Call me Sherlock," he tells her.

"Sherlock," she repeats obediently before asking, "is my brother going to live?"

He smiles and nods, "Yes, John is very good at healing, he will be fine."

She smiles, letting go of his arm and retreating to her father again who merely picks her up without taking his eyes off the baby.

Silence fills the flat as his bondmate continues to work on the child, finally, he mutters, "Paul Hill has been accepted into the Watson pack. Now come get your baby and stop stinking up our flat."

Melisa moves forward quickly, gathering the little boy up and repeatedly thanking John.

John rolls his eyes, motioning for Mara to come to him with a soft smile. She does so without any hesitation, climbing up on his lap with the ease only a small child can achieve. Again a soft glow comes from John as he carefully touches the little girl, a startled gasp escapes her. A moment later she is running back over to her father.

"Mara Hill has been accepted into the Watson pack." His lover states.

The other male wolf keeps his head bowed, it is obvious that he does not expect to be accepted, so it explains the shocked look when John offers his left arm, wrist up, with a smile. Slowly, the second
wolf accepts, keeping his head bowed as the pack markers change on his neck.

"Philip Hill, welcome to the Watson pack." John states as he still holding the man's arm. Again he glows softly, this time focusing on the man in front of him. A few minutes later a satisfied smirk curls his mates lips. "You will not be having any more children with that particular illness, I have wiped it from your code, no children they have or father will have it either. They are completely healthy now."

The female smiles at him tearly, holding the baby close, "Thank you John."

He shrugs, then states, "Now then, you're all healthy, go use the Watson pack house as somewhere to stay until you are on your feet instead of that hotel I am sure you are considering. But go away, I want time with my mate."

The two adults nods, and he watches as the wolf male takes the little girls hand and leads her with her mother and brother away.

Almost as soon as they are gone, he finds himself pinned to his spot by his short lover who is kissing him with a passion. When they break apart breathing heavily, his lover informs him, "You're all I need, never feel the need to get jealous over anyone again. Understand?"

He nods once, kissing his lover back, trying to express with his touch what he cannot bring himself to say.
I everyone, as always, thank you to all you wonderful people who leave me reviews, comments, kudos, bookmarks, subscribes, or any other form of communication. Your awesome.

Sherlock’s POV
Not even a week later was the next pack meeting out to the Watson property. He was not sure he really wanted to go, that female who had dared to call John hers would be there. Wait. That’s a perfect reason to go. In order to prove that he might be a human but he was a good and supportive mate. With that decided he makes sure to dress the part of someone in charge, one thing he has always been good at is dressing to whatever situation he was finding himself in. When he was done preparing, he carefully checks himself in the mirror, pleased to see that the dark purple silk shirt still fit perfectly and accented his coloring in a way that was sure to please John.

Just a few minutes later, he heard John come up the front stairwell, heading up into his room to change clothes and clean up.

Frowning, he tries to remember why they had separate rooms even though he slept with the wolf more often than not. That’s right, he had request it so he could have his space. Now that they had been together for a few weeks he was considering requesting the opposite, that his John move into his room so that they could always be together. Isn’t that what good mates do? Well he would have to think about it from all angles before actually making his choice, he did not want to make a rash one.

Less than ten minutes later, his wolf was standing by the door with a crooked smile on his face, “Ready?” he inquires, his light blue eyes carefully looking him over.

Nodding, he grabs his coat from its hook and swings it on, stopping next to his bondmate who reaches up to pull his face down for a long kiss before turning and heading up to the roof. Any time that his wolf decides to use his wolf form to take them anywhere he heads to the roof to shift since there is no cameras up there. Once on the roof he shifts into his beautiful golden wolf and kneels so he can easily get onto his back. He loves the feeling of being on John’s back while he is running in wolf form. It is almost as if he is flying.

Shortly before the sun sets and the moon rises, the pair finally touch finish the run to the Watson home where the pack meeting will take place. He had just shifted back to human form when a motorcycle came roaring up the driveway, its barely even parked when Eric steps off, eyes watching the sky. Not two minutes later he sees why as a large black crow comes flying in. There are no crows in our pack, so why is there a crow here?

Gracefully landing, the crow shifts to a half-human form, with the majority of her body being human except the two massive black wings on her back that are partially fan out. She bows low to John, just a little less so to him, and then a slight inclination of her head to Eric.

“Elite Alpha Watson,” she intones, her voice higher pitched, “On behalf of the Wilson Nest I request an audience.”
Nodding once, his wolf shifts positioning just the slightest so he is standing to his left. His left? Oh. Left handed, left side for importance, Eric steps up to the right, his cobra’s hood visible.

Bowing low again she continues to speak, “Elite Alpha of the Watson Pack, your permission to ask assistance of your alpha-second is requested. A situation has arisen that his unique abilities would be suited for. If it is convenient a vehicle will be sent in two days time at eleven am for your use.”

Why is she asking permission from John to ask assistance? Is this one of those pack things? Frowning, he glances over to the cobra and raises an eyebrow, knowing that the cobra will understand the unspoken question.

You are his bondmate, anything that could be potentially dangerous has to be vented through him or it could start a war. It is a sign or respect that they wish to ask you, because crows rarely look outside their own ranks for problem solving, and if they cannot figure it out, it means it could be difficult. Past that, you are human, your body does not heal like ours, if you were to be injured he could demand blood price from the entire nest and that is a terrifying option to the crows. Comes the easy reply, images along with words explaining the custom from the cobra.

This was the crows trying to be respectful. It was also them recognizing his rank within the packs. Because he was human they could have dismissed his rank as worthless or decided he would not be worth asking. After all, Eric was just as smart, perhaps smarter.

I might be smarter, but I am also far more deadly, no crow will ever willingly turn to a cobra, particularly not a black cobra who wears his scales openly. I am too much of a threat. The cobra tells him with a chuckle, not surprising him in the least that he had been listening to his thoughts.

“If the Watson pack alpha-second wish he may do so,” his John replies, his tone formal.

Smiling, he inclines his head slowly, accepting the offer. He is curious what could have them seeking out his help when shifters seems to be so self-reliant.

A massive smile curls the crows lips as she bows again, “My nests thanks Elite Alpha, alpha-second. With your permission I will relay this acceptance.”

“Wind to your wings,” his wolf tells the crow.

“Earth to your paws,” she replies before bending a little and taking to the air, shifting as she gets higher up.

“So Tech, what’s the problem?” his wolf inquires, turning to look over at the cobra once she is gone from sight.

The smile that he gives in response would be chilling to a lesser person, he merely finds it fascinating. “Would I do something like listen to her thoughts to determine that she was being honest, her den’s elder-second has been poisoned and they cannot figure out how, and their den healer is worthless?”

A low chuckle escapes from his wolf as he just shakes his head before turning towards the house to go in.

The three of us fall in step, with John still in the middle, the cobra to the right, and him still to the left. However they are all pretty much equal footing with no one being a head of the others until they get to the door where the cobra reaches out and pulls it open for us to enter. With a quick nod of thanks to the taller man, he heads inside, mildly startled when the little girl from just few days earlier comes running up to hug him.
“Sherlock!” she cries as she wraps her small arms around his legs. “You were right! Paul is fine!” her voice is excited and her child-lisp almost unnoticeable over her French accent.

He smiles at the child, letting a hand brush against her smooth dark hair before she notices the cobra to the side and tries to hide behind his legs.

“Danger,” she whispers staring at Eric with wide eyes.

Scooping her he shifts her to his side, stating, “Only if you plan to harm someone in this pack. Do you plan to do that?”

She shakes her head hard, mumbling, “No.”

“Then he is no danger to you. He would protect you instead.” He tells the small girl latching on to him for dear life as she stares hard at the cobra who is watching her with unblinking black eyes.

She nods once, laying her head against his shoulder and snuggling close to him.

The cobra merely smiles at the child, a small curve of his lips, before turning away and striding off with ease. He knows the exact instance the male wolf spots the cobra because a loud thump can be heard before a soft snarl rents the air.

“Eric, drop the newcomer, he was unaware,” he hears John command from somewhere down the hall. A moment later another thump can be heard.

Mara starts to wiggle in his arms, so he sets her down and watches as she runs towards the noise. He just shakes his head and goes looking for the library he remembers seeing the last time he was here.

Three hours pass before one of the pups who he had previously met but whose name he does not recall comes to tell him that the official part of the meeting is starting. He nods, not really answering as he stands and puts the book on linage he had been reading away. It surprises him how closely the bloodlines of some of the pack members have been recorded.

Stretching he heads towards the area outside where the pack tends to meet but before he can get too far the dark-haired woman from the week before spots him and comes rushing over, “Alpha-second Holmes?” she murmurs questioningly.

He stares at her with narrow eyes trying to determine what she wants.

“I want you to know, alpha-second, as much as I love John, it’s not the romantic kind of love, it’s more like the love of a good friend. A love of a person who has stood by you for no reason than they could. I love my mate.” She informs him with a low voice that is still respectful. “You must be a human child, or your mark would have already appeared. The longest I have ever heard of it taking after the bondmates had accepted their bond is seventeen months, others it appears hours later. “

Snarling low in his throat, he pins her with a look he had seen Eric give to some of the wolves when he wanted instance obedience and is mildly surprised when she drops her head submissively. “I understand you are mated, that John was your lover, but never touch him like that again. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, alpha-second,” she murmurs softly.

Nodding, he walks past her with a flare of his coat, knowing that she is watching him as he goes.
When he gets out to where everyone is gathering, he is not surprised to see that John is waiting for him before he calls everyone to attention. That seems to be his normal mode of operations for these types of events. For the most part it is a rather routine meeting. Nothing truly important happens besides everyone updates on how their various tasks and lives are going. John formally welcomes the Hill family into the pack. Introducing them to the top of the pack, the military pack is it is often referred to by the rest of the pack.

Afterwards, when everyone has moved on to the visiting part of the night, he is surprised when the new wolf quietly and respectfully approaches John. Waiting with his head bowed for John to be done speaking. He figures no one had warned him that his new alpha was not one to stand on ceremony.

“Yes Philip?” John inquires at a lull in the conversation.

“Elite Alpha,” the man begins but John interrupts him.

“Call me John, please.”

He slowly nods once, “John, I have a sister, Kiara, she has a daughter like Paul, I…” his voice trails off. He can tell that the man is trying to bring himself to ask for John to use his gift on this child.

His bondmate nods once, “I understand, you bring her here and I will see what I can do.”

The wolf shifts foot to foot for a moment looking nervous before mumbling, “She is waiting just outside the property with Katie.”

A look is flickered to the cobra, who nods once, and a dry chuckle escapes his lover. “Well, bring her in.”

The wolf proceeds to thank him repeatedly before bowing almost to the ground and taking off towards town on foot.

“Wolf pups,” Eric snaps, “are idiots.”

He smiles as his wolf starts chuckling deep in his throat. “They can be.”

The three of them wait there for less than ten minutes when he returns with a young appearing woman holding a small child in her arms.

She had barely presented the child to his mate when he was sinking to the ground in a cross-legged seated position, the child placed so she was cradled by his legs.

*Watch him. See him as he is. He is not just a wolf, an elder, an elite, an iota. He is a Thera. He deserves all the honor and respect that being a Thera should earn. You wonder why I answer to him when I answer to no one. This is why.* Eric’s voice whispers through his mind as he watches his mate heal the child from the inside out. *He is a child of the gods. A gift from them. Fucking wolves do not appreciate what he is. While he has the iota’s gift of healing, his goes further. He is a Thera. They are terrified by the very thing that allows them to live.*

*They think that the Thera’s are abnormal. Uncontrollable. Yet they are the most controlled of all the healers. He can speak directly to the Old Gods. Any elite can ask a favor of the Old Gods, but only a Thera can speak with them. Only a Thera can stop death when it is the only choice. Only a Thera can create or destroy a shifter. Only a Thera has the ability to remake a person at a cellular level.*

His voice continues to hiss through his mind as he watches. The glow had completely enveloped both John and the child.
I answer to him because he is John. Thera Elite Elder Wolf. I answer to him because he is a gift from the Old Gods, and I am not stupid. I will defend and protect him until the day he dies. I am a black cobra. I understand exactly what type of gift he is. Each and every one of these wolves should be groveling in thanks but they are foolish idiots. They do not. I realize though. See him as he is William Sherlock Scott Holmes, blessed human bondmate to the Thera Elite Elder Wolf John Hamish Watson.

See the gift he is and understand that he has selected you as his mate. Not someone else because I tell you this now. He could have. The gods would have let him choose his own mate had he desired to. He did not select a different mate. He selected you.

With that the contact between himself and the cobra was broken. Still he watched as John continued to work on the child. Why was it taking longer than it had the others? Turning his head the slightest, he looks past his mate to the mother as she stands there. His eyes quickly learning everything about her, including the fact that her mate had died of some illness that the iota’s and doctors had not been able to cure. Something different than what her family had. Oh. So there was more to it than just what he had originally thought.

Several more minutes passed before the light glow that he could not name a color for finally faded and the small child in his arms. Finally, the child in his arms starts to squirm, before a low wail escapes it and it falls quiet instantly, as if confused.

The look on the mothers face is priceless. It says a great deal, the child had been deaf mute on top of whatever other problems it had.

Smiling, his bondmate offers the child to its parent without standing. The child, a girl, he recalls, wiggles around for a bit in John’s grasp until he pulls her close so she can feel his heartbeat at which point she stops moving and relaxes into him.

The mother and uncle both drop to their knees, lowering themselves completely to the ground as they thank him. The mother is pledging her loyalty.

Holding his left arm out, wrist up, John waits to see if she will accept being a member of the pack. She does so almost instantly. Still thanking him profusely. Rolling his eyes, he offers his arm as well, forcing her to stand in order to accept it and completing the pack link. He feels it as the power surges between John and the child as he welcomes the little girl into the pack, nuzzling her cheek with his nose before offering her to him. Concentrating, he accepts the small girl, and welcomes her to the pack as well before passing her back to her mother.

Eric steps up at that point, offering his arm to John with his scales withdrawn. His mate accepts and he watches the power that flows between them before his mate gets to his feet with an easy smile on his face.

“Take care of things?” he murmurs to the other shifters.

“Always elder,” the cobra replies.

Nodding, he looks over at him asking, “Ready to go home?”

He smiles at his mate, nodding and the two of them leave. Him once more riding on the back of his beautiful wolf.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

Sorry it took so long to get this updated, real life and my computer conspired against me, Thanks goes to my new lovely beta, Vixis, for making sure I didn't do too many silly things, any mistakes still seen are mine.

John’s POV
Upon getting back to their flat, he is mildly amused at the fact Sherlock seems to be in caring mode. Once they are inside, he carefully removes his jacket before sitting him on the sofa and going out in the kitchen to make tea. When he comes back with the tea, it tastes surprisingly alright, if a bit sweeter than he prefers his apple-cinnamon tea to be. While he is drinking the tea, his bondmate is keeping a close eye on him. After he finishes up his tea, he is surprised when his dark-haired lover leads him into the downstairs bedroom, which they had agreed was Sherlock’s, before stripping him to nothing more than his pants and shoving him gently under the blankets. Within moments he was asleep from the exhaustion that comes from the type of healing he had done.

He woke early in the morning with the long body of his bondmate pressed against his side. Soft breathes escaping him in his sleep as he rests his head on his good shoulder. It was rare for him to wake up with his mate, so he decided to enjoy the feeling, not sure when it was going to happen again.

As he laid there thinking, he considered the fact that the little girl had not been dying of a natural illness. True part of it had been the genetic problems from her mother, but a bigger part of it had not. That second part, the deadly part had been something brought on by outside sources, and not anything that could be done by a shifter or using poisons. He would have to consider it carefully, perhaps ask Eric to look into any unusual deaths, or track down the bodies of those who died in similar cases.

He is just thinking that he needs to move, when his dark-haired lover stretches out against him, bending a lot like a cat. Smiling, he tilts his head just a bit, nuzzling the curls against his shoulder as he murmurs, “Morning Sherlock.”

Kissing his shoulder his bondmate replies, “Good morning,” before burrowing close to his side. A moment later, the taller man hisses, holding up his right arm and look closely at the underside of the wrist. “John, look,” he prompts, excitement in his voice.

Where there had been empty skin before, there was now a spiraling fern design much like the one on his left arm. Lifting his arm, he places it next to his mates to compare marks, when they are done forming they are identical so he gets a good idea of what it is going to look like when done. His is more open fern with little dots surrounding it but he can feel that it still has a little bit left of changing. However, if Sherlock’s is finally appearing, that means that the marks will soon be done with their shifting.
Grinning, he presses their wrists together as he shoves his human bondmate on his back and leans over him to kiss him long and passionately. “You were worried it wasn’t going to show up,” he mumbles slightly amused against his lips before kissing him again.

Sherlock just smiles back at him, through the kissing and within moments there is more than kissing going on as long fingers run up and down his back while he proceeds to nipping and kissing his way down his mates, jaw, throat and chest.

“John,” his dark-haired lover whines in need as his tongue flickers out against his left nipple before moving on to the right one. It’s not often that he gets a chance to be in control since Sherlock tends to have an active personality, but with their arms firmly clasped together above his mates head, he only has one hand to work with and John is making sure his mate really doesn’t even use it.

Slowly, making sure to build his lovers fire, his tongue traces a path down his slender form, gently dipping into his belly-button before continuing downwards to the edge of his sleeping pants. Smirking, he uses his nose and teeth to carefully pull them down, though he does not remove them all the way, choosing instead to trap his mate’s legs in his night clothes. As his tongue flickers out to lick the tip of his mates cock, Sherlock’s his jerk upwards but he uses his free arm to hold them in place.

“John!” his human moans, his tone demanding.

“John!” he just about shouts as he comes, his seed hitting the back of his throat in a rush that he quickly swallows.

With a smile, he gives his mate one last lick before kissing his way back up his body and kissing him deeply for a few moments before releasing his arm and stretching back out beside him.

Not to be outdone, the tall human shifts to sitting up as he reaches over and strokes down his body, fingers kneading his chest and stomach muscles as he goes until he gets to the top of his pants where he hooks his long thumbs and tugs them down, only he totally pulls them off instead. Smiling mischievously, he proceeds to kiss each and every inch of him that the human can reach, everywhere except his aching member which is curling towards his chest.

A dry chuckle escapes his lips even as he proceeds to moan because of how good it feels.

He nearly expects Sherlock to give him a blow job, but is surprised when the tall human reaches across to the night stand and grabs a small jar of lube off of it. With a focused look, he carefully coats him with it before using his own fingers to prepare himself. It is the first time in the several weeks they had been doing this that his human had decided to do something quite like this. He can do nothing as stare transfixed at the sight before him.

The gasp that escapes him is low as his mate slowly sinks himself onto his cock, carefully taking all of him in until he has bottomed out. Groaning, arches his hips against the taller man, bumping against...
his prostate as he does so. His shorter fingers come up to hold his mate's hips as his mate braces himself against his upper arms as he slowly moves.

“Sher-loc,” he gasps out as he feels the pressure building.

His lover smiles at him, rolling his hips a bit as he responds, “Yes, John?” nearly hissing the ‘s’ sound.

Growling softly, he flips his mate over, somehow managing not to lose their connection before he takes to carefully snapping his hips after pulling nearly all the way out. Between their bodies he can feel his mate getting hard again, and maneuvers a hand between them to stroke him as he continues to take him. Once he can smell that his lover is just about there, he changes positioning to hit his prostate every time he thrusts and both of them end up coming within seconds of each other.

Breathing heavily, he uses his arms to support his weight so he does not collapse on top of his mate. “Shower?” he suggests, leaning down to kiss him one more time.

Eyes hooded, his mate nods, and he slowly withdraws from his body, watching with a satisfied smirk as the tall man gets to his feet with semen running down his legs.

Quickly the two of them make it into the shower, where they take turns cleaning each other up though nothing more happens between them. After the shower, Sherlock has retreated to his room to dress while he has gone to his to do the same.

He notices when Mrs. Hudson arrives, almost chuckling at her exclamation of, “Ooh dear! Thumbs!” as she looks in the fridge.

A few minutes later, he hears unfamiliar footsteps and smells a strange human within his flat. Before he is all the way down the stairs he hears the stranger murmur, “The door was,” he begins but pauses as if trying to catch his breath, “the door was,” he trails off as a loud thump is heard. Apparently the strange human had fainted.

He is just coming off of the steps when he hears Mrs. Hudson yell out, “Boys! You’ve got another one!”

Stepping off of the last step, he can see her leaning over the other human, according to the scent in the air the stranger has merely fainted from shock. Rolling his eyes a bit, he checks him over with quick, medical precision before telling her as much. He is considering moving the heavy man but decides not to because he can smell him waking up.

With a shake of his head, he makes tea for everyone while the stranger sits up on the floor, groaning softly. Moments later, his mate comes out of his room dressed in nothing but a sheet because he had been debating about what he wanted to wear when the client had arrived.

After a brief discussion about what had happened, and the man telling his entire side of the story, the tall human looks at him and smiles, saying, “Can you take the laptop to the crime scene and use the wifi? I am not sure what I want to wear yet.”

He shakes his head chuckling but does so, when he arrives at the crime scene, several hours later, he speaks with a young man where a rather bright yellow vest before an older human comes walking over to the car he is in.

As he gets out the human extends his hand inquiring, “Sherlock Holmes?”
With a small smile, he shakes the other man’s hand answering, “John Watson, are you set up for wifi?”

Over the next few minutes the two of them speak using the Skype on the laptop, though he determines he needs to have Eric get him a bug for the house so he can hear whatever it is that his dark-haired bondmate thinks that they discuss when he is not there. He is startled when the link is suddenly cut and the same young man that greeted him tells him that the helicopter that just arrived was for him. Slightly startled, he heads over to it, but makes sure that he has his laptop as he does so.

It seems to be a quick ride from the crime scene back to London. The pilot of the helicopter is a human, so he reaches with his mind out to the various members of the pack he knows are playing guard, to Trace, his guard he comments, *Do not worry about rushing back, take your time. I have a feeling where I am going you would not be the best for sneaking in.* Then to Elspeth that he knows is with his mate, *Is he at the palace?*

*He is, and without a stitch of clothing on either. It was rather amusing watching the humans that came into your flat, and they were all human, not a shifter or gifted one in the mix, collect up an outfit for him and try to convince him to get dressed. He did that thing that he does and smirked at them as if to say like you wish.* She replies, her tone full of laughter. *Now we are sitting within Buckingham Palace and I still have not seen or smelled one non-human in the mix. Perhaps they are shielding, but for some reason I highly doubt it. It's a good thing our kind stays out of human affairs normally because this place would be simple to attack.*

He gives an internal shake of his head before changing paths and reaching for Eric, *If you do not already have a microphone in the house, can you get some set up so I can hear what my bondmate is saying to me when I am not there. Because he seems to forget that I am not there at times and keeps talking.*

*Of course,* comes the soft reply, *I do not currently have anything set up, but I can before you both get home. Do you want me to hook it to the private files of your computer or your phone?* *Computer.* He answers, *he uses that less and has not yet figured out how to open it as far as I know.*

*Alright. It will be done shortly. Enjoy your trip to the palace, tell the cat that most the non-humans in the palace are immortals, they smell like humans unless you know what you are sniffing for.*

*Will do, thank you,* he tells the cobra as the pilot lands and he is shown into an enormous, overly decorative hall with a pair of sofas sitting across from each other with a small circular table between the two of them. On the table is the pile of Sherlock's clothes, while his mare is sitting wrapped in his sheet with his back to the massive white fire place that has a mirror above it.

Walking over slowly, he studies his mate for a moment before slowly sitting down beside him and questioning, “Are you wearing any pants?” even though he already knows the answer is no.

Looking around the room, he tries for serious, or even just figuring out Elspeth’s hiding place while his mate softly replies, “No,” staring straight ahead at the other wall.

Slowly, the two glance at each other and bust out chuckling at the ridiculousness of it all. Knowing that there is probably at least one or two watchers observing him he states, “Buckingham Palace,” as he looks up at the ceiling and settles his hands on his knees. Clearing his throat he remarks, “Oh, I’m seriously fighting an impulse to steal an ashtray.”

Out of the corner of his eye, he can see the grin that has dominated his mates features and considers kissing him as the tall human chuckles but decides not to because they had agreed to keep that part of
their relationship at home where no one else can observe it. Smiling, he gives a small shake of his head, clearing his throat one more time as he queries, “What are we doing here, Sherlock? Seriously, what?”

His sense of smell picks up on Mycroft even before the human comes around the corner, “I don’t know,” the human answers, still smiling.

“Here to see the Queen?” he questions, listening to the approaching footsteps.

His mate glances over as he sees his brother come through the archway and flippantly answers, “Oh, apparently yes.” He cannot help but to start chuckling again, which gets his mate going.

His mate’s serious brother smells of annoyance even as he tries to keep his features impassive. Tilting his head the slightest, the tall auburn-haired human inquires exasperatedly, “Just once, can you two behave like grown-ups?”

Looking straight ahead for a moment, he sniffs the air, there is another person approaching, still human though, “We solve crimes, I blog about it and he forgets his pants, so I wouldn’t hold out too much hope.” He turns to look up at the other human as he finishes speaking.

Becoming serious, his dark-haired human just about snaps, “I was in the middle of a case, Mycroft.”

Tucking his hands into his suit pockets, the still standing human responds, “What, the hiker and the backfire? I glanced at the police report. Bit obvious, surely?”

Sounding sure of himself, he replies, “Transparent.”

Leaning over, his bondmate’s brother, lifts up his clothing as he comments, “Time to move on, then.” Offering the dark-haired human his clothes, he sighs when he just gets stared at, stating, “We are in Buckingham Palace, the very heart of the British nation.” Pausing for a moment, his voice goes stern, “Sherlock Holmes, put your trousers on.”

“What for?” he inquires sarcastically with a small shrug of his shoulders.

“Your client.”

He watches as his bondmate stands and stares at his brother, demanding, “And my client is?”

The human he could smell approaching, remarks, “Illustrious in the extreme. And remaining – I have to inform you – entirely anonymous.”

He gets to his feet politely, because it is expected. Another discrete sniff of the air tells him that this is a full human who often works near or with Layard, who he can smell on him. That means he works with or for the Queen. Great, the human queen is their client. As the stranger is speaking, Mycroft sets his bondmates clothing down on the opposite table before turning to look at him.

“Mycroft,” the stranger comments, reaching forward to shake his hand.

“Harry,” he replies in greeting. “May I apologize for the state of my little brother?” as he finishes speaking, he turns so both government men are standing side by side.

The stranger looks at him with a condescending smile as he replies, “Full-time occupation, I imagine.” Then the stranger turns towards him, remarking, “And this must be Doctor John Watson, formerly of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.”
Shaking the stranger's hand, he greets him with, “Hello, yes.”

Standing perfectly straight, the stranger comments, “My employer is a tremendous fan of your blog.”

He schools his features into looking partially startled, he repeats, “Your employer?”

The stranger looks him straight in the face as he comments, “Particularly enjoyed the one about the aluminum crutch.”

“Thank you,” he responds before giving his bondmate an I-told-you-so look.

Stepping around the table, the stranger comments, “And Mr Holmes the younger. You look taller in your photographs.”

Sarcasm just about drips from his dark-haired human’s voice as he answers, “I take the precaution of a good coat and a short friend.” With a quick glance in his way, his human steps pasted him, and he adjusts, stepping back, as he comments, “Mycroft, I don’t do anonymous clients. I’m used to mystery at one end of my cases. Both ends is too much work.”

Glancing over to the stranger, his mate remarks, “Good morning,” before walking on past him towards the area they had come through.

He had not even gotten three steps when his brother had stepped down on the sheet wrapped around him, forcing him to grab for it quickly as it falls off, his wrist just barely showing the vibrant fern design on it that seems to have settled.

“This is a matter of national importance. Grow up.” the auburn-haired brother snaps.

Holding the sheet, his dark-haired bondmate growls through clenched teeth, “Get off my sheet.” As he holds it in place.

The scents pouring off of the three humans are amusement from the stranger, frustration from Mycroft, and anger from Sherlock. Staring straight ahead he tries not to laugh at the trio.

“Or what?” Mycroft demands he turns more towards his brother.

“I’ll just walk away;” his mate snaps, but he can smell how uncomfortable he is with that even if he does not wish to say so.

Switching to a sugary sweet tone, the older brother answers, “I’ll let you.”

Deciding that this probably should not be allowed to go any further, he steps up to Mycroft commenting, “Boys please, not here,” he tries for a calming tone, considering using the alpha’s voice but deciding against it.


The auburn-haired human locks gazes with him as he answers, “Take a look at where you’re standing and make a deduction. You are to be engaged by the highest in the land. Now for God’s sake,” pausing, he looks around before snapping quietly, “put your clothes on!”

Sitting back down, he watches as his mate turns around and comes to fetch them, dressing with indelicacy right there before taking a seat next to him. On the other sofa, the two government officials sit down and a few moments later a young woman comes in with a tea set.

Once the set tea is arranged, the young woman vanishes again, while Mycroft comments, “I’ll be
mother,” as he pours the tea.

Moodily, he bondmate comments, “And there is a whole childhood in a nutshell.”

Over the next few minutes the four of them go back and forth for a few moments about the job that is needed. Once they are pasted the small talk, they shift to speaking of the actual situation, including Irene Adler. Handing over the image of the person in question, they continue to speak for a few moments more. Until he inquires about her professional name and Mycroft answers.

“There are many names for what she does. She prefers ‘dominatrix’.”

Staring at the photo, he can just about hear his bondmates thoughts without reaching for them, “Dominatrix,” he repeats thoughtfully.

“Don’t be alarmed. It’s to do with sex.” Mycroft remarks as if speaking to a small child.

Jerking his head up his dark-haired human remarks, “Sex doesn’t alarm me.”

His auburn-haired brother smiles at him snidely, questioning, “How would you know?”

We could show him if you would like, he offers to his mate who he can feel getting annoyed.

No, it’s not his business. His human bondmate responds softly.

While they were having a quick discussion, Mycroft had continued to speak, and both of them answered at the right moments even if they were more in their heads than they probably should be. Passing several more pictures to him, Mycroft comments that the images are all from her website. Once his bondmate is done glancing through the images, the conversation resumes, though after the remark about it being a young female person, he dark-haired lover makes a comment to him alone.

Please, as if I could not figure out whom he is talking about.

His hand freezes with the tea cup in it part way between his face and saucer as the other three continue to speak. He doesn’t even pay attention to it until his bondmate comments on it. A few minutes later the two of them are leaving and riding in the cab heading home. Their driver this time is a mouse with a friendly smile.

As they drive away he asks, “Okay, the smoking, how’d you know?”

A brief smile, curls his lovers lips as he replies, “The evidence was right under your nose, John. As ever, you see but do not observe,” with a shake of his head.

Tilting his head sideways he inquires, “Observe what?”

Smiling, he reaches into his coat to pull out a crystal ashtray, “The ashtray,” he responds and the two of them start laughing again. The rest of the ride goes smoothly, neither saying a word as each are lost in their own thoughts.
Mycroft’s POV
How in the hell had his brother managed to pull off not dressing for so long? Where had the tattoo on his right wrist come from? Why was it so hard to get a person who could successful keep an eye on his brother? He knew what Anthea had mentioned about the shifters but surely that could not be it.

He had sent one of his more trusted installers to place cameras in his brothers flat, but he had come back babbling something about each of the camera’s breaking as he installed them. That his entire computer system related to observing Sherlock, John Watson, and Greg Lestrade had crashed. Everything else worked fine, just the things watching them seemed to go offline and there had been nothing anyone in the department could do about the situation. Even tracking their phones had suddenly become a problem.

Then there had been the various watchers he had assigned his brother, the security detail that had difficulties keeping up with him before he had met up with the shifter he lived with. Now they seemed to never be able to keep up with him. Men who were at the top of their abilities and yet they seemed to keep running into unusual accidents. They were not deadly accidents, most the time, they didn’t even injure his agents, instead they were embarrassing and during the time that the agents were recovering from said accidents his brother would vanish into thin air. There were other times that the different men and agents he had assigned had reported one moment he would be in plain sight and the next he would be gone, nowhere to be seen.

It was aggravating.

Perhaps he needed to call Aragorn to see if he could find him using his computer skills. His youngest brother had excelled in the computer arts the same way Sherlock and him had excelled in understanding a person’s every facet through a single look.

He is still debating that idea as he goes from his car to the Diogenes Club with Anthea almost beside him typing away at her phone. The trip through the silent building to his office does nothing to help him make up his mind. When they get into the office, his PA begins to go over the meetings that he still has left for the day when she suddenly stops speaking, her head jerking up to look around the room.

Very good, he hears a soft voice hiss, you lack true gift but you still have instincts that warn you when there is a predator in the area.

A moment later a slender, tall teenager with spiky black hair and something on his neck and jaw appears circling his PA who seems to be frozen in place. Her eyes are wide as she stares straight ahead, as if trying not to look at the person stalking slowly around her far closer than is polite.

“You realize I can taste your terror?” he queries, his voice a low hiss as he stops nearly directly
behind her, tilting his head just a bit so his mouth is near her ear. “Though I must say, daughter of the Jade line, you currently have nothing to fear from me. Scurry along. I desire a word with your human.” A cold smile curls his lips as he states, “And don’t bother with security, they won’t respond currently, anyone who comes through to that door until I am done will simply forget, just like you will until I leave.”

Her eyes flicker towards him, questioning. He knows she will stay despite her apparent fear but he inclines his head to give her permission to leave. As soon as the slender man steps back out of her personal space she calmly turns towards the door, keeping him in line of sight as she leaves.

“Smart assistant. Knows better than to attempt to toy with someone who could destroy her without ever laying a finger on her.” The teenager murmurs, his voice still hissing slightly.

He recognizes the threat that seems to pour of the younger looking man. Something however tells him he is not as young as he looks. With a practiced eye, he scans over the newcomer trying to read him. It is rather frustrating that he cannot.

“Please, keep trying, I wish to see how long it takes before your scent is completely consumed by the nervousness and fear that your instincts are screaming about.” The slender man comments as he moves closer to him.

Taking it as a challenge, he watches him closely, noticing only little things. Military, older than he appears, well versed at using his body as a weapon, wearing some sort of finger protectors.

“Actually, that’s my natural skin I will have you know, just like the scales on my neck and jaw are all natural as well.” The mocking smile makes him forget to breathe for a moment as he catches the stranger’s odd black eyes. “It’s not exactly fair of me,” he murmurs as he steps beside him, “I can taste your fear, your adrenaline, your determination. I can hear your thoughts and feelings, oh yes I am well aware of those feelings that you try so hard to suppress.”

“If you know so much, why are you here?” he inquires in his most diplomatic tone, he refuses to be cowed by this man who looks so young even if all he wants to do is curl under his desk to get away from him.

Slowly the taller man, for he is at least a head taller than him, circles him closely, the coolness of his body noticeable where most give off heat. He wants to shiver but refuses to.

Interesting. Most humans, hell most of any race, instinctively attempt to step away when I am in their comfort area. The fact that you hold still without trembling says a lot for you Mycroft. The low voice hisses in his mind, making him flinch at the intimacy of it. I am here as a polite warning. Do not continue to attempt to use devices or agents to watch Sherlock Holmes, John Watson, or Gregory Lestrade. They belong to my den. As such they are under my watch and I do not allow outsiders to interfere as that short Irish human has discovered in the most annoyed way. If you want the footage, get permission from the den elder. As he speaks, he circles even closer they are almost touching, pausing just out if his eyesight to the left of him.

He feels more than sees when the tall man leans towards him just the slightest, his equally cool breath brushing his ear as he demands, “Understand?”

Tensely he nods once, trying to determine what would happen had he not agreed and determining he really does not want to know.

Deliberately, the tall man shifts positioning so he is directly behind him. It takes ever ounce of will power to remain still rather than step forward away from the danger that he can feel with every inch
of his body. “If you had not agreed,” that soft voice hisses into his other ear, sending chills down his spine, “I would have made you forget you ever had a brother named Sherlock, then I would have proceeded to wipe him from every single moment of your life.”

A moment later that cool body vanishes from his immediate field but he does not relax, somehow knowing that they are not quite done. When the slender man suddenly reappears in front of him with narrow black eyes watching him closely, he is happy that he had chosen to agree. He would have to consider some other way to find out what was going on with his brother, because the last time he had stopped tracking him, he had turned to drugs and he did not want a repeat experience of that, but at the same time, he really liked his mind the way it was and something told him that this man’s threats were not in vain.

“I shall repeat the suggestion given to you by the jackal-child, speak with the den elder.” A cruel smile curves tall man’s lips and it takes everything in him not to step back, though he could barely contain his flinch. “Considère ce que j’ai dit. Plus tard.”

Before he has a chance to react the tall man is gone, silent as a whisper. The air itself seems to warm and without thinking about it, he finds himself leaning heavily on his desk, his mind carefully going over every single instance that the dangerous stranger had been within his office. That had been a very calm warning to him, on several different levels, the most important one being your staff cannot protect you if I decide that something needs to be done about you. The second most important of that lesson being remain calm no matter what and your chances of survival may increase.

He is still leaning against his desk, lost in thought when his PA reenters the room, her eyes troubled. “Are you alright, sir?” she inquires.

Giving a small shake of his head, he looks up at her, slightly shocked to see that she appears to be partially flustered. “Of course, that was just a friendly meeting.”

Delicately shivering, she mutters, “If that was friendly, I would really hate to see unfriendly.”

A smile curves his lips despite the tension still rolling through him. “Do you know who that was exactly?”

“The scales on his fingers, throat, and face proclaim he is the black cobra called Tech. According to the gifted community, he is a living nightmare. Most of the gifted I have spoken with suggest avoiding him and anything that draws his attention as a way to have a longer life span.” Again she shivers, “after meeting him, I have to agree.”

“Arrange for a meeting with Detective Inspector Lestrade, in a public place, somewhere that should not be taken as a threat.” He directs as he walks around to the other side of his desk to open his laptop and send an encrypted message to his youngest brother, requesting a meeting with him as soon as he had a convenient moment.

She nods and is gone, his next appointment coming in moments later. Thankfully he had already gotten himself back together because it would not do for his appointment, a minor official like himself from South Korea, to see him so shaken.

Shortly after five thirty pm Anthea steps back into the office looking the calmest she had since their visit earlier. “I have scheduled a dinner for yourself and the detective inspector at the café he seems to favor near his flat. I have also made sure that he would be available for your discussion.”
“Thank you, Anthea,” he murmurs as he shuts down his laptop after checking to see if there is a response from his youngest brother.

Silently the two of them make their way through the club to his waiting black car. Nothing is said as they ride to the NSY building. Once there she shifts to sitting in the front with his driver Anthony. After roughly ten minutes of waiting, the door slides open and the silver-haired detective inspector slips in with a sigh.

“Hello, is it Mr. Holmes or Mycroft today?” the slightly older man inquires as he glances at him curiously.

Part of him bristles at the idea that they were back to formal names, but he realizes that it is his way of asking what this was about since it was not the right week for a Sherlock discussion. “Hello Gregory,” he just about purrs in answer, he had noticed in the past the type of effect his voice had on the older man and hoped to use it to his advantage but he really does not want to overdo it.

Nodding once, the silver-haired DI smiles at him as he relaxes into the seat.

The ride to the café is quick, and within a few minutes they are seated at a comfortable booth. He is certain that Anthea had already had the place swept for any potential threats and probably had a security team nearby.

Chuckling, the detective inspector remarks, “Slightly surprising, this is a first Mycroft.”

He merely nods once, looking over the menu and trying to decide what to eat. While he does not always eat high end food, he is unfamiliar with the cook of this establishment and thus does not know what he is good at.

“Mind if I order for both of us since I am guessing you are out of your depth?” his companion inquires not even bothering to look at the menu.

Blinking once, he nods, “Of course, that is an excellent suggestion.” After the day he has had, he really does not want to have to figure out what he might like from the menu.

When the waitress comes over, she discretely flirts with both of them, smiling as she takes the order from Gregory, including two of those hot chocolates they make for the madman. She grins as she agrees and is gone faster than he would have guessed.

“So, I am guessing you want to talk about the pack some more.”

He nods slowly, waiting until she has returned with their drinks before speaking, “I had the distinct pleasure of seeing Tech today,” he comments, sipping at his hot chocolate. He is very surprised to taste it is the hot chocolate mixture that Sherlock tends to favor. “Delicious,” he murmurs.

Smiling, Gregory nods once, “They make a wide variety of flavors, that one they call the madman after your brother who first asked them to make it in that imperious tone of his.”

“Really? Perhaps they can make my blend then.” He takes another sip.

Once their food is there, his companion asks, “You said Tech paid you a visit? You are referring to Eric the tall, scary despite his youthful looking, black scaled man?”

He nods once, so the black cobra shifters name was Eric. Interesting. He is sure that he will not be able to find anything out on him, but it is still useful to know. Even a member of his den, or was it a pack, was afraid of him. “Forgive me, I am not sure if I should call the group of shifters that you are
part of pack or den, I have heard both words.”

A sardonic smile curls the older man’s lips, “Your fishing, it’s alright though, it’s a pack according to
the majority of the members. However it has several different types of shifters, so other words are
used by other breeds. Eric tends to call it a den, he is a snake after all, Mouse tends to call it a nest, I
tend to call it a pack. It all depends on the person.”

He nods, eating a few surprisingly tasty bites before asking, “He stated that he could erase my
memories of ever having a brother, was he correct?”

“He could do a lot worse than that if he decided to,” his companion pauses to take a bite of his dinner
before continuing, “He can do a lot of damage I have discovered. Most of the pack knows better than
to anger him, and not just because he is a cobra either, but because John is the only one who can stop
him when he has his temper up.” the older man shrugs, taking another bite of food, “It was part of
the welcoming I was given to the pack, a warning about why not to piss off the tallest pack
member.”

“Oh,” he murmurs thoughtfully as he considers again the conversation he had had with the black
cobra. If one wanted to call it a conversation. What it really was, is a finely planned out intimidation
tactic that seemed to work. How frustrating, he was rarely ever intimidated. After all being scared
was not an advantage in his job position.

“Whatever he told you, I would suggest taking to heart. From what I understand he does not speak
just to hear himself do so.”

He nods, finishing his plate and pushing it away. The main course had tasted better than expected.
Perhaps he could get a dessert, it had been a crazy day and he surely deserved one. For a few
minutes the two of them discuss other things, he is surprised at how easy it is to speak with the older
man. Their discussion touching from one easy topic to the next but never prying any further into a
subject when he changes topics. Once Gregory is done with his meal, he is surprised when the
waitress brings out two small plates with rich dark chocolate cake on it

With the first bite he cannot help the low moan that escapes him at the taste and he finds himself
being stared at with an unusual look from the detective inspector. Slightly embarrassed, he starts to
apologize though he is not sure what for when his companion waves it off. After dinner he has his
driver take them to Gregory’s flat, where he bids him good night before heading home himself.

There is a great deal for him to consider, he thinks. Hopefully Aragorn will get in touch with him
sooner than later, because his skills are highly needed right now. Yet at the same time, he wonders
what it would take to get into the pack that Gregory and his brother both belong to. He also wonders
if there is any way he could get that cobra to work for him, with his scare factor information
gathering from those who need torturing would become simple.

Chapter End Notes

The phrase that Eric says farewell with is “Consider what I have said. Until later.” In
French, which I do not speak, so it is a translation from Google.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

We will be returning to our chapter a day, unless real life interferes scheduling, enjoy!

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**John’s POV**

When they get back to the flat, his tall bondmate is pacing, the scent of frustration in the air. Through their link he can feel that the human is trying to decide what to do about this situation. After pausing for a moment to give him a long kiss, his bondmate vanishes into his bedroom, leaving the door open as he starts going through things, throwing article after article of clothing into the short hallway and at one point stepping out of his room with a bright yellow over jacket on.

“What are you doing?” he inquires, looking up from his reading. He is trying to give his lover space to determine what he needs but the soldier part of him wonders why not just send in Mouse to collect information.

His bondmate steps into the hall and looks at him, stating, “Going into battle, John, I need the right armor.”

He shakes his head, looking back at his book and giving a small frown. Sometimes he worries about his mate.

Several more minutes pass as he sorts through everything. He is surprised however, when his normally hard to get to clean up after himself mate actually takes the time to put his clothing back before stating, “I think I am ready, call a cab.”

Shaking his head, he calls for a cab, requesting one of the crows that he had previously had as the driver. A few minutes after that the two of them are in the cab and discussing the plan of action in how to approach Ms. Adler. He is mildly startled when his bondmate has the cabbie pull off and let them out. Walking down a small side street he looks around questioning.

“Are we here?” he queries, certain the answer is no, and wondering why his bondmate has removed his scarf.

Looking down his bondmate looks tense for a moment before he answers, “Two streets away but this will do.”

Curious he inquires, “For what?”

Gesturing to his face he answers, “Punch me in the face.”

“What you?” he repeats, not sure he heard his bondmate correctly. Did he seriously just invite him to slug him in the jaw?

Shaking his head, his mate responds, “Yes, punch me in the face,” he motions to his jaw again, a confused look on his face, “Didn’t you hear me?”
Disbelief colors his voice as he sarcastically responds, “It’s not abnormal for me to hear punch you in the face when you speak, however it is usually sub-text.”

Looking away, his bondmate mutters, “Oh for God’s sakes,” before throwing a punch and catching him in the jaw.

Picking himself up off the ground he quickly swings his right hand, slugging his mate in the jaw and sending him reeling, a quick glance at his hand and he sends another good punch, this time to his mates stomach. His healers instincts are screaming at him not to harm his mate, but his soldiers instincts are telling him to beat the shit out of him. Shockingly enough, his wolf is being silent, allowing everything to unfold.

As he partially strangles his mate he hears the tall man he has in his grasp gasp, “Okay! I think we’re done now, John.”

Snarling into his bondmate’s ear he states, “You wanna remember, Sherlock: I was a soldier. I killed people. You’ve seen me do so.”

His bondmate says nothing in response, instead is trying to get one of his long fingered hands around his wrist to break the grip. Finally, when he feels the taller man just about ready to faint, he releases his hold. A small piece of his gift surging throughout his bondmate in order to repair the internal injuries, even though he leaves the external damage visible. Once the healing is done, the two of them walk over the two streets to the house where Ms. Adler awaits.

We really need to teach that boy some proper fighting. He hears the cobra murmur in his head and knows that he is watching through one of the cameras.

He gets amusement out of the situation both the sarcasm in his head and the fact his bondmate is wearing a vicar’s collar and is acting like he is panicking because of a mugging. He can smell the amusement from the other side of the door and decides not to tell his bondmate that he is pretty sure that they are expecting him. Instead, he slips in behind his bondmate, inquiring after a first aid kit. His senses are on high alert as he goes with her to the kitchen after she shows his lover to a sitting room.

Amusement pours into him from his link with Spathi, while shock is the feeling he gets from Sherlock.

By Blessed Ayanuh! This woman is amusing. She just came strutting into the room naked as the day she was birthed except the cosmetics on her face. It sent your bondmate into shock, I don’t think he knows what to do. The multi-form cat tells him, showing him the image. It takes everything in his head not to laugh at the scene before him. She has both shifter and gifted blood, but is human, that’s just amusing.

Walking back into the room with a warm bowl of water and a towel, he does not have to fake his surprise when he sees the human standing so close to his mate in a suggestive way. It is a good thing his self control is well tested, otherwise the situation would have gotten bloody quickly.

Thank you for the warning, it was needed, he tells the cat as he watches the by play and interrupts accordingly. Sometimes he really wishes his bondmate would have just allowed them to go public, even if he understand why not. Still, this is very frustrating to him.

He watches as his bondmate tries to figure her out and hears the side notes of frustration as he turns his attention on him.
John, this is frustrating, I cannot get a read on her, he grumbles, mentally, the first time he had intentionally activated the link between them before he turns back to looking at her.

Your frustrated, try being a wolf watching a stranger eyeball your mate like he is the most tasty thing around? He responds.

“D’you know the big problem with a disguise, Mr Holmes?” the human woman asks as she stares at back at him.

He raises and eyebrow questioningly.

Yeah, I don’t get to break your neck for ogling my mate. John answers in their heads.

“However hard you try, it’s always a self-portrait.” She states.

Reaching up to unfasten the top buttons of his shirt he replies, “You think I’m a vicar with a bleeding face?”

Still holding the pose she had settled herself into she returns, “No, I think you’re damaged, delusional and believe in a higher power. In your case, it’s yourself.” Leaning forward she continues, “Oh, and somebody loves you. Why, if I had to punch that face, I’d avoid your nose and teeth too.” She glances over at him, a curiously knowing look on her face.

Giving a dry chuckle, he questions, “Could you put something on, please? Er, anything at all.” Before I really do lose my temper and break you for flirting with my mate,

He thinks glancing down, “A napkin.”

“Why?” she queries, smiling sardonically, “Are you feeling exposed?”

His bondmate responds, “I don’t think John knows where to look.” as he stands up and looks away, holding his coat to the side as she stands and walks over to stand in front of him. Really? Considering how jealous you got of Melisa I am startled you think that. He comments silently.

Well I have not seen any mental images of you with this woman and I would prefer I never did. His bondmate snaps in response. I am surprised I have not gotten anything from her, but then, I have not touched her skin either.

“I think he knows exactly where,” she states as she reaches over and takes the offered coat, “I’m not sure about you.”

He mentally nods, acknowledging what his mate had said. Before smiling like the predator he is and stepping forward the slightest, surprising her by entering her immediate space as she pulls his mates coat on. Her eyes widen the slightest as she steps back, but they do not give her time to process as his mate is already speaking again.

As his tall mate steps across the room to by the fireplace he states, “If I wanted to look at naked women I’d borrow John’s laptop.” Which I will not be doing because naked women are boring, I prefer you naked, preferably stretched out on our bed and letting me explore you, his bondmate comments.

“You do borrow my laptop.” He mutters, not bothering to specify why.

Smirking slightly his mate states, “I confiscate it.” as he tucks his vicar collar into his slacks pocket.
Once she has the coat pulled on and her eyes flicker back to John questioningly, before looking away and stating, “Well, never mind. We’ve got better things to talk about. Now tell me – I need to know.”

Striding over to the loveseat, she sits down and begins to remove her shoes.

Confused, Sherlock questions, “What?”

“The hiker with the bashed-in head. How was he killed?” she inquires staring at his mate.

Both them look at each other in confusion, his lover giving a small shake of his head as he states softly, “That’s not why I’m here.”

She quickly responds, “No, no, no, you’re here for the photographs but that’s never gonna happen, and since we’re here just chatting anyway…” her voice trails off as she continues to watch him.

Stepping forward a bit, he looks at her questioningly as he remarks, “That story’s not been on the news yet. How do you know about it?” Then to Elspeth, be ready to grab the phone whenever it is revealed. I think there is more here than I expected.

Of course, though I must say, I wonder what she would do when confront with you the flirt or Eric in charming mode. She replies softly, he can feel her moving at the edge of his awareness.

She turns to look at him, replying, “I know one of the policemen. Well, I know what he likes.”

“Oh,” he murmurs, sitting down beside her, “And you like policemen?”

She leans forward, smiling slightly, “I like detective stories – and detectives. Brainy’s the new sexy.” Her gaze flickers to his mate.

Growling in their link, he is still contemplating snapping her neck when his bondmate starts to babble almost incoherently, “Positionofthecar…” he pauses for a breath, pacing a bit, before repeating the answer, “Er, the position of the car relative to the hiker at the time of the backfire. That and the fact that the death blow was to the back of the head. That’s all you need to know.”

Both him and the human female turn to look at him as his mate speaks. Desire and interest roll in waves off of her, while his mate seems nervous and excited but not a bit attracted.

Curious she asks, “Okay, tell me: how was he murdered?”

His mate pauses for a moment to look at her replying, “He wasn’t.”

She sounds mildly startled as she tilts her head forward and questions, “You don’t think it was murder?”

Resuming his pacing, his mate responds, “I know it wasn’t.”

“How?”

“The same way that I know the victim was an excellent sportsman recently returned from foreign travel and that the photographs I’m looking for are in this room.” He answers, still looking around the room. Is one of the other pack members here? He hears his bondmate query.

Of course, he replies not answering which one or why.

“Okay, but how?” she asks, not noticing that she inadvertently gave part of the location of the
photographs away.

*Have them grab the phone when it becomes available.* Stopping again he turns to face her with a slight smile on his face, “So they are in this room. Thank you. John, man the door. Let no-one in.”

Mentally sighing, he sends the message off to Elspeth, knowing that she would be able to do so easily. Glancing down for a moment, he flicks his eyes questioningly and is answered by his mate in the same manner. Frowning slightly, he gets to his feet, setting the bowel of water down as he does as his mate asks of him, closing the door behind him as he does so. He really does not like it but understands it was part of the plan. In the hall, he pulls the lighter from the palace out of his pocket and grabs a magazine off of the table to light it on fire and cause the smoke alarm to go off.

Inside the room he knows what’s going on because Elspeth is showing him, she thinks that his bondmates treatment of the human is amusing. Particularly when he tells her to stop being boring and think. She finally comes up with the answer just before he is able to get the magazine to light fire and set off the alarm.

From elsewhere in the building, the scent of new humans enters the picture, along with the smell of a gun. When he hears his mate say turn of the fire alarm he is trying to figure out how when three humans come down stairs, each holding a different gun, one of them shoots it silent.

Pretending to be a regular person, he holds his hands up by his head and states, “Thank you,” much to the confusion of the three men.

*I am coming back in with three men armed with guns, one has a gun pointed at me,* he warns his bondmate.

As the four of them enter the room he murmurs, “Sorry Sherlock,” they are all human, they are all angry, and they want something she has.

“Hands behind your head,” the man with a silencer snaps towards his mate, before turning his head to look at the human female, “On the floor. Keep it still.” the man who is not currently aiming his gun at anyone points it at her and directs her over to next to him. “Ms. Adler, on the floor.”

Slightly sarcastically he queries, “Don’t you want me on the floor too?”

Harshly, the man with the silencer answers, “No, sir, I want you to open the safe.”

A brief smile crosses his lovers face as he states, “American. Interesting. Why would you care?” The tall quickly glances at the female who has tucked her hands slowly behind her head.

In what is supposed to be a commanding tone the man with the silencer orders, “Sir, the safe, now, please.”

Simply speaking his bondmate comments, “I don’t know the code.”

He knows even if he does, he is playing stupid on purpose.

Angrily the man with the silencer remarks, “We’ve been listening. She said she told you.”

Retorting in standard style he responds, “Well, if you’d been listening, you’d know she didn’t.”

Still pointing the silencer at his mate, the man snaps, “I’m assuming I missed something. From your reputation, I’m assuming you didn’t, Mr. Holmes.”
Growing tired of all the bantering he comments, “For God’s sake. She’s the one who knows the code. Ask her.” *Plan?*

_Let him get shot by the gun I am sure is guarding the safe, can you deal with the other one?*_ His bondmate responds.

A slightly feral smile curls his lips, its probably a good thing that his head is currently ducked down or the humans might have caught on.

“Yes, sir. She also knows the code that automatically calls the police and sets off the burglar alarm. I’ve learned not to trust this woman.” The silencer man replies.

Startled, the human female starts to speak, “Mr. Holmes doesn’t…” her voice trails off as the man with the silencer snaps at her.

“Shut up. One more word out of you – just one – and I will decorate that wall with the insides of your head. That, for me, will not be a hardship.”

When the man orders the other man to shoot him on the count of three his mate also starts a count, though of a different type. At the last second he call out for the man not to shoot, just as he slowly turns and opens the lock. As soon as it clicks, he glances towards the two of them, tilting his head. Moments later he calls out “Vatican cameos,” and ducks as he swings the safe open. The pistol he had suspected was there goes off as he spins and kicks out his foot, knocking the human female’s attacker away just as she hits him in the stomach with her elbow. His mate has already dealt with the third one in the bunch.

*Got it,* Elspeth tells him, _I dropped my phone in his pocket since she is going to want a phone. I implanted the suggestion that my phone is hers, I have already had tech wipe it clean. The phone says I Am has four lines for the code Locked. I really hope she was not as simple as she smelled, because that means it’s I am Sherlocked._

*Good. Take it to Eric.* He replies, and there is a mad dash as his mate steps outside, firing off his confiscated gun five times before going back it. He relays the message to Sherlock, before going to check how they got in. When they get upstairs he hears his mate hit the ground and it takes all of his will power not to rush after her in retaliation. Once she is gone out of the window, he sinks to his knees beside his mate, sinking into his gift before running his fingers down his throat. Finding the foreign substance that she had inserted into him, he burns it out in moments, which causes his bondmate to pass out from the stress of all of it.

Moments later the medics come in and rush to check him, when he assures them he will be fine, he just needs to go to home, they are at first leery of listening, but do so after one of them thoroughly checks him.

“He’s right,” the one examining his mate states, finally the others nod and he is taken back to the flat where they help him get him to his bedroom.

Sighing, he tucks him in before going to make himself a cup of tea. While he is doing so he is alerted by Edward that there is a human female approaching their flat carrying the elder-seconds coat. He tells the man to let her through, not to react because he wishes to see what she wants. Then he silently enters the room and shields so he is invisible so he can observe what she wants. She tells his bondmate how the hiker had died before hanging his coat on the back of the door and vanishing out the window.

His bondmate awake, calling for him, and him watching as struggles out of bed. Opening the door,
he reappears, and answers his mates questions, catching him in his arms as he stumbles.

“She was here for a bit to deliver your coat, but she got away, I didn’t stop her,” he tells his bondmate as he holds him.

“Why?” his confused bondmate asks, “Were we successful with the phone?”

“Eric has the phone,” he replies, “I did not tell your brother yet, I figured you could decide if you wanted to or not.”

“Oh,” his bondmate murmurs, “Cuddle with me?”

He smiles answering, “Let me go turn everything off, then I will be right in, alright?”

Nodding, his bondmate tiredly collapses on the bed. Just as he is getting back to the room, he hears what sounds like a recording of a woman’s sigh, and is mildly surprised to find his lover leaning against the wall staring at the phone in his hands. Chuckling, he plucks it from his fingers, setting it on the night stand before carefully disrobing the both of them and curling up under the blankets together.

Latching their hands together, they fall asleep with their bondmark’s touching, his smaller body curled around his bondmate protectively as he sleeps off the day’s events.
Hello all, thank you all for the remarks, reviews, bookmarks, subscriptions, or any other form of communication you have done to tell me what you like and don't like on this story!

Sherlock's POV
When he wakes up it is not yet dawn, but he finds himself snuggling into the warm body pressed close against his back, one arm thrown over his so that their wrists are lined up and touching. Slowly he stretches, his longer limbs escaping the lineup of his lovers form. As he does so, he feels his wolf come awake slowly.

“Morning love,” his wolf murmurs against his back.

Turning he kisses the shorter man, “Go back to sleep, your still tired,” he murmurs as he looks him over closely.

His partner smiles, “How ridiculously early is it?”

He smirks, glancing at the lighting in the room, or more exactly the lack of lighting, and determining the time. “Just after four am.”

“Goddess below help me,” his wolf mutters, rubbing a hand over his face. “I think I am going to try and sleep for a few more hours,” leaning over, John catches his arm, pulling him down for a moment to kiss him, before curling back into the blankets and allowing sleep to overcome his body.

He on the other hand, gets out of bed and showers, considering everything that he has to do today. He is certain that Mycroft will want to know about the phone, which he technically got away from the woman but does not have because one of the pack members had gotten from him. So it was probably in Eric’s hands by now, and knowing him, he had probably already broken into it and retrieved all of the information off of it. He also has that appointment with the crows today. Plus anything else that might come up. Hmmmm, best to dress for it then, slacks and nice shirt, for now, house robe over top until it is time to finish preparing to go deal with the crows.

Just a little bit after he enters the living room wearing his clothes, he is startled when there is a soft knock at the door considering how early it is before Eric comes walking in with ease.

“Sleep is over rated, yes?” the cobra comments as he sprawls in John’s chair. “You’re wondering why I am here at this ridiculous hour, simple really, I realized you were not briefed on how to treat the crows, and I figured I would just wait until you were up to do so. Since you are already up, I can do so now. Though, I think this officially is in Cyanne’s territory for lessons.”

He shakes his head, sitting down in his chair. “There is a special way to treat the crows?”

“Of course, John tends to ignore the social formalities a lot of the clans still embrace but he is still aware of them, you on the other hand are not. So here I am to fix that.” A chilling smile flickers across his lips, “First off, your bondmate to an elite. You only bow to elites, and only to ones who
outrank your mate. Which in the Britain there is none.” He pauses, looking over at the kitchen for a moment thoughtfully before shrugging, “Second, you do have to acknowledge those of equal or close to equal rank. That can be done with a polite inclination of your head. You have been around enough human nobles to know how to do that I am sure.”

Looking thoughtful he inquires, “Who is of equal rank or close to it if none are high ranked then him?”

The smile warms a bit as he answers, “Pay respects to all elders, if you are presented with the elder-second, pay respects to them as well. If there are any healers in the area, pay respects to them as well.” Rolling his shoulders a bit, the taller man shifts in his seat before continuing, “Third, be yourself and observe everything. Internal politics can be a bitch among our kind. Our den has little of it because John allows for an easy approach, and is the least formal elder you will probably ever meet. Fourth, this is probably one of the most important things, allow John to do the talking until they ask permission to speak directly to you. Until they have that permission, anything they say directly to you is consider an insult to him, the kind that can start a war between our dens. We’d win, but there is no reason to decimate the crow population just because they want to be disrespectful.”

The cobra closes his eyes for a moment, his expression thoughtful, “Oh, if anyone other than the elder, elder-second, or senior offers you food and drink, don’t accept it. Some idiots have been known to try and start wars through poisoning visiting elders and elder seconds. They would never try that with a known of elite wolf, but a human, best not chance it.”

Getting to his feet, the cobra inquires, “Any questions?”

He gives a quick shake of his head, replying, “No, it’s straight forward enough. Bow to no one, acknowledge the leaders of the den. Let John do most the talking. Observe everything like I would anyways. Do not accept food and drink, which is normal for me.”

“Good, you got it,” gliding silently to the door, he pauses and states, “I have the phone with me. Do you want it? It really was easy to get into. Dumb human reeked of the answer to the lock.”

He tilts his head to the side thinking about it. “No, hold on to it. I am sure you will not use the information on it.”

Chuckling, the cobra replies, “No need, I can get most of it myself without any difficulty, why would I need a human’s phone? Besides nearly everyone on it is human, thus of no interest to me.” With one last nod, he is gone, vanishing out the door and out of the flat silently.

Shaking his head, he decides to play the violin for a bit, keeping to soft songs that will not bother John as he rests. He is barely aware of the passing of time between when he starts playing and when his lover gets up a couple of hours later.

“Morning love,” his wolf tells him as he walks over to give him a slow kiss before going to make tea. Once the teas are made he sets one down in front of Sherlock’s spot while taking his seat and sipping at his. “What did Eric want?”

When he finishes putting his violin away, he settles into his seat and sips at his tea, answering, “Gave me a quick lesson on how to treat crows.”

“Okay, well I am going to get cleaned up, I already made the bed. No, I did not make it military style either.” His shorter companion tells him before taking his cup in the kitchen and then heading up the steps to his room to collect his thing.
As he watched his partner go upstairs he remembers that he wants to talk to him about sharing a room all the time, not just part of the time. He had decided the other day it was silly for them to keep separate rooms when he kept asking John to join him in his. Something he had found amazing was John’s ability to make his mind slow down just by cuddling up next to him. It was not like his mind shut all the way down, it just allowed him to process one thing at a time, rather than being in overdrive all the time. He was finding it rather relaxing.

While his lover is in the shower he decides to study the mark gracing his right wrist. It looks like a fern, he thinks as he looks at it closely, a spiral fern just opening with little speckles surrounding it. He is curious if there is meaning behind the mark, but he has not had a chance to ask John about it yet.

Just a few minutes later his lover emerges from the bathroom, wearing the funniest blue and black striped shirt and some jeans. His feet are still bare. Smiling, his mate heads into the kitchen and a few minutes later he can smell something cooking as his mate makes breakfast. He is startled when he spots John jerk his head up and sniffs the air. Frowning, his blonde haired wolf heads downstairs after turning the stove down, and comes back a few moments later with his newspaper and something even odder.

Not far behind his lover is his younger brother Aragorn with a heavily muscled man who is just a bit taller than him with dark red hair and light green eyes that seem slightly unnatural.

“Hello Sherlock,” his younger brother greets him, watching him from near the door.

Slowly he stands, staring at the brother he had not seen in over a decade. The last time he had seen his brother he had been almost eleven years old, Mycroft had already left for university and he was getting ready to do his secondary education. It had been one of those rare occasions when his mother had allowed him to see his brother though it had not lasted long. At the time Aragorn had been eight, with only a three year gap between them unlike his seven year gap with Mycroft.

He had grown well, his small frame had filled out nicely and he was built somewhere between himself and Mycroft with a solid frame rather than an overweight or reedy build. His hair which had been more of a ginger as a child was now a rich dark chocolate, though he still had the light colored eyes that marked the Holmes brothers. Like him, his younger brother seemed to favor suits, though not as formal as Mycroft’s.

“Aragorn,” he murmurs, eyes slightly wide as he takes everything in.

His brother is a computer tech. Building, programming, hacking, you name it, and he has the markers for it. According to what he can see, his brother does not often go out into the world, preferring the safety of his office and home. Nor is he a social person.

Turning his focus to his brother’s companion, his first impression is of a shifter. Only he knows that’s wrong, he just does not know how he knows. The stranger is taller than his brother, but not as tall as Mycroft or him. The stranger’s demeanor is very similar to most nobles he has ever met with their better than everyone else tones. Hell, it’s an impression he often uses himself. His clothes are impeccable, all finely tailored and of excellent quality though the design is not one he is familiar with. He cannot determine how old he is, or what he does for a living, his body has markers for several different careers that do not work together.

Slowly his brother steps fully into the flat and off of the landing, his pace easy, and the stranger staying close behind him without actually touching. In many ways it reminds him of his and John’s relationship.
The silence grows and he is not sure what he should do to break it. Instead he is startled when John comes back out, left wrist uncovered and offers his arm to the stranger but not the exact same way he had seen him do so with pack members.

“Elite Alpha John Watson,” he introduces himself to the stranger, eyes locked with his, ignoring his brother.

A slow smile tugs at his lips as he deftly unfastens his sleeve before the stranger grasps his lover’s form arm so their wrists just barely touch, “Shalen of the Shadow Lineage.”

Chuckling, the two of them let go before he gives a shake of his head and returns to making breakfast and tea. Silence still reigns over the flat as the two brothers watch each other, neither knowing how to make the first move. When John comes back with a tray of food, with for plates and tea for four, he is rather surprised. Deftly, the wolf sets everything up on the table before motioning to their guests to sit down on the sofa as he passes each person their tea.

“Your name is Aragorn, right? Nice to meet you,” his bondmate murmurs as he hands his brother his tea.

“Thank you,” he responds absently, before taking a sip and nodding once, “Yes, it is.”

Several minutes pass in silence as everyone eats their breakfast that John had provided. He is startled to see Aragorn eating, but he just shrugs it off as something he does not really know about.

“After all of this time, why are you here?” he eventually asks because he had tried to reach out to him once before only to be met with silence. That had been right before he had finally given up and started using drugs.

The younger man looks at his plate that he had just finished with before glancing at his companion with an eye raised. An entire silent conversation, not telepathic from what he can observe but still complete none the less occurs before he answers. “Mycroft emailed me and asked if there was any way I could get around the hacker who blocks him from observing you. I did not answer him. Instead I decided to ask what your opinion was on the situation. Do you want to be observed by him?”

He doesn’t know what to make of it. A large part of him wants to be pissed that Mycroft had done so but at the same time when would he have ever seen his brother otherwise? He was not invited to family gatherings often, his mother preferring to ignore his existence since the death of his father. Swallowing he drinks some of his tea rather than immediately answer.

While he is considering the answer Shalen cocks his head to the side and eyes John speculatively. “I would lay money that he has a matching mark.”

A smirk curves his lover’s lips, “You would not lose that one. However it is not something we have told Mycroft, or anybody not belonging to the pack.”

The red-head nods, looking about for a minute, “Understandable, humans tend not to understand as well as they could.”

“True enough, I would lay money that yours is as understanding as mine.” His lover responds and the two men smile at each other.

Confused, he glances at his brother questioningly just to be met with a shrug.

For a few minutes there is silence in the flat, then John comments, “We’re about to have company,
Mycroft is on his way.”

Shalen shrugs, raising an eyebrow at his brother. His brother glances at him with a curious look and he realizes he is waiting for an answer still. “I would prefer it if you did not, however I doubt you would get around Eric when he is being determined.”

“Alright,” he replies, “Well we are heading off. I do not want to deal with Mycroft at the moment.” Both men on the sofa stand, and he finds himself standing to shake his brother’s hand. Afterwards, his brother and companion both turn to John and shake his hand as well. “Nice meeting you, I am happy to see someone who makes him smile. We will have to have dinner sometime.”

“Nice meeting you to,” his flatmate responds to his brother, before turning to his brother’s companion and murmuring, “Shadow Mistress guide you.”

The taller man inclines his head, replying, “Mistress of Shadows shield you.”

“Ready?” his brother inquires, of the other gentlemen.

Nodding, he accepts his hand, and a moment later the two of them are gone.

“How?” he asks, curious because he can hear that they are not walking anywhere and is certain they are not still in the room.

Chuckling, his mate cleans up the extra dishes so it is only theirs laying out before coming back and settling into his seat. By the time Mycroft makes it up the stairs, John is eating his second helping of breakfast, while he is reading the newspaper that John had brought up to him earlier.

Without even bothering to greet them, his older brother demands, “Did you get the phone?”

“No.” he replies, still reading the newspaper. He is a bit miffed at his older brother at the moment but does not feel like saying anything about it. Instead he will wait a couple of days before having Eric deliver the phone to his brother. Something says the cobra would enjoy giving him a nice glare as he does so.

“What?” his brother’s fury is easily noticed in his tone.

“The photographs are perfectly safe.” He replies, still reading, though really the newspaper is boring.

“In the hands of a fugitive sex worker.” His brother questions, sarcasm dripping off his tone as he gets his anger under control.

“She’s not interested in blackmail. She wants,” he pauses for a moment, thinking to John, her phone back, “protection for some reason.” Again he pauses, only this time he looks at his brother, “I take it you’ve stood down the police investigation into the shooting at her house?”

Has she texted and asked for it back yet? His bondmate inquires as he continues to eat.

Nope. He replies watching his brother.

Annoyance mars his older brother’s features as he responds, “How can we do anything while she has the photographs? Our hands are tied.”

Glancing back at his newspaper, he remarks, “She’d applaud your choice of words.” He tilts his head to look at his brother demanding, ”You see how this works: that camera phone is her ‘Get out of jail free’ card. You have to leave her alone. Treat her like royalty, Mycroft.”
Pausing from eating his mate tilts his head to the side to glance at his brother remarking, “Though not the way she treats royalty.” He finishes speaking with a sarcastic smile.

A humorless smile is the response his brother gives.

Before anyone can comment, his phone makes that sighing noise that she had recorded to it, letting him know that there is a text message from her. Lowering the paper, he glances at his phone, a thoughtful look on his face. The expression on his brother’s face is priceless as it goes from humorless to embarrassment. John looks like he wants to chuckle but he doesn’t.

“What was that noise?” Mycroft queries as he looks over at his phone.

Setting his paper down he replies, “Text,” before striding over to grab his phone to check and see what it says.

- Good morning, Mr. Holmes. - TW

- Good morning, Irene. - SW

*How long before she asks for it back you think?* He inquires of his mate before asking his brother, “Did you know there were other people after her too, Mycroft, before you sent John and I in there? CIA-trained killers, at an excellent guess.” As he speaks he walks back to his spot, setting his phone between himself and his lover.

Sarcasm drips from John’s voice as he remarks, “Yeah, thanks for that, Mycroft,” in between bites.

A moment later, Mrs. Hudson comes walking in carrying a plate of breakfast that she sits in front of him, she hadn’t seen the fact that he had eaten earlier. Changing pages of his newspaper, he wants to smirk as she sternly tells Mycroft, “It’s a disgrace, sending your little brother into danger like that. Family is all we have in the end, Mycroft Holmes.”

*I am not eating that, I have already had breakfast once,* he tells his mate.

His wolf looks at him and nods once, raising an eyebrow at him in response to Mrs. Hudson he is sure.

Mycroft snarls, “Oh, shut up, Mrs. Hudson,” rather rudely.

Looking up he snaps, “Mycroft!”

At the same time his bondmate snarls. “Oi!”

Dropping his head, his brother takes a moment to catch his temper before looking back up, startled that he had lost it to begin with. Finally he looks at Mrs. Hudson and contritely murmurs, “Apologies,” tilting his head up a bit as if waiting for judgment.

In a dignified manner she replies, “Thank you,” before turning to head towards the kitchen.

Glancing over at her he remarks, “Though do, in fact, shut up.” *It was not his telling her to shut up that was the problem it was the how.* He comments to John who is still eating.

Before John can answer his phone goes off again, and Mrs. Hudson turns around to comment, “Ooh. It’s a bit rude, that noise, isn’t it?” before she goes back to whatever it is she is doing.

- Feeling better? - TW
To his brother he states, “There’s nothing you can do and nothing she will do as far as I can see.”

Looking down at the floor, Mycroft responds, “I can put maximum surveillance on her.”

Changing the page again in his newspaper he remarks, “Why bother? You can follow her on Twitter. I believe her user name is ‘TheWhipHand’.”

*Some reason, I think Eric would do better surveillance.* John comments as he continues to eat. *Odd. I can smell Eric on Mycroft.*

*Really? I wonder why. Think Eric can have the phone to the palace before he gets there?*

*Knowing him easily,* comes his mate’s response.

Softly, his brother answers, “Yes Sherlock, you will.”

Shrugging, he turns and heads over to where his violin is sitting and picks it up. *Do so please.* He requests as he tucks his violin under his chin.

*Alright.*

Leaning on his umbrella his brother snidely remarks, “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a long and arduous apology to make to a very old friend.”

“Do give her my love.” He remarks as he starts playing God Save the Queen and following his older brother towards the door.

As he walks past John he can see the shit-eating grin on his face. A single nod lets him know that he has done as he asked.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So odd chapter, its from the charming black cobra’s view rather than one of the main four… it takes place roughly during the time of Irene and Brothers.

Eric’s POV
The phone had been delivered to his home by Elspeth just a short while after she had retrieved it, planting the suggestion of her phone being the same one as the one she had on the human, but with a dying battery so that the human would not use it. Apparently the pass-code had been very simple to figure out, for someone not used to dealing with shifters, she had not realized that she gave away her secrets by scent alone. Within minutes he had loaded the entire thing to his private system, the one that was not connected to any other system in any sort of way. Cannot be hacked if not hooked in. As a hacker he understood that concept.

The next few hours were spent going over the phone in detail, enjoying the thrill of it. Once he had learned all of the interesting information from it, he carefully hooked it into the same system as Elspeth’s phone, making it so they would duplicate each other but never register as doing so. There were seventeen new file updates because of that. How interesting.

Bored, he stretches, mind drifting as his silk shirt rubs against his scales making him consider the last time he had found a toy to play with for a night.

With a shake of his head, he clears his mind of such thoughts and considers what to do next. Quickly checking his laptop sound system he is unsurprised to see that Sherlock is up already. Like him, the human rarely tended to sleep for long periods of time. With a smile he recalls that no one had bothered to cover the etiquette required for meaning other species elders. Well, it was actually Cyanne’s job but he’d do it just to have something to do besides play hacker.

It takes less than ten minutes for him to get from his house to the flat on his motorcycle. As he approaches, he reaches with his senses into the pack link, determining who the watcher of the evening is and where they are at. Edward, owl perched on the next building over on the corner giving him line of sight to all entries into the flat.

No need to sound the alarm Edward, I am just paying the elder-second a visit to correct an oversight in his training. He tells the watcher he can feel just outside his line of sight. He is still up.

Alright senior, comes the quick reply.

A few breathes later he was letting himself into the elder and elder-seconds flat. As he silently glides up the stairs he sniffs the air once to determine where at in the flat the elder-second is since he knows he is awake. Before entering the flat’s living area, he softly knocks twice, and then swings the door open just enough that his slender form can slip in.

Sprawled out on the sofa is the elder-second, he is mostly dressed for the day and seems startled to
see him. Trying for easy going he remarks, “Sleeping is over rated, yes?” as he sprawls in John’s chair. He is well aware that it is his elders preferred spot to sit, and generally picks it because he finds comfort in his elders lingering scent. “You’re wondering why I am here at this ridiculous hour, simple really, I realized you were not briefed on how to treat the crows, and I figured I would just wait until you were up to do so. Since you are already up, I can do so now. Though, I think this officially is in Cyanne’s territory for lessons.”

The tall human gives a shake of his head, curiosity filling his scent as he inquires, “There is a special way to treat the crows?”

He tries for a smile but is sure that it does not work. “Of course, John tends to ignore the social formalities a lot of the clans still embrace but he is still aware of them, you on the other hand are not. So here I am to fix that. First off, your bondmate to an elite. You only bow to elites, and only to ones who outrank your mate. Which in the Britain there is none.” He pauses, looking over at the kitchen for a moment wondering if he should make some tea but decides against it he does not want to be here that long so he shrugs instead, “Second, you do have to acknowledge those of equal or close to equal rank. That can be done with a polite inclination of your head. You have been around enough human nobles to know how to do that I am sure.”

The curiosity in his scent increases as the elder-second inquires, “Who is of equal rank or close to it if none are high ranked then him?”

Again he tries for a smile, and is pretty sure he is more successful this time as he answers, “Pay respects to all elders, if you are presented with the elder-second, pay respects to them as well. If there are any healers in the area, pay respects to them as well.” Feeling the scales on his shoulders shift a bit, he rolls them to relieve the pressure a bit, shifting around in his seat trying to get more comfortable. After considering it a moment he realizes it is time for one of his annual molts. Lovely. Ignoring the itchy feeling he continues, “Third, be yourself and observe everything. Internal politics can be a bitch among our kind. Our den has little of it because John allows for an easy approach, and is the least formal elder you will probably ever meet. Fourth, this is probably one of the most important things, allow John to do the talking until they ask permission to speak directly to you. Until they have that permission, anything they say directly to you is consider an insult to him, the kind that can start a war between our dens. We’d win, but there is no reason to decimate the crow population just because they want to be disrespectful.”

He closes his eyes as he pauses, the itching in his shoulders is driving him around the bin, as soon as he is home he is shifting into his snake form and allowing the dead scales to come off. The only problem with staying in hybrid form so much is the fact he does shed his scales yearly. What else was there he needed to mention? That’s right, he realizes and then starts speaking again, “Oh, if anyone other than the elder, elder-second, or senior offers you food and drink, don’t accept it. Some idiots have been known to try and start wars through poisoning visiting elders and elder seconds. They would never try that with a known of elite wolf, but a human, best not chance it.”

Stopping once more he considers it and determines there is nothing else that he really needs to impart. All the important details are covered so he queries, “Any questions?” he really wants to get home and get the shed out of the way.

For a moment the elder-second thinks about what he was just told before giving a quick shake of his head and stating, “No, it’s straight forward enough. Bow to no one, acknowledge the leaders of the den. Let John do most the talking. Observe everything like I would anyways. Do not accept food and drink, which I is normal for me.”

Happy to see that his sort-of friend had caught on so quickly he comments, “Good, you got it,” as he
silently walks over to the door. Before going through it he decides to offer, “I have the phone with me. Do you want it? It really was easy to get into. Dumb human reeked of the answer to the lock.”

Tilting his head to the side in a particularly feline way, the human considers it for a moment before responding, “No, hold on to it. I am sure you will not use the information on it.”

Chuckling, he replies, “No need, I can get most of it myself without any difficulty, why would I need a human’s phone? Besides nearly everyone on it is human, thus of no interest to me.” Giving the human one last nod, he is gone, vanishing out the door and out of the flat silently.

On his way out he makes sure to relock everything up before continuing on his way. He is considering stopping and trading phones back with the human. No, scales first, then go visit the human toy. Perhaps play with her a bit. As soon as he was back to his small property in the city he heads to the back part where he has built himself a nice greenhouse full of lush tropical plants and a pool. It is his getaway when he is in snake form. A place where his serpent self feels most at ease. It is also where he spends his time when he is not working on the laptop, though he does have a special area set up for it to protect it from the room in case he feels the urge to work while in mostly snake form as has happened a few times.

Stripping out of his clothes, he lets them drop by the door, he will pick them up when he is done and shove them in the laundry. Gliding over to his pool, he stretches out, reaching for the sky with his arms before allowing his body to go from slender, tall human to massively long black snake. Once in snake form he slithers into the warm pool, submerging his body all the way before coming back to the surface to laze. He repeats this process several more times until he feels the scale preparing to come off. As soon as he feels his over skin getting ready to shed, he leaves the water, and loops himself around the rocks that he has randomly placed for lounging on. They are rather comfortable to him when the sun is out. A few minutes later he is shifting back into his mostly human form. Thirty feet of old snake skin is wrapped around his reclining area.

He will let it dry before he burns it, wet scale-skin always feels funny.

As he leaves his garden he scoops up his clothes and head directly upstairs to his bedroom to deposit them in the laundry before taking a shower. Once he is done with his shower, he dries off with a towel before heading to his closet to find something to wear.

Let’s see, he thinks, I am going for charm before I switch to intimidation, if I bother switching over, I might not. It depends on how she reacts and behaves. Black formal slacks with dark blue silk shirt, the one done with my birth family pattern to it should work perfectly. Black pants and socks for under garments, custom fitted leather shoes. Spiked hair or not? Please, like I go without spiking it often. Focusing, he shortens his bangs up so they are the same length as the rest unlike normal and runs a hand through it to spike it up, knowing that it will mostly stay because it is wet. When he is done, he takes a quick glance in the mirror before deciding to allow the majority of his scales to fade away, leaving only the patterning on the back of his neck, hiding his den markers.

Frowning, he tilts his head to the side and focuses hard, changing his scales to the bright golden-red tone like his mothers had been. He would have to maintain his focus to keep them like that, but that was not going to be an issue. A moment later his hair matched. Smiling at himself in the mirror, he heads to the garage to get his car, deciding now is not the time for the bike.

Less than fifteen minutes later he is arriving at her home and place of business. Frowning, he reaches through the link between himself and John and carefully nudges his friend to let him know he is there before he flips through his memories for a few moments, finding the ones he needs and studying them carefully. Once he is sure he can play the part, he gets out of his car and approaches the door.
Flashing a smile at the girl who answers it with a sleepy, “Can I help you?”

“My apologies, Miss, I was directed by a friend that there was a dominatrix in residence here, and as I am only in town for a few more hours I wished to met her before I left. Perhaps arrange an appointment for the next time I am in town,” his voice is low, a cultured drawl that has been useful in the past for making a person sway with need.

She vanishes for a moment, and with a quick flick of his tongue, he knows that she is going to see if Irene is willing to see him. If he timed it right, and he is sure he had, she will have no difficulties seeing him. Sure enough, not even three minutes later she is back, and the door slowly swings open, with her admitting him.

“May I ask who is calling?” she inquires, looking at him in a supposed demure fashion.

He could smell the curiosity on her, the desire to know, going for a charming smile, and if her thoughts are anything to go by succeeding, he replies, “Ethan Alexander Nicholson, from the States.”

She nods, “Right this way Mr. Nicholson,” she murmurs politely, shutting the door behind him.

Internally smirking, he continues to listen to her thoughts as she considers what type of outfit might work best on him to suggest to her boss. He seems like a charming person, why he would want to be dominated she does not understand but then a wide variety of people like it, not just the obvious ones.

How interesting he thinks, she is an amusing little human.

“If you can just wait here please,” she directs him, leaving him in the same lounge that she had directed his elder and elder-second to the previous day.

He nods once, politely taking a seat and waiting until he can hear and smell her at a different part of the house, then focusing on projecting a copy of himself into his seat, he shields and goes over to where the safe was hidden. Quickly and quietly he checks it, discovering that she has replaced the phone there. Carefully, so not to trigger the gun or get caught, he switches out the phone. Before pocketing the fake and returning to his spot.

He had just gotten comfortable and dropped the illusion when a dark-haired human with obvious mixed bloodlines comes sauntering in wearing a leather teddy and matching spiked boots. His midnight colored eyes quickly scan her as his mind gently probes her without her seeming to notice judging by her lack of thought response. She is barely aware of the other world, the world of the shifters, gifted, immortals, and Old Gods. Interesting. She prefers to focus her attention on high powered humans and is being controlled through fear by that short, annoying Irishman. Again, interesting.

What a shame he found no interest in women, his goal had already been accomplished but he might as well enjoy himself while he was at it.

Standing as she enters the room, he does a partial bow, power to beauty, murmuring, “Mistress Adler, I do believe I was under informed of your beauty.”

Catching her eyes, he smiles, allowing his mind to brush hers once again as he listens to her thoughts. She is only barely interested in him, however right now she wants to work off some stress so perhaps this new customer would be perfect. As he listens, he is amused by how much she desires that which she cannot have, and decides to plant a small suggestion that she help him, rather than
hinder him. Once it is planted, he reinforces it, even as he continues to engage her in conversation.

Eventually, he inquires, “Forgive me for my bluntness, but do you ever take the submissive role?”

Her eyes widen slightly as breathing shallows out, her mind, still processing the suggestion is startled by the idea. She is the dominate, she does not bow to any man or woman. “No, Mr. Nicholson,” she eventually replies, though a bit breathy.

He nods, gliding towards her silently, his charming smile in place, “In that case, Mistress, I will take my leave of you. I prefer a dominate who occasionally can take being the submissive on my bad days.”

Bowing slightly, he again catches her eye and checks to see how well the suggestion is taking. Good, it is embedding itself deep within her subconscious, hiding in the deepest parts of her thoughts where the attraction and desire lay waiting.

Smiling, he leaves, heading out to the car and taking off without a second look back. He had considered bugging the place but decided it was a waste of his time. Upon getting home, he changes out the plates on his car before going to hack the records for it and changing it there as well.

Eyeballing the clock he decides to take a brief nap, it takes a lot of energy to maintain a different scale and hair color than his own. So with a small shrug he heads back to his garden, shifting into his cobra’s form and stretching out to sleep. Before he passes out he makes sure that his phone is sitting in its safe spot so he will be able to hear it in case an alert comes through.

Not three hours later he is being awoken by John gently touching his mind. Eric.

Yes? he replies, his large eyes flickering open as he awakes, it is a couple of hours past dawn, close to ten am. So he had gotten at least two hours sleep.

*Can you deliver that link up phone to Mycroft at the palace before he goes apologizing to the queen?*

*Of course,* he mentally rolls his eyes at his friend before continuing, *that is moderately simple to do. How long do I have?*

*About fifteen minutes, give or take,* comes the easy reply.

Sending a mental nod, he cuts the link before John can say anything more. Shifting, he grabs his phone before heading back to the garage. This was going to be a motorcycle moment. Less than ten minutes later, several speeding laws broken and very thankful that shielding is one of his strong suits, he is waiting patiently for the politician.

When he sees him approaching the door, he straightens up from where he had been relaxing an intercepts him with a frosty smile. *Mycroft*. He murmurs in greeting, into the other man’s head.

Immediately he freezes and looks around cautiously, as if trying not to draw attention to himself.

*Come into the small garden a few feet, I desire a word with you. Now.* he continues, enjoying the way the human’s scent shifts from anger and frustration to aggravation with a touch of fear. It is rather tasty.

Slowly, as if he had planned to step off the trail, the human does as he directs and a moment later he is allowing his shield to shift enough that the human can see him even while no one else can.

“How can I help you, Eric?” the human inquires in his posh voice. While his tone reflects nothing of his
emotions, his scent on the other hand tells a far different story. Apparently he had had quite the effect on the human. How interesting, it is always good to see his work do as he wants.

“I was told to deliver this to you,” he replies, holding out Elspeth’s phone. “It is not the original, it cannot affect the original, however it will automatically copy any file she saves, is untraceable, and can be used to see what she has.”

Blinking rapidly, the human accepts the phone, glancing between him and it with curiosity filling his scent. “Why?”

A smirk curves his lips and he takes pleasure in the way the ginger haired human flinches from it. “I already told you I was told to deliver it. Use your brains would you? If your intelligent as I have been told, then you will realize exactly how useful a weapon that in your hands is. Now if you will excuse me, I have other things to do.”

Saying nothing else, he vanishes from sight, silently moving past the human but making sure to allow him to get a case of the chills that he is prone to causing before returning to his motorcycle to return home.

*It is done,* he tells John, replaying the situation for him.

_Thank you. I will call you if there is need since we are going to see the crows in a few minutes._ His short friend replies.

He sends the impression of a nod as he walks through his front door. His senses automatically scan for other lives in his home and finding only the one in the basement, good.

Heading to his room he strips down to his skin and scales before he sprawls on his bed and sleeping.
Crows

Chapter Notes

Hi all, sorry I am a day late, real life was a bit of a pain the last few days. Anyways please enjoy

John’s POV
Shortly after Mycroft leaves he is about to mention the crows when his dark-haired human puts his violin up and bolts to their room without saying anything. Smiling, he heads up to his old room where he still has most of his clothes at and changes into one of the more formal outfits. Sighing to himself, he dresses in the golden bronze suit that is designed with the pack pattern and declares his rank. It is not one he likes to wear, and one will need to be made for Sherlock, but for now it will work out for their needs.

When he gets back downstairs his bondmate is waiting for him, dressed in one of his nicer suits and standing quietly by the window where he plays his violin.

John, Eric’s advice is as follows, he pauses for a breath, looking out the window, Bow to no one, however be respectful of all elders, elder-seconds, and healers. Let you do the talking for the most part, pay attention to everything, and don’t take food from them because it could be tainted.

He nods, thinking about it before replying, That’s exactly true, though crows are not known for poisoning. I can assume they are here because you switched to telepathy.

His partner nods once, watching the scene in the street below. Not even a minute later there is a sharp knock at the door and he hears Mrs. Hudson answer it shortly thereafter. With a smile to his love, he tilts his head towards the door in inquiry. His dark haired human nods once, joining him at the door. Silently, before Mrs. Hudson has a chance to call for them, they are on their way downstairs. At the ground floor, they bid her farewell before slipping out. The young man who had come to the door seems to dance nervously in place for a moment before greeting them.

He can smell the worry and frustration off of the two crows as the one who stayed with the car opens the door for them. Kin scent is another thing he catches, so these are brothers. Both are unsure what to do, so either they do not know the proper courtesy or something more is bothering them. He is tempted to inquire, but in this case it would be considered rude, so instead he just glances at his tall mate who is watching them with narrow eyes.

A short while the car is pulling into the long driveway of rather nice house. It is one of the older houses in the area but it has been well maintained from what they can see. When they stop, the young man in the passenger’s seat gets out first, grabbing the door for them. The scent of nervousness increases, as he motions silently towards the house. With a nod, he heads towards it with Sherlock at his side.

At the door, a young lady opens it with a smile, but that smile does not reach her eyes. Within the house smells even heavier of fear, anxiety, anger, sickness, frustration, and a host of other negative emotions. How odd, crows are some of the easiest going in the lot. They are self reliant and strong, so why all this? Hell, crows were the second avian race created, they rarely had the difficulties a lot of the other species had.
Something is greatly wrong here John, his bondmate comments as he studies the situation. He can almost hear the whirlwind deductions going through his mate head as he looks around the house as they are shown through it. Every shifter here is terrified, and of all the shifters I have met, this is the first time I have seen such fear. Why would they fear like this?

Someone has corrupted the nest link. He replies as he looks around, that’s the only time he has ever heard of this type of reaction. Elspeth, where are you at?

Directly behind you, this place smells wrong. She replies.

It does, call for Cyanne and Nathan. He directs her as he scans the surroundings.

Yes sir.

Eric, he murmurs to the sleeping cobra, annoyed that he has to awaken his friend.

Despite that, the response is immediate, Situation?

May I borrow your gift for a bit? he inquires as they enter the main sitting room where an older man with a young woman and three children are seated. The man is mostly healthy, the woman and children are not.

Of course, do you want me to link to guide or will you be good doing it on your own?

I will be fine, rest, he replies as he focuses on pulling Eric’s gift into himself for a time. As soon he does, the dark empathy nearly overwhelms him. He is not used to using the negative emotions the same way his tall friend is, so he has to quickly look for the memories on how to control it as well. Once he has it under control he starts to pull the negative emotion out of the air, using it as a power source and feeding it directly into the ground below.

“Elite Alpha Watson, I welcome you to my home. My thanks you have for your willingness to assist.” The old man greets him, slowly getting to his feet, however there is something wrong with how he moves.

Slowly, he inclines his head slightly, recognizing the others position without demeaning himself in the process.

“I am Elder Owen Wilson, this is my bondmate Elder-second Salome Wilson nee Rosen, and our three children Karmen, Tobias, and Malachi.” He continues, his voice soft.

To each of them he also nods respectfully, however he continues to draw the dark energy he can feel crackling in the air to him. How in the hell does Eric live like this all the time? he wonders as it continues to pour through his body. It’s tiring.

“May I also introduce our nests healers Pita and Kieran.” He remarks motioning to a pair standing to the side.

Mind if I act all rude and like me? Because this standing still is getting us nowhere and I think I know what’s happening, you’re a doctor, inquire about the rest of the nests health. His bondmate remarks as he starts to turn the slightest bit towards the others gathering in the room.

“My greetings,” he replies to the crow as he studies him. Not just yet please, I think that they are about to show their hand, according to all the dark energy in the room, though I cannot figure out the motivation for what’s going on just that.
Dark energy? You will have to explain later, along with about how Aragorn did his vanishing act. His bondmate replies.

He gives a single mental nod, still watching the visibly older crow.

“Elite Alpha, I request that your bondmate Alpha-second use the Gifts he is known for to discover what is going on with the nest.” The older looking man intones, his voice going rough as he starts to cough into his sleeve. “Forgive me,” he murmurs before clearing his throat to continue, “May I speak with him directly?”

Nodding once, he tilts his head and studies the children, “Of course, Sherlock can speak for himself.”

While the crow and his bondmate speak, he barely pays attention. Instead he switches to iota sight carefully looking over first the children, then the mother, before turning to the nest elder. Each of them were full of something, it did not look exactly like illness but he was not sure what it was, it was not registering as an unnatural poison either and natural poisons were not his specialty. From there he turns his head the slightest, bringing more of the nest mates into his line of sight and using his vision on them. Many of them show the same signs of poisoning as well, including the two healers who are both almost completely out of power.

Eric, I hate to disturb you but can you identify something for me? he sends the query to the mostly sleeping cobra. His dark friend excelled at poisons, along with an entire host of other things. Sherlock could probably figure it out using his science equipment but he was not sure the children had that long left to live.

Your vision, he remarks as the cobra slips into his mind and shares his iota sight with him. Taste the air for me, he requests after a moment.

With a quick flick of his tongue he licks his upper lip, and does as requested. That's a combination of spider venom and snake venom, its eating their bodies. Whoever is mixing it is not very nice person.

The link cuts out, but he retains the dark empathy that he had borrowed from the tall man.

Meanwhile his bondmate paces slowly around the room checking each and every person in rapid motions without saying a word before coming back to stand beside him and tilt his head to the side. “Is this the entire nest?” he inquires, his low voice vibrating through the dead silent room.

The elder-second is actually the one to answer, a small shake of her head, “No, most the nest is at there respective homes, many are ill, there have been three deaths,” her voice breaks as she says this, and she pulls the smallest child close to her, worry clear in her scent.

“Call them together,” his dark-haired human just about demands, his attention very focused on something. For some reason his eyes keep going back to a man over in the corner. He is older and frowning, watching his mate with a dark expression.

Slowly the female crow nods and he feels a gentle buzz as a mass telepath call goes to all of the members of the nest. He knows that they will come as they are bidded and while he does not like to be out numbered so much, he also knows his mate probably has a plan.

Call for Daria, John, she is an iota and a doctor. His mate remarks, I think someone is poisoning them but I cannot figure out the type, their bodies lack any of the signs I am used to seeing.

Eric says it is a combination of snake venom and spider poison. He replies as he calls for the viper.
Apparently she had come with Nathan because when she responds she is nearby. She has also brought Jace, though she will not allow him in until the poisoner is found.

“Elder, my mate has called for our iota because he feels she may be of assistance, may she enter?” he inquires, keeping his tone neutral because a lot of clans are offended at the concept of their healer not being enough.

Before the elder can respond, his bondmate does, “It was my suggestion we call for assistance, he is of the clans, he is known for his intelligence, if he says we need a different healer, then please do call for them. Anything to figure this out.” Her voice is cracked and full of sorrow as she answers and he watches as her mate tries to comfort her with subtle touches.

Without asking, his mate leaves the room to investigate the rest of the property. A large part of him wishes to go with but another part, the part trained in formal manners remains perfectly still as he debates about what to do. Within minutes his bondmate is back, eyes still narrow as he looks at each person in turn again and then starts to move them around much to the shock of the crows. As new crows arrive he carefully studies them as well before placing them into the groups he has made. When the house is over flowing with crows, as is the yard around it, Daria comes walking in and there is a kind of cold fury on her face. Most of the crows can smell that she is a viper and they visibly with draw from her, terror in their scents. The dark empathy goes into over drive.

“Eldest, I have been called for?” her voice is soft, but there is a lash of anger as she studies the room.

His dark-haired human answers before he has a chance. “Yes, of course, you are a viper right?” he inquires cocking his head to the side and looking at her but also looking past her.

She nods, “Indeed,” she remarks her scales covering her for a brief moment in shimmering blues, greens, and purples.

“Would you look at this set please? I divided them based on what I could determine.” He shows her to the smallest group he had made, there are a total of six people in it, all of which are scowling at him and trying to back up but running into a wall.

She turns her attention to the group he has pointed to, and steps closer, her mate is close behind her, guarding her as he always does. Slowly she studies each before flickering her tongue out to catch a taste of their scent. It was a gift he did not envy the snakes for having. When she is done she steps back and arches one delicate eyebrow.

“These three do not taste of the taipoxin that is in the air.” She remarks, her hand slowly wavering between the three.

“Thank you,” he murmurs as he looks at each of them in turn. “You’re not it, you have a snake in your bloodline so the venom does not touch you. However do talk to your lover about her infidelity. It is the first case I have seen within an actual nest. Also try acting with a bit more confidence and you will have better luck getting that promotion you want.” He tells the first one before turning to look between the second and third ones. “One of you is poisoning everyone. Why?”

It is a male and female set he is looking between but his mate’s eyes are narrow as he studies them. “I see,” he eventually murmurs taking a step back, “it’s both of you.”

Before anyone can say anything the female lunges forward, her hand curled into claws as she reaches for his tall mate’s throat. Only his mate moves faster, tripping her and stepping down on the center of her back to keep her still. The male doesn’t get a chance to do anything because Nathan wraps him in his long tail when he shifts to his half-form, the gleaming purple-blue scales holding
him still.

“What?” the old man cries out staring at them, “Why?”

“She wants a child but is unbonded, it caused her to feel jealous of every person with a family within the nest, which happens to be most of you. He wants to bed her but knows it is wrong because they are siblings. I am not sure which one came up with the idea, I think it was her.” his bondmate looks down at the female he has pinned beneath his feet as he pauses for a moment. “She works in a zoo, around animals, so she carefully milked the venom from various creatures and then proceeded to give it to all of you in small doses. This has been in the making for a very long while. She probably volunteers to help the sick, when in truth she is poisoning them further.”

The old man sighs, staring at her with tears in his eyes, “I don’t understand, we are family, why?”

“Family?” she snarls from the ground, his bondmate steps off her back so he can grab her, “The only family you care about is your own. The rest of the nest is just a means to an end for you! I hate all of you!”

“Do you have somewhere to put her while she awaits council?” he inquires of the crow.

The crow shakes his head sadly, “We have had one of the most peaceful histories among any of the species, there has never been a need before.”

“Daria, make her compliant please.” He orders the viper, knowing that she would love a little bit of retribution right now. This might not be her den, but she never takes well to children being harmed. The crow should feel lucky it is not Eric who is here because his punishment would have been a lot swifter and a lot worse.

She nods, her small hand shooting out to grab the crow by the throat as her mind locks on. A moment later the crow is staring blankly at the floor, her mind has been locked away. Turning her attention to the male her mate holds, Daria repeats the process with him as well.

“There is the shadow of something in her mind, something it would take a full mindhealer or a telepath to read. I would actually suggest he check them, but that you are here if he does so.” She does not have to state what she is talking about. Their pack only had one extremely powerful male telepath.

“Elder, can we attempt to heal the children?” he requests as he looks at them, there are many and most are nearly dead.

The old crow nods, “Some have tried human doctors but they could find nothing wrong. Pita and Kieran have been trying their hardest but you can see it has spread them a bit thin.”

He nods, glancing at Sherlock who is looking at them thoughtfully, before he can comment however his bondmate speak up, “I’ll get the strongest anti-venoms I can get my hands on if you want to work on the children.” Without waiting for an answer he heads out the door and he is really happy that Elspeth is well adjusted to his mate because otherwise he would be worried.

Daria, how would you like to do this? he inquires of the other healer.

I will take the older children, or the children with lesser cases, you are the stronger healer, you take the younger children and those that are close to death. She replies.

He nods, then looks around focusing his iota sight back in and proceeding to separate them further though his bondmate had done a good job of placing them in groups by how badly they were
poisoned. Once they were sorted, he went to work, on the children, starting with the nest elders youngest who was the worst case he had seen. Eric’s dark empathy was now being used to power his healing instead as he worked on each child. He was a little over half way through his collection of little ones when he heard his mate barking orders at someone. A few minutes later a few wolves came slowly and cautiously walking in with his mate not far behind, he was giving directions without stopping to ask once if it was his right or not.

“Can one of you two tell me which poisons which people have?” his mate demands, looking between him and Daria.

*I will, I am running out of healing gift and I am doing nothing more than strengthening their heart and organs. I cannot burn all of it out, it takes too much energy.* She comments, getting to her feet, and walking over to Sherlock.

The two of them start to go through slowly through the adults. Even though he is not listening in, he knows that Daria is using the pack link to speak with him, the taste of emotions and illness heavy in the air is probably messing with her. Eventually she pauses, eyes getting narrow and a moment later a very subdued looking Jace comes in, it is obvious he is uncomfortable, but she proceeds to showing him how to use his iota sight to spot the difference between the types of venoms used.

Meanwhile he keeps working on the children, using the energy provided by all the negative emotions to fuel his healing and burning the venom from the children even as he repairs their insides. He is going to need a long nap when this is done. Even channeling energy from elsewhere was tiring. However he continued to work, and by the time he had completed all of the children, his bondmate, pack iota, and the pup with the ther'a’s gift had completed their rounds of the adults. It was a good thing Jace was a quick study because somewhere towards the end of the adults they had run out of anti-venom and he had gently inquired on the pack link if there was another way. He had paused working on the child he was with for a moment to go over to the wolf pup and help guide him through the burn process, telling him to be extremely careful not to overdo it.

When all was said, there had been more than one-hundred and fifty crows they had treated and it was well past dinner time.

“Alpha Watson, alpha-second, other honored guests, please allow us to feed you before you return home. I have already sent some of the healthier mothers after brand new food and everything else to ensure that no taint is in it.” the elder-second requests as she holds her now healthy child.

Most the families had left after being healed, they had offered a great deal of gratitude and thanks before retreating to their homes to probably purge it of anything the two poisoners might have come in contact with.

For a moment he considers it, sharing a speaking look with the rest of their small group before finally nodding. Someone found a set of chairs for him and the others to sit and most of the nest left it seemed like. It was mostly silent until someone found a piano and slowly began to play various ballads on it. A small smile curves his lips as he listens.

Just before the various crows that had food had gotten back, a loud scream had rent the air sending both him and Nathan to their feet instantly. Sniffing the air he had almost started to laugh when he caught the scent of the packs most rebellious member.

“Mind if he comes in? He is just going to do so anyways knowing him.” he inquires of the crow elder.

“As long as you can promise he means no harm.” The elder-second answers.
Snorting, his bondmate responds, “He likes kids, the only ones that have to fear him are the ones in the basement.” There is a pause then he remarks, “And any who want to harm kids or John.”

The crow stares at his mate for a moment before slowly nodding, “Alright.”

Come in but try not to scare the hell out of everyone. He tells the cobra who he can feel pacing.

Me? Scare people? Never. His tall friend replies as he glides into the house, making most step back as far as they can. A few of the children look at him curiously before their parents pull them back as well. Please crows taste nasty in the air, why would I want to eat them? He inquires on their private link.

“Eric,” he groans as he comes into sight.

The cobra politely inclines his head towards his bondmate and him before extending the same type of greeting to the crows.

I’ll take the majority of my gift back now, dark empathy is not your field. I will channel energy to you to keep you going until you get home. Eric informs him with seriousness as he drops down to a kneeling position beside him and waits patiently. Since you are determined to stay for food because you feel it is polite, I will make sure I think for both of us. Mind if I root around in those two’s brains? I solemnly promise not to harm them.

Be careful about it would you, he replies.

From beside him he feels as Eric links in with the two no longer in the room. A short time later there is a low hiss from the cobra. Almost as soon as it escapes him the pup is beside him asking if everything is alright. His voice low as he stares carefully at Eric’s face.

Not long afterwards several small crow families come back, all of them baring a variety of foods.

Some of the younger crow children upon spotting the kneeling cobra edge closer to study him. The tall cobra smiles gently at them and when one of them touches his scales at his tilts his head a little giving the girl free access.

“They feel different than mummy feathers,” the girl lisp.

A small smile curves the tall man’s lips, “They are scales, care to see the rest of them?”

She nods, pulling her hand back and watching as he flares his hood out. Several of the other children join her, and soon he has been pulled outside to play with the little ones for a bit.

All the food is safe. The cobra tells him as he is pulled outside by the gang of kids.

The scent of shock fills the air as the adult crows take turns watching through the window as the cobra plays with their little ones.

“I never would have imagined,” one of the females mutters right before she calls for supper.
Crows Part 2

John’s POV
Dinner went surprisingly smooth considering the fact they were surrounded by a bunch of nervous crows who did not know what to think of the deadly creature carefully playing with the children and making sure that each of them stopped to eat for a bit. Through all of it, the cobra kept his dark eyes focused mostly on one of the small girls that seemed to stay off to the side more than play, however he never allowed any of the children to look directly into his eyes. When one of the adults inquired about that his head whipped around, his obsidian eyes catching hers and a moment later she was swaying as his cobra mesmerizing ability stopped her breath, he looked away before she fainted.

During dinner he glanced over at the female viper sitting with her family and queries, What did you see in that child’s mind?

Not much, sadly I cannot really recall the differences in any of the children. None of them stood out to me, nor do I recall any with any of the specialized gifts. She replies as she nibbles at the pork chop on her plate.

Nothing more is said between the two of them. His bondmate has started talking with a small group of teenagers who wish to know how he had figured out who the guilty party was so he is explaining the concept of deduction to them. The wolf pup Jace is watching all of the people around him, an edge of nervousness to his actions, but his eyes keep returning to the cobra surrounded by children. The female viper is speaking with the nests healers, while her mate is seated behind her quietly watching. He is fairly certain that Cyanne and Elspeth had collected food when no one was looking and found somewhere to eat but have not yet left the area.

When they are done eating, the cobra goes back to playing with the children, he is intentionally tiring them out, he realizes as he watches them. By the time most the children are sleepy, they head upstairs to the children’s nest, a room designed for large amounts of sleepy children. After most of them have went up to nap, Eric lifts the one he had been keeping an eye on with ease, cradling her against his chest as he makes his way to where he is seated.

Fix her, the cobra commands, his eyes searching the room until he locks onto a man in the corner. Aloud he comments, “I am going to do house cleaning. This den has bad blood.”

The crow elder-second jumps at this announcement, staring hard at the cobra as she considers his words. “What do you mean ‘bad blood’?” she inquires watching him.

“You have two who have been corrupted by a gifted one into attempting to kill their den-mates over petty jealousy. Another who feels it is fine to harm a child because that child is different.” He replies, his voice a low hiss that travels through the room with every adult aware of the threat even though the children are not. “If there are any others with sins that could be deadly, they may wish to speak
up before I find them.”

She blinks, looking at her bondmate and he gets the impression they are talking.

*Your not fixing her John, fix the child,* the cobra repeats as his eyes stay on the man in the corner.

“Jace, come here,” he calls the younger shifter over.

Immediately he moves, stepping up and kneeling next to where he is seated with the cobra so close.

“Elder?”

*We are going to heal the child,* he answers the pup using the pack link. *If Eric says there is some wrong with her that needs healing, then there is. He does not have the healing gift, but his form of empathy allows him to detect when someone is ill or injured.*

The younger shifter nods, his eyes shifting over to the child cradled so carefully in the tall man’s arms.

“How?” he asks curiously.

*I will link with you and show you,* he answers the teenager, carefully connecting their minds together. *Are you aware?*

Slowly the pup nods and he can feel the amazement flowing through the younger man.

*This is how you switch to iota sight, also called healers sight,* he tells the boy as he does so, showing him how to do so as well. *It is similar to what we did previously. Now starting at the crown of her head, carefully scan over her, your healer’s sight will show anything that is physically wrong.*

The younger man does so, stopping just short of the end of her head and frowning, *What is that brightly lit area?*

*Your healers sight telling you where the problem lays. It appears to be a red color near the base of her skull yes?* he answers and questions.

Nodding, Jace doesn’t take his eyes off of her.

*That is nerve damage, unnatural nerve damage, caused by someone using blunt force on her.* He explains, then continues, *this is how we heal it.* Step by step he walks the younger man through the healing until all of the damage to her nerves has been healed. Then slowly the two of them cover the rest of her body. He can feel the crows watching but none of them dare say anything because they are terrified of the cobra that holds the child close. By the time they have finished, they have also touched up some of the breaks to the bones of her ribs that had not been properly treated. At one point he had pulled Daria into the link and she was appalled that she had missed such signs.

Rubbing his jaw softly against the little girl’s head when they complete their work, he feels as the cobra gently rifles through her mind before carefully handing her to Jace and suggesting the pup take her up stairs to the children’s nest. A worried expression settles on the pup’s features as he nods and does as directed. Once they are gone, the rest of the children taking the suggestion to go with him, Eric stands with that fluid grace that all recognize from his cobra movements.

“Three minutes,” he murmurs, there is a quiet fury and promise of pain echoing through his tone, “then I will be checking each of you for taint. John, Sherlock, Daria, and Jace have healed all of you of the poisons and venom, now let’s see what else needs to be dealt with. Do not bother trying to leave, I will check even those not here, believe me when I say I can.”

Four crows admit to theft from humans, one admits he wants to find a second mate because his first
does not seem happy with him, and three admit to beating the shit out of a bloke because he tried to steal their car. All of these are ignored. The man that Eric’s cobra’s gaze is focused on says nothing, continuing just to stare.

He can feel that there is something wrong, but since he is not an active telepath the way that Eric is, he does not know what it is. While he could activate his telepathy, he does not want the flood of information that would come with it. Instead he will wait with the crows, because he knows that the cobra will soon say what the problem is, probably in a highly violent manner.

Something is wrong with him, his mate murmurs, the man in the corner has the look of someone who is trying to hide something. I cannot get a clear enough view of him to determine what it is he is trying to hide.

Alright love, though I think Eric already knows and plans to do something about it, he responds as he watches the cobra.

Sherlock nods, returning to his discussion with the teenagers.

Not long after that those black eyes gleam dangerously his he sweeps the room one more time. He can feel the power swelling around theblack cobra, knows that he is preparing for something but does not ask, he also knows that the cobra will explain himself only when ready to. When no one else steps forward his black eyes swing back to the man in the corner, and he watches as the cobra mesmerizes him, bring him to the front of the group with his predators gaze.

Care to tell everybody why I have singled you out? Eric inquires with a hiss in a broad telepathic murmur ever crow hears.

"For …" he starts to answer but bites his tongue to stop and glares at the cobra who is smiling mockingly.

Go on, confess and perhaps not die a painful death. The cobra mocks the crow.

A snarl escapes the crow as he attempts to lunge at the cobra only Eric side steps with a cruel smile allowing the crow to smash into the wall.

Fool. I am an elite black cobra who served in the military for nearly ten years. It will take more than that to touch me if I do not feel like being touched.

The crows does not get a second chance however, because two of the bigger crows in the room latch onto him and push him to his knees before his elder and elder-second.

Frowning, the elder-second reaches a hand out, pressing her fingertips to the crows forehead center. A soft light covers him as she focuses on him. One breath later, she pulls her hand back and turns her head towards the cobra that is standing perfectly still. Every crow that was near him steps as far away from him as possible.

"You are well known, black cobra,”” her voice is soft as she speaks, her eyes never leaving his face. “He is guilty of the crime of child abuse, the intent to harm a child, and for allowing a child to be uncared for.” She pauses, closing her eyes for a moment, “Had our nest not faced so much misery lately it would have been noticed sooner, however due to the actions of the other two, his crimes were not noticed.”

Again she closes her eyes as she takes a deep breath. Slowly standing, her mate staying close a she approaches the cobra, she continues, “Our nest owes your nest a debt we cannot hope to match. However, in bring this to our attention we also owe you a debt for Kala’s life. I have already
discussed it with my bondmate and elder, he is yours to punish as you see fit.” Pausing, she looks around slowly, “I am tired,” she murmurs before turning her attention to the rest of their group, “We, all of us in the nest, thank you. You did not have to heal our children or help us, for that we are in your debt. Perhaps later we can discuss this? One of the boys will make sure you have a ride home,” she tells us.

Smiling, he stands and gives a partial bow, “What type of healer would I be if I did not help as I can? Now as a doctor I would suggest you get some rest.”

While he is speaking, the cobra had carefully moved past the couple, making sure to give them space in order to not upset their guards who were watching him closely. With a dark smile he moves to stand directly behind the man, forcing him to his feet before sinking his long fangs into his shoulder and letting him drop to the floor.

He will be dead within a few hours, between now and then all of his organs will burn and he will scream non-stop within his mind feeling every bit of pain he ever caused Kala. If I had not already been aware of her having other relatives I would take her myself, but I know that they come for her, so I do not. However, I will watch over her for the night with your permission. He hears the cobra remark.

Many of the crows stare at him in shock including the elders of the nest. Slowly, the elder nods, his voice rough as he answers, “Your protection will be appreciated.”

Without another word, the cobra heads up the stairs three at a time, ignoring all the eyes on him. John, I have the small laptop with me, I will still be tracking the cameras, I had my phone set to alert me if someone tried something.

Alright, have a good night, he replies.

Almost as soon as he is upstairs nearly every adult starts speaking at once.

"Everybody, be quiet!” Sherlock snaps, he does not raise his voice but pitches it to carry instead.

The startled crows listen, most looking around in shock.

"Your elders probably know exactly what they are doing. It is a guarantee that nothing will get near those children tonight. Can you say that about at your homes or at any other time?” he remarks scathingly, “John, I think it’s time to go.”

He chuckles at his bondmates behavior, knowing this is one time he is well aware of all the customs his words are breaking and the fact he is bring the focus to him instead of allowing them to continue being loud.

The wolves that had helped with the anti-venom leave first, after thanking everyone for the food. Daria and Nathan leave next, though they are edgy to do so, their bondson being upstairs with the crow children, however he is asleep and they do not wish to disturb him, it is the first time since he moved in with them several months before that he has not been at home for the night. Finally they go after completing the formal farewells however they state that they do not need a ride. Once they are ready to leave, he shifts into a wolf, allowing his lover to climb onto his back before they take off for home. Tomorrow is soon enough to talk about the day’s events.
Hi everyone, hope everyone is having a good weekend. Thank you to everyone who leaves kudos, reviews, bookmarks, subscriptions, or any other form of communication. I hope everyone enjoys!

John’s POV
As soon as they were within their flat, he proceeded to strip his mate of his clothing as he kissed him senseless. His mate should never smell like a crow and currently he did. The wolf in him was not pleased by this and was determined to fix this problem as quickly as possible. Once his bondmate’s coat, jacket, and shirt are off, he pushes him against the wall, cupping his face in his hands as he returns to kissing him.

“John,” his lover groans as he releases his mouth and proceeds to kiss down his jaw to his slender throat.

“Yes Sherlock?” he murmurs as he sucks on the pulse point of his tall human’s throat.

“Mmmmmmm,” he mumbles in response before asking, “What has you fired up?”

Blunt fingers travel down the planes of his lover’s body to unfasten his slacks as he continues to kiss, suck, and lick at his neck while pressing him against the door. Instead of answering aloud he replies, You smell like crow. Call it one of my primitive moments, but you’re my mate, you should smell like me.

A low chuckle escapes his mate at that pronouncement and he is not sure if he should nip at him for daring to laugh or not. Instead, he drops to his knees, pulling his mate’s pants and slacks down as he does so. As soon as he has the leggings off of him, he proceeds to licking, kissing, and sucking on his stomach and upper legs, just barely brushing his mate’s member as he works the area completely around it with his hands and mouth. He smirks against Sherlock’s skin as he listens to him moan, enjoying the fresh scent of his dark-haired human’s arousal as it fills the air.

After bringing him to the edge of bliss on several occasions he stands, kissing his way back up his lover’s body before pulling his head down in order to kiss his mouth. Several more minutes pass with the two of them rubbing against each other as he holds him in place and kisses him, keeping his lover senseless. Eventually he breaks off kissing him, to spin him around, pressing him against the door.

Sherlock, tell me to stop if this is uncomfortable. He tells his mate as he fishes through his jacket pocket and pulls out the small bottle of lube his mate had shoved in all of their coats and jackets.

Don’t you dare! His mate’s mind voice is firm even as he moans and arches back against the hands moving him into position. Though aren’t you over dressed?

I’m fixing that, he replies absently as he strips off his clothes in less time than it took to remove Sherlock’s. Once he is bare he resumes what he was doing, this time taking to fingers and slowly working his lover’s hole open for him.
“John!” Sherlock’s voice is demanding as he pushes back against him, need and arousal filling the room.

As soon as he is sure that he is not going to hurt him, he pulls him down a little as he thrusts up and in.

Both of them moan, and for a long while the only sounds that can be heard are those of skin on skin and the noises that escape both of them as he fucks him hard against the door. Finally, when he can feel that his mate is getting close, he snakes an arm around his waist and starts stroking his mate’s cock in time with his thrusts, making sure to hit against his prostate as well. Within moments both of them are coming, Sherlock all over the door and his hand, him deep within his mate’s ass.

Carefully withdrawing, he can feel the blush covering his skin as he glances at the mess he made of the two of them and the floor.

After a few minutes of heavy breathing his dark-haired human remarks, “Well that was an interesting reaction. Shower than cuddle?” he suggests.

Still blushing, he nods, leaning down to scoop up all of their clothes to put in the laundry basket before joining his love in the shower. Slowly the two wash each other which leads into another bout of love making. If the first time was frantic, this time ends up being slow and leisurely, as if they have all the time in the world. They start in the shower, but end up stretched out on Sherlock’s bed with his lover being the one on top this time. When they are done, he fetches a warm wash cloth to clean the two of them before they curl up together and pass out in his mate’s bed.

OoO

Eric’s POV

After receiving permission from the crow elders to head upstairs to where the children are, he quickly informs John that he will not be slacking his normal tasks just because he has decided to guard the children for the night. Even if the crows had said no he still would have done so, he just would have shielded first and masked his scent then snuck up there. This was easier.

Upon getting to the room where he can hear the thoughts of so many young people he carefully opens the door and looks in, his dark eyes scanning the sight before him. There are several beds set up in the large room, a couple of small sofas, plus what appear to be random bean bag beds and piles of pillows. Jace is currently sprawled on one of the bean bag beds with a small boy curled up against his side, while several other children are crowded close together so their body heat is shared among them. Kala is tightly curled up on one of the small mattresses.

With a light smile, he wanders towards her, gently lifting her when he is next to her. She stirs, blinking up at him tiredly with a timid smile curving her lips.

Rest, I will protect you until your Uncle Kevin gets here, he tells the small girl as he finds a comfortable spot by the heat vents to settle.

She nods once, snuggling into him and falling back to sleep.

Carefully, he removes the backpack he had kept shielded and takes his laptop from it. Reaching over, he snags a small table from beside one of the beds and pulls it closer, settling his laptop on it with one arm, while he continues to support her with the other. Once the laptop is open, he sets it to the lowest light setting so he can still see but it will not bother the children before getting to work checking the
files he needed to review from the day since it had been slightly crazy. There was nothing new, nor anything he really had to work on. Twitching his shoulders in a partial shrug he sets it to keep going before changing how he is positioned so she is laying long ways against him and his head is resting on a pillow. He has his dark empathy and telepathy open so he will be aware of any threats long before they reach them.

Sometime in the night several of the other small children wake up and spot him. Each of them coming over to where he is positioned and finding a way to cuddle up next to him so his body is surrounded by littler ones. With each addition to the numbers his eyes flickers over them as he checks to make sure there is nothing wrong. By the time morning comes and he feels the first of the children waking for the day, he has been surrounded by small bodies, each curling against each other or him.

As the children wake up, they start to move around, some of the ones who had not had a chance to touch his scales the day before asks if they can now.

Smiling he queries of them, “Would you like to see my snake form?”

Almost all of them clamor yes, including Kala who has not moved from her spot against him even though she is awake. Carefully setting her down he makes sure he has room before shifting, his long black tail takes up most of the floor room. He holds perfectly still as the different children take their time touching his scales. Some run their hands along them feeling the edging and such, others merely poke at them. Several of the small kids climb on him and have fun sliding over the other side of his body.

Somewhere along the way Jace wakes up and proceeds to laughing at the sight of all the children crawling all over him but he says nothing.

Through it all he keeps his telepathy open, listening to the thoughts of the adult crows that are gathering as they awake. When he hears one of the mothers coming up the stairs, he gently reaches for her mind, murmuring, *Be warned I am a large snake with children using my tail as a slide.*

Apparently she thought he was joking because as soon as she opened the door and looked in, she let of a blood curling scream before fainting.

He rolled his eyes at the dramatics. Most of the children who were playing on him stopped to look over at her before shrugging and going back to playing on his tail. Her older child, a little boy around ten, hurries to her side to check on her, as does Jace. As soon as the child is sure she is fine, he comes back over to join the other children in playing. Jace meanwhile finds a comfortable spot to sit as he watches the various children and the adults who come to stare.

He just gives a shake of his massive head, not bothering to warn any of the other adults that he can hear rushing up the stairs. A few moments later the door is full of shocked crows watching as the various children take turns playing on his tail.

*Shouldn’t all of you be doing something other than stare? I am certain I have been told at least once that staring is rude.* He remarks to all the adults in the room and door.

Most of them shake their heads in shock. Some collect up their children and bid him a good day before heading off. Almost all of the children ask him to visit again before heading off with their parents. Eventually, there are very few children left, just the crow elder’s three children, Kala, and two little boys who have kin-scent to the elders.

As he smells breakfast downstairs, he returns carefully to his human form, packing up his laptop and
backpack before putting it back on and re-shielding it.

“Come on, little ones, I smell food, surely you all are hungry after spending the last hour climbing on me.” he comments, carefully giving a small push with his mind to get them to get them to go eat. It works with all of the children except Kala who looks up at him with bright brown eyes that have golden rings in them. Her, he carefully scoops up before raising an eyebrow at the wolf pup who has not moved from his spot by the door. “Everything alright?” he inquires, politely keeping out of the younger shifters thoughts.

Blinking rapidly, the smaller man stands, stretching, “Sorry, I was drowsing,” he murmurs.

He nods once and the three of them head downstairs. Upon getting to the kitchen, he carefully sets the small girl down, before making her a plate to eat. When the crows offer him a plate he ignores them in favor of watching to make sure that she has no difficulties with the food, and listening to the thoughts of most the adults here. Jace’s are just on the edge of his awareness and he actively seeks to avoid them as he listens to the crows.

About the time Kala completes eating her breakfast, he hears the thoughts of an older crow male and a slightly younger bluebird female. They are here for Kala.

As he waits, he quietly looks through both their minds, making sure that they are suitable for the little girl before they ever have a chance to get to the room. A few minutes later, they come walking in with the crow elder.

“Kevin, Tania, this is Eric and Jace of the Watson pack, they helped us deal with the situation yesterday.” The elder introduces the two newcomers to them.

He glides forward a few feet, his tongue quickly flickering out to lick his bottom lip and taste the air as he does so. He says nothing as he does so, taking a measure of how they react to his presence. Surprisingly enough, while the crow steps back, the bluebird steps forward challengingly.

I must thank you for helping our niece out. When her parents died two months ago in a car accident, she was injured and we were in the States, visiting my family. I was attending to my sisters birthing. Chet had assured us that he would have no difficulties taking care of her. She tells him, her mind voice high pitched and cheerful, Had we realized that he would harm her, we would have been back sooner. I can feel the healing gift within her, it not yet manifested when we were home last. She will be properly trained. You are welcome to visit as you like. I get the impression that both you and her would appreciate it.

Unusual, he murmurs as he shifts closer, seeking to see if she would flinch or not. Instead she holds perfectly still, her eyes following his movements.

You are a black cobra, I have nothing to fear from you. She replies, her mind voice still cheerful. Cobra’s are only dangerous to those that they have a bone to pick with. You have no cause to have one with my mate or I. I grew up around cobras. When I was a nestling, a fire destroyed most of my home because of Hunters. A nest of cobras found me, you can imagine it was terrifying since I had heard many times about the terror a cobra can inflict. However the family that took me in treated me no different than their nestlings. By the time I was an adult, I considered myself more cobra than bird despite the fact I turn into a bird. I am still in touch with my serpent family despite the fact I am now a part of a nest of crows who are highly wary of them.

She brings forth the memories of her childhood, the fire that nearly killed her, and the cobra that found her and took her home to the couple that would become her family. They were all golden colored cobras with darker brown markings. Despite that, he knew that she would have been raised
with similar familial values as his own.

With a polite smile, he steps back a bit, bow slightly. *I have already executed the sorry excuse for a crow that was her other uncle. If you will excuse me Tania, I have duties to attend now that I do not need to worry over Kala’s protection.*

The bluebird bows slightly, the bow of one cobra to another, before she replies, *Again our thanks. Come visit some time, I am sure she will appreciate it, and I would appreciate the company of someone who understands tradition.*

*Ready Jace?* He queries as he does a partial bow to the bluebird, and politely inclines his head the rest of the adult crows he feels deserve respect.

“I, yes, of course,” the pup replies slightly startled out of his thoughts.

Kneeling down so he is level with the small crow girl, he brushes her rich brown hair out of her face as he bids her farewell, *I have work I need to do, however your Uncle Kevin and his mate Tania will take good care of you. If you ever need me, just reach with your mind and you will find me, I promise.*

She nods slowly, eyes wide as she stare at him before throwing her arms around him in a hug.

Smiling, he hugs her back before straighten and heading towards the door without another word. He had made sure that he had a link formed to the girl while she was sleeping. In the months to come he would make sure to check in on her from time to time. Jace quickly babbles his farewells before trotting to catch up with him just as he reaches his motorcycle. After getting on, he passes the younger man his helmet before calling his scales to the surface of the rest of his face and head, along with the second set of eyelids that would protect his eyes from the air. Moments later the two of them are on the road as he heads towards the viper’s home to deliver their bond-hatchling to them.
July and August

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

One other quick note: there are two pack meets a month. The meeting held on the full moon is called the month pack meeting, the one held on the new moon is always called a new moon meeting. Full moon meetings tend to be the serious type, new moon ones are more like social events.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV

In the next few weeks between the June pack meeting and the July pack meeting seem to go in a flurry as life picks up. He works at the clinic on days when they need him, other days he works with Jace on learning to focus his healing gift on days Daria has to work, he spends time with his bondmate, has the occasional drink with Greg, and works on his duties to the pack. So the day of the next pack meeting goes smoothly. Unlike the previous month where there had been fun events, this one goes dully, the only eventful thing being a couple of the wolf pups ask his mate if they can learn chemistry from him and he agrees though when they get home he is not sure where to do so at.

The morning after the July pack meeting, he awakes to the sounds of Sherlock in the kitchen puttering with his equipment.

Stretching, he gets out of bed and heads to the bathroom to get cleaned up before going to kiss his bondmate good morning on the side of his pale throat before moving on to make tea. Once the tea is done, he sets a mug down for his mate before going to his seat and drinking his while considering his plans for the day. The first thing to do is talk with Mrs. Hudson about 221C before he continues.

A few minutes later, he heads downstairs to her flat, knocking softly twice so not to alarm her.

“Morning,” she replies, leaning against the wall as she asks, “I was wondering if we could lease out 221C as well? I will have it cleaned up and remodeled. You don’t have to worry about that.”

She blinks at him for a moment, before answering, “Of course! But what’s wrong with your flat? You two did not have a domestic did you?”

He gives a small shake of his head, replying, “Nothing’s wrong with the flat, some of my cousins have talked Sherlock into helping them with their chemistry and I do not want several of them doing experiments in the kitchen, since my inheritance has recently come through, I have some spare money and figured it would be easier just to rent C from you. Then the downstairs can be turned into a lab, with complete proper ventilation of course.”

Now that she is reassured, she beams at him, bustling back into her flat and grabbing her key ring. A moment later she returns and hands the key to the downstairs flat to him. “Here you go, just be careful would you? The mould and dampness aren’t safe.”
He nods, smiling, “Thank you, probably tomorrow or the day after the contractor will be by to check it out.”

She nods, and he bids her farewell before going back upstairs to text Eric, only before he gets there he feels the brush of the cobra’s mind against his.

Yes? he answers the mental request for attention.

*I am getting ready to go over to Kevin, Tania, and Kala’s house, would you like to come?* The cobra queries in response.

*Let me see what he has planned for today, and if it does not include mad dashing across the city that sounds like a fun idea.* He replies as he finishes heading up the stairs and heads to the kitchen.

“Sherlock?”

“Yes?” his mate answers distractedly.

“Are you planning on leaving the flat any time soon?” he queries.

“Nope,” the tall human absentmindedly replies.

He nods once, stating, “Alright, I am heading out with Eric for a bit. I have rented 221C to have it turned into a lab for you and the pups to use. I’ll have a contractor here tomorrow to determine what all needs to be fixed in it.”

“Alright,” his mate responds still focused on his project.

Shaking his head, he heads out, calling for Eric as he does so,

*Outside, I have the car today, decided it might be easier to use then the motorcycle if you decided to come along.* The sarcastic cobra replies as he opens the door and spots his tall friend leaning against the side of his racer.

Chuckling, he shakes his head before closing the door behind. “You’re still something else.”

Of course, ready?

The tall shifter replies as he slides into the drivers seat of the car.

Smiling, he climbs in the passenger seat and has barely fastened his seat belt when the cobra is off, the vehicle moving at an alarmingly fast rate of speed but he knows better than to comment. It is rare that the cobra ever drives slow. With his ability to hear thoughts for several blocks away, he is good at keeping track of other vehicles and reacting long before anyone else would have ever had a chance to. Within a few moments they are pulling in front of a moderately nice small house several miles from the flat.

As the two of them get out of the vehicle, a pleasantly plum young woman with light ginger curls comes walking out the front door. Surprisingly large blue eyes light up when she spots the tall cobra. It is a different reaction then one he normally sees in fellow shifters.

Greetings! She murmurs in their minds.

Hs is startled when his tall companion does a partial bow towards her. It is not something he tends to do. Good morning, Tania, my I present the elder of my den, Thera Elite Wolf Elder John Watson, this is Thera Bluebird Tania Pierce.

The bluebird female bows low, similar to the bows that Eric has given him on the rare occasions he
follows tradition. *It is good to meet you Elder, I thank you for your assistance with my niece.*

He inclines his head politely, healer to healer. It is rare that the cobra will voice the fact that he is a thera, but then considering she is one as well, the chance of their being problems is little. “Nice to meet you,” he murmurs. Curious, he tilts his head to the side and inquires, “Is there a reason you prefer telepathy? I know he does it because he cannot stand tasting everything as he speaks.”

*My sister recently gave birth, she nearly died, and I asked for mercy, the price for her to live was I cannot use my voice for one year. I am a good telepath, so it is alright. She explains, it means I deal only with shifters, otherwise I stay away because I do not wish to risk being noticed by non-nest members.*

He nods, understanding exactly what she means. The Shadow Mistress never asked a price that was impossible, but the price was always something that was worthwhile to the person paying it.

*Come in, please, Kala will be excited to see you.* She tells the pair before opening the door to her home and motioning them inside,

Once inside, he can smell that there are two crows present, one being the child he had healed a few weeks previously, the other being an adult male. When they get to the dining room, the little girl is eating her breakfast, when her head jerks up and she smiles.

“Hello sweetheart,” Eric murmurs aloud, greeting her. *Hello Crow Kevin, this is my den Elite Wolf Elder John Watson.*

“Hello Eric,” the little girl replies after she finishes her bite of food, “You came to visit!” her tone is a combination of excited and shocked.

