Home is Where One Starts From

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Summary

John, a twenty-three year old Alpha, is home from the war, still working through his PTSD with Sherlock, a nineteen year old Omega, helping him to keep his life straight. Everything settled down, and they quickly fell into a rhythm. But of course, things couldn't stay quiet for long, and soon ghosts from Sherlock's past emerged, pushing the seems of the relationship that John and Sherlock had built. But it isn't just their relationship in danger, it's their lives, and the life of the one thing neither of them could live without.

Notes

This is the second installation of our series, "Always." As such we highly recommend reading the first installment "The Trouble With Sentiment" as we pick up right where we left off with our boys and any newcomers might feel a small bit lost without having read the first.

The title of this work is, in fact, a quote from T.S. Eliot.

Enjoy :)
Chapter 1

John swallowed, squeezing Sherlock's hand before he released him, walking towards the blue door. After a moment's pause, he raised his hand and knocked, solidly, three times.

Sherlock held firmly onto John's hand as he knocked, not allowing John to pull away and leave when it wasn't answered.

After a moment of nerve wracking silence, he was about to turn and leave when the door was pulled open by a young blond woman with eyes just as blue as his. "Harry?" he whispered, his voice suddenly gone.

Sherlock blinked when the door was opened, seeing what was practically the female Omega version of John, they had almost the same eyes.

Harry froze in the doorway, taking in the sight before her. The man almost didn't even look familiar, so much older and just... different. "John..." she breathed, before stepping forward and wrapping her arms around his neck tightly in a hug, eyes glancing for a moment to Sherlock before she focused on her brother.

John froze for a moment, relief and disbelief washing through him until he eventually circled his arms around his sister's waist. He buried his face in the crook of her neck, squeezing her tightly for fear that she would disappear again. "God, I can't... you're actually here." He pulled back, cupping her face in his hands, his gaze skipping back and forth between her eyes.

Harry smiled. "Of course I'm here; I... I've been here a while I just... God I didn't know where to start looking for you. I heard you'd gone overseas," she said, wiping at her eye a little, seeing her brother. Feeling Sherlock's presence behind him, John kissed her forehead and released her, glancing over his shoulder at Sherlock and taking his hand, trying to ignore the tears that were gathering in his eyes. "Harry, this is Sherlock. He helped me find you. He's..." John met Sherlock's gaze for a moment. "He's my partner." And he meant that in more than one way.

Harry looked over at Sherlock, smiling a little.

Sherlock squeezed John's hand softly, watching the two siblings interact, it was so odd. So different than he and Mycroft.

Sherlock’s ears went a little pink when John introduced him, thankfully hidden under his hair, and he nodded a little towards her.

"It's Stone now... Harriet Stone. I, well, Clara’s away for a few days, work but... she's wonderful," Harry said. "Oh! Right, erm, come in. Mum's in the living room... she'll be so happy to see you. Come in, both of you," she said, stepping back.

Sherlock stayed close to John as they were ushered into the house.

John followed Harry into the house, tugging Sherlock along with him. "I'm glad you found someone. I can't imagine what it was like... twice..." John trailed off, shaking his head. "I'm sorry I wasn't there," he murmured, reaching up to set his hand on Harry's arm. He squeezed Sherlock's hand at the same time, looking back at him with a small smile.

Harry shook her head. "It's fine... I really lucked out, all things considered, they were raided a few
days after I got there, and we were all sent out to other places. Better ones, really. Clara found me there and... we really did hit it off," she said, leading the two of them to the living room where an older woman sat, middle aged.

Sherlock looked down, feeling somewhat out of place. Close families wasn't something he was particularly used to.

"Mum? Look who's come back home?" Harry said, stepping aside to show John.

Sherlock pulled away a small bit so John could go see his mother, stepping to the side of the room.

"Mum?" John stepped further into the room, smiling at his mother.

"John?" Mindy tilted her head, jumping to her feet to face her son.

"Hey," John said lamely, crossing the room to wrap her in a tight hug. "God, it so good to see you," he sobbed, bunching his fists in her shirt.

Mindy shushed him quietly, running her hands down his back, though she was crying as well. "It's alright, child," she murmured, holding him close until he calmed down.

Sherlock watched the embrace, thinking again to his first heat; that had been the last time he'd really been close to his own mother.

John smiled weakly down at the much shorter woman, leaning into the hand she placed on his cheek.

John turned to look at Sherlock, sensing his discomfort from where he was. It was almost frightening how attuned to the Omega he was already. "Sherlock, come here." He reached out his hand, beckoning him forward. "Mum, this is Sherlock," John explained, entwining his fingers with Sherlock's.

Sherlock fingered his wrist a little, a habit still from when they'd been injured and looked up when John called him over. He hesitated a moment, then walked over, feeling John's fingers weave with his.

John's mum smiled, reaching out to give Sherlock a gentle hug. "Welcome to the family," she murmured in his ear, having easily picked up the combination of Sherlock and John's scents.

"I-it's a ple-" Sherlock was cut off by the embrace, which startled him a little, and he swallowed, blinking a couple times. He stammered a little, not sure how to respond to the action, or the statement. "I... thank you it's... a pleasure," he said, defaulting to finish his initial plan for a greeting.

John squeezed Sherlock's hand reassuringly, leaning into him a little.

_I still need you here._

"I heard about Dad," John said, looking between his mum and Harry. His mum nodded slowly, gesturing him and Sherlock toward the loveseat and retaking her seat in the chair.

Sherlock sat down at the end of the small sofa, his hands folded in his lap, gripping his fingers tightly. He glanced up at the mention of John's father, the three of them with somewhat mournful expressions.

"He was fine, though. He went peacefully," Mindy assured him. "Harry told me you went to war. And you didn't stop over before you left? John Watson, don't do that to me again. Ever."
John ducked his head down momentarily. He may have been an Alpha, but his Omega mother was still dominant to him, and he knew it and most definitely respected her. "Sorry, mum. I was going to, and then..." He glanced over at Sherlock, knowing that the memory was just as raw for Sherlock as it was for himself. "Then they called and said I was being shipped out the next day, and then I was out of time."

Sherlock looked down again as Harry spoke up.

"He was already gone Mum, when you and Dad finally found me," she murmured, looking at John. "Still though, even a call would have been nice, but I understand why you didn't," she said quietly.

John glanced over at Sherlock, frowning slightly, and moved over until he was sitting right beside him. He wrapped his arm around his waist, taking one of Sherlock's hands in each of his own. "Are you alright?" he murmured, quietly enough that only he could hear.

Sherlock nodded, letting out a breath and feeling his ears warm slightly, especially when he glanced up and saw the two women smiling at them.

John nuzzled minutely against his temple, inhaling his scent and giving Sherlock the ability to smell his own as well.

John looked over at Harry and his mother, smiling slightly, not quite sure it reached his eyes. "It's fine; I'm not going back over there any time soon. A lot happened in that desert."

"You're not going over there any time ever," Harry said, folding her arms. "I'm not in the business of wanting to see my brother get shot at," she said, standing up. "I'm going to make some tea," she said, moving out of the living room.

John winced a little when Harry mentioned him getting shot at. He was still unsure of whether or not he wanted to tell them about what had happened.

Sherlock winced as well at the mention of John being shot at; she didn't know that John had, in fact, been shot and almost didn't make it home to tell the tale.

"I'll help," John offered, knowing that leaving Sherlock alone with his mum was probably the best idea he had had all day. And Harry was getting defensive, so he figured he ought to talk to her alone as well.

Sherlock opened his mouth when John got up, but he closed it before he could do something as childish as ask for him not to.

Sherlock swallowed, glancing up at John's mother. He licked his lips a little, letting out another breath.

"I suppose I owe you thanks, Mrs Watson," Sherlock said. "You raised John... and if he wasn't the way he was, I would by all rights not be here," he said. Which was true. Sherlock would have died, and the timing of it all seemed almost perfect, another day in that auction house, or in the hands of someone else... he gave himself two to three days until the problem with his stomach turned to sepsis and he would have died, not that he voiced that, of course.

"Please," Mindy chided, waving her hand dismissively. "John's too stubborn for me to teach him anything. He grew up the way he wanted to, not the way I raised him. Except for his manners, I'll take credit for those."

She smiled fondly at Sherlock, who she had taken an instant liking to. "You can relax, dear. Neither
Harriet nor I are going to kick you out or be mean. We consider anyone who owns the heart of one of ours family, and honey, you should see the way John looks at you.” She smiled again, folding her hands neatly in her lap. "And call me Mindy, please."

Sherlock listened quietly as John's mother spoke to him, nodding a couple times. He rubbed his arm a little, wondering what she would really think of him if he opened his mouth more than a couple times, or if his sleeves were rolled up all the way.

Sherlock let out a breath, wondering what she meant by how John looked at him. That was just how John looked, wasn’t it?

"Th-thank you, Mrs W- ...erm, Mindy," Sherlock said a little awkwardly, attempting to settle more into the sofa.

"Sherlock, dear." Mindy cocked her head at him, watching him carefully. "Are you alright? What's got you so worried?" To anyone else, she would have stood and moved to sit by them, but with this boy... she figured distance would be the best option.

Sherlock furrowed his brows a little, turning to see his reflection in a china case – that was just his face. He shook his head. "Nothing at all," he said. How did he explain how odd it was, seeing a family such as this. And how odd it was to not have people there who looked at him weird for what he did, but only had him there so he could do it? Lestrade was the only one that seemed to like Sherlock, but he had to, didn't he? As his brother-in-law?

Mindy tsked her tongue lightly, shaking her head and wagging her finger at him. "Don't be lying to me, mister. I'm a mother of two very mischievous and troublesome children who were always trying to blame everything on the other. I am a human lie detector." Her eyes were kind, lit with remembered laughter. "So please, dear. You look like you're lost. I can help."

Sherlock shifted on the sofa again, feeling the scrutinising gaze of John's mother. How did she do that? When someone just knew something? Not that she just knew it, she observed. It was odd, being on the other side of things. He looked down at his hands. "I don't blame myself," he murmured quietly.

Mindy smiled softly, resting her hand lightly over Sherlock's and squeezing just as gently. Offering warmth but not forcing it.

"Lie detector, remember?" she murmured quietly, but she stood after patting his knee. "I think you should talk to John about it, though. He's a good listener, and he has enough heart for at least five
people. Lucky for you, he seems to have given it all to you." She smiled kindly and returned to her chair.

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Harry was in the kitchen, and she flicked on the kettle, turning around to lean on the counter, looking at John. "You look good for having been over there. Brown as a nut compared to normal," she said. John leant against the other counter, stuffing his hands in his pockets and shrugging. "They kept me in good shape. And Sherlock's making me eat," he told her, gesturing over his shoulder towards the living room. "I had a limp when I came back but, apparently, it was psychosomatic."

