Conclusion is....

by Feraria123

Summary

Greg received two calls yesterday.

One, two torsos discovered at the Thames. Irish mob. Not his division.

Two, two suspicious death that became three when another body crashed from the roof.

All seemed a bit too odd for the truth.

This is a continuation of 'A tedious day' but this can be read by itself.
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

So the day starts and already, something extraordinary showed up.

Also, poor Dr. Watson.

Chapter Notes

Finally gotten some time to do housekeeping for this fic.

Anyway, I just realized I left out a portion of the ending out. Sorry about that!

To the ones who gave a kudo, thank you very much!

The shrill alarm woke both him and Mycroft. He felt like he barely had closed his eyes but the day had already summoned him.

He hated to be separated from Mycroft for the time being but the alarm was going to give him a migraine.

Spooning after him, Mycroft ran his hand idly over his arms and torso. "It may not be much but would it be amenable with you if you could spend your night with me next Tuesday?"

Greg couldn't help but chuckle a bit. "Why're you so...lucid in the morning?" He asked in amusement, running his hand over Mycroft's arm.

He could feel the ghost of chuckle behind him as he answered. "I would be very amenable." He said as he turned to face the other man.

"Well, then. I can't wait." Mycroft replied with a small peck of a kiss. "Let's get a shower, Detective Inspector. The public service awaits." He said before removing himself to sit up, patting the other man gently on his upper arm.

Greg sighed as he followed him. A shared shower later and a black car retrieving the other man, Greg finally left for work. The heavy petting session, though short was enough to get them both feeling more spirited for the coming day. And the promise of the upcoming visit in three days’ time was something both of them looked forward to.

Continuing the case from yesterday, the autopsy report was taking ages, the forensics were about the same pace and the only thing he could study at the moment was the files on the identities of the deceased.

The severed torsos were apparently affiliates of the Irish mob. That case was instantly taken by the Organised Crimes division. So he only had to deal with the triple death.
"Sir, the reports are just in." Donovan came in with the files with an unreadable expression.

"Whoa." He exclaimed at the thickness of the file as Donovan placed it at one of the clear corners of his table.

"Sir." She uttered in controlled panic. "They all died of snake bites and the snake isn't local."

Greg was stunned as he took the nearest one for the coroner's report. "Bloody hell." He cursed as he dug into the many pages, finding the suspected snakes. "We need animal control service now. There's still people living in the house." He said as he got up, getting his phone. "Get the forensics team out of there, too." They both got to work to prevent more deaths, this time from a snake.

In no time, they had an animal control service at the victim's house. They had to confiscate the pet python, too. The old lady was tearing up silently at the loss of her snake, despite it being temporary.

The animal control service found nothing and the remaining neighbour was being a bit hissy at being called out for the snake search. She was still being a bit hissy afterwards. Of course, it was winter after all. But if she had made a scene, Greg would have arrested her for impediment of justice.

"Sorry there, Greg. No poisonous snakes here. It's winter too. They won't get anywhere with the cold and all. It might be dead anyway." The animal control service person said tiredly. "That's the most we can do for the time being but feel free to call us over if you see it."

"No harm done, James." Greg replied emphatically with him with a shake of his hand. "I've got your number."

Once they were all out, the forensics got back in.

Just as he was going through the living room where they found the bodies again, he had a call from John.

Dismissing himself from the crime scene, he answered John on the second call. "Hello." He called out, surmising it must be a Sherlock related problem. There was a rather shrill screech of a violin at the back.


Greg groaned at that. It had been awhile since he had met the consulting detective. “Kinda in the middle of one, John.” He explained as he lingered outside the house.

Judging from the tone, John was being driven uphill by Sherlock's incessant and probably retaliatory violin practices.

He paused for a bit as he considered his current case. Without the snake or anything else, the case had reached a stop. Trail getting cold, literal and otherwise.

A louder shrill and a pained grunt from John woke him up from his stupor.

“Greg, mate.” John began pathetically. “I'll make it two, if that makes it a deal.”

Greg gave a sympathetic chuckle. “Tell you what. I think I have something. I'll come down to ya in a few hours. If it falls through, then you'll have a deal.”

“Cheers.” John said triumphantly. “I'll just find something to tide me over 'til then"
Chapter End Notes

Hope you had a good read.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Mycroft used Sherlock as a carrier pigeon.

John finally got saved from Sherlock's restlessness.

Greg is just caught in between of it all.

Oh, did you know that there are people using snake bites to get high?

Chapter Notes

Hahahahahahahaha OMG that took a lot more research than I thought.

Finally got this churned out. My cats keeps scratching and hanging on my hands each time I wanted to write or research about this. It's cute for the few dozen times but when lifting said phone is a pain, I had to run. Love you all, my cats, but your jealousy is heavy.

Had a bit of help from nowaytheglobetrotter to keep to keep this on track.

Anyway, hope this is a good read for everyone. Comments and kudos are highly appreciated. Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brother mine, please inform the Detective Inspector that I will be unavailable for 5 days. -MH

Sherlock was expecting a case but the message he received made him frown. Not only had he been disappointed with nonexistence of a case, he was forced to play carrier pigeon. It's been ages and now this!

Tell him yourself, Mycroft. Whatever minor injury you have, won't put him out. -SH

Mycroft knew this was not going to be easy. He rolled his eyes at his brother's reaction. He gave a glare at the ice bag over his raised foot. Earlier, there was an escaping eco-extremist. Mycroft just happened to be exiting the elevator when the said extremist saw him and an opportunity for escape.

Unfortunately, Mycroft didn't manage to get himself out and was barreled in, spraining his ankle in the process.

The fool thought it was wise to take him as a human shield, yelling threats of harm and some claims that the government was behind it all (it's rather unfortunate that he was yelling at the part of the government who had active interest in reaching sustainability). Mycroft had to wait for the elevator to open again before he could free himself. The elevator opened to twenty armed personnel and naturally, the said extremist gave up.
As he was taken home and tended to, he had spent a total of 5 minutes of horror as his mind finally caught up to the Detective Inspector’s coming to his residences the day after tomorrow. The Detective Inspector would surely be too worried about the injury and spend the day with that as well. Simply tedious and needless. They could both spend the time for his recovery for more productive activities.

Typically, the sprain need approximately 72 hours for the pain to recede and almost five days for the swelling to recede to a more natural form. But judging from the popping he felt and the stability of his foot, it was a Grade 2 sprain. He hoped that the discolouration from the bruising would be long gone by then as well. Or at least avoid attention to it until it does.

*That's not the matter. He does not need to waste time on trivial matters. My invalidity would-*

Sherlock simply dropped his phone on his music stand and let his brother prattle on for a few more lines. For someone who claims that sentiment is not an advantage, he was oozing it over Lestrade. He accidentally slipped into the wrong note at this.

Huffing, he decided to end whatever it was.

*Alright, brother dear. I'll tell Lestrade that you're unavailable for 5 days. Now, leave me alone - SH*

*Mycroft smiled to himself as his brother stopped him from continuing his 'convincing'.*

*Thank you, brother mine. - MH*

At that, Sherlock started again.

"Sherlock!" He heard. "I'm gonna pop out for milk." John said as he took his coat.

Sherlock wanted to point out that there's still milk in the fridge and that was his fourth time 'popping out' but he was gone.

It's a dreary and slow week. He needed to do something. The complexities of the violin strings can tide him over for now. He was forbidden to experiment after trying to experiment on cooking oil and gunpowder. The kitchen had smelled of gunpowder and for everyone's safety, there will be no open fire until the smell cleared out.

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Greg came down to Baker Street as promised. Knocking on the door, Mrs. Hudson had opened the door as usual. He was greeted with the faint smell of weird gunpowder and the sound of the violin.

"Evening, Mrs. H." He greeted as she opened the door. She looked like she was on her way out.

"Evening, Greg." She greeted sweetly. "Coming here for Sherlock, have you?"

"Yes, Mrs. H." He answered as he held the door open for her.

"Well, take care. He's been in a mood lately." Mrs. Hudson warned as passed. "Bye, now."

With a wave, he went up. The smell was stronger as he came up the stairs, making him jumpy but the sight of a miserable, newspaper reading Dr. Watson was a bit relieving. At least he knows that Sherlock wouldn't be running around armed.

"Wotcher, John." He greeted as John looked up at him with joy. Sherlock finally stopped his violin practice.
"Got anything for me, Lestrade?" Sherlock asked, if it wasn't for the way he was packing his violin, he would have thought he had irritated the consulting detective.

"Sherlock." John warned, earning an eyeroll from him.

"Now, now. No need to get ya knickers in a twist." He placated immediately. "Triple murder down Lambeth. All of them died from snake bite."

That certainly got Sherlock's attention as he snapped his attention on him.

"The one from the papers? The roof dropper?" John said as he straighten up in his seat. "Snake bites?"

"Yeah but no sign of the bugger anywhere." Lestrade added. "Are you in it or not?" Lestrade asked.

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They arrived there five minutes apart as Sherlock insists on a cab.

As John was left to deal with the cab, Sherlock approached Greg.

"Lestrade." He declared stiffly. "My brother said that he won't be available for the next five days."

Greg, who had been in high spirits for murder clues, felt let down. It would be a lie to say that he wasn't disappointed when he heard that. He wanted to ask more but Sherlock was already going to the entrance.

Before long, Sherlock and John joined him for the crime scene. It was empty except for the police guarding the entrance.

It was already dark when they reached there. The neighbours had went to live somewhere else for the time being.

Sherlock was already grousing in disdain as he observed the front door. As he got in, he quietly observe the carpet, leading to the neighbour living downstairs, the old snake lady. Then he trailed off to the entrance to the ground floor neighbour's entrance, looking puzzled as he did. "Does the one who lives here rented or bought it?" He asked.

"Rented." Greg said as the consulting detective went upstairs.

At the crime scene, he took a swoop of the rooms. The living area where the found the bodies and the gaping hole in the ceiling. Dust, insulation and debris was everywhere making Sherlock grouse yet again.

He took a look at the kitchen and then the bedroom before going to the toilet and basically trying to dismantle it.

"Sherlock! We had animal control service here at noon. You don't need to go find it!" Greg called over, trying to stop him with John in tow.