The cobra smiles at her, nodding and answering, “I said I would, this is John, do you remember him?”

She nods slowly after staring at him through a few bites of food. When she is done eating, she quickly takes her dishes to the kitchen before grabbing the cobra’s hand and leading him out of the dining room, he cannot help but smile at the sight of the tiny girl leading him away.

“Is it safe to leave him with her?” the crow inquires, glancing at his mate with a bit of nervousness in his expression.

*Of course, it is no different than leaving her with one of my relatives.* The bluebird replies as she cleans the dishes in the kitchen.

“No offense love, I know your relatives, he is cobra with a reputation for being deadly.” The crow replies still staring at the door the other two had just left through.

*As well he should, all cobras are deadly, however it is a commonly known fact that all cobras like children too except the oddest of their kind. He is no different than any other cobra in that regard just because he is marked as a Blessed One.* She replies, her tone serious as she puts the dishes away. *Now be polite to our other guest.*

Her mate flushes, as he turns to face him, “Sorry, after everything that has happened lately to our family I am nervous about anything that might be a danger. Though if Tania says he is safe, then I will trust her word, can I get you some tea or coffee?”

“It’s alright, as an alpha I can understand the worry, particularly since I served in Afghanistan with part of my pack for nearly ten years. Tea would be great thanks,” he replies to the nervous man and
suddenly understands why he is here. Eric brought him to meet the healer for one thing, and to
comfort this crow for another.

The next few hours are spent with him chatting with the crow and his bluebird mate while the tall
cobra spends the time playing with the little crow. At some point the two of them go outside where
he carefully throws her in the air and catches her while the three adults watch from the living room
window.

“She has the markings for a crow, but has not yet shown any sign of wishing to shift. I do not know
if that means that she is going to develop late, or if she is going to be one of the ones who can only
partially shift.” The crow murmurs as he watches the tall man with his niece.

“Trauma can cause the shift to be delayed,” he remarks, watching with a smile. This is a side of the
cobra that is rarely seen by their pack mates because the rest of the pack tends to keep him from
pups. “Give her time and I am sure she will shift with no problems.”

The other two nod and the three of them go back to the conversation that they were having. Not even
an hour later, the cobra comes in carrying a very sleepy Kala tucked against his chest up to her room.
A few minutes after that he is back downstairs, inquiring if he is ready to go. It reminds him so much
of his mate he cannot help but laugh as he bids the crow and bluebird farewell and heads to the car
with his tall friend.

As they are driving back to the flat, he tells the cobra about his plan for 221C. When they pull up to
the flat, a solidly built man is waiting on for the one the sidewalk.

"Eric what have you done now?" he inquires as he studies the stranger.

The cobra replies with a shrug as he shuts the car down and joins him on the sidewalk.

_Eric._ He sighs warningly.

_It is completely legitimate, I merely informed him he may have a client and where to be as we were
driving home, I was even polite about it._ The cobra replies before making the introductions between
them.

Once that is done, the three of them head in and he shows the crow to the basement and explains
everything that he needs this lab to be able to do. While he is speaking, the crow is quickly writing
notes and asking questions here and there for clarification. When he is done telling him everything
that is needed he repeats the information back to him to confirm. Upon getting a confirmation, he
bids them farewell and says he will have a team over the next day to begin the process of preparing
the flat to be fixed.

Once the crow is gone, the cobra and him head upstairs where he makes everyone tea while Eric
sprawls in his chair.

“That’s going to cost a fortune,” he mutters to himself.

He should have expected an answer because the cobra hears him and remarks, “Not really, he will
not charge you for the labor, and he will get all of the supplies and materials needed at contractor
prices so it will cost less than if it was just you going to buy the things. Everything will be up to
code. I will make sure that the security for it is solid.” The cobra accepts his tea, “thank you,” he
mutters appreciatively.

Shaking his head, he sits down on the sofa and glances over at his mate who is still working on his
After finishing his drink he shrugs, standing, “It’s part of my job you know, drive you nuts by getting projects done fast, quick, and in a hurry. And look, no intimidation needed, all of it was smooth because they are feeling thankful.”

With that the cobra leaves after placing his cup in the sink.

The rest of the night goes smoothly, he even manages to talk his lover into eating a few bites of dinner though it is not as much as he would like, it is still better than nothing. After checking with his mate about bed, he heads up to the room on the second floor and passes out. Knowing Eric the next day is going to be the beginning of a rapid fire action filled few weeks.

The next morning comes as early as it always does, and includes a visit from Mycroft during which time Sherlock pauses from his experiments long enough to share a cup of tea with his older brother while sharing cutting remarks between them. His brother has a case that he would like him to consider. He is surprised when his mate accepts the case and shortly after the team of crows shows up, they on their way out.

Old Gods be thanked, it ends up being a moderately quick case. His mate has it solved and the person who is causing the problems in Mycroft’s custody before dawn the next day. As the two of them collapse into bed he inquires why they had done it and his mate mutters something about the other guy being a famous chemist that he wanted to meet but had been disappointed by the man.

The weeks between the July pack meeting and the August pack meeting going mostly the same way as the ones between June and July, the noticeable difference being the works who seem to always be going on the flat downstairs. During that time there is also five different cases from Greg that they end up helping with. The last one ending when he had snapped one of the suspects neck in a fight because the man was trying to strangle him while his partner had been beating the shit out of his mate. Greg had not been pleased to only have one of two, but the surviving one had been very willing to talk as long as Greg kept him away.

Two days prior to the August pack meeting the 221C was done and he was able to present it to his mate who seemed to be completely surprised by it. Where before 221C was a dark, moldy, wet mess, it was now a well lit and well ventilated lab that could rival the one at Barts. One of the bedrooms had been turned into a walk in refrigerator, however there was also two regular refrigerators for his use as well. Apparently the set up pleased him because he was quickly pinned to the door of the newly made lab while Sherlock kissed him senseless.

To say they got nothing done for the next few hours would not be an understatement.

The rest of the day went towards him relaxing while his bondmate fluttered about moving all of his equipment and supplies from the kitchen and living room down to the now ready lab. He was even able to get him to eat an actual dinner though he is not sure what the occasion is besides the completion of the lab. They are just getting ready for bed when a text comes in from Greg asking for their help because there has been a triple homicide and he has absolutely nothing but three dead bodies.

It’s probably a good thing he spent all day relaxing, he thinks as the two of them take off. It looks like it is going to be a long couple of days. Somehow they manage to accomplish it just in time to do the August meeting and he is thrill when it is done, because he is ready to go home and sleep. Once done with the pack meeting they do just that.

Chapter End Notes
On another note, I decided to start posting Formation early. I have most of it hand written and will be posting it as I get it typed, however I work faster when I know folks are reading.
Hi all, thank you to everyone who has encouraged me in any way, shape, or form, it is appreciated!

Sorry this is a bit late, real life has been a pain in the rump the last few days, I will be working on chapter three of Formation next.

As always, all reviews, comments, and other forms of communication are loved.

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**John’s POV**

Another month seems to fly by and by the end up September a pattern has been reestablished once again. He works two or three days a week at the clinic, covering shifts for the others as needed, has the occasional night out with Greg, Mouse makes her twice weekly trips to the flat to work with his mate on the packs history and any other useful information about the world of shifters, and twice a week two to six of the teenage pups comes over to work on experiments and chemistry with his mate.

Those first few times had been highly amusing as the pups had collected up all of his randomly scribbled on notes and somehow put them into coherent order, then turned around and quizzed him to retrieve all of the missing information until they had completed the projects and had them in a logical system that the youngest of pups had typed up on the special computer system the packs cobra had installed. Each time they come over the first thing they do is see if he has any new experiments and if so properly record them.

According to Tobe, the oldest of the wolf pups, they find the various experiments to be highly interesting, particularly since his mate lacks some of the gifts of the shifters yet is able to notice things that the wolf pups sometimes missed. While some of the girls disliked body parts, of the eight of them that regularly alternated, three wished to become police and had decided to learn what they could from their alpha-second who often worked with their single Scotland Yard member. The fact that the alpha-second was able to outdo the detectives was something all of the pups thought was a great thing. They wanted to be able to do it too.

So when Greg called while the three oldest were there, his bondmate accepted the case even though he said it was a no more than a four with a smirk. “Come along John, lets see how well these three have been listening.”

All three wolf pups dance around for a moment, full of excitement before straightening up and grabbing their coats. Expectantly they stand there waiting for the two of us to head out so they can follow. If they were in their wolf forms their tails would be wagging.

Shaking his head he looks at each of them carefully before stating, “You will follow all directions given by myself, Sherlock or Greg, is that understood?”

“Yes alpha,” they chorused still looking like excited pups.

“This person may be dead but they still deserve respect, the Earth Lord watches and knows when it
is not paid.”

All three bow their heads respectfully before chorusing again, “Yes alpha,” their tones more serious now.

“Come on John, lecture them later,” his impatient mate demands from the front door.

He is just wondering how they are all going to get there, a total of five of them is not fitting in a cabbie when a sleek black car similar to Mycroft’s pulls up only it has a crow driving it instead when she gets out to grab the door.

“Hello, Elder Watson, I got a message from the venomous one stating that a mode of transportation was needed as per the contract.” She states with a smile, “I’m Cassie.”

“Hello Cassie,” he mumbles just before his mate gives the crow the address and clamors into the back of the car with the three pups.

Shaking his head, he joins the others in the car and a moment later they are on their way. The three pups are silent as they patiently sit there, while his mate is looking at them speculatively. He merely watches out the window as the car goes down the road. A few minutes later they are pulling up outside of the crime scene, and she is parking the car off to the side so it is out of the way but convenient for their return use.

When they approach the perimeter it is with Sherlock in the lead and him bringing up the back with the three boys in the middle.

“What do you want freak?” she demands stepping in the way. He is not surprised when Sally Donovan tries to stop their small group.

What does surprise him is how the three pups flank her.

Tobe, the oldest of the group to study with his mate, steps directly in front of her, looking down his nose at her the same way his mother does when she is questioning someone. “You must be the jackal without a pack. I would suggest you have manners.” He states loftily, his mother is a lawyer he understands perfect well how make someone back down.

Aaron, the pup who had taken her right side tilts his head to the side studying her, “Really though, you are breaking no less than three pack laws, is it really a good idea to be insulting to a pack alpha and his alpha-second?”

“She’s a bit dimwitted,” the third pup, Konrad, states from her left side, “Perhaps she has been hit in the head too many times,” he suggests as he steps into her private space. He had been taking lessons from the cobra on how to intimidate and use his natural gift of telepathy. “However, I doubt that is the problem, now be a good little jackal and call the detective inspector.”

Greg, I think your detective is having a bad day, he comments to his friend using the pack telepathic link as Sally calls him on the walkie-talkie.

“Freaks here, with extras, bring them in?”

This time when the pup to her left shifts closer he growls low in his throat, “Mind your manners, wolves are the second oldest race, jackals the sixth, you’re damn near human according to scent and without a pack. I think you should recall your place.”

Before she has a chance to say anything all three step back and into line and watch as the jackal-child
who is part of their pack approaches.

“Hello detective inspector,” the three of them chorus as if they had not just been causing problems for his detective.

“Sherlock, John, why are there three pups with you?” he greets them, waving the female jackal away.

“We’re learning about deduction and chemistry from the alpha-second, sir,” Tobe answers, “each of us is interested in law enforcement in some way.”

“With your permission we would like to see if the lessons of the last month have been any use,” this is out of Aaron, using his most diplomatic tone.

For a moment the silver-haired jackal-child looks at each of them before sighing. “This is so not right,” he mutters before waving them through.

_Eric will make sure all the paperwork is legal so you do not have any difficulties over this with your bosses. However they did take offense to Sally’s treatment of Sherlock and you may hear about that later_, he remarks to his slightly older friend as he follows the detective inspector into the scene.

_As long as your sure, I don't need extra grief_, the jackal-child replies as watches the three teens out of the corner of his eye.

Anderson apparently is smarter than Sally because he takes one look at the three of them carefully flanking Sherlock and steps back as they approach. When they get to the side of the body, all four stop, the three pups looking for permission from his bondmate before carefully looking over the victim without ever touch her. What he finds amazing with his mate, he finds downright hilarious with three who are each studying her without touching her. Finally all three stand close together by her head and look at Greg as if waiting.

“Well?” the detective inspector inquires when he realizes they are waiting for an invitation.

“She’s a street fighter,” Aaron states.

“A good one too, she’s only dead because she was blitzed from behind by someone far bigger than her.” Konrad picks up, “someone who cracked her skull on the first hit.”

“Despite that, she got a few good shots in before going down. The person responsible for it was her lover at one point, but no longer,” Tobe remarks as he studies her again. “He belongs to a gang or human pack, she did not. That’s what ended them.”

Tilting his head to the side, Konrad comments, “You will find that her day job has something to do with children, possibly teaching, more likely tutoring or nannying.”

Turning to face his bondmate the three wait patiently for the judgment on how they did. Sherlock nods at them, then carefully checks her as well, “Well you got most of it, the only thing you missed is the why. She has a new lover, or is about to, and her previous lover is not happy with this. You will find that there have been several domestic incidents reported at her address, the man from those incidents is the murder. Mention the fact that his gang boss was the one who she was going to start dating and that you will let him know why she is now dead and he will sing like a canary.” His mate doesn’t even pause before turning and heading back to the car with the three wolf pups close behind.

Standing next to him the jackal-child remarks, “I am not sure if I should be concerned or not, scary enough when he does it, but to see three more people who aren’t related do it just as easily is
remarkable. How many is he teaching?"

“Eight of them, three females and five males. Nearly all of the pups over fifteen, I think he is one short. Some of the slightly younger teenage pups are considering taking lessons as well, if only for just the chemistry part to improve their science abilities.” He pauses shaking his head a moment before looking towards the car, “It is surprising, he is caustic with adults but patient with them, or as patient as I have ever seen him. He seems to view them as an experiment and is treating them with care. However, he did lose his temper with Leah when she started quizzing him on all the missing information from his experiment notes, and surprised all of us when she ignored the loss of composure and kept on working.

*John, are you coming yet, we have experiments to do while I still have them for a bit.* His mate comments in his head.

Shaking his head again, he bids his friend goodbye before heading over to the car. He can feel the female jackal watching as he gets in with a cold look on her face. Perhaps he will need to deal with her on a more personal level because this is not going to work. He will not tolerate the behavior towards his mate.

When the five of them get back to the flat, he politely thanks the driver, inquiring if he needs to pay her or not and she shakes her head no, before telling him that the venomous one has already taken care of pay, and has paid quite nicely. He nods once, bidding her farewell before heading inside. The four are already down in 221C and from what he can hear they are discussing the case that they just left. Shaking his head, he stops to say hello to Mrs. Hudson before heading upstairs to the main flat to make tea and work on his pack related work.

Getting lost in his tasks, he barely notices as several hours pass, and soon the pups are filing out of the flat, each stopping to bid him good day before leaving. A bit later, his mate comes upstairs and heads straight to the shower. For someone who works with chemicals and other nasty things at times, he is rather oriented on being clean. It makes for an interesting combination. While his mate is in the shower, he puts his computer work up and proceeds to making dinner. He had just finished with the food as Sherlock comes walking out, a towel low on his hips and another rubbing at his hair.

“John, what can you tell me about Konrad?” his mate inquires as he heads into his bedroom to grab some clothes.

When he comes back out, he replies, “Konrad is the son of Kim-ann and a German black wolf who died in a car accident three years ago. They were another example of a bond not treated right, she didn’t want to go to Germany and he did not want to give up his career. So they split the custody of Konrad and only saw each other during her heat. She had been on a plane back to London, Konrad at his paternal grandparents’ house visiting when his father’s breaks went out and smashed into the side of a semi-truck on an icy road, it was the last freeze of the year. After that he stopped going to Germany but his German and Russian relatives come here every year for his birthday. He is closest to his paternal great-grandmother who has a home just north of London and stays there for a few weeks a year just to spend time with him. She is actual the one who advised him to seek lessons from Eric because he is a strong telepath. I had originally arranged for him to have lessons from Jeffery, the packs omicron because I did not think he would accept them from Eric.” He pauses shrugging, “While the other pups were asking you for lessons, he was asking Eric. The shock the cobra felt was rather amusing.”

His mate nods, grabbing his plate and settling into his chair to nibble at his food. Over the last few months his mate had gotten better about eating, and while he still does not eat nearly enough, he is closer now than he had been.
“Do you know what his goal is?” his mate inquires as he finishes his food.

“To work for the pack as a tracker,” comes his reply as he continues to eat. “He wants to hunt rogues.”

“I’ve heard that term before, what are rogues?” his mate asks as he sips at his hot chocolate.

“Rogues are those who like to harm others for the pleasure of it. The criminal class among shifters and gifted. Trackers are the law enforcement of our kind. Then there are the Hunters, those who kill the other race without cause. Eric lost his family to a pack of Hunters, and he went on a Shadow Goddess blessed hunt himself. It’s how he got his reputation actually.”

For a bit the two of them were silent, neither saying a word as each considers the information he had just shared. He can just about see the wheels turning in his mate’s mind.

Finally, Sherlock inquires, “Cyanne has not answered me about the Old Gods. Why? I hear them referenced often.”

He sighs, setting his plate aside, “It’s a sore subject among our kind and left purely within families to determine how to react. In total we have seven Old Gods as we call them, and they are rarely called by name. Human gods and goddesses do not answer to those who serve them. They rarely respond to prayers, pleas, or any other form of communication. Our gods on the other hand, answer rather regularly. Particularly for elites who are the direct descendants of the first of our kind, those considered the children of the gods.”

He pauses, looking off into space as he thinks, “There are three males, and four females among the Old Gods. By our mythos, all life is created by the Shadow Mistress, Verhaiya, Goddess of the Void. From her begins all of creation, all destruction, and everything in between. It was her will that brought forth the other six, they who share her aspects.”

He stands, collecting the dishes and heading into the kitchen with them, he doesn’t actually wash them, just put them in the sink, he will wash them in a bit, right now he is still considering how to continue this lesson. It is a difficult one for him to do because he knows that speaking their names calls their attention since he is an elite. Returning to the living room, he sits down and continues, “After the Shadow Mistress, comes the twins Iyora and Emberan, Dusk Daughter and Dawn Son, the Goddess of Darkness, and her twin brother, the God of Light.”

Taking a deep breath he glances over at his mate who is staring at him in fascination. “By our mythos, the last four all appeared at the same time, though the females are often listed before the males when considering the order. There is the Wind Keeper, Ayanuh, Goddess of the Air; Sea Mistress, Cydrianah, Goddess of Water; the Flame Lord, Phuryphaen, the God of Fire; and Earth Lord, Thalon, God of Earth.”

Again he pauses, he can feel the attention of the Old Ones on him so he sends up a silent apology, explaining quickly that he is teaching his mate of the Old Gods for he is human. Almost all the attention vanishes, except for her, his patron goddess.

“Now the Old Ones are very active in our world, even if you do not see it. Any elite can call on their patron, whether it be personal or racial, to assist them. However to do so there is always a price. Depending on who the patron is, is what type of price a person will be paying, for each one of the Old Gods has a different idea of prices. From there it is important to understand that a lot of those who follow the Old Way, or the Deep Traditions as they are also called, are very aware of rank and placing. Then there are those who follow what is called the New Traditions, very similar to the Old Ways but lacking one key feature, the fact that our kind can request assistance from the Old Gods. The last set follows the human gods and has often turned against those who show any sort of favor from the Old Gods. All immortals are children of the Old Gods and one of the other species, whether
it is shifter, gifted, human, or non-related immortal. The gifted used to serve the Old Gods but have turned away from them for whatever reason, or their beliefs have been corrupted into a more human like thinking and that’s why there are problems between our two races.”

He stops to rub his neck before asking, “Does that answer your questions? At least for now, because I really do not like the attention I am currently getting.”

His mate nods once slowly, and he watches as he gets comfortable on the sofa, falling deep within his mind to consider the information. After all, he has learned rather a lot today about the pack, their traditions, and how well the pups are picking up the skills he is teaching them. While his mate is lost in his mind palace he works on cleaning everything up in the flat. In the back of his mind he can still feel her presence and he is not sure what to do about it.
October Birthdays

Chapter Notes

So hey, hi all, this would have been posted sooner, only my medicated mind sort of saved over it (I am totally blaming it on the fact it has been a long weekend). I hope every enjoys

As always any sort of communication or review is appreciated.

Sherlock’s POV
He had been surprised when the wolf pups had approached him about receiving training in chemistry and deduction. Then he had surprised himself by agreeing to do the lessons. John, upon hearing of this had acquired 221C for his and his new students use as a lab, then proceeded to have it converted. While he had known what his lover was doing, he had not realized quite how much thought had been put into the idea until he was able to see it. He had been flabbergasted by the sheer beauty of his lab. It was as good as Molly’s at the morgue.

It was a good thing that he had been alone with John when he was showed his new lab because the first thing he did was snog him senseless which turned into more pleasurable activities.

Now, almost two months later he was still thrilled every time he stepped into his lab. Today however was not going to be an experiment day, instead he was getting the things ready for tomorrows lessons with the wolf pups since tonight he was going to the September pack meeting.

While he was there he wanted to find out from John aunt when his love’s birthday is. Originally he had been surprised to discover that his aunt was the one who’s home the meetings were at. When asked why, his lover had shrugged and said it was tradition, not explaining why that first meeting when John got back had been held at their flat then. The hours pass quickly between when he begins to prepare for the following days lessons with the wolves and when it is time to get cleaned up to go to the pack meeting. Like any time they are going to a pack meeting, he cleans himself up and dresses in one of his better outfits, like every time they go to the pack meeting, he enjoys the ride on his lover’s wolf form back.

Upon getting to the Watson family property he kisses John on the cheek before ambling away to find the older female wolf. Sadly, he could not remember her name, which probably was not a good thing considering that they were family by pack standards. Still, she was easy to find and he waited until she did not seem busy to actually approach her.

“Hello Sherlock,” she greets him without turning to face him from the direction she is pointed. “It’s Sandra, or Aunt, most the pack calls me Aunt since I am one of the older members alive right now that is still an active part of the pack. There are others, older than me that are not as active within the pack, they are waiting to see how our lovely young alpha does before declaring their allegiance.”

“Sandra,” he repeats, “Hello, do you know when John’s birthday is? I would like to do something for him without his knowing preferably.”

“The October new moon meeting is on his birthday, I have considered doing something with the pack for it, there was a time when the leading family’s birthdays were celebrated, but Eric stopped
that. I have considered suggesting to John that the new moon meeting being include a small celebration for all of the month’s birthdays but I do not know if he would go for it.”

He tilts his head to the side, considering it. It would be a very useful way for the pack to bond, particularly since his wolf was still trying to find ways to get both sides of the pack to work together with ease, something he rarely did. For the full moon meetings, the Devon portion of the pack always sent a representative but otherwise they avoided the Watson pack. Wait, did that fall under the domestic side which if he remembered correctly was the alpha-seconds job within the pack?

Eric, question for you, he reaches through the link he is well familiar with after his time spent with the cobra.

Yes? Do you wish my physical presence? Or will you ask through here? The cobra replies, his attention is barely on him.

As alpha-second, would it be within my realm to arrange for social events within the pack? He queries of his friend.

A mental snort reached him before the reply, Of course, though I nearly shudder to consider what is a social event in this situation.

He mentally chuckled back at the cobra before filling him in on the conversation he had just been having with the older wolf. Then he fills him in on his idea for the birthday party.

He would appreciate the group idea better, I will have a list for you by tomorrow not of all of the October birthdays that gives you a little over a week to make a plan and execute it. Now I have some wolf pups who are demanding attention since you informed them last month that I like to play. The cobra replies with a mental chuckle as his focus goes from the subject at hand to the two French pups that had joined the pack a few months prior after John had healed them.

The rest of the meeting goes smoothly, his head only partial on the details though he pays attention to the Devon pack representative, something seems off about him.

The following morning John heads to work like normal, while he goes downstairs and waits for the pups to arrive while considering the birthday concept. His mind was still on the subject when Konrad, Dora, Abigail, and Leah all show up for their lessons. First thing that Leah does upon arrival is make sure that all of his notes from his experiments are well organized. While she is doing that he makes sure that each of the four has their kits. Thankfully enough, even though he is distracted, there is little in the way of explosions as they each start their experiment with the seeds and whether they can still grow in various types of acid instead of soil and water.

Afterwards, the four bid him a good day before heading out and he returns to his planning. Thankfully, one of the things included in the information Eric sent him was a list of every pack member including birthday, familial ties since a lot of the pack is related in some way or form, secondary form if they have one, interests, and contact information. Its nearly as complete as a file from Mycroft on a person. Using that information in the chart he carefully considers a variety of options for what to do as a way to celebrate the birthdays, while his main focus is John, he knows that his lover would prefer he focus on the others if he was to know about his birthday plan.

Using his phone, he was able to arrange with a few of the pack-members he was certain would keep their mouth shut and help him out. Aunt Sandra volunteered to make the cake for it, but she needed the list of names of everyone who had an October birthday. Mouse had volunteered to do decorations when he had told her what he was planning, and a few of the mothers when he alerted them to the celebration plans had promised to bring food of a variety. He had also enlisted the help of
Daria for planning some games and such for the younger members.

Over the next few days he got everything organized so on the seventh of October all he had to do was text everyone to make sure they were ready. Sure enough they were, and he was very pleased to see that nearly the entire pack was there, even the Devon members he had invited with October birthdays or family members with October birthdays.

When he and John first got there, he checks with Eric to make sure everything is ready. After the tall cobra confirms that everything is ready, he heads to the back where they normally have the actual meeting at there are tables set up with chairs surrounding them, a long table with a wide variety of snack foods laid out. His bondmate gives him a curious look, he can read the question of why it seemed party like in his eyes.

Smiling, he heads up to the little gazebo where his mate normally makes his announcements from and calls for attention. Pretty close to everyone listens, except for some of the Devon pack members who are there and end up having some of the Watson wolves snap at them.

“On suggestion from one of the esteemed lady wolves, and because it fit wonderfully with my desire to celebrate the fact that John is still alive when he almost wasn’t, I would like to wish every single October birthday a happy birthday, including our alpha, who’s birthday is today.” He tells the collected group before he begins to recite the names and birthdays of each of the pack members born in October. Most of the people listed were actually children, including small Philip who was so new to the pack.

Once his announcement was done and all of the birthday wolves were called to the front, Aunt Sandra had the cake brought out, it was a massive wolf of various types of cake and frosting, the tones mimicking those of the wolves for who it was a gift for. With a smile, the older wolf cuts the cake and proceeds to handing out pieces, making sure that all the children get a slice first before moving on to the adults. There are also gifts for each of the people whose birthday is this month as well. For the children, it is a variety of toys and such, based on interests, while the adults got more practical things for the most part. He had paid a pair of crows to do all the shopping, wrapping and labeling so it would not get back to the gift recipients with a contract to do so again in the following months.

From somewhere a radio starts playing a variety of music, while all the smaller pups are gathered together to play games and have a pleasant time. A pleased smile curves his lips as he watches the results of his planning, enjoying the fact that everything seems to be going smoothly. The real gift to John hadn’t been the cashmere jumper he had selected for him, it was the effort to help the pack bond, because he knew that it bothered his bondmate that the various packs were not merging as smoothly as they could. This would be a good way to help fix that. In a little bit the party part would die down, and they would hold the normal new moon get together which was more of a meet and greet anyways with very little in the way of formal information occurring anyways.

When it was done, and everyone was on their way home, there was a more pleasant feeling in the pack link then he had ever felt before. Several of the teenage pups had helped clean up without being asked to, and he made a note of it, to make sure that they were thanked, though it probably would be nothing more than a quick text message from him doing so.

Upon getting home, the two of them head in from the shift and is second surprise is waiting for John. The flat has been cleaned and redone to almost match the first time the two of them had come together after the incident by the pool. He had enlisted Daria and Mouse to pull it off, and it looked just as perfect this time as last. Only he had added a few of his own touches to the mix, including a long feather that he had been told was erotic to play with, though he could not figure out how, and a
variety of sundae toppings that had been suggested as a part of a playful moment according to many of the sites he had been on.

“Sherlock,” his lover murmurs softly, pulling him close and kissing him as the door is closed, “Thank you, love, for all of it.”

He ducks his head, unused to being praised for getting something right when dealing with a relationship or other people.

Smiling, his wolf lifts his head and kisses him again, a long slow drawl of a kiss, his blunt fingers gently cupping his face. Slowly the two of them make their way over to the rug that has been placed in front of the soft fire in the fire place. Gently, his lover unfastens his coat and throws it on the sofa while he strips him of his jacket and throws it towards his. From there, the two take their time undressing each other, worshipping each inch of skin as it is uncovered by seeking hands. When both of them are bare, they sink down on their knees still touching and kissing.

Carefully the two of them make love, each taking a turn as top and bringing the other to their peak. Somewhere along the way his John had noticed the sundae toppings and had decided that he needed to see what they taste like on his skin, it was one of the most erotic moments of his life as the chocolate had run down his chest with John’s flat tongue following it, swirling around his nipples and belly button before continuing downwards to his cock. By the time he was done, he had a brand new appreciation for sundae toppings. And while the night pasted in a blur, they never did get to playing with the feather when they finally passed out exhausted on the rug to sleep after their fourth round.

Over all he was certain he had succeeded at making this one of the best birthdays his lover ever had. Next year was going to be fun to top it.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

This would have been posted yesterday but I sort of deleted it before I had it save the traditional three times, so I had to retype it, hope everyone enjoys!

Mycroft’s POV
He was surprised when his PA told him that he had lunch scheduled at Angelo’s, he never made lunches for Angelo’s but she was certain that it was. So at the appointed time he had his car deliver him to the restaurant where he discovered his brothers already sitting and talking. Both of them. He cannot remember the last time he saw both his brothers at the same time.

“I see that he was effective at adding lunch to your schedule,” Sherlock remarks as he spots him, turning back to their other brother, he continues, “He is really good at that,” there is a smirk on his middle brother’s face and those mercurial eyes seemed to gleam.

“Hello Mycroft,” Aragorn murmurs, “We’ve only been here for a few moments, I was the first to arrive.”

“Good afternoon, brothers mine,” he greets his brothers as he pulls the chair out and sits down.

Once the owner has left he looks at each one in turn. There is something different about his middle brother though he is not certain exactly what it is. He is sure it has to do with his doctor-blogger flatmate however. As far as his youngest brother goes, well he does not see or speak with him enough to know exactly if anything is different though he does notice that his constant companion is not with him. For a few minutes the three of them sit in silence as they each sip at their hot chocolates.

Eventually the youngest of them glances his way, querying, “Still have the assistant who changes her name often?”

A small smile curves his lips as he nods once, “Indeed. Do you still have Shalen, I believe his name was, as a guard?”

The youngest of them chuckles with a small shrug, “Of course, just because you cannot see him does not mean he is not aware of where I am or who I am with. He found it amusing when my schedule was hacked and this added to it this morning.”

A frown curves his lips as he considers what had just been said. Aragorn might be young but he is
one of the best hackers in the world. There are not many who can out hack him. That’s rather concerning for the politician who is fine with the idea of his brother being able to get past his defense, but bothered by the idea of someone else doing the same thing.

“If your worrying about this being a set up, I am fairly certain it is not.” The youngest Holmes tells him before ordering

“How do you know that?” he just about demanded in his best politicians voice.

A chuckle escapes Sherlock who answers, “Because Eric is the one who did it. He’s big on family and decided I needed to reconnect with my brothers. So he took the best looking time in both your schedule books and added lunch to it.” Then he orders another hot chocolate.

“Eric,” he repeats remembering the taller man with the unusual scales on his face, neck, and hands. He was one of the few people who intimidated him. Though he got the impression he was part of the same pack as John and thus Sherlock. He had also gotten the impression that John was at the head of that pack, but that seemed wrong, leaders were people who had authority and carried themselves as such. The short army doctor did not. Giving an internal shake of his head, he places his order with their host.

Sherlock smirks, sipping at his hot chocolate.

“So have you spent time with John’s family then?” the youngest asks the middle brother as they wait for their food.

He nods once, setting his cup down, “We spend one or two evening a month with them unless there is a case going on. Actually, some of the younger cousins have asked me to teach them chemistry and deduction.” There is pride in his brother’s voice, even a quiet joy which surprises him greatly. His brother has never shown an interest in teaching before.

“Really? How is that working out?” Aragorn inquires politely as the waiter sets their food down in front of them, well two of them.

Again he nods before answering, “Indeed, it’s remarkable how well they are picking it up as well. Apparently a few of the ones working with me have decided to become detectives and think how I do it is better than the Yard, of course they are right.”

Aragorn chuckles at him, shaking his head before turning his attention towards him, “So are you still trying to follow in father’s footsteps?”

He can feel his skin flushing slightly as he replies, “I believe I have surpassed him for influence. However I am in our ancestral position.”

Sherlock smirked and Aragorn nodded seriously.

“So do you two have lunch occasionally or is this completely out of the norm for you?” the youngest of them inquires after taking a few bites.

“I normally avoid him, however John’s very family orientated and keeps pressing me to try and get along better with him.” Sherlock responds after taking another sip of his hot chocolate. “Some days I even listen.”

Confusion strikes him something fierce, Dr. Watson has only been in his brother’s life for a few months but he is listen to with more ease than him, why? What was so special about that shifter? How could he have such an effect on his brother? The loyalty of that threat he had met, and he was
quite certain he was a threat of the worst kind. He could find nothing of true importance in his military history, nearly ten years in the military yet there is next to nothing on it. At least nothing he has clearance to see, which confuses him even further. He had even tried getting in touch with their second cousin, General Avery, to see if he could come up with any information and all he returned with was that the doctor had been in one of the Special Forces units that had nearly complete black records of the hidden kind. If there was anything recorded about it, it would be highly difficult to get and he still had not been able. Nor could he understand how such an unassuming man could be in the Special Forces. It made no logical sense.

Thankfully, despite his confusion, he was able to maintain the conversation and answered almost immediately afterwards, “You know I worry about our family constantly. Even if you ignore me most the time. Though to be fair, you are not nearly as much trouble as him.”

Surprisingly enough the rest of lunch goes smoothly. The three of them speak of nearly pointless things and just work on being calm around each other again. Despite the fact the last time the three of them had been together had been for their father’s funeral, they manage to act as if it is a perfectly common experience for them to sit down in a restaurant and visit with each other. It ends when Shalen and Anthea come walking in together thought they are not speaking. Not far behind them is a teenage boy wearing a black suit of fine quality but watching his assistant with narrow eyes.

“Enjoy lunch?” Shalen inquires as he glances between the three.

His youngest brother smiles, as he stands he replies, “Of course, time to get back to work?”

The solid red-head nods once in response and his little brother glances at the two of them and says, “Well, brothers, its been a pleasant lunch, perhaps we can do this again sometime soon, take care,” and leaves without another word.

“You have a meeting sir,” Anthea tells him, her eyes never leaving her phone as she continues to type though he gets the impression she is uncomfortable about something.

“Thank you,” he murmurs in response, “Good day, Sherlock.”

“Ta,” his middle brother replies, finishing his hot chocolate and standing to sweep out the door with the young man following close behind. When his brother gets outside, he is join by two more teenagers and the group heads towards Baker Street.

Dropping some money for a tip to the waiter, he stands and follows Anthea to the car.

The rest of the day is filled with regular meetings that he had already planned for or Anthea had scheduled in advance. When he is done with that he switches to doing paperwork, working long into the night. It is nearly four in the morning when he finally packs up and heads home. Upon getting to his flat he showers, dressing comfortably, and heads into his office to pull out the files he has one John Hamish Watson. He hates to admit it is not much but what is paints a very unusual picture.

By human standards he is a little on the short side, his build is solid, blonde hair, blue eyes, tan naturally but was darker for a time because of being in a desert. He graduated from his A-levels at seventeen, had a Bachelor’s in Medicine and Surgery at nineteen, and completed his residency while going to military officers training at twenty. His first unofficial mission had happened during regular boot camp, when he and eight others had stolen a pair of helicopters and managed a rescue of several important individuals that had been thought impossible by some of the generals. When he had completed his officers training and medical residency he had went in as a second lieutenant, within six months he was a first lieutenant, within a year a captain. Then all his records vanish. He was still in, he was still being paid, however he was no longer a part of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers
despite the fact that is who the records said he was with. Over the next eight years there was no official record, every single item on it was marked as classified with only two people having access, the first being Layard and the second being a General Keir that he does not know. The next time the doctor and soldier appears on the official records is when he is injured in an ambush, most the group he had been with ended up dead to snipers, though the snipers are found dead by rescue forces. Fourteen days later, two members of his team refuse to allow any medical personal near him, three days after that the entire team is gone, all of them having left the military at the same time. That was five weeks before he met Sherlock.

He had considered asking Layard if he could have access to those files but knew that he did not have a good enough excuse lined up to do so. He did not know this General Keir and something told him he really did not want to know him.

Since his brother had moved in with the doctor, his behavior had become less erratic over all. There had been a lot less mess of his to clean up. Then he had started vanishing from the camera’s not just the Sherlock vanish either, but completely. His men had not been able to get near him, and all the cameras at 221B Baker Street had stopped working or been destroyed. It had been very frustrating. So he had asked Detective Inspector Lestrade about the subject and had been told to speak directly with Dr. Watson. Again the same advice was given to him by a small female perched on the edge of his desk, unseen be all but him. Then once more it was given to him by one of the most intimidating men he had ever met, which is saying something when one considers the vast variety of people he had met over the years.

His brother who had never been a very social person so to hear him clearly state that he was teaching multiple people about deduction and chemistry and vastly surprising to him.

Sitting back in his chair he rubs the back of his neck thinking. There was no other choice. He would have to speak directly to Dr. John Hamish Watson about his brother. Stretching, he heads to his room to sleep for an hour or two before beginning his day.

When he awoke, he was surprised to see that he had slept for nearly three hours. It was a Saturday, officially he did not have to be to the office unless something came up at which point his very useful assistant would tell him. However he normally spent part of his Saturday in the office making sure that he had minimum amount of back log paperwork, so after cleaning up and getting a small amount to eat, he heads into the office, choosing to drive himself in with his low riding sports car rather than call for his normal ride. He spends several hours working on paperwork before realizing that it is nearly lunch time.

Sighing, he puts everything away and grabs his phone to call Dr. Watson. He is mildly surprised when the shorter man picks up on the second ring. “Dr. Watson, I have been advised that you would be the best person to speak with about my concerns regarding my brother. Do you have plans for lunch?”

For a moment the shifter is silent before he finally replies, “Not at this point, do you have a place in mind?”

Even footing, he reminds himself, somewhere that the one with the scale pattern would not see as a threat, “I have not,” he responds. Make this simple, he thinks, allow him to select something.

Again there is silence for a moment before the other man answers. “Alright, I will text you an address, see you in half hour.” Before he can respond the phone goes dead and he is startled by that fact. He often does that to people, people rarely do it to him. A moment later his phone chirps and he glances at the address in shock. It is actually a fairly nice restaurant that the other man has selected.
A few minutes later he is pulling into said restaurant and is mildly surprised when a slender young man with wavy brown hair approaches him at the door, “Mr. Holmes?”

He inclines his head politely, waiting.

“I’m to show you to your table,” the young man states plainly, motioning towards the seating area.

Again he inclines his head.

The young man nods once, turning on his heel and walking away, just fast enough to stay ahead, just slow enough not to be rude. Several moment later he finds himself seated at a booth with a good view of the entire room against one of the inner walls. Two menus have already been set down on the table, along with a steaming mug of hot chocolate for him and a tea for Dr. Watson. He has barely glanced at the menu when the shorter man slides into his seat.

“Good afternoon, Mycroft,” the shifter greets him politely, before taking a sip of his tea.

He is startled by the shorter man’s appearance, he is so used to seeing him in jumpers and jeans that the fairly nice if unusual button down and slacks in a combination of golden top and black bottoms. “Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on such short notice.”

“Of course,” comes the soft response.

For a moment neither says anything. He is studying the man in front of him and realizing that his previous readings were wrong. This man was not just the unassuming doctor from the military. He was a great deal more.

A smile curves the blonde’s lips as if he knows what he is thinking. “Actually, telepathy is not my gift, though I do have a minor ability in it. In this case I really did not need it.”

He arches on eyebrow questioningly.

The shifter’s smile seems to shift to amusement. “Simple really, three times you have been told to have a word with me, and three times you have not. Now you are wondering if you should have, and not a word like that first farce of a conversation we had.” The shorter man shrugs, pausing for a moment when the waitress gets there to collect their orders, well his order because the doctor says nothing, just smiles. Once the waitress is gone he continues, “Now I asked Tech to make sure no one could listen in on your lunch yesterday so I do not know what was said, however since we are here, I am sure it is something that shocked you enough to finally decided to speak with me.”

“I feel that we have started off on an uneven keel,” he tells the shifter, “If you would be amendable, I would like to speak with you about the shifter pack that you and my brother belong to.”

The two of them fall silent as the waitress brings their lunches out. For a few minutes the two of are quiet while they eat. He is considering how else to approach the subject further, finally the shorter man comments.

“I do not promise to answer everything since you are not pack, however I will answer what I can.”

He nods once, continuing to eat slowly, finally he inquires, “Am I correct in thinking that you are the leader of your pack?”

The shorter man nods once before taking another bite, “Indeed.”

“You have accepted my brother into the pack, why?” he inquires before taking another bite of his
“It was the correct thing to do. Since then, he has thrived in a way I am certain he had not previously.” Comes the response from the other man as he finishes off his smaller plate.

“Why can I not track him on the CCTV any longer?” he asks, it’s one of the biggest points of frustrating for him.

A smirk curves the doctor’s lips as he replies, “For the same reason your men are unable to track him very well. The pack protects its own. He has a twenty four hour protection team that doesn’t count when I am with him, along with Tech who is very good with computers of all types and making people do what he wants. The pack protects its own.”

He nods once, finishing his lunch. “Is he safe?”

“Always, as safe as anyone can make him, the new lab means there are less accidents with the food supplies and other hazards. I am good at keeping up with him on a case, at least physically, which means I can protect him as well.” The doctor replies, “I am also very good at patching him up those times when he gets himself injured somehow.”

“Thank you for being willing to speak with me, could we have another discussion in the near future?” he inquires, not wishing to push his luck.

The shifter smiles, “I can arrange to have Eric give you notice any time something goes wrong or once weekly if you would like.”

He inclines his head, “That would be excellent. Thank you.”

With that, the shorter man smiles, standing and stating, “Don’t worry about the bill, its already taken care of, good day, Mycroft.” Without waiting for a response he strides away.

For a few minutes longer he lingers over his second mug of hot chocolate, not sure when it had been delivered but enjoying it just the same. It had been an enlightening lunch. He had more questions than answers but knew that pushing now was not going to get him what he wanted, so he would be patient. The reason he made such an excellent politician was his ability to know when to press forward or hold back, and how to press the right buttons. Since he was dealing with a situation he was unsure about, he would take the wise path and take his time learning further, being diplomatic.

With a shake of his head he stands, dropping some money on the table as a tip before turning to leave. He is surprised when the host who had escorted him to his table reappears to escort him out, wishing him a pleasant day and giving him more food for thought. Everything to do with Dr. John Hamish Watson caused him to consider new possibilities and details, it was frustrating, very frustrating, because now it wasn’t just his brothers who challenged him, it was a short blonde too.
**Days of Summer**

**Greg’s POV**

He was surprised at how smooth the last few months had been. Since Sherlock had joined the pack he had seemed a great deal calmer. He was still insulting, condescending, and arrogant but the edge that had always colored all of the taller man’s actions seemed to have been dulled a bit. When Donovan and Anderson were not around he was simpler to get along with. Not getting angry as fast and a tad less insulting when he explained things. He had even been willing to take on some cases that he probably wouldn’t have taken on prior to John and the pack much to his relief.

Having the option to go to two different pack meetings a month was unusual. The jackal family he had been born to only allowed full shifters to come to the pack meetings. On the rare occasions the human members related to the pack had come, they were not allowed to speak unless spoken to. So the fact that besides during announcement time everyone visited with everyone else was quite odd. Add to it, it seemed that his new pack had not only a mix of races, but also humans and children included without question. That second pack meeting he had attended had thrown him off when one of the older female wolves had brought him a plate and told him to relax, there was no need to be so formal. He hadn’t really known how to respond to that. Jackals were always formal, so adjusting took some time.

When with the pack he got to see a side to Sherlock and John he never would have expected. Normally the short blonde was an easy going person, in his cuddly jumpers and jeans, he seemed like the unassuming type. Most the time he allowed Sherlock to go off on his tangents without getting excited, he took the bull folks threw his way without ever getting angry, he smiled lightly at nearly everything, giving off a cool exterior that was also very warm and approachable. However the moment you got him somewhere where he was in charge there was a subtle shift, and a core of steel seemed to appear. It seemed that every member of the pack respected him, some for his healing skills, some for his military record, and then the one group out of fear but he could see that it was slowly changing into respect from appreciation. Sherlock on the other hand does not seem to react quite so harshly with the younger members of the pack, the viciousness he is used to the genius using when speaking with people seems to be far less when dealing with most of the shifters. Though he would be the first to admit there were still some he ripped into, just not nearly as many.

On the nights of the pack meetings or when he was supposed to have dinner to discuss things with Mycroft his cases always came to a close quickly. Even the ones he thought were going to be difficult. On several occasions suspects had turned themselves in and given full confessions. Hell, there had even been a few times where the guilty had come to him to turn themselves in even before they were on his radar. While a large part of him wanted to know what was making the criminals cooperate, he was not going to question it too hard least something go wrong.

He still enjoyed his dinners with Mycroft, though in recent months they had been less about Sherlock, and more like visits between friends. However there had been several times when he had gotten home after one of their dinners and wished he would have invited the younger man in for a drink. There were times he felt intense flashes of desire for the ginger haired politician that made it hard for him to breath. The younger man had never shown any interest in him however, so he had never said anything about it. Still, there were nights when he would get back from one of their dinners and wish that he was going to bed with him, not even for sex, just to have someone there while he slept. It was very frustrating wanting something he could not have.

After that initial time of Sherlock and John showing up with three pups he had found all of the paperwork on them waiting for him on his desk. It gave Sherlock permission from someone high up
in the Yard’s chain of command permission to bring up to three of his students with them as long as they did not physically touch the body’s of the victims. After that, there had been several of the lesser cases where he had brought the students with him. For the most part they ignored his team, and his team ignored them. The only one who tried anything was Sally and he remembers how she flinched away from some of the wolf pups, particularly Konrad and Tobe, though both seemed to be intentionally be harsh towards her. Though that tends to keep her away from Sherlock and the others, so perhaps that is why they do so.

A few days after the new moon pack meeting in October a startling thing occurred. Eric appeared at the Yard. As the tall man glided through the room he stopped twice to stare directly at different suspects, black eyes narrow for a moment before he continued to move. When one of the inspectors lost control of man hopped up on meth he was surprised at how efficiently the cobra pinned him to the wall with one hand, still completely in human form. The instance those long fingers wrapped around the mans under jaw and slammed him backwards he froze. The cobra locked eyes with him and it was nearly visible that all of the drugs in his system were being burned away. A moment later he dropped him and continued moving as if he had not just surprised every single member of the Yard.

“Eric, umm, come in,” he invites the taller man into his office not sure what he wants or why he was here.

Black eyes study him in a flash and he is reminded of Sherlock when he is collecting data on a person. *You have not been sleeping well, I would suggest having Daria check you for any health concerns.* Is the first thing that he states before holding out his right hand with the flash drive. *I request that you hand this off to the elder-second’s sibling at your next prearranged dinner. Since you willingly see him weekly as schedules allow I have decided it is the best course of action is to have to hand off the flash drive with the automatically updating program so he may be informed of his brother’s actions.*

It takes him a moment to figure out what he means, and when he does, he can feel his skin heating up. “Ummm, alright, I can do that.” He agrees as he takes the flash drive and puts it in his inner coat pocket.

The cobra nods once, turning as if to leave before turning to face him again. *All of the evidence you need against Miller will be found at his sister’s house in the garage, he thought himself clever committing his crimes elsewhere. Murry is guilty of more than just the one murder you have him on, if you check the area between the gas tank and the boot of the car you will find the weapon used in several of your old cases. He pauses speaking for a moment, eyes narrowing before he continues, Windelson is guilty of several different crimes, all of which he should be happy I am not the one to have come across him on the streets because he would not have liked the results. There is no remaining physical proof however you can force him to confess by confronting him about his ex-wife, get him riled about that and he will admit to nearly all of it. Ironically, the crime he was arrested for is not the same as the one he has committed. If you will excuse me, this place stinks.*

Nothing else is said as the tall man turns to leave only at that exact moment Sally decides she needs to ask him about something and comes barging into his office without paying attention to where she is going, running head first into the cobra who had just opened the door to step out. A low hiss escapes the cobra as his black eyes narrow dangerously on her face.

“Watch it,” she snarls not looking at who she is speaking to.

He cringes, knowing what is about to follow probably will not be pretty but not planning on interrupting because he likes his skin where it is attached to himself. Besides, he is fairly certain that
no one else is going to interrupt either.

“What did you say?” he hiss out, his voice nearly impossible to hear because of how low it is.

She glances up then, eyes going wide as she realizes that maybe it is not a good idea to act belligerent. Too bad she does follow through with that idea because the next thing that comes out of her mouth is as foolish as she is when dealing with Sherlock. “Who the hell are you? You shouldn’t be here! You’re a disgrace wearing your scales openly.”

“Kneel.” The cobra hisses. Nearly everyone in the Yard does so, their legs buckling under the command. Sally has it the worst however because not only do her legs buckle but she also finds herself face down on the floor unable to move. “Let me make something clear Sally Donovan. You will respect those who out rank you, you will be polite, and you will be courteous. If I ever hear of your behavior continuing the way it is right now you will find yourself having the worst day of your life. Do you understand?”

She whimpers trying to reply but unable to, instead she nods hard.

He nods once and he feels the force holding him on his knees let loose and he shakily gets to his feet to watch as the tall man exits the building. Others are slowly getting to their feet as well, though he notices that several of the criminals seem to be twitching on the floor.

Sally is the last one to get up. When she straightens she stares at him with wide eyes for a moment before mumbling, “That was…” her voice trails off as she shakes her head.

“That’s Eric, upon entry into the pack I was warned never to piss him off.” He states as he takes a seat at his desk. “What can I help you with?”

“Oh,” she mutters before shaking her head, “I was coming to ask about the Summerfield case, has forensics gotten the results to the blood test yet?”

He shakes his head, “Not that I am aware of,” he replies as he starts to write down the suggestions that the cobra given him just to discover that they were not need, every single criminal in the building had started confessing their crimes nearly as soon as the command to kneel had worn off. As he joins the other detectives in taking the confessions he cannot help but think that he had heard of the alpha gift but never seen it used before. None of the Yarders say anything about the fact they all hit their knees at the same time as they process all the new paperwork.

Two days later as he is leaving the Yard a familiar black car pulls up. With a smile he climbs in the back to see a somewhat tired looking Mycroft in the seat opposite of him.

“Good even Gregory, how are you?” the politician inquires in one of his smoothest tones.

“I’m good, tired, but good. It’s been a long, surprising week,” he replies, “How have you been?”

He nods once, “Moderately well, thank you,” comes the posh response.

The rest of the ride goes smoothly, he is surprised when they come to his flat rather than a restaurant. As he gets out of the car he takes it to mean that they will not be having supper so he is started when Mycroft gets out as well, motioning to his door. With a small shake of his head, he heads up the walk, unlocking the door and letting them in. Upon entering the small flat he is mildly bothered by the fact it smells like someone had been cooking when he was not here. He would be more bothered however if he had been with anyone else and had that occur.

“I considered having you over, however I have noticed you feel uneasy at my flat, so I determined
yours would be better.” the politician answers his unspoken question.

He smiles ruefully, not saying anything as he goes to see what all is now in his kitchen. After finding baked chicken and a variety of side dishes, he digs out a pair of plates and some silverware and passes a set to the politician before getting some food and sitting on his sofa.

“Thank you, this is surprising but welcome.” He tells the younger man.

A small smile curves his lips, not the fake politicians smile, but an actual smile and he realizes that he finds that smile far too attractive. “You’re welcome.”

The two eat in peace and quiet, when they are done he takes both of the sets of dishes to the kitchen, settling them in the sink before going to fish the flash drive out of his coat. “Eric wanted me to give this to you, it apparently has a program on it that will automatically update you on Sherlock. I am kind of surprised he didn’t just install it himself because I get the impression that he does that sort of thing.”

One eye brow arches questioningly as he accepts the flash drive. “I am mildly startled he did not as well, particularly since he made it a point to let me know he could.”

He smirks a little, “That seems to be his style, he gives warning rather well. The other day he forced the entire Yard and the suspects there to their knees because he was annoyed with Donovan.”

That eye brow that had returned to its normal placing arches again, this time giving the impression of disbelief.

“Look at the CCTV if you don’t believe me,” he tells the younger man as he goes to grab a beer, “You want something to drink? I’m having a beer.”

“Tea, if it is convenient please,” comes the politician’s response.

He nods even though the other man cannot see it and gets to work making a mug of tea. When it is done, he takes it out to the living room where his guest is sitting and the two of them spend the next several hours chatting about random things. Including human politics regarding shifters, some of his cases, and nameless commentary from Mycroft on some of the situations he had to deal with. By the time Mycroft is ready to leave, it is early in the morning and he has had one to many beers he thinks. Because at that exact moment he is considering inviting the younger man to his bed, for anything he is willing to give. Instead, he swayingly walks him to the door to bid him a good day.

“Get some rest, Gregory, goodnight,” the politician murmurs before opening the door.

“G’night Mycroft,” he replies slurring. After the other man is gone, he leans against the now closed door and gives a small shake of his head. Slowly he pushes off and heads to bed. He is certain that in the morning he will have a bit of a headache.

He is surprised when he wakes up to find two aspirins and a glass of water sitting on the bedside table. Quickly, he downs them both before going to get cleaned up for another day at that Yard. As he is showering he reflects on the previous night and groans to himself, he is fairly certain that he had let the younger man know he found him attractive. He could only hope it would not affect their friendship, as tentative as it is.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

This takes place during Lunch with Mycroft from John's POV for part of it.

*John’s POV*
He had loved his birthday surprise, the party for all the October birthday pack-members and the after party for just the two of them set up in the living room. Two days after the new moon gathering his bondmate had attend a lunch with both of his brothers. He had been shocked when the day after Mycroft had called and requested a lunch with him, even more shocking was how smoothly that lunch had gone. He had arranged for them to meet him at a shifter run restaurant.

He had showed up before Mycroft but had spent the time speaking with the restaurant owner, a wolf from Layard’s pack. Once he is notified that Mycroft is being seated by one of the wolf-pup host, he thanks the younger man before making his way to his seat where he slides into his seat just as taller man sits down. Sitting on the table is a tea for him and a hot chocolate for the human.

“Good afternoon, Mycroft,” he murmurs politely before taking a sip of tea.

“Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on such short notice,” the human comments.

He can smell the human’s shock as he studies him with the same ability as his brother. “Of course,” he replies softly.

Smiling he remarks, “Actually, telepathy is not my gift, though I do have a minor ability in it. In this case I really did not need it.” Why would he need to use telepathy when facial tells and sent give away that the human was re-evaluating everything that he had previously considered himself to know. A raised eyebrow questions him, along with scent filling further with curiosity and frustration so he answers the look, “Simple really, three times you have been told to have a word with me, and three times you have not. Now you are wondering if you should have, and not a word like that first farce of a conversation we had.” The shorter man shrugs, pausing for a moment when the waitress gets there to collect their orders, well his order because the doctor says nothing, just smiles. Once the waitress is gone he continues, “Now I asked Tech to make sure no one could listen in on your lunch yesterday so I do not know what was said, however since we are here, I am sure it is something that shocked you enough to finally decide to speak with me.”

For a few more moments of silence pass while he watches the thoughts flicker through the older man’s eyes, while they are shuttered and mostly closed off they still had emotions that were more noticeable by scent. Finally, the taller man starts to speak, “I feel that we have started off on an uneven keel,” he starts, “If you would be amendable, I would like to speak with you about the shifter pack that you and my brother belong to.”

After the query, the human falls silent and he decides to wait until their food is delivered before answering. Since he can smell the waitress who had taken their orders coming their way with food, he holds off. Once the wolf female who is serving delivers their food, he thanks her silently and the
two take a few moments to eat before he decides to speak.

“I do not promise to answer everything since you are not pack, however I will answer what I can.”

The human nods once, continuing to eat, his scent full of curiosity as he decides what to ask. “Am I correct in thinking that you are the leader of your pack?”

He continues to eat, but nods once, “Indeed.”

Pleasure fills the humans scent at the idea he was correct before it returns to its previous curiosity, “You have accepted my brother into the pack, why?”

He gives a minor shrug, before replying, “It was the correct thing to do. Since then, he has thrived in a way I am certain he had not previously.” He had determined already that Sherlock had not been well appreciated by his family because he lacked the social ability that went with being part of a political family.

Again the taller man’s changes to satisfaction before returning to curiosity with undertones of frustration, “Why can I not track him on the CCTV any longer?”

He smiles, almost smirking as he considers the fact Elspeth tends to trip everyone who is following his bondmate that does not belong to the pack. When it is one of the others, they also tend to make it impossible for the humans to follow him. Maria who lacks strong gifts in many areas has a remarkable ability to use illusions. Cyanne is good at getting humans to do her bidding by looking all small and adorable, also good at tying shoe laces and such to trip folks out of her way. “For the same reason your men are unable to track him very well. The pack protects its own. He has a twenty four hour protection team that doesn’t count when I am with him, along with Tech who is very good with computers of all types and making people do what he wants. The pack protects its own.”

The tall human nods once, finishing his meal before questioning, “Is he safe?”

“Always, as safe as anyone can make him, the new lab means there are less accidents with the food supplies and other hazards. I am good at keeping up with him on a case, at least physically, which means I can protect him as well.” he replies as considers the facts of there lives, “I am also very good at patching him up those times when he gets himself injured somehow.”

The human’s scent becomes less questioning, and more resigned as he comments, “Thank you for being willing to speak with me, could we have another discussion in the near future?”

“I can arrange to have Eric give you notice any time something goes wrong or once weekly if you would like.” He suggests with a small smile, he can understand wishing to keep track of a family member. With Eric watching everything within the pack, and all those who dealt with the pack, it would be simple for him to do a report on Sherlock, nothing reveling, just a general health report, but it should make the human back off a bit.

The humans face is blank but his scent is thankful as he inclines his head and states, “That would be excellent. Thank you.”

With a smile, he stands stating, “Don’t worry about the bill, its already taken care of, good day, Mycroft.” As soon as he is done speak he is gone, striding out the building with a mental goodbye to the owner and his staff.

He is on his way back to the flat when his phone chirps with an American number. “Hello?” hequires, mildly shocked someone got through, very few people can call without Eric being aware so that means he must trust whoever it is.
“Elite Elder Watson,” the voice greets him, “I was curious if you have time for coffee? It’s Aidan Jefferson, Eric’s son.”

“Ah, hello Aidan, good to hear from you, umm yes, I could met you for tea where would you like to meet at?” he answers the cobra, understanding how he got through, of course he would trust his son.

“Well there is a coffee shop not far from Eric’s house, do you know the one?” the younger man queries.

He thinks about it a moment before replying, “I know the one, I can be there in half hour.”

“Alright, thank you,” he can hear the relief in the younger man’s voice. A moment later the line goes dead.

Tucking his phone into his pocket, he finds a quiet corner to that is unseen, shields and shifts before heading towards the neighborhood that Eric has his home in. About two blocks from Eric’s house he stops in a dark alley and shifts back into his human form, un-shielding and striding into the coffee shop that he had shifted by. Glancing around, he spots the tall cobra over near the corner, when he turns towards, the younger man stands smiling at him.

*Elite Elder Watson, thank you for taking the time to meet me,* the cobra greets him.

“Hello Aidan, call me John,” he greets the taller young man.

“Hello John,” he replies, nodding once before motioning to the table he had been seated at.

He smiles at the younger man, taking a seat closer to the window while the cobra sits back down with his back to the wall. His scent is mild, no major emotions ruling them. “What can I do for you?” he queries as the waitress comes over.

Both order their respective drinks before the taller man speaks, “I would like to formally request a change of dens. I am moving here and would appreciate it if you would consider my entry into the Watson den, sorry, Watson pack.”

For a moment he studies the slender young man, considering everything he knows about him before inquiring, “Why have you decided to move here and change packs?”

He smiles, answering, “I’m the only cobra in a den that hates cobras, I wish to be out from under my matriarchal thumb, and I’d like a chance to get to know Eric better which will not happen if I stay in my birth den.”

He thinks about it for a few minutes, he can smell the sincerity in his scent, hear it in his voice, his rarely used thera abilities can feel it in his being. Nodding once he asks, “Do you plan to fully change dens or be connected to both?”

“Complete change of dens, I do not wish to belong to a den that actively despises me. Eric has a great deal of respect and loyalty to you, something I know he gives to next to no one, thus you are respectable and worth the loyalty.” The younger man pauses for a moment before continuing, “I would appreciate it if you would consider my request.”

The two fall silent as the waitress delivers their drinks. Once she has left, he takes a few sips of the tea, thinking that it is still good, as he considers his answer. This could cause problems between his pack and the coral snake den that he is from, however he doubts it since there is not an elite in the den, and snakes have always been well aware of where they fall on the racial listings. What he knows about Aiden besides the fact he is Eric’s son is he is a straight A student, excellent with
computers, a skilled fighter, able to mimic and hide with the same skill as his father, a very minor healing gift, telepathy, and a minor ability to See.

Unfastening his left wrist on his shirt, he offers his arm to the younger man with a smile, “Welcome to the Watson Pack,” he murmurs.

The cobra smiles back, unfastening his left hand again shirt and the two grasp wrists, a tingle of power going from him to the younger shifter as he is accepted into the pack.

“Thank you, Elder,” he remarks afterward.

“Well we have pack meetings on the full and new moon. You already know who all is at the top of the pack. Do you have somewhere you plan to stay? Any other plans?” he asks the younger shifter.

His scent is content as he answers, “Eric is already aware that I am coming for a visit, I am fairly certain that he is aware that I am planning on moving here, because while I have not told him, he tends to know everything. I wish to go to university, though I have not decided which one to go to yet. I will be doing something with computers, and possibly medicine but have not fully decided. I want to get my own flat, but not sure I actually want to live on my own since like most snakes I like company.” He pauses, shrugging, “I also wish to get to know the others of den.”

For the next hour or so they chat until he gets a text from his bondmate inquiring when he is going to be home. At that point, he smiles at the cobra, offering to walk with him to the other cobra’s home before heading home himself. At Eric’s house he has a quick word with the older cobra, sharing his memories of the last several hours, and the older cobra agrees to his offer to Mycroft. When he is done speaking with the older cobra, he shields before he leaves and shifts as soon as he is outside to sprint on his way home.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

Sorry it took so long to update, real life and Formation have been a bit of a pain, hope everyone enjoys!

John’s POV
The next several weeks go smoothly. Aunt Sandra takes over the birthday celebrations, but continues with his bondmates idea of getting gifts for all of the birthdays, not just the children. With her taking over that part of the new moon gathering she had found herself speaking with more of the pack than she had in years. It was a good thing, pulling her out of the depression she had fallen into after granddame’s death. The military pack and some of the other members who had joined since his return to London were being further integrated together so it was not as obvious that it was two packs combined. Even the Devon pack was beginning to warm up to the rest of the pack. Though there was a lot of nervousness when any member of the Devon part of the pack comes in contract with Eric, Trace, Damian, Hyder, Scott, Daria, and Jace.

On December fifth everyone gathers for the new moon gathering at the Watson pack home. After the birthday celebrations the adults gather to have the normal meet and greet, though some of the mothers cannot help but stare at the yard and the scene unfolding within it.

Eric is in his half-half form. Instead of legs he has a long black tail that he has curved and somewhat flattened. Several of the smaller children are using him as a playground, their small bodies scampering around him. Some of the children are sliding down his tail, others are climbing all over another part of his tall that he has used for them to jump over. Two of the pups are alternating between human and wolf form, hopping over his tail before losing their concentration and shifting back into human form.

“Oh my, is that quite safe?” one of the wolf mothers who is not really familiar with the cobra inquires.

Before he has a chance to answer Melisa remarks, “Safest place in the world is with that cobra, I remember when I first meet him, scared the living hell out of me, but according to our alpha he loves children, and I saw him get hit by a car to keep a little one from being hit. John was not thrilled with having to patch him up again.”

“Really? When did you meet him?” The wolf asks, glancing between the wolf-child and the cobra.

“Iota Symone’s funeral, the cobra had come with John to ensure that everything went safely because it was during that two year period where hunters kept cropping up.” the dark haired woman replies.

For a moment the mother wolf thinks about it before her eyes go wide, “The tall man in black. The one no one seemed to know who stayed close to the alpha family without being right next to them. I remember seeing him. I hadn’t realized it was him.”
He smiles remarking, “That was his point. He’s rather protective of people he feels loyalty to.”

“Oh,” the wolf mother murmurs as she continues to watch.

Laying a hand on her shoulder, he mutters, “Shalia, stop worrying.”

She nods, smiling at him before going to rejoin some of the other wolf mothers who are discussing what their holiday plans are.

Almost as soon as she vanishes from his side, Aidan appears next to him, I had not realized he likes children so much. I have very few memories of him when I was young.

That’s because your dame was a bitch who would not allow him near you three during his grief. Had she had the choice, he never would have seen any of you. As it is, he has lost one daughter to that bitch. The second is an uncertainty at this point, and you had to give up your birth pack in order to get to know him. He replies to the young cobra as he continues to observe the older cobra.

Sighing, the younger man responds, Shuri is a big part of why I left, I could handle most of them hating me, but it was painful that my sister did as well. Zara is mildly afraid of me, but she does not hate. He pauses for a moment smiling as he watches him lift little Mara and toss her in the air before catching her. Zara is actually planning to come visit me once I get my own place. She is terrified of him.

Not surprising, though I hope she will get a chance to see him like this. Hard to feel pure terror when watching him with pups, he states as he turns from the scene to go join Sherlock over with the older pups.

The cobra nods, continuing to watch the other one with a thoughtful look on his face.

The rest of the pack gathering goes smoothly and at the end of the night he is not surprised when the older cobra raises an eyebrow at him, sarcastically remarking in his mind, You realize that I could hear the conversation you were having with both of them?

He smirks at the tall man, answering, “Of course, it’s not like I was trying to hide it.”

The cobra chuckles, giving a shake of his head before heading over to his low riding sports car that Aidan is already in.

He shifts and gives his bondmate a ride back to their flat where they spend the rest of the evening enjoying themselves and each other.

Several more days pass in a flurry, three minor cases occurring between when the new moon meeting took place and the December pack meeting. All three had been solved within several hours of Greg calling them. On two of the cases he had the pups with him and worked them with the pups, encouraging them to do most the deductions. Of all the pups working with him, Tobe seems to be the one to catch on the quickest. There had also been one more run in with Donovan though she had flinched away nearly as soon as Konrad had turned his icy blue eyes on her.

The first part of the December pack meeting had gone smoothly. Now he was preparing for the second half. While he had not held any of the other Sacred Days, this one happened to fall on pack meeting as well. Thankfully, he had learned all of the old ceremonies from his granddame when he was going through his training, because it was not something his uncle had ever covered or held.

Now as he stands within the old grove at the furthest point on the property he waits patiently, thinking. When he had first decided to hold the Calling, he had approached Eric about it, knowing
that the cobra held all of the Old Ways, including the days that humans also saw as important but for a different sort of reasons. They had covered it extensively, then he had asked Sherlock if he wished to participate, mildly surprised when his human mate who disbelieve all forms of religion agreed. So the cobra had explained it all, for while he was the only one to speak during it, he felt it was best to let him know a head of time what it was he would happen.

As everyone gathers, he stands dead center between the two oldest oaks. To his left is his bondmate, to his right is the elder cobra, past that they all fanned out in a circle around the ring of trees.

At midnight he tilts his head back and looks at the sky before beginning to speak, “Verhaiya, Shadows Mistress, Ancient Goddess. Emberan, Dawn Son, Elder God. Iyora, Dusk Daughter, Elder Goddess. On this night of dawn and dusk we call you forth from you’re slumber.”

Above them the sky flared, an aura of colors and lights flared to life, reds and blues, greens and oranges, purples and yellows, all mixing in an unending swirl. Within those colors it seems that there is are forms of three in the shape of a triangle.

“As the new year approaches we beseech you, grant our Pack peace, understanding, and truth. Dusk Daughter withdraw, allow autumn and winter to fade. Dawn Son return, allow spring and summer to bloom.”

Again he stops to look up at the sky as the dark colors flare and begin to fade to be replaced by the bright ones.

“Dusk Daughter to Dawn Son, winter to spring, we thank you,” he finishes.

Many of the older members and nearly all of the military members repeat the last line, “Dusk Daughter to Dawn Son, winter to spring, we thank you.”

One last time all of the sky lights up, vibrant colors flaring around, slowly it seems as if the colors drift to the ground, touching each person before vanishing into the night. The sky darkening to its normal coloring for a December night. For a long time after the colors fade, silence fills the air.

Then, surprisingly enough it is Jace who comments, “Amazing, simply amazing.”

After that the silence is broken because many of the pups and younger shifters start to babble about the sky. They had never seen anything like it. For the longest time everyone chattered away before the meeting slowly broke up as they realized how late it was. Eventually they too left, though it was nearly four am before they got home. One shared quick shower later the two of them were collapsing into bed together.

The following day goes in a flurry as he prepares the flat for the small gathering they hosting that night. They go out for a walk when he is done, just to spend time together. While they are on the walk he is notified by Eric that a female had snuck in through their bedroom window and left after leaving a small gift in the house. Curious, the cobra inquires if he would like it checked out but he is fairly sure he knows who that is so he suggest he does not. It is a short while later when they get home and he smells the familiar scent of the human-child Irene. Ignoring it, he sets about warming the cider because their guests should be there shortly. His bondmate starts to play his violin, shifting between a collection of Christmas carols.

Not long after six their guests start to arrive, beginning with their landlady Mrs. Hudson, followed closely by Greg, then Molly. Mrs. Hudson takes his bondmates seat, while Greg leans against the wall, just as his mate finished up We Wish You a Merry Christmas, Molly arrives according to the scent coming up the stairs.
“Lovely! Sherlock, that was lovely!” the older human female exclaims happily, waving her hand by her head as she continues speaking, “I wish you could have worn the antlers!”

With a mildly sarcastic smile, he twists around a bit as he replies, “Some things are best left to the imagination, Mrs. Hudson.”

“Marvelous,” he murmurs with a smile to his mate as he hands their landlady a tea cup, “Mrs. H.”

Moments later the pathologist comes walking in with two bags with gifts in them in her grasp, “Hello, everyone. Sorry, hello.”

“Oh dear Lord,” he hears his mate mutter at the same time.

*Be nice, she is a friend.* He tells the human, not sure he is going to be listened to. His mate was not all that fond of the holiday season despite the fact he knew all of the songs and most of the traditions.

*If I must.* He replies sarcastically, *do I get a prize at the end of the night if I am?*

“Er, it said on the door just to come up.” she nervously stutters as she stares openly at his bondmate.

He glances over at his mate smiling mischievously even as he joins Greg and Mrs. Hudson in greeting Molly. *I am sure I can make it worth both of our time.*

Despite the attraction that the human female felt for his mate, he did not fret about it because his mate was not attracted to her, sometimes he barely realized she was a person. So he had taken the time to befriend her and if sometimes her scent annoyed him, he merely reminded himself that she was human and didn’t know that he was already claimed.

Rolling his eyes his mate mutters, “Oh, everybody’s saying hullo to each other. How wonderful.”

Smiling nervously towards his mate, the human female begins to unfasten her overcoat at which point he offers, “Let me,” he begins before pausing, slightly startled if she was a wolf blood female and he wasn’t bonded he would have been attracted to her with the fine outfit she had dug out, “holy Mary!”

Almost instantly he feels the jealousy coming through his bondlink with Sherlock.

“Wow!” the jackal-child appreciates as his eyes rake over the human female.

Still nervous smelling and sounding she queries, “Having a Christmas drinkies, then?” as she rubs her hands together before adjusting her dress straps a bit.

A bit monotone his mate replies, “No stopping them, apparently,” as he sits down at the table to and starts typing. His scent is still full of jealousy though he is trying to mask it by playing with the computer instead and focusing on other things.

“It’s the one day of the year where the boys have to be nice to me, so it’s almost worth it.” Mrs. Hudson exclaims as he grabs a chair for the younger human to sit in.

“Have a seat,” he offers her just as his mate calls him over to the laptop.

“John?” the his tall human comments.

Turning to face him, he replies, “Hmmmm?” Behind him he can hear the jackal-child offering Molly a drink and her accepting.
As he leans over to look at the screen his dark-haired human continues, “The counter on your blog: still says one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five.”

Acting mock annoyed he comments, “Ooh, no! Christmas is cancelled!” setting his hand down heavily on the desk.

His mate rolls his eyes at him but continues to look over the blog as he goes and sits in his chair, while the auburn-haired human turns to their landlady inquiring, “How’s the hip?”

“Ooh, it’s atrocious, but thanks for asking.” The older human responds.

Smiling sympathetically, the younger human remarks, “I’ve seen much worse, but then I do post-mortems.” Silence falls over the room as the jackal-child brings her a drink and their landlady stares at her open-mouthed for a moment, she immediately begins to apologize, “Oh, God, sorry.” Her hands flutter nervously.

“Don’t make jokes Molly,” his bondmate remarks without looking away from the laptop.

She flickers a look at him before apologizing again and turning to accept the drink that the jackal-child has poured her. While accepting it she murmurs, “Thank you. I wasn’t expecting to see you. I thought you were gonna be in Dorset for Christmas.”

“That’s first thing in the morning. I’m seeing the girls. It’s all sorted.” The silver-haired detective inspector replies.

From his spot his bondmate remarks, “Good thing too, she’s sleeping with a P.E. teacher.”

A tight smile pulls at the older shifter-child’s face as he glances down in response. Since both men had joined the pack they had gotten along a lot better but there were still times that his mate said cutting things.

Turning to him, the auburn-haired female quires, “John, I hear you’re off to your sister’s, is that right?”

He nods once, answering “Yeah.”

“Sherlock was complaining,” she continues with a look towards Sherlock who gives her a look so she corrects herself, “saying.”

He raises his bottle of beer a bit continuing to answer her when she is done speaking, “Going to meet her new wife, first Christmas we have spent together in years.”

His mate snorts, as he tells him to shut it but continues to speak anyways as the taller human looks at her, “I see you’ve got a new boyfriend, Molly, and you’re serious about him.” While his mate is smiling, it is a sardonic one and his scent is still full of annoyance and a touch of jealousy.

“Sorry, what?” she blinks at him confused, eyes going wide and scent going worried.

“In fact, you’re seeing him this very night and giving him a gift.” His mate continues.

“Take a day off,” he murmurs aloud, telepathically he states, Sherlock stop. Your getting into the A Bit Not Good area.

“Shut up and have a drink,” Greg tells him as he sets a glass down next to him.

His mate flickers a glance at him but ignores him as he continues anyways, “Oh, come on. Surely
you’ve all seen the present at the top of the bag – perfectly wrapped with a bow. All the others are slapdash at best.” His bondmate stands, glancing at the gifts before stalking towards the nervous female, “It’s for someone special then.” Without asking, his mate picks it up and studies it as he continues to speak, “The shade of red echoes her lipstick – either an unconscious association or one that she’s deliberately trying to encourage. Either way, Miss Hooper has luve on her mind. The fact that she’s serious about him is clear from the fact she’s giving him a gift at all.”

Stop now! He snaps at his bondmate as he glances over at the obviously distressed auburn-haired female as she starts to dance in place.

Only his mate ignores him and continues to babble, “That would suggest long-term hopes, however forlorn; and that she’s seeing him tonight is evident from her make-up and what she’s wearing. Obviously trying to compensate for the size of her mouth and breasts...” his voice trails off as he reads the tag. Eyes going wide as he swallows back whatever else he was going to say.

The scent of sadness fills the air as Molly gasps, trying not to cry, her voice is just about broken as she remarks, “You always say such horrible things. Every time. Always. Always.”

His mate turns to walk away but stops, looking back at her and sincerely apologizing, “I am sorry. Forgive me.” John, how did I miss it? he asks telepathically as he steps closer to the smaller human, softly continuing aloud, “Merry Christmas, Molly Hooper,” to the shock of all in the room he gently kisses her cheek.

Her eyes go wide as she stares at him, the sadness retreating from her scent.

All the guests gasp in shock when his mates phone goes off, the text alert from the dominatrix. His mate steps back as he fishes in his pocket for his phone while Molly quickly tries to stutters that it was not her. Dismissively, his mate agrees it was not and looks at his phone before turning to mantelpiece and grabbing the small red package there. He is aware that it is from the dominatrix but had said nothing about it.

“’Scuse me,” his bondmate mutters as he walks to the other room.

“What, what’s up, Sherlock?” he queries, fairly certain he knows what’s going on. He knew that the cobra had been tracking the human dominatrix, finding it amusing to watch as she interacted with the annoyance as he called Jim Moriarty. If she had sent Sherlock her phone, she either thought she was about to die or had decided to go into hiding.

“I said excuse me,” his mate snaps in response as he walks into through the kitchen and into his room.

“Do you ever reply?” he queries aloud, telepathically he inquiries, Is it her phone?

How did you? He begins but then states, Eric.

Indeed. You know how easily he gets bored. Do you want me to tell everyone to have a good night? he queries of his bondmate. If his mate had been showing jealousy towards Molly, he had felt it towards Irene since she was the only human that his mate seemed to find interesting or even slightly appealing.

If you would please. His mate replies before he hears him calling his brother.

Politely he bids everyone a goodnight, much to the confusion of Mrs. Hudson and Molly, to Greg he explains through the pack link that there is about to be a case for them to deal with and the detective inspector nods in understanding.
A few minutes later he walks to the bedroom, leaning on the door and querying, “Are you okay?”

His mate gives him a mildly confused look, as he answers shortly, “Yes,” he can tell that the taller man wants to shut the door in his face but he does not, instead he paces the room for a few minutes, eyes narrow as he thinks. “I don’t understand, why am I bothered by the idea of Irene Adler being killed?”

He gives a small shrug, replying, “Because she is a challenge and there are not many who have challenged you I bet. Do you want me to go with you when you identify her? After all, scent never lies.”

For a moment the taller man thinks about it before he nods once, answering, “I would, though can you shield? That way if it is not her, I will not know until we get home and whatever reaction that is expected of me will be genuine?”

Smiling slightly, he nods before walking over to the taller man and hugging him.

Just a little over an hour passes in silence before his mate receives a phone call from his brother asking that he meet him at Bart’s. Several moments after that the two of them are off, racing through the streets using his wolf form to get there quicker because he did not wish to disturb one of the crows during Christmas for a cab. When they get there, he stops in a darkened side ally, allowing his mate off and shifting before shielding himself invisible. The two of them approach the door he makes sure to stay in his mates tracks even as he steps lightly to leave no real impression on the slightly snowy ground. Just inside the door awaits Mycroft and the two brothers silently make their way to the morgue.

He feels his mate tense up a bit when he spots Molly standing just beside the table with the body lying in front of her with a sheet over top.

His brother is speaking as they approach, “The only one that fitted the description. Had her brought here – your home from home.”

Sherlock ignores him to comment to the auburn-haired female he had been mean to earlier, “You didn’t need to come in, Molly.”

She answers a bit quickly, sadness in her scent as she states, “That’s okay. Everyone else was busy with Christmas.” She had hesitated before saying Christmas. Glancing down, she motions towards where the head is, commenting, “The face is a bit, sort of, bashed up, so it might be a bit difficult.” Without saying anything else, she pulls down the sheet showing her upper torso only.

“That’s her isn’t it?” the elder brother inquires.

Narrowing his eyes, his mate just about demands, “Show me the rest of her.”

Slowly, the auburn-haired female does as directed, her scent confused when his mate confirms that is her and walks away. He steps a bit closer, sniffing the air silently, while this female is of the right build and coloring, scent says it is not her. However he listens as Mycroft thanks her and Molly questions how he could now. A moment later the older brother rejoins his mate and the two begin to speak after Mycroft gives his mate a cigarette and they banter about it for a moment.

“How did you know she was dead?” the elder brother inquires as he continues to watch.

Staring out the window his mate replies, “She had an item in her possession, one she said her life depended on. She chose to give it up.”
Curiously, the taller of the two queries, “Where is this item now?”

The scent of sadness fills the air, as he glances towards the main doors he spots a family weeping together. The brothers had also looked at which point his bondmate asks, “Look at them. They all care so much. Do you ever wonder if there’s something wrong with us?”

With a tone of knowing he answers, “All lives end. All hearts are broken.” He pauses for a moment as he glances at his brother, “Caring is not an advantage, Sherlock.”

Sarcastically, his mate remarks, “This is low tar.”

Just as sarcastically the ginger-haired man remarks, “Well, you barely knew her.”

*Leave first, you know he will call you shortly,* his mate tells him before he remarks aloud, “Huh!”

Silently, he leaves the hall, carefully going through the door so it barely moves and thanking his years doing special ops that require that kind of control. He has barely gotten to where they had agreed to meet up when his phone goes off, “He’s on his way,” the slightly older man remarks to him, worry evident in his voice. “Have you found anything?”

Frowning he replies, “No, did he take the cigarette?”

“Yes.” the elder brother response, worry thickening his tone though he is certain he would not realize it.

“Shit.” He replies, knowing it is the expected response, he had already discussed his worries with his mate, and knew that he would not do anything to harm himself but they still had not told his brother of their relationship and so he could not reassure the human. “Are you sure tonight is a danger night?” he inquires, curious to see what his answer will be.

“No, but then I never am. You have to stay with him, John.” Comes the slightly stiff reply as if he realizes how much emotion he is showing.

“I’ve got plans.” He replies thinking, with your brother of course, but that’s not something you really need to know right now.

“No.” the politician responds hanging up on him.

A few moments later his bondmate comes around the corner, lost in thought. “Was it her?” he queries without greeting.

“No, wrong scent to be her.” he replies before shifting into his wolf form. *Shall we go home or would you like to run for a bit?*

*Can we? I think I would enjoy the feeling.* His mate response still lost in thought.

He dips his large head, lowering himself just a bit so his bondmate can climb on his back. As soon as he is situation, he shields and their off, racing through the city and out into the countryside where he can unshield and run even faster. Once he drops the shields he tells his bondmate, *You realize that you do feel, just because it is not the same as everyone else does not make it any less real.*

*I know, it just seems,* his mate pauses for a moment as if trying to figure out what he wants to say, *that I do not feel things right.*

*Of course you do, no two people feel things the exact same way,* Sherlock. *Your perfect as is.* he
replies to his mate as they continue to run.

_Thank you John_, his mate replies leaning his body as close as he can to his back. He takes it as a sign to go home and the two of them do so, when they get home they spend the rest of evening curled in bed together doing nothing more than cuddling.
First Christmas

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So if any of you are looking for good Johnlock or Mystrade stories I would suggest WingsOfDuskAndDawn, she has recently started posting here on AO3.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sherlock’s POV
He awakens slowly, his body comfortably curled with that of his John’s. In slumber his lover looks younger, like he is in his early twenties and had not just turned thirty a few months prior. As he studies him, he decides that something in the universe must at least sort of like him for him to have found someone who accepted him so completely. His John rarely tried to change him, and even on the things that he did, it was not out of control or cruelty but an understanding that he did not always understand how to speak with other people.

Last night when he had received Irene’s phone, he had felt conflicted, that phone was her life. She saved everything on it for her protection. Yes he had Eric give a copy of it to Mycroft so he could see what information she had, and he was certain his brother was careful about how he used it to not give away his hand. Then as he had stared at the body of a woman with the exact same measurements as Irene he had been certain that it was her and that filled him with a sort of sadness that he had a hard time comprehending. When his brother had offered him a smoke he had accepted it as his mind tried to understand how such a careful woman could end up the way she was. His brother’s attempt at comfort had not been very comforting, even if it would have been at one point.

Perhaps he should tell Mycroft about his relationship with John but he really did not want his annoying sibling trying to interfere. He loved the fact that at home, here where it was just them, he could be himself without any sort of shield and his John merely accepted it, even encouraged it. The fact that the pack accepted him as well was unbelievable at times. He had always been the outcast because of his intelligence and lack of social grace yet for reasons he did not understand nearly everyone in the pack appreciated it rather than being bothered by it. Hell, he wasn’t even the smartest one around anymore, they all feared the smartest but not for his intelligence.

His life had changed drastically the day he met John, but it was all changes for the better. Things he had never hoped would occurred. He now had a family that actually gave a damn about him. One he wasn’t in competition with the other members of. All of it was so surreal at times he was afraid to say anything for fear of ruining it.

Stretching a little bit, his longer limbs slipped out of the comfortable cradle of his wolf’s body. It was Christmas, and while he did not feel any special feelings towards it, he knew his wolf did. Slipping out of bed, he heads out into the kitchen and looks around for a minute before settling on making pancakes, those have to be simple enough for him to make. Grabbing the laptop he quickly looks up a recipe for them before getting to work. He is just finishing up as John comes out into the kitchen.

“Morning, if you want to sit down I am almost done with breakfast.” He informs the shorter man as he flips them one last time to make sure that they are properly golden.
Smiling to himself, he settles them on one of the plates before setting them on the table. Rather than get a plate for himself, he knows that he will just snatch a couple of pieces off of John’s because he rarely eats enough to justify having his own plate though he had gotten better at it in recent months. However they were going to the Watson family property for a family Christmas dinner which meant he needed to have room for dinner. He likes Aunt Sandra’s food as much as he likes John’s.

As he goes to sit down, his wolf leans over and kisses him deeply before sitting back and querying, “Good morning, love, how are you feeling?”

A little breathless, he smiles as he replies, “Better, actually, thank you for the run last night.”

His lover smiles as he butters and pours the syrup on the pancakes. Over to the side he puts extra syrup so that he can dip it since John knows he likes more syrup than him. He grins at this action, knowing that it was his acceptance of him taking his from the shorter man’s plate. The next several minutes are silent as the two eat the pancakes, with him snitching a bite here and there, dipping them in the syrup and John occasionally feeding him a bite after dipping it as well.

When they are done, his John cleans up while he goes and takes a shower. Afterwards he returns to the living room to find John checking on his blog. “Sherlock, love, what was the counter on last night?”

“One-thousand eight hundred and ninety five, why?” he inquires as he walks into the living room.

Shrugging, his lover shuts down the computer before settling on the sofa and patting the spot next to him. “Would you like to discuss it?”

For a moment he paces the room, shutting the door to the outside hall and locking it so that Mrs. Hudson will not come in. Again he starts to pace, long legs allowing him to cross from one side of the room to the other quickly. Several silent minutes pass as he does this. Its Christmas, they are supposed to be focusing on family, and yet John is giving him time to process the confusion of the night before and express anything he has on his mind.

“Why would she send me the phone? Why would she pretend to be dead? Why does this feel like there is more to it and I am missing it?” he stops, turning to look at his mate inquiring, “Didn’t Eric break the code on her phone?”

When he finally stops pacing and settles onto the sofa next to his John, the shorter man pulls him close, so that his longer body is pressed against him, before beginning to speak. “You are a challenge to her I think. Considering everything that has gone on in recent months, I would not be surprised if there was a larger plot, we never did catch Moriarty so perhaps it has something to do with him, and yes Eric broke the code on her phone. Scent gives away a lot of thing among our kind.” His lover’s shorter fingers start carding through his hair soothing him.

Closing his eyes he listens to his John’s voice, carefully considering everything that is being said and all of the facts that he knows. There is more to this than he knows and until he can get the information it would be best for him not to fret about it. Perhaps he should have his homeless network look into the people for him. They were good at discovering information.

“Thank you,” he murmurs eventually, “for not telling me I am foolish or anything else like that.”

His John kisses the top of his head, smiling at him, “Of course love, I understand,” he pauses, kissing the top of his head one more time before querying, “So would you like to open presents now?”

He twists around kissing John soft on the lips, his fingers slipping up his chest and neck to sink into
the short blonde hair at the base of his skull. Shifting his positioning a little bit more, he is just about sitting on his lover’s lap as John’s arms come up around him. When they finally break apart both are breathing heavy and he can feel his John’s erection against his ass while his own sleeping pants seem uncomfortably tight.

“Presents later John, right now I have the most important one in my arms.” He mumbles against his lips as his nimble fingers set to disrobing his wolf. Time flies from there with each taking their turn at disrobing the other. From there they end up in the bedroom with him straddling John’s hips as his wolf slowly rotates his hips against him, buried deep within him. Several more minutes pass while the two of them slowly make love. When he feels close to the edge, he pushes down hard against his mate’s hips. John reaches up with his left hand, grasping his right, their wrists connecting and the surge of love and affection he feels through the link sends both of them over the edge.

Gasping, he arches hard against his love as he comes all over his chest and John comes deep within him. Suddenly tired, he allows himself to slide off of John and curl up beside him. All energy suddenly gone. Chuckling, his lover wiggles out from beside him, heading into the bathroom to collect a wet washrag he returns a few moments later to clean them up before tossing it to the side and curling beside him to drift off to sleep again.

When he awakens the second time he knows that only a little bit of time has passed, his nap had been fairly short. Smiling to himself he goes to get up only to find John pinning him down, smiling at him with a clearly mischievous look on his face. “So, shower than presents?”

He smiles back, just as mischievous, before rolling them so he has John pinned even though he is fairly certain that the smaller man could easily break his hold. “Why are you so stuck on presents?”

“Because it’s our first Christmas together and I am excited to see what you think of your gift.” The shorter man replies.

He nods once, though his smile falters a little as he considers the two gifts he had gotten for the shifter. He had never bought Christmas gifts before so he was unsure how well he had selected the gifts. Giving a small shake of his head, he rolls off of his lover, and heads to the bathroom knowing that the wolf will follow him shortly. Sure enough the water is barely heated when John climbs in next to him, grabbing the clean washrag and carefully running it over his body, taking his time in cleaning him. When he is done doing that the shorter man grabs his shampoo and reaches up to start lathering his curls, dipping his head down, he makes it easier for him to do so, waiting for him to get every inch of his scalp before straightening to rinse it out. While he is rinsing, John proceeds to washing himself.

A few minutes later the two of them are seated on the floor in the living room with the small pile of presents situated between them. John passes him one of his before grabbing one for himself then watches him with a small smile. He knows the shorter man is waiting for him, so he glances at the tag, realizing that it is the gift from Molly before he opens it carefully. His eyes widen slightly at the gift, it is a set new nice glass slides for his microscope with a small card wishing him a Merry Christmas.

Over the next several minutes they take turns opening their gifts.

From Greg he had gotten a pair of official police hand cuffs with keys with a note saying so he would not need to steel his any further. Mrs. Hudson had gotten him a scarf of dark red cashmere that matches the single button hole on his Belstaff that is mismatched from the rest of them. Aunt Sandra had gotten him a nice set of journals with a small note to enjoy recording his discoveries. The surprising one is from Eric who had given him a flash drive that when he plugs it into his laptop opens to a set of encrypted files with the memo that he will have to figure out the code to get into
them, enjoy the puzzle.

Smiling happily John goes through his gifts including the bottle of decent (but not great) scotch from Greg. His sister had gotten him a pair of silk red pants and undershirt, with the card telling him to enjoy. His Aunt had made him a cook book full of old recipes. Eric’s gift is of the practical kind, several boxes of bullets to go with his hand gun. Mrs. Hudson had gotten him a dark brown scarf to match his leather coat and leather gloves. Molly had given him a golden-brown jumper. Daria and Jace had put a scrapbook together for him that includes Christmas cards and wishes from the rest of the pack along with pictures.

Finally he got to the two gifts he had purchased him, and he just about dances in his spot in nervousness. The first gift is simple, a new traveling note pad with a case and pen, the case being dark leather and the pen silver but both having John’s initials on them. The second gift is the one he is unsure of. He had not known what to get John so he had thought about it carefully before deciding to make him a coupon book. He knew that there were times he was hard to deal with, so he had made a small book with three-hundred and sixty-five coupons, one per day though he had not made each one different. Some of them were cleaning related, some of them were Work related, others were treatment of others related, and some was about their relationship. Biting his lip he watches to see what John thinks and is relieved when John leans across to kiss him long and hard before pulling back leaving them both breathless.

“Thank you, they’re both perfect.” His wolf tells him before pulling a small box out and handing it to him. “I was not sure what to get you but I decided on this.”

It ends up being the gift he loves the most. It is nothing fancy, but it is the fact that he had thought of it that makes him smile, it’s a picture of the two of them, though he has no idea when it was taken, it is from here within the flat but that’s not the surprising part. The surprising part is the fact it is with the two of them curled together on the sofa, his longer body stretched out along it so the only part he is not taking up is where John is, instead his head is resting on his lover’s lap while John cards his fingers through his hair. It’s the look on their faces that catches his attention the most however, his is relaxed and happy, content even, and John’s is so deeply loving. On the edge of the silver frame their bondmark is etched into the metal with the words ‘Anima, Quaerunt in Aeternum’ across the bottom of it.

“John,” he murmurs surprised, his eyes wide as he looks up at the shorter man, the picture clasped firmly against his chest.

His wolf just smiles, hesitantly asking, “You like it?”

He nods staring at it for a long while before kissing him again.

They are interrupted by the phone going off and he groans as his wolf pulls back to look at it. “It’s the alarm to remind me to dress for dinner.”

Sighing, he sets his presents aside before rising to his feet. He always avoided his family dinners but had agreed to go with John to his because he actually likes the wolves.

Several minutes later, he is carefully astride John’s back as the massive wolf runs through the streets of London and to the outlaying family home. Beneath him, he can feel every twitch of muscle as his wolf runs and thrills in the feel of power he can feel in every motion. Curling his body close he does enjoy the breeze the way he normally does. Instead he enjoys the warmth of his bondmates fur in contrast to the coolness of the air. Part of him wishes they never had to stop, but he knows that is illogical. Instead he enjoys what he gets and easily slides off when they get there but waits for John before heading in.
Once inside the house he is surprised by how quiet it seems without the rest of the pack around. He is expecting to see Aunt Sandra, Harry and Rachel, and possibly Dora with her mother Andrea. What he is not expecting is a man who looks a great deal like John only taller and older with a woman with nearly flaming red hair to be seated in the front parlor where Aunt Sandra prefers to greet everyone.

Apparently John was not expecting them either because his eyes narrow as he looks at the two of them. He can just about feel the conversation going on between his wolf and the cobra who watches everything in the pack before his bondmate steps forward with a tight smile.

“Jason, Mum,” he greets the pair but does not step forward to hug them which surprises him greatly.

His John is always hugging people for one reason or another so why is he not doing that right now? Something’s wrong here. Turning his eyes on the couple he carefully takes in everything. Noticing the fact that both are dressed in clothes popular among well to do in France. There is tension between the pair, as if they had been arguing but are trying not to continue the argument in front of them. However the tension between them does not compare to the tension between John and the other wolf who he can correctly assume is his father.

“Alpha-second Sherlock Holmes, this is my mother Vianne Bayard, and her husband and bondmate, Jason Watson.” His lover introduces him, his tones slightly clipped.

John, what's wrong? He inquires as he nods once to acknowledge he heard their names. He can just about see the anger on the older man’s face at this dismissive gesture but ignores it.

“Jason, stop acting like an ass and greet your son properly.” The woman snaps before standing and inclining her head politely, “Alpha Watson,” she murmurs before pulling him into a hug, “John.” As soon as she releases her son, she turns to him, smiling and repeating the process only saying, “Alpha-second Holmes,” instead before hugging him. It is completely awkward because he is not sure if he is supposed to hug her back or not. She steps back and tilts her head to the side the same way John does so often and he sees the easy resemblance between them. “You should have been a cat,” she murmurs, “I meant no offense.”

He nods cautiously once, “None taken,” which earns him a radiant smile.

Stiffly the older man bows to John but says nothing before sending a glare his way.

His wife quickly smacks him before settling back onto the sofa and pulling John down next to her, leaving no room for him or her husband. “You must tell me all about how things have been since you got home. We would have come sooner but you know how hard headed your father can be.”

Where’s a case when we need one? John inquires telepathically before beginning to answer his mother, starting with when he was shot and finishing with this morning and their gifts.

I am sure I can find a reason for us to leave if you want. He offers as he takes a seat on the chair closest to the fireplace.

Jason remains standing though he seems uncomfortable in his presence.

From time to time, Vianne asks him questions about the cases they had worked, asking about his blog and other events. Eventually Harry comes in with her bondmate, a curvy wolf named Rachel that he had only met once before. It is enough of a distraction that they are able to slip out of the front parlor and retreat to the library.

“John?” he inquires softly, not sure what to say, he thought John had gotten along with all of his
family.

His wolf smiles at him a bit sadly before shaking his head, “It’s alright, I had not expected them to come, mum maybe, but not him.”

“I thought you got along with your family, what’s going on?” he voices his thoughts, not sure how it will be taken.

His wolf sits down on the leather sofa shrugging, “He’s not happy that I accepted a male human bondmate instead of trying to find my female one. Nor is he pleased with the fact I was made the heir instead of him, thus I became the alpha instead of him. I guess he always thought that he would be alpha first even though he is not an elite and this pack has never had a non-elite alpha before. Right before I was to take over as alpha officially he moved them to France to live with mum’s pack.” He pauses shrugging, “He also never liked the military pack and is pissed that I kept the pack link and even combined the two packs together.”

“Oh,” he murmurs as he sits down next to his wolf, worried that this will affect their bond somehow.

His wolf seems to know the way his thoughts are going because he unfastens both of their dominate hand sleeves and presses their bondmarks together stating, “We’re bonded, now and forever, it’s not something I would ever change or give up.”

He nods, smiling lightly and kissing him before standing up and tugging him towards the door, “Let’s go rub it in his face.” He suggests with mischief in his tone.

John smiles at him and the two return to the front room just in time for Aunt Sandra to come announce that dinner was done. So instead of sitting down they help her lay out all of the food on the dining room table before sitting down in their normal spots and allowing everyone else to take a seat as they want. Dinner is tense but surprisingly smooth. Afterwards, while Aunt Sandra and Harry are cleaning up Jason asks his mate for a word and the two men leave the room. Almost as soon as they do so, his mum turns her attention on him.

“So Sherlock, have you considered any candidates yet for a bondchild? Or will you be following the old ways and having a surrogate carrying one for you?” she inquires as she sips at her tea.

He just about chokes on his hot chocolate at the question because it is not what he was expecting, slowly he replies, “We have only been in a relationship for a few months, we have not yet discussed children in any way. He has been letting me get used to the world of shifters and being in a relationship first.”

“Oh,” her tone is disappointed but she immediately brightens up as she inquires, “Well would you like to have a child with John eventually?”

He blinks at her, trying to understand how he could have a child ‘with’ John. They are both men, so it is not like one of them can get pregnant. “I am certain that eventually John will want to start a family, he loves pups after all, and we will discuss it then.” He will have to ask his wolf what the hell she means by having a child with him. They don’t expect him to have a baby do they? It’s not possible, he’s firmly a man.

She nods and opens her mouth to continue speaking only John and Jason return, seeming as if they had solved some of their difficulties. The rest of the night goes surprisingly smoothly and he determines to ask what happened later.
For those who are curious, the picture frame says "Forever soul mates"
John’s POV

Christmas dinner was tense, he had not been expecting his parents to show up when his father had made it clear on the one occasion they had spoken since he returned from the war that he was not pleased with him. Particularly not the fact he had accepted a human male as a bondmate. So he is very surprised when his father requests a word with him after dinner. A large part of him says he should not, he is the alpha of the pack, but another part of him recalls that it is best to be polite even when dealing with someone who is not being polite to him. Sighing, he agrees, heading to the library with Jason when they are done eating.

“What do you want?” he inquires when they get there without bothering to go through any of the formalities he would have used with anyone else.

“John, a human?” his sire questions, his tone bristling.

He smiles, deftly unfastening his left sleeve and pulling it open to show his father the completed bondmark. It looked like a cross between the side view of a sea shell and a spiral fern with a star burst pattern in the dead center. “Yes a human, my human, Sherlock Holmes, or alpha-second Holmes to you since you are not pack any longer.”

The older wolf visibly flinches at this, stepping back and staring at him with wide eyes, “John we’re…” he starts to say but is cut off.

“We’re nothing. The moment you told me no son of yours would control you, and you intentionally broke your pack bond you ended any relationship between us. You knew before I went to Afghanistan that I was the other possible heir besides Emma, yet you did not wish to accept that. Fine. You made your choice. Do not expect understanding from me when you wish to say something rude about my bondmate.” He snaps, interrupting whatever he was going to say about their relationship.”According to pack law you shouldn’t even be here because this is a pack house and I am certain Aunt Sandra did not invite you, she would have warned me.”

Again the older wolf flinches, but he says nothing in response, instead chooses to stare at the floor.

“So if you have something you wish to say, this will be your only chance.”

For a few minutes the older wolf paces the room while he watches from his spot near the door.
Finally he turns to him, bowing his head politely before beginning to speak. “Vianne wants us to move back, return to the pack, be around so when you two both start producing children she can see them. Though I am not sure how she thinks that’s going to happen, your both partnered with the same gender.” The older wolf pauses and he narrows his eyes at him as he waits for him to continue. “I agreed to come back here, to ask, but I am very hesitant to do so. I will not list all my reasons why.”

*You have no reason too. It’s moderately obvious. Though I would inform you, hurt our Elder and deal with me.* The two wolves hear using the basic telepathic link between family members.

It takes everything in him not to crack a smile at the cobra’s heavy handedness. For all of his easygoingness, Eric is the opposite, and as such the two often balance each other in situations. *How long have you been listening?* He queries on the private link that they share because of all the time they spent in each other’s head.

*Your mate alerted me that you had not expected him, so I decided to be me. Had I known he had not pre-called or requested an audience, you never would have had to deal with him. I apologize for my lack of awareness.* The cobra replies, his tone formal with annoyance. He did not like the rare occasions when he was surprised.

He smiles on the link before replying, *It’s alright, I knew we would have to deal with this soon enough. Enjoy your day with your son.*

The response was the mental equivalent of a shrug before the cobra vanished from his mind. Turning his attention back to his sire, he is mildly surprised to smell the fear in his scent as his eyes dart around the room. It is then he is reminded that his father is more like his uncle and grandsire than his granddame in beliefs and behavior. It was part of the reason he had never told anyone else in the family that he was not just an iota, but a thera because his grandsire thought that there was something wrong with thera, that they were unnatural. Wanting to rub a hand across his neck but deciding not to he studies the older man, using a combination of the telepathic and empathic abilities he had studied and strengthen while in Afghanistan to do so without being noticed.

Jason was serious in his request to return but doubted that John would allow it, at least for him. The older wolf was proud of his son for becoming the alpha even if it did piss him off that he was not. From all accounts, his son was a better alpha than his brother had been and that stung since his brother had been considered the best alpha in the pack in five generations. Yet his son was completely different from any other alpha in the family or that he had ever met for that point. Alphas were commanding and strong, yet that was not the way John ran the pack. He ran it with an easy hand rather than a harsh one, with forgiveness rather than harsh condemnation. He had been proud of the fact his son was Special Forces, though he had never understood why he did not work with a wolf team, why he had a team of misfits. Still, the pack seemed to be thriving despite the mixing of the species.

Emotionally the older man was conflicted. A large part of him would rather be home, and this was his home. However he did not like to mix with other species, did not like the idea of being under his son in rank. He was also worried that the line would end with John and Harry, after all neither of them would be able to have offspring. He did not understand or believe in bondchilding or the surrogate carrying. Why both of his children had to pick same gender mates he did not know. It was not something that would have been considered right during his brother’s time as alpha, nor his fathers.

Pulling out of the older wolf’s mind, he considers the facts he had found before answering the older wolf’s request. As a son he both loved the idea of his parents coming back and dreaded it. While as
an alpha he refused to have problems within the pack which is father could become with his attitude problem towards non-wolves.

*Your view cobra? I know you were listening,* he queries of the taller man.

*He is sincere. At least he is in his desire to be around you and your sister.* He pauses for a moment thoughtfully before continuing, *leave any problems that arise from the mixed den to me. He will obey out of fear if nothing else.*

*Alright, now go spend time with your son,* he responds to him.

A low chuckle is his response before the cobra vanishes from his mind again.

“Do you have plans for where you are going to live here?” he finally inquires of the older wolf.

Shock fills the older wolf’s scent as he stares hard at him, “There is a small house we were considering purchasing if this was going to work out. We did not purchase it already because I did not wish to assume. I realize that there will be difficulties, particularly since I do not like other shifters.”

“Well, I will tell you the same thing I told the entire pack during the reaffirmation: there will be no discrimination between pack members.” He pauses for a moment, considering his next words carefully. “Meetings are held twice monthly. First meeting of the month is more of a meet and greet, second meeting is the important one. At this time I will not be accepting either of you back fully into the pack. We will give it a few months to see how well everything works out. If by Reflections you have adapted and adjusted to life within the pack you’ll be more than welcome back within. Otherwise,” he shrugs, “well you can always return to the Bayard pack.”

The older wolf considers it for a bit before bowing stiffly and replying, “I accept your terms and thank you for the chance.”

Shaking his head he chuckles, “Well should we go join the others? I am certain that by now mum has already started asking about grandchildren.”

A small smile curves the older wolf’s lips as he nods and the two of them rejoin the females of the family. After that the night goes smoothly, everyone visiting with each other though he can just about smell the confusion in the air at times. By the time they are ready to leave, it is rather late and he is happy for the cold air against his fur as he races home. When they get there, they quickly change into sleep clothes before passing out cuddled together.

A few short hours later he is awakened to the sound of his bondmate playing the violin. Upon leaving the bedroom, he stops by the front door and locks it. Smiling, he walks up behind the tall man at the window, and hugs him carefully, resting his head against the space between his shoulders but making sure not to get in the way of his arms with the violin. There is a brief pause for a moment before his dark-haired human returns to playing. His smile turns mischievous as he shifts his hold from a hug to a caress, his fingers slowly running down the flat planes of his stomach over his shirt, before sneaking them under the edge of his shirt.

Again the violin stops as his bondmate takes a shuddery breath. “Keep playing, love.”

Slowly the tall man begins to play again and he gently begins to rub small circles. Slowly he enlarges the circles going from rubbing just his stomach to including his sides and the edge of sleeping pants. A low moan escapes him as he continues to play though his playing is slow and sensual.

*Would you like me to continue?* He queries of the younger man as his fingers brushes against the top
of his black curls down below.

“John,” the taller man’s voice is full of need.

He slowly walks around him, without removing his hands from the human’s body. *As long as you keep playing, then I will keep touching you.* He grins mischievously. *I want to see how long you can continue to play while I take you apart.*

“Oh!” his mate exclaims as his fingers tug on his sleeping pants and pants.

Dropping ungracefully to his knees he takes the time to sniff his mate for a few moments before flicking his tongue out and licking a stripe up his erect member as he begins to tease him. Blunt fingers take the time to carefully rub and touch every inch that he can reach without touching him there again until he has the violin begging in his place. Finally he just about takes all of his mate’s member down before sucking him to completion. When he comes, his mates knees nearly buckles and he catches him with the violin before he hits the floor.

“Well that was not exactly what I was thinking but hey, good morning.” He murmurs as he sets him in his chair and carefully moves his normal chair. “So what were you confused about last night?” he inquires as he stands and goes to make tea.

For a moment his dark haired human is quite, then he asks, “What did your mother mean when she asked is we were going to have a child together?”

He comes back with the tea, pausing to unlock the door as he does so because he knows that his bondmate has already fixed his clothing. “Among shifter each person always has two potential mates, one male and one female. In ancient times when our race was still young, a group of Elder Thera asked the Old Gods for a gift. The thera were able to change a person’s genetic material so perhaps the old gods would allow thera to combine the genetic material of two males or two females if there was a willing host who would carry the child to term.”

He pauses to take a drink, “The bonding ability of the purely human off-spring was offered in exchange for this gift. Its probably when the split between the factions within the shifters began, though many would not know or admit it. The Old Gods accepted the offering and allowed this gift to occur. Meaning that any couple of the same gender could go to the thera, along with a suitable candidate to carry the child for male couples or a decision on who would carry the child for female couples. Their blood would then be mixed, placed over the stomach of the carrier, and the thera would then absorb it through their skin with their gift and into the womb so the carrier would get pregnant. From there on, the carrier lived with the couple until the birth of the child or in rare cases, twins. Carriers had to be human children of the correct shifter species, thus if a wolf couple wanted a child they would need wolf-child, and such forth.”

Again he pauses, thinking back into his early years of training with his granddame before continuing, “The loss of the bonding gift is considered one of the harshest trades made within our kinds history. It only affects those of our kind who are born without the ability to shift, but in recent generations that has been far more than it ever was in our early years. More and more shifters are producing human children despite the fact they come from purely shifting families. Some blame the thera for this, which is why some cause ‘accidents’ to happen to the thera when they are young. That’s when the older thera started teaching the younger ones to hide their gifts in the iota or omicron gifts, not revealing that they had both and thus were thera instead. A lot of thera end up losing their gift making them into whichever thing they pretended to be unless they were trained for both.”

When he is done explaining this he waits to see what his bondmates next question is going to be. Silence reigns for a few minutes while he waits and his mate thinks about what he said.
“That’s why Eric calls most species fools for not understanding the value of the theras. Who all knows within the pack that you are a thera?” his bondmate eventually remarks.

He smiles wistfully, thinking about it for a bit, “Eric, you, and Daria know I am a thera, there are a few that wonder such as Hyder and Spathi who have seen me heal things that should not be healable, Aunt Sandra suspects but has never said anything. Otherwise, no one knows.”

“Do people realize that it is only thera’s who can do the surrogate child creation?”

“Nope, most think it is just really skilled iotas that can do so now a days. When it was realized that the theras were being killed, many of the theras made it their point to erase from the clan histories what they can do, teaching only children with the thera gift of the full history of the healers within the packs.” He answers setting his now empty glass aside.

“Oh,” comes his bondmates response, as his scent turns thoughtful. “Do you want pups?”

Smiling a bit wistfully, he gives a small shrug, “Eventually, just not yet. I think we need to be a bit more stable in this relationship first, after all it’s still fairly new. Past that, I would prefer you wanting them as well.” He chuckles fondly, “I get the feeling that’s not something you are at yet.”

Both men fall silent for a few minutes as they consider that fact. Finally, his dark-haired human nods before deciding to go back to playing his violin. While his bondmate is playing, he cooks breakfast of sausages and eggs with tea before making a plate and sitting back down. Almost immediately after he places the tea and plate of food down his mate sets the violin aside to drink the tea. While he is eating his breakfast he can smell the curiosity pouring off of his mate.

Eventually the taller man inquires, “So can shifters have children with people other than their bondmate?”

“No,” he replies, “Our kind can only produce children with their mates, the exception to this rule is the human shifter-children who can only have children with humans instead, and their children rarely have any of the shifter abilities. Occasionally a human shifter-child will take a gifted or immortal lover which they produce a child with but it is really rare.”

“Hmmm,” his dark-haired human responds before falling silent again, wandering off to go do experiments.

The rest of the day goes rather well, Sherlock stays down in 221C working on experiments while he cleans the flat, putting the Christmas things that he had put out up with the exception of the lights hanging around the room. He makes himself a small dinner but doesn’t bother to ask his mate if he is hungry because he knows he will say no. He had eaten a lot the previous night so he probably would not eat for another day or so.

The next few days go in a blur and it is soon the last day of the month. The morning of New Years Eve he awakes to the smell of cooking food, as he stretches he sniffs the air and notices the scent of pancakes and orange juice. He grins getting up and heading into the kitchen where he finds his mate setting the golden-brown pancakes on a plate with syrup and butter sitting next to them.

“Morning love,” he murmurs as he pauses to kiss him before settling into his seat.

Sherlock gives him that hesitant genuine smile he loves seeing before setting the plate down between them and taking his seat. “Morning,” the tall human replies as he cuts a piece of pancake and dips it into the bowl of extra syrup he has set in front of him.

“Sleep well?” he queries, after taking a few bites and remarking on how good it tasted. Since his
bondmate rarely cooked, he made sure to praise anything that he did cook, thankfully it was always done properly so it was not a lie to do so.

A nod is all the response he gets as the two of them continue to eat in their normal styles. When they are done with their breakfast, he cleans everything up while his mate heads into the living room to check something on the laptop. He has just about finished up and is turning to go into the living room when he hears the taller man stand and start towards the kitchen.

He glances over just in time to see Sherlock pause at the door and inquire, “Would you like to spend the day wandering about London with me?”

Smiling, he nods once, before heading upstairs to get changed into a different outfit than his sleeping clothes. A few minutes later the two of them meet back at the front door and head out. Most of the day is spent with the two of them visiting nearly all of his contacts for the homeless network so he can give them a little bit of money here and there though he asks for nothing in return. By dinner time he is considering turning into a wolf and shielding because it is far less tiring to keep up with the taller man’s strides when his are equal rather than shorter than his but he doesn’t because he is enjoying their time spent together. Through the entire day he can smell the minor concern his mate is feeling but says nothing because he knows it will be brought up when he is ready to speak. However he is surprised when he decides to stop at an ice cream parlor for dinner, though he can’t help but chuckle about it. After they both order and receive their ice creams, the two of them find a seat in the corner where they can observe without really being observed.

“John?” his bondmate mutters questioningly.

“Hmmmm?” he replies as he takes a lick of his ice cream.

With his scent becoming agitated the taller man asks, “Do you think I would make a good parent?”

Since that was the last thing he expected him to ask, it takes him a moment to consider the answer before replying, “I do, though I think I would have to make sure to teach them right from wrong, your compass seems a bit skewed some days.” Pausing he cocks his head to the side and studies the taller man querying, “Why do you ask?”

Looking down at his ice cream it is a few moments before Sherlock answers him, “Your mother asked me when we were going to start having children, and Mycroft is asked by Mummy often when he is going to have a child, though I am never asked by her, some of the wolf mothers in the pack had hinted at us needing to start a family, so I was just curious what you thought.” There is nervousness in his scent and tone, as if he expects to be rejected or put down.

Smiling at him reassuringly he comments, “You will do great I’m sure, it might not be the conventional type of childhood, but any child we have will know that they’re loved.”

“How can you be sure?” the taller human demands.

“Easily,” he replies shrugging, “you’re very affectionate with me when we’re at home and sometimes even when we are with the pack. You’re good with pups. So you’ll be very affectionate with our pups.”

“Oh.”

Finishing his ice cream, he stands, tugging on the taller mans arm to get him to stand as well since his is long gone as well. “Sherlock, I promise everything will work out, we have time. I am an elite, and your bonded to me, that means unless someone kills one of us, we have at least thirty years before
we have to worry about having pups, and we will be alive for anywhere from one-hundred to two-
hundred years. Don’t feel you have to rush just because some of the wolf females ask you about it or
hint at it.”

He nods and the two of them return to wandering around London though they eventually make their
way back to the flat just before midnight. As the clock strikes twelve, he is mildly surprised as his
bondmate pushes him back against the door of their flat and kisses him senseless before tugging him
along to their shared bedroom for a long and pleasant night.

Chapter End Notes

The scene with the violin was based off a nifty scene create by wendymarlowe in
Sherlock Has to Wait (FF.net)
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV
The following morning he awakes to the sound of his bondmate playing a rather sad tune on his violin. Every so often he pauses to write something down and he realizes that the taller man is working on composing. Normally he composes to think things through or to work through emotions. At the moment, he has a feeling that he is still working on processing everything that had happened in the last week including Irene faking her own death, Christmas with the family, and their conversation the night before about if they should ever decide to have pups.

With a small shake of his head, he heads into the bathroom to get cleaned up, continuing to listen to the soft melody his mate is playing. A large part of his nature is telling him to go comfort the taller man, but his healers nature is telling him to give him space because that’s what he currently needs. Sighing, he decides to go for a walk to think for a bit. Perhaps he should track down the human-hybrid and present her to his mate if that would make him feel better. Only he is pretty sure that it will not. At the moment, the only thing that is going to make him feel better is a little bit of time and perspective.

When he gets out of the shower he heads into the living room area to discover their lovely human landlady setting a pair of plates with food down. Smiling thankfully at her, he takes a seat and eats one of them, glancing at the other to notice that it is way more food than his mate would eat. After he is done, he heads into the kitchen to make a hot chocolate for his mate, knowing that even if he would not stop for a tea, he would stop for the chocolate. As he comes back into the living room, a puttering Mrs. Hudson pointed looks between the plate of food she had just picked up and his mate, worry and sadness evident on her face. He nods to her in understanding, before heading over to the little table by his mate to set down the hot chocolate.

Please drink, he inquires of his mate.

“Lovely tune, Sherlock, haven’t heard that one before.” The human woman states conversationally.

“You composing?” he queries aloud.

Hot chocolate? Alright, I’ll drink it, but no food. The tall man replies telepathically, before answering aloud, “Helps me think.”

Grabbing his coat he pulls it on and starts to button it up while his bondmate turns back to the window to continue playing.

I am going for a walk, care to join me? he queries, already knowing the answer but asking anyways.

No. I wish to think, comes the soft reply mentally. There has been a lot of me to adapt to. I feel…his voice trails off as if he cannot determine how to describe it.
He nods once before asking aloud, “What are you thinking about?”

With a squeal on the violin he spins around and sets it on his chair before turning to point at the laptop, stating rapidly, “The counter on your blog is still stuck at one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five.”

Stepping forward a bit so he can turn to look at the laptop he answers, “Yeah, it’s faulty. Can’t seem to fix it.” And I did not feel like asking Eric to fix it when he is having so much fun with other things instead.

“Faulty,” his mate repeats as he pulls the human-hybrids phone out, muttering to himself he says, “or you’ve been hacked and it’s a message.” Entering the numbers into the phone code it pops up with the warning about it being the wrong passcode. Sighing, he shoves the phone back in his pocket before lifting his mug and drinking nearly the entire thing in one shot before grabbing his violin again to continue playing. “Just faulty,” he mutters.

“Well, I’m going out for a bit.” He states as he watches the taller man.

There is no response as he heads to the kitchen to bid Mrs. Hudson farewell where she is tidying up. The look she gives him is sad and full of accusation but he still just bids her a goodbye before grabbing his keys and heading outside.

As he is going out the door his mate inquires, The code was broke wasn’t it?

Spathi broke it when she first got the phone, do you want me to tell you? he replies.

A mental sigh fills his mind, No. I’ll figure it out.

Alright, if you need anything text or reach for me and I’ll answer. He tells the taller man as he steps outside, a mental nod is the only response he gets.

He is just about to start walking away from the flat when a dark-haired woman wearing black and leaning against the fence outside of the flat calls out questioningly, “John?”

Pausing mid-step, “Yeah,” he responds as he turns to see the woman and takes a delicate sniff of the air as he greets her, “Hello.” She is too far away with the current wind to get a good scent but he knows that she is human, that she wants something, and that she’s bored.

With a flirtatious smile at him, she straightens up and he repeats his, “Hello,” with a bit more feeling. As she gets closer he catches the after scent of another, one that is familiar and it takes his mind a moment to register that it is Irene’s scent. Ah. That explains a lot, well best to play dumb and go with the flow. “So, any plans for tonight?” she queries with a small smile.

Giving a small chuckle he looks her over as he is clearly expected to do according to her behavior before looking around and answering, “Er, nothing fixed. Nothing I couldn’t heartlessly abandon. You have any ideas?”

“One,” she replies as she looks over her shoulder and back at him.

Glancing over he sees the sleek black car that pulls up next to them and sighs in exasperation. Really? Why doesn’t anyone just use their phone. It would be fast and easy.

Continuing to play dumb he grumbles as he opens the car door and gets in, “You know, Mycroft could just phone me, if he didn’t have this bloody stupid power complex.” She walks around to the
other side to get in. Spathi, you with Sherlock? He queries of the multiform as he is certain his mate had seen the display and will probably find a way to follow.

*Of course, he is good at putting feeling into that violin I hear.* Com esher quick reply, along with an image of the steps where she is perched and watching from within her shields.

Nearly as soon as he pulls the door shut the car pulls off and makes its way through the city to the empty building that was once the Battersea Power Station. Pulling inside the building, the two of them get out and the human female leads him through it.

As they are walking he queries sarcastically, “Couldn’t we just go to a café? Sherlock doesn’t follow me everywhere.”

He can hear her typing on her phone as she murmurs, “Through there,” gesturing to a door. As he heads through the door he can hear her on the phone, “He’s on his way. You were right, he thinks it’s Mycroft.”

Smiling internally, he continues to walk but gives a quick sniff of the air. While the scent is mostly stale from disuse he can also smell the familiar tones of the human-hybrid nearby and decides to start speaking, he is really good at playing dumb when he needs to, it’s the best way to gather information. “He’s writing sad music; doesn’t eat; barely talks, only to correct the television.” As he is speaking he can smell a change in the scent, sadness is added to it that makes him want to roll his eyes but he refrains. As he continues to walk into the room he notices where the scent is coming from, “I’d say he was heartbroken but, er, well, he’s Sherlock. He does all that anyway,” his voice trails off as she comes striding towards him wearing a moderately conservative black outfit.

“Hello, Dr. Watson,” she greets him as she steps closer and stops moving.

Quietly he requests, “Tell him you’re alive.” Because I am tired of playing dumb about you.

She gives a small shake of her head, replying, “He’d come after me.”

Tilting his head a bit he responds, “I’ll come after you if you don’t.”

Her voice softens as she looks at him inquisitively, there seems to be shock in her voice as she murmurs “Mmmm, I believe you.”

In the dead air around them, her scent is rather noticeable as she quickly thinks things through, it includes curiosity and shock, and just a bit of worry. Before he begins to speak he catches another scent, one that is familiar as his own, that of his bondmate. He doesn’t know where he is, but he knows that he is close.

A little louder and still playing dumb he remarks, “You were dead on a slab. It was definitely you.”

Smiling at him she answers, “DNA tests are only as good as the records you keep.”

Staring at her he sarcastically states, “And I bet you know the record-keeper.”

She nods once, “I know what he likes, and I needed to disappear.”

Being perfectly honest, he queries, “Then how come I can see you, and I don’t even want to?”

She gives a small snort before throwing her hands wide, palms out and shaking her head a bit as she answers, “Look, I made a mistake.” Dropping her hands she continues, “I sent something to Sherlock for safe-keeping and now I need it back, so I need your help.”
With a single shake of his head he states, “No,” in a no-negotiations tone of voice.

“It’s for his own safety.” She responds.

“So’s this: tell him you’re alive.” He retorts evenly.

“I can’t,” she replies sincerely.

Taking a breath because he is beginning to get pissed he just about snaps, “Fine. I’ll tell him, and I still won’t help you.” If it would remove just one thing from the concern his mate was currently feeling he’d tell him about the meeting so that he would know what’s going on. It was not something he actually wanted to do, but he did try to always be honest to his bondmate. Doing an about face, he starts to walk away when she questions.

“What do I say?” her scent is full of worry and frustration with an undertone of acceptance.

Spinning back around he snaps, “What do you normally say? You’ve texted him a lot.”

She pulls her phone out of her pocket and stares at it before looking back at him. He merely glares while she comments, “Just the usual stuff.”

In response he bites out, “There is no ‘usual’ in this case.”

Glancing back at the phone she starts to read them aloud and with each one his anger increases. He does not like the fact that she has been flirt with or at his mate, even if he knows his mate is uninterested.

Staring at her he questions, “You flirted with Sherlock Holmes?”

She continues to stare at her phone as she absently replies, “At him, he never replies.”

Disbelieving he looks away as he remarks sarcastically, “No, Sherlock always replies – to everything. He’s Mr. Punchline. He will outlive God trying to have the last word.”

A smirk curves her lips as she looks over at him, “Does that make me special?”

He stares at her for a bit before answering, “I don’t know, maybe.” She’s human, there is no ripping her throat out he reminds himself.

Glancing back at her phone she asks, “Are you jealous?”

He looks away for a moment before replying, “We’re not dating,” definitely not dating. Bondmates, lovers, but not dating, a bit past dating.

“Yes you are. There,” she replies as she types something in to her phone before turning it for him to see. From the distance they are at, he cannot read it but she states what she typed, “I’m not dead. Let’s have dinner.” Before she presses send.

“For the record, I am not actually interested in other men.” He comments.

A smirk curves her lips as she answers, “Neither am I, look at us both.”

From nearby he hears the phone go off before it suddenly gets silent. Frowning, he considers going after his bondmate but is stopped by the human-hybrid holding out her hand.

“I don’t think so, do you?” She questions almost conversationally.
With a shake of his head, he leaves anyways but does not rush.

_He’s frustrated and mildly confused, if I was the friendly type I would be explaining things to him but I am not._ Elspeth informs him as they leave the building.

A few minutes later he is surprised when Elspeth contacts him again. _I am back off for a bit, Venomous has decided he wants a word with him._

_Alright_, he replies as he continues his walking back towards their flat.

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**Sherlock’s POV**

When his wolf had left this morning he had debated about following him until he had seen the unfamiliar woman and the black car. Almost as soon as he had, he flagged a cabbie and had it follow the car. As soon as he knew where they were going he had the cabbie drop him off a little ways away and made his way swiftly to where they were. It took him a few minutes to go through the building without being spotted but when he did he came to a large room where his John was with Irene. Finding a place to stay hidden, he listens to their conversation.

From what he can tell, John is playing stupid about the fact that he already knew she was alive. That was probably a good thing. He was surprised when his mate demands that the woman tell him she is alive. He is well aware that his wolf dislikes her, so it confuses him, except for the fact he also knows that if she does so, then he can try for answers to his questions which would make him happy. Oh.

The anger in his wolf’s voice is evident when she reads off the flirty messages that she had sent him and he had tended to ignore. He was happy with his wolf, why would he want a human female? When his wolf denies liking men he is heartbroken and almost before the phone in his pocket goes off he is spinning away and leaving. Originally he had wanted to confront her to find out why she had did what she did, but now he knew so it did not matter.

As he stalks through the streets and alleyways his mind is spinning chaotically. Had he done something wrong? Was that why his wolf was denying him? Sure he had been preoccupied this morning but John didn’t normally hold that against him. So why now?

He is so lost in thought he almost doesn’t realize when he gains a shadow except his instincts tell him to be alert and he pulls out of his mind in order to defend himself only he finds he doesn’t have to. Leaning against the wall near where two muggers are laying is Eric, looking at his scale-tipped fingers as if he is bored.

_I know you are smarter than this._ The cobra remarks as he steps over the prone body of the closer mugger. _Let’s have a chat as we walk. You are acting like a foolish human, something I know you are not._

“Foolish or human?” he inquires slightly lost as they return to ambling along.

_Foolish._ The reply is short tempered, _First off, it is fully understandable why a wolf would be bothered by the concept of someone else flirting with his mate. You know the answer to why, care to state it aloud?_

He thinks about it for a moment before slowly stating, “Because wolves only mate once.” With that statement a bell seems to go off in his mind because he realizes that everything said was nothing
insulting or denying. He had asked John to not make it public that they were in a relationship. He had showed interest in a person that had been flirting with him, which probably made his wolf nervous because humans could have as many loves as they wanted, and what’s to say that he had not found her interesting enough to fall for her too, particularly with the way he had been acting lately.

Oh.

*Good to see you still have brains. Shall we have a hunt so you may work off some of the annoyance I can feel pouring from you over the foolishness that you displayed?*

“Just one, then I wish to get home to speak with John.” He replies but doesn’t ask who is hunting who. That question will be answered soon enough.

The next three hours are spent with him trying to avoid the cobra who decided that he needed to be prey. Apparently, working off of fight or flight will help him with his emotions though he is not certain how besides giving him something else to focus on. By the time they are done, he is no longer feeling conflicted about the idea of him as a father, nor is he bothered any longer by the situation with Irene. He had also decided that maybe they should tell his brother about the fact they were together, though he does not wish to do so until after this situation with Irene has been dealt with. Like normal the two of them part ways just before his flat, he knows it is the cobra way of making sure he is fine without intruding.

By the time he returns home his mind is far clearer than it has been in several days and he immediately notices that someone has broken into the flat according to the chipping in the paint on the door.

*Need assistance?* he hears the cobra query as he stops where he had turned to leave.

*Perhaps.* He replies as he pushes the door open and takes in all of the details within the hall between the flats. Anger burns through him and as he heads up the stairs into his flat to find Mrs. Hudson and the CIA men with her. *I will require a cleanup crew.* He tells the cobra as he steps into his flat with his hands behind him.

*Done,* come the swift reply, *I will make sure no humans out here interfere.*

He says nothing in response as he steps into the flat and spots Mrs. Hudson sitting on one of the dining room chairs that has been placed in front of the fireplace facing the sofa with Neilson holding a gun with a silencer to her head. She is crying and grows just a bit louder when she spots him.

“Oh Sherlock, Sherlock.” She cries out, partially as a warning and partly as a plea.

Voice cool despite the burning rage, he remarks to her, “Don’t snivel, Mrs. Hudson. It’ll do nothing to impede the flight of a bullet.” His attention switches to Neilson, “What a tender world that would be.”

Trying to quiet her sobbing she looks up at him pleading, “Oh, please, sorry, Sherlock.”

The first thing the man says to him is, “I believe you have something that we want, Mr. Holmes.”

He continues to move forward as he replies, “Then why don’t you ask for it?” leaning over carefully, he check Mrs. Hudson to see what all has been done to her before his focus switches to Neilson. The other human had made a vast mistake by touching his landlady and would pay dearly for it.

“I’ve been asking this one. She doesn’t seem to know anything.” The American remarks, not seeming to realize the danger he is in. “But you know what I’m asking for, don’t you, Mr. Holmes?”
His focused gaze sweeps from Mrs. Hudson to all of the places on a person he could attack, he then looks him square in the eyes as he straightens up, tucking his hands back behind him. “I believe I do,” he replies seriously.

Whimpering she murmurs, “Oh, please, Sherlock.”

“First get rid of your boys.” He commands aloud, I am sending two idiots out, please deal with them.

The impression of a feral grin is the response he gets, By deal with them does that mean I can snap their necks and make them vanish or be a little nicer?

However you like. He replies still furious over their treatment of Mrs. Hudson.

“Why?” the CIA man demands staring at him.

He steps back one more step, giving himself plenty of room for what’s to come. “I dislike being outnumbered. It makes for too much stupid in the room.”

For a moment the other man says nothing, then he nods once, motioning to his minions, “You two, go to the car.”

“Well then get into the car and drive away.” he orders the two of them as they slowly make their way to the door, “Don’t try to trick me. You know who I am. It doesn’t work.” He snaps at Neilson, clicking the ‘k’ sounds in the sentences as he does so, the only outward sign to his anger.

Neilson nods once more and the two nod back before heading outside. A moment later he gets the impression sharp teeth sinking into skin before he hears a car drive away.

They’ll be dead in less than three minutes, their hearts will stop and they will crash harmlessly into a parked car, he hears the cobra, I borrowed a bit of John’s healing to make the marks vanish so there will be zero trace of how the poison got into them that killed them.

Thank you, he replies before stating aloud, “Next, you can stop pointing that gun at me.”

Snappishly the gunman comments, “So you can point a gun at me?”

Spreading his arms to the side he states, “I’m unarmed.”

“Mind if I check?” the stupid man asks as he walks around Mrs. Hudson, falling for exactly what he wanted.

“Oh, I insist,” he replies with a dark gleam in his eyes.

As the other human pats him down he rolls his eyes, shifting his sleeve a bit to get ready to drop the can of sanitizer spray from within his coat into his hand. Slowly the man goes from checking his front to checking back, focusing mostly on his torso. Bending his arm just a bit he waits until the other man is directly behind him and he can feel him looking down before he drops the can into his hand and spins around, dousing the other directly in the eyes with the sanitizer before fiercely head-butchting him.

Neilson drops to the ground unconscious as he flips the spray in the air and sets it on the table muttering, “Moron.”

After checking on Mrs. Hudson he sets to work dealing with Neilson. Including binding him to the chair and duck taping his mouth shut. Sarcastically, he goes downstairs and places a note on the door
before making Mrs. Hudson a cup of tea and settling her on the sofa while he takes a chair aiming Neilson’s gun at him.

Minutes later he hears his mate coming up the steps, apparently he had read the note because he takes the steps rather quickly as he demands, “What’s going on?” while coming through the door. He watches as his wolf takes in the scene and can just about hear his thoughts processing. “Jeez. What the hell is happening?”

Lifting his cell phone to his ear, he replies, “Mrs Hudson’s been attacked by an American. I’m restoring balance to the universe.” While he waits for the phone.