Harry nodded a small bit, getting out some mugs and a package of biscuits. "He seems nice, the boy... what was it? Sherlock? When did you meet him? You can't have been back that long," she said. John scrubbed his hands over his face, letting out a long breath into them. He supposed he had expected having to tell at least Harry; he just hadn't thought it would be right away.

"No, you're right. It hasn't been that long – not even a year." John sighed, looking up at his sister. "I went with a friend of mine to an auction – he wanted to buy an Omega; I was just there to keep him company – and as soon as we got there I just knew something wasn't right about the place. All of the Omegas were coming out with bruises or forming bruises and they were still being bought. And then... Sherlock was brought up. He was..." John shook his head.

"I was in the middle of the crowd, and I could see how malnourished he was. Needless to say, I had Mike bid on him for me and he came home with me. He had a hole in his stomach lining, and he probably would have died if I hadn't got him. And then... I don't know. We got close, really close, and then the army called me to duty and I had to leave." John looked down, making a small sound and closing his eyes, trying hard not to remember the day he had left. His hand started shaking and he clenched his fist to make it stop.

Harry felt pained for her brother, crossing the kitchen and wrapping her arms around him again. "Hey, it's alright, Johnny," she murmured quietly, rubbing a hand up his back.

John wrapped his arms around his sister, breathing deeply through his nose and working not to get upset again. He thought he had cried enough for one day.

Harry sighed. "It's good you found him, though, and that you're close... that's a good thi-" She trailed off, her hand sweeping up John's shoulder and feeling the bump of a scar. She pulled away concernedly. "What is that?" she asked.

John backed away when Harry asked about his scar, looking away towards the kettle. "I don't wanna talk about it, Harry," he murmured, not wanting to upset his sister. Definitely not wanting to relive that moment again. Sherlock didn't even know the whole story.

Harry nodded, understanding. She stepped away, fixing the tea. "You came back though, that's what matters John," She said over her shoulder.

"Yeah," John murmured, "that's what Sherlock keeps saying." He walked over to help her, fixing his and Sherlock's mugs. "The only problem with that is that I don't feel like I'm back. Part of me is still stuck in that desert." After a glance at his sister, he picked up the mugs and walked into the living room, retaking his seat beside Sherlock. Sherlock blinked a few times, looking up when John came back in, Harry behind him. He let out a
breath, taking the warm mug when John offered it and holding it in his lap. He glanced up at John's mother again, then over to John, giving him a small smile.

Harry eyed John carefully, somewhat worried from what John said.

"She didn't scar you with any embarrassing childhood stories, did she?" John asked Sherlock, nudging him in the elbow and giving him a small but warm smile. He took a sip of his tea, the hot liquid warming him thoroughly.

His mum laughed lightly, accepting her own tea from Harriet and taking a drink of it. "I can if you'd like. I could embarrass the both of you," she winked at John and Harry.

"No, Mum, please. If you could refrain, that would be lovely, thanks." John grinned, glancing over at Harry and seeing the concern on her face. He shook his head in a simple *not now, maybe not ever; don't worry about it I'm fine* sort of way.

Sherlock shook his head. "Hardly seems fair, in that there isn't really anyone to reciprocate such stories," he said. His brother could, but it was Mycroft they were talking about. He smiled a little, unconsciously scooting a bit closer to John as he sipped on his tea. He noticed the glance from Harry, and her and John's silent exchange, able to read already what it was about.

John leant over against Sherlock, wanting and needing to have contact with him. "Oh, I'm sure Mycroft would have a few good stories to tell," John commented, leaning more against Sherlock for a moment. He was tired, god, he was tired. Emotionally drained and physically spent. He wanted to go home, stand in the shower and have a good breakdown, and then spend the rest of his night cuddling with Sherlock.

Mindy looked over at her son, her eyebrows furrowing as he stared down rather blankly at his tea. "Looks like it's time to say goodbye for now," she said softly, giving John a knowing look when he glanced up at her with a slight frown. "You look like a beaten racehorse, child. Go home and rest. We'll still be here when you come back," she promised.

Sherlock leant against John a little, tilting his cup up more and looking at John's mother questioningly. He looked over at John, who did look exhausted.

John looked at Sherlock, giving him a questioning look. "Would you like to go home?"

Sherlock nodded a bit. "We can, yes," he said, setting down his cup. He let out a breath, looking at the two women across from them. "It was... nice to meet you," he said quietly, shifting a small bit and putting on a small smile.

*It had been* nice to meet them, odd as it was. He did like it, and John's mother intrigued him. She knew things, and was very perceptive.

John stood, holding his hand out for Sherlock's and keeping hold when he took it. "I'm not saying goodbye, because the last time I did that, I didn't see either of you for nearly five years. I'll stop by again, catch up a little more when I'm not so tired." He stepped up and pressed a kiss to his mum's cheek, and then to Harry's, before he turned, leading the way to the door and then outside into the cool London air.

Sherlock followed John outside, lifting his arm up for a cab before reaching into his pocket and texting to have something delivered to the flat. He knew Mycroft would have them there in time. He leant against John, breathing in his scent again. "Are you okay? It had to be a little nice though, seeing them again," he murmured.
"It was brilliant," John murmured, and he meant it. "I've missed them so bloody much and it was great seeing them again." He sighed, leaning heavily against Sherlock and wrapping his arm around his waist. "I'm just exhausted. It was a lot to take in."

"I like your mother..." Sherlock mused after another minute.

John pressed a lingering kiss to Sherlock's temple. "I'm glad you like her. I thought you might, but I didn't want to say anything before we got there."

Sherlock let out a breath, sliding into the cab and lightly pulling John in after him.

John sighed, sliding in beside Sherlock and snuggling up against him, his head on Sherlock's shoulder.

"She's like me..." Sherlock murmured. "Only, she's able to read and deduce one of the few things I can't. Emotions. I can predict what someone might do, but knowing if someone is angry with me or what they are thinking... it's harder," he said.

"She's always been like that. Just... really good at reading people." John took Sherlock's hand, studying the bumps of his knuckles and the blue veins under his skin. "You're pretty good at reading me," he mused quietly, glancing up at Sherlock for a moment before looking away again.

Sherlock furrowed his brows. "I am... though I'm not sure why. I can hardly 'read' myself," he said quietly.

It didn't take too long to cross London, and soon enough they were outside the flat. Sherlock saw the large box and smiled a little, heaving it off of the ground. "Get the door? I have something for you," he said.

John furrowed his brows, tilting his head at the box before crossing to the door and twisting the key in the lock, pushing it open. He followed Sherlock up the stairs, opening the door there for him too and then standing off to the side.

"What exactly is it that you have for me?" John asked timidly, not sure what exactly he should be thinking.

"Upstairs," Sherlock said, heading up to the spare bedroom. He kicked open the door gently, setting the box down on the bed and looking around the mostly empty room. It was a bit dusty, the hard-wood floor bare.

"Excellent," Sherlock said, shoving the desk out of the way and against the same wall as the bed, and doing the same with the wardrobe, completely clearing the corner.

Sherlock looked at John, leading him over to the box, which had rattled a bit when he set it down. Opening it, the box was revealed to contain various different china plates, many of them chipped or cracked already.

"I did this once when I was younger. I was bullied some, obviously, and Mycroft did this with me. Cathartic, I think they called it," Sherlock said, handing John a plate and picking one up for himself. He looked at John, pressing a small kiss to his cheek. "It's for you," he said, nodding towards the box before spinning and hurling the plate across the room into the empty corner where it smashed and shattered.
John looked doubtfully at the box of China and then up at Sherlock. "I don't understand how this is supposed to help me," he admitted, his gaze flickering over to the smashed plate that Sherlock had thrown. "I don't have any anger to take out. Not that I'm aware of, anyway." He spun the plate between his palms, looking intently at the cracks that ran over its surface.

Sherlock looked at the box and then at John again. "It's not just for anger, though that is easier... I... just throw the damn plate John," he said. John had to get something out. Sherlock himself wasn't that good with emotion, but he knew it was just eating away at John, and he wasn't letting any of it out.

John sighed and threw the plate, watching in slight satisfaction as it broke to pieces. He tilted his head, betting that if he angled the next one differently, he could get it to break more, could produce smaller splinters of white China. He picked up a stack of plates, throwing them at the wall in quick succession. Each one that shattered pulled like a gunshot, and with each plate that he released, he saw one of his comrades. Then the plates would shatter, his ears ringing with distant gunfire, and the face would disappear to be replaced by another.

Sherlock stood back as John started hurling the plates, watching slowly as he seemed to shatter as well.

John threw the plates harder, faster, until he ran out of people to think about and all he saw was himself. He collapsed to his knees, not really registering the pain of it, and broke down, heavy sobs raking through him. He bent forward at the waist, one arm banded around his stomach, pounding his shaking left hand onto the floor and squeezing his eyes shut. "They're all gone," he sobbed, his voice building into a scream. "They all bloody died!"

Sherlock waited a moment as John fell, and then knelt next to him, his arms wrapping around John as he rested his head on his upper back. "Yes John... they're gone," he said, because John needed to hear it. Not so he could feel guilty, but so he could face that fact. The sooner he did, the sooner he could move on. "But you're not... and that's okay. That's what war is, and as much as we hate it, what happened, happened... no one can or could have changed it."

John cried harder, his whole body shaking. He felt nauseous, but he knew he wouldn't get sick. He just... ached everywhere. "It's not okay. It's not." His voice was unstable – suitable, because he felt unstable. He barely felt Sherlock's presence behind him. "I should have died. Every time someone died, I wished it was me." He could barely talk through his emotions, but Christ he was trying. "Every time, I'd go and get pissed and think over everything I had done wrong; I'd wonder why I was even there, if it would be better if I wasn't. And every time I'd fall asleep cradling my gun to my chest."

Sherlock felt like something inside of himself was being ripped out and he held John tighter, rocking them both slowly. "Shh... John. You were there to help others, help your men, and you saved so many more of them," he said quietly, lifting John's tear streaked face and meeting his red eyes. "And now you're here... for me," he said. "That's why you're here, that's why you didn't die there, John, why you didn't let yourself die... because you knew you had to come back," he said quietly, pressing his lips to John's forehead and climbing onto John's lap, wrapping his legs around his waist, and placing John's shaking hands around his own waist before cradling his head to rest on his shoulder. He breathed in John's scent, tilting his head so he could do the same. "You saved me, too... and then again by coming back," he said quietly, knowing it was true; he'd been destroying himself slowly.

John couldn't stop shaking or crying, his arms wrapping tightly around Sherlock's waist, his head resting heavily on his shoulder. Sherlock's scent made him feel secure, but it did nothing to help him calm down. "I know. And you're worth it. The pain and the nightmares." He held Sherlock tighter, potentially too tight, but he couldn't have stopped if he had wanted to. "I just wish they would go... part 2
away," he whispered, hiding his face in the crook of Sherlock's neck.