Sherlock rounded at him with a roll of his eyes. "I'm not looking for snakes." He hissed as he felt around the siphon tank.

"Stop it before you break something and flood the place." John hissed back.

Seeing him dug around the siphon tank like one would with a drugs bust, Greg stared at him as he
gave up with the tank, replace the lid and opened the cabinets.

"Are you looking for drugs?" Greg asked in dawning realization.

"Brilliant deduction, Detective Inspector." He said sarcastically.

He was out of the bathroom and stopped at the living room again.

"Snake bites doesn't kill a person immediately. It takes time. Hours" He explained heatedly as he scanned the living room again. "You said they were bitten, what were they doing waiting around if they were? Anyone would have reached out for the A&E after they were bitten."

"There weren't even scuff marks on the carpet and the house phone is untouched. They had done nothing." He concluded for them. "There's a trend for using snake poison, mainly cobra venom for recreational purposes but either they have a snake handler elsewhere or they were bitten not so deliberately by a snake. No obvious drug abuse. No signs of substance abuse. Evidence suggests the latter."

"The geriatric in the basement has a pet snake but it's either not the one who bit them or not poisonous. She is also particularly fond of spices, Indian spices, yet she is not Indian. Enthusiast. Probably worked with animals before." Sherlock rattled on. "May or may not handled poisonous snakes before."

Lestrade dropped his jaw before throwing his arms up. He should have really known better than to be surprised at the moment. John looked in question to him.

"Marisa Moore, 67. Former gamekeeper and Indian enthusiast. Owns a python." He explained. "Quite deaf."

"That's brilliant." John said in awe.

"Pointless." Sherlock growled. "I need to see the outside of the house." He said as he turned abruptly to exit the floor.

Outside, the snow was still slushy as they went around to the side of the house where the shrubbery had grown wild and obscured part of the house.

Dropping down, he was prodding here and there at the base on the tree as he muttered something about 'how' before letting out a victorious 'Aha!' as he pulled out a collapsible ladder.

The ladder itself looked severely battered as if it been ran over and fixed repeatedly.

Looking around, he traced rust stains on the wall that probably came with the rusting gutters. Smiling to himself he took the ladder and propped it against the wall, right on the rust stains that was just wide enough to follow the width of the ladder.

"That's...." John gasped in surprise while Greg was dumbstruck.

Sherlock was pressing and shaking it a bit, testing the sturdiness of the ladder.

Seeing this, both of them got alarmed.

"Sherlock, I don't think-"

"Stop, that's dangerous-"
Ignoring them, Sherlock was already going up. Out of worry, both of them steadied the ladder. Feeling it shake, Sherlock stopped for a second and looked down.

"Stop, shaking the ladder. It's frail enough as it is." He scolded them before continuing his trip up the ladder and disappear from sight before they could even respond.

John and Greg shared a despairing look before Sherlock popped his head out from the roof.

"You can join me from the inside now." Sherlock said. "Be careful with the ladder and put it away before it breaks." He ordered before disappearing out of view. The sound of a muffled hatch closed somewhere at the roof.

Greg huffed as John took a deep breath.

"Is it really that bad?" Greg asked as they carefully collapsed the rickety ladder.

"Trust me. This is better than him trying to ignite gunpowder using cooking oil and that time when he tried to ignite gases from decomposing pork parts." John said with shudder.

Greg positively felt green at that. "Point taken." He said in agreement once the ladder was safely sheltered under the shrub.

Chapter End Notes

Theory doesn't always work when applied. A reminder when doing home brew experiments.

Hope it was a good read for everyone.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Lestrade is being affected by Mycroft's postponement more than he realised.

Molly got a hug for mentioning a clue.

John and Sherlock has to stake out in the snow.

Oh yes, the drink offer was not forgotten.

Chapter Notes

Not my best work but I was running in circles with this. Whatever is making me feel sick doesn't want to go away either but I'm just making excuses. My cat also somehow corrupted my OS to the point I had to reformat it. Thank god for cloud storage or I'm going to be crying before I started re-writing all this. This week had been a bit not good but it could have been worse.

As always, I hope this will be a good read for everyone and may everyone have a better week than I did.

The two made their way to the roof loft from the entrance at the kitchen.

"By the way, which pub do you want to go to?" John asks as they moved.

Greg chuckled at that. He barely remembered 'the deal' with everything. "I was thinking of going to the one near the Underground but I might need something stronger." He said, his chuckling trailing off rather ominously. His schedule was unfortunately cleared up with Mycroft cancelling.

"Problems?" John guessed empathetically, wincing as he did.

Greg shrugged aloofly at that. Mycroft’s postponement was disappointing but not unexpected. "Maybe. Long day and all with this."

John gave him a questioning stare.

Greg stared back at him challengingly as he pulled down the staircase to the roof space. "If it makes you feel better, you pick the drinks. I won't get myself piss drunk with a case, anyway. Needed my head in it." He placated the doctor.

John sighed. "Alright, mate." He relented as moved towards the pull down stairs. "You've got my ears if you needed them."
"Now, there's the good doctor." He cheered with a pat on John's as he went up first.

Once they were up there, Sherlock was busily swooping through the victim's sleeping area with a mini flashlight, prodding and shifting stuff carefully with a pen.

It was a tight fit for them with the low roof and the water tank with all its piping. As it is, Sherlock was crouching as he swooped around.

The joist was quite spaced but there were flat boards for movement near the tanks. There, the third victim had also made a living space off.

There were also discarded liquor bottles. A few garbage bags with one, still open, half full of food packaging. The bedding made of layers of clothes near the insulated hot water tank pipes. There were a few books and a stack of newspapers.

A bit farther off was the hole where the third victim fell through. Two of the ceiling panel had fell through with the body. Only half of the loft had the flat board. The other half only had insulation and piping.

"Forensics were up here earlier." Lestrade offered. "Said, the guy was a homeless squatting up here."

John was surprised at that. "And nobody knew?"

"All the neighbours knew." He told him with a dismissive wave. "The victims downstairs didn't mind it, though. He was handy to have around and doesn't make a total muck up here."

They watch Sherlock as he paused. For some reason, he remained by the books for a long time.

"Should we..." Lestrade interrupted, looking at John for some clue.

John gave him a worried look. He treaded carefully, to look over Sherlock. The first thing that came into his mind was drugs. If it was drugs, Sherlock might have pinched it. That's a different set of trouble.

"Yes?" Sherlock asked irritably as John came closer.

"Uh, just wondering...if you found...something." John said lamely.

"Young man, drinker, family problems, runaway, frequents the nearby coffee shop for food and access to plumbing. Begs for alms. Handy with his hands, made that hatch, ingenious. Probably fixed the ladder as well. Reads books from the trash. Might have caused some unsavoury reaction." He blurted out rather than spoke it out as he pointed at the books. "Financial and cooking books. Possibly the trash bin from here."

"The ground floor neighbour with the pristine door frames are probably the former owner. Probably of business field, definitely accounts. Meticulously clean. Perfectionist. Poor cook. Cheapskate." He told them as he pointed at the cookbooks 'How to cook and save' and 'Budget meals and a microwave'. "May have problems with the other neighbours."

He got up but before anyone could stop him, he bumped into one of the rafters.
John gave a steadying hand on his shoulder as Greg hissed in sympathy. John was suddenly wary of the rafters as well.

"Right." He said curtly before he headed towards the exit, it could almost be mistaken for embarrassment...or it was just cope with the pain.

"Careful!" John warned as they all moved down.

"Lestrade, I will be needing the case reports." Sherlock said offhandedly, his other hand was already typing fast on the phone as they paused at the entrance. "Need another look around outside."

"Sherlock, tell me what you found." Lestrade demanded politely, partly hoping the consulting detective would. It's usually a lost cause unless he threatened him.

Sherlock gave him a look as if he interrupted him mid conversation. John also gave him a pointed look.

He gave a long-suffering sigh. "They were all murdered. I haven't figured out why but foreign snakes just don't turn up here without help. That involved effort and reason. People are rarely so motivated to go far when a good fall is all that it takes and escape without implication. No, this had a plan. So far, I haven't had enough data to come up with anything concrete." He said impatiently.

"How-" Greg began, his mind was reeling with the information but more importantly, how can he know it was foreign?

"How did I know it was foreign?" He piped up in a high voice before Greg finished his word. "Oh please, if it had been an indigenous snake none of the victim will be sitting around to die. Adder bites are painful even when it's not deadly. If they were bitten in their sleep, none of them would had waited around to call for help." He answered with a glare, getting more impatient as he did. "In which case, I need the case report to find out more. There's more to the picture than meets the eye. Outside!" He said with finality before he stormed out into the night.

Greg was feeling weary and John was already despairing with the fact that they will most definitely be spending the night at an empty interrogation room with case files.

"Should we join him outside or wait here?" John asked, looking as exasperated as he did. Trying to grasp on whatever peace he had left.

Greg gestured his head towards the opened door. "Might as well find with him or he'll disappear like a bloody bat at dawn." He said gruffly and exited the place.

After taking more pictures of the property, they were off to New Scotland Yard.

Considering he had done his bit in report reading, Greg escaped the overnight case file analysis while John was left with Sherlock to study the files.

A worried thought on the Elder Holmes was there as he succumbed to sleep.

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Sherlock managed to come up with a timeline of sorts and dissected the neighbours in great detail. John tried to keep up but at one point he had dozed off in his seat.

By the time Sherlock was done with the case files, he was roused by a very excited Sherlock...or
agitated. It's hard to say at the moment. More or less dragging John to his feet, they were off to the morgue.

John was thankful of St. Bart's coffee machine. It still taste like tar water but the caffeine worked.

He ran through the information of the victims again. The couple were Elaine Harrison, 38 and her registered partner Will Asheron, 37. Theatre people. The man that literally fell from the ceiling was a homeless man registered by the name of Lucas Hope, 22.

The postmortem report said that Elaine and Will had bite marks around their legs. The cause of their death is respiratory paralysis from snake neurotoxin, bungarotoxin to be specific. They were found in their sleeping things in the living room.

Lucas had only one bite at his left hand and his blood alcohol level was so high that he would have been severely impaired mentally and physically. It is no surprise that the young man was dead earlier than his neighbours below. He has scuff marks on his knuckles which were made perimortem and there were insulation fibres in his nails.