His wolf immediately hurries over to Mrs. Hudson to check her over, murmuring comfortingly while surging a little bit of power into her while checking her.

“Downstairs. Take her downstairs and look after her.” he tells his bondmate as he continues to wait for the phone, standing he moves closer to Neilson who has opened his eyes and is now watching the scene unfold.

“Are you gonna tell me what’s going on?” his wolf queries aloud.

Smiling a bit coldly he responds, “I expect so. Now go.” I have asked Eric to get a clean up team, they will needed when I am done with him for harming her.

His wolf narrows his eyes at him, Good. I’ll go see about healing some of that damage without her noticing.

When the two of them are done with their shared look, his wolf sends a dark look to the bound man before following their landlady downstairs.

At the same time Lestrade finally answers his phone. “Lestrade. We’ve had a break-in at Baker Street. Send your least irritating officers and an ambulance.” Turning his back on Neilson as he walks over to the table to set the gun down he continues to speak, “Oh, no-no-no-no-no, we’re fine. No, it’s the, uh, it’s the burglar. He’s got himself rather badly injured.” Glancing over at Neilson he can read the fear in the other man’s eyes as he lists all the things he plans to do, “Oh, a few broken ribs, fractured skull ... suspected punctured lung.”

“What happened to him?” Lestrade asks over the phone and he can just about feel the frustration.

A slightly cruel smile curves his lips as he responds, “He fell out of a window,” before hanging up.

A few hours actually pass before the Lestrade shows up, during that time he throws the CIA agent out the window and hauls him back up the steps several times between inflicting several other painful blows to the man. By the time that Lestrade gets there he is certain all of the injuries he listed are completely done. It takes the paramedics a few minutes to get him into the ambulance before they are driving off.

“And exactly how many times did he fall out the window?” Lestrade queries as they stand in front of Speedy’s and watch the ambulance drive off.

“It’s all a bit of a blur, Detective Inspector. I lost count.” He looks over at him, eyes daring him to say something.

Shaking his head the detective inspector simply walks away while he goes back inside to visit with John and Mrs. Hudson.
John’s POV  
A large part of him wants to go join Sherlock in bashing that human’s head into the ground, but he doesn’t, instead he stays with Mrs. Hudson, carefully checking each of her wounds and putting antibiotic ointment on them. As he places the ointment, he send tiny surges of power through her, healing the internal damage to make sure that she is not left in any discomfort, he also sends a bit of power through her to check the rest of her. Perhaps he should see about making her some tea one of these days, he can always place bits of power within it to make sure she get a bit more healing to stave off of the effects of aging that are more noticeable in a human than shifter.

Eventually, after a couple of short hours and a few cups of tea, he finally hears Greg and the medics come for the human intruder.

Alpha, he hears Greg query his attention while his mate and him stand outside.

Yes? he replies as he makes another couple of teas.

What do you want me to do with this bloke? Sherlock has gone a bit extreme on him, the jackal-child replies.

Send him to the hospital, I do believe that Sherlock has already given Eric permission to do whatever he wants to them, that means that he will be vanishing sooner than later. With no trace to find as a warning to those who would try a stunt like that again. He responds as he makes the tea.

Understood. The jackal-child replies before breaking the connection.

Had had just set the tea on Mrs. Hudson’s table when his mate comes in, carefully wiping his feet on the mat before entering and looking through the fridge.

“She’ll have to sleep upstairs in our flat tonight. We need to look after her.” he tells the taller man as he glances between the two.

“No,” she mumbles, still a bit teary.

“Of course, but she’s fine,” his mate responds as he pulls a mince pie out of the fridge.

Looking between the two again he states, “No, she’s not. Look at her. Since I know she won’t leave here, I would prefer her to come up to our flat for the night so I can make sure there are no lingering effects.”

“Don’t be absurd,” his mate mutters as he straightens out and shuts the fridge door.
Sighing, he remarks, “She’s in shock, for God’s sake, and all over some bloody stupid camera phone. Where is it, anyway?” the healer in him wants to fix any problems that she may have, a trait that he really tries to keep under control when surrounded by humans.

His mate nibbles at the pie, wiping a few of the crumbs from his lips as he replies, “Safest place I know,” and glancing at their landlady.

She straightens up, drying her eyes one last time before reaching inside her shirt to pull the phone out, “You left it in the pocket of your second-best dressing gown, you clot.” She holds the phone out for him.

Accepting it he flips it in the air a few times before shoving it in his pocket. “Thank you,” he murmurs before returning to eating his mince pie while she continues to talk.

Rubbing a hand against the side of her face she states, “I managed to sneak it out when they thought I was having a cry.”

After taking another bite of the pie his mate looks at him commenting, “Shame on you, John Watson.”

Curiously he repeats, “Shame on me?” not understanding exactly where this is going. He might be smart but he will never claim to keep up with his mate.

Walking over to their landlady his bondmate continues, “Mrs. Hudson leave Baker Street?” he tucks an arm around her and pulls her close, “England would fall.”

The last of the fear and sadness in the air vanishes as she runs a hand across his longer fingers and chuckles. A smile curves everyone’s lips, though he is sure it is for varying reasons for each.

He tries once more to talk her into staying upstairs for just one night but she demurs, making an argument for the fact that they are home so any problems will be quickly dealt with. Finally giving in, he gives her a quick hug before heading back upstairs to their flat where he pours a drink for himself and makes a hot chocolate with almond for Sherlock.

Carrying the two cups out to the living room, he sets the hot chocolate down on the desk for Sherlock while he waits for the taller man to come into the room. Almost as soon as he does so, the dark-haired human downs the hot chocolate before striping off his coat and hanging it on the back of his chair.

“Where is it now?” he queries as he walks over to where he is standing.

Scooping up the violin, his mate turns to look out the window that has been replaced again as he tunes in his violin, and replies, “Where no one will look.”

With a slightly serious expression on his face he states, “Whatever’s on that phone is more than just pictures.”

Still tuning his violin in, he responds, “Yes it is.”

He glances at the floor for a moment before glancing at his mate and asking, “How do you feel about the fact she told you she’s alive rather than just me telling you it wasn’t her on the slab?”

His bondmate does not answer, instead he flips his bow string in the air and begins to play ‘Auld Lang Syne’ before turning back to the window. With a sad smile he settles into his chair to listen to him play as he goes from one song to the next. While it is technically the first going into the second,
he is not going to complain. Several hours seem to pass while he listens to the sound of the violin. The scent in the air is mostly relaxed. Neither of them are giving off a lot of emotions at the moment.

Eventually Sherlock comes to the end of the song he was playing and sets the violin aside before settling onto the sofa. For a minute nothing is said, then his bondmate pats the spot next to him a bit hesitantly. With a small smile, he gets up and moves over to it, not shocked when Sherlock immediately curls against his side, folding his long body up against him. He just cards his fingers through those dark curls while he waits for him to say what’s on his mind.

“I was jealous today,” he murmurs after they had sat there in silence for a bit, “I thought for a bit that you were denying me.” he pauses again, snuggling closer, “I am the one who did not want to say anything yet it bothered me a great deal that you said we were not dating. Do you think we could come out with it? Not necessarily tell everyone but just not deny it?”

Kissing the top of his bondmates head softly, he pulls the taller man onto his lap and wraps his arms around him, making soft relaxing noises, “It’s alright love, we can handle this however you want. Though among our kind dating is only ever done by the unbonded, all bonded couples that have actively accepted it are considered in a permanent relationship. Many eventually get married or announce themselves as lifebonded just to formalize things during one of the six holy days.”

He can feel Sherlock nod against his shoulder but the taller man says nothing as he stays curled close to him. eventually the two drift off to sleep. When he awakens, they had shifted positioning on the sofa so that Sherlock is fully stretched out with his head against his chest and his arms around his waist, while his arms are loosely covering his bondmates shoulders. He’s not exactly certain how they had fallen asleep like that, but at least they had gotten a little bit of rest. Almost immediately after he awake, he feels Sherlock waking up as well. the taller man stretches a lot like a cat before sitting up properly, a blush staining his pale skin with just a hint of color.

“Better?” he queries, brushing a lock of dark hair way from his face.

He nods once, leaning over to kiss him before heading into the bathroom without saying another word. A little bit later he hears the sound of water as the tall man hops into the shower.

Smiling to himself he stretches out, rotating his should a bit and surprised to find it is not as stiff as expected until he remembers the fact he had not been using his gift a lot lately which meant it was burning energy to heal any old scar tissue he had instead. Unbuttoning his shirt, he carefully runs his fingers over the delicate area around where he was shot, noting that the sensitivity seemed to be leveling out and the muscles flattening back into their proper shape. There will probably always be a mark to show for it but eventually that’s all it will be.

Still smiling to himself, he checks the laptop to see what time it is and sighs when he sees it is only four thirty in the morning, so they had slept for just over four hours or so. Oh well, he know he will not get back to sleep so instead he makes two cups of tea as he hears Sherlock leaving the bathroom, and wanders over to the desk to type on his blog a bit more.

A moment later, the tall human comes out of the bathroom wearing nothing but a towel wrapped around his hips. “Thank you,” he murmurs as he passes by, grabbing the hot tea and sitting down in his chair to drink it. “Sleep well?”

He rotates in the computer chair to face the taller man, “Yes, of course, you?”

Sherlock nods once before looking around as if trying to figure out what to do. Eventually the taller man decides to work on his violin because he gets out the resin for cleaning it and settles into his seat with the supplies surrounding him, carefully taking the time to check each string. For the next few
hours the two of them work on their individual projects in silence, before Mrs. Hudson comes wandering up with a plate of biscuits and scones for the two of them.

“Good morning boys, I figured I would say thank you for getting rid of those nasty men and taking care of me with something sweet for breakfast since I was sure you were not going to eat a proper breakfast.” She babbles as she sets the plate down on the table in front of the sofa.

“Thank you, Mrs. Hudson, how are you feeling this morning?” he comments as he quickly buttons up his shirt and moves over to the sofa to grab a scone.

Smiling, she takes one of the biscuits and sits down next to him, answering, “I feel surprisingly well, actually I feel better than I have in a long time, my hips not bothering me so far today.”

He smiles softly, happy to hear that the little surge of power he had used the night before had been useful. Glancing at the clock he realizes that it is nearly time for him to get ready, so he thanks her one more time before heading upstairs to prepare for work for the day. Before he leaves the flat Sherlock tells him that he is going to Bart’s to run some tests on the phone and he will text when he has the answers or leaves the hospital. He nods and smiles at this before heading out the door with his jacket on and keys in his hand.

Just before he is about to go to lunch he is surprised when his dark-haired human shows up at the clinic with a small bag of food and a cup of hot tea. Sarah recognizes him and shows him to his office so when he walks in there he stands rather nervously according to his scent though that does not show on his features as he presents him with lunch before bolting without saying anything else. Startled, he goes back in his office to open the bag and see what’s in it. He’s rather pleased to discover that it is some sandwiches from Speedy’s with home brewed tea.

-Thank you.- JW

-Good?- SH

-Very.- JW

The rest of the day goes rather smoothly, though he has one instance where a child is being harmed by his uncle and his parents are unaware of the situation. Not wanting to separate the family but wanting to deal with it he sends the information to Eric instead of calling for child services. There had been plenty of times when they were in Afghanistan that he had watched the cobra rewrite a person’s personality in order to maintain the family unit without any risk to the little ones. He did not care what race or species the person was, if they harmed a child, he would deal with them. A little bit before he is to leave work, he feels the link establish between himself the cobra as the cobra shows him what he had chosen to do. The uncle would be turning himself into the authorities in the morning when he finally woke up from the massive headache he currently had from feeling every ounce of pain he had ever given to a child. The cobra also borrows a bit of his mindhealing gift in order to smooth the edges of the little boys memory after pulling the negative emotions out of him, making it so they will not be nearly as traumatic for him.

When he gets home he is surprised to see that there are no new messes to be cleaned up, even though Sherlock has the new lab downstairs there were still times that he would find random experiments that the taller man had started up here in the kitchen out of habit more than anything.

He is just considering what to do about dinner when his tall human comes breezing in with another bag of food which he sets in front of him before drifting off into their room. “Eat up John, there’s a case!”
Chuckling, he digs in happy to actually get a chance to eat before the two of them are off chasing through the streets of London.

That second day of the month sets a tone of the entire rest of the month. On days he works Sherlock shows up with food and drink right before lunch leaving it in his office before vanishing. There are no new surprising major messes, though the little ones are still occasionally around which doesn’t surprise him. Any time they have a case his bondmate makes sure he gets at least one meal before they are off chasing the criminals. At night the two of them cuddle either on the sofa or in bed, which often leads into other things, but not always, however his dark-haired human is initiating contact between them far more than he had in the past. There are only three days that this pattern does not hold true.

The first being the new moon gathering, the second being his bondmate’s birthday, and the last being the pack meeting.
January Fourth to the Sixth

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV

January fourth was the new moon gathering, it also happened to be a solar eclipse. Since Jace had not had a proper childhood, he had asked one of the other shifter pups that was close to his age if there was any sort of significance to eclipses within the shifter beliefs.

Jason had heard the question and had turned on him commenting, “What type of idiot are you not to recognize the beliefs of your own kind?”

Before anyone can respond, Jace’s eyes get wide and fear just about pours off the younger wolf at the aggression in Jason’s tone. The most immediate reaction is out of Eric, who’s long slender fingers are around the older wolf’s neck and lifting him high into the air before anyone can say or do anything.

“You’ll keep a civil tongue or I will insure you never speak in any way again.” The cobra hisses in a low tone. Despite the quietness of his tone every single person hears him since they are paying close attention to the one who never speaks aloud.

Jace puts a hand on the tall man’s back hesitantly before the cobra glances behind him at the younger shifter. A moment later the cobra tosses the older wolf aside like a rag doll, his dark eyes catching the attention of each and every person who dares to look at him before stalking off to some other part of the house. The young shifter wolf looks around a bit lost before he spots Aidan approaching the pup.

“You must be Jace, I’m Aidan,” the younger cobra greets the wolf with a smile. A moment later the two of them are wandering off, the cobra carefully drawing the younger shifter out of his shell.

At the same time he watches as Cyanne approaches his father, putting one hand on her hip as she looks at the older wolf. “Would you like a hand?” she queries before the wolf gets to his feet.

He watches as his father gets to his feet staring at the mouse.

“You should perhaps consider learning patience if you wish to stay here within the pack,” she murmurs to the taller man as he continues to stare at her. “You should also never judge someone without first knowing the facts. Jace came to our pack and is now the bondchild of the pack healer Daria, but his original pack had several who thought it was fine to harm a pup just because he has mixed bloods. The Old Gods determine who bonds so it is not for our kind to say whether the children of those bonds are wrong because their blood is mixed.”

He can just about feel the bristling from the older wolf but the confrontation is ended when Aunt Sandra calls for everyone’s attention in order to do the birthday celebrations. As the celebrations begin the mood is suddenly lifted though he does not feel Eric return to the house. Excusing himself he heads outside and follows the deep link that he has only with two people, the one his bondmate,
It takes him a few minutes to track him down, even with their link when the older cobra feels like hiding he is hard to track. He finds him in the farthest part of the property in the old grove he had chosen to use for the Dawn Awakening.

Eric? He queries softly with his mind, knowing that sound is not something the cobra would appreciate right now.

Go away John, I am tired. The cobra replies perched high within one of the trees in the ring, ironically enough it is oak tree, the tree of the dark protectors in legend.

Come down here, he just about commands the taller man. For a moment he does not think that cobra will listen, but then he drops to the ground, silent as possible for someone of his height.

Elder. He answers the command, his voice far more subdued then he is used to.

Aunt, can you see that Sherlock and Aidan have rides home? He queries of his aunt as he watches the older cobra.

Do you need help? She asks in response, worry filling her tone.

Just make sure they get home without difficulty. He answers as he loops an arm around the taller man and gets hissed at.

Alright, be careful, she responds.

Sherlock, I need to deal with something I will see you in the morning, Aunt Sandra will make sure you have a way home. He tells his bondmate as they get to the taller man’s car and he shoves him unceremoniously in the passenger seat.

He gets a nod of understanding in response mentally before he shifts his focus to the car, of course the cobra had to drive the fancy sports car. Couldn’t he have selected one of his boring cars today?

Stop complaining before I drive myself home. The cobra grumbles but he know that he really won’t.

Slipping into the vehicle the two are on their way shortly, and it takes him a few minutes to adjust to the delicate nature that is Eric’s favorite car because it has a very easy gas pedal and touchy brakes compared to the cars his family had always had. A few minutes later he is pulling into the driveway at the cobra’s house to park in the garage. Once parked, Eric opens his own door and goes to stand, swaying a bit before using the car as a support.

I knew I was tired, just hadn’t realized how tired I guess. The cobra grumbles as he stands there with his head down waiting. My thank, Elder.

You haven’t called me elder in years, I would prefer if you do not start now. He replies to the swaying man.

A low laugh rumbles through the taller man’s throat, Only from force of habit do I call you by name, I would prefer elder, you asked me to do otherwise.

Well I really prefer not to be called by title, hence the reason I asked to be called by name. He answers before asking, To the garden or would you sleep in bed?

The garden, I rarely use the bed. The spiky haired cobra replies, with it the feelings of loneliness that
he prefers to avoid comes rushing through.

_This would be easier if I just carried your tall ass._ He grumbles as they make their way slowly through the house to the back part where the indoor garden and pool are.

Upon getting there, he strips Eric out of his over clothes even though he gets hissed at every step of the way before making sure he is seated in the one open spot. The cobra shakes his head a bit as if to clear it but it does not work. A moment later he is in wolf form and curling around the tall man, using his head to push him carefully.

**Go to sleep, you’ve done this before, now get comfortable and rest.** He commands the cobra without putting any true command into the order. It is easy to tell that the taller man wants to argue but his body is not working with him, so instead he sighs and shifts so his head is resting against his side and stretches out so he is touching most of his body against his fur long ways before he finally drifts off.

Snorting softly, he gently touches the cobra’s mind and tries to smooth out the edges of his grief and pain. He knows it will do nothing in the long run, for mindhealing has never worked on him, but it will allow him to sleep a little easier for just one night then he will take it. Every time he feels the cobra’s dreams turn to nightmare he uses their connection and his mindhealing gift to pull him out and back into peaceful sleep.

Almost two hours later his ears perk up as he hears someone enter the house, using a broad sweep with his telepathy, he notes that it is Aidan returning home.

“Eric?” the younger cobra calls out as he walks through the house.

**Mind speech only,** he tells the younger man, **we are in the garden. Keeping him asleep is not an easy task.**

_Yes elder,_ the teenager replies just before silently gliding into the area. _Is something wrong?_

_He’s not been sleeping again, probably because he is adjusting to having someone around. Change has never been easy for him,_ he replies, using his mind to force the cobra back into slumber as he awakens.

Aidan’s eyes get big as he takes in the scene before him, his wolf form is huge, and this is the first time the younger cobra had been so close to it, then to see his father curled so closely to someone else, it was unusual. _Will he be alright? I had not realized that he was in such bad shape._

_He has a bad habit of pushing himself ‘till he drops, he would probably have been fine if he had not had to suppress the energy surge that comes with being angry for him._ He tells the younger shifter. _In that aspect, my bondmate is a lot like him. Figures the two that I seem to be closely bonded with have similar personalities._

A low chuckle escapes the shifter as he nods once, before bowing and backing out of the room. _Thank you for taking care of him._

Glancing over at the younger shifter he inclines his head but says nothing.

Another three hours pass in peace in quiet after Aidan leaves before Eric begins to awake, his body coming out of the deep slumber he had forced him into. Slowly those obsidian eyes flicker open and everything that he normally keeps hidden is easily seen.
Good morning, feel better? He queries as he watches the taller man stretch and get up.

For a moment he says nothing, instead his eyes narrow as he recalls the previous evening before he actually blushes. “I did not do that at the celebration did I?” his normally smooth hiss is gravelly.

He shakes his head once before returning to human form, “Nope, you left to go outside, since it was cold and you’re a snake I tracked you down and brought you home. The only one who saw you besides me was Aidan.”

The taller shifter flinches but says nothing as he scoops up his clothing and heads into the house.

Shaking his head, he follows him, unsurprised when he heads into the kitchen after dropping his clothes in a laundry basket.

“How long was I asleep for?” the cobra asks as he sets about make tea.

“Just over five hours, though I had to force you back into sleep when Aidan got here around hour two, you had automatically started waking up when you noticed his presence. I also smoothed the edges of your dreams to keep them from heading into the realm of nightmares.”

Handing him his tea, the taller man inclines his head politely, “My thanks, do you want a ride back home?”

“Nah, I can get there easily enough,” he turns considering leaving, but glances over at his moody pack member with a smile, “Perhaps you should consider an old fashion courtship, you’d feel better, and that itch would fade away.”

“Fuck off John,” the cobra snarls at him, it is not a subject he cares to discuss.

Giving a shake of his head, he turns back to the cobra, eyes narrow as he locks onto his mind and takes full hold, Look, he commands, showing him part of him that allows for bonding. Most of it is frayed but there is a small place that seems to be mending, with five bonds attached to it. The first three of those are to his children, the fourth is to him, and the last is the weakest and smallest but it is beginning to form towards the wolf-pup Jace. Do you see? I can tell you right now, whether it was an intentional choice or not, he has already selected. He’s a wolf, we only bond once.

A low hiss escapes the cobra as he faces off against him. Both long poisonous fangs are fully extended, something he only does when in fight or flight mode, and not something he likes to lose control of. No.

“Too late, already starting, now you have to decide whether it is worth trying or not and how to proceed, but don’t make a choice on what you think is right based on the skewed perspective that the bitch left you with.” He tells his tall friend before turning back around, “Get some more rest, you need it.”

With that he takes off, leaving one seething cobra behind him. Both long poisonous fangs are fully extended, something he only does when in fight or flight mode, and not something he likes to lose control of. No.

Almost as soon as he gets in the door, he can smell that Sherlock is in 221C working on one of his experiments so he heads downstairs rather than up to visit with him.

“Hey love, you at a point where I can steal you for a cuddle?” he queries from the door as he watches the taller man flutter around.
It is nearly five minutes later before his bondmate responds, “Of course, just let me turn the flame off. How’s Eric?”

“Exhausted, I swear between the two of you I will go prematurely grey.” He replies grumbling, “Of course, I wouldn’t change either of you for the world.”

His dark-haired human chuckles and the two of them head upstairs together, shutting off the lights and locking the door behind them. When they get upstairs they both head to Sherlock’s room to strip down to nothing but their pants before curling together on the bed, his lovers longer body tightly wrapped around him. A few short hours later and his eyes are snapping open as he awakens, his senses telling him it is time to be awake even though he was not sure why. Slowly, with patience and skill born of years doing special ops, he disentangles himself from his mate and flares his senses out to encompass the entire building.

There is a team of four men trying to get into the flat.

Who is on guard duty? He queries through the private pack link as he feels for a shifter and finds that it was Edward but someone had shot him with a tranquilizer.

Snarling low in his throat, he shields, vanishing from sight before increasing his shield to block scent and sound as well. Carefully, he checks each of the people attacking the house, annoyed to discover that they are all purely humans, well that wouldn’t matter in the long run, they will all be dead. Since they are human he carefully rifles through each of their brains discovering that they had been sent to kill him and capture Sherlock. That’s not happening.

Of the four, one of them would prefer not to be here but it was the only job he had been able to get and he was being paid well, so he would accept it as is. The other three were perfectly fine with the idea of killing a sleeping man and capturing another. The leader was not sure why they had been told to tranquilize or kill any animal that they saw.

Silently, in the early dawn light, he watches as the four prepare to separate, two are heading to his room upstairs, the other two to his mates room. Still it is not something he is going to allow. Quietly leaving the room, he shoves a heavy compulsion of sleep onto Sherlock’s mind, sending him even deeper into slumber. A moment later he has silently stalked across the room to directly behind the attackers. The one who really doesn’t want to be here he is not going to kill just yet, the other three are about to have neck problems.

Eric, are you doing anything currently? He queries of the cobra as he snaps the first mans neck with practiced ease.

Relaxing by the pool, I was considering soaking for a bit, I have the computers on auto right now rather than watching them. His friend replies.

Care to interrogate a human to see how sincere he is? he answers as he drops the second one with a quick palm strike to the center of his spine, adding just a bit of elite strength to it in order to snap it with ease.

The impression of annoyance reaches him as the tall man checks his laptop. Why the hell did the alarms not go off? Where is your guard?

Couldn’t answer you about the alarms, that’s your gig after all, but Edward is dead to the world right now, he was tranqued. He has just finished answering as he drops the third would be killer and kidnapper before reappearing behind the remaining who is looking around in horror.
“Kneel,” he command using the alpha voice and dropping the plain human to his knees, unable to move.

From downstairs he can hear his bondmate stirring and a few minutes later the tall man is leaning against the door eyeing the man kneeling in the middle of his bedroom. “Why are there three dead men with broken necks and one kneeling in the flat? They are thugs but they lack identification and I cannot think of anyone who is currently after us.”

He glances over at his tall human with a small smile. “They’re human’s sent by someone to kill me and capture you, apparently they did not do their research very well before setting them to their tasks.” Turning his attention to the man kneeling in front of him he orders, “Stand and carry your partner down stairs. Place him by the door but not in front of it then kneel again.”

Slowly the human gets to his feet, his motions careful as he follows the exact order. With a shrug, the two of them follow the thug downstairs to the main part of their flat just as Eric with Trace and Damian show up. Damian is carrying the unconscious Edward and settles the large owl on the sofa before joining his brother in collecting up the three dead men. Ignoring the human, he sits on the floor next to the sofa and reaches one hand out to brush against the feathers at the crest of his head. A moment later he sinks deep within his power, flaring it to life and burning all of the poison from the eagle owl’s body. Several seconds later the owl’s eyes flicker open and he straightens up before hopping off of the sofa and returning to human shape.

“That stings,” he grumbles as he rubs his side.

“You’ll be fine, just a little bruising, I healed all the after effects already.” He tells the owl before shifting his attention to the human kneeling by the door. “Stand and approach.”

With the same time of jerky motions as when he had carried his dead partner down the stairs he does so, presenting himself in military ease before him. Seconds after that the cobra appears at the human’s side, eyes narrow and shimmering silver rather than their normal obsidian black, energy just about crackles around them before the human faints, collapsing to the ground.

He’s no threat, however he is being threatened. Shall I deal with it? the cobra inquires after the human passes out.

Snorting softly he checks the humans vitals before nodding once, “Thank you all. Edward try not to get shot again yeah?”

The owl smiles sheepishly as he comments, “I probably should have seen it coming, the two of them were walking way too casually for strangers but I thought that they were just wandering, humans do that after all.”

“You might stick out just a bit too much in owl form since there are not a lot of eagle owls around here.” He replies to the shifter, easily able to smell his worry and disappointment in himself.

The owl nods once, “I’ll stay shielded from now on, if they cannot see me, I will not stick, excuse me please.” The older shifter does a partial bow before exiting the flat, his footsteps silent on the stairs.

The wolf brothers glance between him and the cobra, with the older of the two arching an eyebrow in question. Apparently he gets his answer because both wolves nod once before leaving as well. A moment later the engine of a car can be heard firing up before pulling away.

_I will escort him to his home, pack him and his wife before implanting new memories in both their_
minds and making sure they have the proper documents before sending them on their way. Our friend Amber should be able to help them adjust to a new situation, the tall man remarks.

“Alright, thank you,” he replies aloud, *A favor if you would.*

Yes? curiosity colors the mind-voice of the cobra.

*Change both Aragorn and Mycroft’s schedule to include an hour dinner here tomorrow night, I am cooking something nice for my bondmates birthday and wish for him to see his brothers, even if only for a short period of time.* He replies on their private connection.

The impression of a smile and nod is the taller man’s response before he awakens the human and escorts him out.

“Well that was a bother, happily I have today and tomorrow off so there is not much I have to do. Do you want to do anything?” he asks his lover after everyone is gone and he has opened the windows to remove the scent of the strange human.

“Nope, I will be in the lab,” his lover responds before vanish from their flat.

Outside it is just about day break, the sky just beginning to lighten as the sun rises in the winter sky. It actually looks as if it is going to snow. Happily enough nothing else of importance seems to happen. His bondmate spends the majority of his day downstairs in the lab, barely acknowledging him when he tells him he is heading to the store to get groceries. While he is out he sends a text to Greg asking if he would like to come to a bit of a birthday dinner the next night for Sherlock and makes sure to stop and ask Mrs. Hudson the same thing, both readily agree. That night he gets Sherlock to sleep by shifting into his wolf form and getting him to cuddle, something he had noticed that his dark-haired human vastly enjoyed.

The following morning seems to come a bit later than normal, thankfully enough he wakes up first and gets to spend a bit of time observing his handsome bondmate. He really never expected to choose the male option. But then who expect someone like Sherlock to exist. Even in his wolf form he smiles as he studies the normally energetic human with the long, lithe body, beautiful ever changing eyes, and devastating smile. Still smiling, he carefully returns to human form, kissing his bondmate as he does so until the taller man awakes, blinking slowly at him as his mind comes back online.

“Morning love,” he murmurs as he kisses the tall man again.

Slowly the dark-haired human kisses him back, shoving him backwards onto his back. “Morning,” he replies as he proceeds to kissing him again.

Their morning is filled with easy, slow love making as the two of them take turns undressing each other, touching and kissing, and otherwise just worshipping each other’s bodies. By the time it is past lunch time, the two had still not stirred from bed though both eventually groan and get out of bed to take a shower together before dressing.

His lover heads down to the lab, muttering something about an experiment and he takes advantage of it to start preparing for dinner. Thankfully enough his mate stays downstairs while he continues to work and in short order he has the flat recleaned and dinner cooking. With a smile he makes a hot chocolate for his dark-haired human before taking it downstairs to him. An owlish blink tells him his mate was not expecting him to bring him something to drink but the happy sigh after the first sip says he was ready for something and just ignoring it as always.
Chuckling, he kisses the tall man, telling him to clean up because dinner is soon and no, he is not allowed to skip it. His dark-haired human grumbles but does as he asks thankfully enough. A few minutes later the two of them are upstairs and Sherlock is cocking his head to the side as he stares at the kitchen and the food set out. Just as the doorbell rings, he goes to check on the fresh cinnamon apple pie which is just about done cooking.

“John, why?” his dark-haired human asks as he takes in the fact that everything cooked seems to be his favorites.

“Happy birthday love,” he murmurs to the taller man before he gives him a quick kiss and settles him into his chair for a minute.

Seconds later both of the other Holmes brothers, Shalen, Greg, and Mrs. Hudson are also in the flat.

“Happy birthday Sherlock!” Mrs. Hudson exclaims as she moves over to his chair to give him a quick hug, “Shame on you for not telling me when your birthday is. I would have made you’re your favorite biscuits.”

The eldest of the brothers looks uncomfortable as he settles into his seat, carefully watching the others, while the youngest smiles and wishes him well before sitting on the corner of the sofa. Shalen inclines his head politely, saying nothing but perching on the edge of the sofa arm next to the younger Holmes. While Greg inquires if there is anything he can do to help.

“Nope, it’s just about ready then everyone can serve themselves,” he replies to the older shifter-child. Turning to look at his bondmate he states smiling, “In case you missed it, happy birthday.”

For a few minutes silence reigns, he can smell the discomfort in the room and is just about pleased that he is the only full shifter in the room so he is the only one who’s sense of smell tells him everything he needs to know about the others in the room.

Finally the immortal in the room turns to his bondmate inquiring, “Have you had any interesting experiments lately?”

On a safe subject, his bondmate starts in about his last experiment while the silence is finally broken and everyone starts to visit with someone. Slowly, as if unsure of what to say the other two Holmes brothers begin to chatter about their lives in the most insignificant way. Greg and Mrs. Hudson also begin talk, with the older woman asking after the shifter-child’s children. Once the food is done, he calls for dinner, laying out plates and silverware so everyone can get their own. Dinner goes surprisingly smoothly considering that normally it is difficult to have his bondmate and his elder brother in the same room without there being a matter of one-upping each other. By the time everyone is ready to leave his mate is surprisingly relaxed and even content according to his scent.

Once they have all left, he gets out the small gift he had stashed for his birthday present.

“Here love,” he murmurs as he hands him the small box.

His mate gives him a curious look, opening the box and smiling at what he finds inside. For his mates birthday he had gotten him a new cleaning kit for his violin, but it was the type of kit he would buy for himself, top of the line and perfect for his Strad. After that the two of them end up back in the bedroom, where Sherlock laughs when he spots the sundae making supplies laid out on the table next to the bed. It’s a very long night with John going with anything that his mate desires. When morning comes he ends up calling in because he can’t walk straight but doesn’t have a complaint in the world about it.
Hi everyone
Sorry its been five days since I last updated this, I've had three main things going on:
lost my job, helped my dad with his home work (I got a better GPA then him when I completed my Bachelors degree so he has gone back to school to try and beat my score), and typed up six chapters on my new story Atypical Traits (starts of Moran/John and turns into Johnlock Mormor, if any of you lovely people would like to leave a review on it, I would greatly appreciate it!). So now I have three stories to bounce between though Atypical is going to be moderately short, I do not foresee it going much past 10 chapters.

Anyways, as always a great big thank you to every person who has left a review and all my new subscribers, kudos, or bookmark people. Hope you continue to enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Greg's POV
His divorce had finalized two days before, the day after a jackal had showed up with a packet of papers detailing that now that the marriage was over she was claiming birth rights to the girls, he was not to try and see them again. Panic had caused him to call Dimmock and ask him to take over the case, an emergency had come up. Thankfully the younger detective inspector had not questioned him. As soon as Dimmock had the situation in hand, he had bolted, heading directly to the flat that his pack alpha lived at.

Upon getting there, he knocks twice before using the key that Mrs. Hudson had given him a few months prior to come up. When he gets to their flat door, he knocks again, waiting for the shorter shifter to allow him entry.

He knew things between him and Crystal had ended badly but he had never thought that they had ended that badly. How could she have done this to him? After Madeline's birth he had a feeling that he was not actually his second daughter's biological father but that meant nothing to him, she was his as surely as if he had been the one to sire her. The same feeling had crept in again at the birth of their youngest daughter Sofia with her almost white-blonde coloring despite the fact she was supposed to be the daughter of two dark-colored jackal-children.

He couldn’t lose the girls. They were all he had left of his own little family, even though their mother and his in-laws had turned against him, they had still loved him. While his parents and siblings cared for him, he lived in a mostly different world then them because he had never been accepted into the pack because he could not shift. Since his acceptance into the Watson pack he had seen his family more, they were more comfortable talking to him about pack matters even though they were from different packs now. It was something he easily understood, particularly since he had taken a job within the human law enforcement, not the pack law enforcement.

His mind whirls as he waits for his alpha to open the door. A moment later, a chill runs down his spine and he finds himself turning as a blur of dark seems to approach. The next thing he knows, the packs older cobra is standing next to him, carefully opening the door and motioning him in. Part of
him does not want to enter, he wonders why the cobra would be the one inviting him in, not John but he does not question it as he follows the taller man in.

When he steps into the flat he spots Sherlock sitting at the table nibbling at some bread and jam but John is nowhere in sight. A few moments later, the pack alpha comes out of the bathroom, dressed but rubbing his hair down.

“Greg? What’s wrong, I can feel your worry and panic.” The doctor questions him as he sets about making tea.

Silently he hands over the papers to the sandy-blond, unable to answer aloud but needing him to understand. After he quickly glances through it, he passes them to the cobra who has sprawled in John’s chair with a laptop perched on his legs. Silence continues as the alpha starts passing out teas starting with his mate, then him, before taking one for himself, and setting the last one next to the cobra as he continues to go through the papers. There is not a lot there so why he is taking so long he’s not sure. Maybe the cobra found something that he had missed? Pack law was not one of his strong suits so that was altogether possible.

This is illegal, the cobra eventually states, dropping the papers onto the laptop while he reaches over for his tea.

“What?” he just about screeched, startled and spitting up his tea. It was? How?

Black eyes turn to him and narrow, he gets the impression that the younger man is considering how to respond before he their shared alpha actually does so.

“I thought it might be, I did not see council or alpha permission either of which are required for that to be legal in our world.” the alpha wolf murmurs as he finishes his tea. “You’re the Tracker, what say you?”

The cobra’s black eyes close for a minute and he gets the impression that he is reviewing something, it is eerily like when Sherlock catalogues a crime scene or a person. When they snap back open a silver ring surrounds his pupil making it possible to see the difference between the parts of his eyes. Deal with her of course. I have already contacted the proper jackals. We should head out shortly.

Groaning, the sandy-blond runs a hand over his face, “Eric,” he mutters before standing and heading upstairs.

Confused he glances between Sherlock and Eric trying to understand what’s going on, but there seems to be something missing. Some clue he doesn’t know. How is this helping get his daughters back? Wait, would he get them back? Before he has a chance to say anything, John is back and wearing that golden-brown outfit he had worn during several pack meetings.

“Let’s go, I am sure you have already got a plan,” the shorter man mutters as he stops by the door.

With the kind of grace he had only ever seen in dancers, the cobra rises to his feet before gliding towards the door. Eyes widen slightly as he realizes that the cobra is wearing the same type of clothes. What? Blinking fast, he follows the two shifters out of the flat, mildly surprised that Sherlock is not coming with them. In the time that John and Sherlock had been together he had rarely seen one without the other except for on nights where he would go drinking with the wolf shifter. Almost as soon as they are outside, the cobra vanishes from sight just to reappear a moment later with a sleek but rather big car.

“At least it’s not the sports car,” he hears John mutter, “I really hate the sports car.”
You are odd, my other car is excellent for quick speed and good reaction, though I will not go into how I know this. The cobra replies to that statement before querying, Well?

Nodding, he gets into the back seat while John gets in the front. Now that they are doing something the panic he had originally felt upon getting the paperwork is nearly gone. Sitting back, he closed his eyes and considered why he had felt such panic. Normally things did not panic him, he had been a police officer too long to freak out over most situations but when it came to his girls his instincts were not as simple to control. The idea of never seeing or speaking with them again had terrified him. So he did what any raised by a jackal family would do, he turn to the alpha that headed his pack. Thankfully he now actually belonged to a pack so he did not have to wait for an alpha to approve his request because he was not sure how well that would have worked.

Considering how you were broadcasting in the pack link, it probably would not have been a good thing for your health. He hears the cobra remark as he drives. Telepath. Think too loudly and I hear it.

“What he is really saying is, I listen to everything because I can.” John remarks from the passenger seat a bit sarcastically.

Before he has a chance to respond they are pulling up to his old house, the one his wife had gotten in the divorce since she was the one the kids were living with. Since it was the middle of the day the girls were supposed to be at school. He could only hope that was a fact.

As soon as the car stops he notices that there are three other cars already here, two of which he is very familiar with since it his parents car and his in-laws car. Oh God, that’s a bad thing, his in-laws hate him.

Immaterial. Their emotions mean nothing. The cobra remarks as he presses the button for the car widow to go down.

Just after it is halfway down a small bluebird comes fluttering in right before he closes it again. Seconds later a young woman with vibrant blue eyes is sitting next to him before the door is opened and she slides out.

A low chuckle escapes the alpha wolf before he gets out of the car as well, while the cobra is smirking. Shifting his thoughts to when he is working, he also gets out, standing respectfully to wait for the two senior members of the pack. Moments later he is aware of who the third car belongs to as the pack alpha for his birth pack steps out of his vehicle with his beta and mate, along with one bodyguard. Oh shit. Jackal’s dislike humans and human-children how was this going to…he starts to panic again but finds his mind locked firmly in someone else’s grip.

Calm down, you show disrespect for your elder with thoughts like those. The cobra snaps and he knows he is the only one that can hear him right now.

Slowly he nods once.

From above the cry of a hunting bird can be heard but when he glances up there is nothing there. Then, surprisingly enough he spots the packs beta walking down the street as causally as you please wear formal clothes of a similar style to both John and Eric. When he gets close, he bows to John once before politely inclining his head to Eric and bowing to the alpha of the jackal pack but no one else.

“Alpha Hayes, we thank you for your time,” the beta formally greets the alpha he had grown up with.

The jackal’s eyes cut across them, studying each of them in turn before he nods once, “My thanks for
the polite invitation.” The sarcasm is just about noticeable in his tone.

Elder-second Jackal Hayes, Elder Jackal Hayes, Senior Jackal Townshend, Dame Lestrade, jackal Lestrade, Dame Reeve, jackal-child Reeve. He hears the cobra greet each of them in turn, startled that he greets the females prior to the males. I present Elite Elder Wolf Watson, Elite Senior Falcon Hope, and Healer Bluebird Pierce.

For some reason the cobra does not introduce himself which he finds odd but does not question. Apparently he does not need to because all three of the jackal elders look between John and Eric before taking one step back, both non-alpha jackals step back and bow politely to the cobra who ignores them.

“Elite Alpha Watson,” the jackal alpha murmurs politely, “What can I do for you and yours?”

“Tech has determined several illegalities, as a Tracker he does not need to call council but as a cobra he is prone to making sure that there can be no questions of legality.” The wolf replies.

He knows his eyes widen because he had not realized that the cobra was a Tracker. That was the equivalent of police, judge, and jury among the shifter kind however they had to be approved by one of the Old Gods which made them extremely rare. To be a Tracker a person had to go through either an extreme loss or a high amount of training by another Tracker.

Jackal-child, it would be best if we took this inside. The cobra suggests to his ex-wife though according to tone it is not really a suggestion but an order.

She flinches but nods, and the group of them goes inside. Once inside the house, the cobra pulls out the paperwork and hands it to the alpha of the jackals. Carefully the alpha reads through it before his focus shifts to his ex-wife, a cold fury burning in his eyes.

“What is this?” he demands harshly before handing the paperwork to his mate to read.

She carefully looks it over before her head jerks up. “This should have come to me, as the alpha-second of the pack whose territory you live in, it would have required permission. This is not legal. How dare you?”

His ex flinches away, “I didn’t realize there was something illegal, we were married in human courts not pack council.”

“That does not matter, you are aware of pack law, you were raised within the pack and did this through the pack, thus you have broken pack law.” The female jackal snaps.

“They’re not even his so it does not matter,” she replies, worry in her voice.

That is the first law you broke, the bonding or marriage of two individuals is one of the most scared laws among the shifters, to break the trust of it is to bring down punishment. The second law you broke was the child protection law to endanger your child by bringing an outside shifter into the house as a lover. The third law is of family bonds. The cobra states, Since you have already admitted to two of the broken laws do you care to admit to the third?

She flinches again but says nothing.

This is rather simple actually, your crimes are those that would have had you banished and made sterile in the past. You are not pack, so your punishment will be sterilization and the loss of all rights regarding your children. His voice is a low hiss as he tells her. Then he turns his attention to the guard with the jackal alpha’s. You really should have had someone else come here instead. I can
smell your mixed genes in this house. You are just as guilty of the same three broken laws. Only for you it is worse you are a jackal within the pack. Your punishment belongs to the alpha-second of your pack since you do belong to a pack.

The alpha-second looks between the cobra and the guard before she nods, “He will be dealt with tonight at the pack meeting, my thanks Tracker for allowing us to deal with the situation within the pack. We will be leaving now, things will need to be prepared.”

The tall cobra inclines his head once saying nothing. However he tilts his head towards the bluebird, a questioning look on his face. With that the four full jackals leave and he finds himself sitting in what used to be his house with his ex staring in horror at the cobra, but she is begging aloud for the jackals to intervene yet they are ignoring her. For her the punishment will be banishment, no longer will anyone within the jackal pack Hayes speak with her. That means not only has she lost custody of the girls but she has been disowned because nearly the rest of her family are jackals within the pack.

Wait, she lost custody of the girls, does that mean he gets their custody? Where will they live his flat is not nearly big enough. Oh shit. What to do now?

He is just about ready to panic again when John steps next to him, murmuring, “You are pack, any assistance you need will be provided. I do mean any assistance.”

He nods, feeling as if a weight has been lifted off of his shoulders.

Silence falls on the room as the four jackals leave.

His ex-wife gets up and heads towards the kitchen with Eric keeping a close eye on her not allowing her out of sight. When she gets back with a drink she looks between the five of them before trying to beg from John to not allow this to happen. He ignores her, glancing over to the bluebird female to inquire if she was there as observer or healer. If she responds it is done silently because he hears nothing. Finally, his ex goes from begging about how this isn’t fair to screaming and falls silent suddenly after a sharp look from the cobra which has her clutching her throat.

I have summoned Aidan with another car so that the girls may collect their things since this house technically belongs to her. If you need, I have another house in town that you could rent or purchase, I do not use it. The cobra tells him as he hears his daughters coming up the front walk way. It belonged to my cousins, they are long dead and it has been emptied long ago. I maintain it in case someone within the den needs assistance. None of the wolves currently need it.

His eyes widen as he thinks about it, “Seriously?”

Of course, I never lie. The cobra responds.

A moment later his daughters are walking into the room, all three stop when they spot him but his youngest quickly drops her book bag, running over to him, and hugging him.

“Daddy!” she squeals happily.

“Dad? Are you here for a visit?” his oldest asks as she glances between him and the others.

His middle daughter says nothing just watching him with curious eyes instead.

“Hi beautifuls, actually you three are coming to stay with me, ummm why don’t you go gather a couple of changes of clothes? We can figure out the moving plans later.” He tells his daughters as he hugs each in turn, though he holds his youngest the longest.
Madeline gives him a careful look, before taking Sofia by the hand and leading her upstairs. Their older sister Charlotte answers the door even before there is a knock, startling him a bit before heading upstairs. The person she had let in was the other cobra. Aidan moves just as gracefully as the older one and comes to stand next to him. While the girls are packing their things, the bluebird looks over at his ex and motions to the sofa.

After the girls have bid their farewell I will complete the sterilization. He hears a soft female voice whisper through his mind and realizes that it is the bluebird broadcasting to the adults only.

Several minutes later his girls come back down each taking a turn to hug their mother before looking at him questioningly. Before he has a chance to comment, the younger cobra comments that he is their ride and takes them out to the car.

It is your choice whether you stay to observe or not, Aidan can give you a ride to your flat or the house, whichever you choose. The cobra tells him.

“My flat, tonight at the pack meeting we can discuss an agreement for purchasing the house after I see it.” he responds, “I think I will go though, I really don’t want to see this.”

With that he bows to John before turning and walking out of the house, it will be the last time he does so his gut tells him, because after this he will never see her again. When he gets to the car he smiles at the girls before giving Aidan his address to the flat. The younger man nods once before putting the car in gear and driving off. The ride to his flat goes smoothly and he thanks the cobra for the ride when they get there.

The next few hours are spent with him explaining things to his daughters, and while it is not a conversation he is really happy to have. Happily enough, his oldest and middle daughter understand enough of it to understand. His youngest doesn’t understand but then she is only a little girl. When they are done with the talk he has them each get their homework done while he makes dinner, ever so happy that he had gone shopping the night before. Though now he would have to do even more shopping.

After dinner he has the girls get cleaned up, he had already decided to formally present them to John to see if there was a chance that they would be accepted into the pack as well. So when Aidan arrives just past seven with the car to see if they are going, he is happy that they seem to be the only ones riding with him.

Actually this car will be for your use after this, I will be riding back with Eric. The younger cobra remarks as they get in.

“What?” He questions, mildly surprised. How could he afford to do that?

The younger man shrugs, Eric said to give you the keys to this upon reach the estate, we do not need it. He has at least two other vehicles and can always purchase another if he needs one.

“I’ll have to speak with him about that.” He mutters, he has never taken handouts and does not plan to start now.

A low chuckle escapes the young cobra driving, He does not do handouts. However he does take care of those within the den with young. You are part of the den, you have three young, it is logical.

In the back seat his daughters are softly talking about school. For a bit that is the only noise in the vehicle, then he decides to inquire, “So how are you related to Eric?”

He is my sire, ummm father. The younger man responds, I am just over seventeen, only been here
for a couple of weeks. I recently moved here from the States where my dame’s family lives.

“Oh,” he replies, he had not realized Eric was old enough to have an seventeen year old son.

_He was fifteen at the time of my birth. He is now thirty-three._ The younger cobra replies. _We are nearly there, the Healer has directed me to inform you that the girls are welcome, their greeting ceremony will be first off as a cause for celebration._

“Alright, thank you.” he replies, he still needs to have a talk with Eric about the car and the house. Nearly as soon as they get there the younger cobra parks and leads them to where the pack has gathered.

Standing in the same spots as when he was first welcomed into the pack is John with Sherlock, Jacob, Eric, and Daria. Like when John had originally accepted him to the pack, he calls each of the girls names touching his wrist to theirs. Charlotte, his oldest requires no prompting when she is called forward and steps up with her head held high, though she blushes when she clasps wrists with both Sherlock and Eric. Madeline follows her older sister’s behavior though she doesn’t blush the way her sister does. Sofia on the other hand seems confused about the process so John scoops her up and presses their wrists together before passing her carefully to Sherlock who repeats the process before handing her to Eric who plays with her for a moment before doing the same and holding her while Jacob and Daria greet her as well.

When that is done, since they were the only new pack members, John does the announcements, including the fact he will start working with anybody who wishes for training in regards to shifting, something that the younger members need and some of the just shy of human members appreciate. Eric meanwhile vanishes off to a different part of the house with his daughter and the rest of the packs pups who come to play. Once the cobra has warmed all of the children out, he tucks them into the children’s area where there are plenty of sleeping areas for them to crash in while their parents finish the pack meeting.

_You desired to speak of the car and house, here I will give you a quick tour of it_, the older cobra comments as he gently links with him, taking him through the house room by room.

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It is a rather simple home yet it is perfect for what they need. There is a full basement with a laundry area set up. The ground floor has a nice size kitchen full of appliance, there is a dining room with a simple table that seats eight, the living room has a fire place, a downstairs bathroom, and a front entry with stairs going upwards along with the doors to the other rooms. While the upstairs is rather simple, it is divided with two bedrooms on either side of the stairs across from each other, a shared bathroom in between each. There is a small fenced in yard out back and a garage that could fit his car to the side. It is a few minutes further away from the Yard but that is alright because it is in a nice neighborhood and should be fairly safe for the girls. He’d be able to drop them off on the way to work.

“Well?” the cobra inquires after giving him a moment to consider it.

“That place is amazing, are you sure you want to sell it?” he replies.

_I have no need for it. It is not a cobra’s home. Aidan will build his own home eventually. There is no reason it should not go to someone within the den that would appreciate it._ He remarks, _The amount you currently pay for your flat, that will be adequate payment for it for the next five years. Do not bother trying to argue with me, it will fail. If you decide to find somewhere else before that the contract will be ended without penalty._

“That’s too much for too low a price,” he starts to argue but then Mouse appears next to him.
chucking, “What?” he inquires.

“Don’t bother trying to argue with him, you’ll lose. Even if he agreed to take more money he would just put it into the stock market and then create trust funds for the girls with it. He’s stubborn like that. John wasn’t originally poor. He just put all of his money into trusts and did not want to get into them. However our friendly cobra here has actually increased the amounts of money in that account that he probably could live off of it permanently without ever touching the base amount.” She answers him with a smile, gently ribbing the cobra who merely smiles at her.

Realizing that it would be like trying to argue with Sherlock he agrees to the deal. “Alright, but this is for them, not me.”

With a smile the cobra replies, Excellent, you can move in this weekend. I will have the cleaning team do one more sweep of the house. The car will be included in the mix, though you will have to have the maintenance done yourself. I can suggest several mechanics if you need.

He nods, then checking the time realizes how late it is and goes to collect up his daughters. After bidding farewell to everyone he carries his youngest while his middle daughter stumbles along with guidance from his oldest.

When he gets back to the flat he puts the girls to bed in his room, the only room in the flat with enough space for all three of them to sleep before he goes to crash on the sofa. He will figure out what to do with them while he is working tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

I realize that Greg might seem a bit out of character but I figured that he is a strong family man and would not react well to being told he could not see his children any longer.
Hi all, as always thank you greatly for all of the comments, a always they are appreciated along with the favorites, subscriptions, bookmarks, and kudos.

John’s POV
In the last six months since everything that had occurred with that damned hybrid, as he was prone to thinking of Irene, things had gone mostly smoothly. There were still days where he worried about his mate, particularly on the days where he would consider that blasted hybrids phone. There were actually times he had considered unlocking it merely so he would stop feeling so frustrated by it. Yet he did not because he knew that would bother him worse. Thankfully though, those days where not nearly as often as they could be only occurring two or three times a month. Throughout those six months his beautiful bondmate seemed to come even further into himself since he was still working with the older pups on their deduction and had actually added three more to his rotation of teenagers. His work with Lestrade had continued as well and he even accepted some of the lower value cases when he had the ones who wished to become detectives with him. There were days he worked in the lab or crashed on the sofa, falling deep into his mind. Then there were days that was just them. Those were his favorite days where he would awaken to his bondmate and lover sprawled out in bed with him, long body often wrapped around his in sleep or perched over him when the taller man was waiting for him to wake up naturally.

He thanked the Shadow Mistress regularly for such a unique gift in his mate.

Pack meeting went smoothly, the one year anniversary of when Jace had joined the pack had already passed. Those that had submitted to Daria’s punishment had already died, one within two weeks of the punishment, the other two within the fortnight before they would have hit the year marker. Talos had been executed and dealt with by the wolves of the military pack. Michael had stayed with training under Jeffery and had actually requested to continue for one more year, his guilt over his actions had been extreme. The older omicron had agreed with this as well, taken it as a good sign, that perhaps the younger one could become a decent pack member with continue training. As for Jenna, well, she hadn’t left Eric’s basement since the original punishment was handed out and the chances of her ever leaving it alive were very slim since she still insisted that it was Jace’s fault that he was abused, not hers. A small part of him wonders what Eric will do about her if he ever gets around to bonding with her birth-son.

Their one year anniversary had also passed though they had been on a case at the time so it was not celebrated until the week after, during which time they had gone on a small vacation for three days to a bee farm that has a small bed and breakfast. They had spent all three days between Sherlock enjoying studying the bees to them spending time together, it had been awesome. As an anniversary gift he had gotten the taller man a set of silver cufflinks in the shape of bees, the really unique part of those cufflinks was the fact that the underside of the wings held a thin lock pick so as long as he had the cufflinks he would have a way to pick locks. His bondmate had spent a day watching Star Wars movies with him as his anniversary gift, not even complaining at the parts he thought were stupid, at least not aloud, his thoughts were a totally different thing.

So he was not surprised when that six month marker passed and he had gotten home to the smell of
that hybrid in their flat. His mate was standing at the door to their room, staring inside, and remarks, “We have a client.”

“What, in the bedroom?” he queries as he walks over to him after grabbing a drink out of the fridge. “Ohhh,” he murmurs in response to seeing the hybrid sprawled in their bed. He will be changing the sheets and blanket for washing before they go to sleep next. Sighing, he heads back into the living room and starts putting around, as he does so he notifies Eric through their link of the events going on within the flat.

A few minutes later he hears the hybrid waking up and his mate speaking with her, directing her to the shower before coming back out to join him. Apparently the tall man could feel my annoyance because he takes a moment to rub against him before settling grabbing a chair and placing it in the living room next to the desk to settle into. While his mate is doing that he makes three teas out of politeness, giving his mate his tea and leaving hers sitting on the counter, she can grab it when she comes back through, before he settles into his spot in front of his laptop.

The tea is just about cold when she comes back out but she drinks it anyways as she sits down in his mate’s chair wearing on of his blue silk dressing gowns. Annoying hybrid.

Finally his bondmate inquires, “So who’s after you?”

Slightly sarcastically she replies, “People who want to kill me.”

Just as sarcastically the dark-haired human retorts, “Who’s that?”

He can smell her attraction as she replies with a smile, “Killers.”

Blandly he remarks, “It would help if you were a tiny bit more specific.”

At nearly the same time as his bondmate states, “So you faked your own death in order to get ahead of them.”

She gives a small nod, glancing away as she says, “It worked for a while.”

Softly he remarks, “Except you let John know that you were alive, and therefore me.”

She looks away as she states, “I knew you’d keep my secret.”

Slight confusion mars his bondmates scent as he states, “You couldn’t.”

Satisfaction blooms in her scent as she just about smirks inquiring, “But you did, didn’t you?” Sitting back in the seat she continues, “Where’s my camera phone?”

Leaning on his hand which is resting on the table he answers, “It’s not here. We’re not stupid.” However, he is fairly certain that his mate does have it here, even if he likes to pretend otherwise sometimes.

Again she leans forward a bit, her eyes flickering between the two of them as she states, “Then what have you done with it? If they’ve guessed you’ve got it, they’ll be watching you.”

Closing his eyes for a moment, his mate takes a breath before replying, “If they’ve been watching me, they’ll know that I took a safety deposit box at a bank on the Strand a few months ago.”

Softer than most people could hear she sighs, “I need it.”

It’s his turn to glance between the other people in the room, “Well, we can’t just go and get it, can
we?” after that he falls silent, knowing that there is more going on than he wishes to say. Besides, she’s effectively human meaning that she is Sherlock’s domain to deal with unless he is directly asked.

She gives the both of them looks before sighing and shifting in her seat a bit.

Then his mate pulls the phone out of his pocket, playing with it as he queries, “So what do you keep on here, in general, I mean?”

She stands, crossing her arms over her chest and smiling tightly at him as she answers, “Pictures, information, anything I might find useful.” Her scent is full of annoyance along with a bit more of attraction towards his mate.

In order to distract himself he asks, “What, for blackmail?”

She gives him a slightly cold look as she answers, “For protection.” Before looking back at his mate, “I make my way in the world; I misbehave. I like to know people will be on my side exactly when I need them to be.”

Watching her with a bland expression, his mate queries, “So how do you acquire this information?”

Smirking, she replies in what he supposes is suppose to be a flirty tone, “I told you,” she leans forward a bit, just about hissing the next part, “I misbehave.”

He is ever so happy his bondmate ignores the flirting and continues on his train of thought, “But you’ve acquired something that’s more danger than protection. Do you know what it is?

Nodding once, she hisses again, “Yes,” before switching back to normal speech, “but I don’t understand it.”

*Gezzz, she hisses more than Eric, Daria, or Nathan and they are all snakes,* he mentally mutters to his mate.

“I assumed,” his mate replies to her but smiles slightly for him, commenting telepathically, *I noticed, I think she is trying to come on to me but I do not see the appeal,* before continuing, “Show me.”

Unfolding her arms, she reaches out with one hand for the phone, palm upwards. Her scent is expectant but he knows his mate better than that. The chance of him doing what she wants on the first try or at all are slim.

“The passcode?” he queries blandly as he holds the phone by his head.

She lifts her head in challenge and he watches in amusement as the two have a seemingly test of wills before the tall human hands her the phone for her to enter it.

*It’s not her phone,* his mate mentally remarks as he watches her.

He mentally chuckles in responses, watching as she types into it and it does nothing before his mate plucks it out of her hands with a sarcastic remark before quickly explaining that he was not handing over the original just yet. Though he frowns when he realizes that she had given him the wrong passcode. Sighing, the tall man ends up handing it over though he can tell from his mates scent he is not pleased to do so. Of course her scent is that of satisfaction, she’s very pleased by how things are going and explains rather quickly what is getting her into the situation she is in and hands the phone, now unlocked, back to his mate.
Ignoring her, his mate studies the code. He knows that the taller man is breaking it even as she continues to speak. When she kisses his mate's cheek, he sets his mug down a bit harder than he had attended even as his mate flickers an annoyed glance at him.

Finally the tall man quickly recites, “There’s a margin for error but I’m pretty sure there’s a Seven Forty-Seven leaving Heathrow tomorrow at six thirty in the evening for Baltimore. Apparently it’s going to save the world. Not sure how that can be true but give me a moment; I’ve only been on the case for eight seconds.”

He knows he is giving his mate a blank look but it is really the only expression he can manage when he really wants to rip the damn hybrids throat out for touching his mate in such an intimate way.

Beside his mate, Irene is giving him a serious look, a not quite smile on her face as he speaks, but she is slowly straightening up.

“Oh, come on. It’s not code. These are seat allocations on a passenger jet. Look,” Flipping the phone around towards him his bondmate continues, “There’s no letter ‘I’ because it can be mistaken for a ‘1’; no letters past ‘K’, the width of the plane is the limit. The numbers always appear randomly and not in sequence but the letters have little runs of sequence all over the place, families and couples sitting together. Only a Jumbo is wide enough to need the letter ‘K’ or rows past fifty-five, which is why there’s always an upstairs. There’s a row thirteen, which eliminates the more superstitious airlines. Then there’s the style of the flight number, zero zero seven. That eliminates a few more; and assuming a British point of origin, which would be, logical considering the original source of the information and assuming from the increased, pressure on you lately that the crisis is imminent,” he continues to ramble as he gets to his feet, “the only flight that matches all the criteria and, departs within the week is the six thirty to Baltimore tomorrow evening from Heathrow Airport.”

Wonder and admiration, along with a heavy dose of desire from her fills the air as she stares at him with her emotions written across her face.

Blandly, his mate looks down at her, remarking, “Please don’t feel obliged to tell me that was remarkable or amazing. John’s expressed the same thought in every possible variant available to the English language.”

Leaning towards him she states, “I would have you right here on this desk until you begged for mercy twice,” her voice full of arousal.

He growls low in his throat as the two of them stare at each other, he doesn’t know if she hears him, but he is certain his mate did as the tall man politely inquires, “John, please can you check those flight schedules; see if I’m right?”

Turning to his laptop with a tight smile, he responds, “Uh-huh. I’m on it, yeah.”

Despite the fact he is typing on the computer he keeps an eye and ear on them. Still engaged in their staring contest, his bondmate replies, “I’ve never begged for mercy in my life,” except from you when you’re being a massive tease.

“Twice,” she repeats staring hard at him.

Ignoring the scent in the air he comments, “Uh, yeah, you’re right. Uh, flight double oh seven,” as he looks up at his mate.

That draws the taller man’s attention and he breaks the staring contest, glancing over at him, “What did you say?”
Still watching his mate he repeats himself, “You’re right.”

Giving a small shake of his head, his mate queries, “No, no, no, after that. What did you say after that?”

“Double oh seven. Flight double oh seven.” He repeats the second part of the original sentence and watches as his dark-haired human presses past the hybrid while thinking aloud. He can hear her fingers softly clicking at the phone she has behind her and wonders what it is. Too bad he had banned their guards from being in here or he could ask whoever was on guard duty today. His bondmate however does not notice, falling into his mind as he tries to figure the answer to the question out.

After a bit he calls out mentally to Elspeth to come keep an eye on the hybrid as he slips out after mutter that he would come back in a bit. As he opens the door downstairs, the cat comes in, heading upstairs as she phases into invisibility. He heads over to Eric’s house to speak with the cobra in person about the situation. While he is there Spathi continues to update him on the hybrids actions and even more so once his mate comes out of his mind after dark. When the agent shows up to take Sherlock away, he tells the cat to stay with the hybrid, he will go meet up with his bondmate before he leaves to do so. He has just reached the airport where a jumbo jet is at when Elspeth tells him that the female is on the move. Annoyed, he directs her to follow the annoying human hybrid and is surprised when she walks up behind his mate within the jet. He has parked himself to the side and back, listening to the two humans as they speak. His bondmate is confused and frustrated according to their link, he’d use his sense of smell but there are too many dead around for it to be very effective.

However he hears the just about growl as Mycroft orders the car around, and follows the three out of the jet silently, ordering Elspeth to stick with his mate, he would follow behind in wolf form. Several minutes later they are arriving at the small house that Mycroft keeps for work, not the one he really lives at. As the three of them head in, he along with the cat, sneak in between them, their movements as silent as always.

Mycroft and Irene settle at the dining table while his bondmate settles in the chair near the fireplace thinking. Silently, he settles on the arm of it, telepathically telling his mate, I am here.

John, she played me, did she actually succeed? His mate responds while the other two humans talk. I fell into her trap didn’t I? Because I cracked the code out of curiosity and told her what it was. Mycroft had a copy of her phone with all its files, he could have done something about it, besides, Eric hacked the phone she is using while she was at the flat, the jet number she gave Moriarty was the wrong one. He did not specify which one to your idiot brother. He replies to his mate, trying to comfort him. I know you can break the code, think about it love, you still have a few minutes to visibly beat her at her own game. What tell has she given you? Us shifters knew the secret by scent so there is still one you could have noticed too.

He watches as his bondmates eyes widen and flicker, the thoughts going a thousand miles an hour.

"And here you are, the dominatrix who brought a nation to its knees.” The elder human brother remarks with a small bow to the hybrid female, “Nicely played.”

A smirk curls her lips, as she stands and stares at the elder brother. In the air the scent of frustration, anger, satisfaction, and annoyance mingle though almost all of it is from the humans at the table, his human’s scent is void of any real emotion as he thinks.

Suddenly, his dark-haired bondmate remarks, “No.”

Confidences fill her voice as she queries, “Sorry?”
Turning his head with a slight smirk now curving his lips instead, his mate repeats himself, “I said no. Very, very close, but no.” As he gets to his feet he continues, “You got carried away.” turning fully towards the other two humans he keeps speaking as he walks directly to her, “The game was too elaborate. You were enjoying yourself too much.”

Her scent becomes flustered as he comes closer, but she fakes confidence as she replies, “No such thing as too much.”

Still moving towards her slowly, almost as if he is hunting her his mate continues, “Oh, enjoying the thrill of the chase is fine, craving the distraction of the game, I sympathize entirely, but sentiment? Sentiment is a chemical defect found in the losing side.” *John, do not take what I am saying to heart, I would not trade what we have for anything.* He smiles like a predator at the hybrid female.

*Not to worry, I was not. I know how you were raised so I understand.* He replies to his bondmate as he watches the events unfold from his spot near the fire.

“Sentiment? What are you talking about?” she just about demands, her voice losing that edge it had held.

“You,” he replies blandly, staring at her.

Smiling calmly she steps back a half a step, commenting, “Oh dear God. Look at the poor man. You don’t actually think I was interested in you? Why? Because you’re the great Sherlock Holmes, the clever detective in the funny hat?”

His expression is bland murmurs, “No,” before he reaches out and takes her wrist, stepping so their bodies are close together and leaning forward so he is speaking directly in her ear, “Because I took your pulse.”

She frowns up at, confusion and terror beginning to take over her scent.

Mycroft watches from where he had stopped, his own scent is full of confusion as well, though not as much.

Still next to her ear, his bondmate continues to speak, “Elevated; your pupils dilated.” He releases her hand, reaching past her to grab the phone as he keeps talking but now in his normal tone, “I imagine John Watson thinks love’s a mystery to me but the chemistry is incredibly simple, and very destructive.” Turning as he speak, his dark-haired human walks towards him as she follows a few steps behind. Finally his bondmate turns to face her, stating, “When we first met, you told me that disguise is always a self-portrait. How true of you: the combination to your safe, your measurements; but this” he pause to toss the phone in the air, flipping it, before catching it and turning it on, ”this is far more intimate.”

With a second beep the security screen is visible, and he continues to speaking looking her dead in the face as he types in the four numbers that will unlock it, “This is your heart. You could have chosen any random number and walked out of here today with everything you’ve worked for but you just couldn’t resist it, could you?”

Her breathing shifts to being heavier, sadness has now added itself to her scent. According to his empathy she wishes to cry but she is trying to maintain her composure.

Smiling triumphantly his bondmate continues, “I’ve always assumed that love is a dangerous disadvantage,” he pauses for a moment watching her carefully, “Thank you for the final proof.”

She grabs his hand before he enters the code, her voice soft and wobbly as she pleads with him,
“Everything I said: it’s not real.” Swallowing hard she continues even quieter, “I was just playing the game.”

Carefully pulling his hand free of her he murmurs just as softly, “I know,” hitting the enter button he continues, “And this is just losing.” It dings once and he turns it to her, showing her that it is now unlocked, tears run silently down her face at the realization that she has lost.

His bondmates eyes are still locked on the hybrids as he holds the phone out to his brother commenting, “There you are, brother. I hope the contents make up for any inconvenience I may have caused you tonight.”

Stepping forward so he is behind the hybrid, the politician remarks, “I’m certain they will.”

*I’m ready to go John, do you think I can ride on your back rather than flagging down a cab?* His bondmate inquires as he turns to leave, commenting aloud, “If you’re feeling kind, lock her up; otherwise let her go. I doubt she’ll survive long without her protection.”

He turns to follow his mate, pausing directly behind him at the door when Irene calls out, “Are you expecting me to beg?”

His bondmate stops moving, standing perfectly still as he calmly responds, “Yes.”

For a bit she stares at him before stating, “Please,” swallowing her pride she continues, “You’re right,” she pauses for a breath and his mate turns towards her a bit, “I won’t even last six months.”

In a somewhat bored tone he remarks, “Sorry about dinner.”

When they get outside, his bondmate continues to walk for a bit before querying, “John?”

Appearing silently beside him, but mindful of the cameras he smiles softly at his mate and shifts, kneeling down so that the human can climb on his back before they vanish and he proceeds to run, racing through the streets. He can feel the frustration, worry, and anger as it drains out of him. They do not head directly home, instead he loops through the city streets, mindful of people, until he is sure that his bondmate is ready to go home. When he is certain the tall human is ready to go home, he turns and heads in that direction, moving with a great deal of speed.

Once home, he shifts back into his human form after his mate gets off of his back and the two of them go inside. Upon entry into the flat, he sends his thanks to Eric, apparently the cobra had understood he had not wanted the hybrids smell within the flat because it had been aired out and the bedding already washed. The only thing he could smell now was his, his bondmate, and the cobra’s scent. With a soft smile he settles onto the sofa and pats the spot next to him. It is a few minutes before his bondmate joins them and the two just settle there for a good cuddle. He understands that even if his mate was not attracted to her, she had been one of the closest things to a friend he had had within the human world so this hurt to think about the fact she had willingly betrayed him and intentionally tried to crush his spirits. So he says nothing as the tall man processes, instead offering his support in the best way he can, by simply being there.
Thanks to everyone who has left me any sort of communication stating that you like it whether it is a review, kudos, bookmarking, or subscription. Hope everyone enjoys

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV
Two weeks after the situation involving Bond Air as he thought of it in his head, his bondmate tells him before he goes to work that he has been contacted about finding a missing girl Karachi, that he will be gone for three to five days. He nods, kissing him long and passionately before biding him safe journey, not asking to go with because he has an idea what’s really going on. Instead, he calls for Elspeth, happy to see she is nearby.

Do you have any plans for the next week? He inquires of the multiform cat.

No sir, is something going on? She replies quickly.

He is planning a trip to Karachi, I have a feeling it is to assist the hybrid, go with him, protect him. He responds, giving orders to the one person who prefers to have orders from their pack.

Yes sir, is he getting ready to leave now? she answers.

Indeed, he is packing a small bag, I am certain he has already arranged for his transportation. He explains, please make sure he is careful. If he is helping the hybrid, tag her so that Tech can track her as needed.

Yes sir, she answers once more.

A few minutes later Sherlock gives him one last kiss before heading out the door with a promise to text him when he has time. Sighing, he finishes preparing for work and heads into the clinic. The day goes smoothly but he is surprised when he gets a text from Greg asking if they can go have drinks tonight, it’s not normally one of the nights that they do so on. At the end of the shift he bids his coworkers good night before heading home to clean up.

He is just getting done doing so when the door bell rings and a moment later the silver haired detective inspector is standing in his entry way inquiring if he can come in, a bag of take-out in one hand and a box of beer. “Hey, mind if I come in? Sherlock texted me earlier and said he was going to be out of town for a few days on a missing person’s case but that you had to work so you would be home. Is that really what happened?”

He smiles at the taller man, motioning to the living room as he says, “Come on in, it’s a lot safer to eat in here now that almost all his experiments are held in 221C. Yeah, he’s gone to do a missing person’s case, at least that’s what he told me before he left.”

Settling onto the sofa and setting the food out in front of them on the small coffee table, the older man inquires, “Is he on his own?”
He shakes his head, before heading into the kitchen to grab plates and silverware, “Hell no, he has a protector, though he doesn’t know that, she stays quiet and invisible at all times.” Returning to the living room he inquires, “Was that the only reason you came over tonight?”

The detective inspector shakes his head no, opening a bottle and taking a drink before he answers, “Something is off with Charlotte, since the girls joined the pack she has been acting moody, she hasn’t had a single cycle, and she says her skin feels like it is always itchy but I can never find anything that could be causing it. Right now she is over to her friend Karen’s house from school, but I told her I was going to talk with you about it since you’re a doctor and she doesn’t want to go see her human doctor. Madeline and Sofia are over to my sister’s house for the night to play with her children.”

He thinks about it for a bit, before questioning, “Can you have her come here? I think I know what’s wrong but I would have to examine her with iota sight to say for sure.”

Before he has even finished speaking the jackal-child has pulled out his phone and is dialing on it. A moment later he is speaking with his daughter, asking her to catch a cab here as soon as she is done with her homework. When he gets off of the phone, there seems to be a lot less stress in the older man. “Thank you John, really I cannot thank you enough, I worry about my girls all the time and when this started going on but she didn’t want to see a doctor, well you can understand.”

Smiling, he nods, “Of course, I’d be worried to if my daughter suddenly started acting different, now let’s relax while we wait, how’s everything else been going?” Reaching out with his mind, he requests, Eric please make sure its one of our cabs that picks up Greg’s daughter.

Alright, the cobra replies before vanishing from his mind again.

Sighing, the taller man digs into his dinner before answering, “Its been crazy at the yard, Anderson keeps trying to get the paperwork for the pups revoked and is getting pissed that its not working. Sally has actually been a lot easier to work with since the visit from Eric a few months back. I recently found out that I have two other shifters in the force that I had not realized were shifters, both approached me after last month’s department meeting to introduce themselves in the shifter manner. That was a bit surreal, I have been working with Kristopher for fifteen years and never realized that he had crow in him, though it does explain why he is so good at following people even when they take to alley ways if he was doing so from the air. The other bloke, Micky, just transferred to our department three months ago from Cardiff, he didn’t specify what type of shifter he was however.”

From there the conversation turns to some of the different cases that they had had, the fact that there had been several criminals who had just randomly turned themselves in, along with bringing any remaining evidence of their crimes or telling them where they had occurred. After that they talk about how his daughters are adjusting to life with him and the pack. Then they move on to how his visits with Mycroft have lately been.

“You’re attracted to him, am I going to end up with you as my brother-in-law in the future?” he queries playfully as he smells the slight arousal his friend is giving off.

That arousal changes to embarrassment as he mutters, “Shut up John.”

Chuckling, he remarks, “You know it’s all good right? I think it would be good for both of you actually, besides the two of you already act like you’re going steady.”

The jackal-child blushed but is saved from answering by the door bell going off.

With a smile, he gets up and goes to answer it, finding it to be the jackal-child’s oldest daughter at the
door. He doesn’t even have to switch to iota sight to have a good idea what’s going on in his sense of
smell tells him. She’s going into a shifter’s heat rather than a human’s menstrual cycle. Well then,
that is interesting, “Hello Charlotte, come on up,” he greets the girl and motions her inside.

She nervously greets him back before heading upstairs with the backpack thrown over her shoulder.
When she gets to the flat, she glances around curiously before sitting down on the sofa next to her
dad.

Coming back upstairs, he closes the main door to the downstairs and settles into his armchair. “So,
Charlotte, you’re sixteen right?” he queries gently.

Nodding, she glances at him before looking down and answering, “Yeah,” softly.

“Well since you’re sixteen, if you want I can have your dad leave for a bit and we can do this
privately, we can do this here and aloud, or we can do this here but use telepathy for me to tell you
what’s going on.” He tells her before getting up to make tea while she thinks about her answer, when
he is done with the teas, he carries hers and Greg’s out to the living room before fetching his and
settling back into his seat, “I have been a doctor for ten years, I am also a fully trained iota, so I have
worked with young ladies as much as blokes.”

She sips at her tea for a few minutes before saying, “It’s alright if we do this with Dad here, I just,”
she trails off giving a shake of her head. Her scent is that of a worried person.

He smiles at her reassuringly, before finishing his tea and coming over to where she is seated to kneel
carefully on the floor before her. “May I see your dominate wrist?” he murmurs.

Biting her lip, she nods, carefully pulling the sleeve to her sweater up before offering it to him. He
smiles at her again, carefully unbuttoning his shirt and pressing it back to show the fern-shaped mark
on his before pressing it against hers. Eyes drifting shut, he falls into his iota sight before reopening
them and allowing himself to check her with his healers senses instead of his human senses.

Sure enough, her body is going through the change from human-child to shifter, her second form is
trying to bring itself to the surface but she had been resisting because she was scared of the feeling it
was producing. As her body goes through the transition it had went from human cycles to shifter
cycles, something that is both good and bad. Past that, her body was burning away all illnesses that
she had within her life and the affect effects that they had left. She was even beginning to develop a
gift, though it would never be a very powerful one.

He carefully checks her bonds to each of her family members, happy to see that the ones to her sire,
sisters, and paternal side are all very healthy. The bonds to her maternal side however are fading and
would be gone within another two or three years, apparently they had never developed properly
which said a lot about that side of her family. She also had one other tentative bond that looked like it
was a ghost bond, so she had meet her bondmate then, that could be both a good and bad thing,
though he did not follow it to see who it was.

Carefully pulling back into himself he allows his eyes to shut again as he returns to normal vision and
releases her wrist, though he turns her arm to see if she has a small dot on the inside of her wrist.
Sure enough she does, it’s a silver one with a black ring around it. So it is the Shadow Mistress’
choice of a bondmate then, not Dawn or Dusk.

“Well Charlotte, you’re a shifter. The itchy feeling you are experience is your body trying to get you
to shift. If you would like I can help you through the first few transformations so you can get a feel
for it, afterwards that feeling will go away.” He gently informs her before stating, “Secondly, I bet
you stopped having periods just about five months ago and it scared you right?”
She nods once, biting her lip and looking down, “I was worried I was pregnant, I had only had sex once but then everything started changing and,” she replies in a whisper but trails off.

Greg is staring at her though he can tell that the jackal-child is trying not to get mad.

“You’re not pregnant, your body has changed its cycle to a shifter cycle however that takes time, so it is just now gearing up for your first actual heat. You will have heats like a jackal every four months or so, during which time most female shifters have told me it is better to find a willing male to pair off with. The beautiful thing about our biology is you do not have to worry about getting pregnant from anyone other than your bondmate, though that is not a reason to sleep around.” He continues after a moment, moving back to his seat as he explains the situation to her. “According to the mark on your wrist you have already met your bondmate, so I need to ask if you are aware of who it is.”

Her eyes go wide and she glances between her father and him questioningly. “What’s a bondmate? Do you mean like yourself and the alpha-second or some of the others that seem to have close partners?”

He nods, answering, “When the Old Gods created the shifter species they gave them a gift, each shifter would have two people in the world that would be perfect for them. The first would be selected by the Dawn Son and often times reflected the more positive traits of the shifter, the mark from those bonds will always be light in coloring. The second would be selected by the Dusk Daughter and often reflected the more neutral traits of a shifter, the marks from those bonds will always be dark in coloring but not black or silver. Occasionally however the Shadow Mistress will select a mate for one of the one’s she considers hers. Those marks are always silver or black.” He holds up his wrist, showing the black spiral fern with the small dots surrounding the frond. “See? My bondmate was selected for me by the Shadow Mistress, as was yours according to the fact your warning dot is silver.”

Biting her lip she stares at her wrist, looking at the dot like she’s not sure where it came from. “This has been here since I joined the pack, I just thought it was a pack mark, Dad said I now had a pack mark.”

He gives a shake of his head, “Nope, that’s on the back of your neck, look at his neck if you want to see one, they will be very similar only yours will identify you as a full shifter and not a shifter-child.”

She carefully peers at the back of Greg’s head and neck, where the pack marks are visible at, and he leans his head down a bit so it is easier for her to see them.

“I have one of those? That’s beautiful!” she remarks as she looks back at him, “You said you can help me shift?”

He smiles at her, nodding once, “I can, if you would like we can do so once tonight so you can get a feel for what your other form is like, however you will not be able to stay in it long and will need to go home when you’re done in order to get some sleep.”

She nods, asking, “How?”

He smiles at her, motioning for her to come over by the fire place where the floor is empty. Joining her, he carefully places his palm against her forehead, focusing for a bit before he pulls back, “Now I am going to be in your head, you’re going to both feel and hear me, I will not be looking or listening to your thoughts, however I will end up taking control of your body so I can walk you through the process, alright?”

She nods excitedly, watching him closely.
Here we go. He begins,

“Yes” she replies aloud and it feels like its echoing.

That’s because it is, right now just think your answer to me and I will hear it. There is amusement in his voice,

He can feel as her attention turns to it, Now what?

Now we are going to bring it the rest of the way to the surface, your first reaction will be to panic, don’t. Instead just breath steadily like when you’re running alright?

Alright, he feels her answer before she tries keeping herself calm.

When the tingling that signals the change begins she just about panics but at the last minute remembers his advice and starts picturing herself running. The result is, as soon as her body finishes the shift she is doing a loop around the room though it is rather wobbly since she went from two legs to four.

“My God,” Greg gasps as he looks at his daughter, he had never imagined that she would be a shifter.

Her coloring is a dark brown-grey mix with golden markings on her face around her eyes and muzzle. She prances around, each time returning to her father’s side and head butting him.

“She wants you to rub her fur, its rather traditional, almost all canine forms do that with their parents when they are in their shifted form, she’ll do the same thing with her mate when she gets older.” He chuckles, stating, “Shadow Mistress knows I do it often enough to Sherlock.”

Slowly, his friend starts rubbing the area behind her ears slowly, cautiously, as if he is worried he will hurt her.

“Well come here Charlotte, time to be a human again.” he tells the relaxing jackal pup who is falling asleep to her father’s soft touch.

She shakes her head a bit, coming back over and he reconnects with her, Alright, now to shift back merely think that you are human and picture yourself in the clothes you were wearing.

She gets the picturing herself human right but blushes up a storm when she appears without her clothes on, the clothes falling to the floor beneath her. Quickly she gathers them all up staring hard at the floor.

Carefully, so not to sound like he is laughing, he tells her were the bathroom is and drapes the blanket that is normally kept on his chair around her. For a minute she remains seated before she gets up and bolts to the bathroom to get dressed, tripping twice as she does so.

“John, that was amazing. She will be able to do that on her own?” Greg asks while she is walking to the bathroom, he can tell that the older man wants to help her but doesn’t say anything because he knows she’d be embarrassed.

He nods, smiling, “Yeah, she will be able to do that on her own eventually, though for a while any time she shifts, she is going to want you to touch her fur, it reaffirms the family bond, she will do the same thing with sisters as well, this upcoming new moon gathering I will check on your other two daughters to see if they will be shifters as well.”
“You said she has a bondmate, do you mean like my parents? An actual true bondmate?” the older jackal-child inquires, wonder in his voice along with worry.

Again he nods, “Yep, like Sherlock and me, Daria and Nathan, and any of the other bonded couples within the pack. Depending on whom it is, they may be waiting for her to get older before approaching her or they could be waiting for her birthday before approaching you to ask for permission to court her.”

“Oh,” Greg replies, worry in his scent.

“Now here is some interesting things to consider, things to be careful of, now that she has shifted her senses are going to come online so to speak, her sense of smell and hearing in particular, though possibly her sense of touch as well. They might actually cause her headaches as she learns to control them, so you might have to keep her home from school a couple of days though if it lasts too long bring her back to me or take her to Daria. As the pack healers we can help,” he warns the older man just before his daughter comes out of the bathroom clutching the blanket around her.

“I’m cold,” she murmurs, “and tired.”

“Get her home and in bed, make sure she is well covered, we can work on her shifting some more during the next pack meeting. Graduation is in a couple of day right?” he directs the other man.

Greg nods, carefully hefting his daughters backpack, before wrapping an arm around her to help support her, “Next weekend actually, this was her last week of school, she’s doing her finals, next year she does her A-levels.” There is obvious pride and pleasure in his friends voice over his daughters accomplishments.

“Do you know what she wants to go into?” he inquires as he walks with them out of the flat and down the road a little ways to where the car is in a parking lot.

“She said she wants to be a veterinary. I was surprised actually because I hadn’t realized that she liked animals that much,” he gives a little shrug continuing, “I knew she liked dogs and cats, but had not realized she like other animals all that much too.”

Smiling, he comments, “Its probably her gift asserting itself, she has a very minor healing gift, its pretty common for folks with the minor version to go into some support form of the medical field whether it is for animals or people. Daria offers lessons every third Sunday, you might want to talk to her about going, I offer lessons too, but mine tend to be a bit more random and I work with the two that have strong healing gifts, not minor ones. I can also check the charts to see if there is anyone else in the pack or one of the allied packs that has the same type of gift as her that she could work with,” he offers.

When they get to the car, he grabs the keys from Greg, unlocking the door and opening it while his friend helps his daughter in, straightening up he remarks, “That would be great if you could, I really can’t believe how much your willing to do, I mean we’re friends but it still seems to be a lot.” Carefully the taller man shuts the door before going around to the other side, “Actually I still have a hard time with how much help the entire pack has been during this time of adjustment, its unbelievable.”

“Pack takes care of each other, by tradition we are all considered one large arse family, and family is supposed to help each other. Have a great night Greg,” he tells his friend as the other man gets in the car.

“Good night John, thanks again.” he states before closing the door and taking off.
Ambling back to the flat, he heads upstairs and checks his phone, happy to see a message from Sherlock telling him that he had safely arrived. He also has a message from Elspeth telling him that she is still with him, but that he is currently preoccupied and thus she can send this before she switches to telepathy for all reports, they will be every six hours like when on mission unless something comes up.

Sighing, he heads in their room and stretches out on the bed. It’s going to be a long couple of days without his mate.

Chapter End Notes

I’m still not British so any mistakes on the educational system are my fault because sometimes wiki is just not clear enough and I know they differ from what I am used to here in the States.
Familial Discussions

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

This chapter is for RavenOceana for her help on understanding the differences between British and American schools, along with all the rest of you who continually leave me awesome comments.

So originally this was going to be called Awkward Discussions but I decided to save that name for a later chapter that I have already got partly wrote.

Greg’s POV
He was in shock. His oldest daughter, the one he knew for a fact had only shifter-child parents, with neither parent being a full shifter was a shifter. She was a beautiful, small dark-brown and grey with golden markings on her face. Those markings look like eye shadow, blush, and lipstick the way they color her face but they are blended perfectly with the surrounding dark-brown and grey. She keeps prancing around, each time returning to push against him, in a manner very similar to the dog that they used to have.

Finally his friend tells him in an amused voice, “She wants you to rub her fur, its rather traditional, almost all canine forms do that with their parents when they are in their shifted form, she’ll do the same thing with her mate when she gets older.” He chuckles, stating, “Shadow Mistress knows I do it often enough to Sherlock.”

The next time she prances closer, he reaches a hand out and runs it down the back of her head, his blunt fingers carefully rubbing the area directly behind her ears. She leans into his touch, and he can feel the rumble in her chest, the canine equivalent of a purr. As he feels her start to relax he realizes that she is drifting off to sleep.

Eventually John comments, “Well come here Charlotte, time to be a human again.”

A few moments later his daughter has returned to her own form though she is wearing nothing because her clothes appear beneath her. It doesn’t take much to realize that she is embarrassed and he is not sure how to help her but John seems to get it. Grabbing a blanket and carefully placing around his daughter, the shorter man puts her at ease and she heads into the bathroom to get dressed again after a bit.

While she is getting dressed he discusses with John the fact she will be able to learn to shift on her own, that his friend and alpha will check his other two daughters for the shifting ability, and what to watch for to make sure that everything is alright with her. Since she only has one week left before she goes on summer break for a few weeks. She should have plenty of time to adjust to her new abilities hopefully. When she comes back out of the bathroom, she is cold and tired, and John walks with him back to the car. With the two of them discussing her minor gift and the possibility of training for her.

Once in the car he carefully drives to the new house, still in shock over the fact that Eric had handed
over such a nice house and car as if it was nothing. What type of home must he live in to feel that way? Why was the Watson wolf pack so different from the Hayes jackal pack he had been born to? It was something he was still trying to understand.

Upon getting home, he helps his daughter up to her room, setting the book bag just inside her bedroom door before going and showering to head to bed himself.

In the morning he makes breakfast before work for him and school for Chare. Just as he gets done cooking she comes downstairs, dressed for school and carrying her pack.

“Morning Dad,” she murmurs, “breakfast smells great, is it sausages and cheese eggs?” she inquires as she walks into the room before she actually looks over to what he is cooking. “Did I really turn into a jackal last night?”

He smiles at her, nodding, “You did indeed Chare, a beautiful jackal of dark-brown and grey with adorable golden markings on your face. If I hadn’t been in awe I would have taken a picture of your first transformation. Tonight when you get done with school we need to have a conversation.”

She nods slowly, looking nervously at the floor.

“You’re not in trouble, we just need to talk,” he tells her, understanding why she is worried.

Again she nods, but she seems to relax at that and the two of them share an ease breakfast. Once done with that he takes her to school before heading to work. Surprisingly enough the day goes rather smoothly, by time he gets off work and collects his daughter from her after school program. When they get home he starts making dinner while his oldest daughter does her homework. Her sisters will be home in a bit. His sister Audrey was bringing his other two daughters when they were done with swimming lessons and spending time at her house. He had asked her to do so, so he would have a chance to talk with Chare.

“You just about done with your homework?” he inquires as he sets the last pan in the stove.

She nods, “Just have one last problem to do. Since they have us doing exams this week, homework has actually been pretty light.”

He grabs a pair of cups and pours some ice tea for both before sitting down to wait. A few minutes later she is packing her stuff back into her bag.

“Done now, you wanted to talk?” she comments, sitting back down and grabbing the cup, “Thank you.”

“Charlotte, you’ve had sex already?” he asks, not even working into the subject, just asking what is on his mind.

She blushes, looking down and nodding, “Yes Dad,” she murmurs.

“Look at me, Charlotte,” he directs her, waiting until she does so to continue, “It’s not a bad thing for you to explore that part of your nature. I grew up in a shifter household, you heard what John said, a female shifters heats are easier with a partner, however you have to, have to, have to make sure that it is a shifter that you’re taking to your bed. Do you know if the young man you had sex with is a shifter?”

She shakes her head, replying softly, “I dunno, I never thought to ask, Mum got so mad at me. I didn’t want to tell you in case you got mad too.”
Reaching over he squeezes her hand, “No sweetie, I’m not mad, I just want you to be really careful. There are several full shifter males of your age in the pack, perhaps you can come to an agreement with one of them,” he suggests, while the idea of his little girl being sexually active is something he does not appreciate from his time in the human world, his shifter upbringing makes it an acceptable practice as long as it is done safely. That means with another shifter or quasi-shifter who would not get her pregnant or give her some type of illness.

For a long minute she stares hard at him before asking, “Are you sure Dad? I really don’t want to disappoint you.”

He smiles at her and nods, “I’m sure,” the relief in her eyes is noticeable and he doesn’t need the shifters ability to smell things to know she is happy to hear that. “Now then, John has suggested that you get training for your emerging shifting abilities and your gift. The question is, do you want to do so with the other pups working on theirs or would you rather apprentice?”

“They still do apprenticeships?” she inquires curiously.

He nods, “Yeah, according to John they do, I didn’t qualify for pack training so I don’t know personally. He said he would have a list of people with similar gifts to yours that you could train with at the new moon meeting, so you have a couple of days. Apparently you have a minor healing gift.” He knows his voice is full of pride, “Just consider what you want to do with yourself and if you would rather a class teaching you to use your abilities or a person.”

She nods and before she can answer he hears his sisters car pulling up, her sisters are home. Now to tell his sister the remarkable news, that somehow his daughter was a shifter. He’s just getting ready to go to the door when his phone buzzes, checking it he is surprised to see that it is a picture of Charlotte from the night before right after she had turned into a jackal for the first time.

Eric’s POV
In the six months since the annoying incident as he referred to what happened at the January new moon pack gathering his son had found a small two room flat closer to the university that he was considering going to. He had considered arguing with the younger shifter, trying to talk him into staying but knew that was not a wise idea on several different levels. Aidan had moved out because he had been aware of how difficult things were on him and the fact he wanted his own territory. While he had not liked the idea of him being in a human owned flat, he had understood his need for space. Despite the fact that they lived in different housing, they often had dinner together at his house since he enjoyed cooking a variety of foods and Aidan was due shortly.

Sure enough, not five minutes after he got dinner into the oven, his son was walking into the house, calling out a greeting before he got to the door with his mind. Aidan had discovered early on it was not a good idea to startle him.

“How was your day?” he inquires as the younger shifter enters the kitchen, setting a bottle of something down on the table as he does so.

“Long,” the younger man replies, “I hadn’t realized how tiring it is to sit in a room full of humans thinking so loudly while trying to take a test. On the plus side, I am fairly certain I passed all of the and now have all the required paperwork ready to go to the university in the fall.”

He nods once, asking, “Have you decided on a course of study?”

“One of the social sciences, I think, maybe duel major in psychology and sociology, I prefer to do
my computer work with you rather than outsiders. They do not need to know what I can do with a computer,” the younger cobra answers.

For a few minutes they are silent as the food cooks, when he is getting ready to pull it out of the oven Aidan sets the table so that all they have to do is serve themselves and sit down. Once the two of them have their plates, they settle into their spots and talk about how things had been since the last time they had dinner three days earlier.

“I have a silver and black dot on my left wrist,” his son eventually remarks, flipping his wrist so that the mark is visible. “If I am not mistaken that is a Shadow Mistress selection of a bondmate. Apparently I have three then.”

Eighteen, his mind supplies, he’s eighteen. That’s too young. Giving a light shake of his head, he clears his thoughts, not really, most shifters are happy when they know who their bondmate is at eighteen. Cobra’s even have long traditions regarding the courting of bondmates. Too bad coral snakes do not have the same traditions. Internally sighing, he queries, “Do you know who?”

After taking a few bites of his food, Aidan replies, “I think it is the jackal-child Charlotte Lestrade, daughter of the jackal-child Gregory Lestrade. She is the only new person I have touched in recent months and it appeared shortly after the first time I touched her.”

Silence falls as he considers this. Gregory Lestrade, human jackal-child, divorced of the human jackal-child Crystal Reeve, father of daughters Charlotte, Madeline, and Sofia, with Madeline and Sofia actually being a bonddaughters not a blood daughters. Raised in a traditional jackal house hold, which means customs very similar to those of the cobra. Recently Charlotte had presented as a shifter, jackal like both her parents bloodlines of a dark-brown and gray with golden markings according to the memory John had shared with him. She was interested in animals and had a minor healing gift. Where her father had been raised in a traditional jackal household, her mother had maintained a more human household and probably was unaware of a great many of the shifter traditions.

“The jackal child is an alright person, he never officially got permission to work in the career path he is on, however John has given him retrograde permission. His daughter is a hard worker from my understanding, recently developed the ability to shift, though she is still unused to doing so.” He eventually remarks, again the both of them are quiet for a bit before he asks, “Do you have plans regarding her?”

A light blush colors his son’s cheeks, “I looked up when her birthday is, after she turns seventeen I wish to approach her sire and ask permission to formally court her.” He glances at his food for a moment before looking back up, “I might have been raised in a coral snake house but I still have the cobra memories and traditions that I inherited. Apparently I have a minor mnemonic gift so there are certain traditions and such that I recall if they have been repeated through several generations.” He shrugs, “I guess that was the gift I developed instead of Sight.”

He nods, several of his cousins, along with one of his aunts had had the mnemonic gift rather than vision. It was a trait from his father’s side where the Sight had been from his mother’s side.

“Just be sure before you make a choice, do not rush into anything.” He warns the younger cobra.

Aidan smiles at him nodding, he understands that it was permission to court her that he had just received and the subject slowly drifts into other matters. His son is considering buying a property in order to make his own permanent home for when he is done with the university. They also discuss the fact that Zara is coming for a visit the following month.
John’s POV

Four days after his night with Greg and his daughter his bondmate gets home. Between when he left and when he got home, Elspeth had checked in with him seventeen times. Sixteen times as required, and once to bitch that his mate reminded her of Tech only not as fast or deadly. She also confirms that he has saved the hybrid from being beheaded and had beheaded several of the terrorists who had captured her before faking her death with another woman who is already dead. The first thing his bondmate does when he gets home is shower before he comes and crashes in bed with him, snuggling up close to him and falling asleep almost as soon as his curly head was on his shoulder. Smiling, he reaches over to grab his phone, calling Sarah and telling her he won’t be able to cover that afternoon shift after all.

Eventually he wiggles himself out of his bondmates hold in order to go use the bathroom, make tea and breakfast. A little while later, just as he is getting ready to make the plates to take into the bedroom his bondmate comes out, dressed only in his pants and a house robe.

“Hello love, how was your trip?” he inquires as he makes the plates.

The tall human, settles into a chair at the table, blinking at him for a moment before he replies, “Successful.”

He nods, “Here’s some breakfast for you, I am sure you did not eat enough while you were gone. Now do you care to tell me why you were really in Karachi?” he queries as he sets the plate with a hot tea next to it down in front of his bondmate.

Sherlock’s head jerks up and he stares at him in shock, not touching his breakfast.

“I’m not dumb Sherlock. I am part of a group of highly trained military shifters who are not your run of the mill types. Did you really think I would not realize why you were there?” he questions as he sits down and starts to eat his breakfast.

“I…” his bondmate begins but quickly trails off. He can smell the nervousness and worry in the air, along with the sorrow. “I didn’t think you’d understand. I know you don’t like her but…” again his voice trails off as he tries to figure out how to explain himself.

Sighing, he finishes his breakfast, but also urges his mate to do the same, “Come on love eat up” While his bondmate picks at his breakfast he considers how best to explain this to the tall human. Once they are both done he goes to settle on the sofa, patting the area next to him and beckoning for his bondmate to join him. It is a few minutes before he does so but eventually the taller man curls himself against his side, head resting on his shoulder while he has his arms wrapped around him.

“Listen love, I might not have liked her, hell I considered ripping her throat out every time she touched you in a familiar way or handing her over to Eric so he could rip her mind to shreds but I also understood she was something like a friend to you. Had you asked for help saving her, one of the military pack could have helped you.” he pauses for a moment, considering how to word it, “I wish you understood that I will support no matter what and would have trusted me enough to be honest.”

“I didn’t lie!” he quickly exclaims, twisting around to face him, eyes wide with worry.

Giving a small shake of his head he remarks, “But you did, it was a lie of omission but still a lie. A strong relationship cannot have lies Sherlock. If you feel uncomfortable telling me something, then
tell me you do not want to talk about it, but don’t lie to me.”

Sherlock curls against him, ducking his head down and pressing close rather than replying. For a bit the two of them stay like that, then he hears an almost silent, “I’m sorry John,” from his bondmate. His scent is full of sadness and worry, even fear.

He kisses the top of his bondmates dark curls, and just holds him, not saying anything more. He knows that in the past asking for help had nearly always ended badly for his bondmate, so the dark-haired human had gotten into the habit of never asking, of disguising his actions. Even now when he had just over a year’s worth of support from him and the pack it did not override all the previous years of not getting that support.

“Just promise me you will try to remember to talk with me in the future when something like that comes up.” he eventually requests.

“I swear John, I didn’t mean to lie to you, I really didn’t.” his bondmate quickly replies, his scent sincere.

“Alright, now how would you like to spend the day?” he agrees, allowing the subject to be dropped though he is sure they will end up having this discussion or one like it at least one more time.
Reflections and Considerations

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So this chapter might seem a little bit all over the board, all I would like to say is remember it is an teenage boys thoughts, not really all that organized.

Warning: this chapter vaguely refers to the abuse of the a child.

Jace’s POV

When looking back at the last year there were times he could hardly believe he was the same person who had timidly approached the alpha of a famous wolf pack in order to ask for a place as an omega. Back then he had not expected anything to come of his request except maybe he would be laughed at. Never in his wildest dreams would he have thought that he would end up with a home, family, friends, or pack. That his ability to shift would be unlocked or that he would be allowed to learn, both mundane subjects and how to control his gifts.

Those first few months had been extremely hard on him. The desire to submit to every single thing his new mother had wanted had occasionally caused problems because he did so without thinking, without complaint, even on things that she thought that he should complain about. How could he explain that his life was unbelievable now? That the things that she asked were easy to consider and do. It had taken showing her his memories before she had finally understood and even then she had been furious.

At first he had thought she was mad at him, then had come the events when he had been taken by his birth pack, the pack that refused to claim him but kept him around as a toy and punching bag. He had been very surprised when the pack had showed up for him, even more surprised at how quickly they had reacted. That fury he had felt in his bondmother was finally directed somewhere and those who it touched paid a high price, their minds ripped to shreds. Through it he had been supported by both of his bondparents and the cobra within their pack.

In the months following he had slowly adjusted to his life. Never before had he been allowed a room to himself yet now he had a rather big one full of things that were purely his. To sleep on a bed had taken some adjusting as well since previously he had only been allowed to sleep on the floor or wherever he was thrown when whoever felt the need to hurt him had finished. There had been several times where his bondmother had come to comfort him, and twice where she had called the cobra to comfort him because she was not able to. Not that he understood at that point why he was comforted by the presence of the cobra.

Eventually he had gotten past that, though he knew that a large part of that was the mindhealing that his bondmother, the pack alpha, and the cobra had all taken turns doing.

Then had come his education. He was far behind what most pups his age could do in pretty close to all subjects. It was something that had made him feel hopeless yet now he was nearly ahead of most the pups that had gone to school continuously. Why? Because the pack’s only small shifter Mouse had taken the time to teach him. Carefully going over the information that he had already known and
then slowly adding to it. At least it felt slow to him despite the fact he knew otherwise, after all he completed almost ten years worth of studying over the course of one year. She had asked him at the offset what he wanted to do with his life but he had been unable to answer then, to unsure of himself and his abilities to do so.

Now he knew exactly what he wanted to do with himself. He wanted to have a mate of his own, children, and be trained as a healer, possibly even as a doctor so he could treat more than just shifters.

So everything he has studied in the last three months has been with that goal in mind. As soon he had told her that in a bashful way she had shifted their curriculum to be more science heavy. She was determined to help him with that goal, making sure that he was learning everything he would need for when he sat his various exams he was going to have to do in order to get into university to get a degree in medicine. Once he had gotten past the basics he had started training with his bondmother as well, though she had stated he was a stronger healer and would do better with their pack elder that occasionally did lessons on the fly.

Occasionally the words used by the pack members would confuse him. Since their pack was a mixture of species, it meant that a mixture of terms were used regularly. Depending on who he was speaking to, they would refer to the pack as a pack, den, nest, coop, or clan. Alpha was used interchangeably with elder. Senior was used interchangeably with beta. Healer was used by several of the members without specifying what type. Did they mean iota,omicron, or those rare people with both? Though no one wants to talk about them, something he really doesn’t understand. All of these he had quickly adjusted to but there were those who also mixed the terms and that’s where he really ran into problems, it was a good thing he preferred to be quiet or he would be forever asking for clarification.

There were also the wide variety of customs that seem to fill the pack, each coming from the wide variety of species within the pack. Though the primary customs where those of the wolves since the pack is primarily wolf. Still they were nothing like the customs he had grown up with, something at he was extremely happy about. He was learning the customs that went with his bondfamily, sometimes surprised at how traditional the vipers he lived with were in many ways but weren’t in others. According to his bondmother the most traditional person was also the one who tended to break traditions in the form of the older cobra.

Stretching out on his bed, he stares at the ceiling as he continues to allow his thoughts to switch between topics.

Cobras, when he had first joined the pack there had been a single cobra, a beautiful man with obsidian eyes and scale gracing his ivory skin. From the first he had found him attractive, hard not to really. But he was terrifying as well. There was a coiled deadliness that no one else in the pack matched. He appeared to be the same age as him so it had been a shock to the system when he had discovered he was really in his thirties. Then the second one had appeared and he hadn’t understood why he found attraction in the older one but not in the younger even though they were identical except for the eyes, the younger cobra had silver eyes instead of black ones. Still it was the older one who caught his attention.

When he had finally got the nerve to ask his bondmother why he would catch his attention she had sighed, telling him that there was a connection there though the type was yet to be seen. She had not sounded happy with the idea, but then she was not a fan of the older cobra for reasons known only to her.

He hadn’t been able to ask her what the different types of bonds where. Instead he had ended up asking the pack’s omicron Jeffery during one of the new moon meetings what all types of
connections there were between shifters. The older wolf had explained that there were six types of bond. The first is the family bond, the bond between parent and child, brother to brother, sister to sister, brother to sister. Second is the secondary family bond, that between cousins, aunts and uncles to nieces and nephews, grandparents to grandchildren, and any other not single generation divide. Third was the bond between protector and protected. Fourth bond is that between teacher and student. The fifth bond is that between friends or that between enemies, recognized as equally important bonds, one that supports and one that can destroy or cause adversary. The sixth and final bond is the bond between bondmates. For many the bond between mates was considered as important or even more important than the bond between parent and child. Probably because it was the only bond that was formed by the Old Gods.

Again he moves, his thoughts making him uncomfortable as he shifts how he is laying. Focusing for a moment, he shifts forms happy that his bed is big enough to accommodate his rather large wolf form which he had been told would actually get bigger still. So instead he curls up in his bed as a wolf and continues the line of thought.

According to the wolf omicron he had already come in contact with his bondmate however he had never touched them skin to skin. Apparently to touch a piece of the animal form would form a base bond without showing a mark. So he had carefully considered all of the shifters he knows and had met. Among his birth pack they had not cared whether their skin had touched him or not so he knew that it was none of them. Then among his new pack pretty much all of them use their skin only except for one. The older cobra.

Carefully he had fallen into his power the way that his bondmother had shown him. once inside the gift, he had felt out his bonds. First connecting to his bondmother and bondfather, then to the small life within his bondmother, his to be bondsister. From there he traced the next link, the one to his birth mother though that one is just about gone, she is just about dead. That is one bond he expects to vanish sooner than later. Then he follows the pack bond, it leads directly to Alpha John and his bondmate Alpha-second Sherlock, from them he can trace the rest of the pack. Backtracking he goes to the last link he can feel, it’s really nothing more than a shadow bond, even less than the one connecting him to his birth mother. It takes him a few moments to trace it and he is startled when it comes to the older cobra once more.

Once he has traced the link he returns to himself, staring at his paws as he lays on his bed questioning why the cobra make sure never to touch his skin. But then, from what he had seen the older cobra made it a point to never touch anyone. Perhaps the reason was he did not want the connections that actual touch could otherwise caused. From what he had seen of him, he massively disliked other people, the only people he seemed to willingly be around were the alpha, alpha-second, his son, and the young pups under ten years old.

Shifting back to his human form he gets up to pace around his room a bit before crashing back on the bed to consider everything he knows.

The older cobra had been through a bad bonding, unlike wolves, cobras could bond more than once. His first bonding had been far too early from what he understood and had produced at least two children. Perhaps the reason he was avoiding any sort of connection was he did not want to risk going through that type of heartache again. That could be a problem though, because he found himself fixed on the cobra. He was beautiful, smart, and protective. He loves pups. Really, besides the rather short fuse he had seen anytime someone had threatened him, he was a really good candidate for a bondmate.

Oh shit. Had he really selected? If he had that could be a problem because he was a wolf, a wolf’s bondmate was for life. What if the cobra was never open to the idea? Then what would he do? Well
all that meant is he had to figure out how to be a good bondmate. How to get the cobra to want him as a bondmate. Perhaps it would be a good idea to talk with his son and maybe the alpha, they seemed to be the people who are closest to him.

Finally he had found a comfortable way to lie and smiled up at the ceiling.

A plan of action, that’s what he needed. That was alright, he had spent the last year changing from the pup he had been to the one he was now. He still had bad days where the past would come back to bite him but those were less and less. For the most part he was adapting to living in a situation that was far different from the one he had been born to. If he could overcome the problems he had, there was no reason this would not work. Hopefully he could convince his bondmother to support the choice despite her dislike of the older cobra.

He’d figure it out, the wolf inside insisted on it.
Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So this would have been posted yesterday but I sort of hurt my hand Friday and had to wait in order to type properly again. I am just about done with the next chapter which is a bit longer to make up for the fact that this is the shortest chapter in the story, hope everyone enjoys.

John’s POV

The new moon pack meeting at the beginning of July was on a Friday. It was probably a good thing since besides the birthdays, Aunt Sandra had also decided to throw a celebration for all of the pups who had graduated or moved onto the next grade. She was thrilled that the pack was thriving and wanted to promote that even further. Since it was a weekend, all of the younger members of the pack were invited to stay for lessons and to visit. Some of the different adults would be offering varying lessons, including basic first aid with Daria, shifting guidance with him, self defense with Eric or Mouse, a reading program with Melisa, and lessons in tracking from Trace.

The first thing he had done after they had gotten done with all of the celebrations, he had found Greg with his daughters over with his aunt and had gone to say hello. Charlotte had already asked if she could join those working on their shifting earlier in the evening.

“Hello Greg, Charlotte, Madeline, and Sofia. How are you all tonight?” he greets them.

“Hello John. It’s been an interesting night so far. How are you?” the jackal-child inquires in response.

He smiles, “It’s been good.” He glances at the jackal-daughter, “Ready to work on your shifting some more?”

She smiles shyly nodding.

“What about you two? Do you want to find out if your shifters?” he inquires glancing between the middle and youngest of his friend’s daughters.

The younger girl started bouncing, her eyes full of excitement, “I wanna know! I wanna know!” she exclaims happily, “How do you know?”

He smiles at her excitement, setting his left hand carefully against her forehead and closing his eyes for a moment to switch sight types. Once he has his iota sight instead of normal sight he reopens them, carefully checking her over. Carefully he looks at how she is developing and his smile grows a bit more.

“Well Sofia, you’re going to be able to turn into a jackal when you’re a bit older, though you do not seem to have any of the special talents from either bloodline.” He tells the young girl.

“I’m going to be like my big sister!” she exclaims and dances around, her voice sing-songy and high
pitched. Happily, she takes off towards the other pups of her age, happily announcing along the way, “I’m going to be a shifter!”

Turning to face his friend’s middle daughter he inquires, “Would you like to know if you are a shifter?”

She nods, her eyes wide, “I would,” she replies her voice low. It is actually the first time he had heard her speak and he realized that she had a bit of a lisp.

Carefully looking at her he checks for the markers at determine whether a person will be a shifter or not and discovers that she does not have the actual shifter trait. He carefully checks to see if it is dormant or not actually there. She completely lacks that shifter gene, nowhere in her can he find it. What he finds instead is rather startling, she has the gifted gene instead and it is even coming active. As her gifts come into awakening she will have full range telepathy, empathy, minor abilities in all four elemental kinesis, and minor abilities in all types of Sight.

Shifting back to normal vision, he tilts his head to the side, murmuring, “Well that was unexpected.”

“John?” his friend questions.

“Let’s go to the house, I think this is going to require tea while we discuss it.” he suggests, motioning to the house. Eric I believe your assistance will be needed.

Alert me when it is, I am enjoying time with the hatchlings. Comes the cobra’s reply.

So the three of them head inside, they do not worry about the fact that Sofia is outside, there are other children around plus plenty of adults who keep an eye out on all pups. When they get inside, he leads them to the kitchen where he sets about making tea. While he does that Greg and Madeline take a seat at the small table and wait patiently. The jackal-child’s scent is curious but not concerned. His daughter on the other hand smells heavily of worry and a bit of fear and depression. Once the tea is done, he passes them out to the other two before sitting down with his.

“So, Madeline, you’re not a shifter, you don’t even carry the shifter gene.” He tells the young girl.

“That means that Daddy isn’t my daddy,” she whimpers, tears welling up.

He gives a shake of his head, “It means nothing of the sort. Your sire is still your sire. It was an acknowledge fact before you joined the pack that he was probably your bondfather rather than blood father, that is immaterial. Do you feel as if he is not your dad?”

She shakes her head, “He’s always been my Daddy,” she quickly replies.

“Then nothing changes, now then,” he turns his attention back to both of them rather than just her, “Now what is unique about you Madeline, is the fact you are not human.”

She looks at him with confusion clearly written in her face and scent. “But you just said I’m not a shifter or a shifter-child.”

He smiles reassuring at her, “You’re not, you’re Gifted. Heavily Gifted actually. One of the Gods would have had to have blessed the union because nearly no Gifted would sleep with a shifter-child that they could tell was a shifter-child.” He offers his left wrist, bondmark up.

She stares hard at him for a bit before pulling the sleeve of her long sleeve up and offering her wrist in return.
Focusing on his theran gift, he follows the innate bond that all shifters and gifted have with the Old Gods. Carefully checking her, he finds her Goddess touch within moment. He’s only mildly surprised to see that she has been blessed by both the Dusk Daughter and the Shadow Mistress. It had been the Dusk Daughter that had allowed a child of mixed blood to be conceived according to the fact that the older touch of power is from her. The full awakening of her gifts had not started until she joined the pack at which point she must have come to the Shadow Mistress’ attention. How very interesting. Sending up his thanks for allowing him to see the connections, he releases his focus and lets loose her arm.

Smiling at her gently, he comments, “You are going to be rather powerful. Though, you are the first true Gifted to be within any sort of pack within the last five hundred years to my knowledge.” He pauses, taking a sip of his tea and allowing her to consider it for a bit before continuing, “There is only one person in the pack who is even remotely qualified to train you, and you will need to be trained, otherwise your gifts could come to rule you rather than you controlling them.”

“How?” she hesitantly asks.

“Eric, better known as Tech or Cobra, is a fully Blessed Tracker. His gifts are the closest to yours within the pack. He is also the one most able to adapt to other types of gifts outside our normal gifts.” He tells the younger girl.

“Would he train her?” Greg inquires after a moment.

Of course I would, I like hatchlings, children. Besides, as one who serves the Mistress of Shadows, I appreciate the idea of a mixing of the species. The tall cobra replies as he enters the room. I could feel the power surge when you were testing her. Both Greg and Madeline stare at the tall cobra in shock as he settles himself against the counter, leaning with one hip.

“Well, I will leave it to you all to figure out a schedule for training and such.” He murmurs before heading back outside.

Once he was outside he stopped to speak with each of the younger shifters to see which ones would like assistance with their shifting before finding a nice open area to do so. Of those to join him, Jace and Charlotte were the oldest, while the youngest were around ten. Since the shifting ability can become active at any point between the ages of six and seventeen that wasn’t really a surprise. Jace was there more for the fact of he was trying to figure out how to turn into his lynx form and kept running into a wall. Charlotte was there because she didn’t want to go to her aunts for help, preferring to work with the person who helped her shift in the first place according to the thoughts he picked up from her. Most of the others where there because their parents had thought it a good idea for them to practice with the alpha that just happened to be a healer too. After all, it was possible to get stuck between forms or to accidently mis-shift thus having a healer around while doing so meant they could get safe practice in. For a while their group continues but it slowly breaks apart after an hour or so, though he gets a real kick out of watching the various pups with their multiple hues of furs as they play together.

Charlotte manages to shift into a jackal on her own after her fourth try, though it is not all that easy and requires being walked through the process to begin with. Luckily enough, shifting back is rather simple for her, leaving her with just the one direction she has problems with. Still by the time she’s got it figured out she goes seeking her father in canine form, happily sprinting away with her focus elsewhere.

Jace on the other hand gets the shift down after his first assisted attempt, apparently he just needed
someone else to help him unlock it before he was able to do so on his own. With a mischievous smile he requests help with turning into a crow, and once the two have unlocked that as well, he takes the time to see if he can hybrid the forms, discovering it really does not work out well since his crow form is not elite and thus does not have the super big wings to carry his feline or canine form. When he freeform shifts he ends up becoming a mix between the wolf and lynx with the more canine body but fur patterning and tail like a cat.

When he is done with that he drifts between groups of people, visiting with them and working on strengthening the pack bond. It is rather late by the time everyone starts to head home for the night, though he is thankful that most clean up after themselves so that when he finally corals his bondmate for going home they are not leaving a mess for his aunt. By the time they actually get home it is fairly early in the morning and he is rather happy that he does not have to work the next day or things would be a bit of a pain.

Instead they spent the day after the new moon meeting relaxing and just having a lie in for the most part. His bondmate did spend some time in the lab but not a lot. Instead the taller man had decided it was a day for cuddling and with the weather being stormy like it was, he tended to agree.
Arriving in Grimpen Village

Chapter Notes

This chapter is dedicated to Precious, a beautiful cat who got sick and died far too soon in her young life.

Sorry it took me an extra day to update, after having one of my babies get ill and pass away in far too short a time frame, I was not in the typing mood.

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV

A few more weeks pass in relative ease with both continuing the patterns that they had developed. He had returned home from the clinic one day to discover that all of his things had been moved to the downstairs bedroom in the exact same order as they had been upstairs. With a smile he had kissed his bondmate long and hard, understanding that it was his way of saying that they didn’t have to be a secret any more. A few days after that he had been on his way home when it started to rain, sighing, he had decided not to shift and return home as a wolf, he would just deal with the wet clothes.

As he was nearing his flat and the small café next door he was startled to spot his bondmates brother waiting outside beneath his umbrella, file in his grasp, brief case at his feet, and smoking. Since when did Mycroft smoke? He wonders as he glances at the taller man.

With a slightly sarcastic smile, he comments, “You don’t smoke,” to the taller man through narrow eyes.

After taking one last drag on it, he drops it on the ground and uses his toe to put it out as he remarks, “I also don’t frequent cafés.” Turning, the ginger-haired human closes his umbrella as he scoops up his brief case and heads inside Speedy’s.

“You should you know, frequent cafés that is,” he suggests to the taller man as he follows him inside.

Once inside the two of them get a seat with the politician choosing to have his back to the wall while he sits ever so straight and observes him. A small part of him considers reminding the arrogant human that he is an alpha wolf but he quickly squashes that idea, knowing it really isn’t a good one. Instead he motions to the hostess and gives her a quick smile, knowing she will understand the request for tea, which she does. After she sits his tea down, he thanks her softly before looking at the plastic envelop that the politician had set in the table between them.

A quick glance at it tells him it is the file on that annoying hybrid, however to be polite he queries, “This the file on Irene Adler?”

Lifting his head and smiling tightly the human replies, “Closed forever.” Before looking down at it and continuing, “I am about to go and inform my brother,” he nods towards him, “or, if you prefer, you are – that she somehow got herself into a witness protection scheme in America. New name, new identity. She will survive, and thrive, but he will never see her again.”
Keeping his features neutral, he gives a small shake of his head as he inquires, “Why would he care?” Locking eyes with the other man he continues, “He despised her at the end. Won’t even mention her by name, just ‘The Woman’.”

He takes a sip of his tea while he waits for the other man’s response. He already knows something that the politician does not. That his bondmate had saved the bloody hybrid and that Spathi had tagged her with a special nano-chip to track her. Whatever the politician thought he knew was going to be vastly wrong.

“Is that loathing or a salute? One of a kind; the one woman who matters.” He can smell the frustration pouring off of the taller man as he comments.

With a small, tight smile of his own, he does not respond to the obvious bating, he has no reason to. Instead he remarks, “He’s not like that,” leaving the statement of what he was like open for suggestion or interpretation.

Leaning forward and looking down at the folder the ginger-haired human remarks, “My brother has the brain of a scientist or a philosopher,” he glances back up shrugging a little as he does so, “yet he elects to be a detective. What might we deduce about his heart?”

“Plenty,” he replies with a smile, “Do recall I am not as unassuming as you seem to think.”

“Oh,” the taller man blinks at him, before smiling humorlessly and commenting, “Initially he wanted to be a pirate.”

For a time neither speaks, he watches as the tall man seems to think fondly of the past before his expression becomes distant and reflective, as if realizing something he wish he hadn’t.

Since he knows that the taller man is lying, he glances down at the folder and states, “He’ll be okay with this witness protection, never seeing her again. He’ll be fine.”

“I agree,” the other man pauses to take a deep breath before explaining, “That’s why I decided to tell him that.”

Curious to know what the politician does not want to tell him he asks, “Instead of what?”

With the politician mask firmly in place the other man replies, “She’s dead. She was captured by a terrorist cell in Karachi two months ago and beheaded.”

For a few moments he just stares at him, he is really trying not to laugh because apparently his bondmate had pulled a fast one on his brother. However because he wants to know if the taller man is telling what he thinks is the truth he queries, “It’s definitely her? She’s done this before.”

A predators look colors the taller man’s eyes, and his scent is full of honest as he answers, “I was thorough,” he nods once, “this time. It would take Sherlock Holmes to fool me, and I don’t think he was on hand, do you?”

Swallow reflexively a few times to keep form correcting him, he waits to see what the taller man wishes to suggest.

Finally, the ginger-haired human begins, “So,” before using both hands to push the folder forward, “what should we tell Sherlock?”

Again he swallows reflexively before answering that they should go with the politicians plan. After all, neither of them wishes to bother Sherlock with the truth of her death. Though he knows for a fact
it really isn’t the truth. Just as they finish their conversation, the politician’s phone goes off and he walks upstairs with the folder in hand.

When he enters the flat, he finds his bondmate over at the laptop looking at the screen, glancing up the taller human spots the folder and comments, “If it’s about the Leeds triple murder, it was the gardener. Nobody noticed the earring.”

Giving a small shake of his head he replies, “Hi. Er, no, it’s, um,” before stepping further into the room, “it’s about Irene Adler.”

That catches his mates attention because he stands, coming over to him and querying as he walks, “Has she come back?”

He smiles at the taller man, remarking, “No, she’s, er,” he pauses not sure how to continue because he knows that the older brother is mistaken, “I just bumped into Mycroft downstairs. He had to take a call.”

His bondmate merely raises an eyebrow at him.

Chuckling he finally comments, “According to your brother she has gone to America to be in the witness protection program. Though we both know otherwise, yes?”

A small smirk curves his lovers lips as he replies, “Yes,” stepping forward the dark-haired human tilts his head a bit questioning, “What does he think really happened to her?”

He smirks back, “Well you know, Karachi and all that,” a small chuckle escapes, “he commented that only you could fool him, I think I should introduce him to my team when they are in a mood. They could probably do the same when they want to.” He pauses offering the folder to the taller man, “Do you wish to look at it?”

With a shake of his head, his bondmate simply replies, “No, but I will take the camera phone.”

He nods once, fishing it out before handing it over, “Well I better take this back to him,” he remarks about the remainder of the folder before heading downstairs to hand it back to Mycroft without a word. When he gets back upstairs, his bondmate is standing by the window with a vague smile on his face.

The rest of the day goes smoothly, with both just sort of relaxing around the house.

oOo

Nearly two weeks later, and several minor cases included before the next actual case comes in. However during that time he manages to catch a ride on the tube wearing bloody clothes and carrying a harpoon, insult Mrs. Hudson, and go a bit stir crazy because he has finally agreed to stop smoking and using the patch. So when the doorbell goes off and both proclaim it is a client, his bondmate bolts to the room to change out his dressing gown for a coat while he goes and lets the person at the door in.

The young man at the door smelled heavily of fear and sadness, in his hand is a small case with a DVD according to the label on it. He was of average size and build with short cropped hair and ears that stuck out way too much. Motioning him to follow, he heads up stairs to find his bondmate in his seat, so he has the young man sit in his, while he sits in the computer seat. They watch part of the DVD for a bit before his bondmate turns it off and starts questioning the younger man.

The scent in the room fills with the younger man’s sadness and remembered fear and he wishes that
he was a dark empath for just a moment rather than a regular empath as the emotions bombard him. Normally people’s emotions do not have this big of an effect on him so he narrows his eyes and sends his empathy seeking an answer. As soon as he has connected he gets it. Someone has been playing with his genetic code and make up, past that, there are clear signs of gift manipulation which is illegal for shifters and gifted alike on a human. He is rather pleased when his bondmate accepts the case without any prompting from him.

With narrow eyes he sends out a text to those of the military pack only.

-Pack light, we have a situation to deal with.- JW

-Sir.- all of them reply.

-Grimpen Village. Tomorrow at water watch.- JW

-Sir.- they reply again.

After that he takes the time to pack a quick bag, making sure to grab both of his ID cards, the one for standard ops and the one for special ops. Before they leave the flat he turns to look at his bondmate commenting, “You have twenty-fours to figure out what’s going on with Baskerville. Then we’re dealing with it.”

“John?” his bondmate curiously queries.

“Someone has been using the gifts on that boy for years. Since he is purely human with not a drop of non-human in him, completely lacking the shifter, gifted, or immortal genes that means that someone is breaking one of the few Old Law.” He pauses with a predators smile, “That’s bad news for them. Our pack has a blessed tracker, even if he does not hunt often he has not forsaken it. They will be dealt with accordingly. So anything to do with humans I will leave in your hands, but anything that deals with non-humans are ours to deal with.”

As the two of them step out of the flat, he smiles as he spots the sleek black car sitting at the curb. “There’s our ride,” he murmurs to his bondmate.

“Who?” his bondmate inquires as he opens the boot up and shoves the two bags in it.

“Maria,” he replies as he opens the back door and motions him in. “She was formally brought into the pack at the same time as you, while not an official part of the military pack, she aligns with it easier than with the rest. She will be driving us to Dartmoor where we can acquire our own vehicle if you prefer.”

“Oh,” his bondmate replies as the two of them get into the car.

The ride there mostly silent, with only soft flute music on the radio breaking that silence. Only once do they have to stop for anything and that’s because he decides he wants to get something fresh to drink.

Upon getting to Dover they get a large black land rover jeep and he is not surprised when his bondmate wants to drive. Luckily enough he’s a good driver and the two of them are quickly approaching where they need to be. When his bondmate spots an outcropping of rocks and pulls over to climb up it to look out at the surrounding area. They quickly discuss what each of the things they can see is. Afterwards, they get back in the land rover and drive into Grimpen village where they park at the inn before getting out and looking around. The first thing they spot is a young man talking about tours and the safety of the moors at night. As they go inside, he rolls his eyes because he knows it is a scam. His ears perk as someone shrieks but his senses do not detect a threat.
Once inside he heads to the bar to speak with the bar and inn keeper about getting a room. Soon enough the human who had introduced himself as Gary, is handing him a set of keys and joking about the bedding situation while his bondmate is prowling around the inn looking at everything in his normal fashion. Within their link he can hear his dark-haired human’s running commentary as he deduces everything. One by one he can also hear the team checking in as they arrive and scope out the community.

Smiling, he remarks, “I couldn’t help noticing on the map of the moor: a skull and crossbones.”

Moving to set out some mugs he makes a noise of recognition, “Oh that, aye.”

Still smiling he queries, “Pirates?”

The older human looks at him with shock on his face, “Eh, no, no.” he answers, coming back his way, “The Great Grimpen Minefield, they call it.”

Blandly he remarks, “Oh, right.”

Glancing down for a moment in consideration, the other man explains, “It’s not what you think. It’s the Baskerville testing site. It’s been going for eighty-odd years. I’m not sure anyone really knows what’s there anymore.”

_Mouse, explore and report back on what you find at the minefield testing site._

_On it._ she replies almost immediately.

The humans eyes wide as he answers, “Oh, not just explosives.” He looks down at what he is doing with the tabs, before looking back up at him, “Break into that place and, if you’re lucky, you just get blown up, so they say,” he pauses to take a breath, “in case you’re planning on a nice wee stroll.”

_Careful of landmines_, he cautions, nodding once with a small smile he replies to the human, “Ta. I’ll remember.”

Grimacing a bit the older man remarks, “Aye. No, it buggers up tourism a bit,” eyes widening in a dramatic fashion, he continues, “so thank God for the demon hound!” he chuckles, moving out from behind the counter as he queries, “Did you see that show, that documentary?”

Bland expression still on his face he nods once answering, “Quite recently, yeah.”

Picking up a couple of glass the other man comments, “Aye. God bless Henry Knight and his monster from hell.”

Curiously, he inquires, “Ever seen it, the hound?”

A single shake of his head no as the older man answers, “Me? No.” before pointing at the young man on the phone outside of the door who they had passed on their way in talking about tours, “Fletcher has. He runs the walks, the Monster Walks for the tourists, you know? He’s seen it.”

He gives a discrete sniff of the air to determine if the human is telling the truth, or at least what he believes as the truth, “That’s handy for trade.”

From the back a shorted man in a white jacket comes walking behind the bar and the older man turns to him, remarking, “I’m just saying we’ve been rushed off our feet, Billy.”

The second human glances at him commenting, “Yeah. Lots of monster-hunters. Doesn’t take much
these days. One mention on Twitter and oomph.” Then glancing at the barkeep he notes, “We’re out of WKD.”

Walking around to the back of the bar again, the older man acknowledges the comment with, “Alright.”

While the second human looks back at him stating, “What with the monster and that ruddy prison, I don’t know how we sleep nights” glancing at his partner he queries, “Do you, Gary?”

Affectionately putting a hand on the shorter man’s shoulder, the older man replies, “Like a baby.”

Glancing over at his partner as he lets go of his shoulder and keeps working, the shorter human mutters, “That’s not true,” before turning his attention back to him, “He’s a snorer.”

Embarrassed the older of the pair hushes the short one, grumbling, “Hey, wheesht!”

Curious the shorter one asks with a nod towards his bondmate, “Is yours a snorer?”

He smiles at the shorter man, not answering the question but inquiring, “Got any crisps?”

While he is getting something to snack on and a drink he keeps his senses on alert to make sure he can track his bondmate. His tall human is wandering towards the bloke who has supposedly seen the hound.

“Mind if I join you?” he hears his bondmate inquire politely before continuing to speak in a mildly disbelieving tone, “It’s not true, is it? You haven’t actually seen this,” he gives a small snort, “hound thing.”

Suspicion fills the human’s voice as he queries, “You from the papers?”

“No, nothing like that. Just curious. Have you seen it?” his tone remains polite but disbelieving, some would even call it lighthearted.

“Maybe,” the human remarks.

As he walks over, he watches his bondmate watching the human with sharp focus as he asks, “Got any proof?”

Sounding defensive the younger human states, “Why would I tell you if I did?” before going to get up, “’Scuse me.”

“I called Henry,” he begins but is cut off by his bondmate turning to speak to him.

“Bet’s off, John, sorry.”

Settling into his spot, he raises an eyebrow questioningly, “What?”

Pausing the younger human looks between them repeating, “Bet?”

His bondmate glances at his watch before remarking, “My plan needs darkness.” Still ignoring the younger man’s questioning glance, he looks skyward as he continues to speak, “Reckon we’ve got another half an hour of light.”

Slightly pushier the younger man demands, “Wait, wait. What bet?” while raising a hand to point at his mate.
Sounding completely sincere even if his scent gave away the fact he was lying, his bondmate answers the young man, “Oh, I bet John here fifty quid that you couldn’t prove you’d seen the hound.”

He smiles, understanding the ploy and glancing at the young man as he remarks, “Yeah, the guys in the pub said you could.”

Smirking, the younger human waves his hand towards his mate stating, “Well, you’re gonna lose your money, mate.”

“Yeah?” his bondmate responds with interest, still keeping his voice soft with a small smile playing around the edges of his lips.

“Yeah.” He repeats nodding, “I’ve seen it. Only about a month ago,” he turns looking towards the direction he us referring to, “up at the Hollow. It was foggy, mind,” glancing down he continues speaking but is fiddling with his phone, “couldn’t make much out.”

Sarcastically his dark-haired human looks straight ahead as he comments, “I see. No witnesses, suppose.”

“No but,” the other human starts to say but his mate interrupts him by commenting.

“Never are.”

“Wait,” the younger human remarks as he flips his phone towards them and shows him an image of a dog, “There.”

Snorting and smiling his bondmate queries, “Is that it?” he glances away as he continues, “It’s not exactly proof, is it?” lifting the draft sitting in front of him like he is going to take a drink he remarks, “Sorry, John. I win.”

Waiving his hand the young manner comments, “Wait, wait. That’s not all.” Shaking his head he continues, “People don’t like going up there, you know, to the Hollow. Gives them a” he pauses for a moment as if considering what to say as he stares off into the space between them, “bad sort of feeling.”

Dramatically his bondmate watches the other human as he acts wide eyed for a moment and coos, “Ooh! Is it haunted?” before returning to his soft tone he had been using previously, “Is that supposed to convince me?” he sets the glass down without taking a drink out of it.

Mildly condescending, the other human comments, “Nah, don’t be stupid, nothing like that, but I reckon there is something out there, something from Baskerville, escaped.” As he talks the young man nods, his scent clearly stating that he believes every word he says and is lying his arse off at the same time.

Sounding rather disbelieving and questioning all at once, his bondmate queries, “A clone, a super-dog?”

“Maybe,” the other human retorts, “God knows what they’ve been spraying on us all these years, or putting in the water. I wouldn’t trust ’em as far as I could spit.”

He looks down as the human continues speaking. He really does smell as if he is telling the truth, be really believes that there is something running free in the moors from Baskerville, the only part he is lying about is the fact he has seen it. According to scent, the young man knew what he saw, but used it as part of his trade to get people to do what he wanted. A small part of him considered using direct
thought listening but decide against it because that’s not his style. Besides, his mate still has the rest of the day and into tomorrow to solve his part of this before he takes over.