Sherlock winced slightly, letting out a breath as he nodded, running his fingers through John's hair. "They will..." he soothed, "little by little... you'll let them go. They won't ever be gone John, those men and women will stay with you, but someday it'll just be you remembering them, and maybe a small ache if you think too long," he said quietly. "It won't always be so heavy."

Not that Sherlock knew specifically, but for the longest time he'd blamed himself for what happened to his family, and he supposed he still did in a sense. He was partially responsible at the very least, and it still ate at him. In theory though... he knew it could work. But he couldn't do everything for John to help him, though he wished he could.

John didn't have anything else to say, and he felt too raw to be talking at the moment anyway. He didn't entirely believe Sherlock – his mother had told him when he was twelve that he had too much empathy and that it wasn't good to hold on to so much. He couldn't help it, though, and now he carried around the lives of fifty-three soldiers – twenty-one women and thirty-two men. He remembered their faces, their wounds, their ranks – funny, because he couldn't remember what he had had for breakfast, if he had even had breakfast.

John shuddered, blocking out the image of Stephen bursting into his tent with a huge cup of coffee and a chocolate bar that his family had sent him for his birthday, tossing it to John's bed and declaring it the breakfast of champions.

Sherlock didn't move from where he was, rubbing John's back softly. They sat like that for more than an hour before he sat back, cupping John's face in his hands. "How about we go to bed early, hmm?" he asked, sweeping his thumb over John's cheek.

John nodded a bit dejectedly, pushing himself up and holding out his hands to Sherlock. He turned from the room, his eyes sweeping over the pile of broken China and he flinched, leaving the room in a few hurried steps.

Downstairs, John wandered into the kitchen, pulling open cabinets only to close them again. He wasn't sure what he was looking for until he didn't find it. "Where's all the alcohol?" he asked, turning to Sherlock. "We had... at least four bottles before I left."

Sherlock lingered in the doorway of the kitchen, thinking about the empty bottles still under the sink that he'd emptied the night John got back. "You won't find it, because there isn't any," he said quietly, looking at John steadily.

"Where did it go?" John asked steadily, his hands braced behind him on the counter.

John shook his head. "You poured it all away, didn't you?" He knew the answer already, and he moved past Sherlock to the doorway, shrugging on his jacket, grabbing up his wallet and keys.

Sherlock stood his ground. "You don't need it, John; it won't help," he said, following John a bit and grabbing his arm. "John, just because the signs of what my vice did to me are visible and yours aren't doesn't make yours not as bad," he said.

John wrenched his arm out of Sherlock's hold, staring up at him resolutely. He wasn't mad, he was just determined. "I know. And right now, I don't care." He kicked at the door before opening it, pausing for a moment at the doorway. "I just want to stop fucking thinking," he murmured, and then he left, trotting down the stairs and to the street.

Sherlock watched him leave, running his hands up his arms. He'd wanted to stop thinking too... and
look where that had got him. He sighed, looking down. He never could do thinks like this right. He
wanted nothing more than to help John, have him back. He wasn't good at being the strong one, not
for things like this.

Sherlock moved over to the sofa, flopping down onto it. Nothing to do except wait for him to come
back pissed, he supposed.

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John didn't take a cab. He wanted the fresh air, bitingly cold and icy sharp in his lungs, and he
wanted the movement. Distraction for now, the alcohol to numb him later. He knew he should have
stayed at the flat, knew he should have just gone to bed and endured the nightmares with Sherlock
beside him, but he couldn't. Not now, not when he was so raw and bleeding.

He wasn't far from his usual pub – one he had visited a couple of times with Mike before his life had
been flipped upside down – when he heard footsteps behind him. He didn't even think to react before
a hand wrapped around his nose and mouth, a strong arm banding across his torso, and he was
dragged backwards into an alley. John struggled, unable to breathe, until he was thrown against the
brick wall, a fist slamming into his jaw while he was still disoriented. He staggered, tasting blood
pooling in his mouth, and didn't move to fight back.

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Sherlock sat on the sofa for a while, waiting. Finally he couldn't stand it, pacing the room a bit before
pulling out his phone.

*I realise you feel like you have to do whatever it is you're doing, but can I at least come with? Just
make sure you come home okay? SH*

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John's attacker came forward, grabbing a fistful of his hair and slamming his head back against the
wall.

"You took him from us," the man snarled, leaning in close to John.

*Him? Oh, shit. Sherlock.*

John fought back then, slamming his knuckles into the man's ribcage. This arsehole was from the
warehouse, and John was not going to let him go easy. He got another hit on him, this one aimed at
his throat but ended up hitting his jaw. He moved to do a roundhouse kick while the man was off
balance, but his foot was grabbed and yanked. John fell, landing hard on his injured shoulder, and he
groaned, rolling over to push himself up. A solid kick that landed on the front of his ribcage kept him
down.

"He's ours, and we're taking him back," the Alpha snarled at John, who was too stunned to make
much noise. Blood was still pooling in his mouth and he turned his head to spit it out. When he
looked up, the man was gone.
Chapter 2

John fumbled in his pocket, his hands shaking like mad from adrenaline, and finally managed to pull out his phone. He hit the first speed dial and waited until the line connected. "Sherlock," he groaned, pushing himself up and slumping back against the brick wall.

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Sherlock lifted his phone to his ear. "John look, I-" he cut himself off when he heard John's voice, his senses alight instantly. "What's happened? What's wrong?" he asked, immediately going for his coat. "Where are you at? I'm leaving now," he said, heading down the stairs before he could get an answer. He tried to think about the pub that John would have been heading for, and left in that direction.

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"No!" John yelled, not caring that the sudden loud noise hurt his jaw, throat, sides... everything. "No, get your arse back inside. Get my gun from my nightstand drawer. Load it and keep it on you. Safety off." He shifted, getting the weight off of his ribs. "Please, Sherlock, listen to me. Someone..." he hissed, pushing himself to his feet, "someone from the – buggering fuck – the auction house. Coming for you."

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Sherlock froze halfway down an alley, hearing John. He was injured though, what if they hurt him more? He wet his lips. "John, where are you at? What did they do? I... they sold me, why would they want me back?" he asked. They'd put him up for auction... but then, the man. The Alpha he'd pointed a finger at behind the glass... he knew it was Sherlock. What if he wasn't the one in charge?

Sherlock's stomach clenched, and he instantly felt small again. He shook himself a little. "I need to find you.... John, please..." he said.

***

"Dammit, Sherlock! Would you just listen to me, please?" John gritted his teeth, leaning against the wall at the mouth of the alley. He had walked no more than five meters and he was sore and tired. His shoulder throbbed. His side... fire. "If you're going to be stupid and come after me, go get my gun and arm yourself. I don't want them to get you. Don't get in a cab and watch the alleys."

***

"Fine!" Sherlock snapped, turning around and starting back towards the flat. He'd get the bloody gun, and just try and stop himself from shooting John in the foot for being so... god, he just wanted to go to bed quietly.

They probably weren't even from the auction house. John had been gone a bit, probably enough time to get pissed if he was determined, but then maybe that was just him not wanting John to be right.

***

"Thank you," John sighed, leaning heavily back against the wall and sinking to the ground again. He tipped his head back against the bricks, swallowing slowly. "And if you're wondering, I'm not
pissed. I'm just," he pressed his hand to his side and cursed again, "not in the best shape. Completely sober, though." He looked up at the sky, glaring at the clouds. If it started to rain... Christ; that would just be the icing on the cake.

***

Sherlock sighed. "I'm almost back to the flat now, if you insist on me getting the damn gun," he said. "Look, it's fine here, might as well call Mycroft for a lift back home okay?" he said, opening the door to the flat. He blinked a couple times, pausing as he reached the living room when he realised something. "John... you took the keys..." he said slowly, "and I locked the door... but I'm standing in the middle of the flat," he said, not even mentioning that he hadn't picked the lock, his ears alert for any noise.

***

John was on his feet instantly, ignoring what felt like a crack in his ribs as he started jogging/limping in the direction of home. "Out. Sherlock, get out of there. Call Mycroft, do something. Don't be in the flat." He stumbled, cursing to himself as he pitched up against the side of a building. "Sherlock, I can't... I can't get home. I don't want to get there and find you gone." He was shaking, the thought of Sherlock being taken from him driving him nearly into a panic attack.

***

Sherlock was perfectly still, letting out a breath. "I'll be okay, I'm calling him now.... I'll see you soon," he said quietly. "Love you..." Sherlock hung up, quickly typing up a message on his phone.

*John's hurt, trace his phone to find him. SH*

He left out the bit where he himself might be about to be attacked; he wanted John to be the priority, and Sherlock knew Mycroft. He would go to Sherlock first.

Sherlock took a breath, picking up the faint traces of Alpha that wasn't John. His heart started to beat a little faster as he started slowly for the door.

***

John choked on his reply, on his own *I love you*, and Sherlock hung up before he could say it. He let the phone fall from his ear, calming his breaths so that he wouldn't damage his ribs further. When he was finally in control – though by no means calm – he picked up his phone again.

*Get to the flat. Sherlock's being threatened. JW*

He knew Mycroft would get there quickly. He was too protective of his brother to let it go.

***

Sherlock paused when he was near the door – *the gun*, he remembered, taking another breath. He quickly moved down the hallway and into the room, crawling over the bed and reaching into John's
beside drawer. He pulled it out, looking at it. It was different than the gun he'd shot that murderer with, and it took him a second to look it over, finding the safety. He backed up from the bed and headed back down the hall.

Sebastian leant against the doorframe, idly looking over his gun and glancing up when Sherlock re-entered the living room. "Took you long enough," he commented, levelling his gun at the Omega before Sherlock could raise his own gun. "Don't even bother. I'm ordered not to kill you, but I was never told not to hurt you. I will shoot you if I have to. Same as I did to that Alpha of yours." The lie was sweet on his tongue, and he knew how effective he was at the art. He was curious how Sherlock would respond.

***

John jerked his head up when he heard a car pull up in front of him, a man getting out of the back to help him inside.

A woman around his age sat in the back, typing away on her BlackBerry. She looked up. "We're taking you to a hospital."

John shook his head firmly. "No. No, I'm going home." The woman regarded him for a moment. "He said you would request that. Alright then. 221B Baker Street it is."

***

Sherlock jumped when he saw the blonde Alpha blocking his path, seeing the gun point at him. He felt a jolt of fear, and then a flicker of anger when they said that he'd shot John. Not again... not John... was the thought that crossed his mind. He couldn't help but raise the gun, though, a small bit of a tremble going through his arms despite himself.

"What do you want?" Sherlock asked, taking a step back, but not turning away from him. "I don't belong to anyone anymore..." he said. Except for John...

Sebastian nodded, a wicked grin spreading across his lips. "I know. That makes you fair game for me to take." He took two steps forward, enjoying Sherlock's frightened reactions. "Better run, little rabbit," he teased, laughing loudly.