From what Sherlock had pieced up, it was probably due to Lucas realising what had happened and tried to break the ceiling to get help. Unfortunately, he didn't have enough time and died before the ceiling could break. His efforts, however, afforded him to be discovered.

There's probably more perimortem bruising now if that's what Sherlock is aiming for.

Molly was the one to greet them. "Oh-h, morning." She greeted them nervously as she lead them inside.

"There's probably slight oedema at the bite area now. I had to get it referred just to be sure." Molly ended with a chuckle that trailed off in awkwardness if not for John's answering laugh. She opened one of the body boxes.

"Nothing wrong with getting help." John managed a smile and a nod for Molly. "Were you the one who did the tests?" He asked in interest.

"Oh, no. Not me. I retrieved the samples is all." Molly explained sheepishly as Sherlock was busily prodded the body, looking over his elbows and shins.

"John, Molly." He warned with a tone that was slightly less than a growl.

Seeing this, Molly look chastened while John gave him a grimace.

"Molly, could I have a look at those tests?" He asked, both to will himself not to snap at the busy detective and to find something else to concentrate on.

"Oh sure," Molly said in relief.

Both of them moved to the morgue office where she retrieved the test results. "Usually we don't use these. Had to call in a favour at the Uni department." Molly explained as she took the colourful graphs and pages of report that came with it. "The lab tech was surprised to get the real Krait snake venom as a sample."

"It isn't everyday you get death by foreign snakes." He said as he read the ELISA report. "And to get
three deaths at the same time, too."

"Yes, it's surprising." She replied with interest. "With this type of snake, it's common to have deaths. The symptoms mimics the flu so most people took too long to get to the doctor's."

"Bungarotoxin. Neurotoxic. Pretty common in Asia." John recited off his head, head tilted a bit to remember all of his fact.. "Has ready antivenom, if I'm not mistaken."

"Yes but we don't have it ready stocked here though." She continued. "We need to put it through with the National Poisons Centre if we did get them as patients."

John looked like it was a ridiculous fact before he groaned. "Oh yeah. That was back in the Army." John said with a sigh and a self-depreciating chuckle. "We used to have a vial with us just in case."

Molly gave him a sympathetic look. "Long day?"

"Ta." He responded nonchalantly. "Anyway, let's get back to Sherlock before he disappears." He joked his phone buzzed with an incoming message.

Molly gave a small titter as they left.

Sherlock was furiously searching for something on his phone. "Does anyone knows how much can a Krait snake produce venom and the regeneration rate?" He quickly asked, not looking up from his phone.

"Hang on, need to get this." John replied as he typed.

Looking up with a scrutinizing look at John, he scoffed before going back to his phone.

"M-maybe you'd like to talk to a herpetologist?" Molly offered.

Sherlock looked sharply at her. "Say that again."

"Herpetologist...?" Molly broke off the eye contact. "It was just a suggestion." She said nervously, fiddling her hands at the same time.

"No, no, no. That's brilliant, Molly!" Sherlock declared with a hug, shocking the army doctor as well. "Why didn't I think of that earlier?!" The man said as he lets go with a smile...A bit maniacally as when he figured something out but yes, a smile no less. "Thank you."

"Watson, come along!" He said as he hustled to the exit.

Molly and John were still in shock.

Hearing the slam of the morgue door had John stuttering into action and gave Molly an awkward pat on the shoulder before chasing after Sherlock.

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Upon seeing the investigation room empty, Greg texted Sherlock on the update. Usually, if it's a simple enough case (a level 5 or so) he would be done by now or in the progress of doing something reckless to that effect.
Greg waited for an hour before he texted John next. Luckily, he responded back within 10 minutes, informing him that he was at the morgue looking for more marks on the body.

Knowing that he won't get anything more than that, he decided to visit the victims' workplace and interview their colleagues. Maybe they could remember more now after yesterday's work.

'Christ, Sherlock just hugged Molly' John texted.

Greg was on his way to the car when he saw that. He couldn't tell if it was good or not but his attention was then absorbed by his Detective Sergeant Sally Donovan.

Getting her to drive, Greg finally responded. 'Not sure how to react to that, John. Is it good or bad?''

He decided with the truth.

'Not sure but if you could, check up on Molly later. I'm worried. She was frozen solid earlier' John responded.

Greg had a small sympathetic smile on his face. 'Poor girl. Yeah, I'll look her up later. By the way, any updates on the case?'

'We're going to see a herpetologist about the snake.-upside down smiley-' John answered back.

'Cheers -laughing emoji-' Greg answered back in amusement.

'Date night, sir?' Came Donovan's curious question.

Greg gave her an incredulous stare. "What makes you think that?"

"Oh, sorry, sir. You were smiling." Donovan apologized despite poorly hiding her amusement.

Instantly, he was reminded of Mycroft's postponement and sighed. He was looking forward for their next meeting and starting to miss him but there was a tinge of worry, too. For all he knows, he's at a hospital or something. Being that high up doesn't come with flowers or pleasant company. However, they talked about this and both agreed that they will send representatives if it ever gets that bad. For him was Sherlock and for Mycroft, it was Anthea. So, no news is good news. Plus, it wasn't as if he hasn't postponed before...As much as he tried to soothe himself.

At that, the Detective Sergeant's expression grew somber.

Catching that, Greg immediately waved his hand around. "It's nothing, Sally." He tried to explain, dropping the formality. "Honest. Things just got busy is all."

"No offense, sir." Sally said grimly. "You were pretty bad off back then and I can say for everyone else that we don't want the 'other' Detective Inspector again" She said giving him a pointed look.

Greg couldn't help but gave a small chuckle at their care. Other than constantly insulting Sherlock, she had her heart in the right place.

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One cabbie ride and a long explanation about Marissa’s background from her file and her inclination to save reptilians in trouble, they finally arrive to their destination. A destination that had surprised John.
Both of them were staking out the victim’s house... behind a scraggly bush... in the snow... as the light fades.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

"It was a very funny situation they've gotten into. Here they have a former army doctor and the world's only consulting detective masquerading as policemen, aiding an elderly, half deaf snake wrangler to find a snake or snakes that had killed three people so far."

Chapter Notes

Holy heck. I'm starting to think this fic is cursed. This is my fourth try at getting this chapter up. Hahahaha

Anyways, this particular chapter just keep rewriting itself until now. Thankfully, nowaytheglobetrotter was kind enough to help out and point out where to stop and split it. It was pretty long.

I managed to worm out most of the proofing but I just know I let a few more slipped. Pardon me for that but I'll fix once I can find it.

John huffed. The cold was making his old wound ache and he was more than convinced that the 'herpetologist' wouldn't show up. The cardboard they found could only prevent their bottoms from getting wet as they sat behind the leafless bushes that was still thick enough to cover their presence.

"Why couldn't we just meet her at her friend's place?" John hissed. "Especially, now that the snakes could be dead? You said earlier that the snakes wouldn't be able to survive the cold for more than a night. It's obviously nearly a day now."

He scoffed. "What better way to find them if not with the help of a herpetologist?"

John rounded on him, zoning on the word 'find' and 'them'. "We're...going to find them." He repeated. "As in more than one?"

Sherlock gave him an approving look at his question. "Of course, these snakes don’t produce enough for multiple bites. For it to kill three, there must have been more than one." Sherlock answered with thinly veiled excitement. Though, the shivering he had was getting worse, his jaw barely concealing the chattering of his teeth. "Unless..." He trailed off.

John waited for an explanation, assuming he had gone to his Mind Palace for more clues. He rubbed his hands together to get over the bite from the chill. However, later on, Sherlock had shaken his head as if trying to get a grip on himself before he went back to being quiet.

Realising it might have been signs of the cold progressing to hypothermia, John acted quickly. "Sherlock?" He called for the man with a few sound pats to his shoulder.
Sherlock looked back at him with an annoyed glare and a grunt. Both of them were pale and blue due to the cold but Sherlock was starting to look like he was going into stupor.

"Sherlock, we're getting to somewhere warm." He declared as he got up to his feet. "Come on." He told him as he lugged the stubborn, tall man to his feet.

"John, you're overreacting." He hissed, barely able to keep his chattering out. He followed John's whims only to not jostle the bush they were hiding behind. "Don't shake the bush! You're ruining the stake out."

"You are getting hypothermic." John retorted clearly for him to hear, keeping a grip on his elbow in case he had ideas of sitting back. "I am not letting you go into a hypothermic stupor." He said as he pulled him from the back of the bush.

"Lock?" Came a timid voice that caused both of them to jump.

One of the fence's board had been moved away to reveal the face of a girl with a snow cap under the street light. Judging from her looks, she was a homeless and also from her calling Lock, it's one of Sherlock's homeless network members.

"Roll?" Sherlock regarded incredulously; the rush of adrenaline managed to tone down the shivering. "Why are you here?"

"I should ask you the same." She said, with same surprised tone. "Anyway, we're checking on Mecchy. Could we come in?" She asked impatiently. "This is quite an awkward position to stay in, you see." She meekly complained.

The two men moved to give them space. Roll got through the hole and so did another one, this time a smaller girl. Once they were in, the board was replaced nicely as if there wasn't a board loose. Their clothes, though mismatched was thicker so, they needed a bit of help to squeeze through.

John was a bit frustrated with that because he had to give Sherlock a boost to get over the fence and he himself had struggled to get over it.

The other smaller girl gave them wary looks before holding the taller girl's gloved hand.

"Me and Rock found Mecchy all plastered yesterday. He isn't arrested right, Lock?" Roll asked anxiously.

At this, John reached for Sherlock. If his guts are right then Mecchy is probably Lucas.

Annoyed, Sherlock gave him an impatient stare. "What is it?"

John grimaced for a second before he straightened up, preparing himself to address the girls. A non-verbal signal for 'A bit not good' situations.

Intercepting whatever John was about to say, Sherlock pressed on. "Has he gotten plastered often?"

John gave him a short questioning before realising this might be important.

"Well, he does drink a lot." Roll answered. "One time, we found him sleeping behind there." She said gesturing towards the fence. Roll was starting to sound suspicious.