Nodding towards the phone, his dark-haired human comments, “Is that the best you’ve got?”

For a moment the other human is silent while he considers what to say, finally he starts speaking but it is in a lower tone than he has previously used, but full of earnestness, “I had a mate once who worked for the MOD. One weekend we were meant to go fishin’ but he never showed up,” he nods a bit, “well, not ’til late.” He pauses for a breath, “When he did, he was white as a sheet. I can see him now. ‘I’ve seen things today, Fletch,’ he said, ‘that I never wanna see again. Terrible things’ He’d been sent to some secret Army place – Porton Down, maybe; maybe Baskerville, or somewhere else.” He leans a bit closer, still keeping his low, earnest tone, “In the labs there, the really secret labs,” he glances between them, “he said he’d seen,” he pauses for a moment, “terrible things. Rats as big as dogs, he said, and dogs,” he pulls a piece of plaster out that is a paw print that would almost match his wolf print, “dogs the size of horses.”

Grabbing his drink, he sniffs the air to see if there is any remaining scent or if the plaster is faked. He’s only mildly surprised to find that it has a lingering scent of elite wolf. Aloud he remarks, “Er, we did say fifty?” while telepathically he reaches for the cobra, Have you decided the best way to enter Baskerville? There is an elite wolf in the area according to the mold of a paw I was just shown and smelled.

Through the front door with my ID. The cobra quickly replies. However not today, you have promised your mate twenty-four hours so I am seeking out all other shifters in the area today and tomorrow, the day after I will be going in.

Good. He replies as his bondmate pulls put his wallet and gets a fifty pound note for him as he finishes his drink. “Ta.” He tells the human as his bondmate stands and heads towards the jeep. He just smiles and follows him.
Baskerville: Sherlock's Visit

Chapter Notes

As always, thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV

As they get into their vehicle he does a quick mental inventory of who all is currently there and what their skill set is. Normally he would have Mouse do this type of scouting but was unsure if she would be able to get there in time from where she currently was. Well, nothing for it, best to ask.

Mouse, report. He queries of the scout.

Almost to the test site. The area surrounding it is rather healthy, as if cared for, but something is off. I can smell heavy chemicals in the air, including ones that would be highly mind-altering to a human. She replies as she continues on her way.

By pass it for now and head directly to Baskerville will you be able to get there before us in the jeep? He orders.

She considers it for a moment, I will catch a lift, just let me find, got it! She pauses for a moment before replying, yes sir.

He smiles. One of Mouse’s most useful tricks was the ability to control regular animals through a version of telepathy where she can convince them to do what she wants. It rarely fails her, though he is curious what type of animal she has commandeered until he sees the hawk in the sky as they are driving to Baskerville.

Tech, make sure that when they scan for Mycroft it goes no further than a quick check and does not alert him that his card has been used until we are ready to leave. If possible ensure it shows Sherlock’s face not his brothers in the IDing. He comments to the cobra.

There is no reply for a moment and then, It is done. You have one hour before it will actually record that you are there. Right now all permission caused by his card will come directly to me.

A mental nod is his only answer.

I am here. Having the bird drop me off on top the main building. If this base is like most, my mouse self will not even register on the alarms, though I will keep shielded to be on the safe side. She updates him as she has the wild bird drop her off.

Several minutes later they are pulling up to the gat at Baskerville, his bondmates sharp eyes taking in everything while he does as well though from a different perspective. Years of planning for special ops comes into play as his mind begins its detailed study of the personal and buildings.

Have you alerted the general that I am looking into a situation? he queries of the cobra as they stop
the vehicle at the guards request.

*Yes. I have alerted him. He has agreed to back you if there is a shifter law being broken here.* The cobra replies.

He sends a mental nod and a moment later the impression of a smirk reaches him. Apparently the cobras trick with the computer system had worked.

“Straight through sir,” the guard comments as he hands back the security pass.

As his bondmate drives onto the base he merely smiles, not telling his bondmate that the cobra had adjusted the system to show him instead of his brother, at least for the moment.

“Mycroft’s name literally opens doors,” he remarks somewhat sarcastically.

“I’ve told you, he practically is the British government. I reckon we’ve got about twenty minutes before they realize something’s wrong.” His bondmate remarks as he continues driving up the entryway.

When they get out of the vehicle, his eyes sweep the area and he carefully sniffs the air. He can smell members of every race. Narrowing his eyes he sends his empathy seeking and is surprised to find that the immortal he felt was a Dusk Linage within the compound. Carefully brushing his empathy against the immortal, he is amazed that there is not a response, because all immortals can feel the brush of empathy or telepathy, it’s in their genetic makeup.

Nearly everyone not in military uniform is escorted by someone who is, mostly those with weapons as well. As they follow a human soldier to front door of the main complex another vehicle pulls up and a young human hops out inquiring, “What is it? Are we in trouble?”

With a tone to match his brother’s his bondmate responds, “Are we in trouble, sir.”

Glancing between the two of them, the human replies, “Yes, sir, sorry, sir,” before stepping between them and the building.

Since today belongs to his bondmate, he allows the tall human to handle the situation, “You were expecting us?”

Looking directly at his bondmate while standing in military at ease, the human answers, “Your ID showed up straight away, Mr. Holmes.” He glances between the two of them as he introduces himself, “Corporal Lyons, security.” The human pauses for a moment before nodding once towards his mate as he repeats himself, worry evident in his scent and slightly in his tone, “Is there something wrong, sir?”

His bondmate glances around a bit as he replies, “Well, I hope not, Corporal, I hope not.”

Very solemnly the human explains, “It’s just we don’t get inspected here, you see, sir. It just doesn’t happen.”

Keeping an emotionless expression, he pulls out his military picture ID, he presents it to the human as he comments, “Ever heard of a spot check? Captain John Watson, Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.”

Even as he finishes his introduction, the younger human is snapping to attention and saluting him, “Sir!” a moment later the younger man remarks, “Sir. Major Barrymore won’t be pleased, sir. He’ll want to see you both.”
His bondmate goes to speak but to short fuse whatever situation might have aroused from it he switches to captain mode and orders, “I’m afraid we won’t have time for that. We’ll need the full tour right away. Carry on.” For a moment the younger man looks like he is about to argue and his bondmate smells curious but says nothing, “That’s an order, Corporal.”

Looking down submissively the younger human remarks, “Yes, sir.” Before turning and heading to the entrance.

At the entrance the human swipes his card than steps aside so that his bondmate can swipe the card he had snitched from his brother. Slowly the door opens with a rather annoying noise and he takes another sniff of the air as they follow the human in.

Within the building the scents are even stronger, including the emotional ones that he is now picking up. The primary scent seems to be human, but the underlying scent is anything but. Humans, at least twenty distinct shifter scents, nearly the same amount of gifted scents, and one immortal plus a variety of regular animals, altered animals, plants, and chemicals. Altogether it is rather offensive to his sense of smell, though he is thankful his scenting ability is not as strong as the cobra’s. His mind also tested the door to see if it was going to be something that would need to be dealt with and was surprised that it was not designed with the concept of keeping it protected from psionic manipulation. Interesting.

“Nice touch,” his bondmate remarks softly as they follow the human, his expression serious.

A small smile curves his lips for a moment, “Haven’t pulled rank in ages.”

“Enjoy it?” the dark-haired human queries.

Sarcastically he replies, “Oh yeah.”

A moment later they are at a shining silver colored door where both Sherlock and the corporal have to use their cards to open it.

Stepping into the elevator that the door revels, the soldier presses the button for the first subfloor level with there being at least four more according to the button pad. The trip down is silent as they get out it is to step into a lab that is nearly all white and silver, brightly lit, and full of humans buzzing about in white lab suits, some covered from head to toe, others just the regular lab coat.

As they step past the first cage a rhesus macaque screams at them, while in his head he hears the faintest pleas for help. Opening his telepathy wide it becomes easier to hear.

Help us, let me out! I am not an animal! I am a shifter. Please, please help us!

Shhhhh, calm down, he mentally murmurs to the small monkey, I will be returning tomorrow in order to end whatever is going on here with the shifters. This is an affront to our kind, I just have to have information before I can act.

This seems to calm the monkey, because she settles down, staring at them from behind the bars, eyes wide.

His bondmate queries, “How many animals do you keep down here?” as he spins on his heels and looks over at the monkey who had just been screaming.

The human turns a bit, replying, “Lots, sir.”

“Any ever escape?” his bondmate questions.
“They’d have to know how to use that lift, sir. We’re not breeding them that clever.” The human replies.

Again he scents the air, taking in the fact that the human seems to be telling the truth, which means he does not know that some of these animals are actually people. That makes him wonder how many of these people are actually aware of the experiments that they are protecting or if they are merely the type to take orders without finding out or caring why.

“Unless they have help,” his dark-haired human remarks seriously.

A human who had just removed his mask comes walking over, querying, “Ah, and you are?”

Pausing to stand at ease, the soldier comments, “Sorry, Doctor Frankland. I’m just showing these gentlemen around.”

With an open smile the man states, “Ah, new faces, huh? Nice. Careful you don’t get stuck here, though. I only came to fix a tap!” as he walks past them towards the lift.

He chuckles politely at the joke, while his bondmate looks around with a serious expression on his face.

Politely he asks, “How far down does that lift go?”

Still standing at ease the human replies, “Quite a way, sir.”

He follows up by asking, “Mmm-hmm. And what’s down there?” as he glances back at the doctor who is watching them while waiting for the lift. Carefully he reaches out for the humans mind, barely brushing it with his empathy. He is surprised when he feels a compulsion on the human. Interesting. His bondmate is carefully watching the other human, his eyes taking in everything as they begin to walk again.

“Well, we have to keep the bins somewhere, sir. This way please, gentlemen.” He directs as he heads towards the other end of the room.

Following close behind the human he keeps his sense out, looking for the problems and cataloging the as they walk, however aloud he asks, “So what exactly is it that you do here?”

Sounding completely confused the corporal replies, “I thought you’d know, sir, this being an inspection.”

They pause for a moment for his bondmate to catch up and he turns to face the younger man answering with a slight smile, “Well, I’m not an expert, am I?”

The hint of a smile appears on the younger man’s face as he explains, “Everything from stem cell research to trying to cure the common cold, sir.”

As they start walking again, he asks, “But mostly weaponry?”

Are you here to help us? Another voice asks and he glances over to see a small mouse with light blue eyes staring at him. You’re not bound like us, please make them stop.

“Of one sort or another, yes.” the human answers as he swipes his card and waits for Sherlock to do his.

He sends mental reassurance while stating, “Biological, chemical,” his voice trailing off
questioningly.

The human nods, “One war ends, another begins, sir. New enemies to fight. We have to be prepared.”

As they step into the next room, he watches as a human female works with another human and a small, normal monkey. She is speaking with the other human, making notes on her clipboard before starting to walk away.

“Doctor Stapleton,” the human calls out politely as he heads towards her with them following.

“Stapleton,” his bondmate repeats thoughtfully.

“Yes?” she answers, writing on her clipboard before looking up and noticing them, “Who’s this?”

Stopping to stand before her in military ease, the soldier replies, “Priority Ultra, ma’am. Orders from on high. An inspection.”

Her tone is disbelieving as she utters, “Really?”

Using that uppity tone that mirrors his brother’s so well, his bondmate states, “We’re to be accorded every courtesy, Doctor Stapleton. What’s your role at Baskerville?”

She snorts at him in disbelief, looking between the two of them.

He just about snaps, “Er, accorded every courtesy, isn’t that the idea?”

Sarcastically she responds, “I’m not free to say. Official secrets.”

A predators smile curves his bondmates lips as he retorts, “Oh, you most certainly are free,” his voice drops an octave becoming more commanding, “and I suggest you remain that way.”

Startled she stares at him for a moment before politely replying, “I have a lot of fingers in a lot of pies. I like to mix things up”, she glances between “genes, mostly; now and again actual fingers.”

An ironic smile curves his mates lips as he pulls his notebook out of his pocket while listening to her answer. “Stapleton. I knew I knew your name.”

“I doubt it.” she mutters disbelieving as she rubs her nose.

Still smiling a bit, his bondmate holds up his notebook, as he comments, “People say there’s no such thing as coincidence. What dull lives they must lead.”

Showing it to the human, she stares at him for a moment before demanding, “Have you been talking to my daughter?” her voice and scent are full of concern

The soldier glances at the notebook then the doctor, a look of confusion clearly written on his face.

Closing the notebook and slipping it back into his pocket he queries, “Why did Bluebell have to die, Doctor Stapleton?”

She doesn’t answer, her eyes flickering as she stares at him, her scent heavy with worry and fear. Carefully touching her mind, he finds it in chaos, there is a terror there, though of what he cannot say without going deeper which would alert her that there was someone in her mind if she had any sort of gift. According to her scent she has the blood, but her reaction says that she is human, meaning one of the many born to a parent of gifted blood with a human lover or spouse.
“Disappeared from inside a locked hutch, which was always suggestive.” He leans forward a bit, still speaking, “Clearly an inside job.”

“Oh, you reckon?” she retorts defensively.

“Why?” he pronounces, lowering his voice a bit as he leans into her personal space, “Because it glowed in the dark.” His tongue clicks the k.

Eyes widening, her scent adding lying to its mix she lifts her head responding, “I have absolutely no idea what you’re talking about. Who are you?”

_So you know, we actually have one hour, not twenty minutes, before they realize we’re not supposed to be here._ He comments to his bondmate through their link as the tall human checks the time.

_Really? How?_ He replies as he stares at her.

_Two guess,_ he sarcastically replies, really this was an easy one.

“Who are you?” she repeats a little more forcefully.

His eyes narrow as he replies, “Someone who has been notified of several unusual animals being removed without previous authorization.” _Eric._ He states, suddenly understanding.

She flushes a bit, “No, no, no, there was official permission to take the rabbit, all the testes had showed it to be perfectly normal. Its fur was just a bit more reflective of any sort of light than normal, that’s it. I did not kill the rabbit, it died on its own, I just took it out before she saw.” She finally explains before glancing around the lab. “It was not one of the classified projects, it was approved of, now if that’s all?”

He watches her for a moment before glancing at him and raising a questioning eyebrow. He tilts his head a bit in response, glancing back at the lift.

“Are there any other animals that have been removed in a similar fashion?” he demands.

She stares at him blankly for a moment before heading over to one of the computer terminals and quickly typing. A moment later she straightens up, answering, “Doctor Simons had permission to take his beagle home for review on how it did outside of a controlled environment, Doctor Romaray has recently had four deaths in his lab, otherwise there have been no animals that have escaped or left the compound in the last year. There have been twenty three new animals brought in for Doctor Romaray however. He has had the biggest increase in experiments. His are completely around animals however, all of them omnivores actually.”

“Is he here?” he asks, the name sounds familiar though he is not sure why.

She shakes her head, “Not today, he is due back tomorrow. The last three days have been a vacation for him.”

His bondmate nods, “Alright. If you are sure then we are done here. Make sure that no more unique animals are spotted by civilians,” he orders, turning on his heel and heading towards the door.

The human soldier stares after him as he strides towards the door for a moment muttering, “That’s it?” questioningly.

“That’s it,” his bondmate replies. “It’s this way, isn’t it?”
Shaking his head, he moves to catch up with his bondmate while the human trail behind them, his scent confused. The fear that had filled the doctor’s scent is gone, being replaced by confusion but she says nothing else. At the door, his dark-haired human swipes his card before waiting for the security to do the same and the three of them get onto the lift.

Still striding with purpose, his bondmate heads towards the door, seeming to be focused on one thing only, leaving. As the three of them move silently, he continues to hear the calls for help from the various ones they pass and reassures each of them as best as he can that help would be coming soon, just to calm down. A small burst of empathy is used in order to reinforce this idea. At the next lift, they do the same as the last, with his bondmate swiping his card, then the soldier before the three of them get on. Only this time the human Doctor Frankland is standing in the lift, he looks like he had been waiting for something or thinking something through.

“Hello,” he greets them as he looks up, with a chuckle he continues, “again,” smiling at both of them in turn.

He can feel the suspicion rolling off of his bondmate, but his dark-haired human says nothing and the lift ride up is as silent as the last. When the lifts doors open they are confronted by a gifted man wearing military fatigues and glaring at them.

“Er, um, Major, this is” the human begins but is cut off.

"This is bloody outrageous. Why wasn’t I told?” he snarls standing there in a combative posture.

Making sure to keep a bland expression, he shields both his and his bondmates minds as he questions, “Major Barrymore, is it?” He glances at the corporal before stepping forward to stop directly in front of the gifted man, happy that he lacks the scenting ability to realize what he is, “Yes, well, good. Very good,” he offers his hand to shake, “We’re very impressed, aren’t we, Mr. Holmes?”

The gifted man glares at him, not moving to accept the handshake as is the polite thing to do.

His bondmate breezes past him with a sarcastic look on his face as he remarks, “Deeply, hugely,” before continuing to walk.

Still snarling the gifted man spins as he barks out, “The whole point of Baskerville was to eliminate this kind of bureaucratic nonsense.”

He can just about feel his bondmate rolling his eyes as he comments, “I’m so sorry, Major.”

“Inspections!” the gifted man exclaims.

His bondmate spins on his heels, staring directly at the major as he snaps, “If there had not been multiple reports of animals besides the hound getting out we would not be here. Keep better track of your people Major.” Then he turns and starts heading towards the door again without giving him a chance to respond.

As major doesn’t get another chance to speak as his bondmate goes breezing out of the door after it automatically opens.

They are half way to their vehicle when the human doctor comes trotting after them, “I’ll see them out corporal,” he tells their escort when he catches up. Quietly, so none of the military men around them can hear, the human questions, “This is about Henry Knight, isn’t it?”

His bondmate glances at the older human questioningly but says nothing aloud.
“I thought so. I knew he wanted help but I didn’t realize he was going to contact Sherlock Holmes!” the doctor remarks as they get closer to their jeep.

His bondmate smiles tightly, but says nothing. Instead he glances around, his eyes catching even more details as they continue to walk.

“Oh, don’t worry. I know who you really are. I’m never off your website.” The older man tucks his hands into his pockets before muttering, “I almost didn’t recognize him.” pausing for a moment the human glances at him next, “I love the blog too, Doctor Watson.”

Smiling, he glances over at the human commenting, “Oh, cheers!”

Slightly babbling the doctor keeps speaking, “The, er, the Pink thing,” he pauses for a moment, “and that one about the aluminum crutch!”

He makes noises of appreciation without actually saying anything.

When they are finally in a spot without anyone nearby who can hear them, his bondmate turns to the older human demanding, “You know Henry Knight?”

With his hands still tucked into his coat the taller human response, “Well, I knew his dad better. He had all sorts of mad theories about this place. Still, he was a good friend.” The human glances back at the door to the main building where the gifted man is standing before continuing, “Listen, I can’t really talk now.” he pulls out a card, handing it to him. “Here’s my, er, cell number. If I could help with Henry, give me a call.”

Giving the doctor a narrowed glance, his bondmate accepts the card and queries, “I never did ask, Doctor Frankland. What exactly is it that you do here?”

For a moment the older human looks down, “Oh Mr. Holmes,” he looks back up continuing, “I would love to tell you,” he bounces a bit, “but then, of course, I’d have to kill you!” a cheerful chuckle escapes him.

With a completely straight face and deadpan tone, his bondmate retorts, “That would be tremendously ambitious of you.”

This seems to startle the human because he suddenly becomes serious and he shrugs. There is something in his scent though he cannot determine what exactly it is with the after scent of all those chemicals still burning through his sinuses.

“Tell me about Doctors Stapleton, Simons, and Romaray.” He states, voice commanding.

He glances around for a bit before answering, “I will never speak ill of a colleague.” He pauses for a moment, “Romaray is new, only been here for a year so there is not much I know about him.”

Tilting his had a bit, his bondmate remarks, “Yet you’d speak well of one, which you’re clearly omitting to do.”

The human tilts his head a bit with a sardonic smile, “I do seem to be, don’t I?”

Using the card that the human had just handed him to motion, his bondmate, states, “I’ll be in touch.”

Nodding once, the doctor replies, “Anytime.”
Nothing else is said as the pair gets in the jeep and take off, he can just about hear the thoughts spinning through his bondmate's head as they pull off of the base.
Dewer's Hallow At Night and a Meeting

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

John’s POV

As they are driving from Baskerville to Henry’s house because the young man had finally called as they were leaving, he decides to inquire about the situation with the rabbit that his bondmate had just witnessed.

“So, the email from Kirsty,” he glances over at his driving bondmate, “the, er, missing luminous rabbit.”

Rather blandly his bondmate replies, “Kirsty Stapleton, whose mother specializes in genetic manipulation.”

Looking out the window he comments, “She made her daughter’s rabbit glow in the dark.”

Still rather blandly his bondmate explains, “Probably a fluorescent gene removed and spliced into the specimen. Simple enough these days.”

Curious about what is on his dark-haired human’s mind he begins, “So,” but lets it trail off questioningly to see if he will pick up the sentence.

Sure enough he does with a glance in his direction, “So we know that Doctor Stapleton performs secret genetic experiments on animals. The question is: has she been working on something deadlier than a rabbit?”

Taking a deep breath he considers it for a bit before remarking, “To be fair, that is quite a wide field.” He pauses for a moment before replying, “And she smelled heavily of fear when you asked about the rabbit so I don’t think it is her working on the more dangerous experiments.”

For a bit the ride becomes silent, his bondmate looks like he is considering something he hadn’t originally. Eventually the taller man asks, “Some of those animals were far too smart to be regular animals, were they shifters?”

He nods once tensely. “They were, and tomorrow the team and I will be removing them from that place while dispensation a bit of justice.”

“I’m sorry,” his bondmate murmurs and nothing else is said the rest of the way to Henry’s home.

The house itself is old and shows the memories of times long past, far better times long past according to the fact it appears to have once been a very fine house though now it is in dire need of a lot of work. Heading through the conservatory, they stop at the door and ring the door bell, waiting for the human to answer. His bondmates eyes are wide, and he can hear his heart racing a bit.
John, I don’t feel right. Why? He inquires on their bondlink.

Switching to iota sight he looks him over, finding nothing physically wrong, so instead he reaches out with his telepathy and empathy, carefully touching his mind and finding the small part of his bondmate that was awoken with their bonding. His bondgift of reemberancy is trying to come online again, however his bondmates strict control of his mind is causing it difficulties.

*Your rememberancy is trying to show you something, you can either chose to let it, or ignore it and it will go away in a bit but leave you with a headache. We really do need to get you trained in that so you can use it effectively.* He tells the taller man just before the other human opens the door.

“Hi,” the human greets them, staring at them mildly shocked according to his scent.

“Hi,” he replies softly, using a touch of empathy to calm his emotions.

Motioning with one hand for them to come while the other is on the door, the troubled human beckons them, “Come in, come in.”

Immediately his bondmate strides past the other human, pausing only long enough to click the heels of his shoes clean before continuing down the hall. Despite this, he is rather certain that his tall human is gathering all the information that his senses will give him with ease. He himself gets the impression of several generations that had lived here from the residual empathic energy that surrounds the house. For a moment he considers asking about his status within the human world but decides against it, it has no bearing on why they are there, instead he follows the two humans into the kitchen where the kettle is hissing. They seat themselves at one side of the island while the troubled human works gets out three mugs and stops by a shelf of various types of tea, inquiring if they have a preference. Since neither does, he just grabs one and makes each of them a cup with it. Once he has the tea and hot water seeping, he passes the mugs to each of them before sitting the sugar and milk between them so they can flavor their tea to preference.

While they do so he stares at the counter softly stating, “It’s—it’s a couple of words. It’s what I keep seeing. ‘Liberty’,” he takes a deep breath as if to gather his thoughts, “‘Liberty’,” he repeats, “and ‘in’. It’s just that.” He looks up, picking up the milk and querying, “Are you finished?”

Making an affirmative noise, he smiles reassuringly at the younger man before he turns to his bondmate asking softly, “Mean anything to you?”

Very quietly his bondmate replies, “‘Liberty in death’, isn’t that the expression? The only true freedom.”

He nods once, recognizing the full expression while the troubled human turns back towards them sighing and his mate takes a drink of the tea.

Staring out the window for a moment, the younger human seems to exclude sadness and eventually looks between them asking, “What now, then?”

He smiles at the human before turning to look at his bondmate replying, “Sherlock’s got a plan.”

Rather upbeat his bondmate declares, “Yes.”

Eyes wide, the troubled human stares at him bobbing his head quickly as he says, “Right.”

Sitting the tea mug down, he begins, “We take you back out onto the moor.”

Nervously exhaling he agrees, “Okay,” and continues to stare unblinkingly at his bondmate.
“And see if anything attacks you.” he finishes rather blandly.

Startled, he gives his bondmate a funny look questioning, “What?”

With a small smile, his bondmate glances at him muttering, “That should bring things to a head.”

While the troubled human starts to babble, “At night? You want me to go out there at night?”

His mate makes an affirmative noise watching the troubled human’s reaction.

Looking at his tall human he queries, “That’s your plan?” but he cannot help but snort with laughter a bit, “Brilliant!” between him and Eric he was not sure who was more impulsive when coming up with a plan, how they ever manage to not get massively hurt more often he does not know.

Mildly defensively his bondmate replies, “Got any better ideas?”

He shakes his head, answering, “That’s not a plan.”

Staring hard at him his bondmate retorts, “Listen, if there is a monster out there, John, there’s only one thing to do: find out where it lives.” He turns back to the other human with a smile before taking another sip of his tea.

Fear radiates from the troubled human and he does not look like he is very reassured.

A short while later the three of them are making their way to the hollow with flashlights as the sky begins to darken.

With his mind he reaches to see which one of the protectors he currently has with him and is not really surprised to find it is Edward, the packs eagle owl. Let’s face it, a bird with a wing span of one-hundred and sixty centimeters, perfect night vision, and razor like talons makes a great first defense. Nor is he surprised that he can still feel Spathi sticking close to his bondmate, she is very good at what she does, and while she is not an elite, her ability to become a full grown lion makes her a match for most anything when coupled with her training.

His bondmate and the troubled human end up getting ahead of him when seeks an unusual noise he was hearing. He also takes note of someone using a light to do Morse code, spelling out UMQRA. Something to give to Eric to look into apparently. Quickly using his bond between him and his mate, he tracks him, and catches up to the two humans as they crest into the hallow which just happens to be on the edge of the minefield.

Oh that explains a lot, he thinks.

Sniffing the air, he notices the sharp tang of chemicals, most of which would have no effect on him but could cause a lot of effects on his human mate. Though he has a feeling that his mate will have a slightly higher tolerance to whatever chemicals is in the air due to his years on drugs. How ironic.

Catching up to the pair, but still just far enough away that they cannot easily spot him, he listens to their conversation.

“Met a friend of yours,” his bondmate comments blandly.

Confusion colors the other humans tone, “What?”

“Doctor Frankland.”

“Oh,” he seems startled before his voice loses its energy, “right. Bob, yeah.”
“Seems pretty concerned about you.” his mate remarks, a touch of friendliness in his tone.

“He’s a worrier, bless him.” he pauses for a breath, “He’s been very kind to me since I came back.”

As he speaks, the troubled human’s voice goes between normal and low.

Curiosity fills his dark-haired human’s voice as he states, “He knew your father.”

“Yeah,” the troubled human mutters.

Still sounding curious his bondmate continues, “But he works at Baskerville. Didn’t your dad have a problem with that?”

“Well, mates are mates, aren’t they?” he pauses for a moment, “I mean, look at you and John.”

His bondmate’s tone suddenly gets sharp, “What about us?”

“Well, I mean, he’s a pretty straightforward bloke, and you,” the troubled human’s voice suddenly trails off as if he has decided that might not be the best sentence to finish. “They agreed never to talk about work, Uncle Bob and my dad.”

The two of them come to a stop and he looks down the side of a slop, before unhappily stating, “Dewer’s Hollow.”

Turning the light off and tucking it into his coat pocket, he shifts into his wolf form before shielding himself completely. Almost as soon as he does that he catches the scent of a fellow elite wolf though there is something that is off about it. Something not quite right. In his wolf form he can smell even more of the chemicals and while they are giving him a headache, that is all they are doing. However he can hear the sound of howling and howls back in response, causing the foreign animal to fall silent and bolt. A moment later his bondmate and the other human come rushing towards him and he quickly returns to human form grabbing his flashlight.

_Follow it._ he directs the owl soaring above him.

As they make their way back to the troubled human’s house the owl reports back.

_It went into the compound sir, where an alchemic silver set of bands were removed from its ankles and wrists before it morphed back into a naked human male. At that point an alchemic silver collar was put on him. He submitted willingly but there are a great many marks on his body that tell me this is not something he has always done. Mouse has requested that I pick her up in one hour._ The eagle owl informs him.

_Is Yana here? He queries while he processes the rest of the report._

_Yes sir_, the large owl replies.

_Then have her retrieve Mouse. She is smaller and less noticeable yet will have no difficulties carrying Mouse._ He informs the eagle owl as he continues to follow his silent mate. _Make sure she shields, I know you have taught her how. Best to be safe._

_Sir._

Almost as soon as they get to the edge of the property the troubled human starts babbling about how he must have seen whatever was out there. However his bondmate is not listening and takes the jeep, returning to the inn according to Spathi who is staying with him. Meanwhile, he continues to follow the troubled human into his home, considering how to deal with him.
When the troubled human turns to him with sorrow written clearly on his face, questioning, “Why would he say that? It-it-it it was there. It was.”

Deciding to do his duty as a doctor he motions to the sofa, stating, “Henry, Henry, I need you to sit down, try and relax, please.”

Gaining a bit of control over himself, the troubled human mutters, “I’m okay, I’m okay.”

“Listen, I’m gonna give you something to help you sleep, all right?” he queries as he scans the room and spots some water which he goes to fetch.

While he is doing that, the troubled human slowly starts to take his scarf off as he remarks, “This is good news, John. It’s-it’s-it’s good.” The human sets his scarf next to him as he continues, “I’m not crazy. There is a hound, there, there is.” he presses his hands together, looking towards him, “And Sherlock, he saw it too. No matter what he said, he saw it.”

_The alpha-second seems to be under the influence of a drug, should I have the iota check him?_ Spathi inquires as she shares the image of his mate.

_No. I will be there shortly, make sure he does nothing stupid in the meanwhile._ He replies.

_Understood._

After he hands the human the pill and water, he makes sure that he has taken them before using a small surge of power to speed the process up. A few moments later the younger man is sprawled on his sofa, with a throw pillow under his head and a blanket draped over him.

Shutting off most of the light he leaves the house, closing the door behind him. Once he is outside he shifts, returning to his wolf form and shielding before sprinting to town, only to shift behind the inn and causally unshield when he is certain that no one will see him.

Once inside the inn, he walks over to where his bondmate is sitting by the fireplace, stopping to rest a hand on his sweating temple, and surging energy through him, burning away all traces of whatever drug was in his system. Almost as soon as he does that, the sweating ends and his eyes become focused.

Sitting down across from him in the other chair he watches his ate for a moment before commenting, “So did you see the pup then?”

His bondmate’s eyes narrow at him, “Pup? Are you sure it looked like a giant hound.”

He nods once, “I had him followed, right back to the base, there is a hound alright, but he is not the kind you are expecting. Now I think you need to get some rest because you were drugged and should go rest in the room.”

“John?” his bondmate questions.

“Trust me,” he stands up, “go rest, you’ll feel better if you do.”

Without actually waiting to see if the tall man will take his advice he heads outside and spots that the Morse code lights are going again. Instead of trying to figure out what it says, he starts heading in that direction. When he is out of sight of humans and town, he morphs before easily loping up to it where he discovers its just two humans having sex in a vehicle, one of them keeps hitting the lights button. Way more information than he needed. He has just returned to town when his phone chirps at him.
- Henry’s therapist currently in Cross Keys Pub- SH
-So?- JW
- Interview her?- SH
-Why me?- JW
-You are nicer- SH

Before he has a chance to answer the last one, two more come through, the first being a picture of a rather lovely female who he would have been attracted to if he was not bonded the second being a message.

-Besides, I’m taking my doctors orders. Going to bed.- SH

He chuckles, muttering, “Ooh, you’re a bad man.”

A few minutes later he has found the female in question and is getting her to talk about things when the human male doctor from the base comes walking up. Since he has not mentioned that he is shifter he has to act surprised when the older man’s hand clamps down on his shoulder though he really does feel the urge to rip into him. Wolves might be tactile, but its still not a good idea to attempt to surprise one, particularly not one trained for warfare. He knows nearly as soon as the damn man starts speaking that any headway he was making with therapist is gone. Sighing, he rolls his eyes before heading back to their room to check on his bondmate who is curled on the bed and passed out cold.

Going outside he reaches for Eric for an update and is given directions to a local farm with several outbuilding, one of which the team is currently in. With a smile he finds himself racing across the moors again, not bothering to shield once he is in the wild lands until he has approached the farm where he shields until he is inside with the rest of the team.

During missions nothing is ever said aloud to prevent outsiders from hearing.

Hello all, report. He greets them as he comes to stand next to where Eric has draped his long mostly serpent body over some bales of hay.

Mouse is the first to do so. I have completely scouted the military base called Baskerville. It is run by two gifted ones and a human. However as far as all documentation shows it is run only by one of the gifted and the human. The other gifted has used his gift to take control of the major but does so in a very subtle method. If I had not been observing at the time it occurred, I might not have realized it. There are exactly twenty-five shifters that I discovered within the base, bound. There is a total of seventeen gifted. None are physically bound, however after watching the display by the lead gifted, I believe that they are bound through power instead. I have also discovered two children of the gods, both trapped within their minds within isolation tanks. The first is aware, the second is not.

She pauses for a moment eyes narrowing as she considers what to move on to. Defense are top of the line, but should not cause us any problems. Particularly since you still have your security card and Tech can get anything I have ever seen put in his way. Every soldier is human, from what I have gathered, they are unaware that they are guarding an illegal operation. Nor are they aware that there are shifters on the property or the two children of the gods. Apparently only a small group of scientists are allowed in that part of the base, though they are escorted to the door. The humans soldiers sleep in a set of barracks on the east side of the base, it is also where their food supplies and recreational time is spent.
Again she pauses, this time gathering her thoughts while she drinks her water. Shifters. Total of twenty-five. Ages ranging between five years and fifty from what I can determine. Three wolves, one elite wolf, fourteen mice, five monkeys though their exact type I do not know, and two cats. All are bound either with alchemic silver collars or in glass cages made with alchemic silver. The hound is in truth the elite wolf, a pup no older than fifteen. Though his wolf form is as ragged as his human form. She falls silent again, switching to relaying images instead covering every inch of the base in her normal method. When she is done she shifts into her mouse form and finds a place to settle in while she waits.

The wolf brothers are next up, they have spent the majority of the day scouting the surrounding areas and report on all of the people, animals, and buildings that have come across including the minefield which they decided to scout when it became obvious that Mouse was not going to be getting back to it today. Tech comes in next, his skill with a computer having allowed him to cause what would be considered havoc by many as he had broken into every supposedly secure system in the district for the information on them. When he had completed that he had used his telepathy to scout the area as well, not caring that many would consider it unethical the way he would go through a person’s mind without even considering the politeness of it. It had been him who has secured this location for their gathering. Renting it from one of the local farms, paying triple what they were asking for it, and then making sure that the farmer decided to be elsewhere for the next forty-eight hours so he would not see any of them. Spathi reports from her place with his bondmate about the things she had discovered while sticking close to him, some of it overlaps with the wolf brothers but there is also some details they had missed. Both owls come after that, giving their reports on the base as they saw it, though much of their details overlapped with Mouse’s. The rest had only just arrived.

Calling the meeting to an end he reports that he will contact everyone first thing in the morning with the plans. They all agree and he returns to the inn where he cuddles up close to his bondmate and sleeps.

Chapter End Notes

For anyone who is curious or has to look it up like I did, 160 CM equates to 63 in or 5 ¼ feet, making the eagle owl one big bird.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So once again the muses have hijacked my story, because this chapter did not go at all the way I thought it would.

Warning: mention of child abuse, regular abuse, and violence

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV

When morning comes he is not surprised to see that his bondmate has already awoken. Nor is he shocked when Spathi informs him that he is currently standing on the top of the stones from the previous days stop staring out at Baskerville, the hallow, and the town. A bit later she is updating him to let him know that his mate has decided to pay attention to the troubled human, who she swears reeks of chemicals.

While his mate is busy with that, he decides to get cleaned up. He has just gotten out of the shower and is drying off when his mate gets back to their room.

“John?” he queries as he enters, shutting the door behind him.

“Yeah Sherlock?” he replies as he comes out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped his hips.

For a moment his bondmate doesn’t answer, he’s too busy staring apparently though why he is not sure. Finally, the taller man shakes his head as if to clear it before speaking. “Last night you made a comment about Morse code, did it end up equally anything?”

“No,” he replies as he uses the second towel on his head, “It was just a couple who wanted some excitement and chose to use their car to get it.”

His bondmate nods, still staring at him. Before he has a chance to do anything, the tall human has crossed the room and cupped his jaw with his slender fingers, leaning down to kiss him rather passionately before straighten back up. “You look good fresh from the shower,” the tall man murmurs.

He smiles at his lover, pulling him back for a long, slow kiss before stepping back. “Good morning, feeling better I take it?”

He nods, a blush staining his cheeks. “Yes, I am, do you know what that was?”

He shakes his head as he grabs his duffle and opens it, “Nope, nearly the entire military pack, along with myself, are immune to mind-altering drugs and chemicals. They smell off to us, but have no effect except causing a headache.”

“Oh,” his bondmate murmurs, “Well, anyways, I think you should do whatever you are planning to
Baskerville. I am sure I could solve this case but something tells me that your mission will be a bit more important."

He stares at the taller man, mildly, well no not mildly, very surprised. He had not expected that at all. "Are you sure?"

His bondmate nods once, "Indeed. As a detective it might annoy me, but," he pauses worrying his lower lip with his teeth for a moment, "this is a pack matter, and I take the responsibilities of being pack seriously."

He knows that his lips curl into a huge smile but he cannot help it as he drops the clothes he had just pulled out of the bag and turns on the taller man, startling him when he shoves him back a bit onto the mattress before pinning him down to kiss thoroughly. "Your amazing, you know that right?" he eventually queries as he releases him.

It takes the younger man a moment to answer, his eyes are glazed over and he is breathing rather heavily. "Do you think there’s time," he begins but trails off, his voice a rather husky tone added to its normal; rich baritone.

He smirks, "Oh yeah, if you want there to be time, there’s time," he replies as he proceeds to striping his bondmate from his suit, making sure that the outfit doesn’t land on the ground as he does so.

To say that it is a while before they both re-bath and dress is an understatement.

Instead of dressing in his regular clothing like he had originally planned, he pulls out the sleek black special ops fatigues he has, a uniform that looks nearly like normal clothing at a glance but is so much more. The material is light weight, designed to reflect knives, needles, and protect against garrotes. They are not commonly available with very few units getting a set of them. Each one is tailored for the person who is going to wear it. The only part he does not put on is the matched hood, instead he leaves it off and in the bag. There is a small flap on the front which includes his title and unit.

He appreciates the wide eyed look his bondmate gives him before he pulls his coat on over top of the uniform, effectively making it look like he is wearing nothing more than black boots and pants with a turtle neck that matches.

They are surprised when they leave their room to discover Greg standing there.

“What the hell are you doing here?” his bondmate demands in shock.

Blinking at this sort of greeting because it’s a bit out of the norm since he had joined the pack, the jackal-child replies, “Well, nice to see you too.” Taking his sunglasses off, the jackal-child glances at him murmuring his greetings, “Hullo John.”

“Greg!” he replies, slightly shocked, why is the only official detective in the pack here?

“I was asked by an outside source why you were borrowing their name, since he felt he would not be answered if he tried to ask himself.” The jackal-child tells him without glancing at his bondmate.

His bondmate gives him a disbelieving look, but he knows that it is not actually for Greg, it’s for his brother. “Dealing with a situation which is actually now John’s so I won’t be doing that again this time.”

He smiles a bit like the predator he is, glancing between the two of them, “Yes and I have somewhere I need to be since you have handed it off to me. Please stay here, Greg, please keep him
“John,” his bondmate begins but falls silent when he sees his look, “Alright,” he snorts, “I’ll stay, maybe I will go visit with Henry.” Greg merely nods in response.

Thank you, this is a pack situation now and it will be dealt with accordingly. He tells the jackal-child knowing that he will understand.

Again the jackal-child nods before he turns his attention to Sherlock.

Maria, take Spathi’s place as his protector, he directs the multiform canine who he can feel just outside of his line of sight.

Sir. She replies.

Spathi, join the rest of the team. I will be preparing here and meet you there. He directs the multiform cat.

Sir. Comes her nearly instant reply.

Heading out towards the moors he makes sure he is out of sight of humans before shielding and shifting into a wolf to return to the barn where the rest of the unit waits. Its not quite lunch time yet when he gets there but the team is just finishing up eating their lunch in preparation for their mission. He is mildly surprised to see that Liang is there but a quick conversation with the cobra tells him why which he accepts with ease.

We are going to approach the base shielded, not bothering to show ourselves until we are right at the gates. At that point, Tech, Beta, and I will unshield and use our IDs to get into the base. Mouse, Watcher, Chiclet stay hidden and observe, if anyone tries anything alert us. Spathi, Hunter, stay with Iota. You are her protection detail while she frees the bound ones. Rogue, as the most skilled locksmith in the group, go with Iota, Spathi, and Hunter to make sure there are no difficulties. Fighters and Cat act intimidating.

A round of sirs along with one bow is his response. Someone had gotten the gibbon outfitted with one of their uniforms, again he is certain that would be the cobra, to who he had had the gibbon report to when he had first joined the pack. Five minutes later the entire team was shielded and making their way quickly to the base.

Upon getting to the base the three of them form a triangle before appearing directly before the front gate. They could have gone around it but this was a more effective fear tactic according to the sudden burst of shock that he smells from all of the humans who have suddenly got their guns pointed at them. Despite that, he smiles coldly and hands the gate keeper his ID at the same time as the other two.

When the keeper hands back their IDs saluting, he merely nods before continuing forward with purpose. As soon as the gate opens the three head in and the rest of the team is close behind according to his mental tracking of their location. At the front of the primary building he stops, telepathically ordering for Healer team and Intimidation team to appear which they do. Iota is directly behind him with her two protectors and assistant forming a triangle around her, fanned out in a loose crescent behind them is the Intimidation team.

“Major Barrymore and every single person not currently on defense duty plus all scientists in front of me. Now.” he barks out, not bothering to be polite. Tech, lock this place down so we have control.
Not even a minute later the cobra replies. *Done.*

He knows the minute the humans realize they are no longer in control because there is a lot of shouting and people running around.

Not two minutes later the major comes storming up with a set of guards. Like his humans will do any good.

“I believe I included the scientists and all off duty personal in my order,” he remarks.

“How dare you! This is outrageous! I don’t know who the hell you think you are,” he begins to shout at him but falls silent when he turns his stormy eyes on him.

“I am certain by now your staff knows exactly who we are. I would suggest you start listening. Yesterday was the civilian side of things. Today you deal with the military side.” He replies with a bite to his tone.

One of the guards goes to lift his gun but a single look from Tech drops him to his knees. A moment later another soldier is stopping by the major to fill him in on what the file says. His cold smile gets just a bit colder. When the soldier is done reporting, the major orders what he has already ordered, glaring at him every step of the way.

Less than half hour later the humans and gifted of the base have been collected up, all of the soldiers are standing in formation while the doctors, lab assistants, and other scientists are milling about, many complaining loudly about not being able to work on their tasks. He ignores all of them, and waits until he can feel that all of the non-bound personal on the base and ones not currently on the perimeter are present.

Identify the Gifted, Mouse. He orders as he continues to stand there. The entire unit having not moved since this first begun except for very causally.

**Second scientist from the back, very quiet, blonde hair, green eyes, pale skin.** She replies, describing him even as she shows him the image. *He touched his hand against the skin of the major and gave his highly suggestive orders while doing so. The gifted major complied nearly immediately.*

Before he can get much further, his phone trills and he quickly answers it though he says nothing off the bat.

“Have Tech open the gates Doc, those arriving are under orders to obey yourself, Beta, and Tech for the duration of this mission.” A familiar voice orders him. “They are also under order to keep this silent.” The man on the other end continues. “In Umbra Hera.” Then the line goes dead.

You heard him. He comments to the cobra as he watches the various people.

A moment later his sharp ears hear the droning sound of the trucks as they come up and park before the soldiers within unload. All of them dressed in very similar outfits to what his team has on only they also have visible name badges as well. Several of the scientists look like they are going to bolt but he directs the Intimidation team to block their path. Vanishing, the four of them reappear on the other side of the scientists, challenging looks on each of their faces as they stare at the humans and gifted. From the new units four men approach but stop exactly three feet away before coming to attention and saluting.

“Sir, Major Tyler, commander of the Black Hawks reporting. I was told you have taken command
by the General,” the highest ranking one of the group reports.

He nods, saluting him back and takes a great deal of pleasure out of the other major’s discomfort. “We were just getting ready to sort them between those who will face charges and those who will not. Secure the perimeter, send in his remaining soldiers for sorting, we will require at least two medical teams as well, have them report to Iota, and await further orders. “

“Sir,” the new major accepts his orders before turning to bark out orders to his troops who quickly take over the base.

“How dare you! This is my base I will not be,” the major begins to shout again only he falls silent when he turns his telepathy on him, forcing the older gifted man to his knees as he strips his mind of all useful information. He had not wanted anything to do with the two immortals that were trapped within the base but thought that the shifters deserved every moment of pain and experimentation on them that they received. Besides, it would help in the long run so what if several mutts died in the process.

“Major Barrymore, you are stripped of all rank within the British Armed Forces. The charges and verdict are as follows: you are guilty of treason within the human realm. You are guilty of illegal experimentation in the human realm. You are guilty of illegal interference within the shifter realm. You are guilty of physical abduction of twenty-seven non-clan members within the shifter realm. You are guilty of of the injury of twenty-seven non-connected clan members. You are guilty of pup abuse in the highest order. You are guilty of promoting the abuse of said pup in the highest order. Your sentence for such is death. There will be no chance for you to escape. It is your choice whether it is done within the human legal system or the shifter legal system.” He rattles off the charges, his tone deadly cold and completely serious.

The gifted man does not respond, trying instead to fight the telepathic hold he has on him so that he can do something, anything to fight back.

*Select your punishment.* The cobra broadcasts, his mind tone commanding.

“Human world,” the disgraced major eventually chokes out.

He nods; motioning to the four he called the Intimidation team to collect him up. Over the next three hours he, along with Tech and Beta, go through every single member of personal on the base, which happens to be all but one person, sorting those that are guilty of any sort of crime from those that are not. The innocent are allowed to return to their duties and projects as long as they are not part of the illegal ones. While the three of them are doing this, Iota with her team is going from cage to cage, room to room, checking each and every animal to make sure that they are actually an animal and not a shifter before moving on. With each shifter she has Rogue unhook whatever alchemic silver is holding them bound before carefully returning them to their human form where the medics carefully cover them with blankets before taking them outside to receive further treatment.

For the most part the sweep of the staff and building goes smoothly. The blonde that mouse had identified is Jared Romaray and he is the only one who attempts to fight back by trying to strike out with his gift against him and his team. Something says that the gifted doctor had not realized that he was not just dealing with shifters as Tech turns his now silver eyes on him, lashing back with the dark empathy which is probably overloading right now. Moments later the gifted doctors knees buckle but he continues to try and fight back, failing miserably as blood begins to pour from his nose and ears.

“Die damn you!” he snarls before he pulls a handgun from somewhere and fires an unlucky shot off as his body shuts down.
A single grunt is the only noise besides the shot firing. As soon as it does, every single soldier who has been cleared and from the Black Hawks has their weapon at the ready and spotting for further trouble. Not that they really need to be concerned.

*Are you alright?* He demands of the cobra.

*Of course, go help the viper, she will not be able to handle the wolf pup or the two immortals.* The cobra replies.

Later he would realize that he should have asked if he was injured, not if he was alright. But that would be afterwards. Long afterwards.

Heading into the now easily accessed main building he follows the telepathic link to the viper down to the very lowest floor where he finds the remains of several shifter children and adults alike. Sorrow, pain, fear, and anguish beat at him as he makes his way to the very end part of the hall where there are two rooms on either side with the doors wide open while the viper healer stands in between glancing back and forth.

“Report.” He orders, knowing this has to be bothering her healers empathy.

*The chamber to the left has the elite wolf pup. From what I can gather he has been here nearly ten years, he was four when his pack was murdered by a group of humans and gifted. He, along with six other wolf pups were taken to a private lab where his ‘training’ was begun. Three of the pups did not make it past the first week. Two more died within a week of being transferred here. He is here, the female pup he was with was found with the other two non-related wolves. One of which is her bondmate according to the marking on their wrists.*

*In the room to the right are four isolation tanks, only two of them have anyone in them. Both contain immortals, children no older than eight, one male, one female, twins. He has shut down, his entire self is nowhere to be found, she is aware but barely. The entire room was under a dampening field until a few minutes ago.*

“Eric killed the gifted causing problems, I believe he caused every blood vessel in him to burst. I’ll start with the wolf pup,” he tells her before glancing between the two rooms. “Has the silver been removed?”

She shakes head but it is actually Rogue who answers, “No sir, he will not allow me close enough to do so.”

Nodding, he turns fully to face the pup in the other room. Mouse’s description of him was fairly accurate. He was raggedy looking with shaggy but short brown hair, feral light brown eyes, and rich tan skin of the natural kind not the sun-kissed kind. he’s wearing nothing except for five silver bands, one per wrist and ankle, and one on his neck.

“I need you to calm down,” he murmurs to the boy, watching to see if he will listen. As he steps into the room he hunches low and growls, just as much with his wolf mentality now as he is in wolf form. Rather than trying to talk his way through which would be ideal but he really doesn’t have the time he switches to the alpha voice instead. “Kneel.”

The pup’s legs automatically fold. His eyes going wide as he stares up at him. Apparently he had never had someone use the alpha voice on him. Outside of the pup’s chamber he hears it as the human medics also fold under the command even though it had not been directed at them.

Sighing he focuses on releasing the humans, before motioning them away with his hand. They are
rather quick to obey.

Meanwhile the pup is trying to fight his control and failing miserably but it does nothing more than cause him to panic because he cannot bring himself to get up no matter how hard he tries. The pup even tries throwing himself down but that fails as well as his body will not move. Growling he stares hard at him.

“You will be silent and still. You will not attempt to attack any of my pack. You will allow the gibbon Rogue to release you from the silver and maintain the same kneeling position.” He commands the pup. Feeling horrid that he has to do so, but knowing that time is of the essence right now. Something is bad is coming.

Nearly as soon as he speaks the boy is forced to obey, though every line of his body says he would rather not. Unfortunately for him, he is dealing with an elite wolf with far too much practice using the alpha voice on enemy wolves in a war zone, this is far simpler. Once the gibbon shifter is sure that the boy is under his command he slips around him, keeping to the side so he does not lose line of sight but carefully approaching to remove the silver shackles holding him bound. He is rather surprised when the monkey starts speaking in low, soothing tones.

“You should fight not the Family Elder. He is only attempting to help.” The Asian shifter murmurs as he unlatches the first wrist cuff before gently letting go of his arm and taking hold of the second. “He is the good sort. By rights, dead I should be. Instead, saved I was.” He lets go of the second wrist as he drops the silver band, before carefully moving behind him to start on the ones on his ankles. “Thought my sister was lost to me, now I have her back.” He switches to the next ankle, “An honest job, my family, and a home. Saw him snap another wolf’s neck for daring to harm a pup that was not even part of the family yet. Though now he is. The pups mother is there,” he motions over the pups shoulder towards the door were the iota is standing with her eyes wide. Letting go of the second ankle, he carefully makes his way back to the front of the elite wolf to undo the collar, “Tilt head back,” the primate murmurs when he spots where the lock is.

Slowly the pup does so, though he is carefully watching the gibbon as he does so.

“That pup now hers went through a harsh life. Just to be saved. He wanted to be saved.” As the lock clicks the gibbon tilts his head and asks, “Do you?” before allowing the last piece of alchemic silver to fall to the floor before backing away carefully.

Still under the effects of the command the pup eye’s are following the gibbon as he steps back behind the iota yet remains a respectful distance back.

“I am going to heal your injuries, you are not to strike out.” He informs the pup, still using the command voice to make sure that it does not override his previous orders because healing can hurt. Eric, do you have any extra power I could use?

Did you really ask me that nonsensical question in this place? The cobra snaps in response.

Oh. Right. He can feel himself mentally blushing. Anyways, may I use the extra energy?

Of course, I will funnel, use as much as you need. There is plenty for me to pull from here. There is something in his tone but he is currently focused on the pup in front of him so he does not go deeper into figuring out what it is.

Carefully broadcasting his every motion so not to startle the pup, he moves up close where he lays one hand carefully against his chest and the other against the center of his forehead. Eyes drifting shut, he trusts that his command will hold as he switches to using his thera gifts, completely
bypassing the weaker iota talents. Sending his power seeking outside of his body, he carefully finds each major injury, whether it is old or new and sets to work repairing them. It will not be enough to fix everything now. However it will be enough to get him back to London and the safety of the pack territory. Mindhealing and dark empathy were both probably going to be needed for this pup to be healed and taught how to be a functional person again. Lovely. In many ways his abuse was less than Jace’s but in others it was worse. Perhaps the two of them could bond as friends or brothers and heal together, though to be fair Jace’s healing was mostly done. When he gets him to a point where he can safely be moved, it will still hurt just not as much he stands.

Releasing the command he offers the pup a hand but the pup does not move. His focus is still on the gibbon standing beside the pack iota.

Liang Yao, your assistant please. He requests of the gibbon who seems startled that he remembers his name and carefully steps forward but keeps his head inclined as is polite. Please don’t, do you ever see anyone in the pack with their heads inclined?

He gives a small shake of his head before looking up.

Thank you. Now he seems to be fixed on you at the moment, I realize you are not a healer, and I will understand if you decline, but will you accept responsibility for him until we get back to pack territory? He inquires of the other shifter.

“Honored to accept I am,” he replies, telepathy not being a skill he is proficient with at this time.

Turning his attention back to the pup he makes sure to look directly into the younger wolf’s eyes, “I’m not going to put you back under command for the time, however I will if it becomes necessary. Until we are back in pack territory you are to stay with Rogue here, take your directions from him. Do you understand?”

He can feel the younger wolf weighing his choices. Apparently he decides that it would be easier, at least for now, just to listen, and nods once. A look of shock in his face when the motion does not cause him the pain it once would have.

Ignoring the wolf pup, he turns and heads across the hall into the other room where he finds the four tanks, with the outer two being empty. Carefully reaching with his telepathy and empathy alike he brushes against both and decides to do the work on the girl first. The tanks are run by a set of machines that he studies for a moment before understanding there use and releasing the latches to them after setting them to drain. These are the same type of tanks as used in Afghanistan by some of the insurgent scientists there wishing to break those they caught without actually harming them, done more to specialists than anyone else.

As the first tank slides open, he makes his way over, and carefully studies the young woman within the tank. The best thing to do would be return her senses as he removes the devices holding her senseless. Starting with her feet because it is easiest he removes the special boots that keep her from being able to move at all and uses a bit of the energy that the cobra is currently providing to restore feeling to the limb. This catches her attention though she is still mostly zoned out, she is working on bringing herself back into her own mind. He carefully repeats the process with her other leg before moving on to do her waist then arms. By the time he has reached her head, she is fully aware and a combination of curiosity and fear. She is worried that this is just a weird ploy but is hoping that it is not.

When he finally pulls her completely free of the accursed tank, he cradles her carefully, as he studies her to make sure there is nothing else wrong with her, “Hello sweetheart, I am going to hand you to Spathi, she’s the golden female right there alright?”
She latches on and shakes her head and it takes him a few minutes to get her to let go so that he can work on her bother. Finally she does so, but her eyes never leave him as she does her small body unable to support itself because it had been still too long.

Carefully opening the second tank, he finds that the boy is in far worse shape, he has almost completely shut down and the only thing really keeping him alive is the machines. He’s not actually sure if this is a good thing or not, and considers whether it would be healthier to seek his mind first or heal his body first. After several minutes consideration he decides he can link with the child, keeping his body alive while he heals it and then go looking for him as soon as he is physically healthy, if weak again. She had been simple to heal, he on the other hand requires nearly every ounce of power that the cobra can send his way and he wonders if it will be enough. After what seems like hours but is really only minutes, he has restored health to all of the boys outer limbs leaving only his mind left to heal.

Carefully, he goes seeking the child’s mind within himself first, knowing that a child’s ability to get lost within their own imagination can be one of their biggest advantages. It takes him longer to find where the boy has hidden himself and convince him to return to his body than it actually takes to heal his body. Nearly as soon as he is in his body he starts calling out with his mind, seeking someone called Ura.

Taking a close look at the pair tells him that they are not originally from here. Sighing, he reaches within his power, *Iyora, Moonlight Lady, Daughter of the Dusk, I seek your assistance on behalf of two of your own.*

All light seems to vanish an instant later as a curvy woman who glowed softly like moon light that he found he could not look at, nor did he really wish to appeared within the room. Power echoed in her every word as she spoke directly into each of their minds, *Why do you call me wolf, from my work?*

“Daughter of Dusk, these two children are of your blood, yet they have been held captive by a gifted one who sought to use them for his own uses.” He replies, he is nearly bowing in half from the force of her presence and knows that the rest of the group is either on their knees or flat in full submission. Her attention turns to the twins, the boy is still within his grasp, the girl within the multiform-cats. Time seems to hold still and speed up all at once as the dark goddess views the events from their mind. Apparently finding what she needs, the twins vanish just before she does, but she informs him, *A boon you have earned this day. Use it wisely. Before she too is gone.*

Getting to his feet, he shakes his head a bit, remember why he hates to be in the presence of the Old Gods, its hard on a person’s body. The others are taking longer to get back up, though the gibbon and pup are staring at him in complete awe, the iota has a very knowing look on her face, while the others merely look shocked.

“Come on, lets get out of here.” He suggests as he makes his way to the lift, slowly he hears the rest of them follow behind.

They had just reached the ground floor when two soldiers come rushing up, “Sir! Some of the prisoners have just vanished. Their clothes remain where they were but they are gone.”

Sighing, he wants to rub the back of his neck but does not. “Thirteen of them I bet.” He mutters, knowing the amount of gifted that had been guilty of experimenting without having to be forced, the other four had been under compulsion and were judged innocent, though they would be watched.

“Yes sir. Do we send out search parties?” the soldier answers.
He shakes his head, replying, “No. They will not be found, at least, not alive.

“Sir,” the two salute him before taking off to tell their major.

Getting outside he glances around and is unsurprised to see that the base is back up and running, though under new direction so things will probably be a bit different. He has just reached where the rest of the military pack is when he glances at the cobra and notices that there is a hole in his shirt.

“Tech, are you shot?” he demands.

The cobra’s black eyes flicker open, *Are you done healing for the moment?*

“Eric,” he growls warningly.

*This is good, because I don’t think I have any more energy pull left.* Without another word he goes down, his tall body folding in a heap to the ground.

Chapter End Notes

What John’s general tells him is “In Umbra Hera” or “By the Shadow Mistress Will” in order to insure identity is real.

Also, not in the military, though I know creative names for the different units is something that seems to happen in all armed forces, if only as a way to recognize what they do without having to say exactly who they are. So here be creative licensing.
Healing, Orders, and Dealing with a Murderer

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

This chapter might get a bit confusing because it is from several different points of view.

This chapter is dedicated to Kota, a beautiful black cat who died far too soon for my liking, may he always be in paradise.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

John’s POV

What the hell! He mentally exclaims as he bolts over to where his friend is lying on the ground. Kneeling next to the tall, black scaled man, he carefully checks him over with his iota’s sight. The bullet had ripped through his side, while it had hit no major organs, luckily enough, he was bleeding out, particularly now that he was not using his empathy to hold himself together. Sinking into himself he discovers he does not have nearly enough energy left to mend the wound, barely enough to stop the bleeding. Shit.

Shalen, Son of Shadows, I ask your assistance. He reaches out with his mind for the immortal, not knowing if he will answer or not.

A moment later the heavily muscled man is there, eyes scanning everything as he takes in the scene. “How?” the taller many inquires.

I am a rather strong telepath and we are both children of the Shadow Mistress, making it a hair easier to find you. He replies, I ask a favor if you will.

“Ask,” the tone is formal.

I need to get to his home. Now. If you could? He inquires, motioning with his hand between the three of them.

The immortal nods, touching a hand against his shoulder and the three vanish.

Jacob. Protect Sherlock, get the new shifters back to our territory, Aunt Sandra is already expecting them, get a comprehensive background if you can, find out their names at least so when dumberse is back on his feet he can look for their families if they have any left. He directs the falcon as they vanish.

Sir. He just barely hears.

Moments later they are within the garden area of the house.

“Do you need help getting him to his room?” the immortal inquires glancing between him and the cobra.

“No thank you, I can get him there, the price?” he replies as he loops his arms around the cobra to lift
him bird style.

“No price, John, you have been trying to mend the link between my Aragorn and your Sherlock, I would say that is price enough,” the immortal comments.

He nods, bidding him farewell before standing and taking the cobra with him. For someone who is just shy of seven feet tall he is awful light weight and he vaguely wonders if he has not been eating right again. Once they are in the taller man’s room, he carefully stripes him down, before settling onto the spot next to him, here he can fall into his energy without having to worry of any threat, so that’s what he does. Linking himself fully with the taller man as he does so. It means that he can feel the burn just as easily and knows how much pain the cobra is in, despite the fact he is ignoring it.

Due to blood loss his body is beginning to shut down and he does not have nearly enough energy left to stop it. Despite that fact he still tries, pouring every last ounce of power into healing it. For a time, he even thinks it is working until he notices that part of his body has already turned itself off.

“Damn it,” he snarls, trying to figure out what else is left to do. There has to be something. Sitting back, with his hands covered in blood he thinks carefully about the situation and comes to a realization. There is only one person who can save the cobra. This is going to be costly.

“Mistress of Shadows, Goddess of Healing, Verhaiya, Lady of Death and Life, I seek your assistance.” he murmurs formally, his mind forming the ancient symbols that correlates with each of her names.

Several minutes pass without any sort of reaction and he almost wonders if he had said it wrong when the air suddenly seems thick and hard to breath.

Glancing around he is surprised to see a white-haired child staring at him with unusual silver eyes that seem to swirl like water. There is power in this girl unlike anything he had ever seen in another shifter, gifted, or immortal. It is that fact that alerts him to the fact this is the Goddess in her child form.

“You are crying over his death, why child of shadows? She inquires as she drifts closer, her small body seeming to glow lightly.

“He cannot die, not like this, he’s done too much for too many to die like this,” he whispers in response. “Shadow Mistress, I ask you, heal him, please.”

Drifting even closer, she tilts her head to the side as if studying him, I healed him once before, as his body lay dying, surrounded by the death of every family member who cared for him. Why should I heal him now?

“Healing Lady, I ask you to heal him for the bondmate just forming, for all the times he has been willing to die, for the fact he would trade his life in an instance to help a child, and did just that. Because he’s Eric.” He replies, his voice breaking, “I will pay any price I must.”

She looks at him curiously for a minute before querying, Even the loss of your bondmate through the bond being broken?

He closes his eyes for a moment, taking a deep breath, “Even that.”

Then I will grant you his life, the price is thus, you will heal his bonding so that when the time comes the my pup will be able to bond with him fully. You have seven days to complete this. She informs him, a soft light covering the cobra, mending the damage in a way he couldn’t currently match. Worry not, your bond remains with your human, I desired to know how sincere you are and that is
the best way to do so.

A moment later she was gone and he found himself staring at the slender man whose body lacked any signs that he had just been dying. Carefully checking him, he realizes he is in a deep sleep, and retreats to the library downstairs to think carefully about how to go about accomplishing this price.

 oOo

Jacob’s POV
Why me? he thinks as he looks around. Major Tyler had already assumed command as soon as the elder gave him leave to, he was already dealing with the ones who had been cleared and preparing to take those who had not to a military prison to await their closed trial where they would each be found guilty before having extremely harsh and even deadly punishments handed out to them. All of the gifted had vanished a few minutes ago when all of the lights had seemed to disappear. When the lights had returned, the gifted clothing and all of their things were laying in the buses where they had been handcuffed, all the cuffs still locked, but they were nowhere to be found. Two of the corporals had tracked down the elder as soon as they vanished to get orders. Probably a good thing because he was not sure what to do in this case, he had a feeling that they were being punished but didn’t know for sure until the two confuse humans relayed that they were not to seek them.

Something seemed off in the air, a smell that was both familiar and not yet he could not place it. It is not until the cobra goes down that he realizes what that smell was. It was the cobra’s blood. How he had missed the small hole in the side of shirt or the slow drip of blood he does not know. Of course their elder doesn’t miss it when he is no longer focused on the mission. He notices it almost as soon he exits the compound.

When the cobra and elder vanish he is at first concerned but he hears his orders through the telepathy that is normally the cobra’s link, not the elders, then the cobra is far more injured then he first appears. Jacob. Protect Sherlock, get the new shifters back to our territory, Aunt Sandra is already expecting them, get a comprehensive background if you can, find out their names at least so when dumbass is back on his feet he can look for their families if they have any left.

Sir. He replies, not sure he will be heard but answering and obeying anyway. Spathi return to protecting the elder-second, Cat, Fighters, Rogue, Hunter ride with the shifters going to Advisor Watson’s home for protection. Mouse and Iota, ride with the shifters going to Advisor Watson’s home to talk with them and heal them, learn what you can and record it so that their families if they have any can be sought. Watcher and Chiclet, collect all items from the barn and return to the coop home with them, we will collect or things later. I will be joining the elder-second in human form.

A round of beta and second’s can be heard as they fan out to do as ordered.

He approaches the new major of the base and waits politely for him to finish speaking, “Major Tyler, this base is now under your control. If you would be so kind as to lend us a driver for the bus that has the civilians on it, it would be greatly appreciated. The criminals are yours to transport, though I am certain Tech will be making sure that all of them end up where they belong. Well, the remaining ones.”

The major salutes him, before barking orders at a couple of corporals. A few minutes later four men are there. “These two are going to drive you back, this is Corporal Hooper and Corporal Blackmore. These two are going to drive the criminals to the prison compound, this is Corporal Miller and Corporal Wainwright.”

He nods to the four of them, salutes the major and then heads off. Spathi has already taken off to join the elder-second. There were time he wished he was just as fast because by time he had gotten there,
the jackal-child who had come to inquire on behalf of the elder-seconds brother, the elder-second, and the jackal had already trapped and had the human murderer blown up. What a day.

oOo

**Sherlock's POV**

Not long after John had left to join up with the others, his phone had trilled that he had a new message. When he checked it he was surprised to see that it was from Eric. Opening it, he carefully read the article contained, his widening as he realizes what it is. The answer to the H.O.U.N.D. question, the full report on the scientists and their assistants, what the project was about, and why it was scrapped. It had originally an anti-personal weapon that had been scrapped because of all of the damage it had done to the test subjects, everything from paranoia to insanity to a wide variety of problems with the brain including bleeding out. By the time he has read everything and absorbed it all, he is surprised to see that it has gotten a bit later in the day. It’s not dark yet but he is sure by time everything is arranged it will be.

“Bob Frankland,” he mutters as he reads the assistants' names. He had helped to work on this project twenty years prior.

“What?” the detective inspector mutters from where he is seated at the bar.

“I figured out the H.O.U.N.D. situation with a little help from our favorite Tech.” He vaguely replies as he pulls his phone out and calls the doctor who had offered help, asking him to meet at the hallow. “Come Lestrade, we need to get to the Hallow quickly and bring a gun, you might need it.”

Nearly an hour later the two of them have just reached it when they are startled to find Henry kneeling on the ground with a pistol in his hand, pointed at his head like he was going to commit suicide. Great, just great, he wanted to deal with him after they had caught the murderer not before. Oh well, can’t be helped. Shinning their flashlights towards him he studies the situation.

“No, Henry, no! No! “ he yells at drugged young man holding a gun as he and the detective inspector come sliding down the side of the hallow as quickly as they can.

Jumping to his feet, the other human yells brokenly, “Get back. Get,” his voice high pitched and full of fear and sorrow, “get away from me!”

From beside him, he hears the detective inspector start to speak in the same kind of calm voice he uses on victims, “Easy, Henry. Easy. Just relax.”

Still hysterical the overly drugged human cries out, “I know what I am. I know what I tried to do!”

Still trying for soothing the detective inspector states, “Just put the gun down, it’s okay.”

Emotion makes it difficult to understand the anguished ramblings as Henry speaks, “No, no, I know what I am!”

Voice reassuring, he steps forward just a little as he comments, “Yes, I’m sure you do, Henry. It’s all been explained to you, hasn’t it,” he holds out a hand to the other man, “explained very carefully.”

Confusion mars his tone as the other man queries, “What?”

He edges a little closer, tiny steps that barely make him seem to move but give him a little less distance with each one, “Someone needed to keep you quiet; needed to keep you as a child to reassert the dream that you’d both clung on to, because you had started to remember.” He pauses to take a breath, glancing around as he does so and wondering if the doctor had arrived yet.
“Remember now, Henry. You’ve got to remember what happened here when you were a little boy.”

“I thought,” his hand wavers with the gun for a moment, “it had got my dad,” he lifts the gun again, “the hound. I thought,” he trails off, lifting his hands up and waving them hysterically before howling, “Oh Je,” his voice breaks, “oh Jesus, I don’t,” a ragged sob escapes him, “I don’t know any more!” almost as soon as he is done talking he bends double, placing the barrel of the gun in his mouth.

Lunging forward the detective inspector just about loses his reassuring voice as he comments, “No, Henry! Henry, for God’s sake!”

However he ignores him, instead trying to get the broken man to focus on him, “Henry, remember. ‘Liberty In.’ Two words; two words a frightened little boy saw here twenty years ago.” There is an urgency in his voice that there had not originally been as he tries to keep the victim from killing himself. Apparently he had spent too much time with John if he was starting to care about the victims as people rather than just as pieces of the puzzle but that can be considered more later.

Something in his tone must reach the troubled man, because he slowly begins to calm though he does not move from his hunched positioning yet though he does take the gun out of his mouth.

“You’d started to piece things together,” he continues, before softening his voice just a little, “remember what really happened here that night.” His tone changes to questioning as he gives a small shake of his head, “It wasn’t an animal, was it, Henry?”

Slowly straightening up, the other man blinks rapidly with a wide eyed expression and open mouth. Giving another shake of his hand, he comments, “Not a monster.”

Still moving slowly, Henry turns to face him, he can see that memories are beginning to flicker through his mind.

“A man,” he remarks, waiting and watching to see what the other man will do next.

Time passes as the troubled man remembers everything according to the expression on his face. When his eyes indicate that he is back from his memories he continues to speak.

“You couldn’t cope. You were just a child, so you rationalized it into something very different. But then you started to remember, so you had to be stopped; driven out of your mind so that no-one would believe a word that you said.”

Now that he seems calmer, the detective inspector edges closer, carefully removing the gun from the troubled man’s grasp as he reassuringly mutters, “Okay, it’s okay, mate.”

Sounding far calmer but still teary, the troubled man laments, “But we saw it: the hound, last night.” his voice begins to break as he says, “We s... we, we, we did, we saw,” before he trails off staring wide eyed.

He nods once, “Yeah, but there was a dog, Henry, leaving footprints, scaring witnesses, but it was nothing more than an ordinary dog. We both saw it,” he nods again, “saw it as our drugged minds wanted us to see it. Fear and stimulus; that’s how it works.” He pauses, taking a deep breath before continuing, “But there never was any monster.”

From above them on the rim there is a growl, but he recognizes it as a regular dog growl after his time spent around plenty of wolves to know the difference. Before he can say anything, Henry is freaking out again.
“No!” he gasps as panic sets in, “No, no, no, no!” he has backed up and is beginning to hunch himself over.

Ignoring the dog he tries for calming as he holds a hand out towards the troubled man, using a somewhat commanding tone to get his attention, “Henry, Henry!”

Beside him he can feel the detective inspector studying the damn thing, “It’s not a monster, just a large dog, I think,” he mutters quietly, “not sure, wish there was one of the pack here who could see clearly in the dark.”

Crumbling to his knees the troubled human is still weeping, “No,” repeatedly, while, clasping his head between his hands.

“All right! It’s still here,” he pauses panting heavily, “but it’s just a dog. Henry! It’s nothing more than an ordinary dog!”

A moment later the dog howls before jumping down towards them, only it never reaches as another dog comes out of nowhere to knock it off course and break its neck before stalking over to him and growling towards the hollows entry. Turning he spots a person wearing a gas mask, and rushes them, pulling the gas mask off.

“No, it’s not you, you’re not here!” he frantically yells to remind himself of the drug as the gas masked person appears to be Jim Moriarty who he knows it cannot be. This person is too tall and bulky to be Jim. He grabs them by the collar, spinning both of them around as he shakes his head to clear his mind. When he stops he can see it is the doctor and he realizes something else. “The fog,” he mutters, “It’s the fog! The drug: it’s in the fog! Aerosol dispersal,” he glance over at the detective inspector and troubled man, before he continues staring at the doctor, “that’s what it said in those records. Project HOUND,” he spins around as he puts a arm over his face, “it’s the fog! A chemical minefield”

“For God’s sake, kill it! Kill it!” Frankland cries out pointing at the canine that had killed the hound.

I don’t think so, the canine answers snapping her teeth at the doctor but commenting to him and the detective inspector.

Greg glances between the canine next to him and the doctor before aiming his gun at the doctor instead. “Sorry mate, that’s jackal, according to family legends they protect us, and since she happened to kill the hound, I guess those legends are correct.”

“Look at it Henry,” he commands the other human.

“No, no, no,” he mutters as he shakes his head and resists being pulled over towards it.

Stepping behind him, he shoves him hard and determined, forcing him closer, “Come on, look at it!” he orders him.

Slowly he does so, and when he realizes it is nothing more than a large dog he mutters, “It’s just,” he turns to the doctor growling, “you bastard!” rage fills the other man as he hurls himself across the hollow at the doctor, knocking him to the ground as he continues to rage, “You bastard!” he slams the doctors head into the ground, “Twenty years! Twenty years of my life making no sense! Why didn’t you just kill me?”

The detective inspector is working at pulling him back but not having much luck because the rage is giving him a slight edge, finally as it dies down he is successful and keeps muttering, “Calm down, take it easy,” to the troubled man.
It is him who answers the question asked of the doctor, “Because dead men get listened to. He needed to do more than kill you.” He pauses glancing between the others, “He had to discredit every word you ever said about your father,” he looks back at the now prone doctor, “and he had the means right at his feet,” spinning around, he motions to the area around them, “a chemical minefield; pressure pads in the ground dosing you up every time that you came back here.” Lifting his hands into the air he continues, “Murder weapon and scene of the crime all at once.” He chuckles as he stops spinning, “Oh, this case, Henry! Thank you. It’s been brilliant.”

“Sherlock,” the detective inspector groans in a manner much like his John.

“What?” he queries.

“Timing,” he mutters in response, further reminding him of his bondmate.

Tilting his head he questions, “Not good?”

Before the detective can say anything else, Henry calmly states, “No, no, it’s,” he starts to bobble his head a bit, “it’s okay. It’s fine, because this means,” he is waiving his hand with his finger pointing up, turning to look at the doctor he continues, “this means that my dad was right.” he points to himself now, tapping on his chest as he continues to speak, “He found something out, didn’t he, and that’s why you’d killed him,” he leans forward a bit towards the doctor, but Greg had stepped into his path so he can get no closer, “because he was right, and he’d found you right in the middle of an experiment.” His voice is breaking as he speaks, but he continues anyways.

As Henry speak the doctor gets to his feet and bolts towards the actual minefield. “Frankland!” he yells as he realizes where he is going, “It’s no use, Frankland!”

He considers having the jackal knock him to the ground but knows that the jackal is not supposed to interfere with humans as much as possible. Instead he watches as the doctor flings himself across the barbed wire fencing and into the minefield where he tumbles before getting up to scurry across only to come to a dead stop when he hears the click and beeping of a mine coming online. The doctor had landed on a pressure pad, and as the doctor straightens out he already knows what the older man’s choice will be, it was made from the moment he had stepped into the minefield on purpose.

As the three of them get to the edge of the field, the doctor glances back towards us from what he can see in his flashlight before stepping off of the mine and allowing it blow him up. The explosion sets off several more, before the entire field goes quiet.

Henry falls against a tree while he, along with the detective inspector, just stares out at mine field. A short while later the three of them make their way back to the village. He had noticed that the jackal has since vanished but suspects that she is still somewhere nearby since he has an idea that John would never allow him to be somewhere dangerous without assistance.

When he gets back to the inn, he is mildly surprised to see that Jacob is sitting by the fireplace. “Where’s John?” he demands, looking around for his bondmate.

“Tech was shot, the two have retreated back to his home so that John can patch him up, I am to escort you home either tonight or tomorrow as you choose.” The falcon answers him, glancing between him and the detective inspector.

“Home, now,” he replies, “Let me gather my things and we will be on our way.” Without waiting for any further information he heads to the room to get his things. He needs to be back with his bondmate.
Greg’s POV
He had escorted Henry back to his house before catching up with Sherlock just as he had reached the inn. When they get inside he is surprised to see the pack beta waiting for them by the fire place. The dark-haired falcon stands calmly when he spots them, swiftly making his way over and meeting them half way.

“Where’s John?” he hears Sherlock demand, eyes narrow as he stares at the beta.

Glancing between the two of them, the beta replies softly, “Tech was shot, the two have retreated back to his home so that John can patch him up, I am to escort you home either tonight or tomorrow as you choose.” There is something in his voice that seems unusual and it takes him a moment to realize that the beta is actually worried.

Apparently so is Sherlock if his tone is anything to go by, “Home, now,” he just about barks as he spins away, heading towards his room and calling back over his shoulder, “Let me gather my things and we will be on our way.”

Sighing, he rubs the back of his neck, glancing at the floor before he asks, “How bad?”

The falcon flickers a look at him for a moment before returning to looking towards where the pack’s alpha-second had gone and replying, “Bad, he passed out, the only time I have ever seen that man pass out is when it is a deadly type of injury.”

He nods once, sighing again. “I will stay to tie up the cases loose ends including getting the guy who has been drugged for the last twenty years the medical support he needs, filing a report on the doctor, and such forth.”

“Alright,” the beta replies, “was he injured?”

He shakes his head once, “No, there was a dog who tried to attack but a jackal killed it. I didn’t know there was a jackal in the pack besides my daughters.” He murmurs in response.

A small smile curves the falcon’s lips, “Maria is a multiform canine, both her parents were jackals however so that is the canine form she prefers. She was on guard duty.”

He nods, understanding perfectly well, as a multiform she would not have been welcome within the jackal community because they would have seen her as odd or unnatural. In this pack she would be a welcome member with her unique skill set.

Silence falls between the two while they wait for Sherlock. Several minutes later he comes down from the room, he has both his and John’s bags and is ready to go. After a quick farewell the two are off and he wanders to his room to consider the next day. He still needs to report to the older Holmes brother as well about the parts that he can report. Tomorrow is promising to be long.

Chapter End Notes

Now for those who wonder exactly how John is going to pull off healing one stubborn cobra, feel free to read Unusual Healing (or reread in some cases) otherwise, just count it as him doing something completely not in his nature and succeeding for those who do
not wish to read about three guys.
Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So I took a day off to adjust to my new glasses, no reason to give myself a headache trying to read the screen during the adjustment period. Then it took longer than expected to come up with twenty five new names for the newest shifters.

John’s POV

Nearly two days after the raid on Baskerville and the subsequent events that followed, he is climbing out of the shower at the older cobra’s house after nearly six hours of way to closeness to said cobra. It had been necessary to save him, but it was still something he never felt the urge to repeat again. As soon as they get home he would be acting all wolf-like and reasserting his scent on his mate. Until then, well he was at least not in an area where someone would try to claim his mate, and, he shakes his head, cutting that thought pattern off. Oh brother, he thinks, since when did I get so damned possessive? About the time my bond as threaten, he answers himself with a sigh.

The first thing he does upon getting downstairs and spotting his freshly cleaned mate speaking with the cobra is stalk over and slam his fist into the cobra’s stomach, once hard, before upper-cutting him to the jaw when he leans over.

“Don’t you ever do anything so stupid again! Damn it, Eric! We’ve had this discussion before, everything is not ‘alright’ if you get shot!” he snaps at the taller man as he straightens back out. He can smell the amusement from the cobra which just makes him want to slug him again though he does not. “Really though, what in the hell made you think being shot was alright?”

The cobra shrugs, “Well I was not going to die between when you asked and when you were done, I just did not time it as well as I thought.” He mutters in reply before making hot chocolate for his dark-haired human and hot tea for him.

He understood well enough what the hot chocolate and tea were and took it at face value with a sigh.

“I swear I am going to go grey prematurely because of you two. It is that simple.” he grumbles as he sips at the tea before sighing in pleasure at the taste.

“No, I did not drug it either,” the cobra comments with a chuckle, “gezz, you and tea.”

A curious look crosses his bondmate’s face as he glances over at him, “I thought you said you were immune to drugs?” he inquires, a look like he wants to test the idea out.

“He’s referring to my natural venom which is a hallucinogenic if I do not add anything to it or alter its properties. In nature, black cobra’s of my variety create paralyzing agents more than anything else. I, on the other hand, can alter my venom at will between a paralyzing agent, deadly poison, hallucinogenic, and sleeping agent. My natural venom is one of the only things our group is not
immune to because the rest of them never built up a tolerance to it. I am naturally immune.” The cobra explains as he makes himself a strong cup of black coffee.

“You’re talking aloud more than normal, why?” his bondmate queries.

The cobra shrugs, “You’re in my home, one of the few places that does not stink of others, I don’t mind his taste-smell, yours is similar thus not an issue. Other people,” he shrugs, “Try tasting everything you smell and smelling twice as much as everyone else and see how often you speak aloud. Very few cobras will use their voice outside of their homes preferring sign language, not many use telepathy the way I do. It makes a lot of people believe that cobras are mute, when really we’re not.” He downs the coffee before smiling at them, “Now if you don’t mind, I need to shed.” He inclines his head politely before wandering off towards the back of the house where his garden area is.

“Come on, love, I want to get home, my inner wolf is complaining loudly that I need to get back to my territory with my mate.” He mutters to his dark-haired human.

Stepping outside, he shields before turning into a massive wolf and lowering himself so his bondmate can climb on his back. One thing he never says but he is certain that his bondmate understands is that he loves the way he curls close to his back some days when they are racing through the city. By the time they reach home, he feels somewhat better though he still feels the need to reassure himself with his bondmate.

They are barely in the door when he has shut it with his heel and pushed the taller man into the door as he proceeds to kiss him senseless.

*My mate,* he growls to the taller man, *my love, my mate.*

“John,” his human groans in response as he arches back against him when he moves from kissing him full on the lips to working his way across his jaw to his throat. Carefully but determinedly he kisses every single inch of his bondmates neck, jaw, and chin he can reach while his fingers work at unfastening the buttons to his coat and shirt.

Once the initial shock of the suddenness wears off, his bondmate is equally enthusiastic slipping his slender fingers beneath the edge of his and running them across the expanse of his back. Before tugging on the hem in an upwards motion, breaking his kissing of his bondmates neck just long enough to toss the two shirts to the side, leaving him bare chested while he finishes unfastening his lovers shirts. With each button that he undoes, he kisses the skin it exposes, his lips and tongue worshipping every inch of him. Eventually he gets the shirt the rest of the way unbuttoned and shoves it off of his lovers shoulders with a simple efficiency while continuing to kiss every patch of skin he can.

At some point they end up against the side of the sofa, when he realizes this he smiles a bit ferally as he notices this and uses his understanding of weights to lift the taller man up, settling him on the armrest of the sofa. Later he will feel the need to clean it, but for now, now its need driving him and making him want to touch everywhere.

Despite his need he pauses, freezing his wolf which angers his nature in order to inquire, *May I?*

His bondmate nods, apparently understanding but he wants the words.

“May I Sherlock? Are you against being fucked into the sofa?” he inquires in a low growl against the taller mans throat as he kisses his way back up to his mouth.
“Jawn,” he moans again, that adorable mispronunciation that always speaks of his need his answer. “Please.”

Finesse is out the window as he strips the slacks and pants, socks and shoes off of his bondmate before pausing just long enough to do his as well. From somewhere a small bottle of scentless lube appears and his smile grows as he snatches it up and sets to work preparing his mate. Within minutes he has worked his mate into a state of readiness which includes lots of beautiful, needy noises escaping him.

More careful than he had been at any other point in the hurried pace he had set, he shifts so that he is standing directly between his legs, lifting the longer limbs to drape over his elbows as slides himself in and enjoys the way his dark-haired human bucks against him.

“John, please,” his mate eventually keens, driven past the point where he mispronounces things in need and straight into the begging. “Please, please, please!” he gasps out.

His inner wolf is feeling triumphant at the sounds of his mate in need and finally fades to the background so that he can take care of his bondmate properly. Bracing his left arm against the sofa, he reaches around his mate’s leg with his right to tug and stroke his heavy erection even as he starts to rotate his hips in order to hit the taller man’s prostate with each pass which has him whimpering in desire as he gets closer to the bursting point.

When he feels his mate’s balls start to pull up in preparation for his release, he shifts his angle just a bit and pounds into him. Soon enough, both of them are coming and seeing stars it seems.

Somehow he manages to keep them from falling either backwards onto the sofa or sideways onto the floor. After several minutes, he carefully withdraws from his arse, before lowering his legs gently down.

“Are you alright?” he asks, his voice full of worry, “I’m so sorry! I haven’t lost control like that since I was a pup,” he can feel himself blushing.

Several heartbeats pass before his bondmate answers, “That was losing control? Seemed more like being completely in control to me,” he murmurs before continuing, “I’m fine, just need a shower, or maybe a hot relaxing bath. I think you worked some muscles I forgot I had.” There is amusement in his mate’s tone, which makes him relax because he really was worried about him.

Smiling, he stretches a bit, “Come on then, let’s get you cleaned up,” he replies as he helps the taller man to his feet and down the hall to the bathroom where he carefully draws a muscle relaxing hot bath before helping him to get in. For a moment he leaves the room to go grab his bondmate’s favorite dressing gown before returning to carefully wash him with far gentler touches then he had used when they first got home.

He was not joking when he said he had not lost control like that in years. The last time he could remember getting all possessive was when he was seventeen and the female wolf who had selected him for her heat-partner had been actively being courted by one of the wolves from a different pack. Afterwards she had read him the riot act right before snogging him senseless. Apparently she had not appreciated the bruises and would have preferred a bit of a warning but otherwise had vastly enjoyed it. That had been the last heat they shared together because she found her bondmate and decided to bond with him three weeks prior to her next heat. Despite that, they had remained friends and she had spent a few years picking on him about that loss of control.

“John, really it’s fine, I’m not injured, I might be a little sore tomorrow but it’s the good kind of sore not the bad.” His bondmate reassures him as he carefully uses the washcloth to clean him.
He blushed again, “Sorry, that’s not the first time my inner wolf has wanted to do that, it is the first
time I have lost control like that though.”

A smirk curves the dark-haired human’s lips as he tilts his head back and states suggestively, “Well
as long as you don’t mind if I return the favor sometime, I do not see what the problem is.”

A chuckle escapes him at the idea and he nods, “Alright,” he agrees before doing a double check to
make sure he is perfectly clean, “Let’s just not repeat why my inner wolf felt it had to come to the
surface okay?”

For a moment the taller man studies him before nodding solemnly once, “Alright John,” he answers.

It’s his bondmate who empties the tub a few minutes later after pulling him in to give him a quick
scrub down too. From there, the two make their way to the bedroom where they collapse together in
a pile of limbs, curling up and falling asleep without any complaint from the tall human about not
being tired.

At least there is one benefit to such hearty sex, his human is tired afterwards, he thinks to himself as
he drifts off, a satisfied smirk curling his lips.

The following morning has him up long before his bondmate, though he carefully checks him with
his iota sight to make sure there really is no damage before sending small tendrils of power through
him to heal the bruising around his hips and arse before getting up to go make breakfast after pulling
on some pants and sleeping pants.

He is just finishing up breakfast when his bondmate comes walking out of their room, his stride not as
even as normal but is otherwise fine.

“Morning love, sleep well?” he inquires as the tall man stops to kiss his shoulder before settling into
the chair at the table.

The dark-haired human nods, “I did, you?”

He smiles, nodding, “Yes,” serving up breakfast he states the obvious with a smile, “breakfast.”
Instead of two separate plates he puts it on one with two forks, but pours them both orange juices
while the tea makes. Breakfast goes smoothly with both of them occasionally feeding each other
bites and enjoying the others company as they eat.

After breakfast he grabs his phone and spots the list that had been forwarded to him including all of
the names for the shifters rescued. Cleon was the elite wolf, his cousin Qamra was the only female
wolf, her bondmate Trey was originally from Italy, Macrae was the last wolf originally from
Scotland. Archana, Ekram, Hiyan, Jyoti, and Sarla are all base white tone mice from the same nest in
India. Ande, Ilori, Sadiki, and Zene are all light brown base mice from the same nest in South Africa.
Nakia and Menefer are twin sisters who were kidnapped from their nest in Egypt. Siusan is a dark
brown mouse who was pregnant when she was kidnapped and gave birth to Aven and Keaira while
in captivity. All five rhesus macaque are from South China though Bai was sold by the crime
syndicate, while Fai, Xia, Shing, and Qiao were all captured after their families were killed. Vevina
was kidnapped as a child in her hybrid form when she accidently shifted while playing in the park.
Fayre was sold into captivity at fourteen and she immediately shifted into her cat form and has
refused to become human since.

At the moment all twenty five of them are at the Watson pack home with his Aunt Sandra, Daria,
Scott, Jeffery, and Hamil who were working on healing them in their respective ways. He was
planning on seeing if his bondmate wanted to go to the pack home with him before heading over
there to help himself.

“I’m going to the Watson home. Would you like to come with me? I’m the strongest healer in the pack and some of the deeper damage requires a lot more healing than Daria or Hamil can provide.” He tells his bondmate as he starts cleaning up their breakfast.

For a few minutes the taller man is quiet before he comments, “I would enjoy that.”

At the same time his bondmate answers, his phone trills so he checks it once he is done with the dishes.

-Vevina, Aven, Keaira, and Siusan are the only ones with any remaining family that I can find. The rest are dead, even extended family as far as I found- Tech

-Alright. Heading to Watson home- JW

After getting dressed, the pair of them head downstairs, he is debating about whether to call for a cab or not when they step outside and a chuckle escapes his bondmate. Upon locking the door, he turns to see what the tall man is chuckling at just to spot the sleek car that the pack’s cobra favors sitting by the curb, its owner leaning against the hood.

_Since I am heading that way anyways, there is no reason to pay for cab fare._ He comments with a smirk, eyes silver instead of black.

“You’re going hunting I see,” he murmurs.

_Soon enough, I have to gather information and make sure Aidan can run the systems while I am busy. Not that I ever totally ignore them._ The cobra replies before motioning to the car, _come on wolf, let’s get this show on the road._

“Watch it snake, or I might see if you make a good pair of boots.” He responds with a shake of his head.

Apparently his bondmate didn’t need to be told twice as the tall human climbed into the front and looked around. “Are you two coming? I can always take the car, I am sure it would be fun to drive.” The tall human snarks at them.

Both of the shifters chuckle before getting in. Since the cobra is driving that puts him in the back seat. A few moments later the car is flying down the road towards the pack home and he can’t help but chuckle at the speed in which the cobra drives, thinking that it really is a good thing that he never has the cobra ride with Greg because he is sure he is breaking several speeding laws. Not long after that the car is pulling up to the pack home where part of the pack has already gathered.

When the three of them get out of the car, the first thing that happens is the viper iota slaps the cobra hard upside his jaw, he is certain she accompanies it with appropriates words but seeing how it is telepathic and not broadcasted those words must be for the cobra only. Then she turns to him, bowing slightly before reporting on the general health of the group.

_Cleon, Qamra, and Trey are locked into the basement, the elite pup did it himself and growls at anyone who tries to come in. He seems to feel the need to protect the female, and the other male is allowed in only because of the mark on his wrist I believe. I have considered getting Jace but he was feeling rather stressed and was not sure it would be a good idea._ She informs him. _When I checked her with my Sight she showed signs of miscarriage but the pup will not allow me or the other healer close enough to help._
She pauses for a moment, considering who to cover next. The other wolf, Macrae is mostly undamaged physically, either he was not resistant or he was broken in a manner that did not leave a physical trace. The mindhealer has been working on him for the last few hours, he apparently has sleeping problems. The five mice from India seem to have more physical damage than mental, I have removed most of the edge to it, but I am not sure it was enough to do much good. All five were children when they were taken, they are all from the same nest, and they were all forced into their mouse form before they should have been shifting. Again she pauses, this time wandering towards the kitchen to get something to drink. She returns a few minutes later before continuing, There are four mice from the same nest out of South Africa though they could not tell me exactly where, I am actually surprised that those four are alive considering the physical damage done to their bodies without proper healing. I have actually left them in mouse form in order to move them with minimum amount of pain.

The twins Nakia and Menefer are actually in the best physical shape of all of mice that had been in the lab, from my understanding they were seven when they were taken and it has been six years. For the most part they were kept locked in a tiny cage in mouse form, but they were not used for experiments yet, apparently the doctor had just acquired them. Sighing, she returns to the kitchen to put her cup up before coming back to continue, The female Siusan has gone through physical trauma of someone trying to force her to get pregnant again without actually getting anywhere, from what I can tell, every method was used. Her children were used to control her and have never been outside of a lab or cage since they were born in captivity.

Bai was the monkey who asked you to free them, she was used for testing of chemicals to see what type of reaction a shifter would have to them, and will need a great deal of healing. The other four suffered through various experiments as well, but none as violent or as physically damaging, though I will say nothing for their minds. Vevina cannot get back to her human form, getting stuck between cat and human every time she tries to shift which causes her to panic and sends her back into cat form. Fayre has stayed in cat form and is merely watching everything, I get the feeling that she is judging before she decides whether to shift or not, I was surprised by how much power she has.

When she was do giving her report, she heads back into the kitchen while he processes and returns shortly with tea for both him and his mate. He was wondering what else was going on when he hears the others collecting from elsewhere in the house. A few minutes later the three wolves are giving their reports as well, the packs omicron is most concerned about the pup who has locked himself and the other two in the basement even if he had been working on the other pup so far trying to get him to a point where he could sleep naturally.

Sighing, he rubs the back of his neck considering his options before deciding to deal with the other elite first. Non-elites would not be able to handle him as well, no matter how good their training because he was highly resistant to the gifts, probably a side effect of having them used on him far too much. The one gift he seemed to not be resistant to was alpha gift which there really was not an equivalence gift within the gifted abilities, at least not one that he had found so far.

Sending his greetings to his aunt, who was in the room with the mouse twins, he heads towards the door to the basement after telling the cobra to assist the others as asked. With a sardonic smile, he turns to the viper and motions towards the part of the house where everyone is at. Shaking his head, he stops in front of the door to the basement and considers it for a bit. Elite wolves are faster and stronger than a regular wolf. It might be easier to command him into a kneeling position but he doesn’t wish to risk doing so to the female with the concerns that he has for her health. Instead he knocks twice before pushing it open, considering the various diplomatic ways to deal with this and deciding none of them will really help.

Hello? He calls out from the top of the steps as he opens the door.
A muted snarl is the answer he gets along with the sound of a low whimper.

All of his protective instincts say to find the female and protect, because he can smell the combination of fear, illness, and sadness. *My name is John. I am the alpha of this pack, along with one of the pack’s healers. May I know your names?* In truth he already knows their names from when they were first rescued and the pack had collected them, some by asking, some by listening, but it was still polite to inquire.

He can feel the three of them having a muted conversation even though he cannot actually make it out because it is not on the same spectrum as his pack. Theoretically he could listen in, but he has a feeling that the boy would be able to detect that and it would cause more problems than it would help.

Eventually the second male, the non-elite of the two answers, “Trey,” though his voice is really low and he has to use his elite hearing to detect it.

*Nice to meet you, Trey.* He replies, keeping to the open telepathy rather than using his voice since he knows he is more likely to use the command tone aloud then with telepathy. *May I come down?* He queries after a bit, allowing them to adjust to his scent before he asks.

“That is not wise,” the wolf replies, not agreeing or disagreeing.

He inches down the steps. Stopping every so often, to listen to the growls that he can hear getting louder, though the whimpering has almost completely died off. Switching to iota sight instead of regular vision he scans the area finding the three wolves in the furthest corner. Apparently the pup had wanted to make her as comfortable as possible because all of the spare blankets and pillows from the supply closet under the stairs had been piled in the corner making a nest for her to rest in. The pup was also in wolf form, his dark brown fur looking raggedy in the nearly non-existent light. Scanning over him with his sight he finds all of the damage that remains, he had healed the silver damage to his body, but there was still plenty of other damage that remained. His gifts as far as he could tell were all of the physical kind with the exception of telepathy. He did not have any of the emotional based gifts such as empathy or the alpha gift thankfully enough, nor did he seem to have any of the elemental gifts.

*Hello there, would you like a brush for your fur? I don’t know about you but I hate when mine knots up. Thankfully, my mate does not mind brushing it because it always felt weird having someone else do so.* He comments off-handedly, a neutral topic he is hoping.

The pup merely growls at him.

Turning his focus past the other elite, he carefully looks over the female, finding that she had miscarried within the last two weeks, her body had not been allowed to heal properly but there is something else. Narrowing his focus he realizes what that something else is, she is still pregnant, though just barely, with one last pup. No wonder her blood-kin was acting so defensive of her. It’s perfectly natural for the other pack members to defend a female who has been ill or when they had just left a dangerous situation. It actually explained a lot.

*I am a healer,* he repeats, *I can help her. Remember I helped you with the silver?*

He still gets growled at a lot and the younger wolf paces in front of him with his teeth barred. The pup is not actually thinking right now, he is reacting, with his wolf fully in control.

Turning his focus on the other male, he finds that he is mostly alright though he has two misaligned bones that need to be restored. Sighing, he slowly backs up the steps to the kitchen and sits there for
a moment thinking.

*Daria, call for Jace, I think he might be the only one who can get close enough, and she needs a healer. Now. I sincerely hope whatever punishment the Dusk Daughter inflicts is extremely painful.*

He tells the viper, knowing that she will not be pleased to put her pup in harms way but knowing that she will answer anyways.

*Are you sure that’s the only option?* She demands to know even as he feels her calling for the other elite wolf.

He mentally nods once, *I am. Believe me, its not the option I prefer but it is the only one I can think might work. He is one of the most seemingly submissives I have ever met and has a really strong healing ability. Thankfully he has enough training to stave of any more complications but it will not be enough if we cannot get her up here or one of us two down there. He pause for a moment considering, Don’t get me wrong Hamil is a strong healer, but he is not a trauma healer the way we are, adjusted to working under pressure.*

His bondmate and aunt come walking into the kitchen together, chatting about the properties of some plant, and he cannot help but smile at the pair. When his aunt spots him, she comes over to give him a hug, while his bondmate leans against the door frame.

“I thought you were with the three wolves?” he asks, arching an eyebrow.

He nods once answering, “I was, they are still down there,” he switches to their private telepathy link, *Qamra is pregnant but has miscarried as well, probably originally twins, the pup is trying to protect her, unfortunately that means he is trying to keep everyone and everything away. Even those who would help. If I had to wager a guess, I would say that that lab was not the first time that where they were held was raided. So I have asked Daria to send for Jace. He is naturally non-threatening and a healer to boot, though not all the way trained, so perhaps he can help.*

*Logical.* His bondmate replies, “Well we are getting something to drink for those who are willing to come to the dining room and holding a bit of an impromptu gathering. Some of the pack mothers heard that there was a raid on a compound and that there were children without families so they came baring food, clothing, and other supplies for them. Eric is working on contacting Siusan’s bondmate to see if he wishes to reconnect with his lost family. Something tells me the answer better be yes or that cobra is going to be a bit pissed.”

He chuckles, knowing exactly what his mate means. To the older cobra family is one of the most important things. So anyone who willingly gave up on their family around him tended to anger him beyond belief.

He is saved from answering by the pup showing up with Konrad and Leah with him.
First Healing

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read, left kudos, comments, subscribed, or otherwise let me know that you had enjoyed it. Hope everyone continues to like it.

Jace’s POV
He had been surprised when his bondmother had called him to the Watson pack home, particularly since he knew she really did not want him anywhere near all of those shifters who were not pack. So there must be a reason why she would be willing to call him. When he tells the others that he has to get going, Konrad offers him a ride in the family car that he is currently using and Leah volunteers to go with.

A few minutes later they are arriving at the large house on the outskirts of London where the pack meets for all large gatherings, and apparently where shifters without packs of their own end up when the alpha rescues them. Only it wasn’t just the alpha, his mind supplies, it was the entire military pack including his parents and his to be bondmate. Whatever he was needed for, hopefully he would be able to do so without any problems.

He really wanted to not be considered such a pup anymore. Being considered a pup was counterproductive to what he really wanted. With a shake of his head, he slides out of the car and thanks the other two wolf pups who are with him.

The protective, nearly white eyed wolf waves it off but the golden eye female wolf smiles at him reassuringly.

“We’re pack, you have had a hard time the last few days, so we will make sure that does not continue,” she tells him with a small shrug. Her scent is sincere, though he still finds it hard to believe at times how easily the other wolves in his age range had accepted him into the fold.

Nothing else is said as the three enter the house and he nearly hits his knees as the emotions in the building swamp him. Before he has a chance to say anything, all the emotions vanish and he finds himself staring at the older cobra whose black eyes are currently narrow in annoyance. Wait a moment, why aren’t his eyes black currently? Aren’t his eyes always black? Then he remembers something his bondmother had told him about eyes turning silver on those sworn to the Shadow Goddess when they had a task assigned by her to complete. Since he already knew he was a Tracker it didn’t take much for him to understand why those normally black eyes were currently silver.

You need to shield a bit better. The cobra tells him, while the message is scolding in nature, his tone is gentle, reassuring.

He smiles at the taller man wanly replying, “Shielding is not my strong suit, my shields were all the way up,” he sighs.

A single nod is the cobra’s only response before he offers him a hand up. With a grateful smile, he accepts the hand, straightening back up and blushing up a storm. He feels more than sees when Leah takes a step back, while he feels the polite bow that comes from Konrad, though the other wolf says nothing. Almost as soon as he is standing, the cobra strides off and he gives a small shake of his head
before seeking his bondmother. He finds her a few minutes later in the kitchen with the alpha and the other pack healers.

“Hello mama, you wanted me?” he murmurs in greeting as he looks around, at those who are gathered politely.

She nods. *We cannot help the young woman in the basement because her protector will not allow us near her. You are the least threatening of us with the healing gift. It is our hope you will be able to get to her. For the last several years they have been within highly abusive situation.*

He nods, understanding perfectly well what is not being said. As the one pack member who had lived through a lot of abuse, he might also be the only one who can understand.

*It will be difficult.* She tells him, there is obvious worry in her mind voice.

“Alright, where is the basement?” he queries, eyes wide, this was not what he had expected when he had been called here.

*It is there,* she points to a door, *please be very careful Jace, the protector is an elite wolf like yourself and the elder. One who seems to be more wolf than human.*

He nods, carefully going over to the door and pushing it open. “Hello?” he calls down the stairs, before taking a few careful steps. When he feels the other two wishing to follow he waves them away. “I’m coming down the stairs,” he calls out to the three he can smell.

He pauses for a moment, allowing his eyes to adjust to the sight of the dark and his vision to switch to the healers sight. Once he has adjusted he continues down the steps, his senses reached out and he sends silent thanks to his cobra for keeping him shielded since he is sure he would not be able to do so himself. When he reaches the bottom of the stairs he glances around. Learning the lay of the basement and spotting the three, he is rather happy to see that she has been carefully surrounded by blankets and pillows.

“Hi,” he greets them, sitting down on the bottom stair, “my name is Jace. Can I ask your names?”

He gets growled at, a low, threatening growl from the dark brown wolf with amber eyes pacing the floor in front of the other two.

Tilting his head to the side he smiles at the wolf, trying to project calm to the two behind the pacing wolf since he knows that the chances of it working on him are slim.

Shifting to telepathy he comments, *Are you trying to cause her to fall ill? You are worrying her which can do just that.*

The wolf stops for a moment, pausing to stare at him before moving closer and continuing to pace. *Since you are busy pacing, may I check and see how healthy the female is?* he inquires of the other elite.

That elite wolf snarls at him, diving towards him, and swiping with his paw. He holds perfectly still, not flinching and making sure that he does not give off fear scent as he watches the wolf draw back. Years of being attacked and abused hold him steady as he watches the wolf pace further before trying to frighten him again.

*I am sorry, wolf, but you are not nearly as terrifying as those who put these on me.* He tells the other elite wolf as he pulls his shirt over his head while the other elite is withdrawn and tosses it to the side.
Turning slowly he presents his back which is riddled with scar damage from years of abuse. Despite his bondmother’s best effort it was not fading nearly as much as she would like. He feels it as the wolf stops and stares at him in shock.

_How?_ He hears a stuttered voice murmur in his mind.

_I was born to a pack who hated all who were not like them. I was not like them because I was mixed. I am wolf but I am also lynx and crow. Because I was mixed they thought it perfectly acceptable to beat and abuse me as they so desired. My birth mother even allowed it, at times even encouraged it and did so herself as well. He pauses shrugging, I understand pain, I would like to help you and them, but I cannot do so if you will not allow me. Will you return to human form so that I may heal you and them?

Time passes though he does not know how much before the wolf finally stops pacing and shifts back to human form. Through the wait he holds perfectly still, years of practice doing so holds him well. It is after the other wolf returns to human form that he realizes that he is younger than him. Not by much but still younger.

_Cleon. I used to be called Cleon._ The other elite finally tells him, _This is Qamra, my first cousin, and her mate Trey._

“Hello,” he murmurs aloud, “Are any of you hungry? I’m hungry.”

The female nods, though she glances at the elite wolf to make sure he will go with it.

When he is certain that the other elite will allow for it, he stands, making his way back up the steps to get food before coming back downstairs. A glance at a clock tells him that it has been four hours since it begun, and while he is not surprised to see the alpha, his bondmother, or the cobra, he is surprised to see that the other healers had remained. After gathering up a tray of finger foods and something to drink he carefully heads back down the stairs, balancing the tray as he does so. At the bottom of the steps he stops, eyes scanning the area before he carefully steps forward but not very far. He is waiting to be invited to the nest.

Several minutes pass while the other elite wolf sniffs the air, trying to determine whether it is safe or not, but eventually he nods once.

Slowly, so not to startle the other wolf, he moves forward with his tray. When he is just a few feet from the nest he stops again. Carefully lowering himself to the ground and pushing the tray so it is evenly between them.

“Its not much but until we know for certain how healthy you all are, it’s best not to overdo it.” he mutters as he takes a piece of fruit. “I learned the hard way when I first got away from them, I ate too much and as a result I ended up sicker than I really wanted to be when trying to escape.”

While he nibbles he keeps his eyes down cast but studies the female wolf through the top of his lashes. She is in poor shape, her body needs a lot in the way of vitamins and nutrients, she’s partly starved, and her last pup is barely surviving because her body cannot handle the pressure. As he continues to study her, he is surprised to see that her heart is weak, something seems off with it, same with her lungs.

Frowning, he reaches for the alpha but cannot seem to connect with him though the pack telepathy. Sighing to himself he tries to consider his options before recalling that his cobra is connected to the alpha, perhaps he can bridge them if he is willing.
Eric? He mentally queries, not sure if the older man is paying attention.

Now that is a foolish thought. Me not pay attention, he gets the impression of him shaking his head and rolling his eyes, I am appalled at the idea. Yes, I can link you.

Before he has a chance to say anything else he feels a third person enter the link but at the same time it still feels like it’s only them. How odd.

What’s wrong Jace? He hears the alpha query.

Instead of trying to explain with words he is not sure are right, he shows him instead, trusting that the more experienced healer will understand. Sure enough he does if the small gasp is anything to go by.

Heart and lungs first, then reinforce her immune system, after that turn your attention to her pup. It might be easier to just flood heal, but that would leave you exhausted and stuck down there unless you can convince him to let us down there. You’ll need extra energy. I can provide some, along with any directions you might need. The alpha informs him as he borrows his eyes.

It is a really weird feeling having someone else using his eyes.

Energy will not be a problem, the cobra mutters within his head. That I can provide in spades, the elder can keep his to work on the other shifters.

While the conversation seems to take forever it is really only a matter of a few bites. Surprisingly enough, no one speaks as they eat, and the female is given all of the best pieces by both of the males.

Trey is actually the first one to speak, “Can you help her? She’s not breathing right.” the older wolf asks, eyes wide and worried as he glances between the other elite and him.

He nods once slowly, “I think so, though you really should let John do it instead.”

The pup growls and he knows that that is not going to happen.

Carefully scooting closer, he gets just about in touching range before the pup snarls at him, getting between them again. He merely waits and when the pup finally scoots out of his way he moves just a little closer. He is just close enough to lay a hand on her foot. Not the best connection from his training with both his bondmother and alpha, but still enough of one to do the task at hand.

His eyes fall shut a he brings his healing gifts to the surface before sinking his power into her. According to the alpha a wave of healing might be better, so he politely inquires of his cobra for a steady boost of energy and as soon as he feels the first wave, proceeds to healing her. Her chest and stomach is the first area he cooperates on, focusing mostly on the heart, lungs, and womb. The effect is nearly immediate as he feels her breathing easier and hears the pup’s heart beat improve. From there he turns to some of the other issues facing her body, allowing the healing to guide itself and flooding her with it. By the time he is done he is swaying tired but does not plan to stay down here so he carefully scoots backwards until he is far enough away it should not be considered a threat when he stands. Somehow he makes it just about halfway up the stairs before he starts to fall only to find himself cradled in something semi-smooth and cool.

His cobra had caught him with his tail, though he can hear the growling being issued from the area below.

“She’s better now, nothing else that I could see wrong, I’m sleepy,’’ he mumbles as the taller man lifts him the rest of the way up and out of the stairwell. He’ll think about it more tomorrow, right now he just wants to rest.
Meeting the Baskerville Shifters

Chapter Notes

For some reason this chapter just did not want to work with me, so I apologize for the extra delay in writing at least it ended up being longer, it was being frustrating. hope everyone enjoys.

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Eric’s POV

The entire time his wolf is downstairs, he keeps his senses fully alert. He might not admit out loud that a silver spiral has appeared on his left wrist, but he acknowledges it and its meaning to himself. So he keeps track of the safety of said wolf because that’s what he does. If the den elder says nothing but gives him a knowing smile, well that’s just the way the wolf is.

When the younger shifter had come back upstairs wearing just his trousers and shoes, he had been startled by the fact his scars were completely visible. While he was aware that the wolf had been harmed, the visible damage was one thing that both viper and elder had kept from him knowing his temper. He can just about feel the elder considering how to calm him down, but he gives a small shake of his head. He’ll not lose his temper now. Besides, he can always take his rage out on one of the responsible when he gets back to his home.

After collecting up small foods, all very healthy but easily eaten without silverware and something to drink, he watches as his wolf heads back downstairs with the tray. A large part of him considers just taking over the mind of the foreign wolf who threatens his but he knows that is the wrong choice, so he merely continues to listen and wait.

With the amount of damage that had been done to some of the other shifters and the fact that both the elder and viper are concern for the female downstairs health, he figures that his wolf will need extra energy. After all, he is still in training and has not yet got the focus to be able to very fine healings without running out of energy.

It’s not long after the wolf takes the tray downstairs that he hears Eric? in a very questioning tone, sub-thoughts curious if he is being listened too.

Now that is a foolish thought. Me not pay attention, he gives a mental shake of his eyes and rolls his eyes a bit dramatically. I am appalled at the idea. Yes, I can link you.

Without asking the elder to join, he merely pulls him in, sharing the situation with him as he does so. Thankfully enough, years of working together meant that the older wolf does not question him, instead he turns his attention to the younger healer and queries, What’s wrong Jace?

Since he is currently bridging the telepathy between the two wolves, he is pulled into the vision sharing when his wolf shows the elder what is going on. He can feel the horror and anger in the elder even before he completely understands what they are seeing. Healing has never been his strong suit,
and while he has the information memorized it is still one of those things that it takes more than a great memory to be good at. However as hecatalogues the problems, he only partly pays attention to what the elder is directing his wolf to do.

When the elder suggests he can provide the energy needed, he just about snaps, but instead moderates his tone as he mentally mutters, *Energy will not be a problem. I can provide that in spades, the elder can keep his to work on the other shifters.*

After that the three of them fall silent, apparently echoing the silence going on in the basement. As soon his young healer needs energy he starts to channel it his way. It’s not difficult for him to pull it from the house with twenty-five shifters in miserable shape in one way or another, there is plenty for him to use. Even those who have been healed already have energy that he can use in the form of their dark memories.

So he channels the energy, making sure to clean it of all emotion before passing it on to the younger wolf. The next two hours go rather rapidly as he pulls the negative energy and emotions from those within the house and channels them into positive energy to share with his wolf. He can feel as the wolf heals each and everything he can find. When the younger wolf finally stops pulling on his energy he shifts closer to the top of the stairs, waiting for him to return to the kitchen. While his wolf is slowly making his way up the steps, he feels the exhaustion take hold and quickly half-morphs, allowing his long legs to vanish in place of even longer tail which he uses to reach out and catch the small shifter before he has a chance to go tumbling down the steps.

He is mildly surprised when his wolf curls close to his tail, intentionally wrapping his arms around it as best as he can when one considers he’s half sleep and on the small side in comparison. Carefully, so not to drop his wolf, he lifts his tail out of the stairwell with the smaller man curled within it’s grasp.

Just as he pulls him free of the door, the young wolf mutters sleepily, “She’s better now, nothing else that I could see wrong, I’m sleepy.” Before snuggling even closer and passing out.

Blinking at the pack elder, he shifts his tail a bit, intending to scoop him up to carry him to a bed somewhere but he just holds tighter to his tail. Sighing, he carefully slithers towards the small indoor garden at the side of the house, which is not all that easy when roughly one third of his tail is being used as a bed. Still, he is not complaining, though he does ask the elder to bring him his laptop so he can continue to work while the wolf sleeps.

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**John’s POV**

It’s really rather amusing seeing the way that the pup has attached himself to the older cobra’s tail. He can feel the annoyance from his viper mother, but he can also feel her amusement, though he is certain she would not admit to being amused. The others in the room are staring after the pair with complete shock on their faces, their scents giving away the fact that he has surprised them. Still when a request for the laptop is put forth by the cobra, he does so with a small smile.

*You realize that he as has actively decided you’re it?* He queries of the cobra as he delivers the
I do, it does not change anything at this time. His friend replies with a small shrug. Thank you for this, I will continue to seek the family of those here, I do not think I will find any more but I will still try. Using their memories I have also discovered who each of the kidnappers are, I am seeking information on them as well prior to beginning my hunt. The cobra smiles a bit coolly, I have learned a lot since my hunt fourteen years ago.

He nods, touching a hand against his shoulder blade for a moment before heading back to the main part of the house where he runs into the two pups who had come with Jace.

“Sir, Is Jace alright?” the male pup inquires politely, white-blue eyes watching him carefully.

He nods once in response, “He is, he is tired however and is resting currently. We should let him rest.”

The younger wolf inclines his head politely.

“Is there anything we can do to help?” the young female inquires.

For a few moments he considers the question before he answers, “Well with twenty-five extra people we were going to need food, extra bedding, and clothing for those who are now here. I believe that it might be very useful if you could collect up a list of needed supplies, I believe that Aunt Sandra has currently been asking the different members of the pack for any side dishes or main dishes they may be able to provide, so if you could go shopping, pack will pay of course, it would be greatly appreciated.”

The two pups nod, with the female pup commenting, “We’ll do it, along with enlist the rest of our group to assist.”

Without saying anything more, the pair glance at each other before nodding politely to him and taking off.

Once the teenage pups were gone, he heads towards the part of the house with all of the bedrooms in it. Stopping at the hall, he reaches his senses out, deciding to go visit with the last wolf first. Heading to the room he is in, he knocked twice, before carefully opening the door and glancing in.

“Hello?” he greets the wolf.

The younger wolf drops down, limbs folding as he lowered himself all the way to the ground in a rather groveling style.

“What do you need?” he murmurs to the other wolf.

For a moment, the other wolf slowly straightens to a sitting position but keeps his head lowered and still in the submissive style.

“My names John, I believe you have already met Jeffery, the packs omicron,” he introduces himself before mentally reaching for the older wolf, Do you have a moment?

I do John, what do you need? The older mindhealer inquires.

Was Macrae very submissive when you entered the room? he asks.

For a moment he can feel the older wolf considering it, He was quiet, but not extremely submissive.
The older wolf shows him the other wolf’s behavior. The brindle wolf had inclined his head politely when the mindhealer had entered, had stayed quiet, and had allowed him access to his mind without question. His mind was full of nightmares but they were inexact and barely remembered, instead they tended towards the kind of blind horror in feelings. When asked to shift he had done so without question, turning into a rather small black base wolf with brindle orange, brown, gold, and tan markings. There was minimum amount of physical scarring. He was very easily controlled without having to put any real pressure on him.

*Thank you,* he tells the older wolf.

“Macrae, you really don’t need to do that, I am probably the least formal alpha that you will ever meet.” He tells the other wolf, “I promise no need to be formal.”

The other wolf’s gaze flickers to him, but stays pretty lowered.

Reaching a hand out, he carefully brushes his fingers on the other wolf’s forehead as he sinks into his gift. He carefully goes over the touch between their minds, finding the nightmares and following them back to their source which is actually an embedded compulsion in his mind. It had been laid by a telepath, from the feel of it, a moderately strong telepath at that. Still, that did not make it unbreakable, just difficult. Jeffery had been focusing on healing the damage done, he was focusing on healing the cause of the damage instead.

Over the next two hours, he takes his time carefully undoing each strand in the compulsion. With every piece he undoes he can feel that the wolf breathes a bit easier and his thoughts go just a bit smoother. He is not a naturally submissive person. He had been programmed that way by the same one who had given him the nightmares. Nightmares that were rather basic and emotion driven, thus making them harder to refute. Once the last strand of control was broken he can feel the minor difference in his personality beginning to form. He had been seven when he had been caught. It had been twenty-one years since that event. Since it had been so long since he was free, he would need to learn how to live on his own again.

As he releases the other wolf, he smiles happily at him, “Well I am going to check on some of the others. You are welcome to go pretty much anywhere in the property. The basement might be considered off-limits at this time because that’s where the three wolves you were trapped with are currently at, with the elite pup keeping everyone away from the female.”

The other wolf nods but says nothing, so he nods once to the bloke before he slips out of the room.

Sniffing the air, he determines that the next best one to visit with might be the oldest one of the captives. So after stopping in the kitchen for some water, he heads towards the stairs, he heads up them to the second story and down the hall to the last room on it.

After politely tapping on the door, he pushes it open a bit before softly saying, “Hello?”

*Hello, enter,* the older shifter replies, *I am dressed.*

Pushing it the rest of the way open, he slips into the room, eyes studying the room and all within it. The older shifter is perched on the edge of the bed, wearing a loose pair of trousers and sweat shirt. His dark-brown hair is short and sprinkled with white and his eyes nearly white with damage that had been done over his lifetime.

*Hello, you were the one who came to rescue us. The scent is familiar. What can I do for you?* The older shifter mentally murmurs.
“Can you speak aloud or prefer not to?” he inquires before motioning to the bed, “May I sit?”

I have no voice, have not had one for nearly the entire time I was a lab-creature. Of course, I spent most of that time in my rhesus macaque form, so that does not help. The older shifter replies, Please sit. I am Wai Qiao

“Thank you, my names John, I am the alpha of this pack, also one of its healers, you seem to understand more about has happened to you than many.” He comments as he introduces himself.

I was twelve, nearly an adult in the community I am from when I was taken. Do you know if my family lives? The shifter inquires.

He gives a small shake of his head, “As far as we have been able to discover, nearly all of the families to those in captivity are dead. Only two of twenty three families have any survivors. Besides you that were captive that we have been able to find.”

The older man bows his head, silent tears coursing down his face, SO there is no one left, no home for me to return to.

He can smell the sadness and the acceptance, as if he had already known, and if he had felt the link between them severed the same way that Eric had when his family had died, then he probably did know. “We can take you back, if you want, but your family as far as we could trace, is dead.” he offers before continuing, “You can also choose to stay here, while this is primarily a wolf pack, wolves are not the only thing in this pack. We also have two cobras, two vipers, a multiform cat, a great cat, one mouse, two owls, a family of jackals, a gibbon, a multiform canine, and several human children of shifters. Along with a few pure humans who were bondmates to shifters.”

That is quite an unusual family, the older shifter replies, they all get along?

He smiles, chuckling softly, “For the most part, there are a few problems, but I believe all families have them. The one fast and easy rule is not to piss off the older cobra, the one called Eric or Tech.”

The older man smiles wanly at that, True enough, all families do have their issues, but a good family stays together anyways. He pauses, tilting his head to the side before querying, I am certain you did not stop by just for that. Do you need something?

He smiles at the other shifter, “I actually came to do any healing that you may need. There are five healers in our pack. Myself and four others, two of which besides me can also mindheal. I am actually the strongest of the healers.”

I would appreciate any relief you could give me from the pain in my body, however I will understand that it cannot be totally healed. The older shifter replies, his scent surprised and grateful.

Reaching out, he carefully lays his hand against the older man’s temple before he sends his power out. He carefully checks each part of the other shifter, finding that he had been electrocuted to the point where his muscles were damaged. There was also a lot of damage from disuse, and other damage from times where he had been forced to keep going when he shouldn’t have. Past that his lungs and heart were weak as well. It appears that a variety of chemicals had been used on him as well, which might not have harmed him at one point but the amounts that had been used had in the long run worn him. So he carefully rebuilds the damaged muscles, fixing them slowly but surely. From the muscles he moves on to the organs and repairs them as well. When he is done, he carefully withdraws from the older shifter.

“There, it should be easier to move about now, you’ll need to take it slow as you get used to it,” he
comments as he uses his iota sight to make sure he had missed nothing while handing him the water he had grabbed from the kitchen.

The older shifter accepts it, taking a long drink of it gratefully. “Amazing,” the other shifter murmurs his voice stumbling a bit and very rough with disuse. The scent of surprise fills the air of the room, eyes widening with wonder as his hand comes up to touch his throat.

He smiles at the older shifter, “Well, it’s not perfect, how are you feeling?”

“Better than I have in years,” the shifter replies, a heavy Chinese accent coloring his tone now that the roughness is fading, “I am called Qiao.”

“That’s good,” his smile grows, holding his hand out he comments, “Nice to meet you,” before continuing, “Feel free to wander anywhere you want within the property, we are a ways out of town, so you might not want to leave the property. Past that, I have asked a few of the older pups to collect up items. When each of you is ready, we’ll go into town in order to find you each fitting clothes and supplies.” He pauses before commenting, “I am going to see if the other rhesus macaques need healing, I don’t know if you ever had a chance to speak with them, but you can come with if you’d like.”

Hesitantly, the older shifter stands and walks around the room, he can smell the satisfaction in the motion, and the pleasure at being able to do so. “I will, if you do not mind.” He finishes the water, setting the cup down on the table.

The two shifters make their way to the room with the other three shifters are. When he knocks on the door, he almost instantly is invited in even before he has a chance to identify himself.

*Blonde-one! Come in, come in!* A female’s voice calls him as the door swings open to reveal a petite, light brown haired girl with bright brown nearly gold eyes, and creamy tan skin. Once the door is open, the small girl hug him, before pulling back and tugging him into the room.

*Welcome, you said you would free us and you did, welcome, welcome, welcome!* Shaking her head a bit she repeats herself, “Welcome, you came like you said you would.” Her voice has barely any sort of accent to it instead it is rich, though high in pitch.

He had hugged her back, smiling at her energy. “Hello there, I’m John, this is Wai Qiao, I was coming to see if any of you need healing and invite you to leave this room as you so want.”

The female in the trio smiles at him, “I’m Li Xia, this is my mate Kao Shang, and Wang Fai. Chen Bai is wandering around somewhere. I believe she is perched on the roof.”

He smiles at her, “Nice to meet you,” he switches to iota sight, checking all three carefully. The female has already been healed and he can see the signs of where Hamil repaired various damage, the scars that had been formed but carefully lighten. Of the two males, the one she identified as her mate has next to no damage done to him, though he can see where Jeffery had touched him. While the other male appears to have needed a great deal of healing with a little bit still remaining. “May I?” he inquires, motioning to the second male carefully.

The light golden blonde shifter nods, offering a hand with a confused look which he accepts. Moments later he is working his way through all of the remaining damage, healing it. It does not take as long as it could have due to the foundation of healing begun by the two wolf healers on his mind and body. Most of remaining healing has to deal with the organs and the damage that they have.

He has just finished up when he hears his mate, *John, I am to tell you that dinner has arrived, bring those who wish to eat with the others down.*
Alright, thank you love, he replies, “Well, I was just informed that dinner is ready, if you would like to eat downstairs?”

The two males look leery, but the female jumps right up, “Dinner,” she sounds excited. “Our first actual dinner not in a cage. Come on, let’s go!”

Shaking his head, he chuckles and smiles, “Shall we?”

With that the small group of five makes their way downstairs. When they get to the main floor, he leads them to the large dining hall that is normally only used for pack gatherings. Along the wall closest to the kitchen, the buffet tables are set up and full of a wide variety of food. He can tell that many of the pack families had stopped in with food because he recognizes dishes from at least six different pack families. Instead of the long row tables there are several round tables with chairs set around them like a lunch room. At the tables he can see several of the new shifters plus a few of the families who had brought food, along with all of the healers and their families. Even Aidan has showed up as well.

Almost as soon as they are through the door his bondmate appears at his side, a small plate already in his hands. “I saved you a seat, collect a plate and join me at our table over there,” he motions to one of the bigger tables where he spots his parents surprisingly enough, sister and her bondmate, and aunt along with several empty seats. He nods and before he has a chance to introduce his mate to the shifters the taller man nods at him and strides off, leaving his chuckling at him.

“You can sit anywhere you want, the dishes are there,” he points to a trolley, “Pick anything you want to eat, eat as much as you want, though try not eat so much you get sick, and when you are done the dishes go on that trolley,” he points to one at the end of the food tables with several buckets of steaming soap water in them. “I think my mate has decided we need to sit with my close family.”

The female nods and drags the two male rhesus macaque’s off to get their food. The remaining older shifter smiles at him before wandering over there himself to get dinner. He waits a few minutes, wandering between the tables and saying hello or thank you to the various shifters he comes across. When he spots a young woman with orange fur, an elongated jaw, whiskers, and cat ears he drifts towards her and stops next to her.

“Hello there,” he murmurs in greeting.

She tenses up and glances up at him with very startling blue eyes.

“Would you like to be fully human again?” he queries politely.

She nods once, still watching him.

He smiles gently, reaching a hand out to touch her temple while he focuses. After shifting from his mind to hers, he finds the part that allows her to shift, carefully brushing it with his healing gift. He is not surprised when he finds that it is actually a compulsion holding her form locked, and he carefully unlocks before guiding her through the change. A rather awkward feeling since he is a canine and she is a feline. However, once she is in her human form, he releases his grip on her gifts and mind, returning to himself.

“There you go,” he murmurs softly.

She lifts her hand, staring at before touching it with her other hand, her scent full of shock.

“I’m human again,” she mumbles, surprise filling her voice.
He nods, “You are, I’m John,” he introduces himself.

“Vevina Prier,” she introduces herself, offering her hand politely.

“Nice to meet you Vevina, Tech has discovered that your family still lives in London, if you would like we can get in touch with them, so you can have a reunion with them.” He offers softly.

She nods, “That would be nice, I miss my family,” she murmurs.

He nods, “We will do that first that thing in the morning, alright?”

A small smile curves her lips as she nods before she returns to eating.

He carefully pats her shoulder before he goes and gets a plate of food and joins his mate with his family. Dinner goes surprisingly well. His father keeps his mouth shut through it while his sister’s bondmate chatters with his. The two discussing some science theory as it is taught to high schoolers. While he discusses housing plans for the new shifters with his aunt, arranging to have the food that’s needed and finding out what clothing is needed.

After dinner he mildly surprised when the group of Indian mice approach him. The five glance between themselves before the tallest male in the group steps forward softly stating, “Elder of Wolves. The five of us are all that remain of our nest. We respectfully ask to stay in your domain until we can find figure out what to do with ourselves.” His voice cracks towards the end of it.

He smiles at each of the mice in turn, “You are more than welcome to stay, the five of you are welcome to join the pack if you would like. My name is John, this is my bondmate Sherlock.”

The tallest of the mice bows slightly, “I am Hiyan, to my left is my sisters Archana and Sarla, to my right my cousin Ekram, and our nest mate Jyoti.”

“Nice to meet you all,” he comments as he politely partially bows to the two females, while he does so, his eyes switch to iota sight and he checks each in turn. The two females are in better shape than the three males, all five show signs of healing and needing more. “If you don’t mind, I would like to spend a little time tomorrow working with each of you to continue your healing.”

The tallest mouse nods, his silver-white hair falling in front of his face. “We’re going back to our room to relax further,” he suggests with a glance to the other mice. All four of them nod, and the five all bid him farewell before heading upstairs to their room.

Once they are gone, he glances at his bondmate with a tired smile, “How about we go crash in my room? That way we do not have to come back tomorrow because we will already be here.”

His dark-haired human nods and smiles, a quirky smile curling his lips, “You have a room here?”

He nods, “The pack alpha always has a room here, when I became the alpha I declined the master bedroom, keeping the smaller room I had used as a child instead though I had the bed changed out for a bigger one.”

“Show me,” his mate just about orders, excitement in his tone and scent.

Chuckling, he bids his aunt and sisters goodnight before heading to the bedroom. When they get there, he strips out of his clothing. After kissing his bondmate, he heads into the attached bathroom to get a shower and is not surprised when his mate joins him. The two of them take their time bathing each other before drying each other off and going to bed. He knows that his mate will probably be up be long before him, but at least he is sure that he will stay at the house because there is plenty to
keep him occupied. It is not long after his head hits the pillow that he passes out with his bondmate curled close by.

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Sherlock’s POV

From the time he wakes up, to the time he falls into bed a bit earlier than normal and not at their flat he has a busy day. While John is working with the new shifters on getting them all healed, he joins his small group of students in planning and executing that planning for the supplies they will need. Since he does not like junky clothing, he puts in a call to a couple of his favorite stores for clothing after getting a general idea as to the sizes he will need and pays for them with his credit card before sending his students after them while they are in town getting the food as well. Since he is not sure of the styles of clothing each person may prefer, he makes sure to arrange for several different styles, including some of the ethnic clothes for those who come from cultures with such styles available. It makes tracking down options a bit harder but fun.

He also gets a hold the various shifters and human-shifter children in the pack who are teachers of some type or another including Mouse, Rachel, Melissa, Kim-ann, Shalia, and Mike. Having them all come out to the pack house as soon as they are off shift for a little meeting. That meeting covers how to teach twenty four people about anything that they might need help learning since most of them had been in captivity since early childhood so he is fairly certain that they are not well educated. While discussing that, they also go over the various things that the shifters will need to learn in order to survive on their own. While most shifters prefer belonging to a pack, there is no guarantee that they are going to want to join a wolf pack and many of them no longer have a pack to go back too.

By the time they have worked everything out he is surprised to see it is supper time and calls for his golden wolf on their connection. A short while later a very tired bondmate comes downstairs with four of the five rhesus macaques. His wolf looks like he has been over doing it again, and considering he knows that the cobra is not currently providing him with energy, that means that he will be ready for bed nearly as soon as they get home, if they get home. He would really hate for him to pass out between home and here.

For a few minutes during dinner his doctor wanders around talking to the different shifters and shifter-children before joining him to eat a rather hearty meal which he is sure is not enough so he fetches the shorter man a second plate, not as big, but full of energy full foods. After the second plate his mate suggests going to bed, and that’s when he discovers that there is a room here in the house for them despite the fact that so many of the rooms are currently taken up by either pack members here to help or the new shifters.

The two of them make it to their room, him more to discover where it is at than to sleep though he does find himself curled around his doctor after they take a hot, relaxing shower together. For a few hours he sleeps until his body tells him that it just cannot continue to sleep in an unfamiliar location. Stretching, he gets up and checks out the wardrobe, surprised when he finds several of his suits, or ones very like them, plus an outfit much like the one his bondmate had worn during formal events within. As he looks at the door he spots a note so he reads it, chuckling low in his throat at the message on it.