***

John gripped the door handle tightly, needing it to hold himself upright and keep his focus off of his pain.

Mycroft, if I beat you there, you are in deep shit with me.

***

Sherlock thought of the fire escape that led from John's bedroom window, and darted towards it down the hall. He ran into the room, slamming the door shut and locking it as he scrambled for the window, heart racing in his chest.

Sebastian shot two holes in the door, low enough so that he wouldn't hit anything major, even if he hadn't known that Sherlock wasn't near the door. Laughing quietly to himself, he quickly left the flat. His whole purpose tonight had been to warn off the doctor and to scare Sherlock. Mission accomplished. Now he could go home.

***
John jumped out of the black car as soon as they reached his flat, but he didn't make it terribly far before he started swaying. He saw a figure come out from the alley and he froze, holding his breath as he waited.

***

Sherlock was partway down the fire escape when he heard the shots, jumping and ending up falling the last several feet to the pavement. He groaned, sucking in the air that had been forced from his lungs.

Sherlock got up, his head a little light having hit the pavement, and moved down and out of the alley. He stopped when he saw John, moving quickly then and practically shoving him back into the car and climbing in himself. As soon as the car pulled away he ran his hands over John frantically, three kicked in ribs, not broken, but severely bruised, a black eye and a bruised jaw, most likely concussed, but... not shot. Not dying. He let out a relieved huff, wrapping his arms around him, breathing in his scent as he shook.

***

John was a bit stunned by the quick movement his body was put through when Sherlock all but shoved him back into the car. "Take it easy," he whispered, relieved to see Sherlock alive and not shot or taken from him. "I'm here, we're fine," he murmured, wincing at pressure on his shoulder and shifting until it went away. "I love you." He felt that he had to say it, now that he had the chance. "And I am going to kill your brother."

Sherlock didn't let go of John, shaking still. "He did what I told him to... he got you," he said, not caring that Mycroft hadn't come to get him. He was used to that anyway.

"Well I told him to get you," John mumbled, his eyes slipping shut as he leant his forehead against Sherlock's shoulder, breathing in his scent, which belied fear. "Didn't listen to me."

Sherlock shook his head. "Doesn't have to listen to you... or me. Listened anyway," he said, pulling away and looking at John, gently touching the blooming bruise on his face.

"You're more important," John whispered, leaning into Sherlock's touch and letting out a whimpered breath. He kept his eyes closed, because when he opened them, black spots dance along the edges of his vision, and he knew that meant concussion. God, and he was just so bleeding tired.

"It's alright John... we... we'll get you taken care of, but you have to stay awake until you're looked at. Okay?" he said, knowing the direction they were going – Bart's. "You have a concussion, and you can't sleep until you've been given the clear. But you already know that," he said quietly, still trembling slightly, but he was more concerned for John.

John pulled his eyes open, staring up at Sherlock. He reached forward, running his fingers through his soft curls, fixing some that had fallen the wrong way. "You're okay, love," he whispered, leaning up to kiss his lips, wincing as he lowered himself back down. He looked out of the tinted window, recognising some of the buildings. They were almost there. "I'm not going to let anyone hurt you."

Sherlock nodded, knowing that John's instincts wanted to protect him. "I know," he said quietly, hoping it made him feel better.

They got to Bart's soon enough, and Sherlock got John in to see someone right away, though, because they weren't bondmates, they made Sherlock wait in a waiting room.

By that time, John seemed a bit more out of it.
"I'll be in as soon as I can," Sherlock said, moving to the waiting room, which had a good amount of people in it. He sighed, settling onto a padded bench away from most of them, waiting.

John groaned; having endured the MRI and the x-rays, all he wanted to do was sleep, but he knew he couldn’t until the results came back.

A nurse walked into the room with a needle between her fingers. "You've got a small concussion, nothing major. I'm going to give you a light sedative to help you sleep." She injected it into his IV before he could protest and he was knocked out quickly after.

***

"Sherlock Holmes?" The doctor that had been treating John stepped into the waiting room, looking around for the Omega.

Sherlock's head snapped up, and he quickly stood, walking over to her. "That's me," he said quietly, his anxiety level rising as he looked around the waiting room more. He'd half been afraid that another one of the men were going to show up. "He's alright then? Am I allowed to see him now?"

"He's under sedation," she explained, leading Sherlock from the waiting room and down a hall. "He had a cracked rib, and his clavicle is a mess, but that's an old wound. He had a mild concussion, but he needed sleep. Heavy bruising on the ribs and jaw. Offensive abrasions on his knuckles." She opened a door, gesturing him inside. "He'll live. He'll just be hurting for a while."

Sherlock nodded, following her. "I know…" he said quietly, thanking her and slipping into the room. He saw John laying in the bed and took up a seat next to it, wishing he could just crawl in with him.

Sherlock sighed. He figured they would probably keep John for observation overnight, so he settled into the chair. He jumped at every noise, always feeling like someone was just outside the door, though a couple times there actually was, but it was just a nurse coming to check John's vitals.

John became conscious of things slowly – sound, smells, and finally sight. He turned his head toward where he knew Sherlock was and reached out for his hand. He wasn't sure what time it was, probably the middle of the night, but Sherlock was asleep. He couldn't feel much of anything thanks to the painkillers he was hooked up to, and he was glad of that. He wasn't concerned about himself; he was concerned about Sherlock.

Sherlock didn't mean to fall asleep in his vigil, and he didn't know he had until he felt the fingers brush against his hand. He jerked awake, blinking a few times as he sat bolt upright, looking around rapidly. There was no one in the room though. He looked down at his hand, then up to see John awake. He calmed a small bit, scooting a bit closer in the chair. "Hey," he said quietly.

"Hi, love." John took a calculated look at Sherlock and drew his hand away, using it to help push himself over onto the far side of the bed. He patted the empty space beside him, giving Sherlock a knowing look that dared him to argue. They could both use some closeness to the other.

Sherlock opened his mouth, about to point out that John was still hurt, but he saw John's look and relented. He stood up, carefully climbing into the bed and settling next to John, on the opposite side of his injured ribs.

"He said he shot you..." Sherlock said quietly.
John thought about that comment for a moment, still affected by the sedation agent. "Well, he didn't. I'm fine. But you... how are you?" he asked, combing his fingers through Sherlock's hair, pulling him closer, his scent finally filtering to him.

Sherlock sighed a little, his eyes closing a small bit. "I'm okay," he said. "Got a few texts from Lestrade and Mycroft. Mrs Hudson's not happy apparently, bullets in her floors and holes in the door," he said. He opened his eyes. "I wasn't hurt; I had made for the window, but... he shot at the door a couple times," he said quietly.

Would have nicked his legs if he hadn't moved, but Sherlock didn't mention that.

"I'm really glad you're okay," John murmured, nuzzling against Sherlock's hair. "I don't know what I'd do if you..." He cut himself off, not wanting to think about it.

"Sorry I left," John breathed, hating himself for it. "And I'm still go to kill your brother."

Sherlock hummed a little. "He's out of the country right now..." he murmured. He let out a breath, wondering about the Alpha. He said he'd been ordered to take Sherlock... by whom, though?

Sherlock swallowed, deciding not to think about it. "I am. Okay that is. And so are you – be a bit sore for a few days, but you'll be fine," he said quietly.

"Mmm, yeah. Cracked rib and concussion, along with various bruising. Probably... a week recovery for everything, perhaps a little longer for the rib." John smiled slightly, pleased. It felt good to put his degree and years of training to use again.

"I'm not going to let anyone take you," John promised, his eyes slipping closed again. "I promise. You're mine."

"I know," Sherlock murmured quietly, though, realistically, he knew that that John wouldn't be able to stop anyone right now. Perhaps that had been the plan?

Sherlock sighed, not understanding. Why wouldn't they take him when John was still away? Why did it have to be now? "Sleep John... you need to rest," he said quietly, nuzzling gently against John's shoulder.

John made a noncommittal noise, bunching his fingers in Sherlock's shirt, determined to keep him close. "You sleep too," he whispered, already starting to drift off. "Love you." He fell back asleep quickly, Sherlock's scent putting him at ease.

"Love you," Sherlock murmured, watching John's grip on his shirt slacken. He lay there for a while, still listening at the door, but eventually he too fell asleep again, snuggled close to John.

John woke in the morning to the feel of something tugging on his skin. Parting his eyelids, he found a nurse taking the saline drip from his elbow, smiling kindly down at him and, he realised happily, Sherlock snuggled up beside him.

"You'll be free to leave today," she whispered, patting his hand before leaving.

John sighed, a small smile spreading over his lips despite the fact that he was starting to hurt again. Sherlock had stayed curled up beside him last night, and that made him ridiculously happy.

Sherlock felt John shift a small bit, and he pulled his eyes open just in time to see a nurse leave. He
swallowed, blinking a few times as he turned his gaze to John. "Morning," he murmured drowsily, sitting up a small bit.

"Morning love," John whispered, reaching up to comb through Sherlock's mussy hair.

Sherlock tugged his phone out of his pocket, having silenced it to let John sleep. There were several messages from Mycroft, saying that CCTV couldn't pick up who the Alpha was; they couldn't get his face.

Sherlock sighed. What was the point of one's brother being the British government if he couldn't even catch one man?

"Those from Mycroft?" John asked, gesturing to Sherlock's phone that he was sighing at.

"I would complement you on your deduction, but sadly I'm almost certain Anderson could figure that one out," Sherlock said, not at all as an insult to John, but rather at the obviousness of Sherlock's reaction to the messages. "He's just being useless is all," he said.

John smacked him lightly in the shoulder, taking the phone from him and stuffing it between his back and the mattress. "Then he can piss off," he murmured.

Sherlock opened his mouth in protest when John yanked his phone away. "Hey!" he said, meeting John's gaze.

John cupped Sherlock's cheek and leaning up to kiss him lightly. He winced, but he could ignore it.

Sherlock didn't miss the wince when John leant up to kiss him.

"Ignore your phone for a moment. How are you?" John asked, letting concern seep into his voice as he carefully looked Sherlock over.

Sherlock sighed at the question. "I'm fine. I'm not the one sitting in a hospital bed," he said, looking down. "Well obviously I am, but it's your bed," he said.

"True," John agreed, "but that doesn't mean I'm not worried about you. You did get shot at last night." He shifted onto his elbow, nuzzling against Sherlock's shoulder, breathing in his scent. "I don't know what I would have done if..." He swallowed, gripping tightly to the hem of Sherlock's shirt.

Sherlock sighed, nodding a little. "Yes, well it's actually not the first time it's happened," he murmured quietly, thinking about a handful of cases where he had indeed been shot at, even grazed once. "I'm fine though, so we don't have to worry about it," he said.

John sighed, leaning back on the bed. "You are the most stubborn man..." he shook his head, smiling up at Sherlock.