"Did anyone see him? Got into fights with him?" Sherlock asked further, his eyes bright like he was chasing a clue.
Rock and Roll stared at each apprehensively before they looked at Sherlock. "If we tell you, could you help us get him out of the lockup?" Roll said.

"Yes." Sherlock answered astutely. John was too shocked for words.

"The neighbour here doesn't like him. She always tries to shoo him away whenever she catches him here," Roll told them as she pointed at the nearby window. "Mecchy gets too plastered to climb sometimes so he just...falls asleep." She said as she trails off dubiously.

Sherlock hummed as Rock patted Roll for something, looking somewhat distressed.

"Oh, he even gets bruises and bumps because she throws stuff at him." Roll added as Rock nodded. "He doesn't usually get into trouble. It isn't his fault." Roll pleaded.

"So, she doesn't like him?" He asked.

"Well, she doesn't like us either." Roll continued. "Actually, she doesn't like people like us." She ended with a discrete note.

At that, Sherlock looked enlightened for a second. "Oh, it's like that."

Roll gave a shrug. "Anyway, we told you everything. How about-"

The heard a loud thud of a door somewhere and the four of them duck behind the bush.

The sound of footsteps got closer before there was a pause and a jingle of keys before another thud was heard.

The window facing them didn't light up so it was at another part of the house.

"You need to get going." Sherlock whispered to them.

"Sherlock, wait." John told him as got up but kept himself bowed to keep out of sight. Just in case. It was a tight fit but he's been in tougher situations.

Kneeling in front of the girls, he reached out for his pockets.

"I'm really sorry to tell you this but Lucas-I mean Mecchy had passed away." He said as he grabbed the last pound note in his wallet, the girls were frozen in shock.

"Rock and Roll." Sherlock spoke, rising up just enough to be seen behind the former army doctor. "The funeral won't be in a few days. He's part of a murder case. I'll find you at the usual place later." He said curtly but clearly. The two girls nodded at that despite the news.

"Thank you for telling us." Roll said, almost unheard with how small her voice had become. Rock whimpered as her eyes started to water. "We'll leave now." Roll said as she stood up.

That made John wondered about his life when he was on the streets. Was this a common situation?

"Wait!" John stopped before they turned to leave. "Have this. It's going to be a cold evening." He said as he handed over 50 quid.

Roll could only offer a small smile before they went the way they came.

"John, let's go." Sherlock called over as he stood up and went towards the back door.
John gave one last look at the girls as he joined Sherlock at the door.

Unfortunately, he was too distracted and tripped over a root. Stumbling to regain his footing, Sherlock moved away from his path as he slammed against the door. Thankfully his arm managed to break the slamming but it was also with the same shoulder with the old wound. He only managed a pained groan as he remained still, waiting for the white-hot pain to pass.

"John, is it safe to move you?" Sherlock asked gingerly, hovering close but not sure of what to do.

"Just..." He began, trying to steady himself as he breathes. The pain was sharp and short lived but the shakiness and the nausea took a bit more time to settle.

"Hello, there!" They heard someone said loudly on the other side. "Are you all right?"

"Wait, my friend hurt his shoulder!" Sherlock shouted through the door. "Don't open the door!"

Unfortunately, Mrs. Moore opened the door.

Sherlock scrambled to catch John and steadied him before he fell.

"Oh my, I'm sorry!" She apologized. "I heard 'Open the door.'" She said loudly. "I heard a loud bang. Did you fell from the ladder?" The small elderly lady looked up to them with worry. She still had her coat on.

"No, but my friend slipped." Sherlock answered as John steadied himself, rubbing his shoulder. "We thought someone invaded the crime scene. I'm Lestrade." He declared, flashing his badge...probably the one he picked up while they were at the Yard.

"Oh, another Lestrade. I'm Marissa Moore." She noted. "Come in, come in. Get you something warm and all. A cup of tea would do wonders for pain and aches."

John gave Sherlock a questioning look to which he didn't respond too.

The first thing they smelled as they gotten to her room was the smell of spice with a hint of musk.

"I was just getting my perishables." She told them as she led them to the den. "I'll go make tea. Dear me, you two look positively frozen." She said as she bustled towards the kitchen.

Now that they were warmer, John could relax. He tested the range of motion of his shoulder. Thankfully, it's only bruises now than the sharp, bone deep pain.

"Are you alright, John?" Sherlock asked as he hovered near him.

"Yeah. No harm done." John said as he stood where he was. It was rather awkward. There were only two seats there and one of it had a bunch of newspapers, magazines and a few remote controllers. The coffee table was closer to the free chair.

Nearby the telly was a huge glass tank with barks and random logs, where the snake was probably home to and there was muffled sound of squeaking mice under it. There were posters of Indian actors in Indian and pictures in varying degree of age and fraying of Mrs. Moore and her husband and friends. There was a few pictures of her giving talks and a whole showcase cabinet full or dainty tea sets and classical breakfast paraphernalia.

It was quite cosy despite the clutter.

"Here, dearies." She said but it was more like she had half-shouted as she gave them tea. "Sorry
about the mess. With the deaths and Gina putting up a fuss about putting down dear old Gopal, I haven't had the mind to clean up."

"Thank you for the tea but... is Gopal a person?" Sherlock asked harmlessly.

"Oh, sorry dear. I missed it. Could you speak up?" She asked apologetically.

Clearing his throat, Sherlock spoke louder.

"Oh, no. It's my darling pet python." She said dreamily. "Gina is always making a fuss. First, it was the smell saying that I should respect her boundary. I did keep his tank clean, spotless! Then when she found out I had mice-mind you, these are albino white mice for my Gopal. Not those filth dwellers- She tried to have me reported to the local council. Thankfully, that fell out since I haven't broken any laws. Can you believe that woman?"

"Gina sounds like a prickly one, isn't she?" Sherlock goaded as he sipped his tea.

"No kidding. At first I thought she would tone down when she gotten herself a friend but she managed to scar the poor girl out." She said mournfully. "She was a biodiversity student, a bright young lady. You wouldn't believe what she told the girl. The poor child was too afraid to comeback for her stuff and had to ask her other friends for it." She took a sip. "Well, enough about me. How about you two lads? Any luck with the investigation and all. Heard it was a snake's fault."

The two began to tell her about what kind of snake poison they found and Sherlock was really leading on as the bumbling detective. Convincingly.

"It can't be a foreign snake. Must have been injected or something." Sherlock acted out as sceptically as he could. It was almost too hard for John to act along. Thank god he actually went through the ELISA test reports and still remembered bits of the case files enough to go into Sherlock's narrative. Also, it was rather hard on the throat. He doesn't know how in the world Sherlock managed to keep it up and he was the soldier here.

Mrs. Moore scoff in disgust. "This is rubbish." She said impatiently. "Let's go find it then! You just said that the animal service pe checked the gutters and what not. But these are Krait snakes, we're talking about. They love soft stuff. They were supposed to check the linen cupboards."

"Really?" Both John and Sherlock gave her an incredulous look.

She rolled her eyes at them. "Come on, let's find it. I swear it on my years as the carer of all the snakes at the Zoo of London and lover of India." She said proudly as she puts the teacup on the coffee table and gestured to take theirs as well.

"No need to get out of your coats. The heating is not on. It'll be chilly." She coaxed the two men off their teacup. "Oh yes, we need equipment." She said before she bustled to the kitchen.

Both John and Sherlock looked at each other. One had excitement and the other had concern.

Once both registered the other's reaction, they both gave annoyed looks. Sherlock was annoyed that John wasn't excited at the prospect of seeing a foreign yet deadly snakes while John was worried sick about the dangerous snakes and annoyed that Sherlock was not giving that any mind.

Mrs Moore, huffed at the them. "Don't worry, I won't let you wrangle them. It takes trained personnel." She comforted them with a small laugh as she took out two metal sticks with a pincer type holder like the one on TV for the snake documentaries.
John felt bad at that while Sherlock gave her a scrutinizing look as she came to face them.

"I may be able to wrangle poisonous snakes but falls and bumps are something I can't handle alone."
She told them meekly, heading towards the door. "I could really use the company" She said, looking back at the two of them, waiting for a response.

It was a very funny situation they've gotten into. Here they have a former army doctor and the world's only consulting detective masquerading as policemen, aiding an elderly, half deaf snake wrangler to find a snake or snakes that had killed three people so far.

"Sure, Mrs. Moore." John came up politely with a comforting smile as he helpfully opened the door for her. "We'll join you."

"Oh, stop that. Call me Marissa." She giggled cheerfully. “But you have to speak up, dear. I barely caught that earlier."

Chapter End Notes

I hope it's good read for everyone. Again, apologies for any mistakes.

I'll be more careful with the PC next time. Cheers to a smooth week ahead!
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Greg went back to the basics for the investigation.

Mycroft is trying to prevent an incident.

Sherlock, John and Marissa finds the snakes but not exactly the way they expected.

Also, Greg couldn't catch a break.

Chapter Notes

Phew! Managed to get this out at last! I had to edit a thousand times because I kind of had to deviate from my outline since it's just...opposite of my research.

Apologies for the wait everyone! And Happy Readings ahead!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Greg and Sally was piecing up the clues from his interviews. It didn't take them much time as it was a small theatre but what they found out tallied up with what Sherlock had told him. The deceased couple was quite charitable.

They deal with at-risk teens and the homeless. There were a few times they were called down by the police for one thing or another despite having a charge sheet filled with only prior parking ticket fines and speed limit summons.

Some of the people at the theatre were uncomfortable with the homeless because some of them had drugs (or at least they claimed to) but both Elaine and Will swore that they would turn away those who did.

Otherwise, they were pretty fine with them. The owner of the theatre was alright with it, even supported Elaine and Will's efforts. But the manager had a few bones to pick with the deceased. But now, not so much so.

The manager, James Petterson, aims to to attract a more 'prestigious' crowd but, and quoting him 'the presence of the homeless and less fortunate had became a deterrent'.

With those two senior theatre hands deceased, there's no stopping him now. It was kind of disturbing how he said so as he was organizing their vigil.

"Not sure about murderer but he is an utter creep." Sally said as she went through the their financial accounts report of the theatre, hoping to find a clue there. Thankfully, the manager was really cooperative despite the circumstances.