- Hi love-one of these days we will end up needing a change of clothes while at this house, so I had Eric convince your tailor to make a few suits and forget (he was paid), I also had the pack seamstress make you a formal outfit of your own though you do not have to wear it.-Love John-
Smiling, he looks through them, deciding to wear a dark blue one with a white shirt. Once dressed he closes the wardrobe before leaving the room and heading towards the library though he never makes it there. He spots a small blue-grey cat and decides to follow it. Not an easy task when it seems determined to lose him and can fit into areas he cannot, still he manages, tracking her to the highest point of the house where he also finds a young woman perched on the roof.

“Hello,” he greets the girl in a low, soothing tone.

Despite his attempt at not startling her, the younger woman jumps a little, though she does not fall. Her dark brown eyes are wide as she stares at him in shock.

“You must be one of the new shifters around here. Did you see where the cat went?” he rattles off, eyes sweeping her as he studies everything about her that is seeable. Her family had not been murdered prior to her going into the lab, she had been sold there as a slave by her family according to the tattoo on her wrist. Her eyes and expression say that she had not adjusted to the abuse though she had saw no way out, how she holds herself screams that she expects that there will be more despite the fact she is supposed to be free. “Ah yes, Chen Bai, the last of the rhesus macaque in the house, the only one that John has not yet had a chance to speak to. It’s the middle of the night why aren’t you sleeping?”

The two of them have a staring contest for a bit before she finally folds under the directness of his pale colored eyes and replies, “Its hard to sleep in an unfamiliar place. I do not wish to wake back up in cage.”

He nods, “Logical. Very logical.” For a moment he considers what else to say before continuing, “There are currently no less than four shifter law enforcement members here. John has declared all of you are to be protected. I can tell you that the four will do everything in their power to do so.” He pauses again, looking around and spotting a large tree, a closer, careful look reveals the large owl perched in that tree. Focusing his attention he tries to reach out with the pack telepathy, Excuse me, owl, if you could come here, this young lady needs reassured that this place is safe.

Yes sir, he immediately hears in response as the owl lifts off of the tree and silently flies over, when he gets closer it is possible to see that it is an eagle owl, so it is one of the military pack members then though he cannot remember his name,

“You see, this here is,” he pauses for a moment, trying to recall and is mildly grateful when the owl tells him, “Edward Reed, he is one of several pack members who have military train and are here to protect everyone on the property.”

Carefully the owl lands on the roof near them but not right next to before shifting to a half form, so that the sandy brown haired human is there with his massive eagle owl wings. “Evening ma’am, sir,” the owl greets the two of them.

She stares at him in shock but he just smiles gently at her, commenting, “Don’t worry about protection, the human queen of England does not even have as good of protection as this place. Between the six of us on guard duty, four of which are special ops military trained, to the cobra who has this place under tight surveillance both on computers and otherwise, to the shields that have been erected around it, any hunter tries to do anything foolish and they will find themselves kneeling before the Dusk Daughter faster than they will know how to respond.” He reassures her before nodding once and reshifting into his owl form and flying off to resume his duties.

“Was he serious?” she asks after a long silence, staring out over the property.

He nods, “Of course, the cobra he mentioned is Eric, and he is a Shadow Mistress sworn Tracker,
which to my understanding means judge, jury, and execution to any who attempt to break shifter
law. Add to that he answers only to one person alive, and is planning on hunting down every single
person who caused this mess and I can promise that none of you will ever be locked up like that
again.”

“Oh,” she mutters, still staring out at the yard.

It is times like this that he wishes that he was a telepath like his wolf and the cobra, it would make
things so much easier when dealing with certain people. “Why don’t you go back inside to get some
rest? I am sure you have your own room, Aunt Sandra had assigned rooms to all of the shifters,
though many choose to stay in rooms together if they were from the same pack originally.”

She nods, getting up slowly and heading back in. It is not long after that he follows her back in.
Once back inside, he quickly consults the layout that he had been provided and shows her to the
room that was set aside for her use before heading off without saying another word. Making his way
to the library, he is mildly surprised when he sees the gray-blue cat again. This time though it does
not run away, at least not far, it heads into the library and when he gets in there, a young woman
with blue-black hair is standing where he had last seen the cat though she is not dressed, she does not
seem aware of her nudity either.

"Warst du das ernst? Keiner von uns wird wieder versklavt werden?" she demands, hands resting on
her hips as she watches him.

He blinks, surprised by the German but replies, "Ja. Warum sollte ich lügen?"

"Vielleicht lügen Sie damit sie tut was sie wollen." She retorts.

A smirk curves his lips as he responds, "Nicht notwendig. Es gäbe andere Wege, Zusammenarbeit
zu erreichen, wenn das das Ziel wäre. In Rudelangelegenheiten sage ich die Wahrheit."

A few minutes pass in silence before she asks, "Guter Punkt. Gibt es einen Grund dafür, dass Ihr
Rudel hilft?"

"John mag es, Menschen zu helfen, und der Rest des Rudels folgt dem Alpha." He replies without
having to think about that answer, it is rather simple really.

She nods, returning to cat form and taking off without saying another word. Turning around, he
discovers the reason why is standing behind him, nearly seven tall feet of black cobra with narrow
currently silver eyes.

*Interesting conversation. Very true, but interesting none the less.* The cobra remarks blandly.

He smirks at the cobra, nodding once. “Did you hear the other conversation I had on the roof?”

*I was not paying attention to words, merely pulling emotions away,* the taller man replies.

“Here,” he murmurs, then brings the memory to the surface, focusing in on the cobra standing in
front of him. He feels the instance that the cobra brushes his mind, observing the memory and smirks
at the expression on the cobras face at the end of the conversation.

*Amusing. Truthful but amusing,* he remarks, *I am returning to watching the pup now. For some
reason he has decided it is purely his responsibility to get those three out of the basement.*

He chuckles, “Probably because John told him to heal the female and he has decided to be a hero
about it, John does the same thing after all.”
The other tall man nods before drifting off and he finds himself alone in the library after that.

Smiling to himself, he sets to exploring it in a way he had not had a chance to do over the year he had been part of the pack. He is about one third of the way through when he notices that there is a smallish woman seated in front of the fireplace, staring at it thoughtfully. He is trying to decide whether to announce himself or not when she suddenly tilts her head to look at him.

“Oh, hello, I’m not disturbing you I hope, I couldn’t sleep anymore and saw the fire and,” her voice trails off, its Irish inflection telling him where she was from before she was captured.

“No. You are not. I was just exploring.” He replies softly, studying her. Mother of two, been in captivity for at least twenty-two years, enjoys reading though it has been years since she has had a chance to do so.

She smiles at him, relief evident. A time passes in silence while he continues to explore the library and she is still watching the fire. Eventually she questions, “You are the elder-second, right? The elder’s human mate?”

He stops, turning to face her before replying, “I am.”

Smiling, she nods, “That’s good, he seems like a nice man, he made it a point to stop and talk with me and the twins at dinner time despite the fact he appeared tired. He even said my mate was still alive and we could contact him if I wanted.”

“But?” he asks in a trailing off tone, leaving plenty of room for a response.

She sighs, propping one hand on the sofa arm and setting her chin on top of it, “But why didn’t he come for us? Twenty-two, nearly twenty-three years we were there and not once did I hear any sign of him.”

Quickly walking over to her, he stares at her for a moment, considering everything he knows before replying, “He may have thought that you were dead, you were being hidden by rogue gifted. It is possible that he was unaware of the fact you were alive.” He shrugs, “John says bondmates are the most important bond, that it is important to try and repair it whenever it is damaged. Since he was your bondmate you should see him if only to find out why he never came. Ask one of the telepaths to sit in with you and he will not be able to lie.”

“The telepaths?” she repeats questioning.

“Eric, Daria, John, and Scott are all telepaths. Scott is also the pack mediator, his task is to settle disputes or so I have been told.” He replies.

She considers it for a bit before nodding, “That is a good idea, I believe I will answer the elder when he asks me again. Thank you, elder-second, goodnight,” and before he has a chance to remark she is up and gone, the door closing quietly behind her.

Shaking his head, he returns to working on exploring the library, now where was he…

Chapter End Notes

Fayre: Were you serious? None of us will be enslaved again?
Sherlock: Yes. Why Should I lie?
Fayre: Maybe you're lying so they do what they want.
Sherlock: Not necessary. There would be other ways to achieve cooperation, if that were the goal. In pack matter I am telling the truth.
Fayre: Good point. Is there a reason your pride is helping?
Sherlock: John likes to help people, and the rest of the pack follows the alpha.

Update on translation: Thank you to PawToPaw and CheekyChemist I used a combination of their updated translations to change the conversation, using the one that seemed closer to what I had originally meant, I keep forgetting that English and German do not translate exact because sentence structure is different (still working on A to G on the alphabet since I started learning German).

It was pointed out to me that Rudel means both pack and pride, when she uses it, it is for pride like cats form (since she is a cat), when he uses it, it is for pack like wolves form
So for whatever reason known only to the muses, I felt the overwhelming need to make a family tree for John and his family, probably because of this chapter, add real life, and it took far longer than a normal chapter would. Next chapter is mostly done so it will be posted tomorrow.

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV
When morning comes he is unsurprised to find that his mate is not in bed with him. He had expected that the taller man would get up in the middle of the night. Once he has dressed, he heads downstairs in order to get some breakfast. Upon getting to the kitchen he is startled to find the older cobra cooking over the stove and humming as he does so. For a few moments he merely watches the taller man, surprised to see moving about the kitchen with ease.

“Well that’s unexpected,” he murmurs, before greeting him, “Morning Eric.”

What was unexpected? That I cook? There is a amusement heavily lacing the cobra’s voice. I live on my own, of course I can cook. Since I am wide awake and there are a lot of people here, I figured I would cook. Besides, it will be amusing to see how everyone reacts to the idea of the bloke who can kill cooking.

He cannot help the chuckle that escapes him at the taller man’s blatant joke. It is rare to hear him even close to relaxed.

It is either be relaxed or go make a wolf tremble, so I have gone with option A since I am certain that you two would be displeased with me for doing so. The cobra replies to his thoughts. Currently tracking everyone in the houses thoughts as a way to distract myself, so please do not consider all of the ways you can enjoy your mates company at this time.

The chuckles becomes a full out laugh, because really the idea is just amusing as hell. “Well mister, where is my bondmate at and has he eaten yet?”

Library, not at this time, though I did give him some hot tea a few hours ago after he spoke with the German Blue Russian cat Fayre. Since then he has spent the last several hours going through the library, learning where everything in the library is. The cobra pauses while he switches out the type of meat he is cooking and places the completed meat in the oven to keep it warm. I believe he is looking at the lineage book again. I do believe he is surprised by how detailed some of the pack lineages are.

He nods, making a plate of food up and grabbing a juice. “So what type of conversation are the four in the basement having?”

My pup is tell those three all about this pack, the various members, what the people have been like towards him, and how he came to be here. He pauses shrugging before continuing, The Indian mice
wish to accept your offer to stay within the den. The South African mice wish to inquire if they may
join the den because they have been speaking with the Indian mice and are pleased with what they
have heard. The wolf couple Briar and Laura wish to bondchild the Egypt mice twins if there is no
families. Four of the rhesus macaque wish to stay, the remaining one is trying to decided what she
wishes to do. The German cat is considering staying. That is twenty-one of the twenty-five of the
shifters that desire or are considering staying here. Your bondmate has already begun arranging for
the education of all of the shifters, since the vast majority of them were children when they were
captured. In three days I go hunting.

“Alright, thank you Eric,” he replies before carrying the plate off to the library, he knows his mate
has a bad habit of not eating.

As he heads to the library, he greets the few shifters that he finds roaming around. Some of them are
wolves getting ready to go to their day job but that had stayed over after helping out the previous
night. Others are those who had been trapped and are getting used to the idea of being able to
wander around at will. Still he understands that there will be some adjusting for all.

Why three days? He finally inquires of the cobra as he pushes the door open to the library.

Because he has nearly got them convinced to join the den, at which point I will not fret quite as
much. Is his soft reply.

Right, you not fret? Doesn’t happen, you’re a born fretter. He jokes, knowing that the older shifter
will understand.

The impression of a smile it the only response he gets.

When he enters the library, he is unsurprised to find his bondmate is curled up in the armchair closest
to the fireplace with the large lineage book open on his lap.

“Morning love, here, I brought some breakfast.”

“Not hungry,” his bondmate replies as he changes the page. “Did you know that your family is
indirectly related to more than half the wolves in this pack? Almost all of it through your father?”

He shrugs, setting the plate down, “Of course, most packs are closely related, to the members within
it. Our pack was started by an elite wolf named Watan over four-thousand years ago, he bondmated
a female wolf name Sonya, they had four pups, one elite, three not. The elite was the second
youngest and male named Watson, he inherited the pack after going through the combat trials. Three
of the four pups bonded, the fourth dedicated her life to the Earth Lord and never sought her mate.
Of the three that bonded, all had pups, only one elite was born however and that was to Watson and
his bondmate, Raena. It’s been that way for generations with only one or two elite being born per
generation. On the occasions its two, one is male and one is female. I could probably recite the entire
direct family tree if I tried, since Jason insisted that I memorize it when I presented as an elite rather
than a regular wolf.”

“Really? How accurate are the records?” his bondmate inquires as he sets the book down and looks
at him.

He nods, “Very accurate, and yes, I can, I might stutter a bit at times because it’s been a decade since
I last did it but I could. Every pack also has a record keeper who tracks those entries to make sure
that they are correct. It is done under bloodseal, so they cannot lie. I believe the current one in the
pack is my aunt.”
Joining him at the small table he placed the breakfast and juice on, his bondmate has a thoughtful look on his face. After grabbing a piece of toast to nibble on he eventually asks, “Is only the head family tracked or are all pack members tracked?”

“The book you are looking at is the Watson lineage book, however there are several different books on the pack. Actually, the pack book is updated yearly, and I believe that there are several different pack books, the lineage book is actually the third one of its kind, with the first to being carefully stored to keep them from decaying. You would have to speak with Aunt Sandra for more details.” He replies to the question.

“Can you list them? Why is there so few in such a long period of time?” his bondmate queries.

“Elites and their bondmates have long lifespans as a rule, as long as nothing kills them a healthy elite can live up to four to five hundred years, an alpha stays an alpha until death or until they willingly step down. My uncle’s death was rather unusual, but considering he did not really take care of himself, and the fact that he wanted to die after my aunt’s death, it was not totally surprising. However if you want I can list them, just the alpha, or the alpha and their bondmate?”

His mate considers it for a few minutes before saying, “Both.”

With a smile he settles back against the seat and begins to speak, starting at the beginning of the shifters. Telling the story of how the shifters came to be, how the first shifter clans came to be. He is mildly surprised to see that nearly all the shifters, including the three from the basement holding themselves close to the door and to each other. Unsurprisingly Jace is hovering near the trio, his eyes continuously flickering towards the female in the trio even as he hovered equally close to the cobra. Still he continues to speak, carefully going over each member in his lineage. When he is done speaking, he drinks the orange juice that one of the pups had handed him with thanks before inquiring if anyone had any questions.

He is only mildly surprised it is Jace who inquires, “Are there any bondchildren in your family?”

Nodding he replies, “Several, though none in the direct line between myself and Watan and Sonya.” Pausing he considers it for a moment, “However there is one male-male and one female-female couples with bloodchildren using surrogates.”

“How?” one of the mice asks but he does not see which one.

Smiling he explains the process of selecting a surrogate and going through the ritual that gets the surrogate pregnant with the two males child or how one of the females is used to create the male side of the genetics for the female-female couple. Most of the shifters give a wide eyed stare at the response. He realizes that they thought that they would be unable to have families if they selected the lover of the same gender, so this news gave them a new appreciation of their kind.

Not long after, the cobra announces that breakfast is done if anyone wishes to come eat, and the library clears out of most of the shifters except for the four South African mice who all keep glancing between each other before the taller female steps forward, “We have been speaking with the other mice and would like to stay here. Your nest is a lot like a mouse nest, and we miss our home but know it is gone.”

He nods once, with a smile, “You are welcome to stay and join the pack, I welcome all shifter types within it.”

She smiles back at him hesitantly before the four of them nod and withdraw, heading to breakfast according to their thoughts. Apparently the idea of being able to eat like a human and visit with
others is one they all like vastly, not surprising considering the nature of mice as a shifter race.

“Well love, I think our pack has grown by twenty people. That means housing, education, and shopping will be required.” He tells his dark-haired human as he nibbles at his now cold breakfast.

Standing, his bondmate remarks, “Come on, you're alpha, you should be eating with the rest of the pack that is here, besides,” he makes a frustrated expression, “I will eat a small portion as well to show good behavior.” A smirk curves his lips as he continues, “I’ve also started arranging for all of that as well since I figured they would not wish to live with Aunt Sandra indefinitely.”

Grinning, he grabs the cold food and the cup after giving his mate a hug and long kiss before the two of them head to the dining hall where the tables and banquet are still set up from the night before only with new food on them. After placing the cold food in the trash, he joins his mate in getting a plate and follows the taller man to where he wants to sit, which just happens to be with the group of rhesus macaques at their table.

Breakfast goes rather smoothly, after finishing eating, he takes the time to visit with each of the tables and the shifters at them. Asking if at some point during the day he can check on each of them and how they are healing from their time. Most of them seem surprised that he is doing so, but they all agree without complaint. So that is how he spends his day, though he notices that the three from the basement withdraw back to the basement at some point during breakfast. Still, progress has been made with them at least coming out for a bit. Something tells him that there is a very stubborn wolf pup who is going to keep working with them until they feel comfortable being out of the basement for long periods of time.

A sardonic smile curves his lips, the next pack meeting in two weeks time is going to be rather full of events he is sure.
2011 August Full Moon Pack Meeting

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

So here is my polling question: Would anyone be interested in me posting a list of the pack members (or at least the ones I have already introduced in some method?) along with where they are in the pack hierarchy and what species they are? Leave a comment with any preference please.

Sorry its taken so long to post, life has been rather crazy and depressing lately so it has been hard to focus on writing, hopefully things will start improving sooner than later and I will be returning to my daily updates.

John’s POV

By the time the August Full Moon meeting rolls around, they had returned home though they still spent a lot of time out at the Watson pack home, but not all of their time. They had both returned to working their normal jobs, which is to say, Sherlock was working with Greg and the pups again while he was back at the clinic. He was mildly surprised by the fact that there were more shifter-children coming through the clinic now then there had been in the past, and it spurred him even further into considering opening his own clinic but still did not think he had enough time to do so. So it was something he would just keep thinking about.

Eric had been right about how many desired to stay. Of the twenty-five Baskerville shifters, twenty-one had elected to join the pack. The other four had returned to their families.

Siusan and her twins, Aven and Keaira, had been reunited with their original pride. Her bondmate, Bryant, had been overwhelmed with joy when he had first seen his mate and children. He had watched with pleasure as the family had reunited. Being the telepath that he is, he had listened carefully to the other shifters thoughts and memories. Bryant had been sedated for nearly the entire time that his mate had been missing, the healer of his pride having done it because he was going insane. Since the pride’s trackers and elder had been unable to trace her, they had thought that she was actually dead and his mark was a soul-fade mark rather than a bondmark. Now that she was reunited with her family, he doubted that her family was ever going to lose track of her again.

Vevina is reunited with her parents, Cwen and Nicolas, her seven siblings, along with an entire pride of aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents and other members of their pride. Her parents had never given up looking, but because she was so young when she was taken and had been immediately blocked, she had not been traceable. They had gained an ally in the Moore Pride who had rejoiced at their missing member coming home. With that ally, they had gained assistance in acquiring supplies needed for the others. Apparently several of the cat families within the Moore Pride owned clothing stores, tailor shops, and seamstresses so they had been more than willing to help the remaining shifters get clothing.

Of the remaining twenty-one, Ekram of the Indian mice and Ilori of the South African mice had developed bondmarks though they were not rushing into anything. That had probably finalized their decision to stay with the pack, it also gave them reason to mix with each other more often, allowing...
the nine of them to get to know each other better.

The mice twins prefer to stick together but had been spending most of the day time with Briar and Laura, the wolf couple who had decided to bondchild the two of them, as of tonight they would be leaving the Watson pack home in order to go to the older wolves home, where they would live from now on. Though they would still attend catch up lessons with the rest of the shifters they had been found with.

The three from the basement were coming out more, they had gotten to the point where they would leave the basement of their own will when Jace was around, but none of them tended to move far from each other. Occasionally Cleon would sneak out to explore at night, but never with Qamra. On the instances that all three of them were out with Jace, they tended to stay close to him. The only wolves that the chocolate colored elite pup did not seem to mind near his cousin were females, and even then, it was mostly younger ones. The rest of them he tended to growl at and threaten away. Still, it was progress, and that was a very important thing. It was slow going, but he hoped that once they were formally pulled within the pack that the fear level would lesson because the packbond would help the process along.

Macrae had pretty close to barricaded himself into his room, only coming out when someone else would prompt him to and never of his own will. He seems to be the one most afraid of his shadow. Despite numerous mindhealings and the fact the compulsions where broken, he still had years of training to overcome and it was going to be a very long process. His aunt had decided that she was going to try and help the younger wolf, maybe even adopt him since her daughter was already grown and mated with pups of her own.

The German Blue Russian had presented herself after he was done with his recital of the family tree. In a tone that had reminded him of his bondmate she had inquired if she could stay, she had tried to find the rest of her birth pride, but she could feel the void left in her from where the bonds had broken when they had died. She could still barely feel some of those who had been born to the same pride as her but had changed prides, but she would not go begging from them, none of them were directly related and had no cause to accept her into their families. Almost as soon as he had agreed that she could join the pack, she had smiled, and it had been the type of smile he was accustomed to seeing out of Eric, so seeing it on this young woman’s face had been startling. Quickly following the smile, she had inquired if she could have permission to train under the Tracker that she could easily feel in the pack home. He had agreed, telling her that she had to ask him, because it was his choice in the end. She had also asked if she could have the lock picker teach her any tricks that he would. She was the one that seemed to explore in her cat form the most though she had not yet left the house to do so.

Of all the new shifters, Li Xia was the most explorative one, where the rest seemed to be scarred in some way, their behavior echoing their time spent trapped, hers did not. She was happy and curious, spending any time that she was not learning exploring the pack home and property. She was also the one who wanted to get into the world immediately in some way or form. The other four rhesus macaques could not match her zealouosity for life, though her mate, Kao Shing seemed to fret about her regularly, trying to keep her moderated in her behavior because he was worried that she wanted out into the world far too soon. The other three all varied on their views, with the other female spending a lot of time on the roof. The oldest male spending a lot of time in the library, slowly working on learning to read English as well as he speaks it. With the youngest male wishing to spend time with the other ones of his kind and getting to know the others in the house as well.

Mouse had made arrangements to start teaching them after the upcoming full moon meeting. A couple of times over the last few weeks she had made it her point to stop in and speak with the various shifters. Learning what they wanted to do with themselves if they knew and what they
She already knew. She was figuring out what type of lessons to give each of them and arranging with the others within the pack who could teach as well. Since the rhesus macaques all read and write in Mandarin she had checked with Soo Lin to see if she could work with them on their English since she reads and writes both. Kim-ann, Konrad’s mother, understands Hindi, thus she is the best one to work with teaching the five Indian mice to read and write in English. Luckily all six from Africa understand English, though none of them can read or write, Mouse has already determined how to help them learn. She had also designed a set of tests based off of what she had used with Jace to figure out what they needed to learn in the other subjects.

In between cases and working with the older pups, Sherlock and those pups had made sure to get the measurements of every shifter for shoes since that was one thing he was not going to estimate on. He had also made sure to arrange for food deliveries on a semi-regular bases to make sure that there is plenty to eat, though a lot of what he orders does not require cooking such as snack foods like fruit, vegetable, and meat and cheese trays, along with foods to make easy, mass quantity foods such as roast or soups.

Eric had vanished the previous week, leaving Aidan in control of the computers and all of the watching though the younger cobra joked that he really wasn’t, it was still Eric. He knew exactly what the older cobra was doing. Each of the people who had a hand in the imprisonment and massacre of the families was being systematically hunted down and killed. Depending on their part in the situation is how they were being killed or having their minds shredded. While their families were each tested as well to make sure that they would not carry the taint as well, then a memory of finding their relative dead was implanted and they were allowed to take care of them, at least some of them. Again it depends on how he kills them as to if they get their bodies back.

So it was the night of the full moon, which meant it was time for the important pack meeting. This pack meeting was probably going to be as long and tiring as the one when they dealt with the Devon pack. On the plus side, none of tonight’s activities were on the bad side like they had been that night. He knew that the older cobra would be there in order to insure smooth night and to prevent problems by draining all negative emotions.

After work, he heads back to the flat in order bath and dress. Almost as soon as he gets home, he stops in 221C in order to kiss his bondmate before heading upstairs. A few minutes later the tall human joins him in the shower, and the two of them take turns carefully washing each other before they get out and dress. Sometime in the last two weeks, his mate had retrieved his pack design outfit from their bedroom at the pack house, because when he emerges from the bedroom a few minutes after him, he is dressed in the dark blue, almost black outfit with the Watson pack design and his own alpha-second identification markers on it.

While he knows he looks goofy, he still cannot help the large, delighted smile that curves his lips. “Perfect.” He murmurs appreciatively, happy that the pack tailor had been able to fashion it so well for him.

“I considered taking it to my tailor to have it fitted to me, but decided against it, I assume that the design cut is intentional?” his bondmate remarks.

Nodding, he replies, “It is, our pattern has remained nearly the same since our pack began, though the style of clothes has changed a bit, it still incorporates the same design. Any pack that has been around for the last one thousand years would recognize your status within the Watson pack and give the respect that that status demands. As far as packs go, ours is one of the oldest wolf packs, there are rumors that we are directly related to the first wolf Therasa, but I always shrug them off because all wolves are related to her, though very distantly.”
“Amazing,” his bondmate murmurs.

“Ready?” he inquires, before continuing, “I’d like to get there before Eric.”

His bondmate nods and the two of them head to the roof where he shifts before the two of them take off after shielding. His bondmate settled close against his back as they race through the city.

They are just about to the pack home when he mate inquires, Why is Eric going to be there if he is on a hunt?

He is coming to keep the emotions down, the one thing about his dark empathy is if you need emotions to be kept low, he is the one to do it by pulling the energy out of the air. Of course he has to direct the energy, so I think I am going to see about doing a set of wave healing on the various new pack members as they are brought into the fold. He replies as they finish their trip. Besides, do you honestly think that he is going to allow that many emotional people near Jace without being there to ensure that he is safe?

Good point, his bondmate replies.

When the two of them get to the pack home, he returns to his human form after his mate gets off his back. After a quick kiss, the pair heads into the house to check on his aunt before heading to the back yard where the pack was already gather. Like most pack meeting days, he makes it a point to speak with everyone before heading to the area where they the formal announcements are made.

He is making his way over to the announcement spot when Aidan surprises him, by coming towards him with a questioning look so he pauses to see what the younger shifter needs. “Hello Aidan, you look like you have a question.”

The black head inclines slightly in a nod as he replies, My sister Zara requested yesterday that I arrange a meeting between yourself and her. However her flight into London was late, thus she did not make it at a reasonable hour and was worried about doing so yesterday.

“Zara? The one right above you, remeberancer if I am recalling right. Why does she wish to see me?” he queries, curious why a viper would wish to speak with him.

I mentioned your comment about seeing Eric with pups, the idea intrigued her. She has always feared him, plain terror could even be used to describe her feelings, however after giving it several weeks consideration, she has decided that she would like to meet him as an adult. However, she is still scared and knows that you have some ability to control him, so wished to ask if she could attend a pack meeting for part of it in order to do so. She understands that there is private pack business so is not asking to stay for the entire thing. The cobra replies, his explanation being a bit long winded despite the fact it is telepathic.

“Is she in town?” he inquires to that speech.

Again the younger shifter inclines his head in a nod before answering, Indeed. She is at my apartment currently.

“Well, go get her, tonight is a welcoming for our twenty-one new members along with some minor announcements.” He grins a bit crookedly. “Tonight will work perfectly actually, he’ll be too busy focusing elsewhere in order to be scary.”

The younger cobra nods once more, bowing slightly before heading out, long limbs eating the ground space between where he is and to his vehicle. A moment later the older cobra appears at his
side, eyes still silver as he scans the room.

_The emotions are not high yet. He hears softly stated in their private link, where is Aidan going?_

"You have a visitor, he is just fetching them." He replies to the cobra, “Come on, let’s get this started, the others have already gathered even Sherlock.”

A small nod is his answer before the two of them head over to join Sherlock, Jacob, and Daria. As they go he queries, _What do you plan to do with the extra energy?_

_Have not decided yet, I considered warding the property but decided to do so would be a bit disrespectful without asking._ The taller man replies as they continue their walk.

_How about funneling the energy my way and I will reinforce the healing done on our twenty-one new pack members as I welcome them formally to the pack?_ He suggests.

A single nod is the taller man’s response.

Once they join the others, Jacob starts the calling of order process before beginning to call each of the new shifters up in turn to be welcomed to the pack. As their historical custom demands he starts with the elite before moving on to the other wolves, before moving through mice, then the house cat, and finishing with the rhesus macaque being at the end. Each of them greet him first before moving on to Sherlock, then going to the other ones as custom dictated.

It goes surprisingly smoothly, with each formal greeting, a surge of energy, more than normal passes from him to the new members as he welcomes them into the pack and surge healing. As he does so, he can feel their emotions in a way he had not felt during a pack bonding since he first made the military bond. Afterwards, all of the pack members, old, new, military, submerged, and rescue all merge together getting to know each other and he is quite pleased to see the results. Every one of them seems to be getting along fine. Soon enough their group has broken up as Sherlock is commandeered by the older pups, Eric is dragged away by the younger pups, Jacob is pulled away by some of the older pack members wishing to speak with him, while Daria goes to speak with the other pack iota and omicron, comparing notes on the twenty-one who remained and their health care. He knows that Mouse is still working with the others that have any sort of teaching ability.

He is considering what to do next when he is politely approached by Aidan with a dark-haired female close behind. According to scent it is his sister. Like her brother and father, her hair is black, only where their highlights seem to be dark blue-purple in the sunlight, hers are auburn-red. Golden eyes greet him rather than silver or black. While she has elements of her two male relatives, he can easily see where the elements of her female relatives are as well.

_Elder John Watson, I would like to present my elder sister, Remembrance Zara of the Corbin Den._ The younger shifter formally comments on the non-pack telepathic link.

“Elder Watson,” she murmurs, bowing slightly, out-pack to pack alpha, a formalness that drove him a bit nuts, “My thanks for granting my request.”

Smiling warmly, he replies, “Hello Zara, welcome to the Watson pack home. Eric is over that a way,” he waves his hand towards where the pups tend to play, “probably being swamped by pups wanting to use his tail as a slide.”

She blushes, nodding once before bowing again and drifting off.

_I can feel her fear, even with him draining all of the heavy emotions in the area I can still feel it like a pulse. Are you sure she is going to be able to come face to face with him?_ he queries of the
younger shifter male.

Titling his head a bit, the younger cobra replies, *She wishes to try, she has Seen him playing with the hatchlings in shared memories and that has made her hopeful.*

He nods once, smiling at the younger man before wandering off to check on how the new members are doing.
Mycroft’s POV

In the month’s time since the Baskerville incident, during which time General Keir had completely stripped Baskerville of its staff and re-staffed it, things had been crazy. He had heard rumors that a military bus was used to transport twenty-five people that had been found in Baskerville to the Watson family home. Once there he did not have any idea what had happened to those people, even the trials concerning the military soldiers who had been removed seemed to be sealed, though they were sealed under some old law which he actually had to look up to know about. It was under Protection of the Peaceful Coexistence Act, a law which had been put into place nearly four hundred years previously.

He had not realized that shifters where known of during that time, but the law clearly stated Humans, Shifters, Gifted, and Immortals could not be hunted or attacked by a member of the other species without punishment. Apparently the law had been put into place when a member of the royal family had married a shifter. While their children had never taken the throne, it had been decided that they needed to be protected from the hunters that had cost the spouses life. That had surprised him greatly, particularly when he discovered that Layard was distantly related to that particular branch of the royal family. Did that mean that Layard was a shifter?

Exactly five weeks after the Baskerville situation he was invite to eat dinner at Gregory’s house on their regular dinner night, rather than at a restaurant. Apparently it was his eldest daughter’s idea. While he was not sure how well he would get along with Gregory’s daughters, he accepted anyways, and made sure to have Anthea schedule his day so that he would be able to make it on time. Manners dictated that he bring a gift for the hostess since he had been actually invited for a change, but he was not sure what to bring a sixteen year old hostess.

The morning he was to go over there, he is sitting behind his desk after having just finished some paperwork and had turned his mind to the problem.

“Sir?” his rather able bodied PA queries.

“Yes Anthea?” he replies, still considering the problem. If it was a foreign dignitary he would know what to get her, it would depend on her culture, hell he would even know what to get one of the nobles from their own society but he still cannot determine what to get her.

“Is something wrong sir?” she asks, a small frown curving her lips.

Glancing at her speculatively, he inquires, “No, why?”

“You’re frowning like you did when the Koreans did not wish to cooperate with you last autumn.” She answers him, phone lowered so she can gaze at him.
For a moment he says nothing, then he asks abruptly, “What does one get a sixteen year old hostess, who may or may not be a shifter?”

Cocking her head to the side, she thinks about it for a moment before questioning, “Type of shifter?”

“Jackal, both sides of her family has jackals, but her parents are both not. I do not know if she is a jackal or not.” He pauses for a moment, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Detective Inspector Lestrade’s eldest daughter has issued an invitation for our weekly dinner to be at his house because she ‘wishes to meet the person outside of the pack Daddy is spending time with’;” he continues closing his eyes as he thinks.

“Jackals are very family and pack orient, very traditional. A gift should be something useful to the family but respectful to the hostess.” She comments, “Perhaps you should consider something that would not normally be considered a gift such as a handmade throw blanket, book, an herb planter, or something that shows appreciation of the family.” she pauses, lifting her phone to start typing on it, “Is this for tonight’s engagement?”

He nods, pulling out the next batch of paperwork that he has to finish before his next meeting.

“I will consider the options and have you a selection by lunch time,” she tells him before heading to the door after a few moments of silence, the only sounds being his changing the pages of his report he’s reading and her clicking at the keys on the phone, “Your next meeting should be here.”

Again he nods as he finishes the last page and closes it, accepting both the announcement and stating that he is ready for the meeting.

Several hours later it is a little while after lunch when his PA comes back in with a small pile of papers. “Here are the suggestions for you to consider, Sir, three of them come in several options and can be acquired on your way to the dinner this evening.”

He carefully looks through the papers while she briefs him on his last two meetings of the day before he is scheduled for paperwork time. He will have to decide after the meetings, he decides, because he wishes to study each option a bit more before selecting his choice. This negotiation was no less important than the ones he had with other dignitaries. His goal was to earn a way into pack life, since he was certain it was not something his brother would welcome, he needed another source. He had already been advised to not lie around the shifters. Instead he would approach the situation like a war-time peace agreement.

Three hours later, he is happy to see the back of his last meeting of the day. The minor government official who had been visiting had been annoying, ranting about a problem they had been having regarding agents turning up without their memories and dead. While part of him is wondering why, it is not currently his problem so he is not going to bother with it until it is a little more relevant, since he was not being accused of the situation it was immaterial to the rest of their meeting.

Once the minor official is gone, he pinches the bridge of his nose again, sighing, before returning to looking through the options Anthea had provided him with. Her suggestions included a handmade quilt, a small wood memory box, a stained glass window overlay, and a brass and porcelain tea service.

“Why brass? Why not silver?” he inquires glancing up at his PA as he debates between the tea service and the memory box after setting the other two aside for future gift ideas.

“Few shifters willingly use silver since it can be made into a poison,” she replies absently as she uses her phone.
“Interesting,” he murmurs, setting that aside and leaving him with just the wooden memory box. “This memory box, where is it purchased and why is it called a memory box instead of jewelry box?”

She names a place along the way, before explaining, “A jewelry box is made with small spots to hold jewelry only, a memory box has a small spot for jewelry, but it also has a spot for important documents, pictures, cards, and small mementos. It also comes with a leather bound journal that is for recording where the items are from that is fitted into the top of the box. They come in varying sizes.”

He nods, before standing and stretching. A few minutes later the two of them are on their way out, his assistant sitting in the back seat of the car as they go, tapping away at her phone while he is considering the evening to follow. About half way to the Lestrade Household they stop at a small store where they purchase a cherry wood box with a dark red leather bound journal before continuing on their way. Upon getting to the house, he gets out with the box and journal. Carefully adjusting his suit before telling her that he will inform her when he is ready and heading up the path to the front door, taking in the sight of the new house for the first time.

It is a rather nice house, almost out of the older man’s range if he was buying it on the regular market. However it was an in pack sale, and the price was ensured at something he could afford. The new vehicle in the drive way was not perfect, but it was also of good quality and his mind rapidly creates a blue print from what he can see outside before he knocks once and waits. He does not have to wait long, before a minute has passed, a teenager with bright green eyes and short brown hair.

“Hello?” she softly greets him, as she opens the door, “You’re Mr. Holmes, come in,” she states as she looks at him.

“Thank you,” he replies as he steps through. She was too short to be Charlotte who was on the tall side and amber-eyed.

She nods, closing the door behind him before directing him to the living room where Gregory is seated with his youngest daughter, helping her with her homework. “Daddy, he’s here,” the young lady announces to her father before heading towards the other side of the house.

“Good afternoon Gregory, who may this be?” he politely inquires as he glances around.

“Hullo Mycroft, you can sit down if you would like, would you like something to drink?” Gregory greets him as he glances up, “We’re just about done here, it took a little longer than planned. Chare should be just about done with dinner.”

He nods once, settling into the seat near the door and looking around. Even though they had only been in the house a couple of months, he could already see signs of where they were making it their home. There was pictures of the girls all around, along with other little things that make a house seem lived in without seeming overly messy. It is actually a rather warm feeling to. It is far more home like then the house he grew up in or the flat that he currently lives in.

Not even five minutes later, the two of them are done and the little girl is putting her things away. Shortly after that, the young lady who had let him comes into the living room to tell them that dinner is done before retreating again.

Standing slowly, he follows the other two into the dining room where an older teenager is carefully laying dinner out on the table with the help of the middle daughter.

When she spots him she smiles, “Hello Mr. Holmes, thank you for accepting the invitation to dinner, we were curious who it was Dad was spending his time with when not with us.” her voice is soft
when she speaks, but not as soft as the middle girl who says nothing else for the moment.

“Mycroft, these are my daughters Charlotte, Madeline, and Sofia. Charlotte and Madeline are the ones who made dinner tonight.” Gregory says as he comes back into the dining room from the kitchen if his glance through the door registered correctly.

“Pleasure to meet you,” he murmurs politely before turning to Charlotte and offering her the small wooden box that he is holding. “A thank you gift for inviting me to dinner.”

She carefully accepts it, unwrapping it and smiling, “Thank you sir, it’s a lovely memory box.” Once she has looked at it carefully she shows it to her sisters and father, before leaving the room to put it up.

Madeline pulls the chair next to her the head of the table out, with a small smile towards him before sitting down in the spot next to it. When the older daughter returns, she settles across from him, while the youngest sits next to her. Since the one seat is left open, he figures that it is for him though Charlotte tells him as much when she sits down.

“How was your day Mr. Holmes?” Charlotte inquires as everyone serves themselves.

“Productive,” he replies after taking a few bites, “May inquire as to how your day was?”

She just about beams at him, finishing her bite before replying, “It’s been good, Madeline and I spent most the day in the kitchen, it’s been great!” she excitedly tells him.

The youngest beside her pipes up with, “I helped too! I helped too!” just about bouncing in her seat as she continues, “I washed all the vegetables for cooking.”

The oldest of the trio smiles at her sister before nodding and silence falls for several minutes.

“I thought that school was out for the summer break?” he inquires, glancing between the girls.

Hopping in her seat, the littlest one answers him, “It is, but I want to skip a year, and I have to be able to prove I can, so I am doing next year’s courses over the summer, then the week before school starts they will grade my work and decided whether I can skip ahead or not. Daddy was helping me with the parts I was having trouble with.”

“That is ambitious of you,” he remarks, mildly surprised, the detective inspectors youngest daughter was eight, and she was already attempting to skip grades? Impressive.

She smiles at him, still bouncing in her seat as she remarks, “Our alpha graduated early and the alpha-second says I could too if I work really hard. So I am going to!”

Curious, he raises and eyebrow at Gregory in question but says nothing.

“She’s referring to Sherlock and John, you are already aware that John is the alpha, and he has selected Sherlock for his second.” The detective inspector explains, “She’s decided to join the other pups taking lessons over the summer with the different teachers within the pack.”

“What do you do Mr. Holmes?” the little one inquires after taking a drink of her juice.

He smiles, “I hold a minor government position,” he replies, “lots of paperwork.”

“Homework!” she exclaims, “Daddy has homework too, can I go read now?”

“Go ahead Sofia,” Gregory chuckles.
Smiling, the little girl jumps up, grabbing her plate and taking it to the kitchen as she goes.

The middle girl looks at him, eyes narrow for a moment before she murmurs, “I’m done, can I go upstairs?” as she speaks he realizes that she has a lisp.

He nods, smiling at her, and like the younger daughter, the middle daughter collects her dishes before heading to the kitchen and then he hears her going upstairs as she said.

“Did you enjoy dinner?” the oldest inquires as she finishes her plate.

“I did, thank you,” he replies politely yet honestly.

She smiles, before getting up and beginning to clean the table.

“Thank you Chare,” the silver-haired detective inspector murmurs as he gets up, “dinner was excellent, well Mycroft, would you like to have a drink in the living room?”

He nods, “That would be acceptable.”

With that the two of them head into the living room where they have a rather nice conversation, discussing everything from cases that Sherlock had worked the last several weeks and had been in the newspaper to Gregory’s work to the girls and their goals to his own opinions on certain movies and books. By the end of the night he leaves the house rather content with the way things were turning out. It was nearly midnight before he finally called for his pick up.

After getting cleaned up, he heads to bed, planning for the next day. Little does he realize the type of hell that is about to occur.

Chapter End Notes

Protection of the Peaceful Coexistence Act- not a real law of course, a law designed for this world to protect the different races from genocide by the other races. It is actually older than most know, as the common public thinks that shifters are a new race when they really are not and this law is from a time in the past when shifters lived along side humans then as well. Punishment includes fines, imprisonment, or death depending on the strength of the crime.
So here’s a funny one for ya’ll, my dad works on computers, radios, and guns for a living (odd combo I know) but ask him to fix the TV and he gives you a blank stare. This would have been done sooner, only I spent most of yesterday and today fixing his TV.

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

Mycroft’s POV

He was almost to lunch when everything went horribly wrong. He was alerted to three different security breaches at the same time as New Scotland Yard. The first breach was at White Tower of London where an alarm went off, minutes later there is a second breach is at the Bank of England, and just minutes after that there is one at Pentonville Prison. As soon as the alarm goes out he has his phone in hand and is making calls to the various security teams to deploy. Anthea had the CCTV up and running in his office before five minutes had even passed and what had he discovered?

Jim Moriarty sitting in the throne at the White Tower with an ermine trimmed robe draped over his shoulders, the royal crown on his head, the orb between his knees and holding the sceptre across his lap. His eyes are closed and he appears to have headphones on listening to something, as the guards come rushing into the room he sees him mutter something, it takes watching it twice before he realizes what it is he says, “No rush.”

After rewinding the footage he watches as the mastermind enters the tower. Puts in his ear buds before cracking his neck from the looks of it, from there he spreads his arms dramatically yet no one seems to notice as he clicks the music on his phone. He continues to watch the footage as the slender man uses his thumb to scroll through the icons on his phone before clicking on one. Almost immediately after he presses whatever icon is on his phone, the alarms at the Tower go off and everyone starts to exit except for him. He stands perfectly still right up until the guard approaches him to leave at which point he spends around and sprays something that drops the guard to the ground. Once the guard is on the ground, he observes as the dark-haired man pull his cap off and drop it on top the guard while smoothing his hair and watching the door automatically swing closed.

He continues to watch as he dances around for a moment before pausing in nearly the same stance as the first time he had pressed a button on his phone. This time when he does so, it is the banks alarm that the timing matches with and he realizes that he must have hacked the system somehow. Perhaps it would be best to ask Aragorn to look into the matter as one of the best hackers in the world. After spending a few moments swaying in place he pulls a white marker out and proceeds to write on the glass of the case surrounding the jewels and robe. The message he sees is Get Sherlock with a smiley face drawn within the o of his name.

Once the slender man is done writing that he turns with the phone in his hand and clicks on it one more time. This click aligns with when the prisons security crashed. The guards had reacted nearly instantly, keeping the prisoners from escaping but it was a near thing and several had been injured in
the processes while waiting for their backup. While still at the tower, he had spun around for a moment before stretching the gum from his mouth to the glass between the two words he had written. Then he pulled a small jeweler's box out of his pocket, removing a tiny diamond which he place in the gum with the sharp edge of it facing the glass beneath with a manic smile on his face.

As he continues to watch the footage he sees him drop his jacket before raising his hands high into the air as if he is in the ballet above his head before dancing over to the fire extinguisher in the same fashion. At the fire extinguisher he grabs it, dancing back as if formally dancing with a partner to the glass where he lines the end of it up with the diamond before smashing the extinguisher through the plane several times so that the glass falls to the ground. The manic smile still in place, though now there is a look of success as well. Nearly before the glass finishes falling to the ground, the slender man is climbing in and situating himself within the throne, robe and items as he is seen in the first image he had looked at.

Sitting back he pinches the bridge of his nose while considering how to handle this. They had tried locking him up without success. Ruled out torture because there was something about him that said it would not work. The next thing he watches is as Moriarty is placed in the back of the police vehicle, calm as you please and taken away. Not long after it is his brother and companion show up at the Tower and review the tapes as well.

Perhaps he should ask that teenage looking cobra for assistance. Aragorn had mentioned he was a better hacker. It would be something to consider anyways, the idea of actually approaching him was one that he had a hard time coming to grips with.

Eric’s POV

He had just returned home from finishing his hunting trip. Each and every person involved with the Baskerville shifters was dealt with. Many were now dead, their deaths made to look accidental to their families when they were anything but. Those without families he had killed outright before disposing of them so they would not be found. During his nearly ten weeks of terror he had also found and destroyed three more labs, using his rank as a elite black cobra tracker to enlist assistance from local shifter populations as he needed. All of the shifters he had found within the labs he had made sure to find placements for, including sending a few of them back to his den to be helped by John and the rest of them. Thankfully his elder had never questioned why he sent those particular ones back or what happened with the rest of them because he did not have the time at the moment to do so.

As he stretches out in his conservatory, long snake form relaxed, his laptop open so he can review the last several weeks he inquires politely if his son can visit to review as well. Luckily enough the younger shifter is not busy and is over within a few minutes. Almost as soon as he enters the house however he can smell that there is something off in the air. An instant later he is human again, or as human as he ever appears with the black scales that cover his body.

“What's happened that has you on edge?” he just about demands rather than greeting the younger shifter. Aidan is one person whose head he tries to stay out of though he sometimes has a hard time doing so.

Startled, the younger shifter blinks at him for a moment before answering, “The elder-second has been pulled into a human problem by a Jim Moriarty. Tomorrow is the first day of court, something seems off about this, I have considered backhacking to find out what I can but law forbids it.”

As soon as his son states the name he hisses, a long exhale of anger and turns to his computer. “You
cannot, I on the other hand can. Particularly since that damned Irishmen has a gifted partner.”

Flinching, the younger man steps back involuntarily before nodding. “I, yes, of course,” then a bit sheepishly mutters, “sorry.”

Titling his head to the side, he glances at the younger man, “Why? As far as I can tell you have nothing to be sorry for?” after studying his son’s posture for a moment he realizes the reasoning and waves it off, “please, I would be more concerned if you didn’t step back when I am giving off the I plan to slaughter someone type scents.”

Again the younger man blinks rapidly at him in shock, “Hadn’t thought of it like that.”

Snorting his fingers fly over the keys as he catches himself up on the things that he had missed. He has surprised himself by allowing Aidan complete control over the system while he was gone, only occasionally checking in to make sure that there was nothing going majorly wrong with the den and those under its protection. Since he had never informed the younger shifter of the trouble that could be that damned Irish human, he did not hold him responsible for the events that were occurring.

He is unaware of when his son leaves or even of the passage of time between when he starts going through everything. By the time morning comes and it is time for the trial he has already caught himself up on everything along with hacked the humans system in order to trace everything including the fact that the damned human has hacked the TV systems for the jury members.

He announces his presence to his elder with a brush of minds on their private link before inquiring, Has he asked for our assistance yet?

No. There is a pause before he continues, Welcome home, can you keep an eye on things? I don’t trust that damned human or the tricks he likes to play.

Neither do I, link and share? He inquires of the golden wolf.

A mental nod is his answer before he feels him opening the complete link he watches and listens through his elder’s senses as they ride in the car to the courthouse. At the same time he hacks the CCTV within the courthouse, making sure to keep himself a ghost in the system but still able to watch everything as it occurs from that front as well. When the pair get to the courthouse, the elder-second excuses himself in order to use the restroom. As soon as he does that the cobra reaches for his protector, finding it to be Maria.

Canine, may I use your senses for a moment? His tone is formal, because while he could use his telepathy to take over her entire mind, it is not something that is considered polite particularly not between den members.

Of course, nu, what do I need to do? she replies nearly instantly.

Stay quiet, he responds as his mind reaches out and locks on to hers. A moment later she is just an echo in her own head as he has taken over her mind and senses.

From the shadowy corner she as shielded in, he watches as a human female according to scent approaches the elder-second as he washes his hands. Eyes narrow, he continues to watch as the two humans face off against each other. As he watches, he uses the canines weaker sense of smell to determine the human females reasoning for being in the men’s restroom and just about snarls at what he sees. Not only is she attempting to flirt with him, she also appears to be trying to convince him to give her an interview.

In normal style the dark-haired human rips her apart and walks out leaving her standing there in
sadness in the men’s restroom. Using the body he had borrowed to quickly lock onto the human female’s mind, he wipes all ambition of speaking with him from her mind before having her erase the recording of him stating that she is repulsive and putting a compulsion on her to leave now and not come back. As the compulsion sets in the human does as directed and he releases Maria with a moment of thanks before returning to sharing with John.

The next several minutes go smoothly as everyone situates themselves and the judge calls things in order. It had been a long while since he had observed the human court system and from his shared perspective he watches as the elder-second is questioned, that annoying human appears to be smirking, and the human staff of the court seems to be getting frustrated with him.

*He’s what I would be if I was more vocal. Intriguing, and yet he lacks the same level of violence that is my nature,* he murmurs to his friend as he scans the humans in the galley that are the jury. Each of them has already been threaten in some form or another so this trial is a farce but because it is a human situation he cannot say anything. *Now why can’t they have one shifter or gifted in the mix? Then I could interfere without it breaking the very laws that I am bound to protect.*

The impression of chuckling is the immediate answer he gets from the shorter shifter, *True enough. You two are going to turn my hair white. I considered telepathically telling him to knock it off but I am staying out of this for now.*

They continue to watch the trial, even as the alpha-second gets himself thrown into holding for contempt of court because he really does not listen very well.

*Humans,* he snorts into his elders mind and receives a mental nod of agreement.

They both keep track of every one of the humans as the rest of the trial goes on before leaving for the night. During the elders time away from his mate and the trial the two of them break apart and he gets a secondary small laptop set up with all of the things he had learned about the Irish annoyances staff, at least the human parts that he cannot touch by their laws. There are times being a Blessed Tracker has its inconvenient moments.

The second day of the trial the elder-second stays home, but the elder and himself sit in and watch. Of course no one can see him so they are not aware that he is there. Since they are no longer sharing senses, he uses his own telepathy to read the thoughts of every single jury members, the judge and his staff, the councils, and last but not least, the damned human whose throat he’d really like to rip out only that human seems to have a nearly blank mind without a single one of his plans on the surface, instead just pure pleasure over what he has already accomplished. Even before they leave to deliberate, he knows what the verdict will be and he quickly dismisses himself, heading home in order to get the rest of the things in order.

Along the way he stops to speak with several different homeless since he is on foot, give small suggestions to the not-quite human ones.

At his house he opens up the program with the cameras at the elders flat, carefully watching as the elder-second gets a phone call from the elder and sets about making tea after dressing. Once the tea is laid out he lifts his violin and proceeds to play. Maria asks if she should interfere and he directs her to stay guard but nothing more, interfere only if the annoying one does something truly dangerous. Instead he watches as the two of them have a conversation about how foolish people are and motives, waiting patiently for a reason that allows him to harm that annoying human without breaking his oath to the Shadow Mistress.

Still things seem to go as well as they could, it is merely a tea and threat, he had done that plenty of times to understand how the process works. Almost wrote the book on how to make it successful, of
course it works better on someone who can be intimidated with ease, and that does not include the elder-second, but hey insane people do insane things.

Over the next two months he continues to track the annoying Irishman, but he never interferes because the elder-second never asks him once, never even mentions it to him.

He is mildly startled when the elder calls his attention one day, Eric, link, I have a feeling that Mycroft has done something stupid since he has sent the car to pick me up.

Sir, he replies as he submerges himself with the other shifter. When they get to the Diogenes Club, he mentally smirks, guiding the blonde shifter through the halls to the Mycroft’s office which seems to startle the ginger-haired human when they come in.

“Is there a reason for all of the silence out there?” his elder comments as he looks around the office.


He’s not sure if it is him or the wolf who snorts but one of them does before the wolf remarks, “So total silence is traditional, is it? You can’t even say, ‘Pass the sugar.’”

As he answers the tall human pours himself a drink from a crystal container, “Three-quarters of the diplomatic service and half the government front bench all sharing one tea trolley. It’s for the best, believe me.” his smile is a bit grim as he continues to speak, “They don’t want a repeat of 1972. But we can talk in here.”

Again he is not sure which of them snorts, though he knows it is the wolf still remarking, “I’m an elite wolf, I understand all about tradition. You try living with a cobra for a month and see what you learn about tradition.” Glancing around he spots a news paper rag laying open the table and looks it over, this time he knows it’s the wolf that snorts.”You read this stuff?”

“Caught my eye,” the human replies as he is taking a sip of his drink and setting it down on a small table before tucking his hands into his pockets. The wolf merely makes a noise and waits for him to continue, “Saturday: they’re doing a big exposé.”

He reads over the article headline quickly spotting the name and both wolf and cobra consider it for a moment. Pulling back partially from the link so he can still listen but not watch, he uses his laptop to look it up Kitty Riley, ah yes the human he had forced to leave the courthouse. Apparently he needed to put a bit of a strong compulsion on her. That would be done tonight. Meanwhile, while he is looking up every detail of the human’s life he listens as the wolf continues his conversation with the elder-seconds brother.

“I’d love to know where she got her information.” The wolf remarks to the human before asking him, Can you find out?

Already doing so. This article will not run, it threatens pack security and that is well within the laws for me to deal with. He replies, also learning about every single person who works for the paper as well. This is the annoying Irishman at work.

“Someone called Brook, recognize the name?” the human queries in response.

He feels as the wolf tilts his head a bit, answering, “School friend maybe?” in a rather sarcastic tone, though he is moderately certain that the human does not realize that he is being sarcastic.

Snidely the human laughs, either because he recognized the sarcasm or because he thought the idea
was ludicrous. “Of Sherlock’s?” the human remarks, before giving a small shake of his head and continuing, “But that is not why I asked you here.”

“Asked would be a different story and if I wasn’t in a good mood your man would have forgotten the rude way he pulled up to me.” the wolf snaps at the taller human.

Shifting his attention back to the conversation he watches as the ginger-haired human lifts several folders and hands them to him, “My apologizes, I will strive to ask politer next time;” the human stiffly responds.

He feels the wolf shrug more than knows it, a small smile curves his lips, “You forget I am not the unassuming human most think I am. You want to talk about the four who have recently moved into our area.”

The human blinks, settling properly into the seat across from him as he states, “In fact, four top international assassins relocate to within spitting distance of two hundred and twenty-one B. Anything you care to share with me?”

“They’re all human which is why they are not dead yet?” he retorts, using John’s voice, while the wolf remarks, “I’m moving?” sarcastically.

The mildly confused look on the human’s face is rather amusing.

Smiling lightly the wolf comments, “Don’t mind the third person in the conversation, he’s bored I think.”

With a small shake of his head the human ignores both of the statements that came out of the wolf and comments, “It’s not hard to guess the common denominator, is it?”

“You think this is Moriarty?” the wolf questions, also sending a feeling of curiosity to him so he checks to see who hired them as well.

Jerking a bit the human responds, “He promised Sherlock he’d come back. “

Nodding once he comments, “If this was Moriarty he would have tried to have us killed already and we would not be having this conversation.”

Shaking his head slightly with his eyes never leaving the wolf, the human almost demands softly, “If not Moriarty, then who?”

A smirk curves the wolf’s lips, and he can feel the sarcasm building up inside him, this is beginning to get on the elders nerves. Despite the annoyance he remarks, “Why don’t you talk to Sherlock if you’re so concerned about him?”

Sadness and frustration fill the air as the human glances away, he had been calm up to that point, so there has to be something in that idea that bothers him.

The sarcasm that the wolf had been feeling flows to the surface as he snidely remarks, “Oh God, don’t tell me,” while he looks about the room. He knows exactly why the elder-second and his brother have problems, they both do.

Slowly lifting his drink, the older human mutters, “Too much history between us, John. Old scores; resentments.”

“Of course there is you fool, you willing allowed him to be isolated, and for what? Not doing what
your parents wanted? He was a child. That should have never been how he was treated,” the wolf snaps, before softly stating, “Finished,” and getting up to leave.

They are halfway to the door when the human comments, “We both know what’s coming, John.” His voice and scent full of concern, though it is more obvious in scent than tone.

Fury pools low in the wolf’s gut, and he pushes his elder aside in his own body as he turns back around in order to watch the human as he continues to speak. It also gives him a chance to look into the human’s mind, seeing that he had spoken on several occasions with the annoying human, providing him with certain information he thought was meaningless.

“Moriarty is obsessed. He’s sworn to destroy his only rival,” the human states with a little shake of his head, eyes completely focused on them as he waits for an answer, his nerves coiled tightly.

Allowing the wolf back to the surface, the wolf remarks tightly, “So you want me to watch out for your brother because he won’t accept your help.”

The human smiles slightly, nodding once and answering, “If it’s not too much trouble.”

Stepping forward a hair, the wolf remarks, “I do that anyways, as does every adult member of the pack. You see, unlike your family where it was perfectly acceptable to treat him like he is disposable, we protect our own.” he pauses, eyes narrowing as he looks over the human carefully, “Believe me, any threat to him will be dealt with in an appropriate fashion.”

Without giving him a chance to respond, the wolf turns and the two of them take off, heading back into the silent halls of the club and out of the building. He breaks the link between them as the wolf finds a spot to vanish and return home.

Several hours later he feels the wolf summon him to the hospital where a little girl is screaming.

He enters the building and follows the strong emotions he can feel pouring off of her, passing the omega jackal as he does so. She takes one look at him and steps back, eyes widening but he ignores her, continuing to the room.

You require my assistance? he queries of the elder even as he starts to pull the negative emotions from the air around them.

“I do, there is a young lady in that room who is currently terrified of him, and was poisoned today, we need answers,” the wolf replies, Since we were asked to assist in any way I will take it as writ for permission to involve you.

He inclines his head, silently opening the door and steps in. Her eyes widen when she looks at him, and he thinks that she is about to scream but he slowly puts a finger in front of his lips for silence before softly beginning to sing like he would have to his sister. Little one, he murmurs comfortingly into her mind even as he continues to sing, may I see why you are so afraid?

Her eyes are wide as she stares at him, but she slowly nods and the social worker with her stares at him as well.

Still singing softly he kneels down next to her, long limbs folding so he goes from being as tall as the door to her size nearly instantly, a moment later he is probing her mind carefully going over the memories of the night before, of the tall man with black curls and a long coat that had taken her and her brother. Carefully he studies the memories, finding that the man while similar to the elder-second is not identical and he smooths the edges of her mind. He has already memorized the strangers scent and appearance, he would be found quickly and dealt with accordingly.
My thanks, little one, he softly tells her, I will insure this person may never hurt you or your brother again. This I swear to the Mistress of Dusk.

She nods slowly, one hand hesitantly reaching towards the side of his face where his obsidian scales are.

He smiles, shifting his positioning just a little so it is not as much of a stretch for her. Slowly her fingers trace down the scales, her eyes widening as she feels the difference between his skin and them. Eventually she drops her hand, giving him a hesitant smile.

He finally stops singing, and stands bowing once to the young lady before turning and striding out the door. It really is not a good idea to harm a child, even less of a good idea for him to find out about it. When he leaves the room the elder, elder-second, den jackal-child, and that worthless omega are all in a side room speaking though the omega is staring daggers at the elder-second.

Not bothering to greet them, he pauses long enough to tilt his head to the side and comment, I will be hunting tonight. His eyes turn to the omega and he hiss at her, long fangs showing as he does so, Remember your place, just because he is too polite to call you on your rude behavior does not mean I am.

She takes a step back from him, her scent giving off her fear.

Bowing once to the elder and elder second he leaves, long limbs carrying him out of the building before anyone can say anything to him.

A bit later, the elder queries, Has anyone hacked your computers or borrowed one of your cameras lately?

I allowed Mycroft placement of one though I tend to turn it off more often then I leave it going. He replies, Why?

The neighborhood assassins just killed one of their own because he shook Sherlock’s hand after saving his life. Then my bondmate found a small camera but it did not look like one of yours so I figured I would inquire. His friend and elder pauses speaking for a few moments, linking up to show him the scene as the detective inspector and den members asks the elder-second to come to the station with him because there is a suspicion he is the guilty party. After the jackal-child leaves the link is broken and he inquires, Is all of his paperwork completed for assisting on cases?

Of course, I insured that he was completely legal to work them when he joined the den, he replies, keep him out of jail, I will have the proper problem by morning.

Will do, the wolf answers and breaks the connection.

Once back to his home he calls for Aidan, asking him to use the CCTV’s to observe the Yard and see what is happening there. He then sends out a message to all of the shifter and gifted homeless, asking for any information on a human with looks similar to his den elder-second. In less than an hour he has it and is on his way hunting.

Within a few hours he has the human that was the problem in his line of sight, but he also is notified that the elder and elder-second are on the run from the police. Great.

Do you need immidiate assistance? he demands of the elder, his hand tight on the human’s jaw as he holds him in place.

No, take him to the Yard, and cause Donovan some suffering if you will, but nothing that can be
Mentally nodding, he does as directed, stopping by his house only long enough to collect the clearance papers for Sherlock and John before heading to the station. While he is on his way, he gets a question about Moriarty as an actor which has him replying he is not, however he has a twin that is but the wolf cuts the contact without another word.

Not an hour later, he walks into the Yard with the other man close by, his entire body trembling from exhaustion because he had walked, not driven. When they get there, he scans the room, silver eyes searching and finding his target. With the type of anger that he tries to keep to a minimum because it really is not good for a dark empath to feel, he shoves the human toward his goal once, nearly tossing him across the room as he glides in their direction.

The Chief Superintendent nearly jumps out of his skin when the human falls at their feet, but the other three turn towards him, including the jackal-child.

“Next time you decide to cry wolf, better make sure you do your research first,” he hisses low in his throat but his voice carries, “Here you go, one Christopher Phalan, known for doing a variety of odds and ends jobs, particularly useful for his ability to mimic nearly anyone.” He then drops the files on the desk, “Also would suggest reading those,” his voice has a feral tone to it, “Now.”

“Who do you think you are?” the Chief Superintendent snaps, trying to look intimidating and failing.

He smiles, “Someone with far higher clearance than you, boy, and someone doing your job. I would suggest you consider hiring better staff,” his attention turns to the jackal omega, “because sometimes they like to lie to themselves because they rather not face the truth.”

The female omega jackal snarls at him, demanding, “How do we know you’re telling the truth?”

The smile he turns her way is feral and not the type of thing most would want to deal with, “Because I’m a black cobra sworn to the Goddess of Shadows, little girl, and cobras do not lie.”

Just a little bit of pressure from his mind, and he watches as her legs fold before his attention turns back to the Chief Superintendent, “The warrant will be removed immediately, or I will know why and it will not go pleasantly for you.” Turning on his heel, he leaves without saying another word. The jackal-child will be dealt with by the pack later for his part in this.

A moment later he is outside and reaching for the elder, come to find out the elder and elder-second had gone their separate ways. However since the elder-second had gone to his friend Molly, the human from the hospital, he was not concerned about it and decides to join the elder instead. A few minutes later he is leaning against the wall of the elder Holmes office in the Diogenes Club.

When the human first comes into the room he scent is heavily of fear and sorrow. He doesn’t say anything from his spot, shielding instead and watching the confrontation between wolf and human. After listening to the human’s explanation he leaves, heading to the human females flat where he not only wipes her memory of the elder-second, but also of the elder, and that annoying human before changing her base personality, forcing her into being an honest person. While she sits dazed in chair, he seeks and destroys everything she has ever owned, read, written, or considered on the three of them. By the time he is done it is early morning and he returns to his house to check the computers, carefully going over everything and seeing what he can find. If only the elder-second had requested den assistance when this started, it could have been dealt with silently.

Shortly after dawn he gets a message from Maria that she has lost the elder-second.
Tech I have a sniper on my tail, check on Mrs. Hudson and Lestrade, Beta where are you? he hears the elder snap on the military packs private link.

I am high above you, I see the sniper, do you want me to deal with him? The falcon inquires.

Yes, now, the elder replies.

While the two of them are speaking he reaches out to Watcher and Cat, sending Watcher to check the area around the Yard for snipers, and sending Cat to check the flat for assassins. A few minutes later the two of them report in that they have found their targets. Watcher kills his outright, using his larger owl form to knock him off of his hiding place and to the ground far below where he dies on contact. The assassin at the flat is a bit harder to deal with, but he is dealt with all the same.

I am returning to my bonded, I will track him since Jackal lost him, if you would, retrain her later when we are not busy. The elder snaps as he heads back to the hospital.

He manages to find a camera on a building not far away, and spots the elder standing on the roof with that damned annoyance. Spathi to Bart’s, NOW. He snarls across the pack link before reaching for the elder second and finding himself surprised when he cannot get through to him. he’s blocked, how is he being blocked, carefully, he seeks the blockage and discovers a gifted one has done it, shielding him from mental thoughts, a rather strong gifted one but it doesn’t matter, by that small act he has been freed from the laws that keep him from acting and his mind reaches across and snaps the link, channeling all the dark empathy he has into it so it folds the barrier like a twig before he reaches again. Don’t you dare! The snipers have already been dealt with, and whatever that fucking piece of shit says is mistaken.

Only the elder-second ignores him, stepping up onto the ledge he continues on his path but pauses, and he curses the fact these cameras are not nearly as good as his. He watches as it all unfolds, as the den’s elder-second hops back off of the ledge, confronting the mad man, then as he returns to the ledge again before grabbing his phone and putting a call in.

John, if it you he’s calling talk him out of it, there is no reason for him to harm himself we got all the damned assassins! He just about orders the elder across their link.

Only something fails, somehow, someway they fail and he feels the grief as it rips through the pack, harsh and painful, yet there is something beneath it. Something that his dark empathy forces him to follow and he does, does so with the type of speed that he has never found another to match. There on the ground in the camera’s eye he can see the elder-second lying dead, the elder trying to get to him but being held back, yet something is wrong and his senses force him to seek it. Spathi, are you at Barts?

Just about, what was that? She replies.

An illusion, a finely honed illusion. He answers as he finds what he is seeking, the elder-second isn’t dead. Iota to Barts now, get to Doc, subdue him and force him to look at his wrist. Hunter to the roof of Barts, insure that piece of shit is dead. Beta to me, now. Spathi to me as well. He starts ordering as he finds what he was looking for. The link to the elder-second had not been broken, buried deep beneath the sorrow it is still there. He is somewhere within Barts. He can feel it.

Minutes later the multiform cat and falcon are both at his house while he feels iota taking control of the elder and the other viper reach the roof top.

This man is dead alright, though I sank my fangs into his ankle just to be sure. However the scent markers are wrong, it is kin-scent to that annoyance but isn’t that annoyance. It appears he talked
his twin into killing himself. The viper informs him, sharing the information with him.

“Eric?” the falcon calls out from his front door, coming no further in until he is invited.

Striding out of his kitchen he carries a small pack with him and hands it to the falcon before turning his attention to the cat.

“I have a mission for you, it will be difficult and there will not be any relief, despite that will you accept it?” he asks her formally, eyes narrow as he watches the golden female.

She bows low, “I accept any mission put before me.”

“You will travel with that damned human that is our elder-second, protect him. I do not know what he is planning, but I know he faked his own death for a reason.” He can feel his anger boiling close to the surface, “I will not make the pain he has caused meaningless, but his purpose will be maximized.”

She nods once, “Will I need to pack?”

He shakes his head once, “No, I am going to bind you into cat and half cat form. stay with him, protect him, bring him home to John.”

She bows again, shifting afterwards into her small golden tabby house cat form and he reaches with his gift to her, binding her human form away. Once done she cycles through several cat forms before hoping onto the beta’s shoulders.

May I assume you plan to have him deliver me? she inquires.

“Yes, I am going to John, you two will go to Sherlock. Give him the bag, and make sure he understands he will go nowhere without her.” He instructs, giving the falcon and cat the exact way to get to him before the three go their own ways.
Aftermath

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV
His bondmate had just committed suicide in front of him, the grief, horror, and pain of it sent him to his knees beside the dead body that he checked several times for a pulse. No, he thought, this can’t be happening. I would give anything for this not to be happening. As the grief threaten to overwhelm him he felt the cool touch of the cobra, his mind being forced into submission before he was handed over to Daria mentally.

The viper cupped his face between her hands, holding his mind steady as she grabbed his arm and pulled it up in front of him, showing him the mark that still colored his skin, slightly lighter but still there.

Eyes widen as he tries to check the dead person but they have already been removed and the next thing he knows is he is at his flat, seated in his mates chair. His body curled into a rather tight ball. His emotions are ripping through him and while the mark on his wrist declares his mate is still alive, he can still see him falling through the air, cannot figure out how he could have survived that fall. There is no way, yet the mark, the mark gifted to him by the Mistress of Shadows declares he lives.

He curls tighter into the chair as his grief strikes him, wave after wave, washing over him in an unending tide.

\[oOo\]

Sherlock’s POV
To say he was shocked when Jacob and a cat appeared at Molly’s flat would be an understatement. He was less surprised by the fact the first thing the falcon did was slam his fist into his stomach, before entering the flat without asking permission.

“Who are you?” Molly’s voice is high pitched as she demands an answer but she does not get one except for the cat locking its green eyes on her, eyes that seem to glow for a moment before the morgue tech collapse in a heap, only barely being caught by the falcon before she hits the floor.

“Collect your things. I am to take you to the cobra’s secondary house for preparation for whatever it is you are doing.” There is rage in the normally smooth tones of the falcon and he quickly listens because he has a feeling that he has no choice. A few minutes later the three of them are getting out of the cobra’s car that the falcon currently is using and striding up to a small house that appears to be mostly unused. “You can stay here until you leave for whatever reason your faking your death. This is Elspeth, she will be with you at all times, and if you ever try to leave her behind she has permission to beat the living shit out of you.” Snorting the falcon thrusts a bag at him, “Tech says this should help you if you are doing what he thinks you are doing.”

The falcon says nothing else a he turns and leaves the building.
Well it looks like it will just be me and you, I would suggest you take what he said to heart, I will kick your ass three ways to the new moon if you try to leave without me. The cat sitting on the floor in front of him tells him, Lady of Shadows hear this now, my oath is given to protect this human until he is returned to his home within the pride.

For a moment he can do nothing but stare as her eyes glow silver for an instance before returning to their green tone.

Now then, Sherlock, what’s the plan? She inquires, jumping on his shoulders and stretching across them.

She is surprisingly light, he thinks as he stares at the golden cat laying across him. “I,” he begins but corrects himself, “We are going to track down every part of Moriarty’s web of criminals and destroy it. Once that is done we are coming home, I just hope I have a home to come back to.”

Is there still a mark on your dominate wrist? She demands.

He pulls back his shirt sleeve after unbuttoning it to reveal the spiral design that still colors his skin.

Then you still have a home, she continues, her tone sounding rather annoyed with him.

Nodding, he takes the bag and finds a spot to sit down with it. Inside of it he discovers a small laptop, a leather and arm band, a file, and a note. Frowning, he opens the note to read it before looking at the rest of it.

-Sherlock-
You are reading this right now because you are a stupid fucking human.

When you return from your trip I am going to beat the living hell out of you for the pain that you are causing John and the rest of the pack. Yes you are causing the rest of the pack pain as well. I watched as you stupidly ‘committed suicide’ even while John was trying to tell you that you did not have to. We had dealt with the snipers. Yes all the snipers, the one on Lestrade was easy. The one on Mrs. Hudson, not as easy but still simple enough. The one on John, well both of them were foolish, John got the one and Jacob got the other. Really, years in special forces causes us to be good at what we do. Too bad you didn’t think of that before you acted like the stupid human that you are.

Now then, put the arm band on over your bondmark. It will do three things. 1st: hide your bondmark. 2nd: make you unseeable to cameras. 3rd: make you traceable to satellites.

The laptop contains all of the information on the web that was controlled by Moriarty. Since he may still be alive (he had a twin) it will be your task to carefully dismantle it without getting caught but I am sure that is what you were doing anyways with that little stunt of yours. The information in the file is of the main players, the rest of the information is on the laptop. I will update it as I learn anything new.

There is also a passport and documentation, along with contact information for where you can get new documentation in every country I have found one Moriarty’s cells. Included is also a variety of funds plus the account listings for banks where you can get more as you need.

Stay with Elspeth, she will be able to protect you in most to nearly all situations.

-Eric -

“How,” he mutters questioningly, before he realizes that his head is pounding and he sways in spot.
You look like shit, lay down and rest, no reason for you to make yourself sick before we even accomplish anything. She suggests as she hops off of his shoulder and settles onto the back of the sofa to stand guard over him.

-oOo-

Mycroft’s POV
This cannot be happening. How? How could he have been so wrong? Yes, he had given Moriarty information on Sherlock but it should not have been enough to drive him to this. Never this, he thinks as he stares at the broken body of his middle brother. This is impossible, it has to be, the tests have to be wrong, and yet every time they are run the results come back the same: it is Sherlock.

He had never gotten a chance to apologize for all of the harm he had caused him. Never had a chance to make up to him for everything that he had done wrong as a brother. Never told him how much he really did care about him. Never did any of the things he always told himself there was going to be time to do. Now he would never have the chance. He was dead.

Grief forced him just about to his knees as it swamped him. All of the emotions he had spent years avoiding hit him at once and he could do nothing but stand there and mourn the loss of his sibling.

-oOo-

Greg’s POV
After Eric had dropped of the human and vanished his boss had gone berserk, raging at everyone about how dare they do whatever they did. Eventually things had calmed down, and they had actually questioned the man, discovering that he really was the one who had kidnapped the children, the one who had left them in the old factory, he had been hired by a slender man with dark eyes to mimic a picture he had been shown, kidnap two children, and leave them with poisoned candy. This had been confirmed when the little girl who had been brought to the station to ID Sherlock spotted him and proceeded to scream, pointing at him with tears running down her face.

Everyone in the room had been shocked when he threw himself to the ground and stayed there, not moving. They had gotten the girl back into one of the small side rooms where she could not see him and calmed her down again. Donovan had looked at him in shock, staring at him with wide eye as she realized what had happened.

“I will be really pissed if you have ruined my relationship with my pack,” he snaps at her as he grabs the suspect and drags him to a holding cell.

“I thought,” she mutters, her voice trailing off as she continues to stare. “My God, I will fix this, I have to fix this,” and she bolts.

Once all the paperwork is processed including Sherlock’s papers clearing him of the kidnapping charges, he calls John only it’s not John he gets. Its Eric.

“What the hell do you want?” the cobra hisses at him, “Your actions directly affected today’s outcome. There will be consequences for them at the next den meeting.”

“Yes sir,” he murmurs, “I just wanted to tell them that they are clear, there is no longer a warrant out for either though both will have to pay fees, Sherlock for the gun, John for punching the Chief.”

“Since Sherlock was dead, I doubt he will care.” The cobra replies before hanging up on him.

Dead? There is no way he is dead. How could he be dead? Frustrated and worried he grabs his
phone and calls Mycroft. Surely he would know the truth. There is no way that such an alive person could be dead. It’s just not happening. To say he was shocked when Mycroft confirmed that he was dead. That he had killed himself thinking that no one believed in him. That was not true, John believed in him, Mrs. Hudson believed in him, he believed in him, the pack believed in him. How could he ever think otherwise? Of course, the last twenty-four hours, no wonder he thought that and now he was never going to have a chance to beg for his forgiveness.

Oh shit. John. John was a wolf and wolves only mate once. How was he going to take this? They never had a chance to start the family that they had wanted.

All of it was going to hell and it was partly his fault. He had failed.

oOo

John’s POV

One week after his best-friend, lover, and bondmate had jumped off of the hospital roof he stood with both of his brothers, part of the Yard, several pack members, Molly, and a few clients were all at his funeral. To his left stood Eric, black eyes watching everything as they bury the human who was being placed in his lover's grave. The only ones who knew that Sherlock was still alive was him, Eric, Jacob, Daria, and Nathan. Everyone else thought that he was dead and that was the way it would stay until he returned.

The newspaper article about Sherlock being a fraud had never run, instead one of the crows had done an article on all of the good he had done. All of the times he had helped people and never asked for a penny in return. It had been a warm article, with interviews with several different clients about how good a job he had done in helping them.

Kitty Riley had been found dead, she had killed herself by stepping in front of a train the day after Sherlock had committed his suicide.

Now though, as he stands at the grave side, he is relieved that Eric is there. He can feel the cobra beside him pulling the negative emotions out of the air, keeping him from choking on his own empathy as he stands there. Once the service is done he is given a few minutes alone with the grave, he still is mourning despite the fact he knows he is alive because he doesn’t know if he will ever see him again.

When he is done with his mourning he steps away to be immediately flanked by the cobra and falcon. The two of them escort him and Mrs. Hudson back to Baker Street. Since his bondmates ‘death’ one of the military pack members had been with him at all times and this was no different. Once he was safely home everyone left except for Eric who had become his keeper it seemed though he would not argue with him the way he did the rest. At least with Eric around he feels a bit more like himself because the grief is not as strong.

He knows that Greg had stopped by to speak with him. He also knows that the jackal-child had been sent away by the cobra, told to return when summoned and not before. He also knows that Mycroft had stopped by as well and been sent away only he was told not to bother trying again. Only Aragorn had been allowed in, and the two of them had grieved together for the relationship that had been cut so short before Shalen had take his human off in private to grieve.

It hurt, but at least he knew he was alive. As long as the spiral fern remained on his wrist there would be hope.
Conversations and Memorial

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

This would have been posted two days ago but I kept having problems with my laptop, all better now so here it is a bit late, but hopefully still enjoyable.

John’s POV

Three days after the funeral Eric comes back to the flat after being gone most of the day, instead his company is the pups Konrad and Jace who each take turns telling him stories about whatever comes to mind. From Konrad he hears about Germany, the difference between the pack his father had lived with and the pack he was born to here. Jace tells him stories of his learning and catching up with all of the other pups. When the cobra gets there the younger of the pair falls silent, head tilting to the side as he considers him.

“Hello Eric,” the wolf-lynx hybrid murmurs, “We were just telling him about our respective amusing moments.”

The cobra smiles at him, before politely stating, If you two could go downstairs for the moment, I need a word with the elder.

Both pups nod before they head downstairs, their movements almost silent as they go to say hello to Mrs. Hudson.

An immortal lost a daughter to that annoying human and his toys. He asked the Moonlight Lady to avenge his daughter, apparently your bondmate prayed to the Old Gods for success in dealing with that annoyance as well, without specifying how. As you know the Lady of Dusk is a vengeance goddess and when someone offers themselves up as a tool to be used for revenge she will use them, he shrugs, I am still uncertain why he felt he had to do so the way he did, but we both know that if She told him, well he might be doing it on Her direction.

He nods, staring out the window at the street below. “It doesn’t really make me feel better.”

At least you have a better idea of what he is doing. Foolish human, becoming a tracker, not the wisest course of action. Still I understand, as one I understand. The cobra sighs, stretching out on the sofa, Of course, this means I do not get to kick his ass when he gets home. After all I cannot interfere with human events, but he is a human, he can interfere as much as he wants. Again he sighs, Of course this explains why I could not break through to his mind, if he has one of the Old Gods touch, well that’s one of the only things that I cannot get past.

Silence falls as the two of them consider the implications of the fact his human bondmate seems to have found himself a patron in the Goddess of Night.

After a bit the cobra remarks, The pack is planning a memorial for him this Saturday, your aunt has instructed me to summon his brothers and mother for the memorial. I have notified the younger, but not the elder or their mother yet, I wished to get your input first.
“Summon them here first. I need to have a word with both of them first, plus a word with Greg.” He answers after a few minutes of considering it. Out of habit he heads to the kitchen to make two cups of tea and just about begins to be swamped again as the sorrow hits him once more.

Silently the cobra moves up behind him, stopping just shy of touching him physically but he can feel it as the sadness seems to be pulled from him. Black, no sugar please, the tall cobra states after a moment.

Nodding once, he does so before turning to hand it to him and passing him to go settle into his armchair.

Tonight or tomorrow? The cobra eventually inquires.

“Tomorrow, if you will make arrangements, I am going to go lay down for a bit.” he replies before getting to his feet. Sighing, he heads into the room that they had shared and curls up on the bed, shoving his head into the pillow that his mate had used most often and inhaling his scent. He knows that his mind sharing friend is standing guard, making sure that he is able to sleep. Though right now he is not trying to sleep, instead he is just relaxing in the area that is saturated by their scent.

He’s not sure when he drifts off, all he knows is he awakens to the smell of cooking. Mildly startled, he rolls off the bed and goes to see who is in the kitchen, only slightly surprised to find the cobra cooking.

I felt you awakening and decided to make food. You did not eat yesterday according to the pups, so you will eat today. I have already arranged for the three of them to pay you a visit. The first will be the jackal-child. He is due in one hour. I believe he is worried that you plan to kick him out of the pack. The older Holmes is due this afternoon at two, I have already entered it into his schedule and told his assistant to make sure he shows or I will be most displeased. Their mother has declared she is not coming so I am going to fetch her. The older shifters smile is feral as he continues to cook.

Shaking his head, he goes back into the room, collecting some clothing before heading to the bathroom to shower. When he is done, he feels a lot better and more ready to face the day and its challenges. The first challenge is his friend Greg, he understands why Greg had done what he did, but they still needed to discuss it. As he is settling down to eat, the jackal-child shows up, his scent nervous when he knocks on the door.

I will be leaving now, the cobra informs him, Do I need to send someone to visit with you, or would you prefer some time to yourself? I am certain you are past the point where you would harm yourself.

Time to my self is fine, send him up when you leave. He replies, making a second plate and sitting it down on the table.

His tall friend nods, snitching a piece of bacon before heading out with an easy loop.

A few moments later the unsure steps of the jackal-child can be heard as he makes his way up the steps, the scent of uncertainty, nervousness, and fear assault his senses as he enters the flat.

“Hullo alpha,” he murmurs as he shuts the door.

“John, I am still John,” he replies, “Hello Greg, how have you been?” he is proud of the fact his voice barely trembles as he speaks, motioning to the seat beside him, “Have you eaten? The second plate is for you if you are hungry.”

The jackal-child nods slowly, sitting down and eating, “It’s been stressful, Donovan is currently
suspended for breach of conduct, while I have been put on warning. John I wanted to apologize
again for my-"

He waves a hand towards the older man, interrupting him, “You’ve already apologized, I
understand, I really do, all I ask is next time ask as a pack member to a tracker, we have a few of
them after all. Eric is a Blessed Tracker and a black cobra, Nathan is a trained tracker, and Konrad is
working on completing his training as a tracker.” He pauses, taking another bite, “All the paper work
was done a while ago for Sherlock, myself, and the older pups to be at crime scenes legally. Turned
into the London head of Departments, above your pay grade, and your bosses for that matter.”

The jackal-child blinks at him, eyes wide in shock, his scent reflecting that shock, before he nods
once and eats with a little more ease.

The rest of breakfast goes moderately smoothly, the two of them chatting about whatever topics
come to mind, though not speaking of anything important. When they are done with their discussion,
the silver-haired man takes his plate into the kitchen before. He smiles at him before the older man
bids him farewell, his scent far more relaxed then when he got there. It’s always good when there is
harmony within the pack.

After the other man leaves he sets about cleaning a bit, washing up the dishes left over from
breakfast, putting the food away that remains, and doing some dusting.

He gets tired rather quickly however and settles on the sofa which smells like the cobra, a fact that
would be mildly surprising if it wasn’t for the fact he is well adjusted to that scent. For a little bit he
naps before Mrs. Hudson comes to check on him bringing with her a plate of biscuits for them to
share while they visit. They have just finished with their visit when he smells sooner than hears
Mycroft letting himself in. Sighing, he bids his landlady good day and waits patiently for the
politician to come into the flat.

Not even two minutes later the taller man is standing at his door, his scent a combination of sadness,
curiosity, and regret.

“Come in Mycroft, feel free to sit down on the sofa or my seat,” he tells the slightly older man as he
gets up to make tea. “Don’t touch his chair,” he orders from the other room.

A few minutes later he returns to the living room to find the politician had settled on the sofa. When
he reenters the room the taller man stands and he just waves him back to the seat, commenting, “I’m
the least formal person you will ever meet,” he smiles briefly, passing him the tea, “Do you know
why Eric scheduled your visit here?”

The other man is silent for a moment while taking a sip of his tea, when he sits it aside he replies
calmly, “I assumed it was to discuss my brother. I would like some of his things if you please.”

He shakes his head once, settling into his seat, “I don’t please, and don’t bother trying to send
someone for them, it will not happen. You are partly correct, we are here to discuss your brother.”
He pauses, taking a sip of his tea before continuing, “There will be a memorial service for him this
weekend at the pack home. Normally non-pack would not be allowed, however as you are his
family, you have been invited, but it was suggested that the air get cleared between us first or you
might find yourself dealing with a rather hostile group of shifters.”

The politician nods once, slowly, eyes thoughtful as he considers the implications. Even without his
telepathy ha can just about hear the thoughts flying through the other man’s head. “I, yes,” he begins
but seems to not know what to say, “I never wanted this, never imagined this is what would
happen.” He pauses, swallowing once and looking anywhere but at him, “I would appreciate being
allowed at the memorial, it is my understanding that pack functions are usually private.”

“Your actions, both past and present, had a large part to play in his choice to jump off of Bart’s. If you had a choice, would you do things over again?” he inquires of the other man, watching him carefully and delicately sniffing the air.

There are several moments between when he asks and when he is answered. “I would, both when we were younger and now,” his scent is full of sincerity, sorrow, and resignation.

“I assume you know where the pack home is located at?” he queries after a bit.

The human nods slowly, “I am aware from the property records where your family has owned land for several generations, always belonging to a member of the immediate Watson family and not one of the other branches.”

“Well the memorial is at eight pm, we tend to have a potluck dinner prior, and the pack tends to gather around five to do so. You are welcome to come.” He tells the other man softly, he might not like Mycroft, and he might be furious because he feels that the human had a part to play in what happened to his bondmate, but he is not going to alienate him. Even if he is not pack now, he is still family and that means he has to get past his problems with him.

Nodding once, the politician gets to his feet, “I have a meeting to attend, thank you for taking the time to speak with me.”

He stands as well, trying for a smile and sure he is failing, “Thank you for taking the time to come down here,” as he walks the taller man to the door he tilts his head to the side and murmurs, “A suggestion for you, if you are interested in Greg, don’t cut him out now just because Sherlock is gone.”

The human stops and stares at him, his scent full of shock for a moment before he nods once sharply before leaving.

It is several hours past that before Eric arrives with a female in tow, though he is mildly surprised to see a man with her as well. Scent says both are related to his bondmate, the female his mother, the male has kin scent but not the exact relation, uncle then. He looks carefully at both of them, eyes narrow but something seems off so he closes his eyes for a moment before opening them back up with his iota sight rather than his plain sight.

As he studies the older woman he sighs, giving a small shake of his head. “Damn it, I was all set to hate you to.” He mutters, catching the attention of the cobra if not his two stiff guests who are seated on the sofa.

John? The cobra queries.

*How against our laws is it for me to knock the two humans out, heal the female and wake them up without telling them what I am doing?* He asks as he rubs the bridge of his nose while heading to the kitchen to make tea.

Cocking his head to the side, the cobra thinks about it for a bit before sighing, *Technically? Very. However an argument could be made that her health affects the pack in that she is related to the pack and thus needs to be dealt with accordingly. Do you want me to take them back home when your done with your conversation or send one of the nicer people?*

*Neither, I will call Mycroft, though do we need to have another chat about how to treat folks?* He replies.
No elder, the cobra replies with a sigh.

Good. He pauses for a moment to consider it, thinking about what he had noticed with his telepathy. It had been a while since the two remain brothers had seen their mother, perhaps he should offer her a chance to see them before driving them home. How did you convince her to come?

Politely, actually, I asked nicely, with all the charm I could muster, which I can be charming when I want, and possibly included a really good glance at her eyes, which never fails to get humans to do what I want either. However I used none of my gifts, he pause for a moment, well actively anyways, on her. Though she has weird thought processes, thinks in numbers and doesn’t seem to realize that she has divided her children. It has given me something to consider. You know I dislike not having all the facts.

He nods, taking the three cups of tea out to the living room and handing two of them to the humans on the sofa, focusing a bit, he sends a touch of sleeping gift into it, so when they finish the tea both will be asleep.

Go take a soak as a snake. You always think better when you are in your snake form. He directs his moody friend, Besides, aren’t you due for a molt?

Bite me, the cobra replies with a slight smile before taking off.

He settles into his seat, drink his tea while he waits for the effects of the tea on the other two. “So how exactly are you connected to Sherlock?” the human female demands, her tone bordering on rude.

He smiles slightly, answering honestly, “We were considering a relationship and had been flatmates for nearly two years.”

“Hmmm, you realize now that you would have been better served not attempting anything with him, he always was a disappointment.” She remarks after taking another sip.

“Victoria,” the human next to her mutters warningly before stating, “Please forgive her, she is in shock.”

He shrugs slightly, waiting patiently and happy when the two of them finish their tea without saying anything else. Less than a minute later the two of them are sleeping, leaning back against the sofa and against each other. Sighing softly, he stands and moves to beside the sofa, his motions silent, pausing just a few inches from it, he carefully reaches his hand out, sending out a ghost of energy to keep her asleep while his fingers brush against the side of her temple. From there, he sends his gift seeking through her mind, finding the spot where he had found the small lump growing, a bubble of blood that was pressing against the emotional centers of her brain. Carefully he smoothes out the vessels, returning them to the size and shape they are supposed to be while unmaking the lump with each flare of power. When he is done he withdraws from her mind and sends a small trill of power to both to wake them up as he collects the mugs and heads back into the kitchen.

“What happened?” the human male asks confused.

He comes back out with new teas a few minutes later, “Trip must have tired you out, for some reason the two of you zoned, can I offer you a room to stay in for the night? I can make sure that you make it to the hotel.”

The older man shakes his head, “No thank you, though why did that unusual tall fellow invite us here, I know he said, but I was more concerned with how easily she listen to him.”
Beside him, the human female blinks rapidly for a moment, touching a hand to the side of her head.

He smiles, handing them the teas, “Eric invited her via the phone to a memorial in three days time but she declined, since he is a determined friend and knew that I find family to be invaluable, he decided to make the request in person. Very few turn him down in person.”

“Oh,” the older gentlemen voices, eyes glancing over at her again.

There is something in his posture that makes him wonder at their dynamics. The scent in the air is of worry from him and confusion from her.

“Who are you again?” she inquires, her voice holding a different cadence then it had previously and polite without the rudeness.

”John Watson, I was your son Sherlock’s flatmate, prior to his very surprising actions, we had spoken of getting into a relationship.” He replies politely.

She blinks at him, “His partner then, I,” she shakes her head, “Why would he do such a thing? I don’t understand, he was always a curious child, full of life, when did that change? Why don’t I have more memories of him?” confusion fills her voice and it doesn’t take telepathy to understand that she is reviewing everything she has done in regards to him in his life. “Of course we will be there this weekend, I cannot believe I missed his funeral.”

“What if I call Mycroft?” he suggests softly, watching as she tries to figure things out.

The man is the one who nods, so he grabs his mobile, steps outside, and calls the politician, “Hello Mycroft, I hope I am not disturbing you?”

“No, you caught me between appointments, was there something further we need to discuss?” the politician inquires.

“No, we discussed everything between us earlier, though I have a few questions for you,” he replies.

“Questions?” the politician repeats.

“Did your dame injure her head sometime while you and your brothers where children?” he asks as he glances back to the door of the flat.

For a moment there is silence on the line, eventually though the older human replies, “Car accident shortly after Aragorn’s birth, no damage the doctors found, but she developed headaches after that.”

“I bet she started changing too, went from someone who was affectionate to someone who was not,” he remark.

He can just about hear the nod, “Indeed,” there is a brief pause, “Why do you ask?”

“She’s currently sitting on my sofa, along with your paternal uncle,” he answers.

“I will be over shortly,” the politician comments before he hangs up.

Smiling, he heads back upstairs, announcing when he enters the flat, “Mycroft will be here shortly.”

The couple on the sofa nods and he settles back into his seat. While they wait she inquires how long he had known her son, what their daily life was like, and generally just keeps the conversation light. From the memories he had shared with his bondmate while working on his ability to control his bondgift, the younger man had not seen his mother like this in years, all of his memories had been of
her anger, her blaming him for his father’s death, and declaring that he did not need to be with his siblings. From the shock pouring out of the human male, he hasn’t seen her like this in years either and he wonders exactly how long that blood vessel had been growing, how much of the pain caused to all three of her children and her family.

Still, keeping it polite, the healer in him continues to check her over, finding nothing else out of place and out of the way, as he does so. A few minutes later he hears and smells as the politician heads up the stairs to the flat for the second time today.

“Thank you for calling John.” The politician remarks, “Mummy, Uncle,” he greets the other two humans.

He watches as the human female stands, turning with a slightly confused look before she shakes her head, “Mycroft? What are you doing here?”

The younger human smiles at her, “John was polite enough to call to tell me you were here and I decided to offer my hospitality.”

“Oh, thank you,” she turns to look at him, “Mycroft knows where the memorial will be?”

He nods, “Indeed, he has been invited as well.”

“I’m tired,” she murmurs, “Can we go now?”

Her son nods, and the three humans all bid him farewell before leaving.

Over the next three days he spends more time on his own, but still has someone with him at night. Normally it is Eric or Jacob, with the cobra being silent company and the falcon being his normal light hearted self. On the Saturday following the funeral he is up early like he normally is. He is not really looking forward to later this afternoon but it is an important part of pack life, loss is shared among everyone, life celebrated by all of them. His aunt was leading the memorial since Harry did not want to and he refused to allow his parents to.

The day seems to drag on but just before five the cobra shows up with his non-sports car, so they can head out.

*Come on wolf, though I would suggest that you phase a piece of yourself, possibly your eyes so that your skin goes clear. Otherwise the entire bluff is up because your mark will still be visible.* His tall friend suggests.

He nods, focusing for a moment on a partial shift, choosing to change the hair on his head to his fur, making him a bit more golden blonde but otherwise not noticeable unless touched. As he does so he watches every mark on his hands vanish and pulls the sleeve of his shirt up to reveal that his bondmark is nowhere to be seen.

“How?” he inquires, knowing that the other will understand what he means.

*It is how I keep my skin clear, I can still feel every scar and mark but no one else can see them.* The taller man replies as he climbs into the vehicle.

A few minutes later they are racing down the road, and while this car is not as fast as the other one, he still cannot help the chuckle at that fact.

“Do you ever drive slow?” he queries as he keeps his eyes closed.
Shaking his head, he just sits back for the ride.

Less than ten minutes later they are pulling up to the house and the cobra is parking.

As he gets out, several different pack members who are already gather and preparing to go inside stop to hug him or relaying their sadness. With each he returns the hug and nods, words are not expected here, not until his aunt makes whatever comments on his mate that she will. One of the older wolves inquires if it is true about non-pack humans coming and he confirms it as well, mentioning it is his bondmates human family that are unaware of the connection. The message is passed between wolves not to mention the fact they were mates with that remark.

Heading inside the house, many of the pack pups approach him, none of the little ones say a word they merely hug and hold onto him for a moment before they go and gather in the front longue which has been turned into a play room for pack gathers. Most of the older pups, particularly his students, hug him as well. Slender fingers gently touching his wrist as they mourn with him. Except one, pale-eyed Konrad bows low, but says nothing and he determines that before the end of the night he will take the time to speak with him.

Once most of the pack has greeted him, he is allowed to just drift from room to room, the ground floor being full with the pack members, many of which are eating, and despite not being hungry he decides to do the same because it has been two days since his last proper meal at the hands of Jacob.

**Mycroft’s POV**

The last three days had been unusual, the Victoria Holmes currently preparing to go to a memorial service for her middle son was more like the one he remembered from before Aragorn’s birth and the car accident that had occurred on their way home from the hospital. Even his Uncle Edwin was confused by the changes in his mother, remarking that she seemed more like the woman that they had fallen in love with years before.

It was a little known fact that both Holmes brothers had courted Victoria Mallory, only the elder brother had eventually won her heart. Despite that, the younger brother had continued to be her friend and many circles had found it mildly unusual how close the three had been. Upon Siger’s death, it had been Edwin who had comforted her, and several years later they had been quietly married. So now his uncle was also his step-father though he had never tried to use his position as such.

He could easily remember the brilliant but gentle mother she had been prior to that car accident and the changes in her had been so gradual that until now he had not really considered why she had went from loving to controlling. As he prepares to go to a memorial service for his middle, he wonders if those changes could have been noticed sooner and what Doctor Watson had done for her to be acting this way after twenty-five years of acting otherwise. Perhaps if he had questioned it sooner, questioned her and her treatment of Sherlock, questioned why he had so easily gone with it, perhaps he wouldn’t have failed as a big brother.

With a shake of his head he finishes getting ready. Since he is uncertain of the amount of formality that will be required, he dressed the same as if he is going to work, and gears up for confrontation. Several minutes later he asks if his mother and uncle are ready, both agreeing, so the three of them head out to the garage. He had given his driver the night off, since he was certain that he would not be allowed on the property.
“Are you driving then?” his mother asks, mildly confused, “I thought you had a driver?”

He smiles politely, replying, “I do, however the driver was not extended an invitation, and would not be allowed on the property, since I do not wish to walk or leave him standing outside in December for the duration, I will drive.”

“How odd, still it was nice of that John fellow to invite us, though why is he having one?” she inquires as they get into the car, “I realize he said that they were discussing a relationship, but this still seems a bit much.”

He merely nods and smiles politely. While his uncle just glances at her, still in shock despite it being three days later and the change seeming permanent. Since he is not sure what type of food to bring, he decides to bring a meat and cheese tray which he has in the trunk, he had been told it was a potluck like meal and that it was also tradition. The ride from his house to the Watson Home as it is called takes a little under an hour, when they first get to the property edge he finds the drive blocked by three rather tall men wearing similar outfits. The one on his side comes to his window and clicks his fingertip carefully against it. He lowers the window, ready to greet him nearly as soon as the window is cracked, the man steps back and the other two steps out of the way before waving him through. He nods politely to the man before driving through. In the rearview memory, he watches as the group closes the gates before they seem to just vanish.

Several minutes later finds him parking surprisingly close to the front door, before he politely opens the door for his mother, while his uncle got out. They were getting ready to head up the front stairs when a slender young woman with dark hair and colorful highlights approaches them.

“Misters and Mrs. Holmes?” she queries, her voice seeming to hiss the ‘s’ sounds, “I was asked to show you to the main room where the adults are gathering.”

He nods, and the four of them make their way up the steps and through the main hall. He is moderately surprised at the fact of the house. All records show John Watson is not a wealthy man, yet this house says otherwise. It does not make any sense to him.

“Here you are, there are refreshments there,” she says pointing to a long table, “And seating over there, John will be with you shortly.”

Before he has a chance to respond, she turns vanishes it seems into the crowded. Sure enough, a few moments later, before he even has a chance to turn John is there as well.

“Hello Mycroft, Mrs. and Mr. Holmes,” the short doctor greets them as he appears at his side, “I am pleased that you could make it. My aunt will begin when she is ready and will call for attention then.” He smiles tightly for a moment, “Feel free to go where you will down here, the upstairs and living quarters are off limits, the bathrooms are on the other side of kitchen through there,” he tells him pointing at a door.

He nods once, “Good afternoon, Doctor Watson.”

His mother turns to glance at the smaller man, smiling as she states, “Oh hello John, you have a lovely home here, why do you stay in such a small flat?”

“This is my aunt’s home, but it is the one our family gathers at since it is the one with the most space.” He smiles lightly at her, “It’s been in the family for generations.”

She smiles and for a moment the two of them proceed in small talk before an older woman with the same type sandy blonde hair approaches, “John, please introduce me.”
“Mycroft Holmes, Victoria Mallory Holmes, and Edwin Holmes, this is my aunt Sandra Watson.”
He politely does as asked, “If you’ll excuse me, I believe I am wanted elsewhere.”

With a slight bow towards his mother and elder Watson, the doctor heads off, meeting up with a Middle Eastern looking man. While his mother visits with the older woman he excuses himself to look about, the chances of being back in this house again are fairly slim so he might as well make the most of it this time. His mother is unaware of the fact they are surrounded by shifters but he is not and is mildly surprised to see how many there are here. He has just discovered the library when he feels a chill pass down his spine and he freezes in spot as he tries to figure out where the cobra is. The only time he has ever felt that chill is when the cobra is nearby.

*Very good, you have decent instincts for a human.* The cobra remarks, *I am seated near the fire place, though this is rather useful, I had planned to seek you out before you left.*

Turning slightly towards the fire place, he spots the slender man lounging in one of the armchairs, a laptop across his legs. For a moment he is reminded of his brother, but that quickly passes. “Why, may I ask?”

*To make a polite suggestion,* a sardonic smile curves his lips, *yes polite. You are interested in the jackal-child Lestrade, he is den. That means if things develop between you, you will eventually become den as well.* He pauses, tilting his head to the side. *I think it will be good for both of you.*

*Still, you need to understand that we protect our own, the best way to do so is communication, it is something that should have been stressed to Sherlock and was not, so I am correcting that mistake with you.*

The tall man stands, setting the laptop aside and closing it, as he turns to face him. *I actively hate pretty close to everyone, understand that my temperament has nothing to do with you.* With a small, tight smile, the taller man turns and walks away, passing nearly next to him as he does so.

Again a chill runs down his spine, but it is not as major as previous times. From the door he hears a chuckle, and turns to see a dark-haired, brown eyed teenager standing there shaking his head. “I think that was his form of an apology, haven’t heard him do that before to anyone except for the healer.”

“The healer?” he repeats, thinking, I thought that he only answered to John?

“John, the pack alpha, he doesn’t like to be called alpha except for during council and I feel weird calling him by his name, so I call him by his secondary title instead,” the younger man smiles at him warmly, “You smell like Sherlock, not exactly the same, but close, kinscent, are you a sibling?”

“Thank you,” he replies, “I am his elder brother Mycroft Holmes.”

Stepping towards him the younger man politely holds out his hand to shake, “Nice to meet you Mr. Holmes, I’m Jace Arden, my mother was the one who showed you into the house,” the younger man pauses for a moment, tilting his head with his bangs falling to the side, “I am sorry for your loss, the entire pack mourns with you. Do you need anything?”

“No thank you, I believe I will rejoin my mother in the main room,” he replies to the courteous young man.

Nodding, he queries, “Do you have the same type of eidetic memory or do you need to be directed back?”

Despite himself, he finds a smile curving his lips, “I have a better memory than him.”
“Alright, it was a pleasure meeting you Mr. Holmes, see you around,” with that the teenager takes off, reminding him distinctly of a wolf’s trotting.

He follows a few moments later after taking a quick look around the library while considering what the cobra had said. He seemed very certain that he was going to end up in a relationship with the Detective Inspector. He seemed just as certain that eventually he would be part of this pack. A large part of him wonders why the cobra would be so certain. He also wonders why the cobra had felt the need to apologize. He got the impression that he never did that. Giving a small shake of his head, he pinches the bridge of his nose before heading back to the other room where he discovers his mother speaking with the Detective Inspector while his uncle is speaking with an older gentlemen who looks a great deal like the doctor.

Before he has a chance to introduce himself the sound of a chime seems to echo through the room though he is not sure where from. A moment later all of the adults fall silent, each turning towards a small area on the side of the room where a pair of chairs is at. Since he is one of the tallest in the room, he is easily able to see as the doctor’s aunt stands in front of them.

“We gather today in memory of one of our own, lost to us in sadness, while his time with our family was short, he was still loved and will be missed. Perhaps he had not been with us long, not even two years, but during that time he affected each of us in his own way.” She states, her voice soft but carrying perfectly. “May he always find what he seeks, his judgment favorable in the eyes of the Dusk.”

He is mildly startled when every single shifter in the room repeats the end of her speech. After that he notices that the various people in the room seem to be heading over to a large black book, and eventually he curiously wanders over to look at it. He is surprised when he finds it is a memory book, with each person who had stopped in it writing a memory of his brother down.

“It’s alright to grieve you know,” a familiar voice informs him, turning slightly he finds the young woman who had introduced herself as Mouse beside him. She tugs the book in front of her and writes in a small paragraph, skips a line, and writes another before pushing it back to where it had been. “You can write anything you wish to him, these are stored in the nest archives, only family is able to see them once the memorial is done. Sometimes what is written is good, or bad, or amusing. It can be anything really. I once saw a memorial book where the memory placed was of the person as an infant, how they would always scream when given carrots but giggle at peas. Another was a death count for a sniper that belonged to my birth nest.”

He nods, considering it for a moment before he pulls it forward, and writes the only real memory he has of Sherlock being happy when they were children before pushing it back. He had noticed none of them were signed so he did not sign his either.

She nods at him, gently laying a hand on his shoulder before she leaves to speak to the young woman who had shown him in.

After that he shows his mother and uncle to the memory book, once he has explained it to them, both take turns writing. Nearly as soon as she is done she asks if they can leave and he can tell she is trying not to cry so he bids Doctor Watson good evening and takes them back to his house. Despite that, he cannot help but think about what is in the book.
Sherlock’s POV

It had been hell watching his own funeral, the reactions that John and the pack had. What had hurt almost as bad as hurting John was the pain and sorrow he could read in Mycroft and Aragorn. While he expected it out of his younger brother, he did not expect it out of the elder. Like he expected his mother had not come to the funeral, but then he had very few good memories of her, the ones he does have are from before Aragorn’s birth and he had been so small that most of them are not as clear as he would like. Still he watches hidden inside Elspeth’s shield as it proceeds.

After the funeral they had left London, actually heading out of country to begin the process with the first trip being to the west and the Americas. According to the information that the cobra had given him this was the newest part of Moriarty’s web and he had taken it over from a different criminal mastermind who had not been nearly as smart apparently.

During the long flight over he considered the letter that the cobra he considered a friend wrote him. While it had threaten him with violence and even called him stupid, he easily understood that it was the same as when he had called John stupid. Was John actually stupid? No, he just was not quite as smart as him and the cobra had used the same meaning for it. As for kicking his ass, well every time they had a hunt the cobra tended to do that and he was moderately that the cobra was referring to their mutual hunting of each other, though that he should expect it to be a bit more violent than normal in retaliation for action in a manner he saw as foolish.

He was mildly surprised that the pack had figured out about the snipers until he actually took the time to think about it. Part of the pack was the military pack which had all been part of a Special Forces team. Yet at the same time it made complete sense to him, after all, there were more than just wolves in that team. Then there was the information provided by the cobra, that would be invaluable and he was already working on memorizing it so that if something happened to the laptop he would not lose it.

A large part of him bristled at the concept of being sent with a sitter, but as he remembered that shifters could not interfere directly in human affairs so he would still be for the most part on his own. She would be more of a last resort and safety measure, possibly a scout or look out if he could talk her into it.

Sitting back against the seat, he pulls the sleeve on his left arm back, revealing a soft silver and white pattern that includes six small crescent moons in it. Before the fourth of December his skin had been bare but then he had done something he did not normally do, he prayed. He never prayed to the human gods, they never answered and he was moderately certain that they did not exist, but the shifter gods were a different question. He had seen and felt them during the six holy days that the shifters celebrate. So when he prayed, he directed his attention to them, trying to keep in mind what
their domains were.

He had not actually expected to be answered.

It had seemed like he had been taken from Bart’s even though he was aware his body had not moved and was now within a field of stars. He had started to glance around when his eyes had been drawn to a figure that seemed to materialize out of the stars surround them.

_You are human yet your behavior is more like that of a cobra or great cat. I will accept your request for help and assist you with your hunt but you must do me a favor in return._ Her voice echoes through his head, and had he not already been seated, he is sure it would have forced him to his knees. _In exchange for insuring that you live past the fall I desire that you hunt six humans who killed one of my immortal children. Our own laws dictate that I cannot send a Tracker after them of any of our races, but you, you are human our law allows you to deal with them. Do you accept?_

He nods, not sure that he could have spoken even if he wanted to.

_Your non-dominate wrist,_ she instructs holding out her hand.

Not sure what she is going to do he hold up his left and the power burns through him, causing his arm to feel as if it is on fire as her mark burns into his skin.

_Six moons for six targets, when you deal with them, the moon will vanish, you will be free of the Trackers Oath when the last moon is gone._ She informs him before vanishing and sending him back to his spot in the lab. _Allow yourself to freefall, and I ensure that the bond to your mate, along with your life, remains._

He had accepted the deal, and instead of asking his brother’s help, he had trusted the Goddess to her word. Sure enough he had survived the fall, but it had hurt. Not the impact like he expected, that he had barely felt, but the snapping of the pack link between him and every pack member, that he had felt and it sent pain through his body. Hospital personal had rushed to him, hoping possibly to try and save him since his heart had the slightest echo after the initial stop. As soon as they had cleared the room he had stood up and stare at what immediately took his place, it was nearly an exact replica of him, only it did not have any marks on its wrists. However he had kept to the part of the plan where he would retreat to Molly’s flat.

When the falcon had showed up with a cat on his shoulders he had been completely startled. After all, how had he known? None of them should have known, but it clicked that the cobra was connected to his John, which meant his link to John had been what had alerted the cobra that he was still alive and the cobra had reacted accordingly. Leave it to Eric to get around a goddess's idea.

Within the first three hours of them being in New York he had found the first cell and started carefully observing them before deciding to see if he could make a homeless network here the same way he did at home. To say he was pleased when it worked would have been an understatement. It had taken the rest of the week to get the actual hard evidence needed to get them convicted but he had done so. He had even managed to make a few contacts among the mouse shifter population due to the fact he had stopped a hunter from harming a mouse child and her family had wanted a way to thank him.

Then just a few hours ago the cat had dug her claws into his shoulders, her eyes seeming to glow for a moment before she had commented, _Eric wishes me to tell you, if you need assistance, any assistance at all, call on any cobra or viper den, show them your wrist, and they will assist you to their full ability but that you were still foolish for turning to the Gods instead of the den._
When she is done speaking, she gives a small shake of her golden head, mentally muttering, *First I am guard cat, now I am messenger, gezzz, I am unloved.*

*Thank you Elspeth,* he tells the cat as he stretches out on the bed that he is currently laying on.

He had already decided that he would stay with the homeless networks as often as he stayed in a hotel or inn. That way he could get very familiar with the local homeless and the city layouts while still having a chance to get cleaned up and work in privacy with the computer.

At the moment he was actually working on compiling the evidence into easy to understand paths so that he can deliver it with the cell to the police office. Once he has done that he plans to move on to the next city in the list.

If he was lucky this would take less than a year to complete, now he only had to hope that he was that lucky. In the meanwhile, he was writing letters, long letters to John telling him all about his travels, the people he meets, the places he has been, and how much he wished he was with him. He makes sure to include the fact he misses him, because he doesn’t want John to think he hadn’t missed him while he was gone. All the letters are being sent to a post office box he had opened right before he left London using one of the alias that Eric had provided him with. He had asked the post office to hold the letters until he returned and paid for five years in advance for the biggest size box they have. So every day he writes a letter or works on one he has already begun, though he only sends them when he feels that they are complete, which means he has only sent one so far.

The first letter was the one explaining about the why and how of his fall off of Bart’s. Hopefully he would get a chance to tell John in person rather than him having to read it if something was to happen to him for real.
March 19th into the 20th

**Chapter Notes**

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

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*John’s POV*

Over the next three months things seem to go in a blur. Where before time seemed to fly but it was a good thing, now it seems to fly and it is a horrible thing. The Dawn Awakening had passed, as had Christmas, New Years, and Valentines without him caring or doing anything for them. Thankfully the older cobra of the pack understood what was going on and led the pack during the Dawn Awakening because he was unable to focus enough to do so. While he had gone back to work at the clinic, his focus was horrible when he wasn’t at work, and he found that he still mourned his mate who he cannot feel despite the fact he knows he is still alive.

January sixth is the hardest for him because he knows his mate is somewhere in the world, pretty much on his own on his birthday with no one there to spoil him or love him. Apparently the military pack had decided it was a good idea not to leave him on his own for it, so the ten of them gathered to celebrate his bondmates birthday even though half of them thought he was dead.

On the nineteenth of March however he is called to the Arden household where Jace is just about freaking out over the fact his bondmother is in labor and he does not know how to help her. He had nearly forgotten that his fellow healer was pregnant, she had never gotten very big and had spent the last month or so, taking it easy, barely using her gifts as she allowed her power to pool within her and protect her little one from getting any sort of illness. So when he gets that phone call, he immediately calls Eric to get him so that they can help take care of the viper female.

Nathan is nervous about allowing him into the house until he recalls the fact that cobras like children far better than they like adults, add the fact that he can keep everyone calm by drawing their emotions out, and he accepts the cobra into his house with ill ease. However the cobra does not wish to actually enter the nesting area, understanding that only the healer and family should be there so he instead stays in the surprisingly full living room where Nathan is surrounded by every one of his bondmates relatives that could make it.

To say it got quiet quickly would be an understatement.

He ignores the situation in the main room, heading instead to the nesting room where her bondson is sitting on the floor outside of her door, eyes wide as he stares at it in fear. Inside he finds his iota is currently laying on a nest made of pillows and blankets, surrounded by female vipers but not a one of them has the healing gift to the same strength as him or the pup.

*Daria,* he softly murmurs as he pushes the door open, *you are worrying your mate and son.*

Her eyes flicker open and she beckons him, *Bring me Jace, he should not worry, he is a healer, he can watch if he wants.*

“Jace,” he murmurs allowed this time, “Your dame says you may observe with her if you desire since you are training as a healer.”
The pup is on his feet and ready to enter before anyone can say a thing. However when he goes to enter the room, three of the viper females get between him and the door hissing.

“His bondmother has given him permission to enter, as this den’s lead healer so too do I. Now move.” He growls low in his throat at the females.

“You are a man, what do you know of healing?” the one in the center demands arrogantly.

He smiles, lips curving slightly as his focus shifts to her for a moment. Blinking once, he switches to iota sight then proceeds to rattle off her entire medical history before switching to the females on either side of her. When he is done, the trio are all staring at him with wide eyes, their scent full of confusion.

“I understand that in a viper den a female going through labor is always surround by female family members and healers, so I am not going to kick all of you out. However she belongs to my pack now, and as the head healer and the alpha of the pack, when my presence is requested, I will be there. Understand?” he softly tells the trio as he locks eyes with each.

Slowly they nod and move out of his way, allowing both him and the pup to pass into the room. As soon as they are in, the younger wolf bolts to his bondmother’s side, rubbing his head against her shoulder for a moment while his eyesight switches over to that of a healer. He meanwhile goes to check and see how she is doing, discovering that she is in the earliest stages of the birthing process and carefully using his gift to check her daughter as well. She is slumbering, her body shifting into position in her sleep, and he knows that she will awaken when it is time to be born.

Over the next several hours the female vipers and him take turns carefully caring for the viper mother. Through it, her bondson stays beside her, absorbing part of her pain into himself and trying to be a comfort to her.

It is nearly three am on the twentieth when he feels the baby viper awaken and finish moving into position to be born. Three hours later after one grueling ride of a labor that the little viper is born, and she is definitely going to be a viper if the fact that she has colorful scales covering her little fingers and toes, along with randomly patched across her body is anything to go by. Still, he takes care of cleaning her up and preparing to present her to her mother, while the female vipers tend to the packs iota. When the vipers alert him that she is ready, he presents her daughter to her, gently touching his left palm to her forehead as he does so and forming the initial pack link.

They had already discussed that she would not formally present her child until his bondmate had returned home.

Once he has done that he inquires, “Do you wish me to send Nathan in?”

Before she has a chance to reply, the oldest female viper answers, “No, not yet, there is still the Ritual of Acceptance to be preformed, which takes place with him elsewhere and choosing to accept this child sight-unseen.”

He nods once, understanding that tradition is important, and this is one of the viper traditions though it is not one that carries over into the wolf packs. After doing a quick check of Daria with his iota sight, and surging a small amount of healing power through her when he bids her farewell, he returns to his flat, asking his cobra friend if he would stay the rest of the night because he is feeling a bit overwhelmed since seeing Daria with her daughter had reminded him that he did not know when or even if he would have a chance to hold his own child like that.

It’s probably a good thing that he does.
After taking a long, hot shower, he collapses into bed. With the cobra sitting in the living room draining all of his extreme emotions he quickly drifts off to sleep. Though staying that way is a totally different matter. Several times he wakes up seeking his bondmate and not finding him. However the last time he awakens isn’t to his mind searching for Sherlock, but to Eric alerting him that they have company.

Surprised, he rolls out of bed and dresses quickly, not really paying attention to what he grabs past that it is his belongs.

Heading out into the living room, he is mildly shocked to see Anthea standing very nervously by the door, her eyes desperately sweeping the room before returning to observing the cobra lounging on the sofa with his black eyes locked onto her.

“What can I do for you Anthea?” he asks as he heads into the kitchen to make tea. “Come on in the rest of the way,” he invites her.

She steps in, closing the door behind her, but barely taking her eyes off of his scaled friend. “Alpha Watson, I come to ask a favor,” she replies eventually, her scent holding a combination of fear, worry, and frustration to it.

“A favor?” he repeats, as he brings the three teas out to the living area. Even though he can tell she does not want one, she accepts her and take a sip while he hands the cobra his. “I am surprised, there is nothing I can think of that would force you here, and I am certain you are not here because you want to be.” Pausing to take a drink of his tea, he continues, “So what is the favor?”

Setting the tea cup aside, she turns to fully face him, though he can see her flinch when the cobra moves and he waves the taller man back into his seat. The house already smells of fear, no need to worry about it.

“I am aware that you are the alpha of the strongest wolf pack in the U.K., I am also aware that you are a healer with few peers. I am here to find some trade I can do for healing services.” She replies steadily even though her scent is anything but.

Tilting his head a bit, he looks her over with his iota sight. “You do not need healing,” he states, she is in perfect health.

In response she nods once before replying, “Not for me, for Mycroft Holmes,” she pauses to take a deep breath, “I realize he is neither pack nor gifted, but I hoped that you would be willing to barter with me for his healing. I cannot take his place, at this point there is no one who really can, and he is dying in the hospital right now because they cannot figure out what is wrong with him.” Again she pauses to take a deep breath, “I know that you are not fond of him, but it is my hope that your nature as a healer will allow you to at least consider the plea.”

Reaching out with his mind, he is mildly surprised to find hers unshielded as she awaits his decision. Her motives are honest enough. She actually likes her boss, has been thrilled by his recent involvement with the detective inspector because it means he is finally finding someone to bond with, something she feels is very important. Whatever it was that was killing the human was something the human doctors could do nothing about, but perhaps she could find something to trade to a shifter healer, which is when she had thought of her bosses brother’s bondmate. She had understood exactly what that mark on the middle brother’s arm had been, but said nothing because it was part of their world, and as much as she liked her boss, there were some things about their world she was not willing to discuss, such as how the Ancient Ones would select perfect matches. To see a human selected was so unusual to her she had never wished to upset the balance. Thus she was here, hoping that her quest would work though she is uncertain it will.
“Bring him here immediately. Have him placed in my old bedroom upstairs. Then everyone leaves, including you, at least from the flat, you may stay in the entry hall or down at Speedy’s but none of the guards. Mine will do the guarding.” He eventually answers her.

He’ll help Mycroft for a few reasons. One: Sherlock might not get along with his brother but he loves him anyways. Two: Greg is both a friend and packmate, the loss of a potential mate so soon after the loss of a friend would devastate him. Three: he doesn’t actually dislike the older Holmes brother and had seen improvement in his behavior in recent months. Four: it never hurts to have a politician that owes him.

She nods, not bothering to ask about the price because it is something that will be stated at the time of the healing as tradition dictates. A moment later she is on her phone snapping orders almost as effectively as when her boss does so.

Glancing over to his cobra friend he inquires, *Will you guard the elder Holmes from any potential threats?*

Slowly that dark head inclines as he closes his eyes.

*Direct them when they get here, I am going to change into work clothes because I do not know exactly what I need to do and get my kit from the closet to set up. He remarks as he leaves the room.*

By all technicalities, Mycroft is human and not pack, so doing an obvious healing is fully against the Old Laws. However that will not stop him from doing so, and since he can argue semantics on the fact that he is the alpha-seconds brother and a packmate’s mate, he is sure he can find a loophole within the law. Besides, he was approached by a gifted one, a nearly human gifted one, but still a gifted one.

A few minutes later he can hear it from his and his mate’s room where he is collecting his things as the slightly older human is brought in and taken upstairs much to the confusion of the staff doing so. Minutes after that he can hear as all the humans leave, leaving only Anthea there, and she excuses herself as soon as she sees him.

Heading up the steps, he makes his way to his old room where the elder Holmes is current laid out carefully in a hospital gown on the top of his bed with a thin blanket laid over him. Stepping up beside him, he carefully studies him with his normal sight first, noticing the fact that he is extremely pale, ash colored some would say, his cheeks are hollow if he has not been eating properly, and his normally stocky out body is far more slender than is good for him. He automatically notes all scars and even catalogues what the majority of them are before he switches to iota sight. With his healers sight he carefully looks over the taller man, starting with the crown of his head and slowly sweeping down. Blood vessel problems must run in the family, he thinks as he notices the beginnings of an aneurism on his brain before continuing the sweep. There is also damage to his nervous system that looks old and poorly cared for but that is not the main problem either. Continuing on he discovers that the taller man has other damage to several of his lower organs that is matched to being repeatedly beaten, still that is not it either. So he continues on, until he gets to his legs where he notes the scar pattern of someone who has been repeatedly stabbed and the damage below. Found it.

The bone beneath where he had been stabbed had been punctured several times it appears according to the re-growth and scar tissue. However either the wound was never cleaned properly or someone missed the fact that a small piece of bone had been bored out and a piece of something else had been lodged in its place. From that small fragment he can see the virus that is currently killing him, though the exact type is not something he is concerned with.

Sighing, he reaches for the cobra’s mind, *I will need extra energy if you have it.*
A mental snort reaches him, *Please, we are surrounded by people, I can find energy, most humans are brimming with it.*

He mentally nods and gets to work, there will be no partial healing with this, it is either all or nothing and after spending nearly fourteen hours with the viper during her labor his reserves are not as strong as they normally would be though he is still noticeably stronger than most healers ever would be. First step, get rid of the base infection which takes several hours to do so, because he has to go from where the infection begins and carefully check every part of his body, until he gets each and every cell of it. Once he has completed that he is on to step two, healing any of the damage it caused which ends up being the hardest step since the damage is not easily seen with his iota sight and only noticeable when he is completely linked to the taller man. By the time he is done, he sends the politician deep into a healing sleep, he will keep him there until he has had a chance to recheck him, but for the moment, even with all the energy that the cobra is feeding his way, he is exhausted from doing so much deep healing that he just about staggers to his room where he strips to pants and passes out on the bed.

He is not aware of when he ended up under the covers, nor is he exactly how long it is until he finally comes awake. What he does know is when he does, he feel far better than he had in a while. Stretching, he gets out of bed and dresses before checking on the cobra that happens to be resting in hybrid form and shielded on the landing between the upstairs and main part of the flat.

“Morning Eric,” he murmurs to the tall snake that unfolds and shifts before unshielding. With a nod he continues on his way, heading upstairs to check on his unexpected guest. That bed might not look like much but it was actually fairly comfortable to sleep on, just on the small side. Upon getting to his old room he switches back to iota sight, carefully checking each spot where the virus had broken through his immune system before nodding happily to himself and heading back downstairs to make breakfast. After all it is not wise to heal without eating because healing requires a lot of energy and sleep only restores so much of it. Breakfast is a rather simple affair of egg and bacon sandwiches with hot tea for himself and the cobra, he will feed the human after he is done getting healed or he might get vomited on. On the plus side, according to what his sight had showed him one more round of deep healing and the politician should be fine.

Rolling his shoulder a bit, he heads back upstairs to finish the job without really saying a word. One really useful thing about his current house guest is his inability to stay out of other people’s heads sometimes, though he would be the first to admit it can be annoying too, its just useful this time.

Once back in the bedroom, he resettles himself on the edge of the bed, carefully channeling energy through the taller man to repair the remaining damage to his body from the virus. Since it ends up taking less time than expected, he tilts his head sideways and considers whether he should heal some of the other scar damage that he can see.

*Might as well, in for penny, in for a pound,* the cobra remarks to him, *besides at this rate you already have the majority of the damage dealt with yes?*

*True, alright, just a bit more energy if you please,* he replies.

A smile and a nod are the answer he gets before the cobra begins to channel again.

While the energy is free flowing he focuses on repairing the nerve and blood vessel damage that he can see before taking care of the lingering organ damage as well. After getting all that done, he stands, making sure to reinforce the directive for the taller man to sleep while he texts Anthea and tells her to drop of something loose and comfortable for the politician to wear, his skin will be a bit sensitive after going through that much healing.
Chapter Notes

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV
It was fairly late in the morning when he awake for the second time. After he had finished healing the tall politician he had laid back down in his room. Sleeping for a little bit before getting up to the smell of cooking food in the other part of the flat. Dressing in clean clothes, he goes to check on the human in his old room, noticing that he is no longer gray, and looks vastly improved if a bit on the gaunt side from a dramatic weight loss. That could easily be fixed by arranging for the tall man to have regular and healthy meals.

Nodding to himself, he spots the clothes that his assistant had dropped off and decides that they should work fine since they are soft material and not form fitting. So with that determined, he reaches a hand out, pressing it against the side of the taller mans temple as he sends a small surge of power through him to awaken him before stepping back and watching carefully with his iota sight.

Within moments he is coming out of his energy induced slumber, grey-blue eyes nearly snapping open.

Those multi-tone eyes actually send an acute wave of pain through him as he realizes that he does not know when he will see his bondmate’s very similar eyes again. With a shake of his head, he makes sure that he currently has his hair shifted over to his wolf fur, thus hiding the mark on his wrist.

“Morning Mycroft, there is some clothes over there, if you want a shower first, the shower is at the bottom of the steps and there is a towel already in there. Anthea dropped off your personal care kit at the same time as the clothes. Whenever you’re ready come into the living room, we need to have a talk and you need to eat.” He informs the taller man before turning on his heel and heading back downstairs.

He had just gotten comfortable in his chair with a plate of food on the small table beside him with the cobra seated on the floor on the other side of the room in front of the main window atop the heat vent when they hear the tall human come down stairs and step into the bathroom to get cleaned up. With ease the cobra rises, going to make a plate before bring it into the living room and sitting in on the table in front of the sofa, then returning to his spot near the warmth. A chuckle escapes him as the tall man decides to get a fire going and perches almost in it on the edge of the fireplace so that his body stays warm.

Several minutes later, after he had heard the shower turned on, he turns it off and as the politician dresses. With a shake of his head, he returns his focus to eating. It is rather unusual to have someone other than himself in the shower, but he shrugs it off and waits.

A few moments later the tall man comes into the living room, his hair still a bit damp. “Good morning Doctor Watson,” his eyes furrow a bit as he glances at the cobra, “Tech, I believe.”
The cobra inclines his head politely, snuggling back against the wall by the fireplace.

“Have a seat, Mycroft, the plates for you, all high in energy foods that will help with recovery.” He tells the taller man as he takes a bite of his breakfast. It is easy for him to smell the confusion in the taller man, and waits patiently for him to processes everything, knowing that he will speak when he is ready to or the cobra trying to climb in the fire will speak for him if he cannot bring himself to do so.

Silence continues while they eat their meals, before he has a chance to rise in order to collect the dishes and make tea, the tall cobra does just that with a very subtle nod that he would have missed had he not glance at him. However the black eyes are not focused in his direction but in the humans. With easy motions he passes them, collecting up the dishes before heading into the kitchen to wash them while making tea from the sounds of it.

Almost as soon as the tall man turns the water on, his house guest begins to speak, “I was in the office when I collapsed due to sharp pains in my chest, stomach, and legs. Last thing I recall is Amber, forgive me, Anthea, calling for an ambulance.” The human stops speaking, frowning, “I cannot understand why I am here rather than a hospital or having my private physician seeing to me.”

“Anthea brought you to me, after the human medical system failed to determine why your body was shutting down.” He replies to the unspoken question.

“Why?” the human politely inquires, eyes mildly confused.

He shrugs slightly, “As you are not pack, I cannot answer,” he responds, before tilting his head to the side and considering the taller man for a moment, “What I can do is offer you a place within the pack, but you have to understand that our kind live by a rather strict set of laws regarding humans and our interactions with them.”

Silence falls again in the flat. He can tell that the cobra is trying to give the illusion of privacy even though he knows that the tall man can hear every word both of them are saying. Even if he wasn’t listening to the thoughts racing through the human’s head which probably includes what he is saying.

Finally after several moments, the politician inclines his head slightly before straightening, “Why is he hovering in the kitchen?”

A chuckle escape at that question, it was not exactly what he had expected but then that’s Mycroft. He tended to have more surprises then appreciated at times, though they could be rather good at times.

“He’s attempting to be polite. It’s a new skill, one he prefers to ignore normally.” He replies with still chuckling.

“I can be polite, it’s rare but I do know how. Unfortunately, when I decide to be polite I tend to fall back on custom and you dislike a great deal of the customs.” The cobra remarks as he enters the living room with two cups of tea and one hot chocolate which he gives to the politician.

Apparently that startles the politician who stares at the cobra. It takes him a moment to realize it is the fact that he is speaking aloud that has the politician giving the cobra a mildly surprised look.

“Oh yeah, he can speak aloud, doesn’t do it often, but he can do so. You’ve really only ever heard him mindspeak right?” he queries of the taller man with a small smile.

“Correct,” comes the semi-stiff reply.
Several more minutes pass in silence as the politician considers the options. He doesn’t have to actively be using his telepathy to know that the taller man is weighing the pros and cons of joining the pack.

“I would like to accept your offer, Doctor Watson, however I know all things have a price.” The tall human eventually comments, voice a bit formal.

He smiles at him, a small huff of a chuckle escaping him, “It is simple enough, do not break pack law if you accept. That’s it. Of course, you do realize that within a pack the alpha has the right to complete stop any actions whether they are pack related or not.” He shrugs, “I am not telling you this because I am controlling, just that it is a part of our lives.”

A snort escape the tall man settled by the fire, “It’s a right that John forgets until there is a clear threat to the pack or the member in question is doing something very foolish.”

The tall human nods at this, eyes narrow as he considers the implications.

“Don’t worry about national secrets, neither of us really care about human politics. Past that, I have clearance equal to yours though I next to never use it, and he has clearance above yours since it is just easier than trying to keep him from learning things.” He informs the tall human with a shrug, “In case you hadn’t realized after Baskerville.”

A small smirk curves the human’s lips as he responds, “I had looked into how you were able to walk onto a highly classified base and turn it on its collective ear. Those that vanished and never made it to the trial have not been seen since.”

“Well you know, it’s never good to piss off a vengeance goddess and they did just that.” He remarks mildly.

“Doctor Watson, I thought you above such beliefs.” The human states after a few moments of silence.

He gives a small shake of his head, “I do not know if human gods are real or not, but our seven Old Gods are very real and very active in our world,” he smiles, “something you should be very thankful for or you would be dead.”