Sherlock smirked. "Stubborn yes," he said, sitting up more. He would have dug his phone out from under John, but he didn't want to risk hurting his injury more.

"They're letting me out today. Probably as soon as I get a stern talking to by the doctor and she gives me my painkillers and the prescription for more if I need them."

"After though, do you even want to go back home? I would understand if you didn't," Sherlock murmured quietly.
"I don't have any qualms about going home," John replied, resting his hand on Sherlock's thigh to keep him there. "Do you want to?" he asked, tilting his head with a bit of concern at Sherlock.

Sherlock nodded. "Yes, I do," he said quietly. "We'll go home then," he whispered.

Sherlock looked at John, then slid out of the bed, walking over and grabbing John's shirt and jeans. "Here. Be mindful of your side, though; they wrapped it," he said.

"Yeah, I figured that. They're a bit tight."

John pushed himself up, bracing his hands on the edge of the bed for a moment before he slid off, grabbing his jeans and pulling them up. After easing off the hospital gown and tossing it aside, he reached for his shirt and pulled it onto his shoulders with a barely-contained grimace.

"Shoulder's acting up. Bloody thing. I know it's not set right, but still," John grumbled to himself, quickly doing up the buttons and looking over at Sherlock with a small nod. "After you, dear," he said, gesturing towards the door.

Sherlock grabbed up his coat, looking at John. "What about that stern talking to and your pain medication?" he asked, pulling on his coat and snatching up his phone from where John had been laying on it.

John rolled his eyes. "I can get the prescription at the front counter, and I could do without the stern talking to." He reached over for Sherlock's hand, lacing their fingers together. "I just want to go home and be with you for a while.

Sherlock thought about the gun in his jacket pocket and nodded. "Alright then," he said with a nod. He started from the room, staying close at John's side.

"Look at you, being all protective," John teased, walking with Sherlock to the lobby.

Sherlock rolled his eyes.

John squeezed his hand, stepping up to the counter and requesting his prescription. The nurse went to look for it and returned a few moments later, handing it over and waving them goodbye. John followed Sherlock from the hospital, leaning on him a bit as they stepped onto the pavement.

Sherlock hailed the cab for them. They slid in carefully and he glanced out the window, his hand in his pocket, running his fingers over the cool metal. "Soon as we're back you're going to bed," he said quietly.

John made an indifferent noise. "I'm not tired," he protested, leaning against Sherlock just to be near to him. He looked down at Sherlock's hand in his pocket, recognising the tell-tale signs of a gun. "You still have it?" he asked, glancing up at the Omega and then back down at his pocket. "Did you use it at all last night?"

Sherlock swallowed, hand tightening on it. "Yes I still have it," he said, letting out a breath. "And I should have," he muttered, his jaw tightening a little.

John cupped Sherlock's cheek, turning his head until they were looking at each other. "You're fine, I promise," he whispered. "Don't worry about it."

Sherlock let out a breath, nodding. "I know. We both are," he said, his hold on the gun relaxing a small bit. "And as for you not being tired... I don't really care a whole lot; you're going to rest," he muttered quietly, as small smile in the corner of his mouth.
John grinned, pleased that Sherlock was ordering him about because he knew that meant he was feeling fine. "You're so bossy," he murmured, kissing Sherlock's shoulder. He let the rest of the ride pass without comment, getting out slowly when they reached the flat, waiting for Sherlock on the pavement.

Sherlock sighed, climbing out of the cab after paying. He reached into John's pocket quickly and fished out the keys, letting himself in first.

The hair on the back of John's neck raised as he walked up the stairs, the familiar yet strange scent of another Alpha – older than himself, bigger, stronger – still evident in the flat.

Sherlock listened, still able to faintly smell the Alpha that had been there when he moved upstairs. He looked down the hall, seeing the two holes in the bedroom door.

John narrowed his eyes, a low growl escaping him as he paused by the doorway that the intruder had been leaning against. He curled his lip at the obvious mockery of John and his territory. "Fucking Alphas," he snarled, shrugging his jacket off and hanging it up on the door. He turned down the hall, grabbing Sherlock's hand and pulling him along.

Sherlock was a bit caught off guard when he heard John swear, not something he normally did. He allowed himself to be led down the hall to the room, looking at the bullet holes in the door, and then the floor as well, where the bullets had embedded themselves.

John glanced at the bullet holes but ignored them as he pulled Sherlock further into the room. He stripped down and tugged on some pyjamas, squeezing Sherlock's hand before he left the room again, walking around the flat, still on edge from the other Alpha's smell.

John marked his own scent on everything the strange Alpha had touched, disliking exactly how much had been contaminated by his scent.

Sherlock watched John warily, walking down the hall absentmindedly as he heard him upstairs. He rubbed his arm, looking at him when he came back down. "John?" he asked, not sure he quite liked the look he had in his eyes.

John's eyes glanced up at Sherlock when he came back down from upstairs, finding the Omega standing in the hallway. John knew he was acting the most like an Alpha than he ever had in his life, but he couldn't let it go. Another Alpha had encroached on his territory, had threatened his Omega. Relaxing was not on his mind at the moment.

"John... you should... you should be resting..." Sherlock said quietly, picking up on John's agitation and... anger.

"There was another Alpha here, Sherlock. He walked in here, scented the place, and damn near killed you." John flexed his fingers, clenching and unclenching his fist. "How can I rest when I can't calm down?" An edge of helplessness slid into his voice, and he ducked his head and turned away, walking back into the living room to glare out of the window.

Sherlock looked down, rubbing his arms again. He felt a bit small, he supposed, out of nowhere. He didn't bother saying anything about the Alpha being gone. He should have shot him when he had had the chance.

Sherlock turned and moved down back into the bedroom. He dropped off his coat and fell into bed, still fully dressed, curling up.

John stared out at the sun-lit street, glaring at everyone who walked by. He was hurting, badly, in
need of painkillers, but he pushed it aside. He was leery and defensive, thinking that another Alpha was going to come in at any moment.

It wasn't until a full hour later that the thought struck him as idiotic, and his Alpha side retreated. John scrubbed his hands over his face, wincing as he turned around and slowly walked into the bedroom, lying down on the bed beside Sherlock.

Sherlock curled up a little tighter when he felt the bed depress, swallowing thickly. "You forgot your pills," he mumbled quietly, tossing the bottle gently over his side to where John was – he'd pick-pocketed them from him.

"You're ridiculous," John replied, dry swallowing two of the pills before settling back on the bed. He slid up behind Sherlock, banding his arm across his waist and nuzzling against the back of his neck. "Thank you," he said softly, running his fingers over Sherlock's chest.

"I know," Sherlock murmured quietly. "And you're welcome." He swallowed. "Are you done with... with your thing?" he asked quietly. He smelled like he was over it, not so... Alpha, more John.

"I think so..." John sighed, tightening his hold on Sherlock. "I'm not entirely sure what that was," he admitted, kissing Sherlock's shoulder. "Never had that happen before."

Sherlock nodded, letting out a breath. "Okay," he said quietly. "And I think most would call it some kind of territorial display. Common among some Alphas, as well as other species." he said quietly, rubbing his nose a little.

John made a small noise, rolling over to lie on his back, his side and shoulder starting to cause him problems. He ran his hand along Sherlock's arm down to his hand, linking their fingers together. "Sorry about that," he whispered, squeezing Sherlock's fingers.

Sherlock rolled over slowly, not wanting to jostle John. "It's okay... couldn't help it," he said quietly, looking at him. "It's fine, though, now... it's all fine," he said, suddenly recalling exactly where he'd put John's gun.

John hummed in agreement, reaching up to comb through Sherlock's curls – a motion that never failed to calm himself.

"What..." John sighed, the painkillers making him drowsy. He wondered if Sherlock had known that these were the knockout ones. Probably. "What did you do with my gun?" he asked a little sluggishly, turning his head to look over at Sherlock. "I need to clean it."

"It's put away..." Sherlock said quietly. "It's close," he murmured. "Besides, you couldn't clean your teeth right now, let alone a firearm," he said quietly. "Just sleep John, it'll be fine," he murmured.

"I'm gunna throw off my sleep schedule," John mumbled grumpily, closing his eyes and letting out a long breath that hurt his ribs. He left his fingers in Sherlock's hair, absentmly combing through them until he finally fell asleep.

"As long as you're sleeping," Sherlock murmured when John fell asleep. He waited a moment before sitting up, checking the gun again and then setting it under his pillow. The safety was on, and he was more on John's pillow than anything else.

Sherlock let out a breath, staying awake as John rested, listening for anything in the flat. He remembered the Alpha who had helped run the auction house, the one he'd sold out.
Someone will come talk to you soon enough.

Sherlock swallowed, slipping into his mind palace to think.

John jumped awake a few hours later, the sudden motion hurting his side.

Not very long-lasting painkillers, then.

John groaned, closing his eyes to try and pretend he hadn't just had another nightmare. He could feel that Sherlock was awake beside him, his breath not nearly slow enough for him to be sleeping. "Go to sleep, love," he murmured. "You need to sleep."

Sherlock sighed, opening his eyes as he looked at John. "It's fine; I slept last night, and I'm not injured," he said, though admittedly he hadn't slept all that much then, either – probably only a few hours.

Sherlock looked John up and down. "Do you want another pill? Only one, so you don't fall asleep again?" he asked.

"There's another bottle in my other jacket pocket. Non-drowsy ones." John pushed on Sherlock's shoulder. "For future reference, don't pick-pocket me." He skinned his fingers up Sherlock's neck, tracing the shell of his ear and then twisting around a strand of his hair.

"I pick-pocket everyone," Sherlock murmured. "And you needed sleep." He sighed, sitting up, "I'll go get them," he said, sliding off of the bed and moving out to get John's coat. He fished out a bottle of pills, quickly walking back to the bedroom and tossing them to John.

John snapped his hand up and caught them, cursing his stupidity at doing so. "I somehow keep forgetting that there's a reason I'm resting." He leant up on his elbow so that he could swallow down two pills before his lowered himself back to the mattress.

"Are you leaving me or are you going to stay for a little longer?" John asked, watching Sherlock.

Sherlock blinked a couple times, looking at John. "And just where would I be leaving to?" he asked. Though, now that he thought about it, the head was still in the fridge, and probably going a bit ripe by now. He'd have to get rid of that.

John stopped himself from shrugging, because it would hurt until the painkillers kicked in. "I don't know. The living room to think? Maybe you had somewhere to go..." he sighed, not wanting to give Sherlock too many ideas on where else he could go and anything else he should be doing. It was selfish and he knew it, but he didn't care.

Sherlock sighed, sitting on the edge of the bed. "Well, I actually do have to go to Bart's – drop something off at the morgue," he said quietly. "I won't be gone that long," he said, looking at John.