"Yeah, and looking at him, I doubt he'll ever handle a snake either." Greg huffed as he ran into a
dead end with his notes with the theatre people. "Too squeamish." He commented as he remembered
the man squirming at the mention of the snake.

Deciding he should start again and ignore Sherlock's timeline, he went to the boxes where the
interviews with the neighbours are kept. They already know what's the murder weapon and an
unsubstantiated motive, if not a vague one.

"Most people are." Sally said as she stretched in her seat. "What're you doing, boss?" She asked out
of curiosity.

"Just my job." He answered cheekily.

Sally huffed fondly. "Yes, but did you find a lead or something?"

"Nope." Greg said as he took out the bunch of notes and sorted it out into the number of the houses.
"Which is exactly why I'm looking over this again."

"Alright. I'll go return this to evidences first." Sally said as she gathered all the reports.

"Right, see you." Greg dismissed her.

At that, he started on the first box of notes.

The first house was more or less oblivious and claimed that the house did get trouble with the
homeless and that's as far they go.

Another probably had issues with Mrs. Moore than not, considering she was about her age and
claimed that Mrs. Moore murdered her husband. That was a laugh considering Mr. Moore died of a
heart attack at a fishing trip, very much well away from Mrs Moore.

A few more oblivious interviews, another of Anti Mrs. Moore conspirator, a remark or two about
homeless people and there was a weird one about seeing suspicious people coming and going but
there was just one. Noting that one, he slaved on.

It was pretty quiet neighbourhood for a place in Lambeth. He remembered a time where it was a
pretty hazardous to work in, let alone live in. He walked down to the house and there were barely
any people out and the few who did, weren't keen on keeping out. Cars lining the street. But there's
something missing. Something obvious.

A persistent ring disturbed him. It sounded familiar. Realising what was happening, he woke up and
scrambled around for his phone on the desk. Apparently, he had fallen asleep.

Looking up the caller ID, he immediately answered it while wiping off his face instinctively, in case
there was drool.

"Mycroft, are you alright? Is it Sherlock?" He asked in panic. His voice still gruff from sleep as he
got his bearings and his mind fired at him a thousand bad situations.

"Darling, calm down." Mycroft tried to placate through the phone. "I'm merely...calling you." There
was a slight pause in his speech. He saw the sleeping man through the CCTV on his laptop. It should
have been a simple call on getting him home. He didn't expect to see the detective inspector to be so
bewildered when he did call.

Glad that there wasn't any danger, Greg took a breath of relief. Looking around, he was the few still
there and other than his room and a few desks, the rest was dark. Checking his watch, it was already
in the wee hours of the day.

"Hello, there Myc." He greeted as he settled back into his with note from Sally saying she emailed her report. "Uh...yeah." He managed as his mind went blank. It was Mycroft. What was he supposed to say? His mind grasped at nothing, sleep and panic still lagging his brain functions.

Mycroft gave quiet laugh. "It's getting late, Detective Inspector. Perhaps, it is about time that you returned home?" He explained gently.

Greg gave a fond chuckle before he looked towards the CCTV camera near the door. "Being naughty again, huh?" He regarded CCTV with a smile and a small wave.

Mycroft cleared his throat as he resisted a fond smile. "It would not do to leave the lights on needlessly with all the...austerity measures." He said somewhat primly but the humour was unmistakeable as Greg chuckled again.

"Austerity measures. Serious stuff, austerity measures." Greg chimed in mock seriously. "Maybe, if I had the right incentive at home, I'll rush back." He said as the words rolled off with his gruff voice and playful smirk. It was Tuesday night, after all,

Mycroft paused a second as he warred with himself on replying with a sultry answer or go with an apologetic one.

"Never mind, I was just messing with ya." Greg answered for him instead but Mycroft could register the small pinch of disappointment despite the fond laugh at the end of it. Mycroft was at a loss.

"I'll pack up but...would you mind stay on the line with me?" He requested, looking up to the CCTV. It was a too grainy for details but Mycroft knew the detective inspector had imploring eyes by now.

"Of course, darling." Mycroft answered easily, partly relieved at being given a solution. The two of them chatted as Greg packed up, his phone was on loud speaker as he did and Mycroft continued to pour over the documents he was still studying. Both were careful to avoid topics about each other's works and stuck to mostly about food. There was a bit about haggis at one point and both of them had different views on it. Greg wasn't keen with it as Mycroft was but it's also probably due to the two of them being served two different preparations of it.

They finally parted ways when Greg's phone battery gave a warning. Thankfully, he was almost done.

Mycroft kept a watch on the other man, eventually closing the window once he enters the lift. Once that was close, he rearranged the windows for the hospital records database and a window for Interpol arrest records on illegal animal trading.

A tablet was open for him, filled with notes and reports on organised crime. Unbeknownst to the public, the discovered torsos was not the firsts in relation to gang violence within the month and by Mycroft's estimations, this would escalate in a rather unsavory direction with an even bigger area of effect.

Anthea walked in later bearing a document case and a bottle of water. "Anything else, sir?"

"No, thank you. That would be all." Mycroft gave her a nod. "Apologies for the late notification."

"No problem, sir. Lord Beltham will be asking for it tomorrow." Anthea said.
"Noted." He said with another nod.

With that, Anthea left.

Careful not to aggravate his still swollen foot, he took the briefcase and opened it. Inside, a plastic folder with codes and three separately coloured thumbdrives. Taking the code out first, he gave a sigh as he gave a once over before putting it back and getting his medicine with the bottle of water Anthea left for him.

There are chances that he will need the case to be taken off and even now, he's putting out word for his operatives to keep such incidents away from public eye. Wiping publicized deaths is harder than trying to keep one undiscovered.

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The trio found that they couldn't do much as the house was still an active crime scene. Only Sherlock went about the house, carefully minimizing contamination as he searched for the snakes. Actually, even John wasn't all that sure about the contamination but Sherlock would know more than he does in this case.

John stayed with Marissa at the platform outside the house as they watched Sherlock go around.

Marissa groused. "Didn't see this one coming." Her equipment propped next to her.

John couldn't help but sympathize with her. "Sorry about this." Hoping it was loudly enough for her.

"No, no. I understand." She said with a wave at the crime scene. "Mecchy, Elaine and Will deserved all the help they can get. They were good people." She said, her voice had almost cracked with emotions as she did.

John was about to console her when Sherlock came back.

"I took pictures. I don't think they were at the linen cupboard or the closet." Sherlock told them as he carefully closed the door with his gloved hands.

The three of them went through it, Marissa had to zoom in a few times for proper verification.

"Oh dear, that leaves us with Gina's house." Marissa said worriedly.

"I think I know where Gina keeps her spare keys." Sherlock said almost eagerly. "We could get in there for the snakes." He urged.

John was shaking his head gravely behind Marissa, trying to convey that they were doing something very Not Good but stopped when Marissa looked at him next.

"Are you sure you can do that?" She asked, concerned.

"Well, if there's a valid evidence of immediate danger, we're allowed to." Sherlock said convincingly. "Of course, we sort of need you to...y'know." he gestured rather nervously, which was one of his fake nervous act, trying to somehow have Marissa play along. "Just tell the others you saw the snake here and...we can get in." Sherlock suggested innocently.

Marissa gave him a scrutinizing stare before looking to John.

John immediately gave her a pointed look. "If you say so, we might need something about it." He said, hoping it'll be convincing enough and loud not to repeat himself.
Marissa took a moment as if she didn't catch him before she shrugged.

"Seeing as it hasn't reached my floor, I think it's there." She said frankly.

Without further ado, and probably Marissa's grudge with Gina, they got down with all the snake tongs as well.

Once at the door, Sherlock felt around the top of the door frame and struggled trying to get the tape off from the wall.

"I saw the odd patch earlier. It looks roughly the size of key." He explained. Both of them were beyond surprise with Sherlock's discovery but they were too short to help him. John wondered if that was the reason why Sherlock kept talking about the door frames as he vaguely remembered about 'pristine door frame'.

"That's really smart." Marissa said, impressed. "And you, sir, have a very sharp eye." She said with something akin to maternal pride.

Just as a shadow of a self-satisfied smirk crossed his face, he had to stretched a little bit more as he took the tape and the key with it.

"Got it." Sherlock said happily as he rid the key of the tape and examined the key, only to further clean it of the glue. "Ah, better." He declared as he slotted the key in. The door opened with a twist of the knob.

As the door swayed opened, there was a burst of warm air.

All three looked at each other in confusion before John went forth, only to be stopped by Sherlock. He was looking at the floor. Following his line of sight, John saw a line of dark substance. A scraping sound alerted them. Not too far away, there was a snake, half stuck to a square with dark substance, slithering pitifully with almost half of its body stuck to it.

Peering in, Marissa gasped. "Snake glue!" She said horrifically.

"Mrs. Moore, we have to call this in. This might be another crime scene." Sherlock said as John backed away from the entrance.

With that, they closed the door as Sherlock went outside to call Lestrade.

John helped Marissa with the snake tong and her bags at her floor. She still has to wait for a uniformed officer to arrive but at least, she’ll be out quick.

"Mrs. Moore." Sherlock addressed her once he was done with phoning in Lestrade. "When the uniformed personnel arrives, tell them you were the one who found the key and let me in. Or else, the Gina's house will be considered contaminated and not fit for evidence." He said seriously as he held out the key for her to take.

Marissa sighed loudly. "I'm sure the real Lestrade would appreciate that, too." She told them, only to get a beaming smirk from Sherlock and a surprised gasp from John. She took the key, giving them both a shaking head. "The moment you told me you were Lestrade, I knew something was wrong. I was hoping you're the friend Mecchy has told me about. You're certainly tall and have an 'expensive' coat with you. He mentioned that you're the best actor he has ever seen, too." She added, amused. "I daresay you almost had me fooled."
Sherlock looked surprised. "That early? How did you know it wasn't burglars or the murderer?" He asked, curiosity was strong in his words.

"Honestly, it was a gut feeling." She admitted with a wry smile. "I knew you weren't bad the moment you stopped me from rummaging around the crime scene. If it had reached there, I would have faked knee pain or something and get returned to my floor....Or at least, I hoped so."

Both Sherlock and John shook their head.

"That's dangerous." John said in bewilderment. "A lot of things could have happened."