A surprised “Oh,” escapes the taller man as he stares at him. Finally, he gives a small shake of his head before continuing, “I would like to accept your offer, if it remains.”

Unfastening his left sleeve he nods once, “It does indeed, mind you, this is the informal pack acceptance,” he goes to tell the other man to unbutton his dominate wrist sleeve but he is already doing so. A quick glance towards the man sitting by the fire tells him why and he cannot help but smile as he shakes his head.

When he offers his wrist to the taller man, it takes him a moment to process before he accepts it, pressing their wrists together. the surge of power that goes from him to the human seems to shock him and when he releases him with a murmured, “Welcome to the Watson pack, Mycroft,” the humans eyes are blown wide as his body adapts to the new energy surging through it, it is very like how Sherlock had respond, and he gets up to make the taller man another cup of hot chocolate only the cobra has already started.

What, I can be more than just a computer tech. Besides, right now he is providing way too much emotion for me to wish to be so close to him. The cobra remarks a bit snidely as he works in the kitchen.
He gives him a few moments, waiting until Eric has returned with their drinks before softly saying, “Mycroft?”

With a small shake of his head, the tall human seems to come back to the present and blinks at the second hot chocolate in his grasp. “How?”

“Eric,” he answers, “In answer to your question of why you are here and not at any sort of formal medical facility, I am a healer as well as an alpha.” He pauses to sip his tea, “actually, I am probably one of the strongest healers in this country, I once said telepathy was not my gift, I was not lying, my gift is healing, the ability to heal at a cellular level to be exact. How I heal is something very few have ever discovered and is not something any non-pack member knows. Your assistant knows I am a shifter healer, and shifter healers are stronger than human doctors or gifted healers, so she asked a favor, one that is technically illegal but lets over look that note.”

“Why did you do it if it is technically illegal and you have already stated your kind are very law oriented?” the human inquires.

He smiles, “Its illegal for her, not me, she is gifted and not related to you in any way. I on the other hand am by all rights and technicalities your brother-in-law.” He shrugs once, allowing his hair to return to normal, which also brings his bondmark back. “You once asked why I accepted Sherlock into the pack,” he holds up his left wrist showing the spiral fern on it, “because I knew even then that we could be bondmates. Wolves only ever bond once, and I bonded your brother. Even if he is no longer here, you are still his brother, and thus mine through the bond.”

“The tattoo I did not understand,” the human murmurs, eyes widening slightly.

He nods once, “Indeed, only it’s not a tattoo, a tattoo is done by human hands, these are created by the gods themselves. In our case, it was the Mistress of Shadow who determined we would make a good bond couple, and I accepted it. As did he or the mark never would have appeared on his wrist. When you picked on him about being a virgin he considered telling you about it to prove you wrong but decided against it. After all, it was a pack matter, and a personal matter, and you were neither pack nor close.”

“He didn’t trust me,” the tall human mutters as he considers it. He can tell that it is quite a surprise to the taller man.

“Not with that he didn’t,” he comments, “As for those who vanished before they had a chance to stand trial, they were all gifted, and they were taken by the Moonlight Lady to be punished for their crimes.” He pauses again, glancing at the clock and mildly surprised it hadn’t even been an hour since they started this conversation, it felt so much longer. “Now, I have a question for you, how long ago did you come to have a healed over stabbing injury in your femur?”

For a moment the taller man blinks owlishly at him before replying, “It occurred while I was still doing field work, actually that was my last mission prior to getting promoted into the position my assistant now holds.” He tilts his head a bit, “That was fourteen years ago, I was twenty-two at the time.”

He nods, considering it for a moment. “Well whoever else they had stabbed with that knife had the beginning stages of multiple myeloma, it spent years dormant in your system, or maybe suppressed by your system before it started to spread. Only it is an illness that is hard to detect at the best of times, and I would say that it was not the best of times for you.”

“So you are saying I am dying?” the human replies, eyes furrowed in mild confusion.
“No,” he shakes his head, “you were dying. It’s gone now. Like I said, I can heal on a cellular level, it’s gone.” He shrugs, “I also dealt with the beginning stages of the aneurism that you were developing, ironically enough it was almost in the same spot as your mothers. Oh yes, I know you must have noticed the change in behavior. I knocked her out and healed her, only she was still functioning with it, so I didn’t say what I did, merely passed off why they fell asleep on my sofa as tired from the emotional events and fact that cobra fetched them to London which they had not been expecting.”

“Now then, Mycroft, you might want to get a hold of your assistant because I am moderately certain that she is still concern about you and I would give her a big bonus if I was you, because walking into a shifter household to ask a favor is something gifted folks majorly hate doing.” He shrugs, “Old feud problems between the two species.” he smiles, “there are twice monthly pack meeting, held on the new moon and full moon each month, the full moon meeting is always more important one. If you want, I can have Mouse find time in your mutual schedules in order to get lessons on our history, it’s not required.”

Standing, he fetches the other small collection of items that his assistant had left behind for him including his wallet and phone.

While the human spoke with his assistant he headed into his bedroom where he walked over to the closet and shoved his head in the closet holding all of his mates things. Speaking of the tall man had made him want to smell him, and since he was not available to scent, he would have to make do with his things. He hears it when the human is done with his phone call and returns to the living room where the cobra has already made fresh drinks for all of them.

“Well, as a healer and a doctor I must suggest that you take a day in order for your body to finish adapting to being healed, otherwise you can undo some of the work I did,” he shrugs, “you’re welcome to stay here if you want, I realize it’s probably not as nice as your own place but it has its merits. Including top of the line security,” the end he says with a somewhat sarcastic smile.

For a moment confusion colors the taller man’s features before he understands that he is referring to the lanky cobra lounging nearly in the fire. With a slight smile, the human settles back onto the sofa, glancing around a bit bored. A few minutes later a single knock at the downstairs door had the cobra glancing that way with narrow black eyes before shrugging.

“Jade line daughter awaiting entry,” the cobra murmurs, eyes never leaving his computer screen.

With a shake of his head, he goes downstairs to invite Anthea in. She is polite to him, though a bit distant. He hadn’t named a price yet, so he knows that is part of what is concerning her.

When they reach the actual flat she back steps upon seeing the cobra still there but quickly shakes it off in order to give her boss his brief case.

“Don’t worry about it, there is no price for assisting family,” he tells the gifted woman before he goes to make tea in the kitchen. He can smell her shock at that announcement.

While the gifted and the human speak, he finishes up the tea. She is gone when he steps back into the living room to spot the elder Holmes brother still seated on the sofa, now with a laptop on his lap.

It is a surprisingly smooth morning, with the politician and cobra both working on their computers while he takes the time to read. Occasionally the tall human would ask him about his brother and he would answer. He was happy that the older human seemed to be taking his advice and really wished that the brothers could have shared this kind of easy acceptance before his bondmate left.
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John’s POV

Just before dinner time he glances at his two silent companions, inquiring, “I’ve got fish or chicken to cook, any preferences?”

The cobra just shrugs, continuing whatever he is doing on the laptop while the human gives him a mildly confused looked before also shrugging. Sighing, he decides that the two brothers can be royal pains in his ass at times, particularly when it comes to food. So after inventoring what all side dish possibilities he has, he decides to go with the chicken and proceeds to cooking. Silence still reigns while he makes dinner and even through it. However he can just about feel the tension building despite the fact that he can feel the cobra pulling emotion out of the air.

Finally, after the three of them have finished eating and the cobra decides to clean up, he ends up with a tall politician standing in front of his chair. A very frustrated scent though his features are completely blank.

“The both of you have told me the pack protects its own and yet my brother is dead.” The human’s voice is low but there is no mistaking the anger within it.

He continues to sit, and mentally tells the cobra to stay out of it as he waits for the taller man to finish expressing his anger.

“He died. You were there. Why didn’t you stop it?” the taller man demands, “How could you let him die? I have seen that one trying to play invisible do some very impossible seeming things. So how the hell did you fail to stop him from killing himself?” he takes a deep, harsh breath staring him hard.

“The command voice only works if the person can hear me without aid and he was being blocked by the Dusk Daughter which prevented both Eric and I from forcing him to our will via telepathy. Believe me, we tried to stop him, however it is very hard to stop something when one of the Old Gods gets involved. Had I known before he jumped that he made a deal with the Goddess of Darkness I would tried to find some other option. In typical style for him, he acted without saying a bloody thing to me,” he stops at that point, his voice while even was breaking and there was no way that he was going to break down in front of this particular human.

Closing his eyes, he focuses on the very faint life signs he can feel through the bondmark on his wrist. He just about clings to the feeling as a wave of depression hit and a moment later he feels as the cobra links with him, sharing his sorrow but not pulling it from him. After all, it really is not healthy for a regular empath to have no emotions.

I am fine, go back to ignoring us please, he tells the cobra gently, knowing that part of his friends protectiveness stems from the protectors bond that they share.

“Sit down Mycroft,” he politely states. When the human refuses, staying where he is and glaring at
him, he sighs, before shifting tones, “Sit down Mycroft,” he orders the human with the command voice.

He can smell the anger and surprise as the human’s body does as it is ordered.

“Consider the following one of those secrets you are not allowed to say to anyone since at this exact moment the only people who know it are myself, Eric, Daria, Nathan, and Jacob. Which of that list three of us have clearance. The other two just know how to keep their mouths shut.” He pauses, waiting for acknowledgement from the human before continuing, “Well technically its six of us who knows. Only number six is currently traveling with him. Sherlock’s not dead.”

“I saw his body! I am the one who drew the blood from him damn you! I know it was my brother.” The older man snarls at him, all pretense of control gone.

“Actually you drew the blood of a doppelganger,” the cobra replies coming into the room with fresh drinks for all three of them, “A goddess created doppelganger, but still a doppelganger. Designed to look, taste, and smell like the real thing. How very fortunate for you, unlike John here who actually had to deal with the real one when he was literally bleeding out. One must allow that the Old Ones can be very good at what they do.” his temper is up according to the fact that he is hissing more than speaking clearly though he is aware it is probably due to the fact emotions are running high.

For a bit, the three sit in silence before the human in their mix finally demands, “Are you certain?”

He nods once, replying only, “Yes.”

Again silence settles into the room, then as sudden as it had began, the anger and frustration he had been scenting vanishes, replaced by quiet acceptance. It is the cobra who comments next.

“Do not try to find him with a CCTV, cameras, or the satellites, it won’t work, I made sure of that when I sent Spathi with him.” the taller man shrugs, “I could trace his armband if I had to, or even use telepathy to track down Spathi. However as a Tracker I understand the importance of not interfering when dealing with a Trackers mission.”

The taller human nodded once, not saying anything and several more hours passed while the two worked on their laptops and he caught up on the rest of the reading.

Sometime after midnight, the human of the trio glanced around before commenting, “I should be getting home to sleep.”

He shrugs, “That’s up to you. There is still the room upstairs if you want to sleep in it.”

Tilting his head to the side the human considers him for a moment before commenting, “You sleep in my brother’s room.”

A small smile curves his lips as he nods once, “I sleep in our shared bedroom. That is correct.” His eyes narrow at the taller man, “It’s the same room I shared with him for over a year.”

“That’s why you would not let me take any of his things. You knew he was alive and that he would eventually be returning.” The politician continues, eyes narrow. Finally he queries, “How much longer do you expect me to rest?”

He smirks at that, answering, “I’ve actually been shocked at the fact you have done so for as long as you have without demanding to be allowed back to work past the computer.”

“Anthea insisted that I do as told in this instance,” the human remarks in return.
“Intelligent Jade daughter,” he hears muttered from the fireplace area.

“Tomorrow morning, no earlier than seven am, you may go back to running the human world.” He eventually replies after considering the amount of healing he had done and the amount of damage that been present in the taller man’s frame. “However you are to eat one solid meal per day, your body requires a bit more fruits and vegetables than you have been providing it. If you are going to be unable to get solid meals, speak with Daria about getting some of the to-go bars that she makes, or at least the recipe for them so you can have your own people make them if you prefer.”

The taller man considers it for a moment, before shutting down his laptop and nodding, “Alright, Doctor Watson.”

“John, if you would, I really am not formal, formals that one over there,” he replies to the politician as he waves a hand in the general direction of the tallest one in the room.

The politician nods once more before heading towards the stairs and going up to his old room from what he can hear. Once the taller man is firmly behind the door, he can hear the soft murmur of him on the phone but does not allow himself to actually listen in, preferring instead to give him some privacy.

“I have already alerted the viper to the need for some of those fruit bars she likes to give me,” the cobra remarks after a few moments, “She said her mate would be by in a bit so I will collect them from him.”

“Thank Eric,” he replies, collecting up their mugs from drinking tea and hot chocolate throughout the day.

With a mental good night to the cobra, he returns to his room where he collects his things for a shower before going to take one. As the water pours down on him, he allows himself to silently weep for the fact that he was not able to stop his mate from doing something so reckless. Only the knowledge that he was with one of the best shifters and fighters he knew, plus the fact his mate was intelligent in his own right kept him from demanding that Eric track them down so he could retrieve him. He understands perfectly well about goddess born missions. That does not mean he has to appreciate that fact. Particularly when all he wants to do is curl himself around the taller man and hold him tight.

Soon, he thought, soon he would have his mate back and everything would go back to the way it was supposed to be. In the meanwhile he would wait. He would continue to live, running the pack with the help of the cobra and falcon, perhaps get to know Mycroft on a new level. Now that he did not feel as if the tall human was an outsider trying to disturb the pack he could appreciate the similarities between the brothers and between the cobra and him as well. Of course, he is moderately certain neither Eric nor Mycroft would appreciate that comparison but it was hard not to make it when he considered how very similar they were between their need to control everything, having an officially minor role in the political structure but truthfully having a great deal of power, both being a bit more formal than he would ever prefer to be, and both of their tendency to not properly care for themselves at times.

After his shower he heads to bed, sleeping until he feels more than hears the viper arrive and leave before drifting off to sleep. Early the following morning he is awoken by the sound of the politician showering and decides to get out of bed to bid him good day, though the human seems moderately surprised by it. Unsurprisingly the cobra has decided to cook breakfast for the three of them which goes remarkably smoothly, even if he does have to glare a bit to get the human to eat.

Before he leaves, he smirks at the taller man answering his unspoken question, “You’re pack now. I
do not instinctively wish to send you to your knees in submission so I believe we will get along better. Have a nice day Mycroft.”

Long after he is gone the cobra breaks out laughing, his deep chuckle a combination of a hiss and breathy exhale. Several moments later he remarks, “You think too loudly sometimes, I mean seriously how similar do you think I am to that human?”

Smiling at his tall friend he replies, “I think that if he was a shifter, he would give you a run for your money. As is, well none of those brothers need to be one of non-human races in order to be far more than your average human. I would wonder if they have gifted blood in them, but I have checked their DNA, they do not.” He pauses for a moment, considering everything that has happened in the last few days. “Alert Anthea that he is to eat more fruit and vegetables if you would please.”

The cobra nods once, fishing his phone out of his pocket and doing so with a quick text. “There, done.” The taller man pauses for a bit, eyes gleaming silver for a moment, “You might not feel the need to make him submit, but I still do, but then,” a sardonic smile curves the older shifters lips, “that’s my nature, there are very few I do not wish to force into submission.” He shakes his head a bit, “I need to be going, Tracker duties call.”

Without another word the cobra leaves, taking his laptop with him and leaving him on his own. That’s alright, it gives him a bit of private time before he has to head to the clinic to consider what his next step is going to be. After all, he has no idea how long his mate is going to be away for and he really needs to figure out how he will deal with the separation if it goes on for too much longer.
Mary Morstan

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is a day late, I have been working on my business website to get it up and running in hopes of selling books, handmade cards, and custom coloring pages. If I cannot start generating a new source of income I might lose my internet (and house) and will be unable to continue posting for a while. So if anyone is feeling generous feel free to look (and maybe buy or suggest to a friend) my site: http://cosmosbusinessventures.webs.com/ its still being worked on so its a bit plain, but it should be improving soon.

Thank you to all you lovely people who clicked on some form of communication, I simply adore getting messages about reviews, favorites, and follows. Enjoy!

John’s POV

Over the next few weeks between when the elder Holmes brother had joined the pack and the full moon there are a few instances where there was some difficulty. The biggest difficulty being that despite being told not to seek his brother the older Holmes had done just that and found himself in the position of dealing with a very pissed off Eric who was considering wiping the human’s memory of the fact that his brother lived. Why the cobra was angrier than him was one thing he found amusing. Particularly since the cobra did exactly the same thing on a fairly regular basis, which is not listen.

Another problem that comes up is when Jace goes to take his A levels with an early graduation group but they will not allow him to because he had not completed any of the previous exams. One of the instructors even told him not to bother because there was no way an adopted child so far behind in exams could even pass. That had caused fury with several of the pack members including his parents, his already annoyed potential bondmate, and with Mouse who had been the one to make sure that he was ready. Thankfully, his aunt had heard about what was going on and arranged for the pup to make up every single one of the supposedly required tests over a two week period so he would be able to complete his A levels early. To say that the instructors were very surprised when he passed nearly every exam they put in front of him with just about perfect scores, the only subject he had a hard time on being history and that was because it was from a human perspective not a shifters.

The last problem actually happened right before the meeting when Jason decided to cause a fuss about Mycroft being there. Since most of the pack had not gathered yet he decided to see how it was going to go and really had to chuckle when the politician turned his light colored eyes on the wolf and proceeded to rip him apart politely. By the time the human was done, most of the pack adults had gathered and the wolf was vastly embarrassed. When the wolf tries to get him to make Mycroft back down, he merely smiles and politely remind him of the conversation that they had when Jason had returned to the Watson pack.

Thankfully enough the pack meeting itself goes smoothly.

Another three months pass, things having just about evened out. Mycroft was no longer attempting to track down Sherlock, though he occasionally asked after him and he could only reply when Eric had updated him on his bondmates status. Thankfully, he knows his mate is safe because he is with
Elspeth who is damned good at what she does. The older human has also smelled regularly amazed by the interactions between the pack members and the fact he seems to be easily accepted, though he is treated formally by most the members. Mouse had arranged for basic lessons for him once a month. He had even contacted their old general in order to get her clearance so that the human would not be concerned when she would just appear about what she might hear.

Two days prior to the new moon meeting in June he is approached at work by a new nurse, a blonde haired human with large brown eyes and a narrow face approaches him. Nearly as soon as she is within polite speaking distance his phone chirps at him. Curiously, he fishes it out of his pocket and checks the message, mildly surprised to see it is an alert from when Tech and Mouse had tagged all of the snipers that were working for Moriarty at the time of the pool incident.

“Hello, Doctor? Can I have a moment of your time?” her voice a tad bit higher pitched than he appreciates.

Turning to her, he smiles lightly, while switching to iota sight to check her health and body for any implant or alterations. It only takes him a moment to find that her eyes are actually blue not brown, and that she has two different tattoos. One is generalized. The other is a group insignia that he does not know. “What can I do for you ma’am?” he politely inquires, while mentally, he queries of the cobra, *Can you identify this?*

A mental snort is all he gets in response from the older shifter.

“Doctor, do you know where Doctor Sawyer went?” she inquires, “I have the papers she asked for but cannot find her.”

He tilts his head to the side, discretely sniffing the air before answering, “I believe she is in a meeting with a patient right now. Leave them with Suzanna at the front desk and she will make sure that she gets them.”

With that out of the way, he nods politely to her once before calling for his next patient and heading into the exam room.

That night he got a rather complete report from the cobra, including every single part of her history that the cobra could get his hands on. He is moderately certain that is a more complete history than what Mycroft could get because the human would have to do it the polite way, and polite is not a word often used in the same sentence as the cobra. So he carefully studies it, learning all about the chameleon currently playing at being a nurse. She has a wide variety of skills including lock picking, computer hacking (though the report calls it minor), forgery, skilled marksmanship, able to pick up skills with fair ease, minor medical training, hand-to-hand combat training, code breaking, and minor cooking skill. While she lacks a perfect memory, her memory is far better than the average person. She has worked for the CIA, several different European governments, and a few Asian governments as well. Then she started working for a variety of highest bidders, the last one being Jim Moriarty. While most the records were pieced together, he is fairly certain that the cobra had not missed anything major.

After rubbing his temple for a bit he considers what to do and decides to play stupid until given a reason not to. It is something he does on a fairly regular basis anyways just because people seem more willing to give things away to a person who gives the impression of being unassuming.

The following weeks seem to follow a similar pattern with her, on a fairly regular basis she makes it a point to find a reason to speak with him about something. Sometimes it is about one of their coworkers, sometimes it’s about a patient, occasionally she asks something not work related and he politely answers in every occasion. Her scent is often flirty, full of emotion even as her face is kept
Finally, she decides roughly a month and a half after their initial contact to get a bit bolder. He is just about to leave the clinic when she stops him with a hand on his sleeve, “Doctor Watson, John, I was wondering if you would like to join me for drinks tonight?” her tone is light, lilting, and annoying as hell since he can smell the cocktail of emotions pouring off of her.

Narrowing his eyes a bit, he cocks his head to the side while he decides before nodding once. “That would be acceptable. There is a nice little café about three blocks from here. We could meet there at six.”

She nods once, smiling at him and letting go of his arm before heading back in.

Sarah gives him a funny look, tilting her head to the side and he gives his boss a smile, with a small shake of his head. Walking over to her, he softly states, “I have a feeling she will make a bit of a scene when I tell her I am uninterested and I would prefer for it not to happen here.”

His boss nods once, eyes thoughtful, “Understandable,” she pauses, glancing about a bit before inquiring, “How have you been lately? I know Sherlock’s loss hit you hard.”

“Happy for the work, it has kept me occupied, along with my family deciding I needed to be visited far more often.” He responds smiling at her. After their initial conversation about why they would never date the two of them had developed a rather easy-going friendship and there had been several times she had run interference between him and some of the more persistent nurses who thought he would be a great catch. “Have a good day, Sarah,” he bids her before leaving for the day.

After leaving the clinic he heads to the store in order to get his weekly shopping done. From there he heads back to the flat, enjoying the walk even though it is a bit longer than many would consider comfortable. Since his mate’s ‘death’ he had his days where his leg didn’t like to work right, so on days it was not acting up he would walk as much as possible. Once home, he carefully puts everything away before doing any housework that is needed. Completed. When he is done with that he glances at the clock and notices the time, he still has over an hour before he needs to shower and dress for his meeting this evening so he decides to go work on his mate’s lab for a bit. It is not something he is fond of doing, but he does not want anything wrong with it when he gets home. However he is not certain how much needs done so he sets an alarm and he is really happy that he does so when it goes off before he is done.

Sighing, he heads upstairs to get cleaned up before heading to the café. He has just arrived when he spots Mary approaching on foot.

“Hello John, thank you for accepting my offer,” she greets him.

He smiles at her. Sure that it is a bit tight clears his features and emotions so that he can deal with her. “Good evening Mary,” he replies politely as the two of them take a seat in the back of the café.

They had barely sat down when the waitress comes over to give them menus, though she inquires if he would like his regular to which he nods.

“Do you bring dates here often?” she inquires when the waitress steps away after ordering something for herself.

“I don’t date,” he remarks calmly.

A large smile splits her face and he can smell her pleasure at that, “So I am special?” she queries.
Tilting his head, he answers, “This is not a date. This is a warning. However let’s wait until the food is here.”

Confusion fills her scent as her eyes narrow and she stares at him as if trying to figure out what he means. The next several minutes while they wait are passed in silence, however he gets the feeling she wishes for an explanation, not that he is planning to give it to her yet. After their drinks and meals show up he still continues to say nothing, waiting somewhat politely for the eating to be done, or close to first.

“Now then,” he begins, voice low as he starts to speak, “Mary Morstan, currently chameleoning a nurse, minor medical abilities, far more skills in what would be considers spy craft. Birth name Amelia Generosa Rivera Avery, daughter of Cara and Jacob Avery, orphaned at fourteen due to a car accident, recruited at seventeen by the CIA due to having an unusual skill set.” He pauses to take a sip of the tea that the waitress had just refreshed for him. “You spent nearly ten years working for them before moving on to work for a variety of other governments, some of which are actively hunting you. The last job that I have discovered of yours was with that annoying human Jim Moriarty, who should never be confused with his now dead twin James.”

He stops for a moment, finishing his tea before smiling a bit like the predator is second form is and continuing, “I do not know or care why you have decided to approach me. I will simply warn you now: I will not tolerate any foolishness. Try something at the risk of your own throat.”

She blinks at him, eyes rather wide, scent full of shock, terror, and worry as she tries to figure out how he found out so much.

“You must have me confused with someone else,” she stammers as she stares at him, high pitched voice getting higher.

“I doubt it, blood rarely lies, and since you are not a chimera, well how unfortunate for you.” he remarks in response, voice still low but making his point.

“How?” she demands, eyes still wide.

He merely smiles, “I hope you understand what I am saying, because it will not go well for you if you do not.” Standing, he walks over to the register to pay before leaving. He can just about feel her eyes boring into his back as he moves away. He is moderately certain that she is going to do something foolish but he had already warned her.

Three more days pass before she stops him as he is walking home from work. “How do you know all that?”

He smiles, replying, “I have a friend who excels at intelligence collecting. If he tells me something I know it is accurate.”

“After watching you two I quit, I just couldn’t,” her voice is a bit shaky, “I couldn’t kill someone who was so honestly good.”

He shrugs, scenting the air for her honesty, mildly surprised at what he finds. She is sincere, or as sincere as someone of her nature ever is. She is also attracted to him, if she was a shifter he would say she was in heat, but she was not. According to scent and sight she was human, completely human. “I cannot say one way or another, I have noticed that most your targets were political or military in nature, very few civilians. No children.” He continues to move, patiently waiting to see what she does next.
She trots to keep up with his steady pace, “Please, you already know the worst about me, yet you have not turned me in, why?”

“I have no need to turn you in, if I need to deal with you, well I will do so myself. I am regularly underestimated, and I am alright with that.” He responds as he keeps moving. Above him he can hear the very soft wing beats of a falcon, knows it is the beta guarding him, probably something that the cobra had insisted on.

This answer seems to startle the human who falls behind for a moment before quickly catching up with him. “John, could we please just talk? You are known for your close relationship with Sherlock and he was not normal so why can’t-“ she doesn’t get to finish her sentence as he spins towards her growling low in his throat.

“Listen will Mary Morstan, back the hell off, right now the only reason I am not disposing of a body is it is far too much effort. You’ve been tagged as someone who worked for the reason my best friend is gone. I will not tolerate you badmouthing him in any way. Do you understand?” his voice is a low growl but he knows his point is made according to the sudden intake of breath, scent of fear that comes from her, and the way she steps back with her eyes widening.

Turning on his heel with military precision he strides away, making a turn and shielding before she can see where he went. A sort of dark amusement fills him as he watches her try to figure out where he went while he leans against the wall. He is not sure what he is going to do about her yet. Part of him considers striping her mind of everything in it but that is not his preferred style of dealing with problems like her. Still, it is something he will have to figure out sooner than later because something tells him that she will not back off that easily.
Hi folks! So it's been a while since I have updated this, partly because Letters for John and Trial & Error were demanding attention, partly because I had to figure some timeline stuff out, and the big part is real life sucks, but hey, maybe things will start looking up sooner than later. So I know this is on the short side for one of my chapters, however it took way too long to type because I just couldn't focus and my head is still on the prompts I was given. Still have 5 1/2 to type but they will be ready by Christmas!

Anyways, as always, thank you to everyone who reads, reviews, comments, emails, kudos, bookmarks, follows, subscribes, or any other form of communication that I might forget.

Enjoy!

John’s POV
June quickly fades into July, July into August, and August into September without much going on. He is still allowing Eric and his aunt to lead any of the Old Rites, choosing to participate in a secondary roll not a primary. Thankfully, the cobra had no issues with that, and it was the only time that he would drop his scales long enough to lead them in respect of whichever Old God the rite was for. Work was going smoothly, or as smoothly as it could when he could not focus and was finding himself to be more and more depressed. Perhaps that was why he was not as surprised but what the one sworn to his protection pulled his stunt.

The night of the Harvest Flame he participates, but only barely, his emotions pulling him down far more than he likes to admit because the scent of his mate is no longer filling his home.

After the rite, he finds himself within the bedroom at Eric’s house. A room that rarely gets used going by the scent, yet still comforts him as he shifts into his wolf and curls on the large mattress. A small part of him was furious that his mate was not here, he should be here. Another part of him was jealous that his host had his mate but did nothing with him. How could he do that to the pup?

Shaking his head, he tries to stop thinking, knowing that what he is feeling right now was just the separation, not anything he really believed. In truth he was just about overjoyed that the cobra had found such a perfect mate for him. Past that, what the pup did not know, he would learn.

“Sleep John,” he hears the hissing murmur of the cobra, the only person he had met since he developed the command gift that could order him as the tall man’s hands touch his forehead. Only a small part of him wishes to deny the older shifter’s strength over him, but he doesn’t, willingly allowing it to send him into slumber.

Not long after, his eyes flicker open as he glances around, finding himself in some Chinese shrine if the look of the place is anything to go by. He is getting ready to wonder why when he notices something, a drawing force pulling him towards the other room.

Eric, what the hell have you done? He demands on their private link, knowing that the cobra will hear him.
The impression of a sigh and him shaking his head is the only response he gets. Typical of the cobra.

Following the feeling, he finds himself standing in a bedroom, stretched out on the bed is his mate but the cat that protects him is nowhere to be seen.

How had he gotten here? He wonders as he makes a beeline to the bed, only to discover that he cannot actually touch it. Damn it! So close yet so far away. He wants to touch his mate, not just see him. Still, this is better than nothing, he thinks as he stares at his human.

The stress of being on the move seems to have taken its toll. His already thin love is even thinner than normal. There are dark rings under his eyes as if he has not been sleeping properly. Not surprising considering how hard a time he had getting his human to sleep when they had first moved in together as just flatmates. Those curls that he loves to play with are a bit longer than normal, with a small growth covering his jaw because he needs to shave quite badly. Despite all that, his mate is the best thing he has seen in the last ten months.

Finally, after what seems like forever, he feels the world around him shift and they are in their bedroom, yet not because something seems off even though he does not know what it is. On the bed, his mate is slowly stirring. Again he tries to join him, with a feeling of overwhelming joy when he can this time.

“Sherlock,” he murmurs appreciatively as he scatters light kisses all across his mates face.

“John?” the dark-haired human sleepily queries as his eyes flicker open. “How?”

“Eric. Probably went and did something insane knowing him,” he replies to the taller man as he snuggles up with him on the bed.

All the sorrow and sadness that had been building seems to melt away as his human wraps himself around him.

“You’re supposed to think I am dead, that way it hurts less,” his human mutters.

Shaking his head, he hugs his mate as close as he can, shifting them around so they can cuddle close with each other like they would at home, “Failed, I knew from shortly after you ‘died’ that you were not dead because of Eric. However he keeps me sane when my emotions start getting the best of me.” Again he kisses the crown of his loves head, “How much longer?”

Holding his arm up so they can both see it, his bondmate states, “After I find this last moon,” his voice is frustrated, “I almost had him twice but he moved on before I was able to deal with him. I will get him.”

He nods, smiling a bit tiredly at his mate, “I know you will, you’re too good at what you do not to.”

“How long will we be wherever we currently are?” his mate inquires kissing his neck.

“No idea, however our link is Eric, so nothing more than a good cuddle, my wolf nature would not be able to handle it,” he answers his mate as the two of them try to press as close as possible.

Nodding, his mate kisses him once long and hard, “I miss you John, I hadn’t realized how much I was going to miss you,” he murmurs before the two of us fall silent and just enjoy the others company without speaking a word.

He has no idea how long it is from the time the cuddle begins to when it ends. However he is well aware when he wakes up of being in human form with tears running down his face while the wrong
tall person holds him.

“I’ll do whatever I can to get him back to you,” he hears his friend promise as he drifts off from exhaustion with the one person who understands perfectly well what he is dealing with.
Elspeth's POV

She awoke in pain, her head was throbbing, and as her eyes burned as she opened them. Someone had used gas to knock them out. Apparently they had thought that she was just a pet, because she had been left behind in her small cat form, while he had been taken. Someone had followed them, or they were noticed at some point. How?

She would discover who did it and deal with them but first she needed to purge her system and the only way to do that is to force shift. Closing her eyes again, she pulls all of her energy to her, and begins to pull energy from the stone and earth around her. As soon as she feels as if there is enough, she starts forcing the energy through her body and going through all of her forms at the same time, completing the transformation into her hybrid form since she cannot take human form at this time. The remaining toxin is gone, burned from her with the energy.

Focusing on her pack link she traces every single strand of it, checking to see if there are any nearby that will be of use. When she comes across one that feels very similar to the elder but not quite the same thing, she carefully studies it before connecting with her telepathy. One very useful thing is she is as powerful a telepath as either the elder or the hunter.

Protector of the Watson Pack Alpha-second requests assistance. She formally requests on the link.

She is mildly surprised at the fact it is a female that answers her, Where are you? I will send our kappa to assist.

As soon as I know the exact address I will send it, we are in Serbia. She replies softly, as she traces the link to the one she is supposed to be keeping safe with another part of her mind, We will require healing assistance.

Understood, I will be awaiting the intel. The foreign wolf with a pack link tells her before going silent.

Glancing around, she notices that they had taken his laptop, and a cruel smile curves her humanoid lips. How very foolish of them.

Venomous, I need assistance. she calls out to the hunter, knowing he will answer quickly.

Spathi, explain, he replies nearly instantly.

She quickly fills him in on the situation before asking him to track the laptop. Within moments he is relaying the address and the coordinates to where it is at before demanding to know if he needs to come. With an mental shake of her head, she tells him she will call for assistance if it is needed
before thanking him and cutting the link. It’s time to go do her specialty.

When they had been in the army she had earned the name Spathi from some of the humans they dealt with because she was such a quick and dangerous killer when she was in the field. Apparently they had gotten the title from a series of books that there was a particularly deadly group of soldiers with special gifts hunted those they considered enemies with a vengeance.

Shielding and shifting into the form of a cheetah, she focuses on the link to the elder-second, mentally smirking as she bypasses the blocks that he has had placed on them. While it might block a normal telepathic link or a pack link, it does not block a protector’s link and the one forged between them is just that. Venomous had insisted on it for just this reason and she had agreed to it. Thickening her fur just a bit, she starts running, speeding through the roads until she hits the woods at which point she goes off road in order to continue her run. Unlike a natural cheetah, she will not run out of energy nearly as fast.

Within a rather short period of time she is arriving at the compound. It is shielded from outside human interference and telepathic scanning. Well how interesting, and how sad for them that she is not your average telepath. Eyes narrow, she focuses on all of her senses, spreading it out in order to determine the amount of guards, where they are, and how the building is laid out.

It takes two loops around the compound before she feels comfortable preparing for an assault. According to her senses there are twelve guards on the outside of the property, four are by the front gate, two are walking clockwise around the outer edge of wall, the other two are on the ground going counterclockwise, the last four are posted on the corners with weapons. There is a ten minute laps between check ins. Well then, the best time to attack is right after the next check in, particularly since the inner pair is on a different time schedule than the outer pair.

Connecting with the female of her pack, she tells the other shifter where they are, how to get here, and to expect to need to do clean up unless she burns the place down. She barely waits for a confirmation before she cuts the link so she can focus completely on the situation at hand.

As she takes the most advantageous spot for attacking, she shifts forms, hybriding her form to get maximum strength and speed. Instead of the thin cheetah form, she is more like her lion form, only far sleeker. Golden eyes stay locked on her target, as soon as the check in is complete she attacks, taking out both of the gate guards without a sound by breaking their necks with a well placed swipe of her front paws before she races after the closer of the two walking guards. Within moments she catches up to them, using her paws to take out the first while her teeth sink into the second. They have barely hit the ground and she is spinning to go after the other two rotating guards, racing her way through the night air invisible to those who are watching by either natural or gifted means.

It takes less than two minutes to come up to the other two, though she is attacking them from the front. Well that will not do. Spotting a good spot to wait, she holds herself perfectly still as they approach, her sense of smell telling her that they are not yet concerned and have not noticed a problem. Internally grinning, she attacks as soon as they pass, using her paws to break their necks in the same fashion as she had broken the other guards necks.

Now that all the ground guards are dealt with she studies the small walls and smirks internally as she realizes that they are not that tall and that the inside has little rope ladders. What fun, a leopard form will work perfectly for getting to the top before returning to the hybrid form. Every bit of speed will be needed to keep the guards from noticing that she is killing them off and she only has two minutes before the next check in is required. Damn it.

Once she is on the wall, she races to the first of the towers, getting pissed when she notices the door. Focusing on the man on the other side, she wills him to look in the other direction as she partly shifts
in order to open the door and slip in. Luckily, she is prepared for him to turn as soon as the door closes and lunges across the small space to snap his neck since she is still in her human hybrid form. Moments later she is out the other side door and heading towards the second tower. There is less than a minute until check in is due. She just barely makes it in to the next tower in time, killing the tower watchman before he had a chance to alert the others.

Sighing to herself, she realizes that her time of being completely unknown is gone as the alarms go off. Oh well, at least she has the advantage of being unseen, none of them have that advantage as far as she can tell. Though she has not come across the one shielding this place, when she does she plans on marking them with the sign of the traitor so after she rips their throat out they will be judged harshly.

Making her way across the wall, she watches as men with guns come pouring out of the building and smirks to herself. They are making it easy for me, she thinks, all I have to do is line them up and they will shoot each other. Charming. First though, lets finish the two tower guards.

So that’s what she does, she makes her way to the towers, breaking the necks of the guards before continuing on her way. Spotting a nice size group of the assholes, she opens her shields just enough to hear some of their thoughts before she shifts and pounces on one of the nastiest asses there.

She might kill without remorse, but at least she did not feel pleasure in killing. It was merely something that she had to do at times, not a compulsion, and while she was well aware of the elder-seCONDS concerns, she did not wish to reassure him because she was not sure reassuring him would even work. Though if she was being honest she did not feel pleasure in much of anything, never really had. There were times she wondered if that was the real reason her birth nest had told her she had to leave, and her father’s birth pride had refused to accept her.

With a shake of her head, she dismisses those thoughts and returns to the destruction of those here. She is sure that she will be punished for this eventually because not all of them are truly evil. However she is on a time crunch so she is not separating the way she ought to. Sighing, she mentally marks all the ones who might be redeemable before continuing her attack. Since her shields have not dropped, she is an unseen killer snapping the necks of all the unmarked ones, and merely knocking out all of those who might be worth saving. Once she is sure that the elder-second is safe she will call of Venomous to come sit in judgment on the living ones. She will not call for him before she has finished because as Tracker he would be bound to stop her from killing any of the humans, and pretty much every single one she had killed so far tonight has been human. By the time she is done, there are twice as many dead as living and she hasn’t even made it inside yet. Taking her humanoid hybrid form, with heavy emphasis on the hybrid she stalks through the halls of the building, still on a killing spree as she takes out those who are cruel or evil.

When she finally finds the elder-second he is strung up between two posts while a man swings a cane into his back. Without thinking about it, she drops her shields, drawing the other man’s attention and pouncing on him even as she shifts, so when her cat form and his body collide, he is sent sprawling to the floor. His throat a bloody mess from where her teeth had ripped into him, as soon as she feels the last of the life drain from the dead man without his throat, she feels a swell of power in the room.

Glancing over at the elder-second she sees the last moon on his wrist vanish and recognizes that he has been freed from the hunt.

Venomous, I request your assistance as a Tracker with the ability to pass judgment in favor of protecting children. Her voice is formal pitched, designed to call him while she unbinds the elder-second and carefully lays him on the floor where it is not covered by blood. She made a bit of a
A moment later the tall man is there, a single eyebrow raises as he glances around.

*I would suggest not speaking aloud, I made a bit of a mess.* Her tone is not apologetic.

He shakes his head, turning and heading out of the room.

A bit later she feels it as the female wolf approaches with a group of other wolves, however she does not go to greet them. It is not safe to move the elder-second at the moment, so she will stand guard over him here until the healer has checked him. She could probably have Tech take him home, but she does not wish him to be in any more trouble than she has already caused, so she will just accept the wolves help. If any of them happen to be a threat, well, there is a reason that she worries the elder-second and its not her looks.

Several minutes later, a tall curvy blonde, along with two black haired men with similar scents enter the room. According to her telepathy, Venonous is just finishing passing judgment and is dealing with the other prisoners that she can feel within the building. The wolves are cleaning up, collecting all of the dead to place inside the building for easy disposal when this place is burned to the ground. The three in front of her are the relation, her mate, and her mates healer brother.

*May I borrow some energy?* She requests of Venomous as she stares at the three of them. In a place like this she knows that he will be over flowing with energy. Instead of a response, she feels a surge of power course through her, almost overwhelming her, if this is what happens when the elder borrows power, it is no surprise that he is so strong. Giving a tiny shake of her head, she keeps an eye on the trio. Hissing low in her throat at the two males when they go to step forward and closer to her charge, until she is sure they are not a threat, there is no way she is letting them touch him.

Now that her energy levels are no longer flagging, she allows her telepathy to sweep over them, checking their minds for any hidden motives.

“Peace protector, we are only here to assist family,” the woman states, her tone very similar to senior Harry’s, with just a touch of power lacing it.

Yeah, not going to work if the foreign female is thinking of using her gifts to make her relax, the only two who had any sort of effect on her was the elder and Tech. At least of all of the shifters she had ever met they were the only ones.

“You called me, across thousands of miles to come help. So let me do so, I am not a healer by trade unlike my first cousin, however my brother-in-law is. While he lacks the raw power of my cousin, he is still a very diligent healer.” The wolf female murmurs softly, holding her hands out palm outwards in a sign of peace.

*I did, however I am cautious with my elder-second and when not drugged do not allow outsiders near without cause. Since I am not currently drugged, well, you get the picture.* She replies mildly sarcastically.

The wolf smiles, nodding, “It’s so like John to pick pack mates that many would fear, I spotted the cobra sworn to him sorting through the living, since he still bares the Trackers marks I doubt he helped with this carnage.” She remarks before tilting her head to the side, “I am Elite Alpha female Wolf Emma Watson Petrowski, this is my mate, Elite Alpha Wolf Alexei Petrowski, and his brother Iota Sergi Petrowski.”

*I am Elspeth the Spathi, my charge is Alpha-second Sherlock Holmes,* she replies after considering
them for a moment, *Only the healer may approach.*

She can tell that the alpha wolf wants to argue with her, but there is a silent conversation between the two alpha’s and he decides not to, though she can tell he is highly protective of the healer, that is a good thing.

*How did you get here so quickly?* She queries, *You were more than a day away when I first called for you.*

“I have an immortal brother-in-law who was willing to open a gate for us, though he had to collect the energy first,” the female wolf explains.

She listens to the wolf, even as her eyes stay trained on the healer who has now gotten within striking distance. Lifting her head, she hallows her tongue and flicks it against her lower lip so her extra scent glade that her cat form has can sniff the outside. He is nervous about being so close to her, but is determined to help, this is a family member apparently, and family is important. Finding no threat in him, she springs backwards so she is standing on the other side of the human while she watches the wolf drop down to his knees next to him.

For a while they are all silent, and she can smell the exhaustion as the wolf heals him, just as she smells the shock when he finds himself flooded with energy a while later.

*I can do no more here, those who needed punished have been punished. Those who needed second chances have received one of those. Those that needed freed have been freed and helped out of here by those who needed a second chance. I still feel the Dusks will on him, so I cannot do more than provide this wolf with energy before I go.* Tech tells her right before she feels him vanish from the complex, show off.

*Thank you,* she tells him sincerely. She likes the elder-second and wants nothing to happen, plus she is happy he could help with those who’s necks she did not break.

*I promised John he would come home, I am just making sure that promise can be kept,* he replies a few moments later.

Once the healer has finished, he sits back and shakes his head in awe. “What a determined human, he has quite a will. It is safe to move him now, he is merely resting.”

“Thank you Sergi,” the female wolf tells him.

Silence falls on the room, the only sounds that can be heard are those from the other parts of the complex as the wolves finish their grim tasks. A bit later, another tall, dark-haired man enters the room. This one is not a wolf, he smells like the elder-seconds potential red-haired brother-in-law. Immortal.

“Are you ready? This place is about to go up in flames and the others will not leave until you do.” he states as he glances at each person in the small room.

“We are,” the female wolf answers the immortal before glancing at her, “Do you need assistance carrying him?”

*No. He is slight, I will have no difficulties.* She replies as she scoops him up. *Please grab that pack over there, and the laptop next to it.*

The female wolf nods, doing as asked, and the six of them promptly leave the room, heading to the front entry where all of the bodies are gone. There, the immortal lifts a hand, etching runes into the
air much like the Iota does when she casts, and a portal appears before them. She waits until the alpha-pair have gone through before stepping through with her elder-second.

Glancing around, she is not surprised to see they are in some sort of compound with several building, nor is she surprised by the fact that almost every person in the compound is either a shifter or shifter-child. However she is surprised when the other wolves step through because there are more than she was expecting.

“If you’ll follow me, I have already arranged rooms for you,” the female alpha murmurs politely, as she motions to the main house.

She nods, following her but remarks, *I stay with him.*

“Alright,” the other shifter replies.

Her senses take in everything even as she keeps her attention carefully on the people. She will actually process the surroundings later. Right now she just wants to get him into a bed so that she can return to her small cat form and take a nap, because really, her human hybrid form is not designed for carrying a person, nor was it designed for this cold weather. So when they reach the bedroom on the second floor she carefully places him on the bed before shifting and taking a spot next to him to stand a relaxed guard, none of the wolves here are a threat. This female wolf insures that because she wants her cousin to be happy.

Chapter End Notes

By the by, for those who are curious, this chapter takes place over the course of a day, while she refers to parts of it as quickly, she is not actually referring to time, but how it felt instead. After all, we have had times where it was actually several hours but it feels like it has only been minutes.
Any comments would be greatly appreciated, thank you to any one for any form of communication, I love it and it keeps me writing!

Tumblr about my stories: JaimiStoryTeller. Recently started posting bios about the various Seeking characters with more to come

So as the story with the most votes, here's the update.

This chapter did not go the way I originally planned, but a bit different, apparently mid-edit the muses decided I needed to add more.

Sherlock’s POV

He wakes to the sound of two men and a woman speaking in Russian somewhere nearby. Slowly he opens his eyes slightly and glances around without moving too much in case there is someone in the room with him. There is not, at least anyone in human form, beside him Elspeth is her small cat form, curled up in a tight ball and slumbering. Now that he is assured he is alone, his eyes quickly sweep the room to see if there are any bugs and is shocked to not notice any of them. Opening his eyes the rest of the way he takes in his surroundings.

The room he is in reminds him of a well furnished hotel suite. He is on a king sized feather bed according to the feel of it. It appears to be made of rowan wood framing for the posts holding the heavy, dark velvet canopy that is open. He’s lying on silky sheets and a soft, heavy, and warm comforter pulled over him. There are also several feather pillows, all with the same type of silky cases on them. On either side of the bed are end tables with marble looking lamps with creamy shades that are turned off. The left hand wall seems to have the door out of the room towards the far end of it away from the bed, beside it is a desk that looks like rowan as well with a matched chair and a lamp that matches the ones on the end tables. The right hand wall has a large bay window with cushions to be used as a seat, with curtains over each of the panes of glass. Across from the bed is a dresser and stand alone wardrobe of the same type of rowan as the rest of the furniture in the room, between them is a door that he is certain leads to a bathroom. His pack and laptop are sitting on top of the desk.

Before he has a chance to get up and check to make sure all of his things are in the pack, a blonde woman very similar to John and his sister enters the room after knocking twice. When she spots that he is sitting up a huge smile curves her lips, “Hello!” she excitedly exclaims, accent telling him that she was raised British but has been living in Russia for the last nine years, to be exact in the area near Omsk. So does that mean they are near Omsk now? “It is good to see you are awake, John had told me he had a mate but I had also heard that mate was dead. If not for the fact I can feel him in you, I would question it.”

“You must be John’s cousin Emma, the daughter of the previous alpha who had bonded while he was in Afghanistan.” He murmurs, looking at her thoughtfully. He could see the family resemblance between the three Watson’s, they all had similar blonde hair, physical builds, and hazel eyes that change colors but not the same way his do.
She grins, “I am indeed, my name’s Emma Watson Petrowski,” she pauses for a minute, tilting her head to the side, “My brother-in-law, Sergi, would like to take a look at you to make sure you have finished healing. Then, I would be greatly appreciative if you could tell me why I was told you are dead when you are here.”

He lifts his arms to check each wrist, when he sees that he is no longer marked, his focus turns inwards to where he can feel John and Elspeth, it is also where he could previously feel the link to the Dusk Daughter. Now where that link was is shallow, nearly gone as if it is just about fulfilled, but it felt right. His hunt was done. He felt free, like he could turn of the rest of the issue to someone else and they would be able to deal with it. Though he is curious why the touch is not totally gone yet.

“Sherlock Holmes, and no, I do not want your iota touching me, if possible I wish to go home. Now.” He answers impatient to be on his way home now that he is no longer bound to the Dusk.

Beside him he feels Elspeth awaken, a moment later she is sitting on the floor, her shape that of a great cat, though he would be hard pressed to tell you what type if asked. Her features seem to be a mix of lion, cheetah, and leopard.

“The earliest flight is in two days, I had a feeling you would want to leave as soon as possible,” Emma remarks, her light colored eyes focused on him and not actually looking at the cat before her. “Are you sure Sergi cannot check you one more time?”

He has already answered, the cat hisses at her, a combination of broadcast telepathy and actual feline hissing and growling.

I thought I was the prick? He comments to the cat why speaking aloud he states, “Only John touches me unless I am dying.”

Or shot, the cat remarks sarcastically, He is a human great cat, treat him accordingly.

“Ah,” the blonde remarks, nodding once, “I understand. Well Sherlock through there is the bathroom. Once you are cleaned up Mama Anya is in the process of cooking lunch, she wants to meet you, after all, it’s rare for family to call on us from such a distance.”

He considers refusing, he would actually like to sleep a bit more but decides he might as well get it over with now. From past experience he knows that Russians are very family oriented and they would definitely consider him family since his bondmate is directly related to this woman, their fathers are brothers. “Alright, though I do not have much in the way of clothing.”

She beams at him, nodding once and stating, “I figured you might be short on clothing considering the fact your Protector only had me bring that bag had me thinking you would be short on clothing so I had Cousins Natalya and Arina make you new clothing based on what you currently have. They are in the Petrowski pack style, marking you as a member of the family.” She pauses for a minute, tilting her head to the side before commenting, “Does the Protector ever turn human?”

No, until we return home I am a cat or a hybrid. She replies loftily, broadcasting her answer so both can hear.

The wolf nods once, “I will have my daughter Anna bring them in,” she states before bowing slightly and withdrawing, from the room.

Shaking his head, he throws the blankets off and slowly gets out of bed, wobbling a little. He probably should let their healer work on him, but he really prefers not to. He does not like strangers
touching him, nor does he care that these strangers are related, in two -maybe three- days he will be home, his John can take care of him then. Getting off the bed he slowly stretches, only slightly embarrassed to be in nothing more than his pants. At least he is used to being around Elspeth like that, it’s only strangers he prefers not to do that with, for some reason strangers see skin as an invitation to touch.

_I am the one who undressed you so that your clothing could be washed_, she informs him jumping back on the bed and returning to small cat form.

“Thank you,” he murmurs, turning and walking stiffly towards the bathroom door. In the bathroom he quickly finishes undressing in order to climb into the shower that he allows to warm up first. Once the water is adequately heated he climbs in and allows the stress and tension to just drain away under the relaxing spray. As his body loosens up, he rolls his shoulders and other joints before proceeding to wash with the soap provided after delicately sniffing it to determine roughly what it is made of. Afterwards, he steps out, drying off with the large towel before securing it around his waist.

When he steps into the other room there is a young girl, roughly eight years old laying clothing on the bed. She turns to face him, large luminescent eyes looking at him curiously. A small frown has her wrinkling her eyes at him. Before he has a chance to say anything she rapidly crosses the floor, her small fingers closing around the wrist with the bondmark on it.

He recognizes the feeling of her healing even before she states what she is doing, _You’re a thera_, he thinks at her, knowing she will hear him through the connection at the moment.

Moments later she releases his arm, stepping back and staring at him with horrified eyes before bolting from the room.

Turning to the bed he queries, “Any ideas why she reacted that way?”

He can hear her privately reply, _Most types of shifters bind thera or kill them, she would have been raised to fear them, and you just told her she was one? Lack of tact there elder-second._

He blinks at her, recalling from so long ago when Eric had spoken directly into his mind while his John had healed a little girl whose body was turning against her. ‘He is a child of the gods. A gift from them. Fucking wolves do not appreciate what he is. While he has the iota’s gift of healing, his goes further. He is a Thera. They are terrified by the very thing that allows them to live. They think that the Thera’s are abnormal. Uncontrollable. Yet they are the most controlled of all the healers. He can speak directly to the Old Gods. Any elite can ask a favor of the Old Gods, but only a Thera can speak with them. Only a Thera can stop death when it is the only choice. Only a Thera can create or destroy a shifter. Only a Thera has the ability to remake a person at a cellular level.’

Oh, how stupid am I, he thinks, this is a wolf pack. Of course she did not take being told she was a thera very well. But she is, and that’s a gift. Perhaps he should see if the little girl could visit John? His John would be able to teach her to control her healing gift, the compulsion that his love once said their kind feel, to have to heal, not just want to. According to his John it was that very compulsion that made most think that they were uncontrollable.

Dressing, his mind is still whirling when he turns to raise a questioning eyebrow at the cat, curious if she knows exactly what John is.

She shrugs, a ripple of motion beneath her fur, _He is my elder, I need to know nothing further. If Venomous finds him worthy of obedience, than I will not question it._

_Understandable, he does respect so few_, he replies in kind, not wishing to speak aloud of their
mutual dangerous friend and packmate.

*Come, you need to eat, and I think I wish to growl at that wolf some more,* she remarks, hopping off the bed and onto his shoulders.

Chuckling, he shakes his head before exiting the room and glancing about with a small frown. How is he supposed to find his way to wherever they are serving lunch?

*I’ll lead, I can feel the female, Emma I believe she said her name is, it is a very similar feeling to the elder and his sister-beta.* Elspeth tells him before proceeding to give him directs through the house.

They pass from the house through a carefully made glass greenery tunnel to another building where they find a large gathering of people. It reminds him of a pack meeting, the kind where food is served for everyone at home. With an internal shake of his head, his eyes sweep the room looking for either Emma or the child Anna. He would like one more word with the little girl. Instead what he ends up with is a teenage boy with shaggy black hair, dark eyes, and mid-tan skin stopping in front of him with a frown.

“You’re the human related to the alpha-female,” the boy states in broken English.

“I am,” he replies in Russian, happy he had taken a few hours to learn it when they first headed in this direction. Well south of here anyways, just to be on the safe side.

Startled the boy blinks at him, cocking his head to the side and demanding, “Why did you make Anna cry?”

“Iosif!” A slender woman snaps as she approaches in Russian, “Be polite to your elders and greet him properly!” Turning her attention to him she smiles, “I am Gala, bondmate of Ion. This rascal is my son Iosif,” she greets him in Russian. “We are second cousins by marriage.”

He inclines his head politely, smiling tightly but happy that she has not tried to touch him yet, “Sherlock Holmes, bondmate of John Watson, and my companion is Elspeth.”

The woman blinks at him for a moment, head tilting to the side, “She’s not just a cat?”

A low hiss escapes the feline on his shoulders as she hops down and shifts in the air, going from tiny house cat to large lion-like cat sitting beside him with her head held high, long tail twitching side to side.

Most of the people in the room step back, eyeing the cat with wariness.

“You have that cobra’s flare for the dramatics I see Protector.” He hears Emma state as she approaches, a chuckle in her tone, “Gala, the cat is his epsilon.”

*I am Elspeth the Spathi, children may pet me if they wish the rest of you do not get close.* She broadcasts with a snap of her teeth and a low growl, *If you wish to address me it is Spathi.*

With a smile tugging at her lips the blonde wolf remarks, “Definitely like that cobra, are you related by chance Protector?”

*He is purely a cobra. However I will take that as a compliment as he is nearly always immediately obeyed.* His companion tells this pack’s alpha female.

“I see Anna delivered the clothing, do they fit well enough?” she inquires while motioning to one of
the tables with her hand.

Understanding her desire to sit, he moves with her to the table before replying, “They fit nearly as well as the clothing my tailor makes me at home. It is a different style cut, more like the Watson pack clothing I own.” he pauses for a moment before stating, “They are more than adequate.”

**Which for him means that they are nice,** his sarcastic companion remarks clearly.

“Good to hear,” Emma remarks still smiling, “These lovely ladies are the ones who made it, this is Natalya and her daughter Arina,” she motions to two women who have stopped beside him, the smaller one looking like she is quite proud of herself.

He watches as the older one twitches towards him but freezes just before she touches him to draw back, smiling ruefully she happily chirps, “It is always good to meet new family members! May your visit be pleasant.”

“Nice meeting you,” the younger one states, tugging on her mother’s arm, “Recall that Emma said he has been travelling, give him a chance to rest,” she murmurs as they walk away.

“In case you did not know, we wolves are very social creatures, very tactile too,” Emma murmurs to him as she watches the other two women walk away.

“I know, the vast majority of our pack is wolves,” he replies, a small smile tugging at his lips. His mind is quickly doing the percentiles of wolf, wolf-child, and other species within their pack.

“Though we also have a peregrine falcon, bush viper, eagle owl, barn owl, multiform canine, jackals, gibbon, various mice, a house cat, cobras, rhesus macaques, and of course our multiform cat.” There is a smirk tugging at his lips when he finishes and motions to Elspeth who is sitting serenely beside him like it is perfectly normal to be a nearly two hundred kilograms great cat in a room full of wolves. Elspeth the Spathi, his mind focuses on, Spathi, the golden woman that nearly died when Eric was pissed towards the beginning of John living with him. He cannot recall ever having met her, but he must have, they were linked, unless Eric had linked them.

“That used to infuriate Papa that John was so friendly with other shifters, then when John formed the military pack there was nearly a fight during that first visit afterwards.” She remarks with a small shake of her head. “So you have met my daughter Anna, apparently something you thought upset her. I am not sure where the telepathy is from, I am not a strong telepath, nor is my mate. Can I ask what you were thinking?”

“You can ask, but I will not answer here.” He replies as he glances around, getting a read on all of the people here. So far he had met Anna the little wolf girl with the theria gift; Natalya and Ariana, mother and daughter seamstress; Gala seemed to be a house keeper of some type; Iosif the teenager with eyes that see too much but not in the same way he does; and Emma the wolf cousin of his mate, alpha-female of this pack. He is not counting the iota or alpha because he was pretty much out of it while they were in the area with them.

“Then after we eat we can retreat to the private study to speak of it. May I ask why it was announced you are dead when you are clearly alive?” Emma queries curiously.

“I made a deal with the Dusk Daughter, officially I was dead for a bit, but I have completed my portion of the deal according to the fact the moons on my arm are gone and that was the indicator.”

He replies, “I can go home now, let John officially know I am alive.” There is pleasure in that thought, in that statement. He wants to be at home. He wants to be with his bondmate.

She nods once, “You were under Trackers oath then and she is your protector since you are human I
He nods once, “Eric sent her with me,” he responds, recalling when Jacob had showed up with the cat and pack with the laptop.

Again she nods, “Not surprising, that cobra is very protective of John so of course he is going to be protective of you.”

An older woman, one who carries herself with a regal bearing come in with a few teenagers close behind, each carrying a tray of food. After the food is laid out on a long table she comes over to their table and studies him for a minute before sitting down across from his with a wide smile.

“You are a good alpha-second, a good bondmate, you give up much to insure your packs safety,” she states in heavily accented English, “I am Mama Anya, my mate,” she motions to a group of gentlemen, pointing at the second oldest one in the group, “Vitali, used to be the alpha. We stepped down when Alexei,” she points at the younger, very similar man with her mate, “brought his bondmate home and we discovered she was a trained alpha. It is good to meet our Emma’s other family members, eventually we wish to meet the rest of them, but there never seems to have been a chance.”

Beside him the young wolf female blushes, softly commenting, “I never invited John while he was in Afghanistan and when he got home I sort of lost contact with him. Jason and Papa wanted nothing to do with this pack, Jason’s a bit of an ass if you have not met him, Eric did not like the fact I choose to be a second rather than a primary alpha.” She smiles wistfully, “I did not want the responsibility of the head alpha, and the pack would have chosen John anyways because he is a natural leader, he didn’t have to be trained to lead, though he was trained anyways.”

A tall black haired man, the one that had been identified as Alexei just a few minutes earlier comes walking over with another man of similar looks. The second is the younger brother, though he can see a third that looks similar as well so he is not sure which younger brother. When the second goes to reach a hand towards him before Emma has a chance to stop him Elspeth rises up from a slight slouch to bat his hand away with a low growl.

“Sergi, this is my cousin Sherlock, he’s a human great cat,” the female wolf remarks politely in Russian with a smile at him.

Eyeing the cat, the wolf replies, “A pleasure to meet you, I was just going—“

He cuts the other man off before he can continue that sentence, “No. Unless I am dying or unable to respond, only John is allowed to touch me.”

“I assure you, I am a well trained—“ the wolf tries again.

“No.” it is short, clipped, and a Bit Not Good, he is sure but he does not want this stranger touching him again. “Thank you for the assistance when I was injured, I no longer require it.”

A soft chuckle escapes Emma, as she remarks, “You sound like that cobra too.”

*Venomous would not be nearly as polite,* Elspeth states clearly as she watches the various wolves, her head slowly swiveling, though he knows from experience it’s actually her telepathy that is tracking them all.

There is silence at their table for a few minutes before the Anya breaks it with a question to him, “You are human according to scent. Were you aware of the shifter world before meeting your mate?”
He gives a slight shake of his head, “I was not, not really anyways, I grew up hearing rumors but did not actually believe them until I met John.”

While he is speaking two women, two men, and two children approach the table, settling in to some of the remaining seats, leaving only two open. Those two are filled a few minutes later by the man that had been identified as Vitali and an even older man.

The old woman nods regally before turning her attention to her mate who is now beside her, “This is Emma’s cousin Sherlock, the cat beside him is his Epsilon Spathi. He should have been a cat.” Her voice is full of humor as she switches back to Russian to speak. Turning her attention to him she states, “My mate Vitali, his father Eric, our children Pyotr and Liliya, Nastia is Sergi’s mate, Christopher is Liliya’s bond, my grandchild through Liliya, Lana and Christophe.” With each name she waves a delicate hand at the person she is speaking about, choosing to ignore the cat the way no one else seems to be able to.

He nods once rather than speak. Feeling a bit overwhelmed to realize that John’s family is bigger than just the sister and parents he is aware of.

“The British wolves do not track family as closely as we do, everyone in this room right now is related within three generations. They have gathered because you are a family member they do not know and they wish to greet you.” Her eyes narrow as she studies him, “It is too many for you,” she nods once, “You should have been born a cat, I think leopard.”

*The Elder-second would have made an excellent leopard since they use mind over speed or strength.* The cat comments as she politely inclines her massive head at the older shifter woman.

“Do you ever turn human, Spathi?” Anya inquires with a curious look towards her.

*Not until I deliver him back to the Elder and Venomous, then I will be returning to human form.*

“Christophe, go fetch the low stool from the corner, Lana go fetch a plate for our lady guest.” The old wolf orders as he watches mildly intrigued. All of the shifter communities they had stayed in were respectful to Elspeth, but only the cobras had actually offered her a place at the table before now. “Do you have a meat preference?”

“No fish.”

*Not fish,* she replies at the same time as him, causing most of the table to chuckle.

“She gets moody if you give her fish, I learned that one early on,” he remarks with an eye roll towards the cat.

*Just because I am a feline does not mean that fish is my primary diet, I also prefer my meat cooked.* She snarks back, long tail slashing through the air.

A minute later the two children are returning with the items they were sent for.

“Excuse me,” the boy murmurs politely, tilting his small head to the side, he is actually the same height as Elspeth, who steps to the side with ease her form blurring slightly as she turns more cheetah like. With wide eyes he looks at her mumbling, “You changed!”

*Indeed, I am a multiform feline.* She remarks with a surprisingly gentle voice. Is she like Eric and him, likes children but not much of anyone else?
“Multiform?” the young man repeats curiously.

_I can become any cat that I desire, often choosing to mix forms based on needs. Currently I am using primarily cheetah, with the senses of a leopard._ She replies to him gently, inclining her head so that she is a bit shorter than him.

“Really?” he asks edging a little closer and staring with her.

He can hear the smile in her tone when she states, _You can touch me if you would like, I can also vary forms._

Glancing around, he notices that nearly every adult and teenager in the room has their eyes on the exchange between the cat and child while some of the other children are edging closer. Looking back at the pair, he sees that she still has her head lowered slightly so that the child is not nervous.

“Can you become a house cat? Are your colors always the same? Do you always have the same patterns?” he queries as he touches a tiny hand against her fur, “You’re so soft!” he exclaims eyes widening further.

_Watch_, she clearly murmurs before her form blurs, one more she is the more cheetah-like cat, then she is the golden cat who rides on his shoulders most the time, following that she is a house cat with tiger stripes, before changing into a dark leopard like form that is still small.

“Oh wow,” one of the other children mumbles as they stare at her.

“Can you look like a leopard tiger?”

“Or a cheetah with brown and white instead of gold and tan?”

“How about a tiger with different colored stripes?”

He does not even bother trying to determine which children are asking. Instead he makes a plate with the food laid out on the table while the attention is not on him. Meanwhile she is going through a variety of forms that he watches from the corner of his eye, getting a chuckle out of combination she goes with. Apparently it was needed to break the ice between everyone and the family members are suddenly a lot calmer.

After a bit the Anya calls out, “Alright children, allow our guests a chance to eat.”

“Yes Babushka,” the children chorus before returning to their families and tables to get their own lunches.

Following that, lunch goes a lot smoother, he is asked polite questions about his life and pack by those at the table, whom he learns are all first generation relations. It is a lot easier on his nerves, which means that Elspeth is not nearly as edgy either. Some of the folks seem amazed at how calmly she sits on the stool, returning to cheetah form to delicately eat the plate of beef and vegetables that was politely made for her.

After lunch some of the teenagers clean all the dishes and leftovers up while the adults visit with each other. Not long afterwards, Emma stands, excusing them from the gathering. Elspeth quickly shifts into her small form and hops on his shoulders as Emma leads him out of the hall and back through the tunnel to the house once more. Once in the house they head down a series of halls before stopping before a discrete looking door that she quickly unlocks. Stepping inside, she motions him to follow before closing the door quietly behind them.
“Now then, what did you think earlier that caused my daughter to be terrified and depressed?” she demands, watching him with narrow eyes. It is a look he has seen on his John’s face many times and normally meant he was going to have a headache if the answer was not liked.

“She is a thera, not just an iota,” he states calmly watching as Emma absorbs that information followed by a look of horror on her face.

“Not possible, that insanity does not run in either family!” she denies, shaking her head.

Rolling his eyes he asks the cat seated on his shoulders, *Should I tell her favorite cousin is a thera or that their grandmother was one? I bet if I check his family I will find one or two too.*

*She will not take it well, perhaps a non-direct approach to that realization.* The cat replies watching the other woman with bright eyes. *Worst case scenario I wipe her memory of this conversation and implant a compulsion to allow her daughter to visit the elder or I summon Venomous to do the same thing.*

*Is that even legal?* he queries curiously as he keeps an eye on the older woman.

**For me? No. For him? Yes.** She gives a mental shrug. *It’s not stopped me before.*

Shaking his head he questions aloud, “What did you think of your grandmother, the one who trained John?”

Confused the wolf blinks at him for a few minutes, before replying, “I loved her dearly, she was a pillar of strength, known for her wisdom, gentleness, and generosity.”

“How about your cousin John, my bondmate?” he queries still watching her carefully.

Still confused she answers, “He is a better choice for alpha than I am, for one thing, he took to the lessons on being alpha better, is an excellent healer, and great at leading because he cares for his pack.” She pauses for a moment, the confusion beginning to fade as he watches the thoughts flash through her eyes, “Why are you asking me this?”

“Would you say that either is insane?” he asks, ignoring her question.

“Well no,” she hesitantly replies, where he is leading this conversation seems to be clicking. “You must be mistaken.”

Smirking, he answers, “I’m not, I once watched John take a little girl who was dying and heal her by force of will alone. It was a miraculous thing to observe. I have spent the last twelve months traveling the world dealing with shifters and criminals alike, I have met several different healers, iota, omicrons, and theras alike. Do you know what the important lesson I learned from that was?”

She shakes her head, not answering aloud but watching him as if waiting to hear what he has to say.

“I learned that no matter what type of healer, without control there is a risk of insanity, then I learned something even more interesting, anyone with a form of empathy, whether the helpful kind of the healer or the deadly kind of the hunter, can go insane from the overload if they are not taught to control it. I bet your daughter is a strong empath.” He states, the smirk still on his face.

“Well yes,” she mutters as she continues to consider what he is saying.

“Have John teach her to control it and she’ll be fine. The problem is iotas and omicrons pull from a different part of their mind than theras do. Neither your iota or omicron will be able to fully teach her
because she is not like them, and she will need teaching. Binding the gift is the stupidest possible idea.” He informs her, giving a small shrug, “I have been studying it through rememberancy, which was my bondgift.”

**She still thinks to bind the child, shall I summon the cobra? I think that would be better than me dealing with her.** He hears the cat remark privately.

*No, I still have a residual bond to the Dusk Daughter, if need be I will see if she will set her straight. He responds to her as he considers his options. Wait, can you link us the same way Eric links people?*

**I would have to be touching her since her pack link is not as strong. However that is a possibility. Why?** She answers after a few minutes of careful consideration.

*I can show Emma her grandmother training John and the warnings she gave him. He explains, watching as the thoughts continue to swirl.*

“John’s not a thera, there is no way he is a thera. Thera never have the alpha gift. Nor are they elites. He has both.” she babbles, a bit in shock apparently, or maybe denial.

Rolling his eyes once more he slowly states, “John did not originally have the alpha command gift, he developed that while he was in a war zone. He is the first of four elites I have met that are also thera, though two of them were serpents so I do not know if I should count them. Would you damn your daughter just because she was chosen of the Shadow Mistress?”

“What?” the wolf snaps, “You’re human, what do you know of the Old Gods?”

Chuckling, he sarcastically but truthfully responds, “I made a deal with one, have you ever spoken directly to one of them? No? Then do not assume to know more than me.”

She can do nothing but stare at him, trying to determine what to do.

*Summon Eric,* he orders the cat, out of patience and wanting to get home. He has a sneaking suspicion that he will not be able to do so until this is dealt with. This is why he can still just barely feel the Dusk Daughter.

**Sir,** she responds before he feels the link expanding.

“You know, I am not the best one to explain this, so she’ll call someone who is.” He states, looking around and selecting a spot to settle into.

“What?” the wolf blankly asks, looking between the two of them.

“Call your mate, might as well make this easier in the long run,” he suggests with a bit of an order in his tone.

He can see her bristling at that but he also knows that she will probably do as told, not because she wants to but because she thinks it is the only way to get answers. Well she is partly right.

The cobra appears at nearly the exact same time as Alexei, Sergi, and Anna enter the room. Both of the male wolves look like they are alternating between wanting to attack and flee.

*You are a pain in my ass,* the cobra tells him privately as he looks over the wolves.

*Yes well, the girl is a thera and losing control of her gifts because they cannot teach her, I recall*
what you once told me, and since you’re marked of three of your Old Gods, you are a better messenger than me. He answers truthfully, Besides I wish to go home and do not think I can until this is solved. He mentally sighs.

Switching to broadcasting rather than privately speaking the cobra glides forward, stopping just before the little girl to carefully study her for a minute, his black eyes sweeping everything. A thera among a wolf pack, figures your kind would not recognize the Blessing. Wolves as a whole are particularly dense.

Alexei growls at him, which the cobra ignores as he kneels down in order to be closer to the same height as the child, not that it was particularly successful. There is nothing wrong with being a thera. You are an elite wolf, a daughter of the first line. You are a thera, Blessed of the Goddess of Shadows, Mistress of Healing. There is nothing wrong with you. You do require a protector though, one person to be there for you when you are healing, in overload, or just need some to support you.

“What the hell do you think you are?” Alexei demands, “If she is curse—“ the wolf did not get a chance to finish his sentence because the cobra turned on him with lightning speed, his black eyes imprisoning the wolf.

Well, he thinks, I am happy he is the one dealing with this, because I do not have the patience to do so right now. Besides, there is nothing wrong with being different. That was a life lesson that had taken years to understand, but it was one he understood now.

Where was I… the cobra murmurs as his attention returns to the little girl staring at him, Oh yes, a protector. Let’s look through your den first, see if there are any viable candidates there, the cobra mutters as he starts going through the pack, An immortal? Interesting, how can such stupidity about the gifts of the Old Ones thrive when the den has an immortal? Particularly one who grew up in the Shadow Realms, perhaps I should have a word with him before I go, back to the task at hand. Protector, preferably one that is Tracker trained.

He is moderately certain that he and Elspeth are the only ones who can hear what Eric is saying as he sorts through the pack.

Perfect, the cobra eventually states, this time being heard by all according to the looks on the faces of the adult wolves.

For several minutes the room is silent, he considers asking the cobra what he is planning but decides against it because he knows whatever it is will deal with this situation quickly and effectively. The silence is broken when the door opens and Pyotr steps in, a mildly confused look on his face, walking with the wolf is the immortal.

Good, now that everyone who needs to be here is here, let’s get this show on the road. Eric states, the cobras temper clearly flared, You are an immortal child of the Mistress of Shadows, tell these foolish wolves what her view of the thera is.

Christopher looks at him with narrow eyes for a minute before replying, “They are one of her gifts to the shifter kind. She is most displeased with how they are hunted by those who should be protecting them. The Dusk Daughter punishes those who harm thera children worse than she does a murder or abuser of a regular child.”

Good, now that that is cleared up, as an immortal and a member of the same pack, it is your duty to protect this child from harm, the cobra orders, motioning to the little girl still standing before him with huge eyes.
He watches as the immortal studies the cobra for a moment before bowing once, his mind supplying him with the meaning behind the bow, servant to master. Interesting choice for an immortal.

*Now then, I selected you as your niece’s protector for a few reasons, first being you wish to be a Tracker for this pack. However the Dusk Daughter and Dawn Son do not accept Tracker oaths from those without loss or challenge.* The cobra states quite clearly, still kneeling in front of the little wolf, his black scales seeming to be edged in shimmery silver.

His mind phases out the conversation between the wolf and cobra. Instead he studies the other wolves in the room. Emma is coming out of her shock slowly, her mind processing the information and a type of determination is taking over. According to expression and stance she will do whatever it takes to protect her daughter. Alexei is coming to grips with being forced to his knees with a look alone, he has never met a cobra that is that strong before, all the cobras he had met previously had been weaker that him. His mind is whirling on the fact that there have been thera in his family before but they have all died. Sergi is watching the proceedings with anger in his amber eyes, he does not like strangers in their home and who is this stranger with scales think he is, according to his expression. Why would Anna require a protector when he does not?

Shaking his head he thinks to Elspeth, *I’m not a telepath, but even I can see that the other healer will have problems.*

*Oh yeah, not that it will matter, Venomous has already noted it and will deal with that next. Really, not a good idea to challenge one Blessed for three of the Old Ones, particularly not our kinds judge, jury, and execution. If you would like I can link my telepathy with you so you can hear.* She offers after answering him.

*No thank you, I will just sit here and watch, Anna seems to be in shock.* He remarks as he studies the little girl who is the reason for this impromptu meeting between the siblings.

*She has grown up hearing that thera are dangerous and that she is lucky to be an iota with omicron talents, apparently they forgot that thera are both iota and omicron.* The cat comments as she stays where she is, her tail twitching against his back. *She will be a good alpha when she grows up, very like her uncle.*

Their attention is drawn back to the conversation between wolf and cobra when the wolf bows his head, clearly stating, “I will do whatever it takes.”

*Excellent.* The cobra replies with a bit of a smirk.

He continues to watch as the tall serpent slowly stands, towering over the rest of the shifters in the room, his long body still mostly human.

Slowly the youngest of the brothers makes his way to standing beside the child wolf and cobra tracker, offering up his wrist with ease and a seriousness he had not noticed before.

*He has always wished to be a Tracker. Only as a teen he was denied that path by his parents and the packs Tracker because they did not think he could handle it.* The cat updates him as they watch Eric press the child’s wrist to her uncle’s and the flare of energy that sparks from him, the scales on the back of his neck standing out vividly for a moment.

*Go cuddle as wolves for a bit, you’ll feel better,* the cobra suggests when he releases their wrists and gently lays a hand on the top of the little girls head. He can feel the energy surge between the cobra and child.
The older wolf nods, scooping up his niece and leaving without glancing at anyone else in the room.

Now then, the cobra states as he turns to face the remaining familial adults, *Time to deal with the next round of foolishness. Sergi Vitaliovič Petrowski you are an iota, a healer, if I ever hear of you trying to harm any child or bind any child’s gifts I’ll personally take you before the Dusk Daughter for judgment. Healers protect they do not harm.* For a moment the tall man pauses before a cruel smile curves his lips, *Let us handle this the easy way.* Faster than wolf can move, Eric’s hand shoots out, catching him by the throat and glowing, along with his eyes, for a brief moment before he releases him, dropping the now gasping wolf to the ground. Turning to the last two he frowns for a minute before nodding, *Three days Sherlock, and then you will be home.*

“How annoying,” he grumbles in English as the cobra vanishes, he would have preferred to go with the older shifter but oh well. “Well that was Eric, he’s John’s shadow-second, a Tracker, and a bit temperamental, but he likes children, so he is perfect to ask for help in this situation.” Shrugging he continues in Russian before querying, “Do I need to explain what just happened or all of you smart enough to understand?”

“We understand,” Alexei states clearly, shock still in his voice, “Though I believe this calls for a family discussion, feel free to wander where you will. You might not wish to go outside because it is bitterly cold and none of your supplies seemed useful for the cold. Currently Natalya is making you some winter gear.”

Glancing around he nods, all four adults seem to take that as an alright because they leave together, not that he is concerned. The part he cares about has already been handled. Hopefully they hurry up and deal with their personal situation or the next two days are going to be long.

*Let’s go see if any of these children can learn deduction the same way the children of our pack do,* he suggests to the wolf as he leaves the room.

A mental smile is the only response he gets.
Sherlock’s POV
Two days after he had arrived at the wolf pack home he is finally leaving. They are taking a train from the small town just half hour away to the airport. From the airport in Omsk they would catch a flight to London’s International Airport, with a stopover in Moscow. It will be a nine hour trip. However he is impatient for it to begin. He had not minded meeting all of the Russian family members he apparently had, nor had he minded practicing his rarely used Russian. Part of him is annoyed that he is to be accompanied by Emma, her daughter, mate, and daughter’s protector. Still, it does not matter because he will be home before tomorrow.

When they get to the airport they check in through customs and the wolves are shocked when no one notices or comments about the cat riding on his shoulders.

They cannot see, smell, or sense me, Elspeth answers the unspoken question. It is very useful.

“I can imagine,” the adult female wolf remarks with slightly wide eyes.

Once on the plane the five of them are seated all fairly close together, with Emma and Alexei sitting in front of him, Anna in the spot beside him, and her protector-uncle Pyotr on the other side of her.

The trip from Omsk to Moscow goes smoothly. He spends nearly the entire time deducing everyone around them to Anna, making sure to only tell her the funny tidbits. Occasionally Elspeth will butt in with a comment but she stays mostly quiet on his shoulders.

In Moscow they make the layover and have just boarded the plane when an announcement comes over the com system that they will not be leaving just yet because of the weather. A sudden blizzard has struck, causing the visibility to be too low to move the plane. Unfortunately since the plane has already taxied to the airstrip, passengers are going to have ot stay on, however free hot drinks will be provided while grounded.

Grumbling he gets hot chocolate and starts looking for puzzles to solve since Anna had decided to take a nap in her seat, he is not sure how they ended up in nearly the same seating arrangement on both planes, but he has a feeling that it is the work of the cobra. Glancing around he spots three gifted, two shifters besides the ones he is traveling with, and what he thinks is an immortal according
to the double rings in their green eyes. He considers trying to go converse with them, but decides against it because he is not in the mood to talk with anyone really. What he wants is for this weather to clear up, now, so that he can be on his way home. Every minute they are stuck waiting here is another minute before he gets to see his John again.

He is so keyed up he cannot sleep, instead he decides to bug the cat, asking her to tell him about her military days. She seems to understand what he really wants to know about is John, because almost every story she tells him, includes the alpha wolf in some way, shape, or form.

When they finally take off he is excited because it means soon, so very soon he will be home. Of course it is not until they land at the airport in London when he final considers how he is going to get all five of them back to the flat. He could let the other four of them fend for themselves, but has a feeling John would not be pleased with that. So he is happy when they arrive and there is a tall man he recognizes waiting for them.

“It is good to see you again, Alpha-second Holmes, news of your demise has reached many of us, so I am pleased to see it was mistaken,” the crow greets him, “The deadly one ordered myself and my brother here with our cabs, said we would know who the passenger is when we saw them, and that we were to say nothing to anyone else about our passenger, I don’t know about you, but that is one man I would not dare disobey. If you want to follow me, I am parked over here.”

He chuckles darkly, knowing that it was Eric who ordered the crows there.

“Crows?” the male alpha queries in Russian, his voice full of confusion.

“Eric, the cobra who came for a visit, hired all of the crow cab drivers in the city to be drivers for our pack.” He responds in Russian.

“I thought you come from a large pack?” there is still confusion in the other man’s voice.

He chuckles, nodding once, “Almost one-hundred and fifty members of our pack, last I knew, however none of them are cab drivers.”

“Are you not worried they will turn on you?” the alpha asks, glancing at them.

“No, they would not dare deal with Eric in a bad mood, in case you missed the detail while he was at your home, but he is Blessed by three Old Gods, the Shadow Mistress, Dusk Daughter, and Dawn Son, and he’s an elite black cobra, do you know of any shifter who would willing act against him?” he responds, happy to see the cabs. Each cab can only hold three people so he suggests, “Anna and Pyotr can ride with me, you two can ride in the other one.”

“Good to see you!” the second crow exclaims, “I had hoped you still lived despite the rumors!”

He nods at the man, sliding into the cab closer to him, the two wolves not to far behind. The other two look uneasily at each other before sliding in as well.

“The pack home or your flat?” his crow driver inquires.

“The flat,” he responds, a small smile tugging at his lips. He is almost home, just one rather short car ride away. Wonderful, simply wonderful.

Since Anna’s eyes seem to be glued to the window, he tells her about every single building they pass that he knows any history for, making sure to mention the most important buildings first. Just because she is being raised as Russian does not mean she should not know her British heritage too, he thinks.
When they pull up to his flat, he is out of the car before any of the others even realize they have stopped, at the door he remembers he does not have his key with him, so he quickly grabs his pick kit out of the pocket of his coat, opening the door and heading inside happily. He is home. His eyes sweep the hall, noting that Mrs. Hudson is not home, that the door to his lab has not been opened in a while, that the last time John had walked through here he had been upset. He hears the wolves come in behind him, shutting the outside door before following him up.

There is confusion on the Russian alpha wolf’s face as he takes in the apartment, “Is your pack poor?”

Emma starts laughing as she replies before he can, “John is a minimalist, he prefers a simple lifestyle, besides this flat is in a better part of town. I am betting the mess is more of Sherlock’s than Johns.”

He flushes slightly, for the first time in his life embarrassed by the fact he has not done a better job keeping things organized in the public part of the house, though it is a lot cleaner than it normally would be. He is embarrassed because he has made John look bad and he never wants to make John look bad. “Snacks?” he inquires, his mind quickly recalling the social customs he has always disdained, “Or tea?”

He is actually heading into the kitchen before he even finishes the question. He quickly gathers up some biscuits, fruit out of the fridge that he quickly slices into a bowl, and makes tea. Once it is ready, he puts all of it on the tray and carries it into the living room. Emma, Alexei, and Pyotr are all seated on the sofa. Anna is looking around the living room curiously, small hands touching everything she can reach but picking none of it up.

Setting the tray onto the coffee table he offers each of them a cup of tea before settling into his seat with his own. He could not begin to describe how happy he was to be in his own chair in his own house after being gone for three-hundred sixty-two days. Three days shy of a year. Gods had he missed his mate, he was happy to be home, now he was just waiting for his mate to come home.

Elspeth hops off of his shoulders, reminding him that she had been laying there. Striding over to John’s chair she sniffs it a few times before lying down underneath it and falling asleep in cat form.

After a quick trip into his room to change into one of his older, slimmer lined suits he returns to his seat but finds he cannot wait sitting still. Glancing at the little girl he inquires, “Would you like to see my lab? I do not think John had it dismantled.”

“Lab?” she repeats questioningly, tilting her head and giving him a curious look.

He nods, smiling at her and responding, “I practice chemistry and teach some of the younger members of the pack.”

“Really? Doesn’t your pack have sigmas?” the little girl queries with wide eyes.

“Of course, Mouse and a few wolves, plus there are several rho who also teach from time to time as well. However I am the only one in the pack with my particular combination of skills, so I teach them to the students. John also teaches, as does every member of the military pack, since each has their own unique skills that they pass on to those who wish to learn them.” He explains as he stands.

“Oh, that’s useful. Does everyone have different things to teach?” the little girl inquires.

“Mostly, though the military wolf brothers both share some of the same tricks, they just use them in different ways.” He answers.
“Do you teach that deduction thing you did at the compound?” the little girl asks curiously, “Why is there a skull?”

A sad smile curves his lips, “That was my friend before I met John, the person I used to speak with the most. And yes, I teach deduction as well, actually I had three students who wished to go into some form of law enforcement but I do not know if they continued their studies while I was gone.”

Before he has a chance to show her the lab, his ears prickle as he hears the familiar voice of his brother speaking with someone, a moment later his brother is answered by his mate and he can do nothing but stare at the door in shock. Since when does his mate and brother get along? He is even more surprised when he hears Lestrade’s voice. Perhaps the three of them were working a case together, not likely but possible.

A moment later the sound of footsteps gets a bit quieter and he realizes the only ones he can hear is Mycroft and Lestrade, and just barely for they have gotten quieter too. Stepping so he will be the first thing John sees when he enters the room, he straightens his suit, wishing he has some of his even slimmer line suits still, but they were all gone, used in experiments as he kicked the habit years before.

His first sighting of John in three-hundred-sixty-two days is as the slightly shorter man steps onto the landing, he is dressed in work clothing, has lost weight, is depressed, suicidal even at times, has been trying to work himself into not worrying and has been spending a lot of time at the pack home when not here.

His brother is the next that he glances over but freezes when he sees the detective inspector’s hand resting on the small of his back, and not in the polite do-not-fall sort of way either, but possessively, like it is right to do so. What? When? His brother does not do relationships, he does not do friend, he does not do anything that has to do with emotions. Yet the evidence in front of his eyes does not lie. They are in a serious relationship, as serious as the relationship he has with John.

Rolling his wrist he looks at the spiral marking it, making sure it is still there as he has done several times over the last few months.

Emerging from her spot under the seat, Elspeth goes from her small house cat form to her hybrid form, kneeling before John in a pose of submission he has never seen any of the pack members do.

“I have returned the alpha-second, with minimum damage done to his person, all damage done accounted for and punished by the laws of a protector.” She states clearly, or as clearly as someone who is more cat than human can state.

Before his golden wolf says anything there is a slight shimmer to the air as the elder cobra appears beside John.

You are released from your bond, go in harmony, the cobra declares, his slender fingers brushing her cheek.

Bowing her head she shimmers for a moment, her golden fur gleams dark for an instance before completely vanishing, standing she bows low to the cobra before inclining her head to his golden wolf and returning to her cat form before leaving the flat.

Do not get into trouble in the next forty-eight hours, I have plans that include my tub and a nice long soak as a human, she tells him, her voice full of humor.

Some reason I do not think John is going to let me out of his sight any time soon, so the chances of
“me getting in trouble is pretty slim.” He replies with a mental chuckle, aloud he simply states, “John.”

A moment later he is nearly thrown into the wall as his golden wolf wraps his arms around him, squeezing him almost too tight as he proceeds to kiss him senseless. It is not until he hears the soft female laughter that he remembers that they have way too much company.

“Still a kisser I see,” he hears the adult female wolf remark.

Breaking away, but still holding on to him tightly his wolf turns to look at their company. “Emma, it’s good to see you, however I am going to be rude and send you to the pack house for the next twenty-four hours, be welcome.”

She laughs, deep in her throat, a peeling sound that reminds him of his wolf’s laugh. “I expected no less, will you call us a car if you please? I have Anna with me.”

“My car is outside if you would like to use it,” his brother offers before his mate can answer.

She turns to look at his brother, eyes curious for a moment before she nods and smiles, “That would be acceptable.”

I have already alerted the guards to be expecting the human in the car and allow them to pass. He hears the cobra state.

“Will you need it returned for you?” she inquires.

“No, Chare can come get us, she’s got our car,” Lestrade remarks, hand still firmly claiming his brother.

“Well then, we shall leave the bonded pair to their reunion, in two risings time I require an audience to discus an important familial matters,” she states clearly as she stands, the two mean standing at the same time.

“In two risings time I shall grant your request.” His wolf responds.

With that all of them file out, though Mycroft shoots him several speaking looks before he departs with the detective inspector. Soon the only ones left in the flat are the cobra, himself, and his wolf.

Her Will is lifted. He is free of the Trackers Oath, the cobra remarks after studying him for a minute.

“Good, now go away.” His lover orders with a small smile tugging at his lips.

He chuckles as all of the doors shut and lock before the cobra vanishes into the air.

Moments later he finds himself pushed up against the wall, his sandy-blonde love kissing him soundly while his hands get busy stripping him. Part of him would like to talk first, but the bigger part of him wants his wolf buried in his ass, fucking him raw, so he joins in, his long fingers quickly unfastening all of his buttons before tugging at his lovers shirt, pulling the jumper up over his head and allowing it to fall to the floor. However doing so breaks their kiss for a minute.

“Goddess below Sherlock, I missed you, I missed you so damned much. The wolf in me wanted to track you down and drag you home, to hell with the consequences of such an action.” His wolf informs him between nibbling kisses across his neck, jaw, chin, and chest as each inch of skin is reveled.

“I wanted you there with me,” he confesses, “I missed you every day. It was hell, I never want to be
apart again."

“Good, then don’t but for now you have a few choices where I am taking you, but you better pick quickly.” The wolf tells him seriously nipping at his left nipple and making him moan, “There is the sofa, the wall, and the bed.”

“No, the wall,” he groans out as the smaller man switches his attention to his other nipple. His nipples were not normally this sensitive, maybe it is because they have been apart for nearly a year.

Backing up, John somehow manages to strip him of the rest of his clothing before he is finishes stripping himself without ever breaking his attentions to his body. He is almost overwhelmed by it all and is surprised when the smaller man falls back on the sofa, spreading his legs slightly, his cock jutting up.

From somewhere a small packet of lube appears as he is pulled down so that his legs hook on either side of the wolf’s pulling him wide open and pressing his cock between their bodies.

“Jawn!” he whines in need as he stops his ministrations to open the packet of lube.

Smiling, the wolf replies, “Its alright love, just one minute,” as he coats his fingers and begins working him open.

Groaning, he presses down on the solid digit that is buried in his ass, the tip of his finger finding and playing with his prostate, making him moan and make all sorts of other noises. He needs this so much it just about hurts. Before he can request something more, the wolf uses his hands to change his positioning, shifting so his cock is lined up with his hole. He tries to sink down, but the hands on his hips keep him from that goal, forcing him to take it slowly much to his frustration.

His upper body slumps forward, his head resting on his lovers shoulder as he slowly works his way inside.

Once he is fully seated within him, and he can feel the wolf’s heavy balls against his ass, the wolf just about orders, “Ride me Sherlock, I want to watch as you work yourself on my cock,” his bondmates voice is rough, low, husky, full of command without actually being the command voice.

Sitting back up, he arches his back and slowly raises himself up, gasping as the slightly smaller man’s cock brushes over his prostate on his way past. Once he has gotten as far as John will allow him, he drops back down and moans at the feeling of being full. He could not tell you how long they continued that pattern all he knew was he really needed his wolf to be right where he was. Eventually though it got to be not enough, and he was craving more. Apparently so was his wolf as the smaller man’s hand shift from holding his hips to holding his ass open while he starts to piston up into him, moments later he is coming between the two of them, gasping for breath and still desiring more.

With a somewhat feral smile, his wolf surges to his feet, lifting him as he does so and somehow managing not to unseat him. Groaning, he lays his head on the shifters shoulder while his legs wrap around him, holding him in place as the shifter carries him towards their bedroom, only they do not make it that far, instead he finds himself pressed against the wall in the hall across from the bathroom down the hall from their room.

“Jawn, please!” he pants, “Please!” his voice is keening and he begs without ever stopping to question why. Instead he holds on tight as the wolf pounds him, managing to his prostate more often than not. Soon enough he is hard again, the need to come filling him and making him want nothing more than this to continue forever, while another part of him wants to come right now with his wolf.
His second desire is answered, as he intentionally squeezes his muscles and John comes in him with a shout and a groan their bodies rubbing together and rubbing his cock, making him come a second time.

Gently letting his legs slide to the floor the shifter leads him in the bathroom, where they get a quick shower. However he is so sleepy after not having slept in nearly thirty-six hours that he is swaying on his feet. Not even bothering to put clothes on once they are dry, the wolf leads them to bed, gently tucking him in before making sure all the lights are off in the flat and joining him, their bodies pressed close together.

Tomorrow he will tell John about everything, tomorrow he will apologize for all the pain he caused, but for right now, all he wants to do is sleep with his wolf. So that is what he does.
Together Once More

Chapter Notes

Any comments would be greatly appreciated, thank you to any one for any form of communication, I love it and it keeps me writing!

Tumblr about my stories: JaimiStoryTeller

John's POV
It was so close to the one-year anniversary of the Fall that Eric had started keeping him under watch again, enlisting most of the military pack to assist when he was off doing Tracker business. While it frustrates him greatly, he can understand the logic, particularly since he has been so depressed lately taking care of himself has not really been on the agenda. Upon hearing about the protective detail, Greg had volunteered to do a few nights, to which he was grateful. Since the older man was courting Mycroft he understood perfectly well what it is like for a person to just need silence.

Three days prior to the anniversary Mycroft decides to take Greg and the girls out for dinner, since the jackal-child is on protection duty, he ends up taken out with them, returning afterwards to his flat with the jackal-child and politician. As soon as he opens the door to his flat opens his sense of smell picks up on a scent he has not smelled in years, two unfamiliar wolf scents, a kin-scent he does not know, and the most important one in the bunch, his mate.

Nearly silently he is heading up those steps, ignoring the other two who had asked him something but his attention was not on them.

Eric? He calls out, summoning his friend as he steps onto the landing for his flat, his eyes scanning automatically to identify who else is here. Standing directly in front of the door is his mate, looking almost the same as always except with slightly longer hair and skinner than when they had first meet. On the sofa is three adults, his cousin Emma and presumably her mate and someone related to her mate according to scent, there is a little girl looking at the fireplace who looks almost identical to his cousin as a child.

Stepping forward he is brought short by a sleek golden cat moving in front of him, shifting into her hybrid form as she kneels, neck exposed in submission. Damn it, he doesn’t care about the traditions all he wants to do is get to his mate.

He growls but before he has a chance to order her to move there is a faint disturbance in the air as the cobra appears beside him. Immediately his emotions are lessened, the energy coursing through him lowers and his drive to get to his mate lessens just enough that he can bring his wolf under control.

You are released from your bond, go in harmony, he hears the cobra declare as he unlocks her human form.

She bows her head further somehow, her body shimmering with energy as she rises up as a human once more, though completely bare. Amber eyes gleam in pleasure as she bows low to the cobra before doing a partial bow to him, shifting and leaving.

He catches just the hint of a conversation between the multiform and his bondmate.
“John,” his dark-haired human murmurs, voice low and husky, full of emotion.

That thin line of control he had over his wolf is gone in a flash, as he just about crosses the room in three steps, bodily pinning his mate against the wall behind him and proceeds to kissing him with all of the energy pent up over the last year of being apart. He realizes that he is probably holding him too tightly but it is nearly impossible to let go when all his wolf really wants to do is strip him down and fuck him raw. So he settles for holding him in place and kissing him, his tongue plundering his mate's mouth.

It is not until his cousin starts laughing, remarking playfully, “Still a kisser I see.”

Nearly jerking backwards but keeping a firm grasp on his mate, he pivots to glance at his cousin, a slightly sardonic smile curving his lips, “Emma, it’s good to see you, however I am going to be rude and send you to the pack house for the next twenty-four hours, be welcome.”

Again she laughs deep in her throat as she stands, the males on either side standing at the same time, “I would expect no less, will you call us a car if you please? I have Anna with me,” she inquires as her daughter returns to her side.

*I could summon one of the wolves,* the cobra mentions to him just as the politician comments.

“My car is outside if you would like to use it.”

She turns slightly, studying the politician for a moment, he can just about feel her weighing him before she nods once remarking, “That would be acceptable,” her eyes warm as she watches him.

*I have already alerted the guards to be expecting the human in the car and allow them to pass,* the cobra states. He then hears him comment to the jackal-child. *I intentionally said ‘was’ when I said he was dead. Had I said ‘is’ it would be a different story.*

“Will you need it returned for you?” she inquires, watching the jackal-child and politician.

Giving a shake of his head the detective inspector replies, “No, Chare can come get us, she’s got our car.”

Chuckling softly, his cousin remarks, “Well then, we shall leave the bonded pair to their reunion,” then turning back to him, she continues, “in two risings time I require an audience to discuss an important familial matters.”

He nods once, “In two risings time I shall grant your request.”

Giving a small wave, she turns and ushers her family out. The politician gives him a single curious look before leaving with Greg.

Stepping up beside him the cobra tilts his head to the side, eyeing his mate for a moment before stating, *Her Will is lifted. He is free of the Trackers Oath.*

Smiling slightly, he remarks “Good, now go away.”

The next few hours are spent with him reacquainting himself with his mate’s body. Even after the taller man falls asleep in his arms, he stays awake, just gently stroking his hand up and down his sleek body. He will have to make sure that the consulting detective gets more food and rest because from the looks of him, he has not gotten nearly enough. He cannot actually sleep, but he does drift a bit. It is nearly six hours later before his bondmate starts to stir, long limbs stretching against him and bring him to full awake.
“Hello love,” he murmurs against the back of the taller man’s neck.

Slowly the dark-haired genius rolls towards him, blinking up at him sleepily, “John,” he whispers, “I’m home, not just dreaming.”

“No love, you’re not just dreaming,” he tells the younger man, “You’re home and staying home. At least for the next twenty four hours you are going nowhere.”

Still sleepily the younger man smiles at him, “Alright,” before snuggling back against him and closing his eyes once more.

Smiling gently he curls back against him, dark head resting against his chest. Eventually he drifts off again to his mate’s steady breathing. Another three hours pass before he awakes, stretching and carefully climbing out of the bed in order to go use the bathroom. Once he is done, he sets to making a light breakfast, planning to feed his mate before he intends to inspect every inch of the younger man’s body. Upon finishing the food he sets up the plate, grabs the two mugs of tea, and carries them into their bedroom.

In the time his bondmate has been gone, the regeneration of the vast majority of his muscles had occurred. His rotation in his shoulder was almost completely back, though there still a scar on either side of the shoulder. Most of that regeneration was his body’s way of preparing to track down his bondmate because his wolf refused to be separate from his mate any longer than he had to be and there was several times in the last few weeks he had felt the cobra’s will overriding his, linking them together in order to keep him from going after the younger man.

Setting the food on the table, he settles back onto the bed, sipping his tea before laying a hand carefully against his bondmate’s throat and switching to iota sight. Carefully he checks every inch of the taller man, surprised to discover that he has been healed by another theria with a touch similar to his own. Well then, that explains what Emma wants, it must be Anna. She flood healed, not a controlled heal, which means she probably ended up being in overload or completely drained. Giving a small shake of his head, he returns to checking his bonded, making sure that all damage is gone, though he ignores the light scarring. He’ll ask his mate when he awakes if he wants them or not.

For a while longer, he sits there, just gently running his fingers along his mate’s skin, enjoying the feel beneath his fingers.

The second time his bondmate awakes, he smiles at the younger man, offering him the plate of fruit while he goes to make him a cup of fresh tea. He is not surprised to see all of the food gone when he gets back, according to his mate physical form he has not been eating nearly enough.

“Tea?” he queries with a smile, setting it down.

Nodding, the younger man picks it up and sips at. A content smile curves his lips.

“Still hungry?” he inquires still smiling.

“Yes,” the genius promptly answers.

He kisses the taller man’s forehead before rising and fetching another small plate of food, sticking to mostly light foods so he does not over do it. Once he is back in the room, his bonded sits up, stretching his long arms above himself for a moment before he accepts the plate, eating it rather quickly. After the taller man is done, he sets it aside, reaching out to tug him down beside him.

“I missed you,” the slender man murmurs with a small smile.
Cupping the taller man’s jaw in his hands he leans forward slightly to kiss him, “I missed you too, Goddess below did I miss you.”

That one simple, gentle kiss blooms into something more. Passion and fire light through his system. Need pours through him lighting his blood a fire. His hands slip from his bondmates face, down the graceful lines of his throat to his shoulders before continuing to stroke his body. Earlier his touch was for comfort, both him and his mate. Now it is to arouse, bring pleasure, and just enjoy the fact that they can touch again after being apart for so long.

Sherlock’s long fingers set to touching everything, relearning him just the same. Smirking to himself, he completes the link between them, allowing both empathy and telepathy to play so that both feel the pleasure and desire coursing through the other. Hands touch, relearning, exploring, just being. From hands goes the mouths, lips caressing and touching, tongue lapping gently. Back and forth the two of them share both emotion and physical feeling.

At some point he can feel his bond’s hand on his ass. Part of his wolf nature wants him to pin his mate, but that is not how their relationship works. Long slender fingers work him open, touching him intimately, in ways only his mate should before the two of them roll again, his slender mate below him, while he is rolled over so his ass is lined up with his love’s heavy cock.

Groaning he arches into his bond’s touch, “Sher-lock,” he groans between kisses.

The next several minutes are the longest and shortest of his life. One of his love's long fingered hands wraps around him, stroking in time with his thrusts. Within moments longer he is coming between them with a groan into Sherlock's mouth, his body nearly bowing. Seconds later, his love is coming in him with a shout.

He slowly goes to move, only his bondmate won’t let him, muttering, “Stay, please,” there is something in his tone that just about breaks his heart.

Nodding, he settles against his side, drifting between fully awake and partially sleepy. Eventually his bonded let’s loose, and he gets up, holding his hand out. “Shower with me?”

Smiling and accepting his hand, his dark-haired human nods once before rising.

The two of them go to the bathroom, where he turns on the water.

“All my things are in the same spots?” his bondmate queries with a tilt of his head.

“Since I knew you were alive, I left your things as is. Everyone assumed it was from grief, though those who knew understood it was because I was waiting for you to come home.” He replies softly, shrugging slightly, “Eric will bring you back to life officially.”

Climbing into the now ready shower, he tilts his head back and lets the water pour over him. A moment later the tall man is climbing in with him, before grabbing the flannel and carefully taking his time to wash him down, running his long fingered hands over him. When his mate is done washing him, he takes the flannel, putting more soap on it to wash his mate. By the time he is done washing his bondmate, the both of them are fully aroused again and he smiles mischievously at his mate, his
hands running down his body again before he goes down on his knees, the water still pouring over them.

His tongue flickers out, running over the edge of his bondmate’s tip before he takes him in his mouth, swirling his tongue over his bond’s tip before hallowing his cheek and just about swallowing him.

“Jawn!” the tall man exclaims, his long fingers sinking in his short blonde hair.

*I love you Sherlock,* he whispers mentally, before holding his hips and going to town on him.

*John! Please, more! I want you in me!* His mate responds as he starts letting out a series of low moans, sighs, and groans.

Giving one last long suck on the cock, he slowly pulls off before standing and lifting his mate, “Wrap your legs around me,” he murmurs as he situates them, using a combination of the wall and his right arm to support the tall human while his second hand starts to quickly work him open. As soon as he is sure his mate is open, he uses his hand to line them up before pulling his bondmate’s hips down.

It goes quickly, the coupling fast and smooth, and soon enough both are coming again.

When they are done the two of them dry off before getting dressed in light sleeping clothes and eating a little bit more before curling up on the sofa and cuddling while music plays in the background. The rest of the day is spent alternating between snacking on small foods, touching each other gently, and having lots of sex all over the flat. Tomorrow would be soon enough to return to the real world.
Cuddles

Chapter Notes

Any comments would be greatly appreciated, thank you to any one for any form of communication, I love it and it keeps me writing!

Tumblr about my stories: JaimiStoryTeller

Sherlock’s POV
He was home. It was a glorious thing. Since his brother had been here when he arrived, he would not need to tell Mycroft he was still alive. He felt the need to tell John about his trip, about everyone and everything he had met or accomplished. His only problem was how to tell his mate. There were a lot of things that happened that he was not proud of, a lot of things that happened that he worried about. Prior to meeting John, and joining the pack, he would have said he doesn’t worry. Now though, well he admits to not being a sociopath like he always claimed. Of course, he is not telling Donovan or Anderson that, they can keep thinking he is one. His time away had allowed him a lot of personal growth. Hopefully that growth would be a benefit to himself and his pack. Because he wanted to be worth the praise he had been repeatedly given.

“John?” he murmurs as they lay cuddled on the sofa in front of a fire.

“Yes love?” The wolf replies softly, hand gently rubbing circles into his bareback.

Swallow hard, he inquires, “Would you like to know what happened while I was gone?”

“I would but only when you are ready,” the older man answers, lips pressing against his forehead for a brief moment.

He smiles slightly muttering, “We will need to go to the post office tomorrow, I have something for you.”

“Alright love, but it is also the night of the full moon.” There is a brief pause before the wolf continues. “Expect there to be a bit of an uproar within the pack. The only ones who know you are alive are myself, Mycroft, Eric, Daria, Nathan, Jacob, and Elspeth. Of course Greg now knows too.” His wolf pauses again before asking, “Why are Emma and her immediate family here?”

“The little girl, Anna, she’s like you.” He responds as he considers the fact that the little wolf is an elite and a thera just like his mate.

“You told them.” It is not a question, but a state, laced with amusement.

“Of course, she healed me, completely accidently, when she touched my arm. That part of your family is hard headed. They were getting stupid about the fact she is a thera. So I had Elspeth summon Eric. It’s rather amusing to watch him to rip into someone.” He remarks with a chuckle, recalling the speed in which the cobra had put the wolves into their place.

Chuckling, he feels his mate nod, “It can be.”
Comfortable silence falls between them and they continue to cuddle on the sofa.

Eventually, he inquires, “Will you tell me about the time I was gone John?”

Again his wolf nods, “Of course love,” there is a long pause before the wolf starts to speak.

His voice is low as he talks about his depression and how the military pack, particularly those he listed as knowing he was alive, made a watch schedule to make sure he did not harm himself or try to go after him. He tells him about how the pack is doing, the new members that had joined, some of which were people he had sent to John during his travels. When he discusses the shifter holidays he is surprised to discover that it was not his wolf who had led them, instead he had left them to the cobra. By the time his mate is done speaking, he realizes how much pain the distance has caused and it makes him want to beg for forgiveness.

“Shh, it’s alright, be calm love, everything is alright now.” He hears his wolf murmur comfortingly. “It’s alright love, it will be alright.”

Since he knows he is not making any sort of noise it takes him a minute to realize that his mate can smell or possibly mentally hear his distress. Focusing on the wolf, he allows his presence to be comforting and slowly calms down.

However he nearly goes through his skin when the front door suddenly is opened because he had not been listening for anyone outside.

“John, I’m home, I hope you have been alright the last few days, I know it’s getting close to the…” the voice trails off and he realizes that it is Mrs. Hudson speaking, “Sherlock? You’re alive? You’re alive!”

Before he has a chance to respond the small woman is pulling up off the sofa and into a hug, squeezing nearly too tight. Grimacing, he pats her shoulders, giving her a small hug in response, but hoping she lets go soon.

Letting go, she steps back and beams at him, “I’m so happy you’re alright. I’ve been so worried about John. He didn’t take you being gone very well. Anyways, I am off to bed, its late, time for my soothers. Tomorrow I will make you your favorite biscuits as a welcome home gift.”

He nods, “Good night, Mrs. Hudson,” he murmurs to the older woman after she gives him another hug.

Shaking his head, he curls back up on the sofa with his wolf. For a long time the two of them stay there.

Eventually he inquires, “Can we go for a run?”

Grinning, his wolf nods, “That sounds like a brilliant idea.”

The two of them stand, heading downstairs into the night. As soon as they are outside, the duck into the side ally so that his wolf can change and minutes later he is on the giant golden back, with them racing down the streets shielded from view. It is brilliant, beautiful, perfect, everything he had been missing. Now that he is home he can cherish his mate, the city he adores, and his home.

When they get home he grabs his mate’s face and kisses him senseless in the doorway before the two of them make it up their steps, stopping every few feet to kiss, hands going all over each and every inch of each other. As soon as they are in their flat, he kicks the door shut, crowding his mate back against it. Once more they are kissing, long drawn out, teasing kisses. Hands roaming, teasing,
striping each other, and rejoicing in the fact they are together again.

“Goddess below Sherlock,” his mate gasps as he latches on to the pulse point and sucks on it hard, tongue flicker against it too.

When he is content with the mark he is sure will be on his mate in the morning, he proceeds to moving down his body, kissing every uncovered piece of skin and uncovering those that still have clothes on them. At the point where he can no longer lower himself, he drops to his knees to continue his way down his mate’s body. After reaching his lover’s trousers he unfastens them, nosing at the smaller man’s cock through his red pants.

Groaning, John’s fingers sink into his too long hair, holding him without forcing him to do anything.

“You’re mine,” he murmurs as he lips at the thickening prick through those delightful dark red pants, “I’ve waited for nearly a year to do this.”

His long fingers tug his mate’s pants and trousers the rest of the way off. As soon as his mate’s totally bare, he laps at the tip of the thick cock bobbing before his face before swallowing his mate down.

“Sher-lock!” The wolf gasps, hips arching towards him.

Several long minutes pass while he teases and enjoys his mate. He keeps him right at the edge without allowing him to go over before he is a begging mess. Finally, he pushes the older man over the edge when he carefully works just one finger into his tight hole and flicking his finger over his mate’s prostate.

John comes with a muffled shout before falling back against the wall.

“You’re amazing,” his wolf mutters sleepily.

“Let’s go to bed,” he suggests, surprising both of them. “Tomorrow is going to be busy.”

“What about you love?” his wolf inquires as he slowly straightens, offering him a hand up which he accepts.

Smiling at his lover, he answers, “I just want to cuddle with you.”

Nodding, the blonde kisses him, pressing their bodies together. When they break apart breathlessly, the two of them head to the bedroom where his mate strips off his clothes before gently laying him back on the bed and taking his turn worshipping his body until he is coming in his lover’s mouth with a low groan. Afterwards, the wolf curls up next to him once all the lights are shut off, the two of them fall asleep wrapped in each other’s arms.

Tomorrow they will have to deal with Emma and her family, the full moon meeting, his brother, and everything else, but not tonight. Tonight is just for them.

Chapter End Notes

Hi all my beautiful and awesome readers! Sorry it has taken me so long to update. Life has been rather crazy, between health issues, Rare Pair Bingo, and family issues. I have not given up on this verse, once the RPB is done I will be returning to working on this
far more often. So please continue to have patience with me!
Chapter Notes

This chapter covers the time frame starting in chapter 89 and continuing on to right before the pack meeting.

I love any sort of reviews, comments, and communication.

This is for Cyn2k, she's awesome. As are the rest of my readers.

Tumblr about my stories: JaimiStoryTeller

Sandra’s POV
She was startled by the pack’s nu informing her that the pack home was about to have company, three adults and one child to be delivered by a car driven by a human, all of which were wolves. Humming to herself, she goes to make sure she has rooms ready for company, and to tell the ones living with her that they were going to have company.

Cleon, Qamra, Trey, and Speranza had all moved out after the Harvest Flame into their own little house. She was proud of Trey for managing to find a job and hold it down, she was even prouder of Cleon and Qamra who still attended the classes held at the pack home three days a week to make sure they could read, write, do math, and successfully live on their own. As it is, the small wolf family was getting support from Eric who would take a small portion of the money Trey made and invest it, often tripling it. Since the day that the cobra had physically corrected the younger elite when he made the massive mistake of trying to growl at him, the two males had taken better care of Qamra’s emotional state.

Over the last year there had been several shifters who had approached John or had been delivered by Eric to the pack home to be adopted. She had not asked who they were or why they were here, trusting that the cobra and her nephew would not accept criminals into their family instead. Of those that joined the pack, four of them were living with her at the pack home. That left her with five people in her home.

Macrae would probably never be able to live on his own because of his fear and how timid he is. He was the last of the Baskerville sub-pack shifters that still remained at the pack home. All the others had either found homes on their own or with a few of the others. On the plus side, he was a quick study when it came to cooking and helping around the house, even if he did hide from everyone whenever possible.

The first was a pair of father and daughter golden lancehead vipers. They stay with her because the father refuses to accept charity or assistance from the elder cobra. Instead he prefers to stay at the pack home and assist as much as possible while he tries to find work. The two serpents seem to be antagonistic towards each other, though she does not understand why. He is very polite to her, almost subservient at times, and while he is strict with his daughter, he is still very affectionate and loving.

The snapping turtle only recently joined their pack. She is pretty sure the only reason he is at the pack home is her nephew asked him to stay there for the time being. He is rather self-sufficient, quiet,
and a bit of a loner. Still, she enjoys his rare company, particularly when he starts telling her about
the home he left in Canada. Sometimes though, she wishes she understood why he was here.

Last of the new pack members living in her home is the crocodile. She had not inquired into exact
type, understanding that the young woman did not like to discuss herself. Unlike some of the other
new pack members, she understood exactly why she was there, her home had been destroyed by a

The little viper is all excited, her massive golden eyes widening slightly as she just about jumps out
of her skin. “Visitors? Gathering’s not until tomorrow. Any children?”

Smiling, she nods, “There is a single little one with the company, though I do not know how old they
are. Eric didn’t say.”

Nodding, the male viper stands, his motions not nearly as fluid as the two cobras or the iota viper’s
and gives a little bow as he responds, “Then we shall meet you in the kitchen, right Mia?”

“Right!” the young girl exclaims before skipping out of the door and down the hall.

As she watches, he just smiles and shakes his head.

Moving on, she informs Macrae next and only knows he heard her because of the timid ‘alright’ she
received. Sighing, she moves on to tell the turtle and crocodile, both of which she finds in the library
debating the differences between their scales and whose are better.

“Excuse me,” she murmurs after spending a few moments listening to them.

“Aunt,” the crocodile responds, suddenly turning her sharp attention her way, “is something wrong?”

“Oh no dear,” she replies with a light smile, “I just wanted to tell you there will be company here for
a few days.”

Richard the snapping turtle nods once seriously, “Thank you,” he murmurs politely before arching
and eyebrow at the crocodile and inquiring, “Shall we finish the conversation?”
“You are going to lose, you know, for my hide is thicker than yours,” the crocodile replies with a smirk. Turning her head, the Australian inquires, “Would you like help cooking dinner?”

“No thank you,” she answers, “Dominic and Mia are helping me.”

“Alright,” the two reptiles respond before returning to their conversation.

Heading to the kitchen next, she finds the two vipers gathering the stuff for dinner. She always posts on the dry erase board what she was going to make for dinner, that way if there are any allergies it can be mentioned and skipped or altered accordingly. The three of them work in mostly silence, the only noise being the occasional humming out of each of them, though never at the same time. She had just put the food in the oven when her ears perk and she hears the approaching car.

“Please watch the food while I see who our guests for the next few days,” she inquires of the two vipers as she turns towards the door.

“Of course!” little Mia exclaims as she prances around the room.

“Thank you,” she states as she slips out of the room and heads towards the front of the house.

When she opens the front door, she stops and stares, a huge smile curving her lips. “Emma?” she exclaims as she heads down the front steps and hugs the tall blonde woman getting out of the car. “You look wonderful!”

Hugging her tightly, she gently presses their cheeks together.

The younger wolf hugs her back just as tightly, “Hello aunt,” the blonde murmurs, “it’s so good to see you.”

Hugging her one last time, she steps back, “That silly cobra didn’t tell me it was you.”

Chuckling, her niece motions to the other three who are now standing there, the car ready to go.

“This is my mate Alexei, our daughter Anna, and my brother-in-bond Pyotr,” the female wolf introduces her to the other three.

Beaming, she hugs each of them, gently rubbing her cheek against the little girl’s cheek, causing her to giggle.

“I am sure I do not need to tell you where your room and the nursery is at, Pyotr can choose to stay in a guest room or a family room. Come in, come in.” She happily exclaims as she turns and heads towards the house after looping her arm through her nieces and great niece, putting herself between the two of them.

The five of them head into the house, and she tells them that dinner should be done shortly if they want to put their stuff in the rooms. While the four are settling in, she heads into the kitchen where she sets to making a cake. Just as it is ready to be put into the oven, she glances over at the vipers and asks them to go tell the others dinner is done. Little Mia does so, while Dominic helps her put everything on the serving carts in order to take it to the dining room. Several minutes later everyone except Macrae is gathered to eat.

After introducing everyone, she happily chats with her niece. Her grandniece happily draws the little viper into a conversation, the two of them speaking of their respective packs. The three reptiles are discussing their scales again, this time including serpent scales in the mix. While the wolf brothers are speaking in Russian. When dinner is done, she fetches the cake and serves it up.
When she puts a piece aside, Anna asks, “Why do you have an extra plate set up?”

“That’s for Macrae,” the little viper answers before she has a chance, “He’s a wolf who likes to stay by himself a lot.”

“That’s unnatural,” her nephew-in-bond mutters.

Her eyes narrow, “You may be alpha among your pack, but here you are a guest and should behave with manners. Particularly when speaking with an elder relative. Unless I have forgotten tradition, it demands all those in a position of authority be respected.”

He blinks at her in shock according to the scent rolling off of him. Beside him, her niece is smiling, her expression saying she is trying not to chuckle.

“Aunt is a gamma. She is an advisor to my cousin, just as she was an advisor to Father even though he rarely listened.” Her niece remarks, amusement in her tone and scent.

“Oh,” he mutters, “My deepest apologies.”

Relaxing, she remarks, “Alright.” Waving a hand towards the end of the table where the reptile shifters sit, she continues, “Our pack is mixed. We have wolves, cobras, vipers, jackals, cats, birds of prey, multi-forms, hybrids, human-children, humans, and gifted among our number. Our backgrounds are varied and unique. The pack can easily be broken into six distinct sub-packs. Do not make the mistake of believing that all shifters are the same. Just because most wolves are social creatures does not mean that is true of all.”

“Of course,” he nods, his scent embarrassed.

“Macrae came to our pack after being rescued from a rogue group of humans and gifted that was doing illegal experiments on shifters, animals, and humans.” She explains softly.

Flushing, his embarrassed scent seems to get worse before he murmurs, “I hadn’t realized.”

“It’s alright. Just remember that lesson for the future. I am certain had I not said something Emma would have.” She comments lightly, smiling at him she queries, “How did you enjoy dinner?”

“It was good, thank you.” He replies, his scent evening out.

“I enjoyed it!” her great-niece exclaims happily, “That cake was great! Did you teach mama how to make cakes?”

Grinning, she nods, “I helped, along with her mum and my mum when she was younger.”

“Cool!” The youngest wolf exclaims before rubbing her eyes sleepily.

“I think our little one is getting sleepy. If you don’t mind aunt, we’ll be tucking in for the night.” Her niece remarks as she stands.

“That’s alright Emma, we have tomorrow to speak. I imagine it has been a rather long day for you.”

After bidding everyone farewell, her niece leaves the room, escorting her daughter out. Her nephew-in-bond and his brother also excuse themselves politely, if not as warmly. Once they are gone, little Mia heads to the library to study.

“He’s an alpha? Does that mean we need to show him the same respect and treatment we give to John?” the turtle inquires.
“Treat him politely, but the only one you owe your loyalty to is John, do not worry about treating him the same way. He is no different than any other pack member.” She answers politely.

All three adult shifters nod.

“Good, he smells rude,” the crocodile remarks coolly, “I didn’t like his scent.”

“He’s a wolf who grew up in a traditionalist pack. If he took that tone with Eric around he would have gotten a lot firmer response than what I did.” She comments with a rueful smile.

Chuckling, the crocodile states, “I’ve heard he has a bit of a temper problem, and when his temper goes off you don’t want to be on the receiving side of it.”

“Very true, though I do not think he ever allows his temper free reign.” She replies with a nod, thinking about the fire she has seen in those black eye and cold fury in his silver eyes when hunting.

A low hiss escapes the viper, he then immediately looks down and apologizes.

Titling her head to the side she thinks about the best way to describe the cobra without going into detail. Eventually she states, “He is very traditional, even if there are times it does not seem like it. That is John’s influence on him. When the cobra first joined the military pack he was a lot colder, harsher, and deadlier. Mercy was nowhere in his agenda. He has eased up a lot in the last twelve years, though there are still flashes of the Tracker sworn to the Shadow Mistress and blessed by Shadow, Dusk, and Dawn.”

“You’re serious? He’s blessed by the three oldest?” the crocodile breathlessly queries with wide eyes.

She nods, “Has the markings too, though they are rarely seen because he wears his scales instead.” Standing, she comments, “I am going to go clean the kitchen, have a good night.”

“Would you like some help?” the other female shifter inquires as she stands.

“Oh no dear, I need to do some thinking.” She answers, “thank you though. If you want any snacks, you know where the pantry is.” By the door, she pauses, “If one of you could give Macrae his plate that would be appreciated.”

“I will,” the turtle offers as he stands, “As the only non-predator in this trio, I am less of a threat.”

Smiling, she nods to them before leaving the room, heading into the kitchen where she sets to slowly cleaning everything. While her body is on autopilot she thinks about her conversation with her niece, particularly the part where the younger wolf was bringing her daughter to receive training from her nephew for the healing gift. So little Anna had inherited the true healing gift her dame had and her nephew still has. Many wolves were distrustful of healers of that nature. Emma must not realize or only barely realizes that her cousin is the same type of healer. It also explained the bond she could see between her grandniece and the uncle.

A little known fact about her is she sees bonds. Whether they are accepted or not, just the chance of it allows her see it. At one point she had considered becoming a matchmaker, but had decided against it because she did not wish to be forced to use her gift, after all, not all bonds should be accepted as soon as discovered. The elder cobra was a perfect example of that. Still, she could see parental bonds, mate bonds, protector bonds, and the most important to her, bonds of love.

Shaking her head, she returns to considering the situation at hand. She knows that John will do whatever needs to be done to assist Anna and protect her, but more than that, her little grandniece has
the elder cobra’s protective touch on her. If someone, anyone, attempts to harm her they will find themselves having the worst possible day of their life.

She is curious what has her nephew busy for the next twenty-four hours but does not question it knowing he will tell her when he is ready if she is supposed to know. Though she is curious how the small wolf family plans to get back to their pack for the full moon. Perhaps his parents plan to lead since they still live according to her niece.

“May I help?” a very soft and timid voice requests from the edge of the room.

Coming out of her mind, she turns and smiles gently at the younger wolf. “Of course.” She tries to never discourage him from being out of his room. If he feels comfortable being around her, then that is alright and he can be around her.

The two of them work in companionable silence, falling into a pattern they had already worked out in the months previous.

They are just about done when the younger wolf starts talking hesitantly. “The four new people, two smell familiar, two do not. But there is a connection between them.”

“It is my niece, her mate, daughter, and brother-in-bond. They have come for a short visit so Anna, my grandniece, can speak with John.” She explains as she puts water on to boil for hot tea.

“Are, ummm, are we in the way?”

“Oh dear no,” she shakes her head before clarifying, “I keep rooms for myself, John, Emma, and the family nursery always prepared. Along with two more rooms for family members who surprise us. The rest of the rooms are for whoever needs them within the pack or guests welcomed to our home.”

“Oh,” he mutters, seeming to be lost in thought for the moment, “Why?”

“Good policy is to be ready for any visits,” she answers with a smile and nod. “John is not as social as my brother had been, but he does have a habit of rescuing those in bad situations and bringing them home to heal.”

The hints of a smile curve the younger wolf’s lips as he nods.

Silence falls between them once more as she mixes the tea, passing his before settling onto one of the cooking chairs and relaxing for a moment. “This house has been in the family for over five hundred years. It is actually built on a property that held the first pack house even before that. We have buried or cremated every alpha our pack has ever had on these grounds. In the entire history of our pack, we have never had a non-elite alpha. Every alpha has also ended up on the council.” She pauses, glancing over at the youngest wolf, “Do you know why I am telling you this?”

He shakes his head.

“Because in all of those years and generations, every alpha has been a wolf, his advisors wolves, and we have thrived where others have failed. This house and property are protected by old powers and ancients gifts. Any who are welcome here are safe, and any who are pack belong.” Locking eyes with the timid wolf, she states, “You are both. Never question whether you belong here or not.”

“I umm, I’m tired, goodnight,” he mutters before fleeing.

Sighing, she shakes her head and thanks the gods that she has not seen a match for him. At this point it would be a very unhealthy relationship.
Of course thinking about his match reminds her of the other unhealthy match in their pack, well it would be if it was allowed to happen but so far it had been avoided. Young Cleon might be improving, but he was in no way ready for a mate. Thankfully the female in question seems to realize that since she refuses to touch him. Ever. Again she shakes her head before checking the time and deciding she should probably go to bed.

In the morning, she is up before everyone else as normal. After getting cleaned up, she heads to the kitchen to make breakfast only to discover Macrae already there and slowly putting everything needed on the cart to wheel into the dining room. Perhaps their conversation the previous night had helped. With a grateful smile, she sets to actually making the food parts that need cooked since he has already assembled the parts that do not need cooked.

“Will you be eating with us?” she asks softly as it finishes up.

“I, uhhhhhh, I dunno,” he stammers with a blush. Except for brief moments during full moon and new moon meetings he hides normally so this is big progress.

Still speaking softly, “Alright Macrae, do what makes you comfortable.”

He nods, making himself a small plate and debating for a bit while she puts the food on the cart and pushes it out to the dining area. The two vipers are already in there with little Mia excitedly babbling about something she had found in the library about their variety of snake, though not shifter. Silently the younger wolf settles into a corner seat with the little viper saying hi before returning to her conversation with her father. Barely pausing as she gets up in order to make her plate and sit back down.

Over the next hour the rest of the inhabitants of the house slowly trickle in. The other two reptiles nod in the wolf’s direction but say nothing. Both Russian wolves seem confused by his presence. Her niece smiles warmly at him as she takes her spot next to her mate. Little Anna shyly smiles before heading over to the other little shifter and sitting beside her to visit.

She is actually quite proud of the timid wolf. When he goes to put his plate in the washing bucket she spots something she rather she hadn’t, the potential bond between him and the Russian protector wolf. Oh brother, well at least she does not have to worry about them intentionally touching each other. Focusing on the potential bond for color, she notes it is gray-silver, meaning it could be from either the Dusk Daughter or Shadow Mistress. Lovely, one of the dark goddesses’ has a sense of humor, and she had been thankful he wasn’t matched.

Giving an internal shake of her head, she returns to the conversation with ease, years of having two brothers who could not keep a straight conversation useful practice.

After breakfast the shy wolf withdraws to his room, the two pups head outside to the small play area much to her nephew-in-bonds worry.

“How do you know they will be safe?” he demands as the girls go without an adult.

“This home is protected,” her niece answers with a shrug, “Safest place in the world for Anna to be. Well one of.”

“How?” this is out of the other Russian wolf as he eyes the direction she just went as if he is considering going after her. She can see his bond is almost compelling him.

“Barriers for one thing, guards for another, and Eric for a third,” she answers with a shrugs and reassuring smile.
“Eric?” both Russians repeat, sharing a questioning glance and scowling at her.

“He’s nearly seven feet tall, has jet black scales, eyes that gleam either black or silver depending on the situation, the type of temper problem you don’t want to deal with though I think you already had a small taste of it.” She responds a bit sarcastically, thinking that they should have found out exact who bound niece and uncle together in protection.

“He shares the name of your sire?” her nephew-in-bond questions his mate.

“Yep, and they did not like each other on the two occasions they met. Now can we just enjoy the visit?” Emma remarks equally sarcastic, according to her scent they had already had a similar discussion.

He nods once slowly.

From there on, the rest of the day goes smoothly. She enjoys her time getting to know her nephew-in-bond, his brother, and visiting with her rarely seen niece. Throughout the day several other pack members stop by in order to drop off food for the following night’s festivities. This seems to shock the Russian alpha. From what she is able to gather, almost the entire pack lives on the pack compound built around the pack home. As the pack mates stop by, she introduces those who do not know her niece and allows who do to greet them on their own. A few of the packs pup’s ask if they can stay the night in order to get to know Anna and spend time with Mia. She agrees as long as their parents do not mind and the promise to behave, which is how she comes to have almost twenty pups in the play area and both nurseries packed. Thankfully Emma and Beth have no problems helping her with all the little ones while the two reptiles make an easy and quick buffet style dinner for the pups to drift in and out of.

She has a hard time stopping her laughter when she hears her two nephews-in-bond discussing how odd this is.

“Wait until you see the pack meeting tomorrow then, there will be a lot more children, teenagers, and adults here. We host a dinner before hand and it is open to the entire pack.” She tells him as she keeps an eye on the two youngest who are trying to change into wolves and keep getting stuck in a hybrid form.

“Your pack allows them to shift even so young?” the brother inquires after she helps young Katie back into her human form.

“Of course, while they are on the pack’s property it is perfectly safe. We allow them to choose when they wish to learn to shift, any child who wants to gets lessons from older shifters. If the lessons are not working, they are checked by one of the healers to see if they are able to shift, some desire to shift long before their bodies are ready, others never do, they are all welcomed the same.” She explains as she keeps a watch on the pups. “Most of the pack’s children are wolves, but we have a few non-wolves too, such as Mia, the mouse twins, and a jackal.”

“Amazing,” the wolf breathes as he continues to watch the children.

When she feels it is getting too cold, she calls them in, giving them all warm drinks before asking them to play in the meeting hall or nursery only. Two of the older girls ask if they may read in the library for a little bit before bed, which she easily agrees to as well. Bedtime ends up being fun with most the younger ones exhausted but not wanting to sleep yet. Eventually she gets all of them to bed before heading to the kitchen to make sure it is ready for the following day. She is rather thankful and surprised when she sees that it is all cleaned up and ready for the following day. According to the scent in the air it was Macrae who did so.
With that she heads to bed.

The following morning she is awoken to a shrill scream, causing her and all the other adults to head directly to the children. When they get there it is to find several of the pups staring at a rather large spider.

“For a minute there I thought there was something else wrong,” she sighs as Richard smashes the spider and cleans up the mess.

When she turns around it is to see three wolves all looking rather predatorish trying to look non-threatening.

“Morning boys, would you like a coffee or tea before returning to whatever it is you do when I can’t see you?” she inquires politely of the wolves.

“Thank you aunt, but we are well.” The oldest of the three responds with a slight bow before they exit the house with all do haste.

Shaking her head she announces to the rest, “How about everyone gets cleaned up and meets for breakfast in half an hour if you do not wish to go back to bed?”

After there is a round of agreement, she turns and heads back to her room where she changes into some clean clothes before heading to the kitchen downstairs. She has just started cooking when several of the pups come filing in to ask if they can help. Chuckling she sets each of them to a task before shooing them to the dining and meeting hall.

“How many children do you have?” she hears a heavily accident voice inquire from the doorway.

Turning, she spots Pyotr leaning against the door.

“One, just one, my daughter is an adult with two children of her own. Actually, Thomas is my grandson.” She replies as she finishes up with what she is making.

“Was there a fertility problem with your mate?” he inquires curiously.

“I don’t have a mate. I never have.” She responds as she puts the food on the cart.

“What?” his tone and scent are both full of shock.

Turning to face him, she explains, “I was part of that one percent who shares their heat with their potential bondmate but never get marked. After I discovered I was pregnant I tried to track down the shifter I had spent my heat with only to discover he had died of a tumor.” Smiling wistfully she continues, “After Andrea’s birth I stopped having heats. I helped raise John and Emma since they are almost the same age to her.”

“I’m sorry,” he murmurs softly, regret in his scent.

She shrugs, “I never have regretted it.” Smiling, she suggests, “Let’s get all the children fed.”

He nods, pushing the cart for her into the other room where they set to serving all of the children.