John made a displeased sound, meeting Sherlock's gaze and reaching out for his hand. "Take my gun with you," he murmured, no room for argument in his gaze or expression. "Anyone comes at you, I want you to shoot first and ask questions later."

Sherlock shifted a bit on the bed. "I'm fine. It's just to Bart's and back," he murmured. "I can pick up some takeaway as well," he offered, "since you were a little drugged last night to eat."

John shook his head, reaching under the pillow – which had shifted when Sherlock had moved, and
he knew the sound of his gun anywhere – and pulling out his gun, stuffing it into Sherlock's hands. "You're taking it. And I'm not hungry anyway, so there's no point in getting me anything."

Sherlock narrowed his eyes, looking at the gun. "If I'm taking it for my safety, then you're eating for your health," he said. "And don't think you can force me, John, because right now even I could take you," he said, standing up and pulling on his coat – he hadn't changed out of his clothes yet anyway.

"If that's a challenge, I'll take it," John replied, standing from the bed and stuffing the ignored gun into Sherlock's coat pocket. "You're taking it," he insisted with a long, sharp look at the Omega. "I am not seeing you hurt or, god forbid, taken, just because you were too stubborn to do something sensible."

Sherlock huffed a sigh, wavering slightly under the look despite his resolve. "Fine, but you're still eating," he said stubbornly. He set the remote on the bed for the small telly in the room and then pointed to John's side of the mattress. "In," he said, not as forceful as he wanted it to be.

John reached up, pulling Sherlock down for a chaste kiss before he walked back to the bed and eased down onto it. "Try not to take too long," he said. "And Sherlock... thank you."

Sherlock nodded a little. "I won't," he said, grabbing a scarf from his dresser and putting it around his neck. "And you're welcome," he said quietly, feeling the heavy metal in his pocket. He nodded again, sweeping out of the room and grabbing the head from the fridge, going downstairs and onto the street to flag down a cab.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Woops, my bad. Forgot to post yesterday. SORRY

John sighed heavily, not bothering to turn on the telly. He stared at the ceiling, thinking through yesterday and all the rough patches he and Sherlock had hit. He wondered if Sherlock was mad at him – probably.

Draping his arm over his face, John gave a weak noise, not really knowing what to do. For a small handful of seconds, he wished that he was back in the desert. At least there he knew what he was doing. He had had an agenda and a goal – get back home to Sherlock. Now that he was home, he was lost.

***

Sherlock got to Bart's no problem, saying hello to Molly as he dropped off the bag. His timing was perfect, as Molly had just fired up the incinerator. He reciprocated her small talk for a few minutes before he excused himself, leaving the hospital and walking down the road. He'd get sandwiches from that one cafe John took him too before he left. He remembered exactly what he had ordered as well, only this time he'd make sure John ate the whole thing.

***

John wasn't entirely sure how he had gotten upstairs, but he was sitting on the floor cross-legged, the box of China to his left. He turned over a cup in his hand, looking intently at the cracks in its delicate surface before he threw it at the wall. The pull on his side was nice, and the twist in his shoulder was better. The shatter of the cup was satisfying.

He took out a plate, spinning it between his palms before he threw it, flipping it end over end until it shattered against the wall. Letting out a soft huff of air, he dropped back onto the floor, staring blankly up at a crack on the ceiling.

***

Sherlock had been anxious the whole time walking to the cafe and standing in the queue. He ordered the sandwiches and left quickly, letting out a breath of relief once he was back in the cab. He didn't like being so anxious and nervous. It didn't help not knowing who that man had been, or who he worked for, what he wanted with Sherlock.

Sherlock shook himself of the thought, making his way upstairs to the flat. He strode into their bedroom and froze. John was gone.

"John?" he asked, looking in the bathroom. He dropped the box with food on the bed, tugging the gun from his pocket as he moved silently through the flat, having the gun ready. He heard a slight noise upstairs and moved, throwing open the door, gun ready.

***
John rolled his head over, looking at Sherlock and blinking once before turning back to stare at the ceiling. He knew Sherlock wouldn't shoot him, though with how terrified he looked, it wouldn't have surprised him all the same.

Sherlock nearly dropped the gun, putting the safety back on and pocketing it, letting out a relieved breath. "I... you weren't downstairs I... sorry," he said, taking a breath.

"Sorry," John murmured, running his finger over the sharp edge of a saucer. "Lost track of time. I was going to move back downstairs."

Sherlock swallowed, looking at John laying on the floor. "What are you doing up here?" he asked quietly. "I thought the whole plate thing was rubbish... didn't work," he said, thinking about how it had just made John storm out.

"It doesn't make me feel any better," John agreed, tossing the saucer without looking and ignoring the sting on his thumb that told him the edge of China had nicked him. "But it's... numbing, and sometimes numbing is nice." He grabbed another plate and flipped it through the air, knowing he was hitting an accurate spot on the wall.

Sherlock knelt on the ground by John, taking his hand and wiping away the droplet of blood welling up before kissing the tip of John's thumb. He sighed. "Numbing isn't really better... even if it is nice," he said quietly. He lifted John's fingers to his own arms. "I know..." he said quietly.

John made a small noise, leaning up to look at Sherlock directly, his fingers still resting on the crook of his arms. "Sorry," he murmured, ducking his head down for a moment. "I wasn't really thinking."

Sherlock tilted John's chin up so he could meet his gaze. "Don't apologise, I did it to myself," he said. "That's why... I got rid of the alcohol. I knew, from your letters... it couldn't be here. Because I don't want that for us, and if you sit there numbing yourself, it's just going to be harder for me not to," he said quietly, his front falling slightly. "It's barely been a month since my last one... and it's so... hard," he murmured, closing his eyes.

John wrapped his arms around Sherlock's neck, pulling him close and kissing him softly. He didn't know what to say. Nothing substantial came to mind, so he let it go.

John gently rubbed Sherlock's shoulders, nuzzling against his jaw and kissing his pulse. "I've got you," he finally murmured, though it felt more like they were holding each other up.

Sherlock hummed, snaking his arms carefully around John, minding his injuries. He nodded a little, pressing a small kiss by John's ear. "I know..." he said, pulling away a minute later. He smiled softly, pushing away the thoughts of it and his want. He tried not to dwell, because even thinking about it... Christ, it sounded so good.

"Come on... I got you something," Sherlock said, getting up and holding out a hand for John.

John took Sherlock's hand and pulled himself to his feet, most of his pain driven down to a dull ache. He followed Sherlock from the room, his hand still closed around the Omega's.

"God, that smells good," John commented as they stepped into the kitchen. "You remembered?" He arched an eyebrow at Sherlock, taking the sandwich from the bag and tearing into it.

Sherlock smiled a little, taking up his own sandwich. "Of course," he said, sitting down. "I remember everything from those few days. Filed it away in your wing," he said, taking a bite. He hadn't really explained the concept of his mind palace to anyone, and saying John's wing slipped out, he was so used to being there and thinking it.
John arched an eyebrow. "You mean in your mind... thing? Wherever it is that you go when you need to think?"

John has his own wing? Christ, he wondered how large that particular area was, how much Sherlock remembered.

"Palace, yes," Sherlock said casually as he took a bite.

Sherlock let out a breath, looking up at John. "I'll get a bandage for your thumb when you're done eating," he said. "The whole sandwich this time, please. Last time I ended up eating your other half after you... had left."

John grimaced, but he kept eating. "Not going to be a problem, I don't think," he answered, wolfing down the first half of his sandwich and starting on the other.

"What did you have to do at Bart's?" John asked looking up curiously and watching Sherlock eat.

Sherlock shrugged lightly. "Just dropping off a head," he said. "It was in the fridge, and I figured you wouldn't like it there," he said quietly, looking up at him. "Just an experiment."

John raised his eyebrows, staring at Sherlock over his sandwich. "You had a head. In the fridge. Why the bloody hell... What were you experimenting?" he asked, a bit astonished that he had missed a head in the fridge.

Sherlock rolled his eyes a little, a grin on his face. "I was measuring the coagulation of saliva after death," he said quietly, still smiling. "As I said, I got rid of it," he murmured.

John made a disgusted face, but somehow managed to continue eating. "Sherlock, that's gross. The fridge is not a good place to keep body parts of any kind. They should stay at Bart's."

Sherlock laughed a little. "Don't tell me – I have to get rid of the thumbs in the vegetable drawer?" he asked, wondering if John would think he was joking.

John gave Sherlock a slightly horrified look, standing up and peering inside the fridge. "Sherlock? What the hell?" he demanded, holding up the bag of thumbs and shaking them at the Omega. "Why?"

Sherlock recoiled a fraction, then took another bite of his sandwich. "It's an experiment. I didn't see you question me lighting my shirt on fire, so long's as I replaced it. I get bored," he said. "Now put those back, they have to stay cold."

John sighed, replacing the thumbs and returning to the table. He finished his last couple of bites, glancing over at Sherlock. "Thanks," he said quietly, rising to his feet and brushing his hand through the Omega's hair as he walked from the room. He all but collapsed on the bed once he reached it, wanting to lie on his side but not daring to.

Sherlock swallowed, finishing his sandwich. He looked down the hall, wandering down it a little later. "John?" he asked, lingering in the doorway. "Are you angry with me?" he asked softly, running his fingers along the wood grain of the doorframe.

John leant up on his elbows, furrowing his brow at Sherlock. "No... why would I be angry with you?"

"Because I keep body parts where food rightfully goes," Sherlock said, looking at him.
"That was more of a shock than anything," John admitted. He lowered his eyes, staring at the folds of the blanket on his lap. "I'm actually more certain that you're angry at me."

"I'm not angry at you, why would I be?" Sherlock asked.

"And because I took off and got the both of us hurt."

Sherlock sighed, sitting on the edge of the bed. "If you hadn't... he would have caught us both off guard," he said quietly. "And we wouldn't be here."

"That doesn't mean that you can't be or aren't mad at me," John said, lying back and dropping his head on the pillow.

"You've been acting different since we left Harry's. Why? Did my mother say something to you?" John asked, staring up at the ceiling.

Sherlock blinked a couple times – he hadn't known John saw that.

"Your mother is interesting... she... sees things. Knows things," Sherlock replied, scooting a little closer to John. "She said you look at me a certain way," he said quietly. "And she said... things about me she shouldn't know. Things no one knows... only me," he finished softly.

"She said that I look at you a certain way?" John repeated what Sherlock had said after a short moment, furrowing his brow a little. "What way?" He looked up at Sherlock, tracing idle patterns along his side.

"She didn't say, she just based the way you look at me as a reason for her to treat me... well she said like family, but with my background I- I don't really know what that entails," Sherlock said quietly.

John smiled softly, holding Sherlock's hand. "I know what look she was talking about," he said softly, closing his eyes. "She calls it a 'whole world' look, and she isn't wrong." He wrapped his arm around Sherlock's waist, nuzzling against him. "You are my whole world."