Marissa gave a nervous laugh. "You don't travel around without getting into a hostage situation or two." She responded. "Anyway, is Greg your friend, too?" She asked.

"Who's Greg?"

"Yeah."

Both Sherlock and John answered simultaneously.

John had to explain to Marissa of their relation with Greg, earning them all another round of tea.

By the time Greg arrived, apparently still in his work clothes, they all shared their findings and Sherlock and John left Greg to do his part.

They managed to find a cab once they were sure that it's away from suspecting eyes.

Chapter End Notes

I think I got my muse back. Hope to get another chapter up soon.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

They've found something and gotten the suspect on a run.

Getting said suspect into custody was easy but something's off.

Sherlock and John chases another lead.

Mycroft will be in the picture.

Chapter Notes

Alright, got this within the two weeks...I think?

Going to keep up with a two weeks upload schedule.

Hope everyone has a wonderful read ahead.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mrs. Hudson had come up to check on the boys. She was surprised to see the doctor, snoring away on the couch and Sherlock's coat was on the rack. It was almost 10 am.

She roused the doctor and went to put the kettle on as he freshened up. It must have been a rough night.

"Oh, thank you Mrs. Hudson." John said gratefully as he settled himself at the dining table, happy and clean but he still looked like he hasn't slept for the whole night.

Mrs. Hudson smiled fondly at that. "You better get some breakfast in you. You look like you've been through the wringer." She told him as he took his first cup.

John gave her an acknowledging nod. "I will." He said Mrs Hudson moved around to dust what she was allowed to. "Do you have any sandwiches to spare?"

That only earned him an amused grimace to which John answered with a chuckle.

John had barely gotten to the newspapers when Sherlock burst out of his room.

"John! Come, we need to chase down a suspect!" Sherlock said as he stopped to get his coat.

John could barely respond before he shouted again. "Come on, John!"

Mrs. Hudson only managed to offer a wry smile before as John grabbed the tea biscuits in a napkin and rushed for his coat.
He had barely gotten to the motorways when Greg received a call from Sherlock. It must be a sign if both Holmes brothers had contacted him within such short period.

Apparently, he's been staking out at the victim's house and now found more evidence. There was some briefing when he got there and Mrs. Moore was more than helpful with the statements.

They had Ms. Tan contacted as the CSIs and animal control came for the snakes. It took them all but an hour to assemble for Ms. Tan’s floor and another hour trying to catch the snake before they could document and collect evidence safely. There was one nearest to the heating vent, fully stuck with the glue and two more trying to escape but with parts of their body still stuck to the snake glue squares.

As Ms. Tan hasn't answer yet, Greg asked them to contact her at a more reasonable hour.

It was bright when they got all the way to the bare bedroom and nearly empty workstation.

Unfortunately, it confirmed one of his worst fears as his officers opened the nearly closet and drawers. Escaping suspects.

"Donovan, find Georgina Tan right now!" Greg called for her as Donovan immediately went out for her orders. Hopefully, he still has time to get the upper hand. Already his mind was leaping on flights checks and embassies. That is if she's still in the country.

"Sir, you might want to see this." Anderson called from the kitchen.

When he got there, three more CSIs are taking pictures and putting out a bottle with a snake in it. There were a few covered urns of pungent smelling liquid, some dried plant parts, probably herbs and gutting knifes. It seems that Marissa isn’t the only one used to snakes.

"Whoever it is, they’ve been making snake wine.” Anderson stated solemnly.

"Be careful in case she has more stored somewhere.” Greg told him grimly, “Jones, you're in charge!.” He said as he left Anderson. Jones, who was wearing the disposable white jumpsuit, stood up to acknowledge him. "Yes sir."

Outside, Donovan was already in the car, on her phone. Getting his jumpsuit off, he got in. "Any luck?" He said, barely able to keep the hard tone out.

She shook her head as she maintained her phone call.

Quickly getting his phone out, he called for Sherlock.

"Lestrade, got a team in this morning and found out the house is mostly bare." Sherlock snarled under his breath. "They found some animal wine making paraphernalia, the sort used for traditional Chinese medicine. They couldn't find her in her last reported residence and contacting her is moot. She's either running or hiding."
"Wait, you said we're chasing her. Where are we going?" John asked, partly regretting bringing biscuits instead of his gun.

Sherlock regarded him seriously. "Her office. If I can access her work PC, we'll know where she went." He told him rather gravely. "Urgh, why her? Nothing is adding up."

John stared at him. "Didn't people say that she hates homeless people? And her neighbours, too."

"Everyone can claim that and it'll be years before anything happens and it's usually not murder. Unless they have something to benefit from it like life insurance, inheritance, contract killing or it was an accident." Sherlock muttered darkly, squinting as he steepled his hands, deep in thought.

John was quiet for a moment as Sherlock burst out. "Regardless if she was guilty or not for the murders, the snake wine made running a logical choice. She would have been convicted with possession of endangered species. Whether or not this constitutes fleeing the country, that's another case entirely."

John racked his head as he processed that. "What would possession of endangered species conviction get?" John asked.

At that Sherlock only had a pinched grimace. "It doesn't makes sense. It's not much. She would be more than capable to make bail without a problem. Even then, it is if she couldn't find a lawyer that would represent her. There must be something else."

John suddenly had a nagging feeling that he was onto something. "If she makes snake wine. Where does she get the snakes?" He asked him. "Could she be running from her supplier?"

Sherlock gave him a scrutinizing look before he gave an impatient grunt. "We need more data."

John sat back as he was lost in his own thoughts. Smuggling syndicates are big and are usually ruthless. They might just find her dead.

---

Once they reached the accounting firm, Sherlock was all but hustling. The police were already there. They made their way to where Greg was.

"We've done all the processing." He said, still on the phone and gesture towards a PC.

At that, Sherlock seated himself and started to go about in it. He kept scoffing and snarling as he did. Seeing that, John settled to a corner and started on his biscuits.

Greg joined him as other officers went about interviewing the colleagues.

"Hey, John." He greeted with a tight smile. He had eyebags and was looking very exhausted.

"Biscis?" John offered from out of the napkin.

He gave a small smile at that as he brushed off his fingers first and popped one into his mouth.

"Any luck yet?" He asked Greg.
"Got the airports for the lady. Haven't gotten any news on her and if she's using a fake passport, we might just be chasing a shadow." Greg said with a heavy sigh.

John slowed his chewing at that as he watched Sherlock being riled up by the PC.

"This might be bad." John commented rather ominously at Sherlock's increasing agitation.

Greg gave him a comforting pat on the shoulder before Sherlock gave a triumphant 'A-ha!'

The two quickly got to him as Sherlock continued to fiddle around the PC and getting his phone out to capture the picture from the screen.

"Lestrade, get your people to No.3-03, Level 3, Block A, Nido House, Blackburn street, West Hampstead." He said as he turned the screen towards Lestrade. "She might be with someone named Rose Fey. The place is tagged with that name."

On the screen was a 'Locate my device page' with a pin at the said place with the address and a tag with 'Rose Fey'. "Hurry before she realised that we've got her."

Immediately, Lestrade got his phone out and phoned the nearest constabulary while Sherlock refreshed the page to keep track of the pin.

---

It took a couple of hours but they managed to find Georgina Tan and take their under custody. She had tried to jump off the floor but the police managed to get her out of harms way. She immediately demanded a lawyer.

"Well, she is claiming unintentional manslaughter claiming the snakes she was processing into snake wine escaped. But we found phone chat logs of her trying to do in the homeless boy, Lucas and a lot of other complaints with the other neighbours." Lestrade updated Sherlock through the phone as he and John were in the cab.

"Was there any other chat about delivery? Or orders?" Sherlock asked.

"No." Lestrade answered back in a doubtful tone. "Nothing suspicious yet. Is there something else I should be looking into?"

"If she's making snake wine, she must have had a supplier." Sherlock said simply.

"Oh." Greg answered back in realization. "Will keep an eye out for that one." He added gravely.

"Indeed." Sherlock answered back tersely.

"Well, Sherlock." Lestrade curtly said. "That's all from my side. If there's anymore updates, I'll text you later."

"Ok." Sherlock responded as they both got off the phone.

John patiently gave him a moment of rest before he spoke.

"Sherlock, is there any reason why are we heading towards the city?" John asked. They were headed
towards the city when they were in the cab. He wanted to ask him earlier but Sherlock had been on the phone the whole time.

"You said it yourself, she's running from her supplier. So much so that she's willing to go to prison for manslaughter." He said it low enough to be ignored by the cabbie.

John's heart leapt to his throat at the implication. "We are not running headfirst into a smuggling den." He hissed his reply. Panic was spreading as he thought of everything he could to convince him otherwise.

Sherlock rolled his eyes. "Of course not, John." He said as if it was the most obvious thing ever. "We're giving the most powerful man in Britain a visit."

At that John gave him a surprise raise of his eyebrows before he resettled himself in his seat.

They were going to see Mycroft. He should know.

Chapter End Notes

Had to cut here for now. Will come back in two weeks with the next chapter.

Edit: Just saw a number of embarrassing misspells and just awkward sentences. Fixed the ones I saw. Sorry about that.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Sherlock actually asks a clue from Mycroft by more or less blackmailing him.

John is livid with Sherlock not eating and curious with all this Gucci business.

Greg is just glad he managed to get a confession and a murder charge on.

Chapter Notes

That was a close call. Happy readings everyone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Upon reaching Mycroft's room at the Diogenes Club, Mycroft regarded them with a sigh once the door was closed. "Yes, Sherlock?"

"Brother dear." Sherlock began, civilly. "There was an incident today." He said pausing for a moment. "Involving Rosa Fey."

Mycroft waited. John felt like a third wheel. Sherlock was more or less stalking his brother, who remained seated behind his desk.

"One of yours?" He continued as he went closer towards the desk.

"If you wanted something, you should ask for it clearly." Mycroft chided as he removed his reading glasses and sat straighter in his seat to address his brother.

"I've just asked a question, brother dear." Sherlock retorted with mock politeness.

Mycroft was regarded him for a few moments before he answered. "No, she is not."

"Is she with the police or the criminals?" He continued.

"Criminals."

Sherlock stilled for a moment. "Smuggling?"

"No."

"Organized crime?"

"Yes."

"Love interest or key person?"