Breakfast goes smoothly, the fear of the morning pretty much forgotten by most as everyone visits and talks. When breakfast is done, all of the children put their dishes in the washer containers much to the two Russian wolves surprise before withdrawing to the nursery to play or the library to read.

“You’re packs pups are very well behaved,” her nephew-in-bond tells her as he watches in shock.
She nods, “They are.” Her attention turns outwards as she feels her nephew approaching. “John’s here, Emma love, why don’t you show your mate and brother-in-bond to the front meeting room?”

“Alright aunt,” her niece replies before motioning to the two men to follow her.

_They are in the front meeting room_, she tells her nephew on the pack link.

**Thank you Aunt Sandra**, he replies, sending affection through the link.

**Will you be staying for lunch?** She inquires as she rounds up the children to get them cleaned up.

**No, I have an appointment to keep, though I will be back tonight to lead the full moon meeting.** He responds with a smile.

**Alright, well I have the pack pups so I will see you then.** She remarks, sending him the impression of a hug before going to take care of the little ones.

Once all the children have gotten cleaned up, she gathers them all in the library to do a lesson on shifter history much to their pleasure. For some reason her lessons are always taken well, probably because she makes sure to use several different teaching methods so that all of the children can retain it. She hears John when he bids her good afternoon.

She has help from the older pups in the groups for making a light lunch of salads and sandwiches. Everyone eats before the pups pick up after themselves before going back to playing or reading, a few even decide to take naps. Just before dinner time she enlists the elder pups to help her set up for the pot luck, along with Richard and Dominic. As the adults start to funnel in, she greets everyone. She feels the ripple of shock that ripples through the pack as she feels John showing up. Curious she goes to see what the shock is when she spots what it is.

Her nephew has just entered the pack home with a tall, dark-haired human who they had buried exactly a year before. The impossible had happened. Sherlock Holmes was alive.

She couldn’t stop from beaming, her only thought being that the Shadow Mistress had truly blessed her nephew for such a glorious event to have happened.
John’s **POV**

When they wake up, he kisses his mate gently, inquiring, “Would you like to come with me to the pack house or stay here?”

“Stay here, I don’t want to leave the flat until I have to.” His mate responds, kissing him back, trying to draw him back into the bed.

“As much as I would love to spend the day in bed with you, I promised Emma I would speak to her today.” He tells his love as the younger man tries to lure him back to bed.

Groaning, his mate mutters, “If you insist.”

“Do you want some breakfast before I go?” he inquires, hunting for some clothing.

“No,” his mate groans, throwing an arm over his face and muttering, “I’m going back to sleep, never thought I would be so happy to just sleep in my own bed.”

He nods, understanding that sentiment after his time in the military.

“Well then, I am going to head to the pack home, when I get home we can have lunch and spend more time together if you want.” He tells his bondmate, leaning down to give him a goodbye kiss before heading to the street below.

Cab or run? He debates before deciding on running, he wants to stretch his legs. Ducking into an ally, he changes and shields. He races through the street, just barely dodging around and over some of the people walking about. It is not until he reaches the front entrance of the pack home that he finally drops his shields and returns to human form.

*They are in the front meeting room,* his aunt tells him before he has finished shifting.

*Thank you Aunt Sandra,* he responds, warmth and affection filling his mind voice.

*Will you be staying for lunch?* She inquires as he enters the house.

*No, I have an appointment to keep, though I will be back tonight to lead the full moon meeting.* He replies with mental smile.

She sends him the impression of a hug as she remarks, *Alright, well I have the pack pups so I will see you then.*
The link fades to the background as he moves quietly through the house to the room in question.

When he enters his attention is drawn to his cousin-in-bond and niece’s father. They’ll be having words, he thinks, because there is no way he will allow what he is thinking to happen.

“John,” Emma greets him warmly, giving him a tight hug before sitting down on one of the sofas in the room. “Thank you for coming.”

He flashes one of the first smiles since his bondmate had ‘died’ the year before, “Where’s Anna?” he inquires.

“She’s with the other children and loving meeting all of her cousins and the other pack members.”

His cousin responds smoothly, motioning to her mate to sit next to her.

“That’s good, Sherlock has let me know that Anna is like me?” he asks, confirming what he already knows.

As he takes a seat in one of the armchairs facing his cousin, the other two male wolves take seats as well. His cousin’s mate sits beside her, while her brother in bond settles into another armchair.

“I thought she was a strong iota with hints of being an omicron. Then your mate said she was a thera,” she responds, looking down at the floor as she flushes, embarrassed over something according to her scent. “That scared me. As you know, most shifter packs tell stories of insanity, unsafe and uncontrolled powers. Hell, you remember how often Father did.”

He nods, muttering, “I know, Grandmum and I tried to always leave the room when he would start. It was part of the reason I went into the military the way I did and got my medical degree.”

“You don’t hide it anymore?” she inquires, confusion in her tone.

Shrugging, he answers, “As a child and teenager I did because of those stories and fear but as I got older I stopped caring so much. I plan to fix Harry tonight.”

“ Aren’t you concerned someone would try to harm you?” Pyotr asks, his English rough but understandable.

Again he shrugs, “Not really, I’m an adult now, and if I couldn’t defend myself for some reason, the protector’s bond between myself and Eric would activate, whoever was after me would find themselves dealing with one furious and deadly cobra.”

His cousin and her bond-brother nod, while her mate gives him a dark look.

“I can put a slowing block on her abilities that will last until summer, but she will need training sooner than later.” He tells his cousin, his telepathy open as he listens to Alexei’s surface thoughts.

“Why not just bind her? Being a thera is a curse.” His cousin-in-bond mutters, “It would be best.”

His eyes narrow as he looks at his cousin-in-bond, “She can stay next summer with Sherlock and I,” he tells her, “or she can stay here with Aunt Sandra and take lessons same as Jace.”

“My daughter—‘ Alexei begins in a nasty tone.

“Will get the training she needs to be safe, or by the Shadow Mistress I will find out why and deal with it. She might be your daughter and part of the Petrowski Pack, but she is also a Watson, a daughter of the first line. You will not do something that would harm her,” he interrupts, snarling low
“I don’t do it often, but believe me when I say I would take you before the Shadow Mistress in a heartbeat. That is, if Eric doesn’t beat me to it since I can almost promise he will be keeping an eye on her to ensure that the protection bond between her and Pyotr develops properly.”

“I am an elite alpha, you’ll not—“

“Shut up Alexei, if John says she needs training, then she needs training.” His cousin remarks, “We’ll make sure she is gets here between the Day of Seeds and Dusk Awakening.”

He nods, knowing his cousin will have her here even if it requires her forcing her mate to do something he does not like to.

“Well then,” he mutters, then turns his attention to Pyotr, “You better be sure you can protect her, and that is from anyone and anything, including your own brother if he tries something stupid. Binding her is stupid, the entire reason many thera go insane is their power just keeps building, trying to break the binding, and that’s where the problems lie. Instead, do the intelligent thing, the thing that would be an automatic idea with any other gift, and train her.”

“But law says—“

“Nothing,” he interrupts, “not about that anyways. What shifter law says, and I mean the laws declared by the Old Gods, not the laws passed by shifter councils, is murder not, commit no spiritual, physical, or emotional injury, and be faithful to bonds.” Pausing to calm himself, he continues, “My pack has one tracker blessed of the Eldest Three, and another tracker blessed of two Old Gods, and a few Trackers in training. Believe me when I say, the only real laws our kind must obey are those.”

The Russian wolf glares at him, but says nothing more.

_I think I need to talk with my mate_, his cousin tells him gently, _if you don’t mind?_

He knows she is speaking on the private link, the link forged as children and understands that she wants him to end the meeting. _Of course, I mean it though Emma, if he is a danger to Anna, I’ll take him before the Shadow Mistress and let you be angry with me before I would allow him to harm her._

She sends a mental smirk along the link, _I would expect no less, John. It does explain quite a bit about our younger years._

Standing, he asks aloud, “Is there anything else we need to discuss?”

“No,” his cousin-in-bond replies shortly.

“Well, you two need to discuss it, but our discussion is done, at least until we know when we will discuss further plans.” He remarks, smirking at his cousin.

“Until later,” she murmurs, standing to give him another hug, thank you.

_Of course, Emma, we’re family_. He responds, hugging her back, “Later.” Turning to the brother, he suggests, “Trace and Damian are on guard duty, if you ask, either will show you some useful ways to defend a healer in tight situations without being a distraction or danger to the healer.”

Nodding, Pyotr agrees, “That would be interesting.”

He just barely nods at the other alpha, wanting to slam him into a wall and make the other man submit, before turning on his heel and leaving.
I will be back later Aunt Sandra, until then have a good afternoon, he bids his aunt politely and warmly as he walks out the front door. He does not expect a response since she is busy with the pups and prep work.

The trip home is as smooth as the trip there. His mate is still curled up on their bed, head resting on his pillow. He quickly strips and joins him, snuggling up with the younger man and holding him close.

“Bad visit?” his mate inquires as he opens his eyes.

“Frustrating one, I think Eric is going to end up forcing Alexei to obey, hell I wanted to force him to obey.” He replies.

Startled, his mate’s eyes narrow in concern, “That stupid wolf still thinking of being stupid?”

“Yeah, I think so,” he answers, suddenly tired though he does not know why, “Would you mind if Anna stayed with us next summer?”

“No, I think it might be interesting for her to be around, why?” his love queries with a tilt of his head, shifting positioning so he is draped over him.

“Because I am going to train her, or have Jace train her and check her progress, not sure which yet.” He replies before grumbling, “Either would be safer than what that wolf wants to do.”

Grinning, his mate starts to stroke his skin slowly, fingers just barely trailing over him, “I have an idea of how to get your thoughts off him for the time, leave him to Eric, it will be fun to watch.”

He smirks in response, letting his bondmate distract him. He definitely missed this.

Chapter End Notes

So I have a new publishing schedule, I will update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. No story will be updated twice in the same week.
I love any sort of reviews, comments, and communication.

Tumblr about my stories: JaimiStoryTeller

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV
The time between when he gets home from the meeting with his cousin to just a little bit before they are to go to the pack meeting is spent either making love with his mate or cuddling with him. Somehow they manage to miss eating, but he is not overly concerned about that since he knows they can eat at the meeting, there will be a lovely pot luck before the meeting.

“Come on you, out of bed, we have work to be done,” he tells his mate as he rolls off the bed to head to the shower, “Shower with me?”

Groaning, his dark-haired human nods slowly, muttering, “I want to stay home.”

“Alpha and Alpha-second,” he motions to himself and then to him, “it’s our duty to be at the pack meeting since there is nothing actually preventing us from being there. Besides, wouldn’t you like to rebond with the pack?” he queries coaxingly, understanding why Sherlock does not actually want to leave the flat, but also knowing they will have to rejoin the world sooner than later.

“True,” the boffin mutters as he sits up, “You have a point. Plus the sooner we do this, the sooner I come back from being dead.”

With that, his bondmate is on his feet and heading to the loo before he can blink. Grinning, he follows the younger man, pausing to enjoy the way he looks as the bathroom begins to steam up.

“Close the door, you’re letting all the heat out.” He love orders him before climbing in the shower.

Grinning, he does as directed, before joining his lover in the shower. They wash each other up with a promise for more to come after the meeting. When they are done, they take turns drying each other off before heading into their room to dress. Once they are dressed they head outside and duck into an ally so he can shift into his wolf form, Sherlock crawls on his back, and he shields, taking off at an easy loop towards the pack home.

When they hit the pack property edge, he drops the shield and continues until he is just shy of the porch. It feels good to run after not for so long. It fells even better to have his mate on his back as he does so.

He can feel the eyes on them as they race towards the house but doesn’t care, he can feel the shock, the concern, the joy, the confusion, a gamut of emotions pass through those who can see them. Upon getting to the porch, he drops low so his mate can hop down before returning to his human form.

Grinning, his mate tells his brother, “Close your mouth Mycroft, you’ll catch flies,” but it is lighthearted and amused.
He watches as the politician directs a glare at his brother before glancing at him in shock.

“You act like you’ve never seen his wolf before,” his mate comments, confusion shared on their link.

“Because he hasn’t, I didn’t shift while you were gone except for when I was at home with Eric.” He softly and clearly states. “He’s only seen the pups that have not actually grown into their wolves yet and are still smaller than me.”

Understanding dawns and his love quietly apologizes, “Sorry.”

“Let’s go inside,” He suggest, hand coming to rest on the dark-haired human’s back as he guides him towards the steps. “Hello Greg, Chare, Madeline, and Mycroft. I hope you are having a good day?”

“Hullo John, Sherlock, it really is good to see you together again,” the detective inspector replies, “It’s been a good day.”

“Hi Uncle John,” the black-haired gifted girl replies quietly, “Sherlock,” she carefully pronounces his name.

Smiling at her gently, he remarks, “Use telepathy if it makes you feel better, or sign language.”

She blushes and nods, hands flickering, ~I’m happy you are back too, Uncle John was sad without you.~

~Hello Madeline,~ his bondmate responses, ~You’ve improved a great deal.~

~It’s been nearly a year, I hope I have.~ she retorts with a small smile.

“Back to going inside,” he suggests again with a smile.

They are barely through the door when the house suddenly falls silent as if something miraculous has occurred. This passes quickly, particularly since they are mostly wolves, and wolves are social creatures. It is his pleasure to watch as person after person comes to greet them, making sure to pay their respects to his mate first and foremost. The youngest of the children that know him all happily clamor to hug and scent his bondmate, their voices rising together in greeting. Not that far away he can feel Mycroft’s shock as he watches the way Sherlock is greeted and returns the greeting.

Eventually he moves to the front of the room where he normally does the announcements from, slowly silence falls again though he can still feel and smell the pleasure, joy, happiness, and relief pouring through the room.

“Hello,” he calls out to the room, catching everyone’s attention, “Yes, I realize you are all excited that my mate is back,” he flashes a smile that many return, “None more so than me, however please allow us to have a calm dinner, followed by a rebonding, after that he can choose what he wishes to share.” His gaze sweeps over the room, settling on several of the different pack members that his mate had rescued that are in the room, “Some of you came to this pack because of his action during the time he was gone and have a better idea than the other. Please remain polite, now let’s enjoy all this wonderful food that all you lovely people have provided.” His announcement is done in his captain’s voice, low but carrying to get his point across.

He spots his cousin and her family seated with his Aunt on the opposite side of the room from Mycroft, Greg, and Eric and decides that’s where they are going to sit. That way his bondmate can speak with his brother if he wants to over the meal.

With his hand, he motions to the table, suggesting, Why don’t we sit with them?
The dark-haired human’s eyes sweep the room, settling on where he is suggesting and nodding, Good idea. Where’s Elspeth?

He quickly scans over the pack members, finding her shielded and hiding in the back corner of the room away from everyone else. There, he answers, motioning to where she is lurking, I think she would be elsewhere right now if she thought she could be.

Ah, his bondmate responds, I am not sure if I should refer to her or not if asked who my companion is.

If asked just say it was a member of the military pack, it’s a well known fact not the entire military pack join the Watson pack. He responds with a shrug as they get food from the buffet.

I didn’t realize, the dark-haired genius remarks, for some reason I thought the ones that were not here were all dead.

He gives a small shake of his head, No, there are several in other packs, even one who became the alpha of his own pack after winning a challenge fight, though he is still pack bonded to the military pack.

Maybe you can tell me about them sometime? His bondmate requests as they head to the table.

He smiles, nodding, I could do that. I still keep in touch with some of them via email from time to time.

As they sit down, he comments, “Hello,” without directing it towards any one person.

Elder, Aidan automatically replies, inclining his head slightly, elder-second.

He sighs, wishing the younger cobra would drop that but knowing it would probably be years before he would. While he is the alpha-elder, he really prefers going by John, or for the younger kids Uncle John. Well, whatever.

Over dinner he speaks with close to everyone at the table for a little bit, keeping his empathy open for his bondmate and brother-in-bond but not speaking with either until they are ready since both are in processing mode. By the time the meal is done both of the Holmes brothers are back with them and ready to deal with what is going on.

Heading back to the front of the room, he glances about, smiling at everyone he can see, even his arsehole cousin-in-bond. His mate is home of course he is going to smile.

“I would like to take this time to welcome Sherlock Holmes back within our fold, reaffirm the bond, and discuss the upcoming Dawn Awakening. Only I do not really have anything to say about it except it will be here and I will be hosting it.” he tells them, causing most to laugh, “Pretty much it will be like every other Holy Day, with events going on here for most of the day prior.”

Motioning to his mate, he waits for the tall human to join him. Smiling at him, he offers his arm, their bondmark visible for the first time since his bondmate’s ‘death’ and beams when he accepts, reforging the link between them on the pack level rather than just their bond.

The members of the pack quickly line up, reaffirming the bond with him and reforging the bond with his mate. Even his cousin and her daughter joins, his cousin’s eyes gleaming darkly as she renews the bond that has weakened over the years and has him reinforce the pack bond that is within her daughter. When they are done with that, after everyone has reaffirmed their bond to himself and his mate, the rest of the meeting is more of a homecoming party for his mate and his cousin.
Afterwards, they bid everyone good night before he returns to his wolf form, kneeling so his mate can get on before they are off, racing back home under the light of the full moon. His world might not be perfect, but it is better than it has been in a long while.

Chapter End Notes

So I have a new publishing schedule, I will update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. No story will be updated twice in the same week.
Sherlock’s POV

The pack meeting goes smoothly. He is almost overwhelmed by how many people greet him and welcome him home. Still it is nice to be welcomed and he has a warm and pleased feeling deep inside himself. When they are done with the meeting he delights in being able to ride on his bondmate’s back as he races them through the city and back to their home.

When they get home he cannot stop himself from cupping his lover’s face between his hands and kissing him deeply just for the pleasure and joy of kissing John again. By the gods he had missed being able to kiss and touch the wolf whenever he wanted.

“We should go in,” his mate murmurs against his lips, “There are far more comfortable spots in the flat.”

He smiles, kissing him again before stepping back.

Quietly the two of them head inside, making sure not to wake up Mrs. Hudson on their way upstairs to their flat. They are barely in the door and he is turning to him again, kissing him long and slowly, allowing all the emotions from the time he was gone pour through him and into his mate.

“John,” he groans between kisses, hands slipping down from his face to his shoulders and further down along the muscles hidden by his bondmate’s shirt.

“Ghnnnnn,” the blonde moans, “Bed?”

“Bed,” he agrees, kissing his mate again and managing to walk them through the flat without running into too much stuff while still kissing his lover.

In the bedroom they take their time undressing each other, kissing, licking, touching every piece of skin as it is uncovered, and making each other moan. Once all both of them are bare they fall into bed together without ever breaking skin contact as they continue to worship each other. It is slow and gentle, nothing about it rushed the way their first night back together was. Afterwards they take a leisurely shower together and collapse together into bed, still wrapped firmly in each other’s arms.

In the morning he wakes up to gentle kisses being scattered across his skin.

“Morning love,” his wolf murmurs, pressing a light nips to his collarbone.
“Mmmmmm, morning, John,” he responds sleepily.

“I need to run some errands today, do you have any plans?” the doctor asks as he sits up.

Stretching, he thinks about it for a minute before answering, “I would like to go to the post office and pick up the letters I wrote you, otherwise cleaning the lab and getting it usable again is about it, maybe go visit Molly at the morgue since she is the only one who does not know I am still alive of our group of people.”

“Would you like some breakfast?” John asks before stating, “I was thinking of making some eggs and sausage with toast.”

“That sounds good,” he responds, thinking of trying to talk his bondmate back into bed with him.

“Not happening love,” his wolf tells him with a smirk, “Some of these errands need to be done in the morning.”

Not wanting to be separated from his lover any sooner than he has to be, he asks, “Could I come with you?”

Smiling, the blonde nods, “You can if you want, I took up helping the homeless network and some of the people will only come around in the early morning.”

He just about beams at his doctor, he never expected him to take care of his people for him. He does that on top of his pack responsibilities? That’s remarkable, simply remarkable, and wonderful.

Standing, he kisses his love before heading over to the closet to pull out one of the suits, happy he can wear them again after not being able to for the last year.

While he is doing that John gets their breakfast ready, and he soon joins him in the kitchen, kissing the back of his wolf’s neck. Settling on the chair, he watches as the blonde moves about, happy he managed to live through everything in order to watch this. Once the food is done, his bondmate puts all the food on one plate but grabs two forks. They take turns feeding each other, though his love eats almost twice the amount he does. His bondmate quickly cleans everything up and they are off.

It is nice to reconnect with his homeless network, several of them had never believed he was truly dead, said he was too canny to die like that. They even tell him about the group created by Anderson trying to figure out how he could have survived, that shocks him greatly, particularly considering the fact he had never gotten along with the other human.

When they are done with the homeless, his mate does some banking and makes arrangements with the clinics to cut back a bit, they are all surprised by the fact he is with John, but none of them say anything. Sarah actually welcomes him home, shaking her head but not commenting past saying hello.

After that they head to the post office to pick up the letters. While they are there he is surprised by a phone call from his elder brother.

“Mycroft?” he questions, wondering what he wants, is something wrong? His brother rarely called him before he went on his hunt except when he needed something work related.

His brother’s voice is smooth, but there is something in it, something he cannot pinpoint over the phone, “Good afternoon Sherlock, I was calling to inquire if you were available around two thirty to meet at the café near my flat? I wish to speak with both you and Aragorn at the same time.”
Why does he want to speak to them at the same time? Probably about the fact he is alive. Not a bad idea actually. Since Ari knows about the shifters and their gods, he will easily understand what happened between him and the Dusk Daughter. “Of course,” he replies before hanging up.

“John, Mycroft wants me to meet at the café near his house,” he tells his bonded once the envelopes are in their hands.

Lifting his head a bit, his lover asks, “Do you want me to go with you?”

He shakes his head, “No, I should talk with my brothers on my own, I’ll ride with you back to the flat if you are done with your errands, and then have the cab take me there.”

Smiling, he mate nods in agreement and the two of them head outside where he quickly flags a cab down. The ride home is quiet, though he holds John’s hand as he stares out of the window.

Just before they pull up to the flat, he states softly, “You can read them if you want, and we can discuss them when I get home.”

Studying him, his doctor answers, “Would it be better for me to wait or to read them?”

He swallows, closing his eyes as he thinks about it. “I don’t know, they are accounts of my travels,” he replies finally.

Smiling reassuringly, the blonde comments, “I’ll wait, we can read them together, have a good lunch with your brothers.”

He nods, squeezing his bondmate’s hand just as the cab pulls to a stop.

After John gets out of the car he gives the address to the café. Upon getting to the café, he pays and goes around to the back Instead of coming through the front door. Slipping through silently and staying just out of line of sight of either brother listening to their conversation. He learns how his brother joined the pack and is even surprised to hear that Mycroft wanted to find him. They were not close, so why had his brother wanted to find him? Perhaps he really did care about him like he used to claim. That is something he will have to think about, maybe even discuss with John.

He comes out of his mind just as his younger brother asks, “Do you know when he will be home?”

Deciding to show himself, he answers, “I already am, got back two days ago.” Quietly he slides into the spot next to his elder brother and across from his younger brother. Both have changed a little in the last year, though he can still see the changes.

He requests, “Hot chocolate with caramel,” when the waitress appears to get their orders.

Curiously, his younger brother inquires, “Are you the reason he requested lunch?”

Smiling, he gives a slight shake of his head, “Since he requested it of me after you, I do not think so, he honestly wishes to improve relationships. Apparently he has grown a bit since joining the pack, understandable, I know I did when I joined.”

Tilting his head and studying him, his younger brother comments, “I went to the pack memorial for you. They are very fond of you.” He shrugs one shoulder, continuing, “It was good to see, particularly after our childhood and everything that happened then.”

Silence falls for a few moments as the three of them consider the shifter world and their lives in general.
“It was very odd when I first joined them,” he finally comments, breaking the silence, “they accepted the fact I was smarter than most and appreciated it.” He glances at his elder brother for a moment, “Coming up against Eric who is smarter was unusual, because I could not recall meeting other geniuses outside our family.”

“I do not remember seeing you,” the politician finally remarks, giving the hacker of their family a searching look.

“I was with Shalen in the back, stayed through the entire thing and was surprised by Mummy’s behavior. She has tried calling me several times since then though I have not answered them yet.” The computer hacker answers, “It was heartbreaking and good all at once.”

“John healed her. Apparently she had a tumor or aneurysm that was pressing on the emotional centers of the brain. She is more like she was prior to your birth now.” His elder brother tells the youngest.

“Ah,” he hums at the same time as Ari before sharing a smile with his younger brother.

“Perhaps I will answer the phone then the next time she calls,” the hacker offers quietly.

Silence falls between the three of them again, but it is not tense or negative.

It is broken up by their lunch showing up, and the three of them eat, taking the time to visit. Wracking his brain, he determines it is the best time he has spent with his brothers in years. Maybe he would be able to connect with them now in a way he has never been able to before. Plus if their mother was different now, well maybe he could at least be friendly with her. He is sure he will have to tell her he is alive, he just doesn’t know how he is going to do that. Maybe John can help him with that.

After lunch he catches a cab back to the flat, finding his reading a book in his chair.

As soon as he walks through the door the wolf sets the book aside and stands, coming over to give him a hug, and then asking, “How was lunch with your brothers?”

“It was surprisingly good, possibly the smoothest time the three of us have ever had. Mycroft made a comment about how you coming into our life changed everything and he’s right, you have, in the best possible way,” he replies as hugs him back.

“How about we go cuddle for a bit, have dinner, and then read those letters?” his mate suggests, voice gentle as he does so.

He nods slowly, hesitant to have his love read the leaders, but knowing it is probably good that it happens sooner than later. “Yes John,” he replies aloud.

Smiling, his mate kisses him gently before leading him to their bedroom, they’ll have a nice cuddle before his mate gets mad at him for some of the stunts he pulled while gone. There are all that he would have not been happy even with him there to heal and protect him, so he will probably be even angrier since he wasn’t there.

“Hey, Sherlock love, whatever is in the letters, it’s okay. You had Elspeth with you, and I know she is damned good at what she does. That means anything that happened while you were tracking had to happen.” His bondmate tells him, cupping his face before they curl up together.

He smiles, nodding and accepting that judgment, they’d weather this just as they have everything else.
Chapter End Notes

Publishing schedule, I will update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Tumblr about my writing JaimiStoryTeller

I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi.
Letters and Thanks

Chapter Notes

I love any sort of reviews, comments, and communication.

Tumblr about my stories: JamiStoryTeller

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV

In his hand was a set of letter, letters written for him by his mate while the younger man was gone. Traveling around the world, Tracking for the Lady of Vengeance. His mate had given him the option as to when to read them and he has decided he will do so with the younger man. It is what’s best. That way his love can get anything not included off his chest as they do so.

Since the flat is in need of cleaning, he decides that will be what he does while waiting for his mate to get home. When he is done with the cleaning he grabs a book and sets to reading it.

His ears perk as his mate gets home. Smiling, he sets his book aside as he walks through the front door. Standing, he walks over to give the taller man a hug and asks, “How was lunch with your brothers?”

“It was surprisingly good, possibly the smoothest time the three of us have ever had. Mycroft made a comment about how you coming into our life changed everything and he’s right, you have, in the best possible way,” the dark-haired genius replies as hugs him back.

“How about we go cuddle for a bit, have dinner, and then read those letters?” he offers, voice gentle as he does so.

Nodding slowly, there is hesitation to his love but he finally agrees, “Yes John.”

Smiling, he kisses his mate gently before leading him to their bedroom, they’ll have a nice cuddle before they start going through the files. While he is sure that there are things he is not going to be happy about within them, he still wants to know what happened. He knows that Elspeth would have done her best to protect him in any way possible, because she had sworn to do just that. The cat’s moral compass might be total skewed but she was true to her word, a fact that is really not a good thing when as her enemy but perfect for her allies.

“Hey, Sherlock love,” he cups his mate’s face between his palms, “whatever is in the letters: it’s okay. You had Elspeth with you, and I know she is damned good at what she does. That means anything that happened while you were tracking had to happen.” He presses their foreheads together for a moment before tugging him gently onto the bed beside him.

His mate smiles and he know Sherlock is finally relaxing again.

Several long minutes are spent with them just curled up together before he finally reaches for the bundle of letters. There are at least thirty of them. Some of the envelops feel like there is more than just letters in them.

“So you want to do these in order or just grab and go?” he asks his bondmate, hands gently rubbing
Sherlock’s shoulders.

“In order,” his love answers, snuggling against him the rest of the way.

“Alright love, in order it is,” he agrees, putting them in order before opening the first.

They spend the several hours curled up together on the bed, reading each in turn. There are only a few times that they pause is for a few brief meals, fetching fresh tea, and loo breaks.

He discovers a variety of little trinkets, some gifts from people he helped, and others that his mate had acquired for him. The first time he comes across is a handmade bracelet made of colorful yarn weaved together. Next is a golden topaz with several different designs for broaches with it. There is a small bag full of colorful handmade semi-precious stones turned into beads. The sun catcher is interesting with what looks to be calligraphy writing on it and a small English inscription on the outer metal ring that states ‘For My love, My Mate’. He chuckles at the small vial of sand from Florida with little sea shells mixed into it. The last is a dream catcher with the symbols for wolves and shifters etched into it. All of them are beautiful, unique in some way, and simply perfect as far as he cares.

When they are done with the letters, he sets everything aside on their night stand before turning to his mate and softly caressing his face before his hands drift downwards and he slowly undresses the genius. He switches to his iota sight to double check each and every spot that was mentioned in the letters as his hands gently stroke over his lovers body. He can see several different instances of healing, with different signatures, but the one that catches his attention the most is the mass healing with a signature so close to his own. It just confirms that his little cousin is a thera, but that is for another time, right now he is concerned with making sure there are no lingering problems, because Sherlock is his mate and he will take care of him.

As he finishes checking his mate for injures, the dark-haired human pounces on him, kissing him long and slow as his clever hands rid him of his clothing. That night their love making is gentle and soft, explorative and caring. There is nothing rushed about it. By the time they both come, bodies pressed close together, they are both gasping in need but unwilling to change the pace when it so full of emotion.

Afterwards he fetches a flannel to clean them up before they curl up together and sleep.

**Elspeth,** he calls out among the pack link when he awakes.

**Sir?** She promptly replies, she feels distracted even though he knows her focus is on him.

*Thank you, for keeping him alive and well cared for,* he tells her seriously before asking, *Do you have a boon?*

*No sir, when he joined our pack I swore to protect him, I am a shifter of my word,* she answers promptly.

He mentally nods, accepting the answer and agreeing that she is a person of her word. She always has been.

*Then I will keep the boon, if you ever find yourself in a situation that you feel is outside the realm of the pack and may desire help with, tell me, I will do everything in my power to assist.* He informs her formally, feeling as the oath takes hold between them.

*As you say alpha,* is all she says in response.
Pleasant evening to you Elspeth, he bids her before cutting the connection since she has never been the type to talk for long or say farewell.

Thank you for allowing Spathi to protect my mate, he thinks, directing his thoughts towards the Dusk Daughter. Sometimes being an elite is a blessing, like when thanking one of the Old Gods.

Now then, time to get up so they can have a proper meal since they skipped some of those yesterday while going through the letters.

Chapter End Notes

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I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi
Chapter Notes

This is for zoofreakpkh, that lovely reviewer who asked ever so nicely for more, repeatedly, much to my little writer's hearts joy.

Also: if you were following the Pack Verse series, you will need to do so again because I accidently deleted the first one and had to put all the stories back in it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sherlock’s POV
He is surprised when both John and him get text messages first thing in the morning, requesting their presence at the pack home, in formal wear.

“John? Do you know what this is about?” he asks as he rolls out of bed and heads to the kitchen where his bondmate is making breakfast.

“No, but Aunt Sandra said we can finish breakfast first, but to be there by ten am,” his love answers, pausing what he is doing to stop and kiss him gently on the lips.

“I’m going to take a quick shower,” he announces after kissing John back.

His wolf bobs his head in understanding and returns to cooking.

Heading into the bedroom, he debates between which outfits to wear, instead he pops his head out of their room and asks, “Will one of my suits work or should I wear the pack formal wear?”

“Whichever you are more comfortable with,” his mate answers, “I’ll be in pack formal wear, but that’s mostly because I only own two suits, one for weddings and one for funerals.”

“Fine,” he responds with a nod, going back in the room, and heading over to the closet. All of his things are still here, clean and smelling like home.

Since he knows he has lost some weight, he digs out one of his older suits from when he first stopped doing drugs and started cleaning his act up. Its dark blue with an indigo shirt.

Heading in the bathroom, he takes a hot shower, enjoying the fact he is able to do so in his own shower, with his supplies, and his towels. Just his home. The shower is great, and when he is done, he quickly dries and dresses, happy to be in one of his suits again.

Breakfast, his mate informs him, their minds brushing against each other for a moment gently, like a butterfly kiss.

“Perfect timing,” he replies aloud, exiting the bathroom and smiling at his wolf.

John kisses him again before setting the plates on the table next to glasses full of orange juice.

“I don’t remember you wearing that suit before,” the blonde comments after a few bites.
Tilting his head to the side with a small shrug, he replies, “You’ve probably never seen me wear it. It’s one of my older suits from when I first detoxed.”

John nods, glancing down and smiling in understanding.

“Do we have plans besides seeing why we are needed at the pack home?” he asks when he finishes his plate.

“Not that I know of,” his bondmate answers, “I don’t work until tomorrow, and it’s only a half day.”

He nods, hands sliding down his suit to make sure it's smooth.

“Cab or run?” John asks as they head downstairs.

“Run,” he answers nearly instantly, one of the things he had missed the most while gone is the feel of John’s powerful wolf form racing through the streets and close together.

They walk for a bit beforeducking into an alley where his wolf changes, dipping down so he can clamor on his back, standing up straight, and shielding before they are off, racing through the city and towards the pack home.

He laughs quietly but happily as he uses his legs to brace himself and enjoys the feel of air rushing around him.

When they get to the pack home, John unshields as he comes to a stop near the front porch. Hopping off his wolf’s back, he glances about, slightly surprised to see Greg’s vehicle, Eric’s motorcycle is parked there as well.

“Ready?” his wolf queries

He nods, straightening his shoulders and smiling at his bondmate.

They head into the house only to be met by Sofia at the door.

She grins at him, tilting her blonde head to the side, “Hello Uncle John, Uncle Sherlock,” she excitedly greets them, “I’m supposed to show you to the library when you get here. You’re here now, so to the library we go.”

He gives her a curious look, studying her to see what is going on, but she either doesn’t know or has been taking lessons in keeping secrets from Mycroft or Eric.

Shrugging, he follows the wolf and jackal through the house to the library where he discovers his brothers, Greg, all three of Greg’s daughters, Aunt Sandra, Eric, Emma and her family, Harry, and Jacob.

“Well then, now that everyone is here, let’s begin,” Aunt Sandra declares with a warm smile, “As the Watson Pack Historian I will record the events for the family books.”

“Well they’re already bonded so I don’t think we need to be completely formal here,” Emma offers, holding a hand palm up.

*Formality is there for a reason, you requested a formal agreement of bonding,* Eric snarks back.

Greg just rubs his neck, his brothers blink in curiosity, and all four girls watch in interest.

Chuckling, Harry comments, “Really? You’re really going to get snarky with each other?” Shaking
her head, the wolf continues, going on to explain, “For those who are wondering what’s going on, when we were kids Emma promised that if John ever found a mate she’d do the traditional agreements to bond that are common for alphas, betas, and nu. Normally done when two packs are merging or ending hostilities, so not really needed for this but,” the wolf shrugs, “here we are.”

There is another brief pause while Harry takes a drink of her tea before she continues, “Jacob and I are here as the betas, even though I really rather him as the beta though there are some wolves in the pack that just have not accepted it yet, and as witness to the ‘negotiations’.”

She motions to each as she lists why they are there, “Aunt Sandra as the recorder in order to add them to the family history and tree. Emma with her family as the rank alpha for John. Eric as eldest shifter for Sherlock, Myc and Ari as blood family, Greg and the girls as the extended family.”

Shrugging, she remarks, “Technically we should have summoned mum and father, but as John is an alpha, they do not have the rank for the negotiations, particularly since mum is foreign born, and father is just a step above being an omega.”

She pauses for a breath, “Now then, an alpha can only be negotiated for by another alpha, an elite parent or grandparent in the family, or a tracker sworn of the same Old God.”

“Harry! Stop ruining the fun,” Emma grumbles with a playful smile. Turning her attention to the cobra, the female elite wolf states, “Eric Jefferson, elite black cobra, nu and Tracker sworn of Shadow, Dusk and Dawn, I am here to offer the formal bonding of John Hamish Watson to Sherlock Holmes.”

“William Sherlock Scott Holmes,” his elder brother comments offhandedly, “If you are supposed to use his full name.”

Emma nods, correcting herself, “William Sherlock Scott Holmes.”

*The offer to discuss the formal bonding is accepted.* Eric answers shortly, arching an eyebrow at her challengingly. *Why should we accept this offer of formal bonding?*

He stares at the pair of them, feeling the amusement from both, though Eric’s is edged with annoyance.

“Well he is an alpha, he’s loyal, stubborn, a healer,” she answers, then playfully frowning offers, “Honest about his faults, such as the fact he is short, temperamental, and sometimes a bit too serious. I’m sure he’s out grown his sleeping around phase by now.”

“You forgot opinionated, that definitely should be on the list somewhere,” Harry pipes in just as playfully.

The expression on John’s face is priceless, it is somewhere between amusement, frustration, and annoyance.

He cocks an eyebrow, getting ready to ask why when Eric answers the unspoken question.

*Until the exchange is begun, he doesn’t get to speak. You can speak as you want since she is petitioning for you to join the pack, not the other way around.* The cobra’s voice is dry as he explains it.

“Oh,” he mutters, considering that rather funny.

*All valid points. That does not answer why we should accept a formal offer to bond.* The cobra
answers smoothly, you have yet to give me valid cause to merge our families permanently.

“Wolves mate for life, high chances that at least one offspring will be an elite, very protective of his family, able to provide a home and well off lifestyle, though,” she playful pauses, tapping a finger on her lips, “He is a bit cheap and simplistic.”

Eric nods, lips twitching slightly in a smirk, All valid as well, turning towards him, the cobra queries, Do you have any questions you would like put forth?

He shakes his head no, a low chuckle escaping his lips.

Turning towards his brothers, Eric inquires, Do either of you have questions before this continues further?

Mycroft shakes his head slowly, “I do not. Gregory, would you suggest any questions?”

Greg tilts his head thoughtfully, “Well, how would you offer children? You’re both men.”

All the wolves except Aunt Sandra tense up before Emma answers, “He will have to be the one to answer that.”

Eric is quiet for a long moment, as if considering how to respond to that, Answer it John.

Nodding, he bondmate does so seriously, “We can adopt, use human surrogacy, or use shifter surrogacy. I will be the doctor taking care of the surrogates, and if done with a shifter, I will be the one to ensure pregnancy.”

Does that satisfy the question? The cobra asks with a tilt of his head.

“Yeah, never heard of it happening among alphas before, normally only lower ranking pack members go with those options.” The detective inspector answers with a nod.

His younger brother studies him closely before asking, “Will the entire pack protect and assist him?”

The alpha female’s voice is fierce as she answers, “Always or I’ll know why.”

His bondmate nods seriously.

“Then I have no other questions,” Ari states, nodding once sharply.

The offer to formally bond is accepted. Now the negotiations of bonding gift between packs. Eric declares, John, what would you offer?

He swivels to look at his mate, wondering what sort of gift they are talking about. It cannot be the bond’s gift from the Old Gods, he already has started developing one of those.

“My abilities as a healer, as a soldier, and as a friend.” His mate’s voice is firm, none of the joking that fills his cousin’s voice. “Emma can do the formal bonding between us, but not until we have had a chance to privately discuss it, so she’ll be coming back for another visit.”

Acceptable. The cobra declares, If that concludes this negotiation. Despite the fact the words are a question, the black-eyed elite does not actually wait for them to agree before turning and leaving. Just as the older man passes him, he notices the shimmering silver eyes.

“Your cobra is no fun,” Emma complains before cheering up, “Time for the negotiation lunch, come on to the dining room.”
As the room clears, he turns to follow the rest, only to have his bondmate catch his arm and hold him back.

“Damn it Emma,” his wolf mutters, before leaning in to kiss him gently, “I had planned on bring the matter up with you after the new years, that way we could settle back into life first.”

He grins, replying, “I was going to ask you about if wolves did formal bonding.” They had briefly discussed the fact there was different types of bonds the previous day while they were going over the letters, but they were going to have a more in-depth conversation about it.

John kisses him again before commenting, “Well lets go eat the lunch, which is the official end of this, technically they weren’t supposed to leave us alone together, and one of your families’ representatives was supposed to stay to make sure I was pressuring you.”

He laughs, motioning to the door and remarking, “Is that why Sofia is hovering just beyond the door?”

“Probably, though I don’t think she qualifies.” His bondmate answers with his own chuckle.

“I do too,” she replies perkily, “Since I am decent telepath, I could easily call for someone to break you up as needed. Now can we go eat? You too can flirt and whatever when we’re done here.”

He laughs even harder, to the point where he has tears gathering in his eyes, “Let’s go before she drags us to the dining room.”

It’s definitely good to be home.

Chapter End Notes

Publishing schedule, I will update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Tumblr about my writing JaimiStoryTeller

I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi
*waves* Hello, hi, season greetings!
So it's been nine months since the last update, it's been a very crazy nine months. I could probably write a section as long as the chapter on everything that's happened. To sum it up Murphy paid me a visit starting in June and just refused to go away. Here's to hoping he's gone come the first! I've been working on pieces of this chapter since my last update. Then last night I sat down with the plan to clean it up and ended up rewriting the entire thing again. Apparently my Sherlock muse decided to come out of hiding just long enough for a chapter *does jig* It probably didn't help that my primary muse right now is Bond, which is how I managed to write Different Paths, a 132 chapter story, in three months as part birthday present and part big bang entry. I'm very proud of it, so if anyone wants to give it a try, I'd appreciate it! Now then, I hope my muse stays out of hiding so I can get some regular updates in on this, though I make no promises because it's been very fickle lately. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Peaceful Yuletide, and pleasant winter season.
Jaimi

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sherlock’s POV
The last twenty-one days have been a bit tiring. He’s euphoric to be home. He’s happy that his time away is done. That John waited for him. Sure, he’d been told repeatedly that wolves only bond once and that is the person they will want, but some reason seeing is believing. People can say things all the time, doesn’t mean that they will actually keep to it.

The hardest part about the entire situation was the fact he was called in front of a judge as part of the being brought to life. He had to attest to why he faked his own death. Thankfully, the judge in question is from a shifter family, so when he explained he made a deal with the Dusk Daughter, he understood immediately.

There was a small new circus but that wasn’t nearly as horrible as he thought it would be. Part of that is the fact Kitty never got to print her vile article. It also helps that the only article that did run was one that spoke of how he helps people, without all the drama a lot of the articles he’s seen have.

His pups are all happy he’s alive.

Although the look Konrad gives him sends a shiver down his spine. It’s something cold and calculating, some would even call the teenage wolf’s expression dangerous. It’s the sort of expression he would expect on Eric’s face, not this wolf pup. Still, nothing is said as they resume their lessons as if nothing ever happened.

Leah studies him thoughtfully, alternating between tapping her pen against her paper absently and jotting quick notes in steno. She doesn’t say anything to him, but he has a feeling she knows more than she is supposed to from the feeling he gets in the pack bond.

Lestrade doesn’t call him for help at all during that three week period, and he finds he misses the calls but he doesn’t ask why he hasn’t been called yet. He’ll ask after the New Year if there still
aren't any cases. Right now he is busy learning about everything he missed, including how the shifters he suggested come here settled into their new pack and home.

He also finds himself slowly reconnecting with his brothers. Though he’s not sure reconnecting is the right word. Connecting might be better. Particularly as he was never very close with either of them, although for very different reasons. It’s rather interesting to see how belonging to the pack has made his older brother slowly unwind. Not totally, because that just wouldn’t be Mycroft, but enough that he isn’t such a cold individual. Seeing Mycroft with Lestrade is interesting too, apparently he will be gaining a brother-in-law in the near future, even if the pair has decided not to talk about it with the rest of the pack or family right now, wanting things to settle down first. The most amazing part is how well Mycroft seems to have taken to being a father and deals with the Lestrade sisters.

The twenty-third is the night of the pack meeting and Dawn Awakening. It’s like so many other pack nights he can remember, and it’s so very different at the same time. He’s not sure how everything feels different and the same, logically he knows things have changed but only in minor ways. Why does it feel like it’s a major change? He’s standing outside, staring at the ring of trees used for ceremonies when Aunt Sandra joins him.

“Being touched by the divine can have a last impression. I have never met a person who wasn’t changed in some way by the contact.” She remarks, staring out with him. “It’s part of why Trackers are considered both the most dangerous members of the clans and the safest.”

He nods slowly. That makes sense. Each and every tracker has been touched by one of the Old Gods. Trackers like Eric with marks from more than one are rare, extremely rare, because the talents each of the gods embraces are different and rarely overlap. So finding someone with those talents doesn’t happen often.

“You’re settling back in well, I can practically feel the difference in you now,” she comments softly, “You were so very unsure of yourself, even if you often pretended otherwise when you first joined our family. Now though, that’s gone and the assurance you present is real. You have a sort of faith in yourself that’s hard won.”

Startled, he glances down at her, catching her gaze and seeing a sort of belief in her eyes that he sees in John most often.

“They’re beginning to gather, if you’re ready,” she states with a warm smile. “That’s what I was originally coming to tell you.”

“Thank you,” he answers, meaning it for everything and not just the last.

She nods in understanding, walking with him to the circle where he meets up with John and the rest of his family.

Family.

Teenage him never would have guessed what sort of life he’d lead. How he’d go from being a pariah for being too intelligent and lacking a brain to mouth filter, to having a home with others who understand and accept him. Have a soulmate, because that’s what John is in human terms, his soulmate. How remarkable is that?

Taking his place, he tries not to think too much, wanting to appreciate the light show that’s about to happen and finds himself being filled with a warmth he has a hard time understanding. It feels like it is coming from every member of the pack. He can feel each person’s hopes and dreams, the very essence of them, connected together for a brief moment tighter than the pack link could ever cause
before everything fades back to normal.

Shaking his head, he smiles at John after, surprised when he realizes that he can see more than John. There are people surrounding them, hundreds of people, maybe even thousands. Their hands lifting as he has seen the shifters do so many times before when the sky lights up, they’re like shadows or impressions of times pasted. As if he is seeing previous generations of the Dawn Awakening. Some he immediately identifies from pictures he’s seen.

One of them, an old woman with sad eyes smiles directly at him warmly, expression not making sense as she whispers, “Thank you.”

He’s not sure if he read her lips or heard it on the wind, but the next thing he knows, all the people are gone, as are the lights that come with the Calling.

How did he see the people in the past like that? He’s rememberancy isn’t that strong, and that was several different Dawn Awakenings at once. He’ll have to ask Aunt Sandra as she seems to be the packs seers person, he doesn’t think anyone else has that as a strong gift. He knows Leah is getting training from Aunt Sandra, but he’s sure that the teenager wouldn’t know.

It’s called the Death Calling, Eric informs him coolly, I see them every time. Not everyone you see is actually a wolf. Any den members family may appear because they are there to support their family member.

He blinks, mind quickly replying all of the people he had seen. Most of them had been related to John, but some of them hadn’t seemed like wolves. There was a little girl who stood so close to the cobra now that he thinks about it, or the olive skinned man who stood with Sandra and her daughter Andrea. Oh.

Only at Dusk and Dawn will they appear. Not during any other celebration as a rule, sometimes a Death Calling will happen during a bonding, when the dead family wishes to be there for it, but it’s rare. The cobra continues. Trackers, thera, and seers can see them, mostly. It’s rare for anyone else.

“Everything alright?” John asks, eyes a bit worried as they look at him.

“Yes,” he answers, “Apparently I have a new gift to think about. Let’s go home.”

His bondmate nods, taking his hand as they walk to the edge of the property where John shifts into his wolf and they take off, racing through the night, together as they should be.

Chapter End Notes

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Christmas

Chapter Summary

Christmas for Sherlock and John

Chapter Notes

*waves* it’s been a while, but I haven’t forgotten this, I just haven’t had a lot of Sherlock muse in recent months. While I don’t have this done, I do have a little over a months worth of updates, so I’m gonna start updating anyways. Hope everyone enjoys, as always, I look forward to any thoughts you lovely folks care to share.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV
Christmas is actually going to be broken into two different familial gatherings. The first is the one with Sherlock’s family for lunch. He knows that his bondmate is not looking forward to that. There are very few fond memories between Sherlock in his family. He’s hoping that that will change now that he’s healed Victoria.

Sherlock, the cabs waiting, he tells his love through their renewed link.

A moment later the dark haired human emerges from their bedroom, fussing with the suit he put on. It takes him a moment to realize that it’s the pack design suit.

Smiling at his love, he grabs Sherlock’s hand and pulls the taller man into a hug.

“It’ll be alright,” he murmurs, pressing a quick kiss against the tall man’s cheek.

Frowning, his love just nods but he’s pretty sure that Sherlock doesn’t believe him.

He picks up the gift bag for the elder Holmes and motions to the door.

The ride there is quiet. He’s pretty sure that Sherlock is considering the last time they had Christmas together. He doesn’t know if it was a positive thing or not, but he’s betting not considering there are very few positive memories between Sherlock and his mum.

It’s five minutes to eleven when they get there, he ends up being the one knocking because Sherlock doesn’t want to and it wouldn’t be polite to just walk in. Everything from Sherlock’s stance to scent is conflicted.

Edwin opens the door, smiling at them warmly and waving them in.

He steps with Sherlock just inside the door enough that it can be shut again but waiting for his bondmate to go further.

“Hullo John, Sherlock,” Greg greets them with a quick smile, and impression of a question on the
pack link that is everything okay?

He nods and tries giving the impression of reassurance through the link.

“Come in,” Edwin greets them warmly, smiling at both of them though his eyes touch on Sherlock and linger as the human continues, “Sherlock, you know you are always welcome here.”

That seems to draw Violet’s attention because one moment she’s speaking with Sofia the next she is on her feet and crossing the distance between them in order to hug Sherlock tightly. “I’m so happy you made it, thank you for coming!” She declares quietly, her voice almost breaks as she continues, “I’ve missed you so much. I’m so sorry for the bad years.”

He smiles softly at the pair, happy to see that the first step towards fixing things seems to be happening. He can smell Sherlock’s confusion and disbelief, but he can also smell the underlying hope. They had discussed the fact she was physically ill and it had changed her mental and emotional responses as a side effect. He understands seeing is believing, so hopefully this will help towards that.

She tugs Sherlock over towards the sofa, pushing him into a seat.

He just follows behind with a smile, deciding to perch on the arm of the sofa next to his bondmate since the rest of it is taken up unless they want to compress themselves like sardines.

A moment later she is heading towards the kitchen in humming to herself.

“She’s a different person than she was while you were growing up,” Edwin remarks with a glance after her, “She’s more like she was before Mycroft’s birth. It’s been an interesting year.”

Out of the corner of his eyes he can see the way both brothers nod once.

There is a fondness in Edwin’s voice as he states firmly, scent sincere, “We are happy you are alive and have come home.”

He rests one hand on his bondmate’s back, rubbing small comforting circles with his thumb on Sherlock’s shoulder. He focuses on his bond with Sherlock to try using his empathy to soothe.

No one says anything for the longest time, according to scent there is a lot of emotion currently being processed. It’s not uncomfortable despite the fact it feels like a knife could be used to cut it.

He has to bite back a chuckle when Sofia breaks the silence by almost demanding, “So you are both uncle and second-parent?” Her eyes narrowing thoughtfully on the man who will legally be her grandfather come spring time.

The question seems to startle Edwin who spend almost a minute staring at the young jackal before slowly replying, “I tried to be there. In whichever role they needed.” He can hear the unspoken it didn’t always work and I failed at times.

Both brothers have a burst of melancholy on their pack links. He expands his empathy, letting it wash over the room rather than maintaining it only in the pack link. Using it as a calming force works better on anger than sadness for him, but it doesn’t stop him from trying.

His bondmate leans into his side, almost as if seeking or drawing comfort from the contact.

He sends more warmth between their link, wanting to make sure that Sherlock knows he is
Again silence fills the room. It’s not awkward, but it’s not peaceful either. It’s reflective, he decides, everyone is thinking about something without wanting to break the peace.

“Hot drinks for everyone!” Violet announces as she comes in the room with a tray full of steaming mugs.

He bites back a snicker as he watches Greg down his previous mug and set it aside as he accepts the new one, murmuring politely, “Thank you.”

That is echoed by the girls who had already finished theirs, and he says it a moment after them just to finish off the round. He’s not surprised that neither brother says something. They rarely say thank you for anything.

Violet nearly beams as she picks up her cup after setting the now empty tray down on the coffee table in the middle, atop a pile of books that seem to take up most of the space.

According to his senses everyone is trying to figure out what to say. It’s almost a nervous energy. Full of poignant silence and easily remembered disappointment and pain with reluctant hope. Apparently adding Violet changes type of silence in the room,

Eventually Edwin breaks the silence by looking at the girls and asking, “Are you looking forward to Christmas?”

“Oh yes!” Sofia exclaims happily, scent changing to satisfaction and pleasure. “Family time!”

Curiously his to-be in-law asks, “What about presents?”

The young jackal shrugs, looking around the room and bouncing in her seat with nervous energy. “Those are good too. But I prefer family time. Particularly peaceful family time.”

Edwin nods, smiling fondly at the young girl.

He knows why she’s nervous, her relationship with her barer’s pack and family has not been good. There has also been some issues with her dad’s family over her sister being Gifted rather than a shifter.

Since he’s not reigning in his senses to more of a human level, he can hear the approach of Sherlock’s youngest brother and partner even before there is a knock at the door. According to the way Sofia’s eyes dart towards the door, so can she. It might be a good idea to teach her how to shield and lessen her senses.

It’s interesting to watch the way the two are greeted by Edwin before Violet gets up to welcome them as well. Shalen easily keeps himself from being touched, the way many immortals do. A lot of them have the ability to see any and everything that has ever happened in a person’s life. So they don’t touch them to avoid that. He also finds it interesting that Aragorn is actually more comfortable with Edwin then his mother, though it’s not surprising considering what he learned in the last year.

Sherlock and Mycroft both greet their younger brother with a nod and a smile, everything said non-verbally with them, using body language to communicate in a way he’s sure they have been for years.

“Sherlock, have you met Ari’s partner Shalen?” Violet queries as she stands up and grabs the drink tray off the table, collecting all of the mugs that have been emptied.

Chare stands up, taking the tray carefully from the elder Holmes as she asks, “Would you like some
help, Mrs. Holmes?”

There is a long moment where no one says nothing, slowly a smile curves the older woman’s lips as she replies, “That would be lovely, dear, but please call my Grandmum Holmes or Grandmum Violet.”

Chare gets the rest of the cups from everyone before carrying it into the kitchen with Violet chattering at her as they do so. He doesn’t actually listen to what is being said, deciding that they should have the privacy of family conversation.

Greg is the one who breaks the silence next, meeting Edwin’s eyes and asking bluntly, “Are you having a good season so far?”

With a glance towards the kitchen door, the elder Holmes replies, “I am. Things are definitely better than they were last year.” Edwin’s eyes fall on Sherlock, warmth and joy filling them.

Silence fills the air for the moment, as if no one knows how to respond to that.

_Do you know Shalen?_ Greg asks him on the pack link during that silence.

_He’s an immortal_, he answers with a wry mental grin. _Beside’s Eric_, he pictures Madeline, _probably one of the best types of person for her to learn from since most immortals are also heavily gifted._

_Really? I’ve never met an immortal before, or I am unaware of it._ The jackal-child replies curiously. He can almost hear the thought process going on, but pushes his telepathy away to give his friend a moment to process.

_There are not a lot of them floating about, most immortals live in the Divine Realms tied to their family line._ He tells Greg even as he says aloud, “You have a nice home.”

“Thank you,” the elder Holmes replies, “We prefer to stay here rather than our small country home since the boys grew up.”

It’s the comfortable sort of quiet following that until Chare and Violet come back in the room with a fresh tray of drinks, some snacks, and little plates to put them on. He’s only mildly curious why she hasn’t been using a teapot, and wonders if she doesn’t have on quite big enough for all of them. After all, there is currently eleven people in the room. He’ll see about getting her one. It’d be a good gift idea and something simple to do.

For some reason, the food seems to break the ice and conversation starts flowing a bit freer among the collective. A lot of the nervous energy in the air vanishes, as does most the scents besides happiness and satisfaction. It’s rather lovely. If he tried, he could listen to the silent conversations as much as he could listen to what’s being said aloud and with sign language, but he figures privacy is a nice thing, he might as well leave it for them.

After the snacks, there is a small gift exchange. He almost feels bad because they only brought something small, but figures it’s probably more than was expected anyways considering the relationship between Sherlock and his parents.

Another hour passes and his bondmate stands up, announcing, “We need to be leaving, we have another appointment to make.”

He’s startled but nods as he rises, “Thank you for the pleasant afternoon,” he tells the elder Holmes’.

“Don’t be a stranger,” Edwin replies with an understanding smile.
Violet gets up to hug Sherlock, “Merry Christmas.” She whispers in his ear, “I’m so happy you’re alive and well.”

They leave the house with quick farewells to everyone else, he shifts, shielding them from sight and kneeling so his bondmate can climb on his back before taking off at a dead run through the city.

With every step, Sherlock seems to loosen up a bit, relief flooding his system. *That didn’t go anything like I expected.* His bondmate seems surprised, relieved and a bit shocked.

**Well, she has changed a bit since the last time you saw her. Side effect of the healing.** He replies, sending warmth through their link.

*Yes,* his love agrees with a drawn out sigh in the link.

He just mentally chuckles.

They fall quiet until they reach the pack house almost an hour later because he takes the longest possible route. Besides, he’s enjoying spending the time with just his mate and racing through the city without having to worry about anything else for the moment. It’s not like they have had a lot of chance to do that lately. He’s been enjoying the reconnecting with his mate. They still need to actually discuss what they want to do for both wedding and bonding, but he figures they can do that after Greg and Mycroft’s is done and out of the way.

When they reach the pack house, he stops next to the porch so his mate can get off his back before turning back into a human.

Sherlock’s long fingered hands cup his face and he finds himself being firmly kissed. Of course he has to kiss back just as fiercely.

“Ready for part two of the holidays?” he whispers against his love’s lips fondly.

“No really,” Sherlock replies kissing him again as a light smattering of snow seems to encircle them. “Now I am.”

He laughs, taking his bondmate’s hand and heading towards the front door.

They are met on the other side by a very excited Mia, “Merry Christmas!”

“Merry Christmas,” he replies, grinning as she takes off towards the kitchen.

_We didn’t bring a gift._ Sherlock suddenly realizes, frowning as he watches the young viper.

He kisses his mate again before closing the door and answering. *Yes we did, our happiness. Just ask Aunt Sandra, it’s her favorite sort of gift. Besides, she’s already arranged presents for all of the minors in the pack.*

There is almost instant relief and amusement from his bondmate.

“Come along boys, you can help set the table,” his aunt states from the door of the kitchen, catching his attention by tapping her foot lightly on the floor first.

“Coming Aunt Sandra,” he responds with a snicker.

He’s not surprised at the fact his parents, sister, sister’s bondmate, and those living in the pack house are here. He’s a little surprised to see all of the singles and pairs here. Including Eric who is almost pouting.
There is a round of good evenings and hellos from everyone.

Setting the table goes quickly with everyone grabbing something. Eric even grabs a few things from cooked and needing to be moved counter.

*I invited them because they are family and do not have family, if that’s alright?* His aunt tells him using their private telepathy link as most settle at the table.

*Of course it’s alright, just a bit of a shock as we didn’t have anyone with us the last time,* he answers, trying for reassuring.

*Well dear, we didn’t have so many last time with no family,* she reminds him, voice gently chiding. *You also skipped Christmas last year.*

*True,* he agrees on both points seriously, forcing himself to relax and smile at her.

Several minutes are spent with Aunt Sandra and Macrae bringing the food into the dining room. He offers to help and is ordered to sit down. That makes him chuckle. Sherlock is speaking with Dominic about something, he doesn’t actually understand because they aren’t speaking in English.

*I’m surprised you are here instead of with Aidan,* he remarks to the cobra who is watching everyone with narrow black eyes.

*Aidan is with Chare and her family for the evening. The jackals and I tend to avoid each other. Mostly because they’re terrified of me.* There is satisfaction in that, as if it is the way they should feel.

He snickers, querying, *How will you deal with them when those two bond?*

*Easily, I’ll be dangerously quiet and they will act like skittish pups. If any of them try making a scene I’ll deal with it before it can interrupt their day.* The cobra replies with a mental shrug.

“I am pleased to see you were not dead as the situation appeared,” Jason states stiffly, looking directly at his bondmate.

“Thank you,” Sherlock replies, uncertainty lacing his scent.

“You are home to stay, yes?” His mum asks curiously, smiling at them. “So you can plan a proper bonding and possibly get around to discussing those children.”

“Bonding first mum, then we’ll talk about what’s next,” he answers with a chuckle. “Promise, we’ll tell you when we know what’s happening.”

“Yes, bonding first, I saw several bondings while I was away, I would like to discuss the traditions of wolves. Emma informed me of many of them and has agreed to provide me with more information through emails.” Sherlock states thoughtfully.

His mum looks like she is considering saying more, but Mia asks, “Are you planning on doing a purely wolf one or are you mixing it up as our den is mixed?”

“We haven’t discussed it yet,” his bondmate replies almost gently. For all Sherlock can be snarly with adult, he does rather well with children.

She nods, a thoughtful expression on her face. “Will Anna be at the bonding?”

He grins, happy to see his little cousin has a friend here, “Yes, as will her parents.”
The small viper looks like she wants to roll her eyes but she doesn’t to his amusement.

“Everyone should eat up, there are presents to be opened in the front sitting room.” His aunt suggest with an almost playful smile, scent happy and content.

“Yes Aunt Sandra,” makes it’s way around the table

When they are done eating, each person takes their dishes to the kitchen, rinses them off, and shoves them in the dishwasher so there is less work for Aunt Sandra to do later since she has hosted the meal. He knows his father didn’t plan on doing so originally, but a word from his mum has Jason following suit.

A little bit later they are all seated in the front sitting room while Macrae carefully hands out the packages from under a colorfully decorated tree. He’s not surprised the children got the largest piles. He is surprised when Sherlock gets the largest pile for the adult. According to scent, so is his bondmate. It’s a very nice surprise however.

After all of the gifts are passed out, opened and photographed, they have sugary treats before just spending some time just visiting with each other. In many ways it reminds him of Christmas three years ago. The first one he had with his bondmate. In many ways it differs from that Christmas.

Overall they have a wonderful time and he can only hope all future Christmases go as smoothly or smoother than this one.

Chapter End Notes

Publishing schedule, I will try & update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Tumblr about my writing JaimiStoryTeller and recently got a twitter to post about drawing & writing @jaimist0

I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi
Sherlock’s POV
The two weeks between Christmas and his birthday are relatively smooth. He still hasn’t been called on a case, which annoys him because he still gets bored easily. On the plus side, Lestrade has brought all the cold cases by so he can look them over. So far most of them have been relatively quick. After solving them, he has his pups solve them, to see which ones can and how they do so. It’s good practice for them and gives him a chance to see what improvements and changes they made while he was gone.

On the sixth of January, he is woken up to John taking his time carefully stripping him out of the pajamas he managed to get into before bed last night.

“Mmmm, morning,” he mumbles, not fully awake and rather comfortable in his bed. It’s been very nice to sleep in his own bed again.

Kissing across his collarbone his bondmate replies, “Good morning love.”

He hums in pleasure as John takes time exploring his chest and upper body. Calloused fingers alternate between gently caresses and firm strokes, tracing along the contours. Playful kisses, light nips, and teasing licks dance across his skin.

Part of him feels he should finish waking up so he can return the favor to his lover. The other part of him prefers to just enjoy the attention. There will be plenty of time for him to return the favor later.

“Happy birthday,” John whispers against his belly button.

Chuckling, he grabs his bondmate, and tugs him upwards so they can spend several minutes just kissing.

_I forgot_, he comments in John’s mind, not wanting to say it aloud because it is almost embarrassing.

“That’s alright, I remembered.” His love promises, scattering kisses across his face.

He moans when the blonde reaches his ear, nibbling his way around it before nosing behind it and following down to the curve where jaw meets neck to apply suction. He’s quite sure there will be a mark there come later.

John takes his teasing him as the blonde slowly makes his way down his body. It’s arousing and sweet in equal measures. By the time his bondmate reaches the top of his pajama bottoms and pants, he is hard and aching.

“Jawn!” he exclaims when his lover mouths at him over the fabric, before curling his fingers over the waistband in order to peel them down slowly, never stopping the teasing, just going from teasing him through both layers to teasing him through the pants only.

“Stop teasing,” he demands but it comes out more of a gasp.

“Are you sure?” John asks almost playfully as his pants are stripped off, exposing his aching cock to the cooler air.
“Yes,” he hisses, fingers curling into the bedding.

When John’s lips close around his tip, he swears his vision becomes blurry, he arches into the contact, and gasps in need.

“Jah-on!” he exclaims breathlessly.

*I’ve got you love,* John promises, taking him deeper in his mouth.

He loses track of time as his bondmate brings him closer and closer to the edge. He gasps and moans, bucks his hips towards that deliciously sinful mouth and arches his back as pleasure rushes through him. He’s not surprised when John’s moist finger works it’s way past the tight muscle of his entrance to tease his prostate and send him over the edge of bliss.

He drifts for a while, just relaxing into their bed.

The next time he’s aware, he can smell fresh coffee, bacon and eggs. Shoving the blankets off his body, he stretches before getting out of bed. He doesn’t bother getting dressed, instead he just wraps a sheet around himself and wanders into the kitchen.

“Breakfast is nearly done,” John tells him, pausing just long enough to kiss him before going back to cooking.

There is more than just the eggs and bacon he could smell in their bedroom. There is also toast, marmalade, sausage links, and biscuits.

He settles on one of the chairs, watching the way John moves around the kitchen, and smiling because he missed the domestic moments like this, even if he’s never going to admit it.

“I figured we could have a nice day here?” his bondmate queries as he makes up the plates to put on the table in for them.

He nods in agreement, thinking there is entirely too much food on his plate when John sets it in front of him.

“Don’t worry, I know you probably won’t eat it all, just eat what you can, and the rest will either be eaten later or gotten rid of.” The wolf states with a smile.

They eat their breakfast in companionable silence, it’s comforting, nice even. Surprisingly he eats pretty much everything on his plate even though he hadn’t intended to. He must have been hungrier than he realized, not surprising considering he often ignores his body’s needs.

When they are done with that, John cleans up while he wanders into the living room and turns the TV on just to play crap TV.

“I’m bored,” he announces half way through the first episode of whatever is playing, he wasn’t even paying attention enough to know that.

“Is there something you’d like to do?” his bondmate asks him softly.

“Something not boring,” he replies almost snidely, feeling frustrated ‘cause he has been getting bored easier than he did when he first got back and just wanted a little bit of time to re-adapt.

John grins at him, “Go get dressed,” the wolf suggests, standing and turning the TV off.

He leaves his sheet right there as he gets off the sofa and heads to their bedroom. What to wear? He
wonders as he looks through the closet at his options. Something comfortable, because he is having a sensitive skin day. So one of his well washed and well tailored suits. A few minutes later, he’s changed and slipping on his shoes.

When he walks out in the living room, John’s already got his shoes and jacket on. He studies the wolf, getting a read for the plan as best as possible, because that would be much more fun than being surprised. They’re going walking, although he’s not exactly sure of where they are walking.

Leaving the flat, they just start walking, occasionally John will make a random turn and change the direction that they are travelling. It gives him a chance to update his mental map of the city, taking in the changes that have occurred during the time he was away. They run into a few shifters, most of which say one of the race based blessings as they pass. Earth to your paws seems to be the most common, but wind to your wings, is the one John replies with a lot more than any of the other phrases. It makes him curious how many winged races there are in the city, and he starts looking for clues regarding shifting species besides the neck marks he memorized from Eric’s file.

He states his observations and deductions. Enjoying the chance to do so without it being a life or death situation.

He’s aware that Elspeth is somewhere nearby, he’s been able to feel her ever since they left the flat. During his time away he got really good at knowing where she is according to his pack link with her even when she’s actually out of sight. It reminds him of the fact he always has a ghost following him to deal with any situations that may come up. It’s something he has mixed feelings about, mostly because he likes his privacy. At least with the shifters he knows that what they see is kept to themselves unless he is in danger, compared to the people his brother used to have watching him.

Somehow or another they end up in front of a large flat complex with John frowning up at it. There is something going on that has attracted his bondmate’s attention.

A burly man with dark curls that looks vaguely familiar comes storming out, marching past them without seeming to notice them. As the man climbs in the car and slams the door he realizes why he’s familiar. Donovan. They’re related, brother, uncle or close cousin.

John’s frown seems to deepen before the blonde shakes his head, “Let’s go.”

Only he doesn’t move, instead he watches his bondmate. Walking away from someone who’s in pain isn’t something the wolf does often. It makes him curious why he’s doing so this time. “Why?”

“Our interference wouldn’t be welcome,” John answers, almost sighing as the words leave him. “I’ll tell Nathan, he’s a Tracker and easier to deal with than Eric.”

“Is a Tracker needed?” One thing he had learned while gone is Trackers can be very handy people for helping to solve issues, but a lot of people don’t like dealing with them because Trackers have final say and do not answer to the clans but the Old God they serve.

His bondmate closes his eyes for a moment and he can almost feel the way the wolf’s empathy expands, something he wouldn’t have noticed before. “Yeah, a Tracker would probably be best.”

Pulling his phone out of his pocket, he finds the contact file for the vipers and sends a quick text off to Nathan’s number.

“There, told him,” he remarks with a nod.

Chuckling, John just smiles at him, “You’ve taken to being an alpha-second rather well. You didn’t have to do that.”
He shrugs, “We’re not friends, but if you think a Tracker is needed, the situation is problematic and should be handled immediately.”

The two of them continue on their path, wandering through more of the city until they end up in the street markets. They get lunch from one of the vendors, finding a spot to settle just long enough to eat before they set to exploring the area. He finds a pair of cufflinks shaped like bees that he’d like but he doesn’t buy them. He does buy a few antique books however, and a decorative plate for Mrs. Hudson’s collection.

When it starts to get dark out, he flags a cab, deciding he doesn’t want to walk back, and John seems to agree with that. The ride back to the flat is comfortable. Today has been one of his better birthdays.

They have just got home when his phone beeps with a message from Lestrade for a case and including the address they need to go with. Perfect.

Chapter End Notes

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Sally’s POV
Her chest hurts and her eyes burn as she collapses on her sofa, her legs no longer supporting her now that she is alone.

She’s always been an omega or packless. That’s just the way things are with jackal packs, humans and jackal-children aren’t welcomed the way shifters are unless their offspring is a jackal. She’s never belonged to either of the packs her family belongs to. Her mum is a Hayes Pack jackal, her dad a Taylor Pack jackal. Both her brothers are shifters and were accepted into the packs, but she was a jackal-child instead and accepted into neither. That’s just the way packs work, humans and shifter-children aren’t wanted.

For the last six months she has been staying away from Anderson and has been dating a jackal-child from the Miller Pack. She thought things were going nicely. Her family approves of her dating a fellow jackal-child rather than a human.

Two nights ago Aaron was found dead.

Tonight her younger brother came to warn her that charges have been levied against her by the Miller Pack. They hold her responsible for Aaron’s death. Neither of her family’s packs are willing to help her. Both have told the Miller pack that she doesn’t have the protection of a pack. That means it’s only a matter of time before they come for her. It’s a death sentence if they decide she’s guilty.

She knows that she can’t work the case, it’d be a conflict of interest, but she also knows that the Miller Pack won’t wait for Detective Inspector Dimmock to finish the investigation. She doesn’t know what to do.

She’s startled by the firm knock at her door. Terrified that they have already decided to come for her. Despite that, she pushes herself to her feet, determined to meet this head on. She refuses to back down without a fight.

Opening the door finds her face to face with a tall blonde whose piercing turquoise eyes have golden rings around them.

He inclines his head the slightest bit, *I have been informed that you have need for a Tracker.* He states as if it is the most natural thing in the world to use telepathy and help a jackal-child.

She just stands there for a long moment as she processes what he said. He’s a Tracker? Why would anyone send a Tracker to help her? They’re the judge, jury, and execution of the shifter world, out ranking alphas and lambdas.

*Explain the entire situation*, the Tracker orders as he steps past her and closes the door behind himself.

Stop stalling and staring, she orders herself angrily. If a Tracker is willing to help her despite the fact she isn’t a shifter, only a jackal-child, then she’s definitely going to accept that help. She refuses to take a false accusation against her laying down.

“Would you like some coffee?” she offers, trying to be polite.
No thank you, the situation? He replies as he leans against the wall and watches her.

She explains it in short to the point sentences, starting with her pack status and going through the entire thing leading up to her brother’s visit.

For a long time he doesn’t say anything, he just stares off into the distance. Finally he nods once slowly, The best way to deal with this is to go directly to the source. Time to go.

He straightens up, turning and opening the door.

It takes her a minute to realize he expects her to follow. She bristles at the directions but knows better than to challenge a Tracker on the hunt, particularly one that is assisting her. So she quickly puts her shoes on and follows him from the flat, shutting the door behind her. She catches up to him as he opens the driver’s door to a plain black car.

It’s odd to be the passenger when most the time she is the driver but she stays quiet as he drives, unerringly seeming to know where he is going. When they stop in front of a large house, the hairs on the back of her neck stand up.

Two men, both of which she identifies as jackals that she had met while with Aaron come up to the car.

“You need-” the one on the left, she’s pretty sure his name is Jared, starts only to cut himself off when he meets the Tracker’s eyes. “Sir.”

The two jackals turn towards the house, but she notices the way the other one -Nick or Mac maybe? - flinches and keeps glancing behind them at the Tracker. They are shown to the door, and Jared tells the woman who opens it something, but she doesn’t catch the words because it is too quiet.

“Right this way please,” she gestures for them to follow.

The blonde’s eyes sweep over everything, it’s uncanny and almost reminds her of the freak or a soldier just back from the war.

She has to stop herself from flinching when they enter a study and she spots the alphas of the Miller Pack.

“How can we be of assistance Tracker?” the alpha asks calmly, not seeming to notice her yet.

The accusations of murder against a member of the clans has been levied but no Tracker has been asked to render judgement, he replies, disdain and disapproval almost dripping from his voice. As the person said charges have been levied against does not belong to a pack, by the old laws, a Tracker is required to render unbiased judgement.

She didn’t know that, she thinks as she watches the way the jackals recoil as if putting space between them will help.

Summon the person who has made the accusations. Now. There is command in that single word that makes her shiver even though it’s not directed at her.

The alpha second pulls out a phone and sends a few messages off before politely inquiring, “Would you like anything to eat or drink while we wait?”

No. The Tracker answers shortly, eyes narrowing
She holds herself still, trying not to fidget or show how nervous she is. Unfortunately she can’t stop the gasp of disbelief when Aaron’s sister Edmonda comes walking in with her mate.

“Alpha, alpha second,” the jackal greets the pair, “You required my presence?”

_I do indeed_, the Tracker responds before the alpha pair has a chance to. _You have levied dire accusations at the jackal-child Sally Donovan, born of the Hayes and Taylor Packs._

She stiffens for a moment before turning towards the blonde and glaring. “Who are you to interfere? That mixed breed is the reason my brother is dead!”

_I am a Tracker_, he replies, his telepathic voice feeling like ice as it grates across her mind. _As such it is my duty and right to judge every case on its own merits as it is put before me by the Old Laws declared by the Sun Lord as the Seeker of Justice._

Edmonda’s legs seem to give out, one minute the jackal is standing, the next she is on her knees before the Tracker.

He says something else, but she doesn’t understand it, it’s not in any language that she knows. A breath later her body feels as if it’s on fire and her knees buckle as well. She blinks through the tears that have filled her eyes, realizing that every single jackal she can see is also on their knees or gripping their head.

_Judgement is passed, the jackal-child Sally Donovan has not committed the crime of murder as she has been accused. None within this pack have committed it._ The Tracker announces as the pain in her head stops and the feeling of fire goes away.

“We understand and accept the judgement of the Tracker in this matter.” The alpha-second states calmly, voice cracking in pain.

Pushing herself back to her feet, she follows behind the Tracker as he leaves without saying anything else. She wonders if he will look into who actually killed Aaron or if he will leave it in the human authorities hands? She doesn’t ask however because she is feeling a bit self-conscious right now, and not in a good way.

The trip back to her flat complex is quiet, she spends all of it thinking about the fact he helped her without demanding a price or judgement.

_I will notify yourself and the Miller Pack when the person responsible has been found and judged_, he informs her coolly.

“Thank you,” she replies sincerely. “I appreciate it. I don’t belong to a pack, never have, but I appreciate it more than words can express.”

He inclines his head momentarily, waiting for her to get out before taking off without speaking another word.

Slowly she walks up to her flat, thinking about everything that has happened today and feeling exhausted. She’s thankful today is her day off, she can lay down for a bit and just process what happened. It also gives her a chance to grieve for the friend that she’s lost.

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Back in Action

John’s POV
He knows the instance that Sherlock is summed to deal with a crime scene. His bondmate’s scent changes. The thrill of the hunt enters the human’s scent. They’ve barely put their things up before it’s time to go.

They catch a cab to the crime scene.

Greg is waiting for them at the edge, a worried frown curving his lips. “There’s something going on. I am fairly certain that this is related to a case Dimmock got three days ago. I just can’t prove it.”

Sherlock doesn’t respond, instead his dark haired bondmate strides in like he owns the place and belongs there. There is a confidence to his love’s movement that wasn’t there in the past. Apparently there are changes in his love he is going to learn about, differences from then and now.

There is a new forensics team, most of the old team has either quit or moved on to other jobs. Only one of them tries to stop Sherlock, not that it actually works. He glares the man into getting out of his way.

A moment later, he hears, This was not done by a human. This was not the killers first kill either.

Concerned, because non-human killers are rare for the police to stumble on, he tips his head at Greg in suggestion and they quickly join his bondmate.

“When it’s a non-human that does the killing, what is the procedure?” Sherlock queries when they reach him.

“I file the paperwork to request a supernatural investigator. That paperwork goes up the chain of command. Someone calls in a lambda or tracker. There haven’t been a lot of cases where it was a known non-human before we’ve tracked them or figured out who it was.” The detective inspector answers, rubbing his neck.

His bondmate tips his head up thoughtfully. “Would we need to call Eric?”

“Nathan would be better. Technically Lestrade is a lambda.” He answers with a shrug.

That catches both of his packmate’s attention. Their eyes narrow on him. Some reason that catches them by surprise.

“Well then, I’ll solve it and then you can arrest them as normal. If for some reason you can’t there are two Trackers in the pack,” his bondmate reasons before whirling back to the scene. Stormy eyes flickering over the scene.

He’s moderately sure Sherlock is also using his ability to see the past. He wonders if that means that he knows who he is hunting.

Greg frowns for a moment, asking on the pack link, There’s two Trackers? I know Eric is one. Who’s the other?

His to-be father-in-law Nathan. He answers as his eyes scan the area, his senses suddenly alerting him to danger even though he can’t actually see it.
Mild mannered viper Nathan? Daria’s mate and Jace’s bondfather? There is shock in the jackal-child’s voice bordering on disbelief.

It’s the reason Kaela is an Arden rather a Miron. He explains, opening up his empathy and telepathy and looking for the danger or the spot where the danger is hiding. It’s unsettling that he’s not finding it. There aren’t a lot of supernatural creatures that can’t be found to his knowledge. Not among the clans anyways. Although there are other supernatural creatures, ones that belong to other pantheons. On the rare occasions they come after someone of the clans, a Tracker is alway deployed to destroy it.

He’ll just have to stay very close to his mate on this one. In case there is something in that category to take care of. After all, his bondmate is human. There are some things he can’t easily handle.

He’s pulled from his thoughts by Sherlock rattling off information before spinning on his heel and taking off. Greg sighs as the dark haired genius strides away without waiting for him. Not that that’s a problem. He’s a wolf, he can move fast when he needs to.

It doesn’t take him long to catch up with his bondmate.

“What are we looking for?” he asks as he falls in step with Sherlock.

“I don’t know, mythology wise, some sort of wolf, but not like you and the others. I’d say a werewolf vampire but that’s insane.” The dark haired human replies with a frown. “The images didn’t make sense.”

He nods slightly, frowning as he focuses on Eric, Is there such a thing as a werewolf vampire?

No, vampire blood kills werewolves and the two species tend to avoid each other, and me. The last is an afterthought but it startles him because he didn’t think there was such a thing as werewolves, though their kind have been called that in the past for the ability to shape change and the moon cycle being important to their faith.

Wait, what? He almost stops walking because that throws him off but quickly catches up with his bondmate.

They don’t belong to our pantheon’s creations. Most are smart enough to stay the fuck away from the clans. There are Tracker groups that’s entire purpose is policing them. Though rare. They all belong to She Who Created Us. The cobra explains, including images of what the other types look like and all the information the Tracker has on them.

He’s not sure he’d call them wolves cause besides a slight canine cast to their features they don’t look anything like a wolf.

Why’d you ask? Eric queries a moment later.

Sherlock said something about vampire werewolves. He answers, replaying the conversation for the Tracker to hear.

Ripping their heart out, beheading them, or burning them is the easiest ways to destroy them. The cobra states matter of factly, as if not talking about killing someone.

Or healing them, he suggests, reminding his friend he’s a healer first.

Laughter fills the bond before it is cut short.
“Did he have any helpful advice?” Sherlock queries with an almost playful smile.

“Some, and hopefully it won’t be needed.” He answers, before querying, “Where are we going?”

“Possibly to the not-wolf’s home,” his bondmate replies with a grin, “What is it?”

“Werewolf, though there is nothing truly wolf about them.” He remarks with a shake of his head. “Most were human originally, then were bit by another one, and it passes on. Humans tend to die, unless they have a non-human somewhere in their family background, then they change.” He shrugs, “At least that’s what Eric implied, and as he’s hunted a few, I trust his intel.”

Sherlock just nods, eyes scanning the area.

He opens his senses up, trying to find the person in that manner, rather than trying to by sight and sound alone. Of course his bondmate figures it out before him.

A moment later they are racing through a back alley and Sherlock is on his way up a fire escape.

He grumbles under his breath as he does a partial shift and almost climbs the walls bouncing between the two buildings on the way up. Seriously, why does his human form have to be short? It can be really inconvenient at times. Thankfully, his hybrid form is not, side effect of his wolf form being taller than he is otherwise.

Landing on the fire escape next to the open window, he doesn’t think twice before following Sherlock inside.

First thing he notices is the scent of blood and decay. The second thing is the man rushing at his bondmate with rather sharp teeth and wild eyes.

Instinct kicks in. One moment he’s John the human and the next he is a wolf. Not like this twisted person, but a full wolf. Technically a dire wolf. He bats the man to the floor with one massive paw, pinning the struggling man to the ground with ease.

He’s not nice or gentle as he locks his empathy onto the pinned creature. As soon as he does, he sinks into his healing talent and changes his sight from predators to healers. It doesn’t take him long to find where the DNA has gotten messed up. A few minutes later he shifts back to his human form as he finishes the job, turning the ‘werewolf’ back into a human and making sure the man doesn’t remember him as a wolf in the process.

He becomes aware of Sherlock standing beside him snickering as his bondmate dials the phone. “Lestrade, we’ve found your killer, he’s safe to pick up.”

His attention returns to the man now lying on the ground staring at him, almost glaring.

“What have you done to me?” it’s demanded almost breathlessly.

Snorting, he answers with a smirk, “Knocked you on your arse.”

“John, Lestrade will be here five minutes. Think you can keep him occupied that long?” His bondmate queries as he studies the room, no doubt figuring out where all the evidence is at.

“Soldier Sherlock,” he reminds his dark haired man almost playfully.

The man tries to get up just to get kicked firmly in the chest, not a full strength kick but enough to knock him back down. Best to do this the safe way.
It’s actually less than five minutes when he comments, “You might want to open the door before they burst in,” because he can hear them approaching.

Sighing dramatically, his bondmate does just that.

Almost as soon as the cops are in the room, Greg at the front, Sherlock starts rattling off facts and details, pointing out the evidence. Two of the others came to collect his captive, giving him a curious glance when compared to the rather large man he had pinned down.

“Dinner?” Sherlock almost demands, eyeing all the police with disdain.

“Sounds good,” he agrees, looking at the human once more he focus is mind on the other man, imbedding the compulsion to be honest with the cops.

They’re gone before anyone can say something else. It’s an old ritual after all, a meal after the case is solved.

He’s sure his bondmate will have something to say about the fact he shifted and attacked before he had a chance to do anything. Apparently he needs to get his instincts under control again. It’s been a long while since he has reacted so close to without control.
Sherlock’s POV
He was mildly surprised by how John had reacted when confronting the suspect. His bondmate had went from human to wolf to hybrid almost faster than he could keep track of. It’s the first time since meeting his bondmate that the wolf had reacted quite like that.

He could feel the air crackling with energy when the blonde’s eyes turned bright in a way he’s only seen when John is healing on the cellular level. Whatever the suspect used to be, he isn’t now. He’s quite sure that the suspect is now fully human and never able to be changed again.

Not long after, Lestrade and the new people show up to arrest the man, search the flat, and demand a statement from them.

Happily, they get out of there before they have to do much more than him rattling off all the details needed for them to find the evidence and charge the man with murder.

“Dinner?” he suggests as he studies the strangers, getting a read on the new cops and finding most of them boringly normal.

“Sounds good,” John hums in agreement, grinning at him.

He ignores the familiar look that is often followed by, ”We need a formal statement from you Sherlock!”

They leave the flat through the front door, rather than going through the window once more. Outside John changes and he climbs on his bondmate’s back before they are off, racing through the city.

Where to? His wolf queries.

Angelo’s, he replies as he quickly considers all the options.

He gets the impression of a nod, rather than words as an answer, as John’s attention goes to where they are and where they need to be.

Trying for helpful, he pulls up his mental map of London, mentally nudging his bondmate so the wolf can pay attention to it.

Thanks love, John responds after a moment, That makes it easier.

He grins, pleased and enjoying the way the wind rushes over him. He’s so happy to be home. For them to be back on the job. Tonight was fun, he got to race through the city as he hunted for the killer.

He was surprised by the fact it was a non-human but not someone from a pack. That makes him wonder what sort of other creatures are out there that aren’t covered by the packs or Gifted. He’ll most likely end up asking Eric about it. That cobra seems to find and store information more than anyone else he’s ever met, including his brother who likes to hoard information for useful reasons. He’s moderately certain that the both have contacts everywhere in the world, and he would be hard pressed to say who has more. A fact he finds intriguing, even if he will never admit that to Mycroft.
Since coming back it seems like almost everyone from his life has changed in some way, shape, or form. His brother and Lestrade are planning to get married on the Spring Equinox. In both the shifter world and the human world. Mycroft currently lives with the Lestrade family, is accepted as a member of the family already, even though nothing is official. It was remarkable watching his brother with the girls. He never would have expected it, probably would have had a hard time believing it if he hadn’t actually seen it.

Before the pack there are a lot of things he never would have expected that have become common since.

_We’re here_, John tells him, breaking his focus.

Jumping off of his bondmate’s back, he smooths out his clothes on habit as the wolf turns back to a human.

“Yes,” he hums in response, “Better than alright.”

He’s barely through the door and Angelo is there, grinning at them. “Sherlock! John! Come in, sit down, your tables ready.”

“Angelo,” he greets the bulky man with a nod.

“Hullo,” John states as the door swings shut behind them.

“Do you menus?” Angelo asks as they settle at their normal table, after fetching a small candle to put it on the table.

“My usual,” he answers, barely glancing over as he does so.

“Surprise me,” the blonde remarks, smiling at Angelo almost fondly.

“Of course!” Angelo exclaims happily, “It’ll be out shortly.”

He’s never been the biggest fan of food, often times stealing stuff off of John’s plate rather than getting a full plate for himself. Before that he’d take the leftovers with him and nibble on them for days.

“What are you thinking about?” His bondmate asks him, meeting his eyes, gray blue eyes curious.

“Just thinking of all the things that have changed since I met you. Again.” He answers with a lazy shrug. “It’s something I have considered on several different occasions. It’s different. Unexpected. Even after we’ve spent so much time together, and even more since I got back.”

John just nods slowly, expression thoughtful.

“I sometimes feel like I was always looking for you, but that’s not logical.” He continues, hands picking up the silverware and fidgeting nervously. “I know your Old Gods are much more active than any of the gods of the humans. I still don’t believe in fate or destiny.” He frowns, brow furrowing thoughtfully. “Well. I used to not believe in. Now I’m not sure. I don’t like that. It’s hard to not believe something I’ve seen. But why me? What makes me different enough to fall into any of their attention enough for fate to say we’re a match? When is it decided? How is it decided?”
He stops when a waiter brings them drinks, waiting until the man is gone before starting again.

“How often do they draw from humans for bondmates? Are bondmates the same thing as soulmate? If so, how do situations like Eric’s occur? Is there a reason why a gay man would have both a male and female bondmate? Are all bondmate’s sexual or are there other types of partners? What about gender? You said there is always a male or female possibility, but what about those who don’t identify that way? Is it based on biology?” Each question is fired off in quick succession, things that he has been curious about for a while, but even more so since meeting all the other species and people while he was a Tracker.

John simply listens, not interrupting as he speaks. He doesn’t know too many people who would just listen. Most get annoyed with him or get huffy when he starts asking so many questions.

“What about packs? Why are there so few mixed packs? Do people turn down their bondmates because they are the wrong species? Do they get new ones if they do that? Why can only a bondmate get a woman pregnant? You’re a theria, could you bypass that?” All are things he has wondered about. “I get why the packs kept themselves hidden in the past but what purpose does it serve now? Wouldn’t it be better to be in the open nowadays?”

He stops when he spots Angelo coming towards them with their plates. John’s is huge compared to his. Not that that’s hard to do.

“Thank you,” the wolf comments absently when the plate is set down.

“Enjoy!” the big man exclaims before querying, “Do you need anything else?”

“No right now,” John replies.

“No,” he answers distractedly, not really paying attention any more.

After the host leaves, they eat in silence for a few minutes.

“I don’t have an answer for most of those questions. I might not be intentionally traditional, but I’m sure there’s things I’m accidently traditional about.” John comments between bites. “I’ve never had a non-bonded shifter ask, so I don’t know. Eric or Aunt Sandra would probably be the best ones to ask about the rest.”

He partly feels as if his bondmate is avoiding the question. At the same time he can feel the sincerity from the wolf on their bond link. It’s nice, being able to feel the bond again. He missed it.

There are more questions, so many more, and he finds himself asking some of them in between bites.

“Does having a mixed pack impact your ranking? If it does, how and why? Do all packs have pack homes? Are they always protected or is that rare?”

John just keeps listening as he eats.

There are a lot of things he wonders about regarding the world he’s found himself in. Now more than before. He’s curious how he never came across another non-human crime that’s been committed by whatever it is they just dealt with. Or has he and he just didn’t realize it? He wasn’t lying when he said that there always seems to be one thing he misses. Could that be influencing his ability? Or has Lestrade just never called him for one in the past? Since apparently supernatural killers get investigated by Trackers.

Perhaps he will make it a point to have a word with both Eric and Aunt Sandra. For now, he’s going to enjoy spending some time with his bondmate, and start ordering his questions into an organized
*waves* hellos folks! So a couple of quick updates:

**A.** July is 007 Fest, and I am participating, so there will be a lot of Bond related stuff posted throughout the month, including daily ficlets & short stories. I love and appreciate all the familiar names I see on that fandom stuff from here.

**B.** My regular stories will still be on the regular schedule, even the Bond related ones.

**C.** I am participating in 4 different big bangs between August to November, there will be a few stories I upload the entire thing at once on.

Anyways, I hope everyone enjoyed and look forward to any comments you lovely people might decide to leave me.
*waves* hello folks, sorry this is late, I was having some internet issues & pain issues yesterday so between the two I spaced. I hope everyone enjoys!

John’s POV

He’s happy that Sherlock enjoyed his birthday. It was a rather full day starting when they had spent time together roaming the city. Following that there was the hunt for the killer and they concluded their night having dinner together afterwards as they laughed and joked about the case. It was so very like their early days together. The biggest difference being that now his bondmate knows about the connection and accepts it. That alone is a wonderful fact.

The rest of January passes in a flurry of cases and work for both of them. There is time with his love and spent with the pack. He’s been learning the new and different traits that his bondmate returned with. It’s quite nice. Sometimes he finds it stressful, but never as stressful as when Sherlock was gone.

They reconnect with the pack. His bondmate with the teenagers he was teaching before leaving, with the new adults Sherlock had sent to their pack, and how the others in the pack had adjusted to an even more mixing. While he strengthened his connections to his packmates, the ones that had started to fray because of his grief. It also gives him a chance to form better bonds with the new members of his pack.

Nathan keeps him updated on the situation Donovan has found herself in. It pisses him off that neither of her birth packs have offered her the protection of the pack simply because she’s not a shifter. It also infuriates him that the pack that levied charges against her didn’t summon a Tracker to deal with the situation. It makes him consider offering her a place just so she knows she would have the protection of the pack. He’s hesitant only because of her relationship with Sherlock — they snap and snarl at each other as if they were jilted lovers.

Still, it is something he will think about and propose to Sherlock later.

There seems to be even more cases in February, as if the criminal classes have decided to come out of hiding as spring approaches. Not only are there the cases from Homicide that DI Lestrade and Dimmock ask for their perspective on, there are also several clan related cases where other packs have requested assistance. Mostly from Sherlock but also from him as a healer while Sherlock finds the person who caused the harm.

For some reason it seems that news of what Sherlock did for the Wilson Nest has spread since his return. That is why they have been called on more since his return by other packs. It’s nerve wracking at times, but it makes him so very proud of his bondmate. Particularly when he can see the way Sherlock is growing as a person and an alpha.

His dark-haired human has adapted and learned a great many things regarding the different clans. The knowledge he gained while away is useful because it gives Sherlock a view of other species and traditions, the differences that may seem ever so small but can have such a massive effect on the clan
it regards. From what he can tell, his bondmate has picked up a great deal of information he never
would have considered himself. Thus Sherlock has picked up many small cues that he missed before
when getting a read on a shifter. He’s even figured out how to tell shifters and gifted apart,
something most can’t do without a keen sense of smell.

He’s proud of Sherlock. For everything.

By the end of February he’s almost wants a vacation because of how hectic things have been for
them. It doesn’t slow down either.

March passes in a blur of preparations for the Holmes-Lestrade wedding. The majority of the pack
are excited that a member of the alpha family is getting formally married, and even more excited for
the bonding ceremony, as it is rare for non-shifters to do one. There were only a few members of the
pack that have actually witnessed a bonding between non-shifters in the past. Beyond that, the
Lestrade family is well loved, and that, too, is a reason for the excitement within the pack.

By the beginning of April, he is almost horrified because if this is what his brother-in-bond’s
wedding preparation is like, how much worse will it be for his own? He’s the actual alpha of the
pack.

He hasn’t had a chance to speak with Sherlock about their public bonding yet. He knows logically
that he should but there just never seems to be the right time. Particularly with all of the shit that
keeps happening in their lives. He’s determined to discuss it with his love after the wedding and
bonding, then they can start planning theirs, he’s just not ready yet. Maybe that’s why they haven’t
had any more discussion on the topic yet. Just thinking about it gives him a headache right now. Not
the bonding to Sherlock, that fills him with joy, but the circus it’s going to end up being.

Still, he has to admit that it is nice to see the pack so involved and happy about the future. It’s
uplifting. His grandmum definitely would have approved of how he is guiding his pack. He’s equally
sure that she would have approved of his choice in bondmate, even though his sire does not, and his
uncle wouldn’t have if he was still alive.

There will hopefully be at least a somewhat calm time after the bonding, he hopes whenever he finds
himself thinking about it. Sometimes they need to just take a nice long breather.
Sherlock’s POV

He’s been focusing on anything but his brother’s upcoming wedding because he doesn’t actually want to consider why he feels jealous that his older brother is getting married before him. He really shouldn’t be jealous. It’s pure foolishness. He’s got nothing to be jealous of. He’s bonded to his wolf. As far as the shifter world cares, they’re already married. That doesn’t stop the jealousy however, the fact that he wants to be publically married and bonded so everyone, shifter or not, knows that they are together in every way.

As the alpha-second he will have a part to play in the bonding. He has to accept it for it to be considered formal within the pack.

As Mycroft’s brother he should be showing support. That’s what the socially accepted rules say. No matter which species a person is referring to. Mostly because supporting family is seen as a very important aspect in society. Supporting friends and pack is considered very important to.

During the first pack gathering of April, Aunt Sandra had taken him aside in order to explain the different types of formal bonds. His role in the ceremony. What he is expected to do before, during and after.

It makes him furious. Why haven’t they discussed doing a formal bonding? He wants to do a formal bonding with John but has no ideas exactly how to approach the topic. He could probably ask Eric, but he doesn’t want to do that either. He can still remember how disappointed John was that he didn’t discuss his plan for dealing with Moriarty with his bondmate. It was never directly said, but it was implied. He hates disappointing John more than he has ever hated disappointing his family. A large part of that is due to the fact he’s always felt like the odd one out in his family.

There are times that he’s startled no one has brought up his emotional turmoil. It makes him wonder if maybe he cares about the pack more than they care about him. Yet that seems wrong somehow. It’s frustrating. So very frustrating that it leaves him wanting to scream. Instead he throws himself into working and teaching the younger shifters.

Another problem he has with the upcoming wedding is the fact the entire family is going to be there. All of them, even the ones who hate him, because they love Mycroft or hope that his older brother will be of assistance to them in some fashion. He doesn’t like that fact. It’s infuriating.

Everything seems to be infuriating right now. All he wants is to know that John is willing to bond with him publically. Is that asking too much? His wolf said they’d discuss it after things settled down but they haven’t settled down and they haven’t discussed it. Not past that day where Emma and Eric faced off to discuss why a formal bonding offer. No one has said anything else on the topic.

Damnit. He doesn’t like feeling like this. As if he is wrong for wanting a formal bonding in front of everyone. The seething, ever present jealousy over the fact his brother gets to be publically claimed when he doesn’t. He wants the twenty-fifth to be done and over with.

Now.

He should see if Eric would be willing to have a hunt. He needs to work off some of this anger.
That’d be an excellent way to do so.

You just want him to confront you on your thoughts, a small voice in the back of his mind that sounds a lot like Mycroft sneering at him haughtily declares.

He wishes he could deny that, but he tries not to lie to himself, even if he lies to others, directly or indirectly.

Why does he have to feel so many damned things? He doesn’t appreciate that in the least. It’s horrid. He doesn’t like feeling jealousy and anger, he doesn’t like to admit the fact he feels both is he is insecure in his position with John. he shouldn’t be, he knows his wolf loves him, but he still is. Particularly now that he has come back from ‘being-dead’ while out tracking down Moriarty’s web and acting as a Tracker for a year. He can’t stop himself from wondering if John wishes he had a different bondmate.

His fingers sink into the hair at his temples as he just about growls in frustration.

Why can’t the wedding just be over already? That’s all he wants. For it to be April twenty-sixth. Well. That and John to discuss their bonding with him.

There was an agreement to bond formally before Christmas. Now why the hell haven’t they discussed it further?

Rather than go for a hunt with Eric he should talk to John. That’s more important right now, even if he doesn’t have the exact words to actually have that talk. It’s definitely what he needs to do. Immediately. Before the wedding.

Even as he thinks it, he knows he won’t say a word until after the wedding. The wedding is less than a week away. He doesn’t want strife between John and him this week. Maybe he should write a long letter to his bondmate so he can tell his wolf all about it without saying a word aloud. That could work. He got rather good at writing letters while he was away. He’s sure he has the supplies around here to do so.

There is no way he is going to allow the fact he is jealous to color his relationship with John or the pack. They’re too important to him. It was the first place he can remember being accepted as is, without anyone trying to change him.

With his mind made up, he goes hunting for the supplies. John’s at one of the clinic’s today, he’s got plenty of time in order to write out the letter, no matter how many drafts it takes to do so. Hopefully getting the words out and on the paper will actually help him calm down. It worked while he was gone, so logic says it should work now. It’s only the fact he knows it doesn’t always work like that which concerns him.

Once he has everything he needs, he settles at the table and sets to writing out the letter. Fighting with his own mind and emotions over the words. It’s harder than he really likes to admit. Stubbornly, he continues until he gets a letter down that he feels covers exactly how he is feeling right now. All of the nitty gritty details that he doesn’t like to express unusually.

By the time John gets home, he feels a lot better and has burned all of the practice pieces since he doesn’t want to risk his wolf seeing the version he really doesn’t appreciate. He’ll hand the letter over and then they can discuss it after John reads it. As for now. Well, he feels a lot better. The seething jealousy and rage are just about gone, or maybe they’re just easier to control now that he has actually taken the time to express himself.
Now it’s just a matter of his bondmate replying, though he doesn’t know if it will be in letter form or in an actual talk. In either way, he’s trying to communicate, that has to count for something.

-oOo-

John’s POV

He’s surprised when he gets home from a relatively short day at a clinic to have Sherlock hand him a folded up set of papers before heading down to the lab without saying a word to him. He takes his coat off and settles in his chair to read the papers, discovering that they are a letter from his bondmate about the fact they have not discussed their bonding and whether they are going to have an actual public one or not.

When he is done, sets the letters aside, heading downstairs to discover Sherlock puttering, rather than actually working on something currently.

“No, love, I don’t want a different bondmate. Yes, we’ll have a public bonding, and if you want a human wedding too, we can do that. I haven’t forgot, things have just been a bit crazy and we haven’t had a lot of time to just sit down and talk. I promise we can take the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh to do that,” he tells his dark haired boffin with a warm smile, hoping that his sincerity can be heard.

Sherlock meets his gaze, studying him for a long moment before nodding slowly, a small smile curling the corners of his lips. “Good.”

“Dinner?” he queries, tipping his head and wrapping an arm around the taller man’s hips as he tugs his bondmate closer.

“Later,” Sherlock hums as he ducks his head down to press their lips together.

Later is definitely a good time for it. Much later.

Chapter End Notes

So I am out of pre-done chapters. Hopefully life will not be too insane and I will get a bit more done on this. Thank you to the wonderful people who leave me reviews as it prompts my muse into continuing to work on this. Have a great one folks!
April 25th

John’s POV

He wakes earlier than is his habit now that he is no longer active duty and doesn’t actually have to work since he quit the clinic a while back. He could justify coming in when he barely cared about anyone since he wanted his mate. He’s been considering opening a clinic for those who belong to the clans, for people like Sergeant Donovan who doesn’t belong to a clan or the gifted who need a healing of the sort their kind rarely can perform. It’s something for later.

Today, however, is all about his brother-in-bond and friend’s wedding.

Rising from bed, he checks the weather outside through the window before gathering his things together for the wedding. It’s a good thing that today is clear. Some would call that a blessing, though he will see this evening at the official bonding weather there will be a real blessing or not.

He’s just getting into the shower when Sherlock decides to join him, letting a blast of cold air in the steaming shower as his bondmate slips in behind him.

“Wedding, reception, free time, pack house to make sure everything is ready, bonding ceremony, pack meeting?” The dark haired genius rattles off, almost nervously.

“Yes,” he agrees before kissing his bondmate.

They spend several minutes kissing and making out in the shower before taking turns washing each other. When they get out of the shower a few minutes later, they quickly dress, both wearing their pack formal wear, rather than a more traditional suit. He’s mildly surprised that Sherlock went that route. He actually expected the dark haired human to use one of his more traditional suits.

Not long after, they’re racing through the city, shielded from sight while his love rides on his back.

When they get to the cathedral where the human side of the wedding is to be held, he finds a private place to stop and change back before they make their way to the front, meeting Greg at the door.

“Ready?” He queries with a grin.

The jackal-child nods once sharply, “I am. Though I’m not sure why Mrs. Holmes decided to separate us before the actual ceremony. He lives with me.”

Shrugging, he offers, “Human custom?”

“It is, generally reserved for the bride, but as you’re both grooms Mummy must have decided that Mycroft gets the bride’s role.” Sherlock remarks as he glances around, the studies Greg for a long moment. “You don’t have pack formal wear?”

The jackal-child freezes, glancing uneasily between them, “I grew up in a jackal pack Sherlock, only shifters or the alpha family non-shifters, had formal pack wear.”

His bondmate looks at him as he asks, “Does that same rule apply to wolf packs?”

He gives a small shake of his head, “No, but it’s not something I really think about. I rarely wear the pack formal wear, and next to never wear my alpha formal wear.”

“You have a different outfit besides that one?” It’s a quiet demand, almost declaring that his
bondmate wants to see it immediately.

“Yeah, but it ignores my rank as a healer, and I find that more important than my status as an elite alpha wolf.” He answers with a lopsided shrug.

“Right, well, let’s get in there so I can stand at the front,” Greg remarks with a shrug of his own, “I don’t remember doing this when I married my ex, but then, we just went to the registry, rather than having a church wedding. After all, our families were pack, they didn’t do church weddings.”

The three of them head inside where Xia just about appears beside them to show them to their places at the front of the room. “This is so exciting! To my understanding, this isn’t exactly a traditional human ceremony but has been adapted.”

Over the next hour everyone files in that is supposed to be here. His instincts as a wolf don’t appreciate exactly how many people are in the building that he doesn’t know, however he pushes the unease aside, watching the way Eric leans against the wall in the shadows, sharp eyes watching as everyone enters. He knows that it’s not just the cobra’s eyes keep track of things. In a crowd like this, telepathy and dark empathy are probably being used to his full advantage.

He identifies everyone that he knows in the crowd, whether they are family, friends, or connections. He’s not surprised to see the entire Holmes clan is here, as is the majority of the Hayes Jackal Pack, all of their pack, even the ones who live in Cardiff are there, though more surprising is his cousin and her close family. Though why that’s surprising he doesn’t know why since he knows she is exceedingly family oriented. That’s what wolves do after all, they support their family.

Finally it’s time to start the wedding, his bondmate stands across from him, instead of walking down the aisle before his brother. He doesn’t pay as much attention to the event as he probably should, but he does pick up on his love’s boredom.

We’re getting a nice civil wedding at the registry with none of this mess, Sherlock declares roughly half way through it. This is exceedingly boring. Why did Mycroft agree to this?

He has to bite back a snort, because he definitely agrees with that assessment. I don’t know. The pack can have fun with the formal bonding instead of this sort of wedding.

The rest of the wedding passes in the same sort of blur as the first part. However they manage to fall in line when it is time to leave as is appropriate. The only part of the wedding he actually catches in exact detail is when Eric pins a man against a wall, eyes flashing amber for a breath in the low light. A moment later two of the security team escort the man away.

At the end of the wedding, they follow Mycroft and Greg out and to several waiting town cars.

The cars take them to the hall where they have made the arrangements for the reception. This part he gets, it’s not much different than what happens within a pack when a bonding is recognized.

He grins as he looks around, taking in all the signs of the pack that he can see, they’re subtle and he is sure a non-shifter would miss them. There is a large buffet of food set up with a wide variety of dishes from across the planet. Many of them are favorites of Greg and Mycroft’s but there are also dishes from the cultures of every single dignitary that is in attendance. There is a table set up for gifts that is nearly overflowing.

There are also plenty of Eric’s touches that he can spot, including the discrete camera system, though he’d bet money that the only people who can access it are the cobras. There’s security in the form of the military pack on guard. They are all placed so no matter where a situation may arise from, they
can quickly respond. Jacob is at the head table with them, which confuses Mrs. Holmes something fiercely according to her expression and scent as he passes her.

He’s not sure what to expect when he’s told it’s time for the best man speeches.

Sherlock rises from seat at his brother’s side, “I can say with all honesty this is not a day I ever expected.”

There is a scattering of laughter throughout the hall, he can see several people nod, and hear a few chuckling.

“Despite my initial doubt about how well Mycroft would do in a relationship, I have to say he adapted to it far better than I have.” Sherlock lifts his wine flute, declaring, “To the Holmes-Lestrade household.”

Everyone joins in the toast before taking a drink.

When his bonded is done giving his toast, he remembers that he’s supposed to give a speech for Greg. Right, he has one, now it’s just a matter of remembering it.

Standing up, his eyes scan over the room as he recalls exactly what he was planning on saying originally, “May their marriage be a long, healthy, and fulfilling one. I am happy to call them my friends and wish them the best of luck, to Greg and Mycroft.”

Again the room completes the toast and he settles back down in his seat.

*Good going John, forgot for a moment you’re in a room with a lot of humans?* Greg queries on the pack link.

*Er, not so much, I just wasn’t sure what else to say, so I went with short and simple,* he answers with a mental shrug.

Amusement races down the link and he knows it’s not actually from Greg.

That seems to be the last of the calm point, after that, there is food, lots and lots of food, talking, compliments, and well wishes. A flurry of activity that takes up the majority of the hours between the wedding reception and the bonding, though not all of them.

When all of the guests that aren’t pack are gone, the pack members start relocating all of the gifts to the two vehicles that Lestrade-Holmes rode in.

“We’re going to spend some time at the house before tonight,” Greg informs him with a tried grin, happiness lacing his scent.

He nods in understanding, it’s definitely been a long day so far. There was more than two-hundred fifty people at the wedding, and nearly triple that at the reception. Tonight at the pack meeting for their official bonding there will be the entire pack there will be close to two-hundred people again from their pack, his cousin’s pack, and the pack Greg was born to but never accepted in.

Not long after that they slip out of the building, he shifts in a private place before Sherlock climbs on his back and he shields them from sight.

*Go home or to the pack home?* He asks his love on their private link

A full minute passes until Sherlock replies, *The pack home. We can see how everything is going and*
I can talk with Aunt Sandra about the differences between this sort of bonding and the sort of bonding that we will eventually do. Besides, that gives you a chance to speak with your cousin to find out when Emma is coming to stay with us.

That's a very good point, he agrees, not having thought about that little but important detail.

He takes off a moment later, racing through the streets with an ease that he sometimes misses. It’s probably a good thing he knows how to make them effectively invisible because he’s sure that otherwise there would be a bit of an uproar about a draft horse sized wolf racing down the streets with a human settled on his back. It takes him roughly the same amount of time running flat out as it would a car to get to the house, the difference being he can head directly there, not needing to stick to the roads once he gets outside of the city limits.

It’s rather freeing.

At the pack home, he alerts the guards on duty that he’s here so they are not startled when he unshields by the house.

“I love that,” his bondmate declares almost breathless, eyes bright with pleasure and love, a bit softer Sherlock tells him, “I love you,” as he returns to human form.

Grinning crookedly, he kisses his human long and gently, filling their private link with affection and joy. I love you.

The front door opens a moment later and Anna is standing there, head tipping slightly to the side as the little wolf sniffs the air. “Momma wanted me to tell you to come in the house. She wants to talk.”

He nods seriously, stepping back and motioning for Sherlock to head in first.

Right then, the wedding is done, the reception is done, now it’s time to talk to his cousin before the pack meeting tonight so they can iron out the arrangements for Anna.

He finds his cousin in the study that his uncle used to use for official business, her mate nowhere in sight, while his bondmate goes to find Aunt Sandra.

“Elite Alpha Petrowski,” he greets her formally, deciding that might be the best way to start, even though the formality will vanish in quick order.

“Elite Alpha Watson,” she replies in the same tone, her lips twitching upwards.

“Right, now that that’s out of the way, do you have plans or do we need to iron them out?” He queries as he settles on the sofa beneath the window.

Chuckling, his cousin joins him on the sofa as she answers, “We’ve mostly got a plan, I just wanted to make sure it’d work for you before we called it good. Formal lessons end June first, so we figured that we’d bring her the day after the Dusk Awakening and then we would come get her the week before Harvest Flame.”

He thinks about it for a moment before slowly nodding, “That’ll work. It gives me almost three months to work with her. I’m sure that she will have the basics down in that time frame.”

She nods with a smile, “Good, and I will plan on repeating it next year. I remember you spent years studying with Grandmum.”

He smiles sadly, stating, “Yes, I spent my summers training with her, while I spent the rest of the
year training with uncle.”

Snorting, Emma comments, “That’s what that was? Sometimes it didn’t feel so much like training as lecturing and acting like neither of us were good enough because we didn’t follow his beliefs. Remember how he used to say we were too much like her?”

“Oh,” he hums thoughtfully, “Particularly me, since I developed the healing gift and she made damned sure that I had full training for it. It annoyed him that I didn’t have the alpha voice until after I went to Iraq.”

“I remember. He used to tell me I’d have to be better than anyone else if I wanted to be taken seriously. I’m not sure why he acted like that.” She remarks with a shrug. “I’m sure it’s not from Grandmum or Grandfather. Both were elite alphas in their own right.”

“Yeah,” he agrees, remembering that their Grandmum had handed over the alpha right to his uncle, Emma’s father when they were children.

They spend a little while not talking, just sitting in quiet companionship before her bondmate comes looking for her.

There is an uneasy nod of recognition between himself and the Russian born alpha wolf, but neither speaks. He’s well aware that he unsettles the other man.

They rise, Emma leaves with her bondmate, probably to discuss Anna, while he heads towards the kitchen to see how everything is going with the planning and preparations. That’s where Sherlock and Aunt Sandra find him a while later.

“Just think,” his aunt comments playfully, “Your official bonding ceremony will have a lot more fanfare than this, but you won’t have to go through a human wedding if you don’t want to.”

He snorts but his bondmate remarks before he gets a chance to, “We are not having a church wedding. Mummy will have to be happy with Mycroft’s.”

Aunt Sandra just smiles, nodding slowly in what he is sure is understanding.

Her attention is soon drawn away as the pack starts arriving, surprising him because he hadn’t realized it is getting close to time.

He greets each person and family as they arrive, and smiles when Trace draws his attention, informing him that Greg’s Hayes Pack family has arrived.

*Bring them to the circle,* he requests as he excuses himself, “I need to go greet the Hayes Pack Lestrades.”

Sherlock glances at him, asking, “I should come with?”

He inclines his head slightly, “It is an action that the alpha-second would assist with, yes.”

Smirking, his bondmate heads towards the door, pausing only briefly to remark, “Come on John.”

His aunt starts chuckling, shaking her head and smiling.

They head outside and to the ring of trees where all the pack religious ceremonies have been held since the founding of this pack.

He’s not surprised to find Eric already there, settled high in a tree for the moment, watching the
people arriving with dark eyes.

Something wrong? He queries of the cobra.

Nothing rest won’t deal with, the nu replies with a mental shrug.

He frowns up at the tree, pretty sure that there is more to this than he knows.

Deal with your new in-laws, I’m fine. Eric suggests, tone bland and hiding all emotion.

When was the last time you attended a bonding? He asks as his stomach drops in dread, he’s got a pretty good idea he isn’t going to like the answer to that question.

Kyden’s, six months before their deaths. The cobra answers shortly, tone deceptively calm.

You don’t have to stay for this, he comments gently, sending warmth through their link. They’d understand if you didn’t stick around.

I need to adjust at some point, no time like the present. I will not disrespect my family, though they are relatively new as my family, by leaving. Eric replies firmly.

He mentally nods, sending another burst of warmth through the line as his attention turns back to the jackals.

“Good evening, Greg and Mycroft should be here shortly, the bonding will occur right after that,” he greets the small group as his own pack slowly starts to fill in the surrounding area. “After the bonding there will be a celebratory dinner, based on past experiences, they may not be altogether aware of the dinner. It depends on whether the bonding is blessed.”

The adults from Greg’s family nods.

He feels the crackle of energy gathering before Shalen and Aragorn appear just outside the ring.

Nice barrier, I thought for a moment it would bounce us out. The immortal comments privately, while his human companion regains his footing.

You are not an immediate threat, Eric remarks, startling the immortal if he’s not mistaken.

His attention is drawn away when Aunt Sandra queries, They’re here, bring them to the ring?

Yes, he answers with a mental nod.

I’ll fetch the gifted woman, the elder cobra informs him just before he vanishes.

Amber was invited to the celebration, considering it was her actions that had started Mycroft down the path of belonging to the pack as an actual member and not just an outlier like the rest of the Holmeses.

Taking his place in the center of the circle, Sherlock stands with his brother and the immortal.

“Greg Lestrade, jackal child son of Hayes jackal Frederic Lestrade and his bondmate human Page Summers, Mycroft Holmes, human child of the humans Siger Holmes and Victoria Mallory, do you come before the Old Gods true to faith, sincere in affection, to declare your intent to bond?”

“I do,” Mycroft states firmly.
“Yes.” Greg agrees simply.

“Do you swear to honor the bond in which you embrace?” He’s trying to remember the words, but this is the least common sort of bonding and he had to look them up last week to refresh his memory. Thankfully his aunt has the book of ceremonies.

“Yes.” They chorus.

“By the Grace of the Old Gods, your bond is recognized by all within the Clans as bonded members of the Watson Wolf Pack.” He proclaims, watching as the sky around them changes color and hearing the way both hiss. He doesn’t actually have to look at them to know what just happened. One of the Old Gods decided that their bond was genuine and they developed the beginning stages of a bondmark.

As the lights fade from the air around them, the moon rising high in the sky, he declares, “The Old Gods have accepted the bonding.”

The entire pack and those who are visiting who understand what that means cheer, they fill the clearing with sounds joy and the scent of happiness.

*Let’s go in to celebrate with the traditional dinner made by our fair pack!* He suggests, using telepathy to be heard over the sounds of happiness.

Greg and Mycroft both look a bit overwhelmed. Not an uncommon feeling when one first develops a bondmark, no matter who it is and why they did so. Chare and Sofia chatter excitedly at them, while Madeline sticks close by as their family makes their way inside.

Most of the pack is long gone when he glances towards where the elder cobra is settled, not having moved from his spot in the tree yet. His form a hybrid of human and cobra.

*Everything alright?* He asks gently, sending warmth along their link.

*It will be.* Eric answers a moment later. *Go in, I’ll be in shortly.*

*Alright,* he agrees, knowing that if the cobra isn’t in shortly, Jace will probably come looking for him.

His first impression when he steps inside the pack home is the fact it is packed. Normally it’s rather full for a wolf pack because they have far more members than most packs, but with all the extra people here, it pushes it well past the full limit.

The air is full of scents. There are more species here than he can ever remember smelling in one place before. So much food that the air is saturated. The hormones and pheromones from the various people are mixed in as well, giving him an easy way to read the moods of the gathering.

Rather than the normal circular tables that are used for most pack meetings, these tables are massive squares, with several pushed close together so the max amount of people can settle at them. Aidan is sitting next to Chare, but he can tell the younger cobra is uneasy. All of the family in attendance is at one table while his visiting family is actually at the next table over with Sherlock and an open space for him. Amber is sitting next to his bondmate, keeping an uneasy eye on the surrounding room.

Everyone else has settled into their normal area, with the groups they normally sit with.

Like always, food is set out in buffet style, with there being a cart full of dishes and silverware at the beginning, a trash can, and cart with buckets full of soapy water at the end and placed carefully by
the doors as well.

Conversation flows freely, though he notices that Greg seems to be a bit zoned, while Mycroft has already started to come out of the zone. Now that’s rather surprising. He hadn’t expected that the purely human would come out of it first. Of course, he knows that the Dusk Daughter has spoken with him in the past, so it’s possible that has helped with his ability to cope quickly.

Eventually, after the dinner and dessert is done, Amber stands up, side stepping to her bosses side to comment, “All the arrangements have been made as requested for the honeymoon.”

“All excellent,” Mycroft hums, the auburn haired man glances at his bonded partner querying, “If you’re ready?”

Greg nods absently, wishing his family goodnight before rising with the human. They leave with plenty of cheers and congratulations filling the air after them.

“You’ve got an excellent pack John, his cousin comments privately, I don’t think I could have ran this pack as well as you are.

I’m sure you would have done great if it was your park. He replies with a burst of warmth for her. He does have a wonderful pack, and a bondmate he loves dearly.

Maybe, but I doubt it, it’s better mixed and I never would have thought to do so myself. She comments with a small shrug.

He nods because he understands why, particularly considering their fathers and their xenophobic manners towards non-wolves.

Tomorrow he’s promised to discuss their bonding, he thinks as he glances at his dark haired love, maybe they can go for next spring. Yes, that’s a year away, but considering their lives, having a little extra time to do the planning might be needed. Of course, they’ll discuss it and come to an agreement. He wants to make sure that his bondmate is alright with whatever plan they agree to, and not just agreeing to agree as he sometimes worries when it comes to their personal life. For tonight, well, they can finish celebrating the bonding of their friend and brother.
Sherlock’s POV

The wedding and bonding went better than expected. Even if it last a nasty taste in his mouth when he realized he was jealous of his older brother.

It’s the middle of the night when they finally get home, and as much as he wants to discuss their wedding and public bonding, he finds his eyelids feeling heavy as they climb the stairs into their flat.

“I want to talk,” he mumbles, “You promised we’d talk about us after.”

He can almost feel the amusement in John’s voice as his bondmate replies, “We’ll discuss it in the morning, for now, let’s get to bed. It’s been a long day.”

Part of him wants to argue against going to bed despite the fact he knows that it’s probably the best choice. So he grudgingly agrees, heading towards their room and stripping off his suit as he goes. He’ll get it dry cleaned later. A few minutes later he collapses on their bed, falling asleep almost as soon as his head hits the pillow.

Waking up hours later, he slowly stretches, arching his back and reaching for the headboard as he opens his eyes. John’s not actually in bed with him, but as the blankets beside him are warm, his bondmate couldn’t have been gone for long.

Rising from the bed, he wraps a sheet around himself as he wanders into the kitchen where he finds his wolf frying up breakfast and making tea.

“Morning love,” John murmurs, turning to catch him by the hip and pull him close for a kiss.

He hums softly, kissing the smaller man back.

“After breakfast we can discuss our future,” the wolf suggests, turning back towards the stove and letting go.

“Good.” He agrees, settling in one of the chairs and watching how the blonde moves around the room. He’s not actually hungry but he knows that there will be no discussion until they’ve both eaten something so he’ll eat part of whatever is put in front of him, and let his bondmate eat the rest.

Breakfast goes quickly, thankfully, and it seems like only a short while later they are sitting in the living room on the sofa. He’s got one of his note books balanced on his knee so he can write out details that may be important plus the answers to questions he wondered about while traveling and meeting the many other packs and dens.

Now where to start? That’s probably a good thing to figure out.

“I don’t want a big public wedding like Mycroft’s.” He announces, deciding that’s a good place to begin with.

Grinning, John nods in agreement, the corner of his eyes crinkling in amusement.

“As we’re already bondmates, will our public bonding be similar or different from theirs?” He
queries, holding his pen ready to write down notes.

“Both. There will be the recognizing of the bond, but there will not be a call for the Old Gods to recognize it, as they have already done so through our bondmarks.” The wolf answers after a moment of thinking it through.

“Who’d do the bonding since you’re the alpha?” He did the bonding for the mouse couple, but he hasn’t seen any bondings between an active alpha couple.

“Eric or Emma,” John replies promptly. “Eric as an elite cobra Tracker, Emma as an elite wolf alpha are both acceptable options.”

Cousin or Nu, he thinks, mulling it over for a bit. Does John have a preference? He’s not sure he’d want Emma to do their bonding, as he doesn’t really know her. At the same time it probably wouldn’t be a wise choice to request that Eric does it, particularly as he didn’t do so well yesterday.

“Preference?” He asks, deciding to leave it as John’s choice. He really doesn’t care who does it as long as at the end of it everyone knows they are bonded.

“Probably Emma, it’s better to have an alpha do it, when possible,” the wolf replies with a shrug. “Do you have a preference?”

“Our bond recognized publically,” he answers bluntly, writing down Emma.

He taps the pen against the paper as he considers when would be a good time for them to do so. Tonight Emma and her family are staying out at the Pack Home. Tomorrow Anna comes to stay with them until the August full moon. That’s a little earlier for drop off than originally planned, but Emma and John had discussed it, since she is already here for the wedding and bonding, she might as well stay for the summer.

“Perhaps we can have her perform the bonding when they come to pick up Anna?” He suggests when he realizes it’s been several minutes since either last spoke.

“We can talk with her tomorrow about that.” John agrees with a sharp nod, “I can’t see why it’d be a problem as we have the formal request done and over with already.”

He smiles, briefly thinking about that odd exchange when he first got back from being away.

“Do you want to have kids?” He blurts out, feeling the skin of his throat and his ears heat up in embarrassment. This was supposed to be about their getting formally married and bonded, not kids.

John’s smile is soft as his bondmate answers, “Yes, if you’d also like to have them. Not because you feel like it’s an obligation but because you actually want one.”

He never expected to be in a long term relationship, so he hadn’t considered children before. Since they’ve started their relationship, he’s only occasionally come back to the questions John’s mum asked him about whether he wants them or not. He’d like to see what their genetic offspring would be like personality wise. He’s quite sure that they’d be intelligent and attractive.

“After we’ve bonded formally, and the summers done, I’d like to come back to it.” He states after putting his thoughts into order.

“Okay,” his bondmate nods.

There are plenty of other things he should probably ask about, that they should discuss, but he can’t
think of them right now. Currently he wants to just sprawl on the sofa and do some thinking.

John gets up a bit later, after they haven’t spoken in several minutes, heading towards the kitchen, so he sprawls out, getting lost in his mind and the information contained within. Time to do some mental house cleaning. His bondmate will understand.

Chapter End Notes

Hey look, another chapter, more progress on the story, I have the next chapter started so there is hope for next week.
Anna’s POV
Her mama told her while she was packing to go to her cousin’s wedding and bonding that she would be staying with her other cousin for the summer. While she was aware that she was going to be staying with cousin John to get training, she hadn’t realized it was going to be quite so soon.

As much as she hates to admit it, she’s on the nervous side. She’s never stayed somewhere without her parents nearby. Her one friend belongs to the pack and lives in the pack compound, same as her. Hopefully she’ll get to keep in touch with Katya. She’d hate if she lost her single friend while getting training for her gifts. Maybe cousin John will let her use the internet with her laptop, so they can email and skype with each other.

Now they are at the Watson Pack Home, which is sort of like the compound at home, but not. It’s the alpha family’s home, not that the alpha lives here. That she doesn’t get. Just like she doesn’t understand why there aren’t houses beside the pack home on the Watson Pack Home.

The bonding wedding and reception were loud and crowded. She was amazed that two non-shifters were Blessed. During the Blessing, she felt like she knew the Old Goddess, as if their name was on the tip of her tongue, like they were an old friend. That’s not right though, it can’t be. She’s just a little kid. She hasn’t even shifted yet. Though her mama is sure she will be an elite just like her parents.

Why did it feel like the Old Goddess was a friend? Maybe she can ask cousin John about it. Maybe he’d know since he’s the one who did the Calling that lead to the Blessing.

It’s rather confusing.

A light tapping draws her attention, making her realize that she has been ignoring the other girl sitting at the table with her.

“Sorry,” she mumbles, ducking her head and blushing. She’s not going to make a good impression like that.

“Whatcha thinking so hard about? The girl queries, head tipping side ways as she’s watched intently for an answer. It takes her a moment to realize that it is said telepathically.

“Old Gods,” she answers, not knowing what else to say.

Nodding, the other girl introduces herself, I’m Mia.

Mia, wait, she met her at Christmas when they visited to drop cousin Sherlock off!

“I know you!” she happily exclaims, thrusting a hand towards Mia as she declares, “I’m Anna.”

The two of them shake, grinning at each other.

“Do you live here full time?” She asks when they let go of each other’s hands.

Nodding, Mia answers, Yeah. This is a nice den home.
“Den?” her eyes narrow as she tries to figure out why the other girl called it a den.

*I’m a viper, our family units are dens,* it’s said matter of factly, like it’s something that everyone knows.

“How do you know mind speech?” Only adults know how to do it, and not even all of the adults can do it.

*I’m a viper,* Mia repeats, frowning as her eyes narrow.

What does being a viper have to do with mind speech? Do all vipers know mind speech? Is it an initiate species talent?

“Anna,” her uncle’s voice draws her attention away from her friend.

Are they friends? She wonders even as she responds, “At the table Uncle Pyotr.”

Less than a minute later he uncle is standing in the doorway. “Your parents wish to speak with you,” he tells her in Russian.

Standing up, she bobs her head, “Yes Uncle.”

She waves at Mia before skipping over to join him. The nervousness she had felt earlier seems to be back. Why do her parents want to talk with her?

She follows her Uncle through the Pack Home, looking around curiously as they walk. She’s been exploring the building since they got here three days ago in the morning, with the exception of when she was at the ceremonies they are here to attend.

“Anna, come sit,” her mama requests as she pats the spot beside her.

Nodding, she happily does so, looking between the adults in the room to see what this is about. Are they leaving now? Has her cousin changed his mind and she’s not staying? Are her parents staying too?

“Anna love, in the morning we’re going to finalize plans with John. You’re going to be staying with him for the summer. Pyotr has requested to stay in London as well, and Aunt Sandra insists he stay here.” Her mama tells her calmly. “We’ll be back at the end of summer, for the Harvest Flame. Your grandfather will be leading the celebration at home.”

She nods slowly, snuggling into her mama’s side.

That seems like a really long time. Why does she have to stay here for so long? What if her cousin doesn’t even like her? He doesn’t know her after all. Exactly how is he going to train her? She’s got the healing gift, but not the normal one. Does he have not the normal healing gift too?

Maybe she will get to make friends here. Would they want to be her friend? She’s met most the pack children, and there is such a huge variety of them. It seems like most the ones her age already know how to shift. She can’t shift. Not without assistance from her mama. Even then she only partly shifts, not a full shift. Will they think she’s not as smart because of that?

“Okay mama,” she mumbled, trying to get closer even though there isn’t a lot of space left between them.

Her dad joins them, taking the spot on the other side of her so she is in the middle.
“Call us whenever you want,” he tells her, voice rough in a way she doesn’t really get.

Why doesn’t her dad sound the way he normally does? Does he not want her to stay here? Does that mean he might come get her before the Harvest Flame? He’s gonna miss her, right? She knows her dad was angry about what her natural talents are. He had felt wrong when she was around him, which just made it all worse. Maybe he doesn’t want her to come home after she spends the summer training with her cousin. Maybe he’d prefer that she just stay here. He wouldn’t think that way. Right?

“Why can’t you stay?” she blurts out, feeling her skin heat up. Why did she have to be like mama and blush so easily?

Her dad hugs her, pressing a kiss to her temple, “Sweetheart, I’m the alpha, I have to go home to run the pack.”

“Then why can’t he just come to our pack?” She demands, twisting her upper body and tipping her head so she can stare at his face.

“Because he’s the alpha of this pack.” Her dad answers smoothly, running a hand through her hair.

Huffing, she straightens out and stares straight ahead. She doesn’t like either of those answers even if she gets them. The alpha has to care for the pack, that’s hard to do when not home. Doesn’t mean she has to like it.

Wait. Cousin John is both a healer and an alpha? She didn’t think that was possible. Maybe if she learns enough about her abilities, her parents will teach her how to be an alpha too. She’d like being the alpha of the pack when she gets older. That’d be cool. She could be the alpha and her bondmate would be alpha second.

“Would you like to go out to eat tonight?” Uncle Pyotr queries, head tipping and a smile curling his lips. “Sort of a farewell until we meet again meal.”

She nods but doesn’t move.

“Alright Annusha, we’ll go out to eat.” Dad agrees with a chuckle.

The four of them stay where they are for a few minutes before finally getting up and heading to their rooms.

There are so many questions she wants to ask but doesn’t know where to begin or even who to ask. Maybe she should ask her mama. Possibly her uncle. She doesn’t know about her dad, it really depends on how he would react to them. Which means she isn’t asking and risking his displeasure. She doesn’t like it when he’s mad at her. It makes her ache.

Shoving those thoughts away, she decides to try focusing on the last evening with her parents until the Harvest Flame.

Chapter End Notes

Hey look, another update. I am on a roll with three updates in three weeks, plus I got next weeks ready already. Thank you to all the wonderful people still around as I work on getting this done. Comments are greatly appreciated
Sherlock’s POV

If someone was to ask what he is feeling about the fact they are going to have a child living with them for the next four months, he would brush it off and give a not-answer. In truth he is somewhere between excited, terrified and frustrated.

He understands why John has to be the one to do the training. It’s the same reason John has been working with Jace. Their variety of healing works differently than the other healers in the pack. Both the body and mind healers, as John combines both types of talent.