Sherlock closed his eyes, taking that in.

"And yeah, she does that. The whole 'knowing' thing. We could never lie around her. It was seriously irritating," John chuckled, closing his eyes and remembering it.

"Different to be on the other side of things, isn't it?" John teased suddenly, running his hand over Sherlock's back and poking his ribs.

"I don't like being on the other side of things, and she was wrong!" Sherlock said, a little defensive thinking about it. Because really... she wasn't wrong, and that's something Sherlock didn't like to face.

John sighed lightly, chuckling at Sherlock's defensiveness. "She probably isn't wrong about you, whether you want to admit it or not."

Sherlock let out a breath, shutting his eyes against the memory of the crash. He didn't know if Mycroft remembered; if he did, he was silent about it. Though perhaps that didn't help their resentment. "No one knows about it. I... she couldn't know," he said, shaking his head a little.

John hummed, tightening his arm around Sherlock when he sensed his discomfort. "She's good at guessing," he murmured, running his lips up Sherlock's neck in an effort to make him relax.
When the Omega didn't, John leant up on his elbow to look down at him. "Do you want to talk about it?"

Sherlock closed his eyes when he felt John's lips on his neck, but he still felt on edge. Swallowing, he glanced up at John. "Not especially, but then I often don't like to think about it, which I suppose is but one of my many problems," he mumbled.

"Well," John said quietly, "I think that maybe facing them would be good for you. Obviously they're still affecting you if my mum picked up on them."

Sherlock shook his head. He shouldn't be talking about it; it was years ago, going on five years now. John's problems were fresher, and they could take care of them, take care of him.

John traced his fingers over Sherlock's chest, his hand coming to rest over his heart. "Please? I want to help if I can."

Sherlock sighed, quiet, still, for a few minutes. "It is nothing, just the responsibility of everything that has gone wrong in my life so far," he finally said. "By that I mean, of course, that I am responsible for my parents' deaths, almost killing my brother, and by rights my own enslavement into that place, because without the former, the latter would have never happened," he said, staring at the wall straight across from him.

John was quiet for a while, his hand still pressed against Sherlock's chest. "What happened?" he asked softly, his lips brushing against Sherlock's neck when he spoke.

Sherlock let out a breath, shaking his head a little. "I think I'd rather not discuss it," he said, stuffing those memories, those thoughts, down again where he had kept them for years. "There are better things that deserve our attention, your attention," he said.

"Nothing deserves my attention more than you," John argued, finding Sherlock's hand with his own and squeezing it. "And if something is hurting you or bothering you, I want to know about it so that I can help you."

"I'm supposed to be helping you!" Sherlock snapped. "I don't want..."deserve, "to be comforted, John!" he said, curling up a little.

John rolled away from Sherlock, throwing the covers off and getting out of bed. "Fine," he snapped. "When you've stopped being such a child, come let me know." He knew he shouldn't snap at Sherlock, but he was still on edge from yesterday and he was tired of the Omega not opening up to him.

John left the room, closing the door behind himself, and walked out into the living room, collapsing on the sofa.

Sherlock blinked a couple times, looking at the door. He balled his fists up into his hair and groaned into the pillow. God, why couldn't he just do stuff normally?!

Sherlock huffed, folding his arms around himself. He hadn't wanted John to leave. Sherlock had got John to let out about what was hurting him; he'd found a way to make him. But Sherlock couldn't do that with himself.

Sherlock sat in the room for a little while, thinking, trying to come up with a way to fix himself. He blinked a couple times, then scrawled out a quick note to John, leaving it on the bed, before he climbed out the window, neglecting to bring his coat, which still had John's gun in it.
John laid on the couch for several hours, staring at the ceiling until his side started hurting again, and then holding out for just a bit longer. He closed his eyes, shaking his head softly, all of his anger at Sherlock seeped away.

With a small groan, John pushed to his feet, stretching slightly before making his way back towards the bedroom. He didn't even make it to the kitchen before a deafening explosion hit his ears and the shockwave knocked him to the floor.

***

Sherlock made it to the cemetery quickly enough, standing in the gates of it for a while. He slowly made it closer to his family plot, but ended up frozen, looking in the direction he knew they were in. He swallowed, moving to sit on a bench.

Sherlock spent the next few hours telling himself to go. To just do it, but he couldn't. He couldn't do it alone, and he knew that.

***

John pushed himself into a sitting position, sliding back against the wall and just staring. Both windows were blown in, glass was strewn everywhere, and he realised that that was why his arm was bleeding. His head was swimming, unable to make a huge amount of sense from what had happened.

Bomb, and his mind immediately thought car bomb, though he dismissed that when he remembered he was home, not in the desert.

***

Finally, long after it had gotten dark, Sherlock started home.

His eyes snapped up when he saw the police cars, and he hastily threw money at the driver, scrambling out to see the building across from their flat with a hole blown right into it. He ran into the flat, shoving past one of Lestrade's incompetent men with a bark of "I live here!" and threw himself upstairs.

"John! John!" Sherlock called, running into the flat.

***

The door flew open to John’s right and a flurry of movement came in, all graceful energy.

Sherlock moved quickly into the room, kneeling in front of John and taking his face into his hands, looking at him intently with worry.

John winced when soft hands cupped his face. "M'fine, Sherlock," he murmured, looking up into his eyes.

"Shut up, no you're not!" Sherlock said, hauling John up and into a kitchen chair. He looked him over, quickly getting some disinfectant for John's arm and wrapping it. Superficial cut, he knew, but the panic was still there.

"What happened?" Sherlock asked. He wondered if John even knew he had gone.
"Bomb," John answered, gesturing back into the trashed living room. "I don't... I don't know what happened exactly. I stood up to go back to bed and..." He turned to Sherlock. "Hang on, where were you? Why did you come in through that door?"

Sherlock looked at the living room, moving out to look out the windows, seeing the police work. He looked back at John. "Building across the street..." he said, avoiding John's question, before he started straightening up a few things in the living room. "Should get this glass up," he mumbled, reaching into the kitchen to grab a broom, and started sweeping.

John blinked a few times, his head finally starting to clear. "Sherlock, it's fine. Leave it for a moment and come here," he asked, a tremble in his voice. He stood from the chair with some effort, walking out into the living room.

Sherlock swept a few more times, turning to look at John. "Sit back down, or should I call you the childish one?" he asked, though he didn't go back to sweeping.

Sherlock sighed, taking a few steps towards John and closing the distance. "What?" he asked.

John wrapped his arms around Sherlock's waist, holding him close and burying his face in his shoulder. "I'm sorry," he whispered, almost too softly to hear. "I didn't mean it. I just... you've done so much for me and I just want to help you."

Sherlock blinked slowly, the broom still in one hand. "I'm not in the habit of letting others help me," he said quietly. "It's not something I'm used to."

It had been easy before – he'd been half dead and couldn't have resisted if he tried.

Sherlock closed his eyes. "I was arguing with my father," he said quietly. "They wanted to switch my schools, send me to some special private one for Omegas." He shook his head lightly. "It was in France, and I didn't want to go. I was lined up for Oxford, but because I wasn't of age, my parents would have the final say. Dad was driving; we were on our way to some stupid charity event for his work. I was yelling at him, he turned around to say something to me, and we hit a bit of ice, just enough to make the car drift from him not paying attention."

Sherlock shut his eyes, letting out a breath. "The car flipped, and we were upside down... I don't remember anything after seeing a lorry speeding towards us, until I was hospital, and was told where Mycroft was, and... and what had happened." His voice cracked a little, and he shoved it back down, biting down on his lip as he dropped the broom.

John tightened his arms around Sherlock, sliding a hand up into his hair and bring his head down to rest against his shoulder. He didn't know what to say, so he just held him tightly and rocked them where they stood.

"It's okay," John finally breathed, backing up and sitting down on the chair again, pulling Sherlock onto his lap. "It's alright. It wasn't your fault, love. It wasn't." He stroked his hand over Sherlock's back, combing his hand through his hair.

Sherlock settled onto John's lap, sighing a little. "And yet I know that it is. Had he had his full attention, the car wouldn't have drifted those few precious degrees," he said, looking down. "What's done is done, though," he said quietly, glancing towards the window. "It's going to be cold tonight; I need to get this cleaned up and boards over the window," he said, trying to get to his feet.

"No," John said, holding Sherlock close, not letting him leave. "No, you listen to me, Sherlock Holmes." He cupped Sherlock's face with his hands, forcing their eyes to meet. "He would have lost
control anyway. Mum and Dad got into a car accident the same way when Harry and I were young.
Mum had her full attention on the road, and they still ended up rolling in the ditch. The only thing
that saved them was the back end of the car hitting a tree. This is *not* your fault."

Sherlock winced a little, not wanting to look at John when he said that. He looked down, swallowing
thickly.

Sherlock shook his head. "There... there has to be someone to blame," he said. "People die, and
there's always someone to blame – the murderer, the person doing something stupid, misusing
products, faulty products as a result of someone not making them. It's always someone's fault!" he
said, not wanting something that had destroyed his life to be left entirely up to chance and a bit of
cold weather.

John shook his head sadly, combing his hand through the hair at Sherlock's temple. "I'm sorry, love,
but no. Not this time." He leant up to brush his lips across Sherlock's forehead, closing his eyes for a
moment. "And there's nothing wrong with it being no one's fault. But you can't keep blaming
yourself, Sherlock. I'm not going to sit around and watch you beat yourself up over this."

Sherlock's face crumpled a bit and he shook his head quickly. He swallowed, pulling out of John's
arms. He moved across the room and picked up the broom again. His breathing was a little irregular,
and he tried to sweep again, but he just threw the broom at the already broken windows. "God damn
it!" he swore, throwing himself down to the floor and knotting his fingers into his hair.

John rose to his feet and crossed over to Sherlock, sinking down beside him and pulling him back
against his chest. "I know," he murmured, taking Sherlock's hands in his own and crossing his arms
over his chest while he rocked them slowly. "I know it hurts."

Sherlock shook his head, face twisted into a frown. He felt a huge pressure in his chest, ripping its
way out of him. He shouted, a sob tearing out of his chest. He crumpled against John, wondering
briefly why his face was wet, and then decided he didn't care, nuzzling close to John as the sobs still
came.

"Shh," John breathed, holding Sherlock close to him, keeping his head tucked against his neck.
"Shh, you're alright. Let it out, love. I've got you." He rocked Sherlock slowly, his heart aching for
the Omega, but he knew the best thing for him was to just cry until he couldn't anymore.

Sherlock shook, sobbing continuously. Eventually, though, his sobs died down, and he hiccupped
occasionally, gulping breaths of John's scent as if drinking it down. He shuddered, exhausted after
about half an hour of crying. Eventually he tried to retreat to his head, but he fell asleep before he
had the opportunity.

A couple minutes after Sherlock had drifted off, there was a voice at the door.