"Love interest."
"What is their name?"

"No, Sherlock. I will not answer that." Mycroft finally showed some semblance of emotion - a grimace.

"I've already figured it out this far. There's hundreds of them and they all have motive." Sherlock said almost petulantly.

John was perplexed at that fact but he should have known better. These were the Holmes. They have an almost telepathic mode of information exchange and of the few times they were here for business and not for taunting (which was an even smaller number), it was cryptic as it is brief.

"I'm sure you can narrow it further." Mycroft gave a benign smile and wore his reading glasses again to peer into his tab. "Good day, Brother Mine."

"If you don't tell me now, I'll send a text to Lestrade." He threatened rather sweetly. "I'm sure he will be very interested to know about your condition."

Picking up the conversation, sensing a topic of concern, John cleared his throat loudly.

Both brothers gave him a baleful stare before they went back to stare each other down before they started the next round.

"Is there anyone here who needs medical attention?" John asked immediately before they went on. If it's something he can deal with, he wants to deal with it quick.

"I'm sure you're aware of it but that information is none of your business, Dr. Watson." Mycroft calmly stated but the sarcasm behind it was baffling. "However, you should have 'observed' my brother closer. Unlike myself, he hasn't sought any medical attention." He half-sneered at his brother.

At that, Sherlock groused when John tried to come closer to check on him.

"Later!" He burst out, shooing John away. "Now, tell me which one is it?"

John was not amused at being shooed away but this was neither time nor place to address this. A woman's life might be on the line. On top of that, dealing with a mid-case Sherlock is harder than dealing with a post case one.

"If you are even a passable detective, you should be able to find the right one by questioning the suspect." He said condescendingly at Sherlock.

"If the suspect was Rosa Fey, I would have. But it isn't her." Sherlock reasoned sharply.

Mycroft visibly froze. "How did you find her?"

"We had a traditional animal wine maker in custody. A suspect for a triple homicide." He told Mycroft. "Rosa Fey's name was at the property she was hiding in. It is possible that Rosa Fey is either a fellow accomplice or a supplier. You had just confirmed that she is involved with a criminal organization. Considering the snake's origin, the organization might be of international repute. Thus, having a flat where foreign students are renting. If you don't give me the name, the suspect will be executed as soon as she is in the public eye. I'm close to finishing this but there are external forces that needs more weeding out."

Mycroft sighed as he absorbed the information. "I am to understand that you don't want her to be executed and allow the judiciary process to take place in full?" He said wearily as he surreptitiously
deflated to the back of his chair.

"Very much so." Sherlock said with a nod.

"Consider it done. There will be no interference from the Gucci Gang. Whoever it is, you may see that the sentence and court proceedings will continue without any...impediment." Mycroft said with a tone of finality.

"Thank you, brother dear." Sherlock said with an acknowledging nod before turning to leave.

"Do take care, brother mine." Mycroft said with sarcasm as he straighten up and continued read his tablet. "You're paler than porcelain ." He added offhandedly.

"You, too, brother dear. Your foot needs rest." Sherlock shot back before he opened the door.

John caught the name Gucci Gang but the following interaction was so fast, he barely had time to process, only managing a short nod for Mycroft.

"Sherlock." John hissed, keeping up with him as they exited. He made sure there was no one around when he spoke.

That earned an admonishing shake of his head as he stared at John. They were still in the Diogenes Club after all.

Thankfully, they were moving fast. John couldn't see anything wrong with him yet. He hoped the consulting detective hasn't done anything that may make it worst.

As they walked out, he began to recall as much as possible of the previous day until now, hoping to figure out whatever it was.

Once outside, John caught up with his stride. He hoped the guess that he had was wrong.

"Have you eaten since yesterday?" John asked, tone neutral.

"We need to get to Tan." Sherlock said urgently, his eyes were squinting as he did. "I can get a confession out of her with Mycroft taking care of the Gucci Gang for now. Still need to -"

"You are getting food." John started, barely restraining his frustration at the detective's lack of self care and his ignorance. "You need food. You need energy. " He said before he grabbed his arm and stopped walking. "We're going for food now or so help me god!"

Seeing that John was being serious with a large probability of inconveniencing if he resists, he relented. "Ok." He answered as they both stopped on the pavement.

"Good." John replied with slight surprise before clearing his throat and sobered up. He was expecting Sherlock to rant about food slowing him down.

The nearest restaurant was an Indian curry restaurant. Unfortunately, upon seeing Sherlock, there was a silent but panicked exit of the store employees.

To which Sherlock offered in a long suffering tone. "Drugs." He told him as they went back out. "They served me roast chicken and not tandoori. I threatened to bring a drug raid here. And they scoffed." He said indignantly. "Unfortunately, they were using kas-kas in their curry. They tested positive for opioids."

"Kas-kas?" John asked as they found a fish and chips stall but Sherlock steered him to a fast food
restaurant instead. The pointed look he had broached no argument for John. There's probably a reason for that.

"A herb derived from poppy. It is not illegal nor is it a narcotic but in high doses, it is suspected that it can give a positive in drug tests." He told. "It makes curry more delectable, really." He finished off thoughtfully.

After getting a takeaway porridge and a sandwich, they left for the Yard.

---

Greg knew he was not going to get a murder charge stick the moment he and Sally saw the lawyer. Georgina was scared and anxious, literally having every word scripted for her by the familiar and successful lawyer.

"As per Ms. Tan's statement, it was an error that the snakes had escaped. Holding true to her traditions, only dangerous animals are made into wine. Unknowingly, the snakes were endangered as well." The lawyer said. "Is there anything else?"

"Where did you get the snakes?" Greg asked.

"A uni friend gave me." She answered timidly. "She commissioned me for the snake wine. I tried contacting her but I couldn't find her anywhere." She said, sounding lost.

Greg was internally upset. There was an even higher chance of Georgina escaping the murder charge at this rate. There was this mysterious third person that could complicate everything.

"Do you always get your snakes that way?" Greg continued.

Georgina was about to answer when the lawyer cut in.

"She has answered that in her statement. She is commissioned for making the wine. The animals are given to her for the making of said wine." The lawyer calmly answered. "There was neither purchased nor obtained by Ms. Tan-"

Suddenly there was a knock, cutting off the lawyer. "Sir, you have an urgent message." said an officer as he peeked in.

Greg gave them all a nod before slipping away.

At a nearby room, Sherlock and John was waiting for him, eating takeaway porridge. Or rather, drinking it.

"Has she confessed yet?" Sherlock asked impatiently.

"Accidental manslaughter? Yeah, that's about it." He said irritably as he sat at the free chair. "It's going to be hard to stick her with the murder charge."

Sherlock stared at him for a full minute before continuing to slurp his porridge.

Both John and Greg waited for him to say something but a moment passed in silence.
"Sherlock?" Greg prompted. John stared at Sherlock as he did.

Sherlock gave another stare at Greg. "Find a way to mention Gucci. She'll pick it up. If she doesn't, make sure to have a suicide watch tonight."

Both Greg and John stared at him even more. John was puzzled while Greg looked suspicious.

"Is that...what I think it is?" Greg lowered his voice conspiratorially.

"If you're referring to DI Davies' jurisdiction, then yes." Sherlock said coolly in the same hushed voice. "I strongly suggest that no further mention is made until you get the confession."

Hearing that, John held his tongue. It must have been related to another case. They've had cases forcibly transfered before.

Greg gave him a nod as if everything had fallen into place.

With that, they all exited the room.

---

Georgina went pale when Greg broke out about his ex-wife's non-existent Gucci watch. Sally was quite puzzled but played along.

Georgina immediately dismissed her rather confused lawyer, probably going to claim for coercing his client.

"I'll tell you what happened." Georgina said. "Don't let Rosa know." She almost begged. "Whatever you do, please don't let her know."

Greg nodded solemnly. As it is, they couldn't find Rosa Fey anywhere.

"Rosa is one of my oldest friends from Uni. I don't have that many friends and she's the only one who still talks to me." She explained with steeled fervour. "Then last month she had a boyfriend. Her boyfriend, Hamid, was always looking for a way to get stronger. I suggested snake wine and told her all about what snake wine are used for. I gave her a sample of the viper wine I had before. He liked it and Rosa said that he was doing better in more than one way. " She said with an awkward laugh. "I told them I made it and I can make more if they commissioned me."

The two police officers were waited for her to continue as she stopped to take a breather.

"I offered them a quote for the wine making services and told them I can't find the snakes unless they were willing to pay more. Rosa told me she'd get the snakes." She continued with a look that was getting more teary. "She managed to find a crate of them and they kept most of them as pets. Hamid was the one who delivered them."

"How much did you...quote?" Greg asked. If she had somehow made enemies with a gang, it might be the reason why Sherlock asked for suicide watch.

"$5,000.00" She told them. "And that's market standards." She said in defense as both Greg and Sally gaped at her. Frustrated, she banged the table. "Don't you get it? It's not my fault!"
Greg, managed to not flinch while Sally jumped in her seat.

"I only wanted the money! I only wanted a better life! Better job! Better working environment! Better home!" She raved. "If Hamid just stopped being a womanizing drunkard, I wouldn't have slept with him. If that homeless trash just went away, I wouldn't need to kill him. And the bloody neighbours! They didn't care about the filthy trash and now they're dead, too! Those stupid snakes were supposed to kill the trash but it went and killed them." She stopped abruptly realising what had happened before she broke down. "It wasn't my fault." She wailed as she curled into herself. "It wasn't."

Sally had to calm her down for her confession. Once it was done, Greg could finally breathe easy.

Chapter End Notes

If you see any weird jumble of words, that's probably the cat's work. I managed to cleaned up the ones I saw but I might have missed some. Feel free to comment on it.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Mycroft carried out his end of the bargain.

John spilled about Mycroft and Greg called to ask him about it.

Sherlock is tending to funerary matters while he looked as if death had warmed up to him.

Mycroft's assumption about Greg is actually correct as rain.

All's well, ends well.

Or is it?

Chapter Notes

First off, apologies if it's all...weird? I couldn't stop myself from giving Mycroft/Greg fluff.

As to whether this is the last chapter, it isn't. There's two more items on the agenda. A cookie to the one who guessed it right.

Happy Reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Once his brother had left, Mycroft resumed his contact on the tablet.