What he’s unsure about is have a child live with them. He does fine with the teenagers that work with him in the lab and deduction at crime scenes. But Anna isn’t that old. What if she doesn’t understand or wants to avoid them? What if having her around means John stops going with him on hunts for criminals?

It’s one of the same problems he has with them having a child. A small human that they’re be responsible for. Can he even care for one? He has a hard enough time caring for himself sometimes.

“Whatcha thinking so hard about?” John murmurs, kissing his shoulder.

Stretching, he opens his eyes and looks around their room as he replies, “Anna.”

He could probably say so much more, but he’s sure his bondmate understands.

“You’ll do great. You already do an amazing job with pack pups. I don’t think it will be any different with Anna,” his wolf states, kissing along his shoulder and up his neck, lips coming to rest just against the point beneath his ear. Hot breath fanning over his skin.

He smirks, rolling so they are face to face and kissing John hard. They have time before they are due at the pack house.

Two hours later he’s getting dressed after a rather pleasant morning and a fun shower to follow. It’s time to head to the pack home in order to speak with Emma and her bondmate.

The plan is to ask her to be the one who performs their public bonding come fall.

Rather than run there, with him riding on the back of his bondmate’s wolf form, they hail a cab. That way it will be easier to bring Anna back with them. Jorry is perfectly fine with waiting on the property for them to be ready to go. That’s one of the advantages to the arrangements that they have with the mouse and crow taxi drivers. There is pretty much always a readily available ride that has no issues waiting as they know they will get paid and a bit of a tip as well.

He’s no sooner stepped onto the porch when the front door opens, Aunt Sandra is standing there with a small smile playing at the edge of her lips.

“They’re in the back lounge, I believe Anna is in the playroom with Mia.” She informs them as she motions them in. “Pyotr will be staying here, though he is rather uncomfortable with that detail.”
John nods, head tipping to the side and a crooked smile curving the corners of his lips.

You expected that, didn’t you? He queries as they walk into the house, closing the door behind them.

Of course. Pyotr is Anna’s protector, much like Eric is mine. I think Eric would rip him to literal shreds if he didn’t take that responsibility seriously. His bondmate replies with a mental shrug. Just as Konrad is Jace’s. Although Jace and Konrad probably have the best relationship of the three of us with our respective protector. There will come a time where Pyotr will discover part of being a protector is taking orders when it comes to dealing with a healing situation he won’t like and will probably have a problem doing since she is his niece.

Why is Jace and Konrad’s more healthy than yours and Eric’s? That doesn’t seem right, he’s seen how well the two of them work together.

Eric’s dark empathy conflicts with my empathy, most the time we work around that easy enough but sometimes, it’s a problem. Past that, a cobra’s view on the protector bond is a hell of a lot different than pretty much any other species. John mentally shakes his head.

That makes sense, he thinks as they open the door to the lounge, spotting the three waiting adults on the other side of the door.

“Good morning Emma, Alexei, Pyotr.” His bondmate greets the trio, hugging his cousin when she rises from her seat.

“John, Sherlock,” the other alpha replies gruffly.

“Is there anything in particular I need to know about Anna before she comes back to the flat with us?” John asks as the three of them sit down.

Emma is back between her bondmate and brother-in-law, brother-in-bond? He’ll have to ask which is the correct word choice later.

Him and John take seats in the armchairs, turning them towards the sofa so all five can see each other.

There is silence while the three adults consider the question and figure out what to say.

He takes that time to study them, getting a read on what their mental placement is based on body language and details that he both sees and observes.

Emma is perfectly fine with leaving her daughter in their custody for the time being. She’s not worried about how things will go. At least not with Anna. He’s moderately certain she’s more worried about Pyotr and Alexei if her expression is anything to go by. The way her eyes keep flickering over the other two wolves. How she holds herself almost completely still, like a predator sizing up prey between them.

Alexei is still not happy that his daughter is a thera. He’d rather her be anything but a thera. How is she going to be an alpha as a thera? He doesn’t trust John. If John was a threat to the Petrowski pack there would probably be an alpha challenge going on.

Pyotr is worried that he won’t be a good enough protector. After all, he kept getting denied the right to be a tracker, maybe he wouldn’t be a good protector. Well that will get trained out of him soon enough, probably by Eric in his short tempered manner.

Wait, he’s getting more details than just body posture and observations have ever given him. It takes
him a moment to realize that his rememberancy is affecting his ability to observe. That’s an interesting twist on the ability he has been slowly working on improving his control over.

“She can’t full shift, only partial and only with help. Making friends is not something she’s good at, despite the fact she wishes she was. She’s got one friend back home, and I think she plans to keep in touch via email as long as that’s not a problem.” Emma answers slowly. “She has her own laptop and a mobile for emergencies.”

“She can’t use telepathy?” He asks, confused as close to every pup in their pack over the age of five is able to use telepathy to communicate. Truthfully speaking, some of the pups under five can use it too, though not as clearly.

“No. Why would she?” Alexei practically demands, glaring at him.

Lifting his head so he is staring down his nose at the alpha wolf, he retorts smoothly, “Nearly every pup in our pack can use it. From the smallest babes such as Kaela and Speranza to the adults can use the pack bond telepathy without difficulties. Even most of the shifter children can.”

By the way Alexei pulls back, he’s startled by that announcement.

Emma ignores the exchange. “She’s currently got two weeks worth of clothes, they should fit her through the summer as she hasn’t been doing a lot of growing. They can be washed in a washer and dryer without any problems.”

“That’s good to know.” John chuckles and nods. “She’ll probably find herself drawn into the playing and practices by the other pups. There are different types of lessons added through the summer that any pack child is welcome to join, and while she’ll be mostly working on controlling her abilities, playing and learning with others will actually help.”

Laughing, Emma shakes her head. “You are doing some of the things grandmum and Aunt Sandra used to suggest.”

“Yeah, with our mixed pack, I find it a bit more useful for bond strengthening if the pack has activities outside of the holidays to do. It gives the pups a chance to spend time together without the parents having to stress over where the pups are and with who.” His bondmate explains with a shrug.

“I teach a chemistry and deduction lessons when not working a case. Some of the older pups, the ones that are nearly adults, work cases with me occasionally.” He pipes in with a pleased smile. He’s proud of his group of pups.

“What cases?” Alexei demands, eyes narrowing on him.

“Murder cases, robberies, kidnappings, whatever case I am called in on while they are having their lessons.” He answers with a shrug. Anna will probably end up going with them for a few cases. He doesn’t see the problem.

The other alpha opens his mouth, looking like he is going to say something, but a withering look from Emma stops him cold.

“Just make sure my baby doesn’t get hurt,” she orders him as her focus shifts back to them.

“Of course,” he agrees with a sharp nod. It really goes without saying. Emma is not the one he would be worried about if things went wrong. That would be more of Aunt Sandra or Eric. Those two can be terrifying when they want to be.
“Right then, all the arrangements seem to be in place. Is there anything else we need to discuss before we head to the airport?” Emma queries, glancing between them.

“We would like you to perform the public bonding ceremony when you come back for Anna,” John states, watching his cousin closely.

She practically beams as she agrees, “Of course! We’re family, that’s what families do.”

Silence falls between them, seeming to drag on as they sit there not speaking.

Glancing at her phone, Emma announces, “Right then, we need to get our things and head call for a cab to return to the airport. I’ll email you later and we can hash out the details.”

Nodding, John and the other stand up, which prompts him to stand up.

“I’ll have Jorry call for a second cab.” His bondmate comments.

“Thanks,” she replies with an affectionate smile, head tipping as she queries, “Who’s Jorry?”

“He’s one of the crow drivers that we have arrangements with,” he responds before his bondmate can.

She nods in understanding.

He watches as the wolves leave. So it’s time to head home and take Anna with them. As much as he loves cases, he hopes there isn’t one for a day or two while she settles in with them. He’s curious if John’s method of teaching her will be the same as how he teaches Jace.

No matter, he’ll see over the next few weeks.

Chapter End Notes

I’m on a roll, here's a 4th update and I got most of next weeks done. The goal is to have this done by Christmas, even if not totally posted by then. Thanks for any comments or kudos.
John’s POV

It’s not hard to tell that Anna is rather uncomfortable. He’s currently out of her head, so he doesn’t know the exact why. He suspects it’s due to being here in London with his pack, rather than her home in Russia with her birth pack.

His cousin and her bondmate left yesterday afternoon.

He had suggested they stay for dinner at the Pack Home through his private connection to Sherlock, something his human had readily agreed with. So they stayed for a few more hours. It gave him a chance to speak with Pyotr, Anna a chance to spend time with Mia, and Sherlock a chance to look through the library some more.

After dinner they had called for a cab since they had told Jorry to go when they ended up staying at the Pack Home longer than expected.

It ended up being a different crow, Sari, who fetched them. She hadn’t come onto the property until she knew she wasn’t going to be attacked for intruding on wolf territory because she was wary. Completely understandable considering some wolf packs get to be too territorial at times.

The trip to the flat was a bit quiet. Anna stared out the window, watching with sad eyes as they went. She had seemed almost relieved when he showed her to his old room, and had promptly shut the door behind her. Staying in there on her own for the rest of the evening.

This morning he had fetched her from the room when breakfast was done and she hadn’t come down when he called up.

Now she’s perched by the window, looking outside.

Well then, how to get her attention?

“Have you started any training yet?” He queries as he walks towards her carrying a mug of hot cocoa.

Glancing at him, his young cousin mutters, “No, nothing the healer told me made sense, and I was frustrating her by not understanding.”

He hands her the cocoa, replying, “That’s because our abilities work differently from an iota’s.”

Staring at her mug, eyes drawn close together and brow furrowed, she grumbles, “I wish it didn’t.”

He settles at the computer desk as he agrees, “I wished that a lot growing up, particularly as I was repeatedly instructed to keep my abilities hidden. I couldn’t let my father or uncle know I wasn’t just an iota as grandmum trained me.”

Anna blinks at him, head tipping to the side the way he can remember Emma’s doing when she was working through a train of thought when they were growing up.

He just waits to see what she is thinking, rather than saying anything else.
“When did you start?” She eventually asks, eyes darting between him and the mug.

“I think it was right before or right after my seventh birthday, I accidently fixed a broken bone, and she decided it’d be best if I got the appropriate training.” He answers with a wistful smile.

Nodding Anna returns to looking out the window, though if her expression is anything to go by, she isn’t actually looking out it.

Right, he’ll give her however much time she needs to process, they have all summer for her to learn control.

OoOoOoOo

Sherlock’s POV

He feels a bit uneasy with the way Anna is staring blankly out the window when he comes upstairs from his lab. Is that how people feel when he gets lost in his head? He wonders as he snags the empty mugs and carries them into the kitchen.

He should make some tea or something.

Is she alright? He asks his bondmate privately.

She will be. It takes time to process the differences between being an iota and thera. Particularly since her father is still against the idea of her being a thera and she could both hear it and feel it, a rather nasty side effect of our gift. John replies with a mental sigh and shrug.

He nods, wondering if there is anything he can do to help her adapt. Probably not. He’s well aware how hard accepting being different can be. How much it can cut having family treat talents and abilities as wrong in some manner.

John joins him in the kitchen, hugging him from behind. I like how you turned out. You’re perfect as is.

He snorts, biting back a chuckle and smiling fondly at the wolf’s hands.

“What? What’s funny?” Anna nearly demands from the door of the kitchen, eyes darting between them. “I can’t hear you the way I do most people.”

“That’s because we were on the private link between mates,” John answers before he has a chance to, letting go and turning towards their current ward.

“Oh,” she mumbles, “There’s different types of links?”

“Yes, pack link, bond link, soul link, and partial link,” his bondmate explains as he motions towards the chairs, continuing to speak as they settle. “Pack link works for everyone within a pack. It’s more noticeable for healers and alphas, as healers use it to make sure the pack stays healthy, and alphas make sure there isn’t discord among the pack. Bond links can be familial, friendship, or enemy-force bond. Familial is anyone of blood relation, bonded through acceptance as family, or raised together. Friendship links are pretty self explanatory, it forms between good friends. Enemy-forced bonds are rare, but used by Trackers to stop feuds.”

He phases the words out eventually, hearing them but thinking of the mouse situation he ran into while gone.
Apparently Anna is not going to be the only one to learn about things during the upcoming weeks and months. There’s nothing wrong with that. He’s always wanted to learn more, there is only so much Mouse can teach him, this will give him a chance to get a different perspective while learning.

Soul links, he muses, like the soulmate bond or the protector’s bond if he’s not mistaken. He’s got a feeling that Eric probably knows a lot on the topic of bonds. Is John going to enlist the cobra’s assistance in the lessons? That’d make sense, considering the cobra knows far more than most realize.

Closing his eyes, he mentally shakes his head before returning to paying attention to the lesson on bonds and links. Paying close attention and assigning names to the different bonds he knows about. He’ll check with John later to see how accurate he is in the assignment of them.

Chapter End Notes

Publishing schedule, I will try & update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Tumblr about my writing [JaimiStoryTeller](https://jaimist0.tumblr.com) and twitter to post about drawing & writing @jaimist0

I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi

I posted this a little early, just so I don’t forget. I will also be doing a Inktober Writing Prompts story for my Moments in Another Life verse for those who also read Bond related stuff, and will be attempting to post a story each day.
Discussing Hunting

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

John’s POV

It’s two days after Anna’s first night in their flat that a case comes up. They had just finished with dinner when Sherlock’s phone chimes, the ring tone set for Greg. That means that there’s a case. Otherwise he would have been the one to get the text message.

“What sort of case Sherlock?” He queries, glancing between his bondmate and cousin.

“Robbery, possible murder, the bodies missing.” His dark haired human replies excitedly.

“Do you want to see a crime scene Anna?” he asks her, meeting her gaze.

She shakes her head violently, darting upstairs without speaking.

“I’m going to stay here,” he tells his bondmate.

For a moment he thinks that Sherlock is going to argue with him or pout, instead his bondmate nods once sharply. “I’ll take whichever bird is outside with me.”

Chuckling, he simply smiles.

A moment later his human is gone, leaving in a swirl of coat as he heads out the door and to the landing. He doesn’t actually have to worry about his love, he knows that the protector on duty will keep track of them. Which one is on duty?

He opens the pack bond up, checking to see who it is and chuckling against when he realizes it’s not one of the birds, it’s Elspeth. Excellent, she’ll definitely take make sure that he remains safe.

Since he is not going with Sherlock, and Anna is upstairs, he sets to cleaning the kitchen. Might as well be productive for a bit. He keeps his shields down so he can keep track of his cousin. This might be a bit too much for her. He wouldn’t be surprised, after all, as a kid he hated change and didn’t do well when there was too much going on. Particularly involving people and emotions, his empathy caused problems and he’s betting that is why it’s a bit too much currently.

He’s nearly got the kitchen done when he hears the upstairs door open.

Smiling, he keeps working on his task, considering how to work with her on shielding her empathy.

“He felt,” she pauses, voice trembling as she comments, “excited.”

He nods, motioning to the chair and setting to heat a pot of water, that way he can make cocoa for her and tea for himself. “Go on.”

Anna stares at him, studying him and sizing him up before she slowly asks, “Does he always feel like that when there is a crime? Why would he be excited? Is he not a good person?” By the time she is done, it’s a jumble or rushed words as if she felt she had to get them out before she lost her nerve.

He processes her words, paying attention to the question and the feeling behind each. “He likes being able to solve crimes. Before I met him, most folks didn’t actually care what happened to him, if
he was alright or not. They only wanted him around for what he could do: see and understand motivation without the gift of telepathy or empathy.”

Blinking, she frowns at him, worrying her lower lip the exact same way her mum used to when they were kids.

While she thinks about it, he makes a mug of hot cocoa, setting the steaming mug on the table before her then making himself a cup of tea and joining her.

“How?” She eventually asks, fingers tapping nervously on the table and her mug.

“By paying attention to detail. It’s not much different than using scent to identify mood and whatnot.” He replies with a shrug. “I don’t notice the little things that he sees in order to do so. He’s mostly right, though there are times he messes up when looking at someone from the Clans.”

Anna seems to think about it as she sips her cocoa, her brow pulled tight and furrowed.

He’s making it a point to stay out of her head, giving her at least a little bit of privacy.

“Why do you go with him?” she eventually asks as she sets the mug down empty.

He smiles wistfully, “I like the hunt.” Shrugging, he wonders how to elaborate it in a way she’d get. “He’s my bondmate, I like to protect and encourage him. I’m a wolf, hunting is part of our nature.”

She blinks at him, head tipping and worrying her lip again.

It’s probably a good thing that she has an elites healing, he thinks as he watches her teeth sink into the soft skin.

“Is it,” she hesitates, “safe?”

Instinctively he understands she doesn’t just mean from the criminal. Most wolf packs, particularly those who live in pack compounds don’t encourage mingling with humans. They foster the idea that humans are unsafe and should not be trusted unless they are pack. It was one of the few things his uncle didn’t do. Of course, his uncle had thought humans beneath him, and only shifters worth anything.

“Hunting a criminal can be dangerous.” He cautions her, “However, there is always a pack guardian nearby, and we’re wolves, that to gives us an advantage over humans who do not have the keen senses.”

She nods, tipping her head and looking thoughtful. “Wolves hunt,” she states slowly, “Like we hunt. Well, adults who can shift, non-shifters aren’t welcome on hunts.”

It takes him a minute to understand what she means. “None of us hunt like that, but we have several lambda in the pack that hunt criminals, and a few more in training. Along with several Trackers.”

Again she nods, “A different sort of hunt then.”

“Exactly, a different sort of hunt.” He agrees, standing to heat some more water. Sometimes he wishes he had Eric’s ability to just do so by thought but he really doesn’t want any other gifts. The ones he has are more than enough.

“Do you think,” she ducks her head, staring at her fingers tapping rapidly on the table, “Do you think he’d mind us hunting with him even though we’re late?” It comes out in a rush of words, one
Grinning, he hums, “He’d love it, but you really don’t have to, there will be other hunts.”

She worries her lip again, brow furrowing as she thinks it through.

“Okay,” she mumbles, brightening up as she suddenly asks, “Do pups in your pack actually know how to shift on their own?”

He bites back a chuckle as he replies, “Those who wish to learn, yes.”

Bouncing in her seat, she queries, “Can I learn?”

This time he does chuckle, because he was expecting that. “Yeah, just let me call a cab and we’ll go to the Pack Home.”

“Why the Pack Home?” She blinks at him, head tipping as she continues bouncing in place.

“It’s better to do so somewhere with space for elites, and you’ll be an elite,” he explains with a smile before fetching his phone. Right then, so today’s lessons are apparently going to be on hunting and shifting. He should probably make a list of everything she’s going to need to learn and how to teach her. Not that he actually expects it to be stuck with, but at least it’d give him an idea of what’s been covered or not.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve got the next chapter ready, and working on the one after that, so I am happy to keep the progress up. Thank you to the wonderful folks leaving me comments and fueling my muse. Comments are greatly appreciated.
Learning to Shift

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sherlock’s POV
He’s on his way home, having already solved the crime and caught the criminal when he gets a message from John saying that they are heading out to the pack home because Anna wants to learn how to shift. Grinning, he changes the address the cab driver is taking him to.

When he gets there, he slips out of the car, following the sounds of laughter to behind the house. There he finds John standing with Dominic and Aunt Sandra watching as the girls run around. Taking turns chasing each other in what appears to be hybrid forms.

Anna seems to be covered in a fine layer of fur that makes him think of werewolf movies. Not that he is ever actually admitting to watching them on the telly. It’s probably where the concept of werewolves came from, those in a partial shift.

Mia’s skin is speckled with shimmering gold scales that seem to catch the light with every movement. Her normally green eyes are bright yellow with vertical slits.

“Practice in between?” He asks as he observes them.

“Yeah, no two pups learn shifting in the same manner.” John answer, glancing over at him for just a moment. “It’s good for them to get a feel for their first shift on their own before moving on to the next step."

He can feel the tightness of his brow as he remembers Emma’s comments on Anna’s shifting abilities. “Did you have to help her?”

“No, I gave some basic instructions, showed her what it feels like for me to shift, made sure to stress that it might feel different for her, and let her see what she can do on her own.” His bondmate replies as the girls come running back up.

“What’s next?” Anna demands excitedly.

“You picture yourself as other and change!” Mia bounces on the balls of her feet excitedly, eyes nearly glowing as she goes from little girl to little viper.

Frowning, the little wolf stares at the viper, worrying her lower lip before shyly querying, “Is it really that easy?”

“No two shifters learn or develop the same,” John answers, catching and keeping her gaze. “For some it’s a matter of will, for others it’s a matter of imagination, there are those who it’s a matter of emotion.”

“Oh,” she sounds almost disappointed, as if she wanted a more exacting answer.

Change! Change! Mia chants, wrapping her small serpentine body around Anna’s ankle.

“You’ll do fine,” he remarks, entering the conversation.

Anna’s eyes seem to widen before she nods. Closing her eyes, she worries her bottom lip, hands
sporadically making fists. Her fur appears to shimmer, a fine aura appearing around her before fading away.

When she opens her eyes back up they are full of tears that slowly roll down her face.

Kneeling down, he use his sleeve to wipe her face off as he states, “Just because your wolf isn’t coming all the way to the surface doesn’t mean you’re not going to be a great shifter.”

“Well said Sherlock,” Aunt Sandra hums in agreement, “I didn’t learn to change forms until I was nearly twenty. My mum learned to change when she was ten. Your mum was fourteen.”

“Do all wolves vary so much in when they learn shifting?” Dominic sounds curious, shocked even.

“Back to human, ladies, lets go in and have something to snack on while we discuss the basic ways shifting works.” John suggests gently.

Sighing, all of Anna’s fur vanishes back into herself, that’s the best he can describe it.

Mia uncoils herself from the young wolf’s leg, changing back into her human form. Speckles of scales are scattered across her face like freckles.

There group heads inside, where they are join by Beth who made a fresh batch of chocolate chip biscuits and tea.

“How’d you learn to shift?” He asks the crocodile curiously, deciding to ask the person who hadn’t been outside.

“My hatchling mother embedded the memories of shifting in my mind, creating the familiar paths, so when I went to change, they were already there,” Beth replies before taking a sip of her tea.

As he walks through the door Richard states, “The eldest healer would teach the band’s children meditation and how to find ourself. If that resulted in the ability to shift it was considered a blessing. Otherwise it was just a means of finding serenity with ourselves and our surroundings.”

“What’s a hatchling mother?” Anna questions, head tipping to the side.

“The caregiver of young while parents work,” the crocodile answers, “hatchling mothers can be of any gender.”

*Then why are they called mothers?* Mia almost demands, nostrils flaring.

“All caregivers are considered mothers, like She Who Created Us.” Beth replies gently, “Bearer and sires are parents, but not always caregivers.” She pauses to take another sip of her tea. “A caregiver can choose a different title such as guardian, father, aunt or uncle to name a few. We track family through caregiver more than parent.”

“While the difference in family types based on shifter species is interesting, let’s get back to the lesson,” John suggest after eating a biscuit.

Well then, does he want to listen to how shifting works or see if Beth will tell him more about the crocodile shifter society? He didn’t get a chance to learn too much about them while in Australia, mostly because the vast majority of the shifter communities were closed to him as a human without his bondmate with him. He’ll file it away to ask about later.

Shifting his attention back to the current conversation, he discovers that John is already explaining
how the shifting works on a physical level. How a shifter’s natural energy levels are higher than their human counterparts and are accessed through a different part of the brain than a gifted person’s initiate talents.

Both children ask curious questions, some of them are basic, some of them surprise him. Even the adult shifters in the room ask questions relating to how the gifts shifters have are tied into the ability to shift. Including the fact that most shifter-children lack special talents or only have ghost talents. It’s rather intriguing.

They actually end up having dinner at the pack home since they are still discussing it when it comes time to cook. He watches in fascination as his bondmate helps Aunt Sandra prep and cook while still discussing it with the other shifters.

After dinner Anna wants to try again, so they head outside.

She spends a few minutes in a mixed form before literally stumbles into being a wolf.

He’s a bit startled by how big she is. While he’s aware that John’s an elite wolf, which is pretty much a dire wolf, he hadn’t thought she would be, or that she’d be so big if she was. Some reason he expected her to be smaller.

A moment later John’s a wolf, and he realizes exactly how small she is in comparison.

He laughs as he watches the two of them frolicking around. John’s gentle with her, but helps her get a feel for her new form. She picks it up quickly and is soon joined by the wolves that patrol the Pack Home. That gives him even more of a size comparison as Anna is as big as the adult non-elite wolves.

After a bit John shifts back to human, and the wolves vanish back onto the property.

“Back to human Anna, and don’t forget your clothing. You don’t have to think of them in detail, just that you have some on,” His bondmate directs her quietly.

She bobs her head and he can see the look of concentration on her face as she shimmers before returning to being human.

“That was fun!” She declares even Cas she falls on her arse laughing.

“Please call a cab love,” John queries, catching his eye.

Nodding, he sends off a quick text message to one of the crows. A moment later he gets a response that they are on the way.

“Terry will be here shortly,” he announces.

“Great,” His bondmate hums. “No shifting unless we are here until you have had enough practice and control.”

Anna bobs her head again.

This has definitely been an interesting trip to the pack home, he thinks, everyone learned something.
Tumblr about mine & other peoples stories: JaimiStoryTeller

Also acquired a twitter recently where I post little updates about what project I am working on: jaimist0

I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi

I’ve got a few more chapters ready to go, I am currently on a roll, thank you commenters and readers.
John’s POV

After bidding everyone goodnight when the cab shows up, they get in with Anna seated between them. By the time they get home, she’s leaning against his side, head tucked against his arm, and mostly asleep. She’s worn out from all of the shifting today if he had to wager. After all, using energy like that when not used to it can be extremely exhausting.

He carefully scoops her up, straighten out and moving away from the car. Carefully, he carries her up to her bedroom. Sherlock is helpful by opening all of the doors for him.

I’ll be in our living room, his bondmate tells him, heading downstairs.

He only removes her jacket and shoes before pulling the blankets up over her and tucking her into bed. She can sleep in her clothing, tomorrow he plans on washing the bedding, so any dirt won’t be that big a problem. With one last glance at her, he turns off the lights and shuts the door so she can have some privacy in sleep.

When he gets downstairs, Sherlock is telling Mrs. Hudson that they have Anna for the summer so she can get to know her British relatives since he is close to her mother.

“Poor dear looked exhausted,” she remarks as he steps onto the landing.

Sherlock’s the one who responds, “She spent the afternoon playing with her cousins and their friends.” Barely tipping his head, his bondmate queries, *She’s fine, right? Only tired from the shifting?*

She glances upwards as she nods once in understanding, “Kids rarely realize how tired they are until they stop. Goodnight boys.”

Nodding in agreement, “Yeah that’s true, goodnight Mrs. Hudson.” Turning his attention to his bondmate, he answers *Shifting can take enormous amounts of energy for someone not used to the changing. It takes even more for someone who’s been told repeatedly that they can't do it for some reason or another because they have to get past the block they are putting in their own way with self-doubt.*

Sherlock nods absently, mind already whirling over the new information covered.

He’s quite sure that there will be questions. He’s not sure how many of those questions he’ll have answers for, but that’s perfectly alright. He doesn’t mind admitting he might not know everything.

Shaking his head, he heads into their flat, mildly startled to see that Sherlock has the water on for tea. Why’s that startling? He wonders, it’s not the first time, but it is something that is more his domain than his bondmate’s unless the dark haired genius has something he wants. That’s when his bondmate tends to make tea the most.

“I’m guessing you got questions,” he states as he takes his shoes off and hangs his jacket up.

“Some, but not right now, I want to think about them some more.” His love replies with a partial
shrug.

“Alright love,” he agrees, walking over to the tall human to kiss Sherlock softly. Once the water is done heating, they spend some time curled together on the sofa with the TV off, drinking their respective teas. It’s calm and quiet, one of those rare moments that don’t happen all that often in their life. At least not at this point in their lives. Between the pack and cases, and the rush of family situations they’ve recently dealt with, there hasn’t been a lot of down time. Not that they’ve ever had a lot of down time. Although they’ve never been the sort to take it easy. He’s moderately sure his bondmate’s mind wouldn’t let him, even if he wanted to do so more often.

So, when I was going through my training, grandmum opened what amounted to a clinic for all shifters and shifter-children willing to be healed by a student. I am thinking of doing the same thing, he remarks eventually, sticking to telepathy because he doesn’t want Anna overhearing this if she wakes up. He can remember how stressful it was to know the only reason there was a clinic was so he could practice. More than that, he can remember being terrified that he’d do something wrong and people would get hurt. It didn’t cross his mind that his grandmum would be there with him, after all, he was supposed to be the one practicing the healing, she already knew what she was doing.

Have you considered opening a permanent clinic rather than working at human clinics? Sherlock queries curiously, setting his cup aside.

He shrugs, Several times, but I like working cases with you and that limits how much time I have available. I know Jace wishes to become a doctor to go along with being a thera, so I planned on discussing it with him once he has started in uni.

His bondmate bites his lip, looking a bit lost in thought, and making him want to kiss the younger man. He appreciates the fact he gets to see these rare moments of vulnerability.

You could do something like a school clinic, teach healing to a variety of shifter types, and maybe the pack healers would be willing to work with you on it? Sherlock eventually suggests before yawning and narrowing his eyes in frustration. I don’t like when my transport is tired.

Chuckling, he nods, No one likes it when they’re tired love. C’mon, lets go get some sleep.

“Don’t want to,” his love grumbles as he stands up. He collects both of the mugs as he joins his bondmate. “Most folks don’t want to for a variety of reasons.”

Sherlock uses the loo while he rinses the cups out and sets them in the sink.

Tonight is the sleepy sort of evening. Not surprising considering it’s been a rather busy day, even if it might not seem like it. At least his love is willing to admit he’s tired. That’s a definite improvement over the times when Sherlock would push himself until collapsing in exhaustion.

A few minutes later they fall into bed, curling around each other and drifting off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

*waves* hellos folks, happy day and enjoy. Comments are always appreciated
Anna’s POV

She’s barely awake when her mind starts racing over the fact that she changed into a wolf. A full shift. On her own. She didn’t have her cousin in her head or guiding her energy. She did it. She changed. It was amazing. Utterly and completely amazing.

She’s an elite wolf.

Her wolf form was as big as the adult wolves. Literally as big as adult men turned wolf. What was a speculation on her parents part, as they are both elites, so it only made sense that she’d be one, has turned into fact.

Still. She finally shifted. It’s been an itch under her skin since last summer, but she hadn't been able to change no matter how hard she tried. Her mum tried showing her what to do, but it didn’t work. Her dad’s explanation hadn’t made sense to her. Her grandparents had said it was there job to teach her. That maybe she wasn’t as ready as she wanted. Her aunts, uncles, and cousins had said it was up to her parents to teach her. None of her age-mate cousins are shifting yet.

She wants to call her parents and tell them. Sitting up, the blankets fall away as she reaches for the small phone, it’s only when she sees the time that she realizes she that it’s the middle of the night. Apparently she slept for a few hours, but not enough that it’s safe to call them.

It’s the middle of the night, would it be alright if she went downstairs or played with her laptop? She’s not all that sure about the rules of Cousin John’s home. So far she hasn’t been given any except don’t shift in the house or apartment.

It’s only been a few days and it’s already been something totally unexpected. Nothing like she thought it would be. For one thing, she isn’t forced into anything.

She doesn’t understand it. Her cousin is an alpha, but he doesn’t act like her dad or granddad as far as she can tell. He doesn’t act like any of the alphas that have visited them in the past.

Just like her cousin’s bondmate doesn’t act like an outsider human. At least, not in the ways she’s been taught to expect. There are hardly any humans allowed on her family’s compound, only those who are bonded to the pack, and even then there can be years before they are trusted. Shifter-children aren’t human, so they aren’t counted as such.

Then there is the fact there are non-wolves in the pack who aren’t part of the pack through bondmates. They’ve been adopted in. She’s never heard of such a mixing of the pack. It seems impossible, but on every occasion she’s been to the Watson Pack Home, there have been plenty of non-wolves. Enough that she hasn’t actually been able to identify all of them.

She bites her lip, flinching when she tastes the blood, she really needs to stop doing that.

Deciding it’s worth the risk of getting in trouble, she gets her laptop out and powers it up. She’ll email her best friend, tell Katya about how her first week with her cousin has been so far. Once she has it on, she turns on the wifi, logging in with the information Sherlock gave her the first night, and signing into her email. She’s surprised that she has messages from most of the pack around her age. She doesn’t really talk to anyone beside Katya, so why are they emailing her?

The next hour is spent going through her inbox. She’s baffled by the happy greetings, well wishes,
and questions. She doesn’t answer the majority of them. After all, she has no reason to since they wouldn’t even be asking her if she was at home. Instead, she reads and answers her best friend, telling Katya all about her cousin’s pack, the things she’s curious about, and what’s been going on since she got here.

She sets her laptop aside a little bit later, suddenly very thirsty, and heads downstairs to get something to drink. While she hopes she won’t get in trouble, she wants something too bad to feel guilty about it.

Besides, they haven’t told her when she has to stay in her room or what the rules are, she thinks rebelliously.

“Can’t sleep?” The question startles her, causing her to spin and stare at her cousin-in-bond.

“I’m thirsty,” she blurts out, feeling her skin warm.

Sherlock nods, expression serious, but he doesn’t seem to be annoyed or angry, so that’s a plus.

“I don’t sleep much either,” he comments as he makes himself tea if her sense of smell isn’t off.

“Why not?” she asks as she slowly walks towards the fridge, planning on seeing if there is milk or juice in it.

“I’ve never been big on sleeping,” he answers with a shrug. “I sleep more now than I did prior to meeting John.”

“Oh,” she mutters, debating between the options since there is milk and a couple of different types of juice. She doesn’t remember the fridge being this full yesterday when she got orange juice.

Snickering softly, he remarks, “Mouse has been by.”

“Why do you call her mouse?” it doesn’t make sense, aren’t there several mice in the pack?

“That was her title when I met her, back then, she was the only mouse in the pack, and part of the military sub-pack,” he replies, sprawling in the chair, cupping the mug between his hands.

She’s quiet while she pours the juice into a cup that he must have got down for her and puts the carton away.

“Do you mind the pack having sub-packs?” she asks as she sits across from him.

Shrugging, “It’s always been that way for me, so it’s normal.”

That makes sense. It really does. He didn’t grow up in a pack, so of course he wouldn’t find the mixed pack odd, because that’s what he’s used to. Why didn’t she think of that?

They spend a bit of time sitting there in relative silence, only the sounds filling the air is their breathing and drinking. It’s a bit odd. She’s not used to adults not trying to tell her something. Whether she wants to hear it or not actually matters.

“All my cousins wrote me emails,” she grumbles when she sets her cup down. “I don’t know why. They don’t even like me.”

“Because you’re somewhere they’re not and they’re jealous.” He answers as he stands up.

“Oh,” that hadn’t occurred to her. After all, they’ve never really been jealous of her in the past. At
least, not that she knows of. Jealousy has a particular scent that’s hard to miss, it’s actually one of the first learned by shifters, along with love and familial scents. It’s also an early indicator of who will be a shifter, cause they have the sharper senses matched to their second form.

When she starts yawning, Sherlock suggests, “Go back to bed.”

“G’night cousin,” she mumbles as she stands up, grabbing her cup to put in the sink as she has been taught to.

She can think about those other emails in the morning.
Lesson Plans

John’s POV

He knows when Sherlock leaves their bed and he knows when his bondmate rejoins him.

In the morning, he wakes a second time to the sounds of Anna moving around the front room. She’s quiet, the way most shifters are, but not as quiet as someone who knows what they are doing.

It’s been a week since she got here, he better sit down and figure out a lesson plan for her.

Dragging himself out of bed, he heads to the kitchen, deciding to make a fry up. His bondmate and cousin could probably use breakfast considering their middle of the night chat.

He smiles when he spots the cups in the sink, that was probably been Anna’s doing since he knows Sherlock forgets as often as he remembers.

Should he ask her how she slept? Right now she is looking around the living room. Perhaps she wants some time on her own? He can admit he doesn’t understand kids, and she as raised in a more traditional household than this, so it’s probably a bit of a culture shock. For all they are wolves, he’s moderately certain that his cousin doesn’t know how to take him or his pack.

About the time Sherlock emerges from their room, he has breakfast done, so he calls out, “Come eat Anna.”

“Allright Cousin John,” she agrees, quickly joining him and washing her hands in the sink. “Can I help?”

“With the clean up,” he replies with a small smile. “For now go ahead and make yourself a plate.”

She nods, grabbing one of the plates he set on the counter and putting food on it, taking more of the meat than anything else before setting it on the table and grabbing a cup to put juice in.

“I’m going to write up some lesson plans and a tentative schedule, tomorrow we’ll start on them in ernst. You’ve got a lot to learn in four months.” He rubs his knuckles along the edge of his jaw, “I don’t think you will actually learn it all between now and when your parents come.”

Her scents is a combination of curious and sad when she asks, “Does that mean I’ll have to come back next year?”

“Probably,” he agrees, watching for her reaction and discretly sniffing the air. His only got a small fraction of his empathy open to read emotions, the rest of it hidden behind shields, same with his telepathy.

“Oh,” she sounds almost put out.

Trying to lighten the tone, he suggests, “Sherlock why don’t you show Anna around the city?”

His bondmate nods, “I could do that. We could visit with some of the network.”

“What’s a network?” she asks, brow furrowing as she tips her head slightly to the side thoughtfully.

“The homeless network is a connection of people that give me information in exchange for money or favors,” Sherlock answers before he has a chance to reply.
“Sort of like a pack then, I didn’t know humans had packs.” Anna says slowly, as if carefully picking her words.

“That’s not a bad analogy.” he hums as he considers it.

They finish eating their breakfast in silence. Anna pecks slowly at her food, seemingly lost in thought. Sherlock steals pieces of his plate, making him wonder not for the first time why he makes his bondmate a plate when the chances are fairly high food will be taken from his plate instead.

After they’re done, she puts the dishes in the sink after rinsing.

“Go change into something you’ll be comfortable walking around for a while in,” Sherlock suggests with a wave towards her room.

“Okay,” she responds before doing as directed.

He catches his bondmate’s hand in his as his dark haired human rises from the table. “Thank you love,” he murmurs, stepping into the taller man’s space in order to tip his head and kiss him.

Sherlock kisses him back, then spins on the balls of his feet, heading towards their room.

Grinning, he shakes his head, going into the living room to get a pad of paper and pen. He’ll start working on the list after they leave.

Anna joins him before his bondmate does, dressed in jeans, sneakers, and a thick jumper. Glancing down at herself, she mutters, “Will this work?”

He smiles at her, nodding, “Yeah, it’s a lot like what I wear when I go with him.”

Her relief is palatable, feeling is sense of smell as she bounces on the balls of her feet.

“Let’s go,” Sherlock announces as strides into the room, grabbing his coat off of the hook and putting it on as he spins towards the door.

They’re gone a minute later, Anna quietly following behind his bondmate as the human chatters about the network and how they provide information.

Settling in his chair, he starts writing out some of the details he’s certain she will need to work on, starting with control. Young thera sometimes heal just by touching others, with no way to actually stop it until they learn to control that ability. For small wounds that’s not really an issue, but when it comes to chronic injuries or health problems, that’s a very different situation. It can kill a theran because they sink all of their life force into the healing, and drain themselves dry.

His grandmum taught him control on sick animals. Small ones to start with and working his way through the various sizes until they got to shifters with minor problems. He can still remember how frustrating it was, having to fight to control his gift. It wasn’t all that easy for him, but once he figured out how, when it stopped being a fight, it got a lot easier.

Learning control leads to the clinic duties and learning to tell the differences between different types of illness in shifters and shifter-children.

He pauses, tapping his pen against the pan of paper as he considers the clinic issue. Perhaps it could work, opening a permanent clinic and then asking Daria, Hamil, Jeffery, and Donna if they would like to work in it. He wouldn’t mind hiring out shifters and clan members who work in the healing field as well.
Actually, he should see if Jeffery considers Michael rehabilitated enough to have his gifts unlocked. It’s been three years, but as the mindhealer hadn’t spoken to him about the younger one in a long while. Of course there was that long and messed up year where his bondmate was gone. He adds that to his list of things that needs to be dealt with. There are a lot of little things he let slide, or let Jacob and Eric deal with for the last year, now it’s time for him to get back to being a proper alpha.

Right, he’ll look into what needs to be done to make such a place. Later, after he’s figured out what else he needs to do for the training.

So, what else? They’ve covered the basics of bonds, though they will probably need to cover how those bonds can affect healing. He should also cover the different types of sight, how they work, and how to use them. That can be tricky as not everyone has an easy time switching between them. Then there are the basics that are very similar to what medical students learn: illness types, diseases, how they spread, and the various types of effects they have. That often ties in with the sight, because seeing and being able to identify helps determine how to treat it. Which leads to the longest and hardest lessons, how to heal the different illnesses and diseases without burning oneself out.

Okay then, how the hell did his grandmum seem to do this with such ease? Of course, she wasn’t an alpha at the time. Well. Not exactly anyways, as she was an alpha-second for a part of it, and gamma for the rest of it. Not that his uncle actually listened to her advice.

Rubbing a hand across his face, he switches to writing out an actual timeline to work with. Here’s to hoping he can do this without screwing up. If he teaches her nothing else, he needs to make sure she has the control needed to keep from healing someone on instinct.

This is going to be a long summer, even if everything goes right.
Sherlock’s POV

Taking Anna out with him to visit the network seems like a great idea. Who knows this city better than him? Eric, maybe, probably, possibly his brother, but that’s it. There are plenty of people who know close to the same amount, but that doesn’t mean that they know as much. Of course those people tend to be focused on one area, rather than having the broad array of knowledge that he has.

The first hour they are out is lots of fun. It’s a delight to spend the time sharing his passion and knowledge. It’s different than when he works with the teenagers. They know the city, at least in part, because they are from here, but she’s not.

Since he knows that she can accidentally heal just by touch, and John has stressed exactly how dangerous that is, he avoids members of the network with chronic conditions just to be on the safe side. While he has complete faith that Eric would be able to reach them to take her to John or bring John to her before she died, he’s not risking it. There are a lot of things in this world he’d risk, but a child’s life is not one of them.

Anna spends the majority of the time asking him questions about everything she sees and pointing out the many things that she finds interesting in some fashion. She seems particularly fond of buildings with arches and stained glass. She also seems to love the colorful signs and banners that stores have.

Her nose keeps twitches and as much as he hates to describe things as adorable, that’s the only word he can come up with for her ability to smell things and how she reacts to those things.

He actually debates about asking her to describe what she smells, but decides against it for this time. He’d rather show her interesting places and introduce her to folks, than to have her have to focus on her sense of smell since he’s been repeatedly told it’s a strong one for canines and serpents.

Several times he finds himself wondering if having a child with John would be anything like this. Of course said child would start off as a baby, so he’d have to learn how to care for one and probably use a lot of alarms to keep track of things. Of course the early stages would be a lot like an experiment to keep track of all of the child’s health and development.

They are a few minutes into the second hour when he notices that she’s gone mostly quiet. She’s no longer looking around full of excitement and asking him lots of questions or pointing things out.

Stopping by a doorway, he turns towards her, getting a read on the fact she seems to be in discomfort, though he’s not exactly sure for the reason. “Why?” He queries as he continues to watch her body language.

Anna blinks at him, apparently at a loss for words as she bites her lower lip and her brow furrows. She shifts foot to foot, watching him but flinching away from people when they get too close.

“You went from talking non-stop, asking questions and being excited to quiet.” He elaborates to see if that will make it easier to understand or for her to answer.

She shrugs not answering.
Studying her closely, he realizes the very thing that he was finding adorable earlier is overwhelming to her. She’s got too much sensory input going on. He doesn’t know if it’s only her sense of smell or if her other senses are providing too much as well. In either event, sensory overload is extremely stressful. He can understand that.

Without saying anything else, he motions for her to follow before taking back off, heading to Angelo’s since it’s only a few streets away and taking short cuts through buildings and alleys to get there faster. That way there will be a lot less things to bother her senses.

When they get there he holds the door open for her, pleased to see exactly how empty it is at this time in the morning.

Almost as soon as the door swings shut behind them, Angelo appears from the kitchen, grinning at him and practically beaming when he spots her.

“Who’s your lovely companion? Here, let me get you some chocolate milk, do you like milk?” The heavy set human queries as his eyes flicker between them.

He motions to the table set aside for him, for her to take a seat while he sits opposite.

She nods, biting her lip, Can I speak to him?

*Of course, Angelo’s a decent sort,* he answers with a small smile, thinking of how they met.

“Yes please,” she answers as she meets Angelo’s eyes for a moment before looking away.

The cook sets a menu down in front of her before vanishing into the back once more.

“Go ahead and pick something out to snack on if you’re hungry,” he suggests, recalling that Aunt Sandra once claimed that use of senses or gifts could make a person hungry fast.

A minute later Angelo reappears, carrying a large cup of chocolate milk for her, and a cuppa for him.

“My usual,” he comments as his eyes flick between the two.

“My usual,” she tells the bulky man.

“It’ll be done shortly!” Angelo announces before bustling away.

They spend a few minutes in silence while they enjoy their respective drinks.

*You wouldn’t want to be in a pack like mine,* she remarks, breaking the silence, and sounding as if having an epiphany about it. *I don’t like it either, some days.*

He nods, she’s definitely right about that. He’d definitely wouldn’t do very well within a pack like hers. The alpha’s word is law, and he thinks her alpha, and probably most the previous alphas of that pack were idiots.

Eventually Angelo brings them their food. Her plate is almost over full, and anything she doesn’t eat can be taken back with them or given to someone in the network who likes omelets.

They finish their small meal in peaceful companionship and by time they are done, she seems to be feeling better. Which is exactly what he wanted.

He likes Anna, he decides, she’s an intelligent child, and with John as her teacher, she’ll end up as a good alpha and healer. Anyone who feels otherwise can deal with him or Eric.
Actually, he’s moderately surprised the cobra hasn’t said anything to him since he has thought about the cobra several times.

*I was ignoring you as it wasn’t actual questions,* Eric informs him, tone laced with amusement.

He snickers in his mind.

“Are we going to see more of the city?” Anna asks him as she glances between him and the window.

“If you feel up to it,” he replies with a small smile, trying for reassuring but not sure if it actually works.

She bites her lip and nods, eyes bright. “I want to.”

He grins at her, already planning where else they can stop while out and about for quiet moments in case she has another instance where things are too much. Worst case scenario is they duck into a building and he calls for a cab. There are definitely plenty of them around after all that Eric keeps on the payroll to make things easier.

Chapter End Notes

Yes folks, there is an end in sight. I've officially finished writing Seeking, though I will still be editing before I post.

I still love comments, and those comments will encourage me to work on the second half, whose title keeps changing but is currently under the working title of "Found"
Siblings and Packmates

_Sherlock’s POV_

By the time they get back to the flat, Anna’s exhausted again and mumbles about taking a shower and a nap.

Since he doesn’t have any problems with it, he tells her, “Go ahead.”

Almost as soon as the words are out of his mouth, his phone goes off, Dimmock’s ringtone, alerting him to a case. Frowning, he opens the message, looking at the details and deciding that he wants to go, but he doesn’t want to go without John because he has a hard time dealing with the detective inspector some days, almost as much as he does with Donovan, though things have been a lot smoother since he joined the pack, a fact he is certain is due to John threatening her that first evening.

There’s a knock at the door, then Mouse slips in, eyes bright, “I can stay here while you two go.”

John chuckles as he exits the kitchen, “If you’re sure.”

The small one nods energetically, “Of course I am! I like kids, and she’s related to you, so I’m sure she’ll be fine.”

“She is rather tired. She wants a shower and nap.” He remarks, as he glances at his bondmate.

“Well, let me get my shoes on and we can go.” His wolf agrees.

He wants to dance, but refrains from doing so. Mostly because he’s not actually sure why he feels the urge to dance. No matter.

A little bit later finds them in a cab on the way to the crime scene to meet Dimmock and his team.

-oOo-

_John’s POV_

He doesn’t agree to go until checking in with his cousin. He wants to make sure that she will be alright with being left with Mouse. While he trusts his fellow soldier, he’s quite aware that most traditional packs discourage other species. So there is a pretty good chance that she hasn’t been around a mouse before.

As soon as she agrees, excitement strums through his system. After all, one of the things he loves about his life with Sherlock is the cases. The adrenaline rush. The hunt.

He’d never admit it aloud but one of the reasons he actually enjoyed his time in Afghanistan was the ability to hunt and track. Something that fulfills one of his desires as a wolf, even if it’s not something he’d admit to often.

Now he gets that same excitement by going on cases with the man he loves.

“Which one are we going to be helping?” He asks as they head down the stairs to the waiting cab his bondmate called for.

“Dimmock, it looks to be a eight, but I won’t know for sure until we get there because the picture quality left a lot of room for improvement.” Sherlock answers, voice filled with disdain.
Chuckling, he nods, opening the cab door for the dark haired human and slipping in behind him.

Dimmock’s a decent sort, a lot calmer than some of the other detective inspectors when it comes to Sherlock. He’s also one of the ones who doesn’t really ask questions when the pups learning about chemistry or deduction show up at a crime scene with his bondmate. Probably figures it wouldn’t do him much good.

-oOo-

Anna’s POV

When she gets out of the shower she realizes that she forgot something very important. Namely her fresh clothes. The entire reason she wanted a shower was to get rid of the outsider scents. She’s not used to non-pack scents. Humans smell weird to her in a lot of ways. Her sense of smell has always been better, probably to make up for her problems hearing.

She’d ask her cousin to go grab her something, but she said it was fine if he went with his bondmate on a hunt since one of his packmates is here. The problem is she doesn’t know the packmate and she doesn’t want a stranger in her room.

Biting her lip, she shoves her clothes in the hamper before wrapping the towel around herself firmly. After all, she’s walked out of the bathing room on her family compound with just a towel plenty of times, it’s not really different. That determined, she grabs a second towel out of the cupboard to wrap around herself as well then leaves the bathroom.

Stepping out of the bathroom, she looks around to figure out where the packmember is at. When she doesn’t initially see anyone, she focuses on her sense of smell, using it to discover where her sitter is at.

She finds a mouse sitting under one of the chairs.

“Are you an actual mouse or a shifter?” She asks as she crouches down to peer under the chair.

The mouse skitters out of her spot and a moment later a short, curvy woman is standing there. “Good job finding me! I’m Cyanne, though most call me Mouse.”

She nods, blinking as she processes the words. This woman is very excitable. Did she volunteer to be her sitter or was it assigned to her? She wonders as she tips her head, slowly standing and holding her towels.

“I’m gonna nap.” She comments, stepping towards the door that leads to the stairs.

“Okay, if you need something, I’ll be down here.” Cyanne agrees with a warm smile. “It can take minutes to hours for them to finish a case. I’ll be staying through it all.”

She nods in agreement than heads to her room to get dressed and sleep for a little bit. It’s been exhausting between yesterday and today.

-oOo-

Sherlock’s POV

The case ends up being a five and he feels insulted that he hadn’t realized that before. At least there was a fun chase. John’s not the only one who likes a good hunt.
The murderer ended up being the victim’s half-brother who decided that the only way to get what he wants is to get rid of his sibling. He’ll never understand that sort of logic. There have been points in his life he’s hated both of his sibling but he never would have murdered them.

He actually caught the man with a well placed kick to the back of the fool’s leg.

“Let’s go home,” he suggests, reaching for John’s hand cause he wants to touch his bondmate.

“Run or cab?” His love queries with a playful smile.

“Run,” he answers, “definitely run.”

One of the things he missed dearly while gone was the ability to ride on John’s wolf form. He knows most are never allowed to do so, as riding on them is taken badly, but he sees it as a way to spend even more time touching the wolf.

Stepping into a dark alley, John’s form shimmers for a moment then reforms as a wolf.

He only waits for a minute before climbing on.

Seconds later, he feels as the air around him distorts, and knows from past experience that means they will no longer be easily visible. In truth they are practically invisible to mortals and those without a strong sense of empathy or telepathy.

He delights in the run. The way John races through the city, jumping over cars and people with practiced ease.

It’s only been a little over an hour since they left, so he’s sure Anna’s still napping. Perhaps that’ll give him and his bondmate some private time. Even if it doesn’t, today’s been a good day.
John’s POV

When they get back from the relatively short case, they find Mouse buzzing around the flat quietly, and that Anna is still sleeping. He doesn’t get why she is still exhausted. He can’t think of any other pups who have had so much trouble with learning to shift and energy problems afterwards.

Right, so he needs to figure out why she is having energy problems prior to getting into the deeper lessons. There’s two ways to do that. First is using the thera sight to see if there is a genetic or physical defect causing it. There shouldn’t be one as thera tend to self heal but it’s still possible if something got mixed up in the process. Second is mindhealing to find the breach.

Well, the first he can do over dinner, it’s noninvasive. All it requires is a clear line of sight.

Does he want to cook or order take away?

Take away, he can make something tomorrow. So when she gets up, he’ll order them food. Sherlock mentioned that they stopped at Angelo’s when they were out because she was a bit overwhelmed with all the sounds, scents, and sights. It makes him wonder if she has a shielding problem going on, cause she shouldn’t be having those sort of issues at her age.

He’ll need to talk to Pyotr, as her protector he should be aware of her abilities and what she can do.

Stretching, he spots where his bondmate has settled and decides he wants to kiss Sherlock while he has a moment to do so.

As he stands up from where he is seated, he hears the upstairs bedroom door open. So Anna’s up now.

Shrugging, he still walks over to Sherlock to kiss his human for a moment.

“What’s with adults and kissing?” Anna demands as she comes through the door a minute later.

Laughing, Sherlock and him break apart.

“So, dinner, take away?” He asks with a glance between them, intentionally not keeping his eyes on Anna for too long since he wants to do that while eating and a bit distracted for her.

She settles in his chair, legs pulled up to her chest as she nods.

“We should get Thai.” Sherlock announces after studying her for a moment.

He nods in agreement, “Sounds good. I’ll order.”

While his bondmate can order, it’s not really a good idea as he gets snippy if they don’t get the order right on the first try.

“Do you know what you like?” He queries, turning to face his younger cousin.

She chews on her lip for a moment before answering, “Khao kha mu?”

Grinning, “I’m pretty sure they have that on the menu.”
She smiles at him, resting her head on her knees and closing her eyes.

Pushing those thoughts aside for the moment, he goes in the kitchen to pull the menu out of the drawer and double check the phone number before calling their order in. Sherlock’s rarely changes his choice. He bounces between a few favorites. Once the order is in, he gets some silverware out and returns to the living room. Neither Sherlock nor Anna has moved from their spots.

Closing his eyes for a moment, he focuses and changes his vision, switching first to the iota’s healing sight then transitioning into the therा’s healing sight.

He first looks at his bondmate, studying the dark haired human and watching the way his entire body works. It’s not shocking to see all the pathways and neurons firing. Sherlock’s brain is both similar and different than the majority of human minds that he has looked at over the years. He’s moderately certain that if he were to look at Eric, Mycroft and Sherlock all close together there would be a lot of similarities between how their minds work. Jace and Sofia too, if he’s being honest.

Shaking his head, he turns his attention to his cousin. Carefully scanning over her from ankle to head in order to see if there is something not working right or drawing her energy away from its proper uses. He’s rather surprised when he discovers that she has two stomach ulcers and hearing issues in her left ear. She’s a therа, she shouldn’t have those sort of issues.

Unless of course, an iota attempted to fix them. Because the way their abilities work, that could have made it worse, rather than better. But why would a kid have ulcers? She shouldn’t have them so young.

He’s drawn out of his thoughts by the doorbell ringing and drawing his attention. Right, the food. Well then, let’s go get that, dinner than fixing the problems.

The three of them eat in relative silence. Occasionally Sherlock steals a bite from him, and he returns the favor, which seems to make Anna giggle since she is sitting on the floor on the other side of the small coffee table. When they’re done, and there isn’t really a lot of leftovers, maybe enough for a snack, but definitely not a meal, they pack them away.

“Anna, do you have hearing problems?” he asks the young wolf as he settles on the sofa since she has retreated to his chair again.

Blushing, she nods, tapping just below her ear. “I couldn’t hear at all as a baby. Uncle Sergi tried fixing my ears but it didn’t totally work.”

He nods, sighing because he bets Sergi is a perfectly fine iota, but not a therа which means he would have had to use multiple sessions to create the working parts of an eardrum, since therа present earlier than iota, he’d wager that her own healing abilities were trying to repair it as well and determined his healing was like a virus.

There’s nothing wrong with being deaf, while it’s uncommon for a shifter, that doesn’t make it a bad thing.

Pinching the bridge of his nose, he queries, “It still has issues I’m guessing.”

She nods, “Yeah. Every time I try shifting it seems worse. It’s actually stopped me at times because it hurts so much it feels like it’s going to explode. I told Uncle once, he said that’s not how things work.”

“Your family seems to be made up of idiots,” Sherlock states coldly before he can say anything.
Well his bondmate isn’t wrong from the sounds and looks of it.

“Right, since he began the healing, it needs to be finished, otherwise it’s just going to keep being a drain on your energy.” Standing up, he takes the few steps to reach his chair and kneels down. “If you were born deaf, your gift doesn’t know how it’s supposed to work exactly, but it knows what he’s done isn’t it, as thera and iota work from different domains.”

She nods slowly, letting her legs drop over the edge.

“Do you know how to find your center?” He asks, it’s generally an early lesson, but he’d rather make sure rather than assume.

Smiling, she bobs her head in agreement.

He watches as she does so, checking to make sure she’s got a firm grasp on it, then connecting with her using a healer’s link. *Now then, from your center, let your energy flow outward, map your own body so you are aware of it from toe to crown. Can you do that?*

It takes her a minute but she mentally nods, doing as directed.

*Oh.* Anna sounds a bit startled, her energy pooling around her stomach.

Apparently she recognizes not only is her ear a problem. Personally he wants to know why a kid has ulcers. It’s tempting to sic Eric on them. He loves his cousin, but he’s just as annoyed with her as he is the rest of that pack.

*Right, now that you can feel every part, picture it in your mind, it will be a bit awkward at first, like looking at a mirror while in the mirror. At least, that’s how my grandmum used to describe it.* He tells her, trying for light hearted.

She giggles aloud, her focus flickering for only a moment before returning to where it was.

*Now what?* She asks excitedly.

*Now we start the healing. Let’s do your stomach first, as that will be a simpler healing,* he answers with a mental grin.

*How?* He’s happy to see she’s curious about it.

*Can you feel how the healthy sections are?* He’s asks, encouraging her to use her gift to explore her own body. It’s not uncommon for thera to live longer lives than their species type average as long as outsiders don’t kill them because they maintain their own bodies.

Her gets the mental equivalent of a nod as she slowly starts to focus on that section of herself. *Go it!* She declares happily, *Now what?*

*Now we make the damaged parts match.* He answers calmly.

*How?* He can hear the background thoughts about the fact she’s never intentionally healed someone, it’s always happened on accident and usually leaves her tired afterwards.

*I’m going to connect with you for a moment, to walk you through it, we’ll be using your gift, so you can feel how it works, alright?* He replies, connecting just a bit more so he can help guide her healing abilities.

*Okay,* she agrees almost hesitantly.
That’s good, she shouldn’t want other people disturbing or using her gifts without her permission. Not when they have such a powerful gift to begin with.

Slowly they go over the lining of her stomach, it takes three passes before she has it completely healed. Partly because he is only guiding and letting her do the actual healing. When it’s done, she seems almost surprised.

*That feels funny, tingly,* she comments, brow furrowing in confusion. *Is it supposed to feel like that?*

He really wants to slap his cousin and her bondmate. She’s a kid, she shouldn’t be under so much stress that it’s causing her to have ulcers and apparently long enough that not having them feels different. Actually he wants to slap that iota as well.

This is one of the reasons he doesn’t like ‘traditionalist’. They add stress that doesn’t need to be there. He knows that he had that problem under his uncle. It was one of the unspoken reasons, besides the fact he honestly wanted to find out what happened to the missing shifters from the pack who had vanished or died after going in the military, that he joined.

He thought his cousin was more like him than her father, but now he’s certain that conclusion was wrong.

Pushing those thoughts away incase she’s a better telepath than she realizes, he breaks the connection between their minds, asking aloud, “Are you thirsty?”

She blinks at him, almost confused according to scent, before swallowing and bobbing her head. “Yeah.”

Rising, he enters the kitchen as he tells her, “It’s important to take lots of breaks while healing. It doesn’t matter if you are healing yourself or not.”

He’s halfway through filling the kettle when he realizes he didn’t even ask what she wants to drink.

“Juice or tea?” He asks as he turns towards the living room.

“He Tea,” his cousin and bondmate chorus.

He smiles as he hears Anna giggling.

Right then, back to making the tea. It’ll give her a few minutes to rest.

Almost as soon as he’s done making the tea, Sherlock surprises him by crowding into his space. Giving him a quick kiss before picking up his cup and spinning away.

Snickering, he grabs his and Anna’s taking them out to the sitting room so he can hand hers over and drink his.

The three of them drink their tea in relatively peaceful silence.

When Sherlock is done with his, his bondmate sets the cup aside and stands up, grabbing his violin and playing a slow song.

Anna watches the dark haired human, seemingly enthralled.

*I didn’t know humans could play so well. Grandfather said all the best players were shifters because humans didn’t have the ear for it.* It’s almost a whisper across the thin pack lines that connect her to the Watson pack, probably placed by his cousin shortly after her birth and strengthened by their
communication over the last hour or so.

That’s bullshit. He states blandly. There are a lot more humans than shifters. The statistics probably run about the two species for how the different sort of people think and learn to play. I don’t know the exact numbers, but you could ask Eric, I would wager he does.

Her head tips to the side and she worries her lower lip as she thinks about it. He’s the black cobra that came to my pack’s compound. He’s nice.

He snickers, thinking that she is one of the few people in the world who’d call Eric nice.

“Ready for the next part?” He queries when she eventually sets her cup aside.

“Loo first, then yes,” she answers as she stands up, picking her cup back up and putting it in the sink as she passes through the kitchen.

I think siccing Eric on them would be considered mean, but I still think you should do it. How stupid are they? Sherlock remarks without breaking pause from where he is in the melody.

Chuckling, he shrugs and replies, I don’t know, but do you think being stupid is a good reason to send a pissy black cobra Tracker to visit?

Yes. It’s blunt and to the point, mental tone as sharp as some of the things he has said to Anderson at times. Considering how much his love hate’s Anderson that’ quite remarkable. One of them screwed up healing her at some point. Am I right?

He nods, not answering as Anna comes through the kitchen and back into the room.

“We’re gonna do my ear? What’s to keep it from not working?” she is almost hesitant as she asks that, settling back in his chair and pulling her legs back up, arms wrapping around her knees as her chin perches on them.

“Yes, we’re going to do your ears next, we’ll check both, just to make sure there isn’t any problems.” He replies reassuringly as he shifts how he is kneeling a bit. “We’re ther. Iota healing has nothing on us. There are very few things in this world we can’t heal.”

She blinks then nods at him slowly. “Find my center and then myself again?”

Smiling, he nods encouragingly, “Just so.”

He connects with her once more, watching as she moves through the centering and spreading of her gift a bit faster than she had the last time.

Right then, now the trick is to completely remake your ear drum and all the connections that go with it. Your uncle tried, but he failed because he’s not a ther, so he couldn’t go as deep. In this, you needed both an iota and an omicron to do it correctly. You were born without the function in your ear, which means you mind doesn’t have the actual connections. He explains as he pictures what the different parts of the ear should look like.

That makes sense, iotas heal the body, and omicrons heal the mind. If the mind doesn’t know how to do it, having the parts wouldn’t work. Anna seems pleased by this, like she just had an epiphany.

Thera are both?

He’s sure he’s grinning as he answers, Yes.
“Oh,” she mumbles, losing her concentration and center. “That’s just stupid!”

It’s his turn to blink, as he tries to figure out what’s stupid in this case.

“Why would thera be dangerous if they’re both iota and omicron? Wouldn’t that be great? Having one person with the abilities of two?” She demands, legs dropping absently as she glares in his direction.

He’s pretty sure that the glare isn’t for him as he’s a thera like her. More likely it’s for those who have had something bad to say about thera. Including her own father who wanted to bind her gifts rather than have her trained despite the fact that is the very worst possible choice.

“They’re idiots,” she states firmly, nodding once sharply at the same time.

“Complete morons.” Sherlock chimes in as he stops playing. “We could have Eric speak with them. He’s exceedingly talented at making his point known.”

Laughing softly, he shakes his head and doesn’t join the current conversation. Instead he waits for her to get it out of her system so they can go back to healing her ear.

“Sorry cousin,” she mumbles a little bit later, as if realizing that she got side tracked.

“It’s alright. I can still remember when grandmum told me what thera can do, and I looked at her like she’s insane, cause thera can’t do all that. Turns out they could do all that and so much more if trained,” he replied gently, reaching out to ruffle her hair.

She bats at his hands before focusing once more. With each try she seems to be getting faster.

Right then, this is what the ear should look like, he shows her his, naming each piece of it and how it works. While he’s sure she won’t remember it all later, it still seems like a good time to cover it anyways.

She nods, concentrating as hard as she can.

Now then, that’s what we need to make both your ears like, as neither is exactly as it should be. He tells her as she focuses on her own ears.

My right is closer than my left, she comments eventually. But neither are actually right.

Almost as soon as she’s done mindspeaking, she starts giggling.

“My right’s not right.” She declares aloud in between giggles.

Chuckling, he nods. At least she’s finding something to be amused about, he thinks, that’s a good sign considering she could be crying over it instead. Laughing is a lot better.
John’s POV

Despite the fact she doesn’t want to take a day to rest, he refuses to let her work on anything for the rest of the day. Even if she doesn’t want to take it easy, it’s important that she does.

Sherlock distracts her by taking her down to the lab, though he has promised not to let her play with anything too dangerous. Of course what he considers too dangerous and what his bondmate considers too dangerous are completely different the vast majority of the time.

Either way, she won’t be using her gift. Unless she gets hurt, at which point it will kick in automatically.

Sighing, he rubs the bridge of his nose, what to do?

Well, he can start making the arrangements for a clinic. Between Mycroft and Eric, he’s not worried about the politics of the situation, those two can handle them. He just needs to figure out the where and the how. He’s got a sneaking feeling that clanless shifters, shifter-children, and the occasional gifted won’t be the only ones to come if they open it up somewhere the public can easily access.

It’s a long standing tradition not to let humans know about the different talent of shifters. Particularly those that have to deal with mind control, mind reading, and healing.

Does he want to break that tradition? He knows it’s not one of the laws laid down by the Old Gods. Eric has been rather clear with that, there are only a handful of laws that must be obeyed.

Well, he’ll tell the council what he is planning, then he will move on to the actual planning. The beautiful thing about the clan set up is every pack is answerable only to the pack alpha. There are very few things that can involve the wolf pack council.

Grabbing his phone, he plans to call Amara but can’t actually remember her number and knows he doesn’t have it on his phone. Dammit.

Setting the mobile aside, he turns his attention inwards instead, seeking the thin connection that he has to all three council members from various events in the past. When he finds hers, he connects telepathically tapping at the edge of her mind, like knocking on a door and waiting for an answer.

What can I do for you Alpha Watson? She replies a little bit later when he is up making tea.

In the old tradition of opening a clinic for young healers to practice in, I am planning to do something similar. The difference being I plan to make it year round and permanent instead. He informs her politely.

The impression of being snorted at and eyes rolling, makes him smile.

Bollocks. You’re telling me because it’s not going to be the traditional only shifter and shifter-children clinics. Her voice is laced with amusement. I’ll let others on the council know. I will also notify the other councils. You will have my backing, John, in case there is backlash.
Thank you. He replies sincerely. He wasn’t expecting her to back him up with the situation.

Nothing else is said as the connection breaks off, but he’s alright with that.

Right, now that the council is informed it’s time to find a building to work with, he thinks, getting up to grab his laptop and do some research. He spends a few hours looking for a building in the area that’s considered his territory that will fulfill the needs of this project. When he eventually does find something, he gathers all the information on the building that he needs to, grinning about the fact that it used to be a clinic that got shut down.

That’s going to make it even more useful. Right then, he doesn’t need to worry about the equipment, whatever is still in it, he can easily purchase, along with replacements and updates as needed. That way Jace and any of the other pups that want to train as a doctor can be trained alongside their healer training.

It never hurts to be able to heal in both methods. His grandmum believed that and he does too.

When he finally closes the laptop, having made arrangements he notices the time. Right, he better go collect those two and find out what they want for lunch. Setting the laptop on the desk, he heads downstairs to get them.

For a moment, he watches the way Sherlock is showing Anna how to use the microscope, wondering if she’s ever had a chance to do so before, and thinking probably not since a lot of separatists don’t teach their pups science. He doesn’t know why. Nothing in their faith says science isn’t real, and nothing in science says their faith isn’t real. They’re not human so evolution theory doesn’t apply to them.

“Yes John?” Sherlock queries, cleaning things up.

“I figured I’d see what you two want for lunch?” He asks as he steps into the flat turned lab.

He doesn’t actually come down here all that often, so it’s been awhile since the last time he saw it. Apparently the pups have been in here often enough that he can catch trace amounts of them.

“Pizza!” Anna declares excitedly.

Laughing softly, he glances at his bondmate, “Well?”

“I suppose,” Sherlock drawls, “I know a person who makes excellent pizzas.”

“Right then, let’s go order some pizza,” he suggest motioning towards the door and stairs. “Eat out or have it delivered?”

Anna worries her bottom lip, thinking about it as they make it to the ground floor. “Stay in.”

On their way up to their flat, Sherlock pull out his mobile and makes a call, apparently checking to see if a certain cook is in before placing their order, after checking with Anna to see what she’d like to eat.

“Today’s been more fun than I expected,” she tells them as she settles on the sofa.

He switches to his thera sight, glancing over her and happy to see that the healing seems to have taken without an issue. Not a shock, thera are naturally stronger healers than iota.

Blinking, he returns to his normal sight and heads towards the kitchen, thinking of getting something
to drink though he doesn’t really want tea right now. What else to drink? Milk or juice maybe, he knows Mouse stocked the fridge in preparation for Anna’s visit. He’s got a feeling that Daria has put her on orders to check the fridge weekly and make sure there is food in it. Sometimes the viper can be a protective mother hen.

He settles on some grape juice just as his cousin enters the room and goes for a cup.

“Are there any rules I need to know about so I don’t break?” she asks after picking the apple juice out of the fridge to pour.

He thinks about it for a moment, “No shifting in the flat. Or going in Sherlock’s lab without him.” He tries to figure if there is anything else but is mostly coming up blank. “Stick with one of us when in public. Don’t sneak out of the flat.”

She nods, bobbing her head with each rule than blinking at him rather owlishly as silence drags on.

Should there be more rules? She’s pretty self-contained. Not overly excitable from what he can tell. Well behaved. Or better behaved than he was at that age. But then, he had a rebellious streak, he’s pretty sure she hasn’t hit that point yet.

The silence is broken by the sound of the doorbell, for which he is thankful.

Before he even has a chance to head towards the stairs, Sherlock is on his way down them, which is weird, cause normally his bondmate leaves that sort of thing to him.

Shrugging, he grabs napkins and asks, Do I need to grab paper plates or does it come with some?

It comes with them, his love replies as he hears the front door close.

Taking the napkins into the living room, he drops them on the coffee table, sure that they will eat at it again, since that’s where they spend most of their meals. The table might not have had any experiments lately but he still doesn’t like eating on it for the most part.

Anna scouts over so there is room on the sofa for them, and then forward a bit so she can reach the table, happily bouncing in place the entire time as if her legs just can’t stop moving.

“Meat lovers special for the growing wolf,” his bondmate announces as he sets the box in the middle of the coffee table right in front of her, making her giggle. “Triple extra cheese with ham for the adult wolf,” Sherlock declares as he sets the second one down in front of him. “Cheese and pineapple with sausage for the family human.”

He snickers at his bondmate, grabbing a plate to use, though they really don’t need to use the plates since they each ended up with their own pizza.

“Thank you Cousin Sherlock.” Anna tells his bondmate as she opens her box and pulls a piece out.

It’s not surprising when his bondmate doesn’t answer. Social niceties are not Sherlock’s thing.

He turns on junk TV so they have background noise to listen to while eating, finding reruns he’s seen a thousand times and forgetting about it.

“This is really good!” She declares as she grabs a second piece after practically inhaling the first.

“Don’t eat it too fast, it’s not good for you.” He advises her with a chuckle, remembering when he used to do the same thing with her mum.
“I’ve got an appointment to see the real estate agent on to purchase a building for a clinic.” He tells them as he grabs another slice of pizza. “Friday I will speak with the various healers and mindhealers within the pack to see if they would like to join me in the endeavor. If so, I might be able to keep it open year round.”

Anna goes very still, watching him with worried eyes.

“It’s traditional, at least it is in the Watson Pack, for healers and healers-in-training to work on people, generally shifter-children without packs, to practice on. As both you and Jace are in training, I figured it would be get it set up ahead of time.” He explains, projecting calmness with his empathy. That’s something he’ll teach her next year since he is pretty sure it will take five or six years to fully train her since he won’t have access to her year round like his grandmum had with him.

“Oh,” she mutters, letting out the breath she was holding, “Why outsiders?”

“Because if the pack healers are doing their jobs, there won’t be many within the pack that needs healed.” He answers, remembering asking the same question when his grandmum explained it to him.

“That makes sense,” she hums, grabbing a fourth piece.

His bondmate studies him for a long time before nodding slowly, “It does.”

They finish their lunch without further discussion, the sounds of the TV filling the air around them. When they’re done, he puts all three pizzas in the fridge after carefully moving things around.

“Will the healers only use their gifts or will they use human ways as well?” She asks as she gets another cup of juice.

“Not all the healers in my pack have one of the three healing gifts,” he answers with a shrug.

She blinks at him before nodding. “Do those without the healing gift work with humans?” There is hesitation on the word human but otherwise it’s a perfectly smooth question.

“Some of the mindhealers,” he replies as he starts the water for tea. “I know most of them have stable practices, I still plan on seeing if they would be willing to work on this project with me.”

She nods again, worrying her lip again but not asking anything.

He doesn’t say anything else, instead he lets her process and think about it. Her pack isn’t like this pack, even at the most traditional, his uncle never tried stopping grandmum or the healing traditions. Of course, he’s moderately certain his uncle didn’t know that he was a thera, or that grandmum was one, or that their family has a long history of theras from both sides of the pack. He didn’t know until he was nearly an adult, and discovered that there were plenty of elite alpha theras in the past, all recorded carefully in the records, even if it’s been five hundred years since the last one controlled the pack.

Chapter End Notes

*waves* hiya folks! It's that time of year again where try to update at least 10 of my
WIPs for Christmas, if you have one in mind besides Seeking & Patron you’d like to see, feel free to tell me.

I look forward to any comments or reviews.

You can find me on twitter @jaimist0 and tumblr JaimiStoryTeller
Second Lesson

Chapter Notes

*waves* I almost forgot it was Wednesday until someone mentioned it to me, here's the next entry for the tale, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Anna’s POV

She didn’t want to take a day to do nothing with her gifts, not when she feels better than she can remember ever feeling. Despite that, she had because that’s what her cousin wanted, and she is supposed to be listening to him.

Then this morning she woke up feeling even better than yesterday, which got her musing as she sat in her bed, unexplainably happier than she’s been in years.

She’s confused by the fact her cousin says she self heals because why hasn’t her ear or stomach healed them? Wait, her cousin commented that her uncle only did a partial job healing, and because he left it not right, her body was trying to fix it unsuccessfully. Why did her uncle do that to her? Why did he ignore her when she said she had ear pains and headaches? He’s a healer. He’s not supposed to do that.

Biting her lip, she thinks about Cousin John’s other comment, that a pack with a proper healer of any sort would not have a lot of people who need to see a healer in training.

Before she came here to learn how to be a thera, that word still scares her, she thought her uncle was a perfectly fine healer. The majority of the pack is healthy and there are only a few people who have chronic illnesses. Now though, she has to wonder if that’s right. After all if he messed up on her ears and hearing, is it possible that he messed up elsewhere as well?

Well then, she’ll learn how to be the best healer possible and maybe the best alpha if she’s lucky. She likes the way this pack works. At least what she’s seen of it. She hadn’t originally wanted to be left her, but they have been trying to make her feel welcome and comfortable. That other pup, the viper one, was friendly.

Actually, it seems like her ability to mindspeak is getting better. Or maybe this pack is so good at it that it’s bleeding over and they’re actually the ones in control of it, they just make it easier for her connect and her mindspeech hasn’t improved.

Either way, she needs to learn more if she wants to be good as a thera.

Does she want to be a good thera? Yes. Yes she does. She wants to prove everyone who has ever said something bad about them wrong. She will prove them wrong by being the best possible healer she can.

Jumping out of bed, she quickly changes out of her pajamas and into jeans, t-shirt and sweater. Socks and shoes are last. Now to go tell her cousin she’s ready for more!
She bounds down the stairs two at a time, practically bursting into the sitting room where she finds Cousin Sherlock but not Cousin John.

“Where’s Cousin John?” she asks as she sniffs the air, noticing his scent is rather weak, like he’s gone.

“Eric and Aidan requested his presence. I think it’s about Cora.” He answers as he sets the laptop he has balanced on his lap aside. “You want to learn something.”

“Yes!” She agrees as she heads in the kitchen to find something to drink. She’s not feeling as hungry as she did yesterday. Yesterday it felt like she couldn’t get enough to eat.

Sherlock just hums in response.

How is she supposed to learn stuff if he’s not here? She wonders before chiding herself, he’s an alpha. Those duties come first always. She knows that, it’s the way her parents are too. Well, her dad anyways. Her mom is very affectionate and the one adult who has never acted like she’s weird.

“You know meditation,” he comments as he joins her in the kitchen.

Meditation? She thinks, oh the clearing and centering, yes. She can do that. She’s good at that. it’s one of the first things taught to a pup wanting to shift. At least it is in the pack she was born to, it doesn’t seem to be for the pups of this pack. Of course not all of them are actually pups, though she doesn’t know what the other species call their young. So she’ll keep using pups for now, cause that word she knows and gets.

“Well, how about we see if you can do the eyesight thing.” Sherlock suggests as he settles at the table.

“Eyesight thing?” she repeats back, not sure what that is. Of course he’s human, he might not know the name of it, just what it does from things Cousin John has said.

“I believe it is referred to as iota sight and thera sight, depending on which is being used.” He answers with a grin, “An experiment if you will.”

She settles in the other seat, watching and waiting to see what he suggests.

“John’s told Jace to focus on changing his vision to iota’s vision, it’s a change that allows you to see the general health of the person you’re looking at or a particular part like how bones are,” he muses, not yet telling her what the experiment is. “So why don’t you see if you can focus your gift on changing your eyes to see what my skull looks like?”

That’s a confusing one. How would she change her vision to do that? He said it’s focusing to see a particular thing. She can do that. Right?

Closing her eyes, she focuses on them, thinking about seeing bones, rather than skin and muscles. She needs to see the bones only. Slowly she opens them back up and jumps, losing her focus, her vision going back to normal.

“I did it!” She crows happily, even if she lost it almost immediately. It means she can do it again.
So she closes her eyes one more time, biting her lip and focusing. Determined that this time she won’t jump when she sees his bonds with the skin and muscle sort of like ghosts imposed over it.

Opening her eyes, she beams because she can see it. His bone and how it is knitted together, she can see small cracks that look like pieces of egg glued back together.

That actually makes her frown, why is it like that?

“Why are there glued cracks in your skull?” She demands, because there shouldn’t be glued cracks in his skull.

He grins, which looks really odd with her eyes working the way they currently are. “Those are from injuries when I was younger. I had a cousin who was not that gentle.”

“Oh,” she mutters as she closes her eyes because that’s beginning to sting, and lets them go back to normal. “I did it!” she repeats when she reopens them.

He nods, “You did, and excellently. You even lasted longer than I expected.”

“Lasted longer doing what than you expected?” her Cousin John asks as he enters the apartment.

“I looked at his bones of his head!” she answers jumping up and turning to face the living room. “He’s got glued cracks.”

“That’s what a natural healing looks like,” Cousin John tells her, joining them in the kitchen. “Why were you looking at the bones of his skull?”

She shifts foot to foot for a moment, bashfully answering, “I wanted to learn something new, but you weren’t here so he suggested an experiment.”

Laughing softly, her cousin gives her a quick hug, ruffling her hair and shaking his head. His scent is full of amusement. “Well then, I guess today we will work on the iota sight and using it to determine different factors. It can be used for a wide range of things,” he remarks calmly.

She sits back down, waiting and ready to see how this lesson will go. It takes all of her will power not to shift around in her seat, keep her feet from tapping on the chair as she swings her legs, and from drumming on the table.

“How did you see his skull?” Her cousin asks when he sits in the last seat at the table with tea cupped between his hands.

“I closed my eyes and thought about seeing bones instead of skin and muscle, and opened them up.” She answers promptly, leaning forward. “I jumped and lost it within seconds the first time cause I didn’t expect what I saw. But I was able to keep it for longer the second time. I lost it when my eyes started hurting.”

He nods slowly, “Let me show you what it looks like when I do it, then you can tell me if it was the same as what you did or not.”

“Okay!” she agrees, bouncing a bit.

She feels when he makes the connection, and hears him murmur, Close your eyes for a moment.
When I say go, open them. Okay?

Okay! She almost chirps.

Closing her eyes, she keeps them that way until they feel sort of warm and he tells her, Open them.

When she does as directed, Cousin Sherlock looks way different. She can’t see the shadows of his skin or muscles, all she sees is the bone, and in better detail than she had when doing it on her own. It’s rather awesome, it’s like looking at one of those skeleton skulls that she has seen on the web for sale.

“That’s way different,” she mumbles, “There’s none of the skin or muscles, just bones, and a lot clearer than when I did it.”

It feels odd when he disconnects from her, even weirder that her vision sticks with it.

“How?” She demands, trying not to blink unless she loses it. “I can’t feel you but it’s sticking!”

“Go ahead and blink, you’ve got the correct pathway now, so you will be able to switch back and forth at will.” Cousin John tells her.

Despite the fact she doesn’t want to, she does cause her eyes are feeling rather dry, she’s happy and bounces in place when she opens them and she can still see his skeleton, rather than the outside wrapping.

“It works!” she cheers happily. “Is there other ways to see a person?”

Chuckling, he nods, and boy does that look weird when she’s seeing bone, answering, “Yes, there is. Take a break for a few minutes then we will move on to the next type of seeing.”

“We should record how long it takes you to adapt, what your impressions are, and how it makes you feel for scientific reasons,” Cousin Sherlock suggests. “I even have a notebook you can use to record it.”

She likes that idea, she can do that during the periods that she’s resting since it doesn’t require using her gift.

“Yes!” She exclaims, almost coming out of her seat as she bounces.

This is definitely going to be fun. She’ll show them, all of them.

Chapter End Notes

Reviews and comments are awesome, I appreciate everyone of them left.
John’s POV

It’s dinner time when he declares that lessons are done for today.

Anna protests, because she wants to keep going, but he’s rather determined that they will not work on anything else strenuous for the evening. Of course she pouts, she’s on a roll and wants to keep going, but he knows that it isn’t healthy for pups to overwork their gifts, particularly when learning to use them.

“Why don’t you call your parents and update them?” He suggests as an idea starts to for regarding the pack pups and his cousin.

Almost immediately she cheers up, heading up to her room to do so, since she doesn’t carry the phone with her at all times.

While she’s doing that, he pulls his mobile out and calls his aunt.

“Yes dear?” she answers the phone, her chipper voice a bit distracted.

“Hullo aunt,” he replies, chuckling softly. “I was thinking about doing a bit of a sleepover for some of the pack pups, just so Anna can have some company that’s not us, and wondered if you would mind hosting?”

There is a brief pause before she answers, “I’d love to, you know I enjoy spending time with the pups.” she pauses for a moment before suggesting, “Let’s make it a weekend, bring her over tonight, and then pick her up sunday evening.”

“Are you sure?” It’s been awhile since the last time she hosted the pups and he remembers her being exhausted afterwards. Although she loved having all the pups there and the pups love being around her because of her easy going personality.

“Of course. Besides, it doesn’t hurt for her to get exposure to other species and pups with a wide variety of talents.” She declares happily. “You bring her over, with or without dinner, and I’ll get a hold of the other parents to see if their pups would like to come.”

“Alright, thanks Aunt Sandra,” he agrees, knowing disagreeing wouldn’t do him much use, even if he was to do so as the alpha.

“That’s a good idea,” Sherlock comments, head tipping slightly to the side, “A very good idea since she only has the one friend among her pack.” His bondmate hesitates, almost muttering, “I know what that’s like.”

He hugs his bondmate, kissing him softly and not saying anything since there really isn’t anything that can be said.

Anna comes skipping down a little bit later, her scent a mixture of happiness and sadness.

“Everything alright?” he asks as he turns towards her, partly letting go of his bondmate but not
completely.

“Mom’s excited for me, dad not so much,” she grumbles as she throws herself into his chair.

He nods, not really surprised by that news, he doesn’t really like his cousin-in-bond.

“Aunt Sandra is hosting a pups weekend, I figured I would see if you want to have dinner with us, or have dinner there?” He queries as he studies her body language and scent.

“Do I have to go?” She groans, staring at him with wide eyes.

“Yes, pup weekends with her are awesome,” he answers with a nod, remembering all the times he stayed at the pack home with her when he was a kid and teenager. His aunt has long been a favorite family member beside his grandmum.

Anna pouts, not responding and not moving.

“Go grab a change of clothes for the weekend,” he tells her, motioning towards the stairs, “And your phone if you want.”

Huffing angrily, she storms off, “Fine.”

Are you sure this is the best idea? Sherlock asks him as she leaves the room.

Yeah, it’ll be fine. Besides, once she realizes she’s at the pack house, and thus where I told her she can work on her shape changing, she’ll probably perk right up. He answers with a mental snicker.

Good point, his bondmate remarks.

A little bit later she comes stomping downstairs, and he texts the taxi company that services the pack for a request.

He decides to let her eat at the pack home instead of with them.

It’s a little over an hour when the cab pulls onto the property. There are already a few cars in front of the house, so after she grabs her bag, he thanks the crow and bids him goodnight.

They’ve barely closed the cab door when Mia comes running out of the pack home, happily exclaiming, “Come on Anna, we’re making cookies!” Her slender scale speckled fingers latch onto the young wolf’s arm and tugs her after.

Chuckling, he grins at Sherlock and they follow not far behind.

Inside the Pack Home there is organized chaos. He can smell and hear roughly half of the pups that are the same age as his cousin. There seems to be some sort of activity going on in the kitchen. Going by what Mia said, it has to do with baking, but he’d wager that’s not the only thing as his aunt is good at organizing kids into different activities.

“Are you staying for dinner dears?” His aunt asks as she appears beside them, her apron covered in flour and a wide smile curling her lips.

“No, we were just stopping in to say hello,” he answers before his bondmate can.

Sherlock arches one dark brow at him and grins.

“Enjoy your night boys,” she tells them before nodding and vanishing back into the bowels of the
house.

*We have the next thirty-six hours to ourselves, car to have dinner and see if there’s any big cases that needs us or spend time at home?* He queries as they step back outside and he changes into a wolf.

“Yes,” his bondmate hisses happily, excitement filling the air around them.

*We’ll be by sunday afternoon Anna,* he tells his cousin, *if there is any problems, you can always call us or have Aunt Sandra call us.*

He doesn’t get a response but he definitely doesn’t expect one. Now then, time to focus on his love for a bit.

Chapter End Notes

Comments and reviews are well loved!
Pyotr is shocked by how many types of pups there are in the pack

*waves* I was going to post this yesterday but life and my mental health, didn't go so well, so here it is instead. I hope everyone enjoys.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Pyotr’s POV

He’s on his way to the kitchen to speak with Aunt Sandra about Anna when he hears her answer the phone. To give her a privacy he waits until he stops hearing her talk before finishing his trek into the kitchen.

“Ah, Pyotr, excellent timing, be a dear and tell the others it’s a pups weekend.” She requests as she goes through her phone.

He nods, going to do so, and sighing in aggravation at himself that he forgot to ask her about Anna. He really should know what’s going on with his niece. It’s been almost a week and he since he last saw her. How is he supposed to protect her if he doesn’t see her?

Pushing that aside for the moment, he delivers the news to his housemates, finding Mia’s excitement levels a bit much. Why is she so excited?

He’s halfway down the stairs to the main floor when he hears the first car pull up. Frowning, he goes to see who’s pulling up, only to have the door open by a petite woman with laughing eyes.

“Oh hello,” she greets him, “New to the pack? I’m Somoni, these three are my pups Satomi, Saki and Kamin.”

“Hello,” he replies, with the hints of a frown.

“You must not be used to the pup weekend,” she comments with a smile, waving the three children in, “Over the next few hours there will be almost all the pups under the age of sixteen showing up. Sometimes the ones between sixteen and nineteen will come as well, however I don’t think that this is one of those days.”

He nods slowly, not saying anything, his eyes flicking past her to the fact there are several more cars pulling up. So there is about to be a bunch of pups in the house?

“Remember to behave for Aunt Sandra,” a tallish woman with umber hair advises three children as they close the car doors.
“Yes mum,” they chorus, each carrying a backpack or tossing it over their shoulder.

A short, dark skinned, fluffy haired man cheerfully calls out, “Hello stranger!” Then stops the two kids with him to tell them, “Don’t cause trouble and behave for Aunt Sandra.”

“Okay dad,” the smaller one agrees, giving him a quick hug.

The taller one is almost as tall as he is, chimes, “Don’t we always?” before also hugging him.

He steps away from the door, heading towards the kitchen where he is sure Aunt Sandra is at. “What’s a pups weekend?” He asks her curiously as he watches her get a bunch of cookie pans out.

“It’s a weekend for me to have all, or close to all, the pups in the pack home,” She answers merrily pausing to study the supplies piled on the kitchen cart. “Flour.” She mutters before turning her attention back to him. “John asked if he could bring Anna by and invite a few pups, I decided to make it a pup weekend.”

Relief washes through him, though he would be hard pressed to explain why he feels so relieved. Maybe because he is used to seeing her daily and since being here, he’s barely seen her. Maybe because he misses having family around him. He doesn’t know. He’s just happy he’ll get a chance to see her.

“Why have several people welcomed me to the pack?” It’s been a nagging question since the first person said hello.

“We have members from all around the world, they probably just assume you’re one of the new people,” she replies as she pushes the cart into the large meeting room.

How many people do they have that shouldn’t be pack? He wonders as he considers retreating to his room and decides against it. They’re going to be here at least six months, it’s probably a good idea to get to know these shifters that will be around his niece. Besides, what a pack’s young are like often show what the pack is like. While they were all well behaved last year during the two day visit, what’s to say that wasn’t just a show for the strangers in their mists? Perhaps they will act different now that they think he’s one of them.

-oOo-

Sandra’s POV

As she watches Pyotr retreat for a second time, she shakes her head and sighs. She’d lay odds because his entire pack lives on one property they don’t have pup weekends like this. He’s definitely going to be in for a surprise in that case.

Right then, she’s got the stuff for cookies and cake out, now to go put it all in the pack room. Two of the three Lestrade sisters are going to be in attendance, they can help her teach the others how to make both if they’d like. She knows that Sofia’s ability to make friends is rather limited, but it would be good for her to bond with some her pack mates like this. It will also give her niece a chance to get to know her other cousins.

Anna’s going to be here for at least six months, however she knows that won’t be enough time to learn everything she needs to. So they will either have to come up for practices she can do while in Russia and come back next spring, or she’ll have to stay here.

She can still remember that her mum once said once a gift begins the training, it is not wise to halt or pause it, because the gift will continue to develop regardless and it can be a bit much. She wonders if
her nephew remembers that. If not, as one of his advisors, she is going to have to remind him. The plans for Anna will be adjusted accordingly.

If for some reason Emma or John refuse to adapt, well, she hasn’t helped run this house for the better part of her life to not know how to make sure things are done properly. Besides, she’s got a feeling that this mixed pack is a better place for her niece than that wolf pack she’s from.

Actually, she should make sure that Anna and Mia get to spend some quality time together. She should also see if Beth would be willing to discuss the differences in healers among crocodiles, since she knows crocodiles hold thera in high regard, unlike wolves.

For the moment, the pups are starting to file in, their parents delivering them to the pack home, gently touching her mind to check them in before sending them to the pack nursery or library.
A Case, Chat & Contemplation

Chapter Notes

The actual sleep over will be covered in a one-shot as it didn't fit within the story itself when I was writing it.

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

John’s POV

They don’t stop to visit with his aunt when they drop Anna off, though they do say hello to everyone they see.

He has just shifted so they can head back to the city when Sherlock gets a text message from Greg.

Well there goes the relaxing kid free weekend, he thinks mentally chuckling.

“There’s a case,” his bondmate declares, “an interesting one.”

*Where to love?* He queries, cocking his head to the side and waiting for a response.

Sherlock rattles off directions as he climbs on his back, tucking the phone away.

He shields them, taking off as soon as his love is settled, enjoying the way the outskirts of the city blends slowly into the city proper. He follows the directions he’s given, enjoying the game of chicken he plays with vehicles that don’t even realize that he’s there. They are within hearing distance when he finds a spot to stop, letting Sherlock off before shifting back.

Exhilaration still rushing through him, he grabs his bondmate’s hand, tugging the younger man closer and kissing him long and hard.

His dark haired human kisses him back before using their still intertwined fingers to pull him along towards the crime scene.

He watches, still as amazed as the first time even years later as his bondmate scans the scene and rattles off details.

He’s startled when Anderson joins the forensics crew, though he is also pleased to see that.

Following the Fall, the human was one of the only people that still believed in his bondmate. Yes, the newspaper articles that could have ruined him were stopped from printing by Eric, but that didn’t stop some of the other speculation when it was declared that he was actually dead from a suicide.

Then there is the fact that he knows that Donovan, Anderson and Anderson’s wife Marie eventually had a conversation about their relationship. Not that he needed to know that, but he was still informed by the black cobra who picked up on her thoughts during a case when the Tracker had been dealing with a different situation. He doesn’t mind poly relationships, hell, there are some species of bird within the shifters that encourage poly relationships, but he doesn’t take well to cheating. Probably because wolves only mate once.

They spend the next eighteen hours on the go. Sherlock is his usual moody and brilliant case self, he
watches with unabashed pleasure, and Greg seems to find it a bit startling. By the time the case is done, he wonders how Anna is doing for the moment.

While the cops are arresting the suspect and his bondmate is rattling off where all the proof is, Greg appears at his elbow, having left the intel gathering to Donovan.

“Thank you,” the older man murmurs, eyes flickering between him and the sergeant.

He nods, pretty sure it’s due to sending Nathan he’s being thanked, though he would have done the same thing for any shifter or shifter child in that situation.

“How’s it been having a pup around?” His friend asks, changing the topic.

“I keep wondering how grandmum dealt with me and everything else,” he admits lips barely twitching into a smile. “She’s very energetic and seems to vary from happy and excited to feeling rather down. She doesn’t have any health reasons for the wide disparity, but I suspect it’s because of how different our packs are, and the fact her dad’s an arse.”

Greg nods, scent shifting to understanding and exasperation as they continue to watch the cops and Sherlock. “I’m happy he’s home and back to doing something he clearly loves, I just wish he didn’t take pleasure in terrorizing my team sometimes.”

His snort of amusement shifts into a chuckle as he just nods. His bondmate can definitely be heavy handed when dealing with people he sees as fools. “Would he be himself if he didn’t delight in calling them fools?” He queries, smothering another chuckle at his friend’s harried expression.

“So far Sofia is looking forward to the pup weekend, Madeline was a bit more hesitant.” His packmate tells him, “I think that Sofia enjoys spending time with Aunt Sandra more than she does the other pups.”

“Sofia is looking forward to the pup weekend, Madeline was a bit more hesitant.” His packmate tells him, “I think that Sofia enjoys spending time with Aunt Sandra more than she does the other pups.”

He nods in understanding, “Yeah, Aunt Sandra has that effect on people. It’s why I am happy she runs the pack home, she’s good at keeping things semi orderly even when chaotic and is rarely flustered in a way most people wish they were.”

“Think we should rescue the newbies?” Greg asks with a chuckle as a young cop asks a question that seems to send Sherlock off on one of his tangents.

There’s an unusual reaction to that, instead of the normal offended or embarrassed expression on the young man’s face, there seems to be fascination instead.

Oh that won’t do, he thinks, realizing that he’s feeling jealous when he starts to stride over.

Right, apparently he’s not as in control of that as he thought. Great, more reactions he doesn’t need to be having. Damn it, he thought they were past that since it’s been a few months since the last time he felt like that. Apparently not as much as he thought.

Shoving those thoughts aside, he focuses on the pups. Anna’s getting to spend the entire weekend with pack pups. He knows she doesn’t have a lot of friends among her own pack, but hopes that she will make friends within this one. He’s pretty sure that she’s on the way to being friends with Mia. Sofia would be a good friend, if she can handle the fact the jackal thinks faster than most kids her age, and is always on the go, whether physically or mentally. Joan would be a good friend as they are both wolves with strong healing gifts, though Joan’s is focused on mindhealing, even though she hasn’t actually presented it fully yet.

“Let’s get dinner,” Sherlock suggests, drawing him from his mind, and reminding him that they had
plans prior to the case. It’s a really good thing that his cousin is currently with his aunt at the pack home, otherwise he’d feel like an arse for not spending more time with her.

Chapter End Notes

Publishing schedule, I will update one or two stories on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Tumblr about my writing JaimiStoryTeller

I love reviews, comments, and any other sort of communication, feel free to stop in to say hi
Sherlock’s POV

They get take away and head home, still in a rather cheerful mood, catching a cab since they have the food with them.

He’s delighted by the case they just finished, he hadn’t actually expected it to go so fast. While he prides himself on the fact he sees and notices things others miss, he almost missed the clue because it was so obvious it didn’t initially seem connected. In the past that would have annoyed him, even angered or infuriated him, but he’s getting better about accepting the fact he isn’t always right. He’s still right far more often than a lot of people.

“Enjoyed yourself I see,” John teases him, bumping their hips against each other as they head up the stairs to their flat.

“Yes,” he agrees, dropping the thag with the take away as he turns towards the blonde, crowding him against the door frame to kiss him senseless. “I did and am going to.”

“Dinner first,” his bondmate gasps, delighting him. He’s the one who does that, not some other person.

He smirks as he steps back, taking in all of the details about John from the mussed clothing to the dark eyes to the fact his jeans are a bit tighter than normal. Excellent, how better to spend their last kid free night for a few weeks than sharing in each other?

The wolf grabs the bag as they step past the door and head over to the coffee table they often eat at since John doesn’t actually like the kitchen table.

Once everything is laid out and there are drinks for both of them, they dig in. They take turns feeding each other occasional bites, simply enjoying spending time together as they do so. It’s a quiet sort of intimacy. There’s laughter and smiles, kissing, which he definitely encourages, and teasing.

By the time they get to the dessert, there is more attention being paid to each other, hands caressing and touching whatever’s in reach, than there actually is either of them eating their food.

He doesn’t pay any attention to where the clothes goes as they undress each other, more focused on touching all that warm golden skin.

“Bed,” John growls, kissing him hard, all teeth and tongue.

Groaning, he pushes off the floor, dragging the smaller man with him, even though he’s pretty sure that his bondmate is physically stronger.

They keep touching and kissing, licking and nibbling on each other as they stumble to their bedroom, just barely remembering to shut the door behind them as they cross the room and fall into bed.

“Sherlock,” it’s a low growl wrapped in a drawn out moan.

He nips at John’s collarbone, nuzzling it as he traces along, stopping when he gets to the scar and
spotting the fact it’s lessened again. He takes his time, learning its new contours before continuing along the way. He likes using all of his senses like this when he explores his love. Tastes how his skin tastes depending on the sort of mood they were in before. Smell the how the sweat changes based on which form his wolf was in prior for the majority of the day or after lots of physical activity. Enjoy the way muscles shift and move beneath his fingertips. Delight in the visual reactions. It’s perfect, an experiment that is never ending and always intriguing.

He loves the fact they take turns. Sometimes one of them takes their time practically worshipping the others body. Other times, it’s fluid and they roll around touching and tasting until they find a good rhythm that works for them.

This time he’s the one doing the touching, the worshipping, and he’s loving every minute of it. It’s the perfect way to end a case. They can have a hormonal rush and fall asleep wrapped up in each other.

He chuckles when he realizes John’s already grabbed the lube, dropping it on the bed beside them while he had been enjoying his senses on his bondmate.

Picking it up, he pops the lid and applies a liberal amount to his fingers before he sets to opening his wolf up. Taking his time delighting in the sounds it draws out of John. by the time he’s sure his love is ready, the blonde is a panting mess of need.

He moans as he slicks himself and lines them up, the slow ease forward always makes him want to thrust hard and bury himself, but he enjoys teasing himself and John far too much to actually do so.

Slow rolls of his hips gradually speed up. He delights in every noise he can drag out of his bondmate, delighting in the breathless moans and gasps of pleasure. He’s not careful as he slips a hand between them, stroking John in time with his thrusts until he loses the ability to do so.

All too soon it seems the pleasure builds until they both rush past the crescendo. His love first, the tightening and arching of the older man’s body sending him over his own edge to collapse tiredly on his bondmate.

John carefully rolls him to the side as he slips free, sliding from the bed to get a flannel to clean them. Really, not necessary, he thinks as he drifts off to sleep. They’ll take a shower when they wake up anyways.

-oOo-

John’s POV

He’s pretty sure that he’s running on adrenaline by the time the case is done and they have dinner. How Sherlock has so much energy he doesn’t know. His body responds to his bondmates, even as his mind slows down and focuses only on the pleasure of touching and being touched.

The way their bodies work together gives him another burst of energy, enough to enjoy the love making and slow build up of Sherlock delighting in his senses, delighting in his body, as his dark haired love enjoys himself.

By the time they come, they’re both getting tired and he uses his empathy to share how it feels, creating a feedback loop between them that builds their pleasure ever higher until they are both a writhing, gasping mess.

Afterwards, while his love drifts, he fetches a warm flannel to clean them before shifting them
around and under the blankets to sleep. They’ll wake in a few hours, spend some time cuddling, and then he’ll clean up the flat before it’s time to fetch Anna from the pack home. For now, well, he’s rather comfortable, and it has been nineteen hours since the last time he had a chance to relax, it’s definitely time to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading and commenting, you can find me on tumblr under JaimiStoryTeller and twitter at @jaimist0

This year I am doing Fandom Trumps Hate
Chapter Notes

*waves* I had a long day with spotty internet before I left for my best friends place to celebrate her birthday. Hope you all enjoy

John’s POV

Anna is exhausted but smells better than she has for most of the visit when she gets home on Sunday evening. She doesn’t eat dinner with them, instead she goes to bed and stays there until more. Apparently it was exhausting for her.

Of course, every one of the pack children is healthy, he’s made sure of that when he accepts them into the pack. Then he often checks them during pack meetings. Eric also tracks them, those his gifts tend to find mind problems, rather than physical ones, though he does catch some of the mental difficulties caused by them.

So she couldn’t have gotten exhausted through her gift.

That means it must have been from all of the activity. Why would being around other pups be so exhausting? He knows his cousin said she didn’t have a lot of friends, do they avoid her? If she’s anything like him, a traditionalist pack could cause her stress because it would tax her empathy. On the other hand, a pack like his might tax her empathy because she’d always wonder when she’d misstep.

Well, she’ll learn soon enough that is not something she has to worry about here.

For now, she can get some rest.

He rolls out of bed an hour before he’s due to meet the real estate agent. He’ll make them breakfast, not that he expects Sherlock to actually eat a proper breakfast. That’s not what his bondmate does after all, but he eats better now than when they first got together, so he sees it as a win.

He’s in the middle of making eggs when Anna enters the kitchen, beelining for the fridge.

He pulls a cup down for her, and smiles at her mumbled thanks.

“I’ve got an appointment with a real estate agent today, would you like to come with me?” he asks as he puts the eggs on the plates, finishing them up.

She doesn’t answer while she eats.

“Thank you cousin,” she eventually states, her scent gets a bit murky, like she’s having a hard time deciding whether to say something. “Are pup weekends always like that?”

He nods, “Mostly. Aunt Sandra’s been doing them as long as I can remember, Uncle didn’t always appreciate them, but knew not to argue with her on it. It’s a tradition that grandmum participated in as well.”
She nods. “Your pack has a lot of pups.” Her scent is on the confused side as she worries her lower lip again.

“Yeah,” he agrees, “That happens when a pack is successful. It also happens when several packs blend together.”

“Not all of them smell like wolves,” she comments, brow furrowing. “I mean, of the ones that don’t have second forms.”

“Well, we have shifter children, gifted and humans in our pack, along with the shifter pups.” He replies as he stands to shove his plate in the sink. He’s slightly surprised his bondmate hasn’t left their room yet. *Everything alright, love?*

*Yes, I’m just thinking,* Sherlock answers, *We had a very pleasant weekend and my gaits is not normal.*

He smirks, wiping the expression off his face when he spots Anna’s wide eyes. Right, she probably doesn’t want to know any more than her sense of smell is already informing her. Though it is surprising that his bondmate is being either considerate or embarrassed.

He’s a bit startled when she says, “Okay,” while putting her dishes in the sink.

It takes him a minute to figure out what she’s agreeing to.

“Go get dressed then, we need to get going,” he tells her, motioning towards the stairs to her room.

“Okay,” she sound a bit more excited as she heads to her room.

Returning to his room, he strides over to their bed, leaning in to kiss his love before querying, “Want me to heal it?”

“No,” Sherlock murmurs, kissing him again.

“We’ll be back later, or you can come join us,” he tells his bondmate.

His dark haired human hums, snuggling back into the bedding.

He gets changed then joins Anna in the living room. He texts on one of the cab drivers to get a ride, and as they exit the outside door, the cab is pulling up.

“Hi Frank,” he greets the crow, before rattling off the address.

“Hullo John, how’s it going?” The crow replies with a flash of a smile in the rearview mirror.

“Decent, how’s the kids?” He queries as they drive through the city.

“Melissa is starting ballet next week and Tony is starting in the shifter school during the next term,” Frank answers happily. “Cari wanted me to extend her thanks for the reference to the school.”

He smiles, relaxing into the seat.

“What school?” Anna asks quietly, eyes darting between him and the crow.

“The local shifter’s academy,” he explains softly, “that’s where the shifters of the city send their pups, but there are more pups than classes available, so a lot of them have waiting lists. Some packs have automatic acceptance and can give references for those who don’t.”
“Oh,” she mutters, nodding slowly.

The car comes to a stop, and Frank comments, “Text me when you’re done, yeah?”

“Okay Frank, ta,” he replies as he opens the door.

The two of them slip out, Anna’s nose twitching as she glances about. “What exactly is this place?”

“An old clinic, one shut down because of budget cuts,” he answers as he scans the area with all of his senses and his empathy.

“Mr. Watson?” a short, portly man with just a whiff of gifted in him, asks as he approaches.

“Good morning Mr. Onion,” he replies, drawing his senses back into a human’s range.

“Right then, this building has been up for sale since it was closed last year after discovering there is a leak in the roof. The sellers are willing to fix it, they just haven’t had all of the funds necessary to do so. It’s spacious, and the equipment comes with it,” the human tells him as he unlocks the door and waves them in.

He steps in, instantly pleased that he drew his senses back, the musty scent is rather strong and a glance at his young cousin shows she hasn’t quite figured that out yet.

*Like this,* he comments as he shows her how to pull her senses back.

It takes her a moment to catch on, once she does, she dials them down lower than human range for hearing and scents, which he can understand.

He doesn’t really pay attention as they look through the building, instead he listens for insect activity, dripping water, and animal movement. He slowly expands on his sense of smell, seeking traces of chemicals or molds. He pays attention to the equipment, most of which is older, some of it in need of repair, other things he is uncertain of.

It is spacious as its got a finished basement, full first through third floor, and a half floor attic. Most the rooms are decent sized, though there are a few that are a bit small. That’s not really a problem since he has several contractors in the pack between the Watson and the Devon wolf-children.

When they get back to the front door, he turns towards the human, smiling as he states, “We’ll take it.”

“Are you sure?” Mr. Onion blurs out, eyes a bit wide and scent shocked.

“Yes,” he hums, reaching along the pack link to a rarely used link to his solicitor. Lightly brushing against it with his empathy, to let the Gifted man know he’d like a word. “My solicitor will be in touch later this week with all the documentation.”

Breaking out in a wide smile, the human declares, “I’ll be looking forward to it! It’s been a pleasure to meet you!”

He doesn’t get a chance to respond before the portly man is walking away humming to himself.

“Want to walk for a bit to clear your senses?” He asks Anna, glancing over at her.

“Yes!” she shouts, cheeks turning pink. “Er, yes please cousin.”

He chuckles, nodding and motioning towards the direction the flat is in.
Third Lesson

Chapter Notes

*waves* Hi folks, due to my previous computer crashing and screwing up my files, I will probably miss next week but should be back the week after as I only have parts of the next chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

John’s POV

The week passes in a bit of a blur. He works with Anna on her ability to control her sight since Sherlock started her down that path. It wasn’t what he wanted to work on next. However, since she did go down that path, the best choice is for her to understand exactly how it works and how to control it. Stress can trigger a change in sight, and when there is a wide variety available, and some can be a bit unsettling, it’s better not to have that happen in public.

By friday and time for the pack meeting, she’s got it down pretty well. She can vary between the different types of sight, though she doesn’t know exactly what each type is used for or what she is actually seeing. That will come later, as she learns the different parts of the body.

Friday morning they start what he had planned on for his first intentional lesson, learning to tell the difference between empathy, healing gift, and telepathy for sensory input. It also reveals exactly why she was exhausted on Sunday. Whenever she’s not actively focused on something, her senses spread wide.

He notices during one of their breaks that she’s getting tireder than she should be. Senses should be second nature to a shifter with early waking gifts.

A little careful snooping in her mind, and he has his answer as to why. She doesn’t filter the way most shifters do. She’s not quite as bad as Jace was when he first started learning after his abilities were unbound, but she’s definitely in an odd spot for a nine year old.

Of course, if she had any subconscious idea about being a thera, she could have been self binding by suppressing that side of her nature and only allowing the parts that were praised out. Not that it would have worked long term. She would have come across a healing where she couldn’t control her gift and died from it.

It’s tempting to put an eroding barrier on her senses, so she can learn to control them through thought rather than instinct but that makes him rather uncomfortable. Instead he decides to show her what it feels like for him using each type of sense, and how they affect his other senses. He takes her through it step by step. By the time they are done, she’s swaying in her seat, eyes drooping.

Carefully he scoops her up, carrying her upstairs to her room and laying her on the bed under the covers.

Reaching with his mind for his aunt, he draws her attention before requesting, *Please send Pyotr to the flat to watch over Anna during the pack meeting this evening.*
Of course, is something wrong? She replies with worry tinting the connection.

No, she’s just not used to using her gifts intentionally, or her senses for that matter. I think she’s been suppressing, so now she has to unlearn bad habits and it’s wearing her out, he explains, knowing his aunt will get it better than most since she is the pack historian along with gamma.

Ah yes, that can be particularly tricky for those with stronger than average gifts, she hums thoughtfully, feeling distracted, I’ll send him on his way here shortly. It’ll be best if I call one of the crows to deliver him.

He mentally nods, Thank you Aunt Sandra.

Of course dear, she replies before the line goes almost mute between them.

Right then, they’ll have to spend some time on working with her senses. Actually, he rises from his chair, not sure when he settled in it, and heads over to the bookshelf. He’ll give her some non-gift research to work on. His grandmum made him learn all of the bones, not always by their scientific names, but by their function in the body. Since she’s already started with her sight abilities, this will be good for her to work on.

Settling at the desk with the book and his laptop, he makes a page of questions based on the information within for her to look up. He doesn’t expect her to learn it all at once. Instead it is something they will come back to. There are more questions on the page than he thinks she will be able to fill out in detail in one evening. After printing it off, he settles the book, sheet of questions, notebook for her to write the answers in, and a collection of pens so she can pick which one she wants to use.

It’s probably a good thing that he got a lot of supplies for her use before this entire venture began.

Wait a moment, he reaches once more for his aunt.

Need something else? She’s a bit distracted, probably working on figuring out who will go where and what not.

Do you know if the notebooks grandmum had me work in are stored anywhere? He asks her, feeling mildly foolish for not remembering them sooner. He started when he first started his lessons. He had one for assignments to work with, and another to journal his thoughts so he could process them.

Of course, they’re in the vault, just like hers are. Aunt Sandra replies with the impressions of a smile. The only people allowed to access the vault are the alpha pair, previous alphas, and the records keeper and apprentice. Not because the information shouldn’t be shared but because the majority of the documents and files within the vault cannot be replaced.

He muses on that for a few seconds before querying, Any suggestions on how to copy them?

Amusement feels the link, Well yes John, in the past it was done by hand. Now it can be done by photographing them or scanning them in carefully.

Great! I need to see mine then, all of them, so I can go through them to see what I can do to teach Anna, he comments, feeling a bit relieved that he remembers them.

I’ll get a few of the wolf children to help me, she informs him. Right now I am looking for an apprentice to train. That way, I can eventually be support rather than primary.

Thank you aunt, he tells her again.
His mind quickly turns back to the lessons, both the ones regarding how Anna sees and how her senses work. He’s pretty sure he didn’t miss anything with either, but it will be good to look back on some of the old lessons that he learned. It’s been twenty years since he was a student learning to control his gifts, he’s sure he’s bound to have missed a few things. The key is figuring out what and correcting his missteps.

Biting his lip, he realizes he’ll need to ask Sherlock not to do any more experiments like the vision on. While that one ended up being minor in the grand scheme of things, it had the potential to go horribly wrong.

Okay then, first up, make sure that she is retaining the information as she learns it, have her practice her sight and senses. Eventually she will need to learn to combined her physical senses with her gift based senses. First though, might as well make sure she has control of them.

Returning to his computer, he saves the questions and closes it down. He’ll go check on his bondmate downstairs, then give the bookwork one last glance through to make sure he didn’t miss anything.

Apparently the third lesson is going to be the lesson he has an epiphany on. At least it wasn’t far later into the training. That definitely could have made things a lot more complicated had it happened deeper into them.

Right now he’s rather thankful for Aunt Sandra and all the pack historians who kept the various journals and documents, they’ll definitely be a lot of help.

Chapter End Notes

Reviews are well appreciated!
Sherlock’s POV

He finds Anna’s exhaustion levels confusing, though he will never say so aloud and tries to keep those thoughts to himself. He can’t remember ever wanting to sleep so much as a child. Since finding cause and effect is a large part of deduction, he decides to apply it to the young wolf.

It doesn’t take him much to realize that large groups of people, using her gifts, and when she gets overwhelmed all lead to exhaustion. He also realizes that all of those tie together because of the use of all of her senses.

Why would using her senses make her exhausted? It doesn’t make sense to him. Using his senses don’t leave him exhausted.

Except.

What about those early years when his notice of things drove him to drugs just to slow down his mind. To keep him from feeling like he was coming apart at the seams. Isn’t it the same thing? Yes, he doesn’t have the heightened senses of a wolf, but he definitely picks up on a lot more than most people he has come across do.

Oh.

Well how did he learn to deal with them? To filter them out, maybe it could be useful for her?

He developed a snarky temperament so people would leave him alone. He categorizes and organizes everything into lists. He forces himself to forget things that he finds unimportant or bothersome. He rarely listens to other people, thinking that he is nearly always right, and they are just misinformed or ignorant. He does experiments, tests, whatever application of the scientific method he can come up with.

That might not work for her, he thinks, and truthfully it hasn’t always worked for him.

He understands what it is like to not want to do anything because everything is too much. For the most part he’s past that, but he still has days where the only thing he can do is play his violin as he processes.

Do all shifters have to learn methods of dealing with their senses or are some of them better at it than others on instinct? Are the methods of distancing himself and processing different than what a shifter does? Could any of the methods of a shifter actually help him? He’s not actually sure what they do, though he knows mediation, or finding their center is a part of it.

He should talk to John about it. He doesn’t want to however. Maybe he should talk to Daria about it? No, wait, she’s a physical healer, not a mind healer. So that’d be Jeffery. He doesn’t really know the wolf however, they haven’t had a lot of interactions past hellos.

He stares off into space as he considers the options. He doesn’t really like any of them to be truthful. But then he hates admitting he doesn’t know something or needs help.
Does he need help? Not like he used to. That first time they touched in the flat, when Lestrade and his team was doing a drug bust, John had purged the urge to use drugs from his system. They didn’t actually discuss it until months later. But he had felt it, the small differences that add up so fast. Of course, it left him in a bind, because it was a coping mechanism he knew would work. Nicotine is not nearly as effective.

Drawing himself from his mind, he realizes he’s been absently playing the violin for most of the morning. He had only partly listened to the instructions going on.

Putting the violin down, he heads towards their room, deciding that maybe he should talk to Jeffery about it. He can do that now, before the pack meeting, well, more exact here shortly before the pack meeting.

It’s while he’s getting dressed that another person he could talk to, one who actually understands because of his own form of overload would be Eric.

Pausing just inside the bedroom door he debates which would be better. Probably Eric, as they are more alike, at least, apart from their species.

Eric? He queries, certain that the cobra will hear him.

Yes? It washes over his mind like a cool breeze or thin sheet of ice, sending a shiver down his spine. A moment later the link shifts, no longer feeling so cold.

How do you control your senses? He asks as he walks over to the bed and settles on the edge of it. He had forgotten how nerve wracking the cobra can be.

Very carefully, there’s different tricks based on species. I’m a serpent so my strongest senses are actually taste and scent blurred together. Eric answers, showing him at the same time. It feels as if he is living through the lessons.

Some of it could be useful for him, but his senses don’t actually work in the same manner so he doesn’t know if all of it would be handy.

The person you’d probably find the most helpful talking to about it, from a more human like set of senses is Mouse. The cobra suggests, Jeffery may be a mindhealer, but you don’t need your mind healed. Just a way to process things safely. He gets the impression of a shrug, I don’t know him well enough to say whether he has experience in helping non-shifters.

He finds himself nodding even though Eric can’t actually see him. At least, he’s pretty sure that the cobra can’t see him.

I can’t. I get the impressions in your mind about what you are doing, because it is something I do as a way to hunt, and how I track people when not hunting. Currently the only person within the den’s domain whose thoughts I’m not in is Pyotr. There is another shrug, as if it’s perfectly normal for him to always be in people’s heads. Maybe it is. There is definitely not a sense of privacy with him.

Laughter fills the link.

I don’t actively read thoughts most the time. That’s too much intel, instead I keep my particular brand of empathy tied to it, so things that are dark, depressed, dangerous to the overall mental health are drawn to my attention, Eric explains as if it’s perfectly natural. Anyways, you already process things in a method similar to my own by putting them into orderly lists based on importance. The difference is, I don’t like to forget things, because details that seem insignificant can be vitally important.
That sends another chill down his spine. Could part of the reason he gets overwhelmed is repeating events and forcing himself to forget, which makes his mind have to reprocess them every single time? That’s make sense. Why didn’t he think of it before now?

Would it be less exhausting mentally if he didn’t try to delete things?

*Figure out a method that’s good for you, others can tell you or show you how they do it, that doesn’t mean it will work exactly the same for you because your brain processes things differently. John will show Anna how his gift works with the direct and emphasized note that they may not process the same. The cobra pauses for a moment, almost as if he is choosing his words. Two thera will have similar processes than a thera and an iota, but they will still differ from each other, even if only in the smallest of manners.*

That actually makes sense. It also sends a burst of relief through him. Right then, he’ll talk to Mouse later since she’s not a strong telepath. He doesn’t thank the cobra, but he’s sure that his appreciation is known.

It definitely gives him something to think about, particularly in regards to himself and Anna since it was her exhaustion that started him down this train of thought to begin with.

**Chapter End Notes**

Happy Valentine's Day folks, have this chapter as a bonus for the evening, I still need to re-finish the next chapter as it was apparently partly lost as well. So I can't say when I will get it posted, but I hope to have it done by the end of March. I had planned to work on it last week but my pupper pinched a nerve in her back which lead to her being unable to walk, it made for a difficult week as she recovered

I love reviews and comments, kudos are great too.
*waves* hello everyone! It's been way too long, but I was finally able to redo this chapter so I can get this one and the next one posted. Seeking is officially done. I dunno when I be starting the sequel, but it will be written at some point. I currently have 23 WIPs and want to try and get a few of them done and posted, so I can get my amount of projects done.

Since my last update I am a published author! With a second book getting ready to come out in July, editor pending.

Things have been stressful, me and Murphy have been on first name bases way too much.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John’s POV

An hour before they are to leave for the pack meeting, Pyotr is delivered to the flat by Frank with a friendly wave before the crow drives off.

As they head upstairs his bondmate passes him heading downstairs, scent worried, distracted, almost confused. None of which is normal for his love.

“Where’s Anna?” the Russian wolf queries.

“Upstairs sleeping, she’s a bit exhausted from today’s training.” He answers, glancing down the stairs as they reach the landing. “She’s got a few habits to unlearn that will be a draining.”

Pyotr frowns at him, following him into the the sitting area. “Explain, please.”

There is just enough of a pause between the two words that he’s certain it started off as an order until the other wolf remembered who he was speaking with. The problem with being part of the alpha family, sometimes forgetting manners. However, since he understands where the emotion behind it is coming from, and he doesn’t hold it against the wolf.

While he is discussing his cousin’s training with the Russian wolf, Sherlock comes upstairs, heading to their bedroom with a quick nod in their direction. At least the scent wafting behind his bondmate is no longer troubled.

As their conversation draws to a close, thankfully a few minutes before it’s time to leave, he excuses himself to check on his love. He finds his genius settled on the edge of the bed, expression distant as if speaking with someone. As there are only a few in the pack who have long distance telepathy for sustained conversation, so he doesn’t disturb them.

He’s finishing changing when Sherlock blinks, gray blue eyes coming back into focus.

“Eric’s a helpful cobra,” his human mutters with a wiry smile, twisting around a bit.
“Are you ready?” He queries as he nods in agreement and glances at the suit his love put on earlier. It’s perfect as far as he cares, but sometimes his bonded changes for whatever reason. “It’s nearly time to go.”

“Yes, of course,” Sherlock’s a bit distracted still. “Is Pyotr here?”

“Yeah, he showed up as you were going downstairs earlier.” He replies with a grin, stepping closer to his bondmate, “He’s currently in the front room looking through the books. Anna’s still napping.” He presses their lips together lightly.

“Excellent,” his love hums with huffing laughter against his lips.

They leave when they’re done kissing. He’s sure his fur is all puffed up when he changes, from pride and possessive love.

_We’ll be taking the cab back_, he remarks, _or riding with someone. As I will have the learning journals from when I was in training to take with me._ He’s not planning on all of them, just the ones he used when learning, the rest will be left in the family vault for safe keeping.

_That works_, Sherlock replies, climbing on his shoulders so they can race towards the pack home.

The pack meeting feels rather full when they get there. It takes him a moment to realize that nearly every single member is there. That’s not something that happens all that often. When he realizes that it’s also a monthly pack birth celebration day, he understands. He almost feels silly for the fact that he forgot.

“Birthdays first or pack meeting first?” Aunt Sandra asks him as everyone finds a spot to sit in the packed room.

Really, they should take this outside, he muses, there’d be a lot more space. Although, he frowns, it’s spring, that might not be a good idea. “Pack meeting, then birthdays so people can leave as they are ready and done celebrating.”

She nods, going and taking her place.

Calling the meeting to a start, he waits until everyone is nearly silent before he begins to speak. The meeting goes quickly, as there isn’t a lot to discuss past the upcoming summer celebrations and the arrangements for apprenticeships. When he’s done, he checks to see if anyone has anything they’d like brought to the floor, but no one answers.

“If all pups ages ten to eighteen could report to the library to speak with Aunt Sandra, and all medical and healers report to the front sitting room, that would be appreciated.” He closes the meeting.

Since Sherlock’s aware of his plans, he pauses for a moment by his bondmate to kiss him, before heading to the front sitting room and waiting for the various healers to join him. He hasn’t had a chance to work with all of them, doesn’t know their skill levels or how each was trained, as many were trained elsewhere, by other packs or humans.

He grabs something to drink on his way to the sitting room, taking a seat and greeting those already there. He’ll wait until the others are there before he will begin the discussion about the clinic and the invite to all of them who may or may not wish to join it. He’ll make it a point to stress that they don’t have to do it, that this isn’t an alpha’s order. He know some of the Devon subpack and the others adopted in grew up in packs where that’s what all alpha suggestions were.

“Thank you all,” he tells them as the last of them settles in the room a bit later. “I’ll keep this brief so
we can get to the celebrations.”

All around him the shifters of his pack nod, watching him intently.

“I will be opening a clinic, as my grandmum had when training me. However, unlike that clinic which was only temporary, I plan to open a year round one.” He picks up his cup, giving them a moment to consider that, see how many of them draw the conclusion as to why he asked them here. “I would appreciate it if any of you would consider joining the practice. It is not an alpha’s order.”

There’s a moment of silence before a flood of questions fills the air.

He waits through it, not actually trying to listen to them. There’s too many voices and questions for him to process all of them. Once they get the shock out of their system, he will ask each in turn what their question is. The only ones not speaking currently is Jace, who’s watching him with thoughtful brown eyes, and Daria, whose lips are pressed tight together as she studies the others.

Eventually the gathered shifters quiet down.

“Please explain more,” Jeffery requests, leaning forward and listening intently. The others who had been asking questions take the wolf’s example and pay close attention.

Right, now it’s time for that discussion.

Chapter End Notes

I want to thank all of you who are still around. Each of you wonderful reviewers, you kept me from giving up. All new peeps, welcome to the world.

Come find me on tumblr: Jaimistoryteller & Cosmos, twitter and facebook @jaimist0
Change is in the Air

Chapter Notes

Hello All!
This is the last chapter of Seeking, however it is not the last chapter of this tale. There will be a direct sequel to this, though there might be a small time hop, as it has been stubborn on what it wants the first chapter to be. I want to say thank you to every wonderful person who has commented over the years, left kudos, messaged me or otherwise cheered for this. You all are the reason this is done and I am still going to do the second part, even when I often feel (depression is a jerk) like it is unwanted. Take care!
Jaimi

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sherlock’s POV

The hairs on the back of his neck stand up as they race through the the streets on the way to the pack meeting. Closing his eyes, he presses as close as he can to John’s warm wolf form, focusing internally.

The pack link is shifting. Changing and merging, the different lines solidifying into one. It doesn’t feel sudden, only final, as if he missed most of the morphing. Originally he could feel each of the subpacks individually. Now though, they are blending and blurring, becoming one.

Later, when he’s not riding on his love’s back, he’ll try his hand with his memory gift to see if he can see what caused the packs to merge. Mostly out of curiosity since it’s something new. Instinct tells him that today will be a catalyst for another change. He doesn’t know how or why he feels that way.

The pack meeting goes smoothly. He tunes out most of it, as it’s all things that he’s heard plenty of times. Besides, John will update him on anything he needs to know. Instead his attention is on getting a feel for the new connections between pack.

The links and how they flow from person to person, each slightly different and yet bound close together. He can feel how they twine and twirl around each other, stretching between individuals and groups creating family and friend units. Is that why the pack bonds are changing? The pack members are connecting with each other, and as they do so, it creates new paths between them? That would make sense as it is much like a massive network.

He’s drawn from his mind as people start standing, even though it’s not time to leave. It takes him only a moment to realize that it is the older pack pups and those with medical training. While he knows what’s going on with the healer types, he doesn’t with the pups.

*John? He queries, what’s going on with the pups?*

His bondmate stops beside him as he leaves the front of the room, *They’re going to be speaking with Aunt Sandra, we’ll be having the birthday celebrations following the conversations.*

He nods, smiling slightly and switching his focus to Mouse, *If you have a moment, I would like to*
ask you something.

Notta problem, we can talk in one of the smaller sitting rooms if you’d like? She replies a breath later.

Standing, he heads towards the smaller sitting room off of the library that’s used for study as far as he has seen.

He’s barely through the door when she joins him, taking a seat and inquiring what he’d like to discuss. As much as he hates to admit to being embarrassed, he definitely is as he explains his earlier thought process and the fact Eric suggested that they speak.

Mouse smiles, listening carefully paying attention and not speaking until he’s done. When she does, she’s got plenty of advice, most of which is even useful for him. As the only prey animal in a group of predators she apparently needed to improve her ability to handle her emotions, senses and reactions. She even promises to do some research because the topic interests her. Not that that’s surprising, she tends to be detail oriented, which is probably how she managed to work special ops as the smallest one in the group.

“Thank you,” he murmurs as he stands and leaves, heading back to the meeting room.

As he enters the room, his eyes sweep over it, noticing that the other two groups haven’t returned yet. Really, how long does it take to discuss a clinic and whatever Aunt Sandra needed the pups for?

Weaving his way through the room to his normal seat, he reaches for John on their private link. He doesn’t actually say anything, listening in to a brush of thoughts instead, checking to see about where they are in the conversation. It seems that they are almost done.

When he comes out of his mind, Sofia is sitting beside him, bright eyes dancing merrily. “I wanted to join the apprenticeship conversation but Chare said no,” she comments with a playful smile. “I think it’s cause I’m not old enough yet.”

He chuckles, nodding as he murmurs, “I remember being in the ‘too young but knows too much’ stage.”

“Exactly,” she hums, playful expression fading into something thoughtful. “It’s okay. I enjoy all my classes and life activities. I’m fairly certain I’m gonna be a Tracker as an adult.”

“Why?” So far he’s only met Trackers who became one due to loss or having to make a deal with one of the Old Gods. Those that have no other choice. Why would she wish to be a Tracker as a child?

Sofia glances at him and looks away, answering, “Jackal Trackers are rare. Maybe if there were more of them, she wouldn’t have had a chance to harm our family the way she did.” There’s a fierceness to her voice, a quiet hiss of fury that reminds him of Eric’s icy tones.

He nods, not saying anything. Nothing needs to be said. After all, he thought about it before making a deal with the Dusk Daughter. If he was in that sort of situation again, he’d do it again. Probably. Maybe. Though maybe not if he actually thought about the unique talent set within the pack.

Sofia’s one of the most like him within the pack, outside his brother and the elder cobra. In a lot of ways they are a great deal alike at that age. The biggest difference being that she has a protective streak, not a trait he developed as a child. Maybe she has because she’s closer to her siblings than he was his.
They sit in companionable silence until the others enter the room once more and the birthday celebrations begin. After that she only sticks around through the food and gift opening, then she’s gone, heading to the library if he knows her. She’s not close to anyone except her sisters within the pack.

John hopes that she will befriend Anna but he’s uncertain it’ll work. Sofia is blunt in a way that makes others her age uncomfortable, her mind often working too fast for them to keep up, giving her a bit of an edge. On the other hand, perhaps the fact that they’re both outsiders to the pack pups will be the trait that brings them together as friends.

He smiles at the way the different pack members interact. The ease between the original Watson wolves and the rest of the shifters. He still remembers how divided they were when he first joined the pack. How uneasy and at odds the multiple packs were. The way the wolves of the Watson pack didn’t know how to take having a human alpha-second or all the different species that that became part of the pack when John blended them.

Eventually the celebration dies down, people start leaving, many bidding him goodnight before they do so.

Ready? His bondmate queries, I’ve spoken to the healers about the clinic, wished all those who have a birthday a pleasant month, and got the journals from Aunt Sandra.

Yes, he answers as he stands, arching his back and twisting around a bit. I’ll meet you by the door.

There’s a brief pause, Good idea. Our cab’s already on the way.

Heading towards the door, he nods at those he passes. He’s just pulled his coat back on when John joins him.

“What’s in the journals exactly?” He asks motioning to the box.

“They’re work journals,” his wolf answers, “from my training.”

That’s a good idea, his bondmate can see what order he learned in, and use it to adapt plans for Anna. “Does every healer in your family have a set?”

“Yeah, Aunt Sandra spoke today with the younger generation to see who may wish to become a chronicler or historian for the pack. We have one who wishes to be a general historian, but that’s not the exact same.” John opens the door with his empty hand.

He nods, stepping through and grinning when he sees which crow has pulled up to the front of the house to pick them up. He’d ask if he could do it, but really, he doesn’t want to use his gift that way. He might like learning and experimenting, but recording the history of just the pack doesn’t appeal to him.

Besides, he’s much more interested in the future. The changes that he saw tonight and knows are coming. He’s looking forward to seeing what comes next.

Chapter End Notes

Feel free to come say hi on twitter & facebook @jaimist0, or tumblr JaimiStoryTeller where I post about mine and other peeps writing, including fandom stuff when my muse
is not working on the original stuff for publishing.

Works inspired by this one: [Olivia and the Mouse](#) by MirrimBlackfox

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