"Finished?" A man regarded with a slight Irish accent.

"As I were saying, it is imperative that those notes reaches the...right members," He said discreetly.

There was a ruffle of paper. "Is there a deadline I need to follow?"

"Make sure the targets do not leave Ireland until their execution. That is all." Mycroft ordered.

"Affirmative. Notification through the usual route?" He asked.

"Yes." Mycroft said genially.

"Alright, I'm off." He said before there the line ended.

Signing off, Mycroft let out a small sigh of relief.

He would achieve a great many things once the operations takes place. Sherlock had come just as the plans were being laid out. Thankfully, his request was able to be incorporated.
He would be able to dismantle the growing wildlife trade while its financiers are at odds with each other, courtesy of the material he will be using. The government resources in the matter will eventually be repurposed once the 'loose ends' stopped being dumped into the Thames and the buyers stopped being injured by their recent purchase. With his further instructions, none of them would be able to leave Ireland until further notice, thus fulfilling Sherlock's end of the deal.

However, due to the fact that this had taken root, he will have to do some 'weeding' later.

All that's left is Rosa Fey. She could complicate matters if she decides to leave the country with her partner, Hamid. However, Sherlock might have something from his suspect.

He considered his options while keeping a tab open on Irish The Sun news.

---

It was late when he settled into bed and even later when he heard the ringtone he had set for Greg. Getting up, he answered it almost immediately.

"Oh, there you are Myccie." Said a very relieved Greg. "Um...Thought you weren't going to pick up." There was a odd level of inhibition involved here. All things considered, it is a victorious end to a case and a celebratory pub visit was almost expected.

Mycroft only gave himself a small smile as he got up in his bed and reached for the light. "Darling, it is late." He said gently. "You've returned from the pub, yet?"

"Yeah, yeah. John got me and Sally a cab and all safe and sound. " He paused as if he was out of words. If it wasn't for the audible breathing, it could be assumed the line was cut. However, Mycroft could guess the reason for the phone call. He hoped that the former army doctor had not made a big fuss over his current condition but he also knew escaping mention was impossible the moment Sherlock highlighted it during their meeting earlier.

"What did you have?" Mycroft settled for the least taxing of questions.

At that, Greg chuckled adoringly. "Just pub meal, really. How-uh... How was your day?" He asked tentatively.

Mycroft sighed at this. His earlier suspicions were right.

"I mean it's totally alright if you don't want to answer or anything. It's ok-"

"Gregory," Mycroft said soothingly, cutting him mid sentence. "Was it relating to what Dr. Watson might have mentioned?"

There was another paused before he uttered an affirmative.

"I know we had an agreement on this but I also understand your worry." He stated calmly. "I merely sprained my ankle. There's no need for worry. It is being attended to."

There was another pause. "Gregory?" He asked out loud.

"Yeah. I'm here, love." He answered back. "Is that why...I mean the other day, it's just that we had...well, you know...I mean I could always come to you if it's too much pain and all."
"Darling, it wouldn't have served either of us any good." He said in a tone finality.

Greg knew better than to argue. He had his moments and so did Mycroft. Still, that didn't mean it didn't sting.

"Gregory..." Mycroft began, realising he might have come off too cold.

"It's ok. I understand. I don't think I'd be able to do anything else but worry." Greg answered back quickly, placating whatever guilt his lover was developing with an awkward laugh. Mycroft was indeed placated.

"If a night out is too much at the mo, would you be...amenable for lunch?" He tried to inject some playfulness into his request.

Mycroft couldn't help the small smile on his face. "Yes, Gregory. I would be amenable indeed."

"Jesus, here comes the posh. I'm swooning." Greg uttered with a giggle. It wasn't that far from the truth. He could feel the warm flutter of a blush on his cheeks.

"Now, now darling. It wouldn't do to spoil our date now, would it?" He said with a slightly stern voice with a plummy accent, playing up the stiff gentleman. "Of course, in my current condition, you might need to come to the Club instead. I'm sure we would be afforded certain...freedom."

Greg's jaw actually dropped at that as the warmth turned into heat instead and his throat drying at the same time. "Oh God." He managed in a gruff tone with a more throatier chuckle. "You're killing me here." The amusement in his voice was audible and so was his fondness.

"Well, I am, as you say, a posh." Mycroft gave himself a huff of a chuckle. "Would it be too much trouble if you were to come down to the club? I could arrange for somewhere else if it's more convenient for the both of us."

"Oh yeah. Yeah. The Club would do just fine." Greg instantly agreed. The club was much more private for them both anyway.

There was an awkward pause. "Well, I'll see you tomorrow?"

"Yeah. See you, tomorrow Mycroft. Good night, love."

"Good night, darling." Mycroft

Once the respective phones hung up, Mycroft proceeded to call himself an idiot at the awkwardness while Greg laid face first into his pillow and shouted out his embarrassment into it.

---

Wrapping up the previous case, he needed the attending coroner's signature. Not that he couldn't send Sally for it but he thought of seeing Molly for a bit. Waiting at the vending machine with a steaming cup of coffee was John.

"Glad to see you haven't been assassinated yet." Greg greeted him with a rough pat.

"Haha." He said sarcastically, playfully pushing him off. "You've called him then?"
"Yeah. Nothing major." He said in relief. "How's Sherlock?"

"On medication." He said tersely. "Thankfully, he did take it. I was close to crushing all the medicine into his food. Though, I suspect he knows he needs it to function for today. He was as pale as his sheets this morning."

Greg gave a sympathetic groan. "Still going around like that?"

"I hope not as often. Honestly, I just zone out a bit."

"Army?"

"Army."


"Oh no. Apparently, he's signing out one of the bodies." He said solemnly with a clear of his throat.

Greg stared at him. "Lucas?"

"Yeah." John nodded.

Greg gave him a sad knowing smile. It's been a habit of Sherlock's. He would protect the Network he made, but in the rare cases like this, he helps with the funeral matters. "I need to see Molly. See you."

John raised his cup to that as he left.

Inside, Sherlock was busy with paperwork as Molly was double checking the forms.

A buzz from his phone caught his attention before he could even get close.

"Morning, Greg!" Greeted the soft-spoken coroner.

He waved a hand back in greeting as he frowned at his message. There were two cases already called in. Johnson is already taking one, leaving him with another.

"He will be picked up by the funeral house." Sherlock told them as he piled the documents up for one last check. He voice gravelly as if he was having a sore throat.

Upon closer inspection, he looked positively sick.

Feeling eyes on him, he regarded Greg. "That better be a 7 if you want me to work on it." He said grumpily.

"Yeah, yeah." He bit back. "Sorry for the trouble Molly but I need you to sign these. In a bit of hurry." He turned to Molly with an apologetic smile.

---

By the time he was done with the initial crime scene checks, he arrived at the club half an hour late.
He waited for the door to be closed before he started apologising.

"Now, now, Gregory. Perhaps we should start on lunch," Mycroft stopped him. "And then continue with the apologies? He said with an amused looked.

The food was served at the lounge area near the fire.

Despite the slow but steadied walk, Mycroft was able to walk to his seat with Greg.

“Now that we’ve settled, would you like to continue with the apologizing or would you like to discuss something else? Considering there’s barely enough time for a proper talk.” He began gently. He felt glad to see the other man again.

Greg gave a forlorn sigh but carried on. “To err is human after all.” He said meekly before his gaze briefly looked at Mycroft’s foot. “How are you holding up?”

“Better, thank you. How are you faring? Considering the previous case had been a difficult one.” He asked curiously.

“Well, getting sleep for once.” He answered in amusement as he dug into the sandwich he had ordered but he remained quiet afterwards. As if considering his words. Greg was still wondering about Mycroft’s sprained ankle.

“I see.” Mycroft noted but he gave Greg a onceover, as if scanning that he was right.

He grimaced at that. “It’s not that bad, is it?” He said as he looked over himself. It wasn’t exactly fresh clothes but it didn’t reek.

At that Mycroft gave an amused smile. “Not at all, darling.” He comforted the man. “However, I sense you’re curious for something else. I am sure you realise there are answers that I can’t give but if it’s possible, I do what I can.”

Jumping on the opportunity, Greg asked. “How did you get it?”

“Unfortunately, classified.” He calmly told him to which a dark look passed Greg’s face.

“So you had a doctor look over it?”

“Yes, I did.” He answered with a bit of amusement. “You see, I had, as ashamed as it is to admit it, had assumed you would be too concerned to the point of distraction.”

At that, Greg laughed. “Sorry for being predictable, love. But you’re quite right on the money for that one.” Giving him an apologetic grin. “I would’ve bugged you with hot compresses and ice and all.”

“Ah, Anna?” Mycroft asked as his thoughts landed on his daughter.

“Yep. She was a footie player. One wrong step and it was all pain and misery.” Greg said as he finishes his sandwich. “My last question.”

Mycroft nodded with a small quirk on his lips.

"Do you mind if I see it?" He asked. "It's ok if you don't want to, though." He said added. "I mean, if you're comfortable with it, that is."

Mycroft grimaced. Greg was expecting a rejection.
"Well, detective inspector, if we started now, neither of us can return to our duties on time." He said. "Would tonight be amenable?"

Greg froze. He wasn't sure if that was a subtle proposition or an innocent appointment. Mycroft is busy running the country and all.

Realizing this, Mycroft shook his head. "Yes, I am requesting your presence for my bed or yours, if you're amenable. The latter would have been my next question." He was amused with the whole interaction.

Recovering from his stupor, he gave a wide grin. "Yeah." He answered happily. "And yeah, your place this time. Don't want ya moving around with a leg like that." He teased.

Mycroft gave him an amused grimace.

"Well, I think I'm already running late." Greg said as he took a look at the mantelpiece clock.

"Indeed." Mycroft said as he stood up, joined by Greg. "See you tonight, then. Detective inspector."

"Yeah, love." Greg dove in for a peck to which he welcomed easily.

Though, he had to be shooed away as Mycroft made his way to his desk again. "I'm recovering splendidly. There's no need for all this." He tried to convince the detective.

"If you say so," Greg said but he only marched away once he was seated.

With that, he returned to the Yard.

Chapter End Notes

I tripled checked this and if there's typos or anything, I apologize for that too.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!