"He hasn't spoken about it since it happened I take it... doubt he would have told the people in the
auction house much about his feelings," Mycroft said quietly.

John looked cautiously over at the door, taking in the site of Mycroft.

Late. As usual.

John didn't move from where he was, knowing he wasn't strong enough at the moment to carry
Sherlock anywhere and not wanting to just leave him on the floor.

"What do you want, Mycroft?" John asked, lifting his chin defiantly and continuing to gently comb
his fingers through Sherlock's hair.
Mycroft sighed, walking into the living room and looking at the state of it. "I'll have someone in to take care of all this," he said, gesturing to it all with the end of his umbrella. He looked down at his brother, who, even asleep, still held a somewhat distressed expression.

"A bomb went off across the street from my brother's flat... you don't think I'd investigate, especially after he's been threatened?" Mycroft pulled out an envelope, already opened. "This was in a strong box, addressed to my brother," he said, reaching in and pulling out a watch that was cracked. "This... was our fathers. It was believed to have been lost in the accident, as it wasn't on his person when... when they were recovered," he said, faltering slightly.

Despite John's distaste of the elder Holmes brother, he felt a bit of pity towards him. He had lost his parents in that crash too, and loss like that affects someone deeply.

"Right..." he sighed, looking at the watch. "Do you want me to give that to him? And tell him what about it?" Sherlock stirred in his arms and John nuzzled against him, murmuring nothing to him to ease him back to sleep.

"It's obvious someone is trying to get a rise out of my brother, some kind of reaction possibly, though their ends I'm not sure of," Mycroft said, setting the watch down on the coffee table.

Mycroft sighed, looking at the two of them on the floor, John's injuries no doubt causing him pain. He spoke softly over his shoulder, and Greg walked in, nodding at John.

"Let me," Mycroft said, his face softening a bit as he set his umbrella aside and bent to lift Sherlock gently, Greg helping a bit before he turned, helping John off the floor as Mycroft slowly walked to the back bedroom.

John almost protested, but he decided to stay quiet, allowing Mycroft to take Sherlock from him and Lestrade to help him to his feet.

Mycroft emerged a moment later after setting Sherlock on the bed with the note Sherlock had written and John's gun. He handed the latter over to John, still looking at his brother's handwriting. "I believe the weapon is yours," he said. "Given the circumstances I give you governmental permission to keep it," he said, finally handing the letter to John as well. "He never made it to them by the way... I was watching," he murmured.

"Thanks," John murmured, taking the gun from Mycroft when he returned. He stared at the note in his hands, his eyes flickering over the words that were written on the paper when it was handed over to him. He sighed, looking up at Mycroft and then over at Lestrade. "I'm going to go be with him," he said as a way of excusing himself, and he crossed from the living room and into the bedroom, shutting the door behind himself.

Mycroft nodded, sending a message on his phone before he and Greg left. A little while later the noise of quiet cleaning came from the living room as people swept up the glass and replaced the windows.

***

Sherlock was curled up on the bed, a small throw having been draped over him, some curls tucked behind his ear as if someone had brushed them that way. His face pinched a little and he curled tighter.

John reached over, pulling Sherlock back against him. "It's alright, love," he murmured softly. He held Sherlock tightly, rubbing his hand over his side and chest, kissing his neck. "It's alright." He
wished he knew if he was telling the truth.

Sherlock hummed a little, settling a moment later, his breathing slowing down a bit. After a little while, he opened his eyes, coming to. He sniffed, seeing John there and realising he was in his bed. "Mmm... how'd I get here?" he asked, knowing John couldn't carry him. He heard noises in the living room and his eyes widened a little. "Someone's here," he said, trying to sit up.

John pulled him back down, caging him against his chest. "Just some Betas your brother got to clean the place for us," he explained, holding Sherlock tightly against him. "He carried you in here. He's gone now, took Lestrade with him. These guys should be leaving soon as well."

Sherlock blinked a few times, relaxing into John's arms a bit. He sighed. "He would leave while I was still unconscious. You know, sometimes I think he likes to pretend I had died in that crash too. Can't stand being around me while I'm awake," he mumbled quietly.

"I think it's more that he's afraid of you hating him for not finding you. He just can't bring himself to face you," John suggested, thinking out loud. "But what do I know? I'm an idiot, remember?" he said lightly, pressing a kiss to the back of Sherlock's neck.

Sherlock sighed, shrugging a little bit.

"Substantially less than the rest of them though," Sherlock mumbled. He rolled over to face John, looking at him. "I'm sorry for all this," he said quietly. "You getting hurt, just... all the trouble," he said. "And now a bomb, which I'm sure doesn't have anything to do with me, but you got hurt and..." He shook his head.

"It was just a small cut, love," John smiled, cupping Sherlock's cheek and leaning in to steal a kiss. "You have nothing to apologise for, Sherlock, I promise. None of this is your fault." He rested their foreheads together, looking intently into Sherlock's eyes.

John looked up when the cleaners left, rolling out of bed. "Come here. Mycroft left you something."

Sherlock sat up, looking at John before he got up as well. "I don't want any presents from my brother," he mumbled.

"I said he left you something, not that he got you something," John corrected, walking down the hall. "And you might want this." He stepped into the living room, a little shocked at how much had been done. Shaking his head, he walked over to the coffee table and picked up the watch, holding it flat out on his palm towards Sherlock.

Sherlock rolled his eyes a little, following John out into the living room, instantly seeing four things that hadn't been done right. He sighed, looking at what was in John's hand and froze.

Sherlock swallowed. "Where... where did you get that? That what Mycroft left? How did he get that, no one knows where that went," he said quietly, not touching the watch.

"It was in a strong box, apparently," John replied, glancing from the watch up to Sherlock. "Your brother thinks that someone's trying to affect you, make you unstable or something."

Sherlock blinked a few times, shaking his head lightly. "Th-that... that was in the... the explosion?" he asked.

Sherlock's lips pressed into a thin line as he took it, flipping it over to see the engraving on it, definitely his fathers. He shook his head. "That shouldn't... it couldn't be..." He tossed it back to his chair. "Someone shouldn't have had that," he said, shaking his head again.
John stared at the watch for a long time before walking over and swapping it for his own. "Sherlock, love, someone did have it, and we have to figure out how and why. Right? Put your mind to work. Something isn't right with this picture."

Sherlock shook his head again, almost feeling sick. Someone who was at the wreck, or at the hospital. He looked at John, at the bandage on his arm. "They blew a hole in the building John," he said, eyeing the watch that John put on. He swallowed thickly. "Next time they might just put a hole in something more important..." he breathed.

"You're staying out of it," Sherlock said. He tried to think of where to start, what he had to go on, but it was just a watch; that was it.

Sherlock swore, storming down the hall and pulling on his coat, before making for the door. He wouldn't keep John in danger.

John saw where Sherlock was going and grabbed his arm, pushing him back against the wall and holding him there. "No. You are not leaving me out of this. You're more important, you idiot. What if they want to separate us, hmm? What then? Then you're just making this easier for them."

John’s side was starting to hurt again as he held Sherlock against the wall, but he didn't care. "You're not doing this alone. Partners, remember?"

Sherlock didn't meet John's gaze, looking sideways to the floor. "I'll go where I like," he said stubbornly. "They get me, then they get me, wouldn't be the first time," he said. "They blew a hole in a building! Could have just as easily been this one! If they really want me, they'll get me regardless," Sherlock said, trying to pull the Alpha's hands off his shoulders. "Are you really so blind as to think that I don't care and am just going to let you walk out of that door by yourself?" John was barely keeping from yelling, and he pressed harder on Sherlock's shoulders. "After saving you from that... that horrible place, after going to Afghanistan and having to leave you, after coming back here to find out that you... I'm not letting you leave without me."

Sherlock huffed, looking up and glaring at John. "That's the point!" he snapped. "You're the only thing that I give a damn about! And I'm not going to run you off the road too!" His breathing was a bit irregular, and his gaze softened slightly but he still tried to pull away. "You're not going to run me..." John bit back his exclamation. "Sod this," he said, pulling back and throwing up his arms. "Just... sod this." He unclipped the watch from his wrist and pushed it into Sherlock's hand before he walked over to the door and threw it open, not bothering with his jacket. "I need air. Do whatever you want," he called over his shoulder as he descended the stairs, slamming the door behind him.

Sherlock looked at the watch in his hand, which was shaking slightly. He swallowed thickly, waiting a few minutes before he swore again, heading down the steps and following after John. He had to make sure he was safe, though he did so without John knowing he was following.

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John didn't have a destination in mind, he just wanted, needed, to get out, moved around, feel the ice gather in his lungs from the cold air.

He walked down two streets, hooked a right, walked down another five. He got lost in the crowds a couple times and had to check where he was going before he continued on.
Nearly an hour had passed when he blinked, finding himself on Waterloo bridge, his hands braced on the railing, looking down at the Thames below him.

***

Sherlock followed John closely, wondering just where it was he was going. He swallowed when John led him to the bridge, and he waited close, not even wanting to think that John might do that. He pulled out his phone.

*Will you come back? SH*

***

John looked down at his pocket when his phone chimed, taking a deep breath as he fished it from his jacket and opened up the message. He caught himself sighing before he replied.

*Why? JW*

***

*So that way I know where you are, obviously. SH*

Sherlock sighed, looking at John intently.

***

*Then no. JW*

John put his phone back into his pocket, staring out across the river and closing his eyes, breathing in deeply, the wind coming off of the water managing to blow even his short hair around. His grip tightened on the railing and he braced his weight more against it, using it a bit like a crutch as a pain went through his ribs.

***

Sherlock sighed, knowing John would come back this way. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small bottle of pills for him, setting it on the railing.

*You forgot them again. SH*

He let out a breath, then headed down the opposite way. They were close enough after walking so long, and he made his way back to the one place he really didn't want to go.

***

John reached into his pocket with a heavy sigh. When he read the message he looked up, back the way he had come from. The orange bottle of pills caught his attention immediately, and he walked over to them, dry swallowing two of them. He sighed, knowing that Sherlock was out now and that he wouldn't be going back home for a while. So that was where John went.

***

The auction house was empty, tape wrapped around it marking it as a crime scene. Sherlock stepped inside, walking down to the stage he'd been standing on almost a year ago, running his hand along it. Sherlock hopped up on the stage, standing in the spot he had a year ago, looking out to where John
had been. He let out a slow breath, waiting.

"Why do I feel like you're just playing with me right now... You never were going to take me from the flat... so what do you want?" he asked, his voice echoing in the auction house. Maybe he was wrong, and he was completely alone, but how often was he wrong, really?

Sebastian watched Sherlock, surprised that he had turned up. But then, Jim had said that he would, and Jim was rarely wrong.

"We like to watch you dance," Sebastian said, letting his voice echo around the auction house. "You're a very interesting Omega, and Moriarty likes to play with his food before he eats it."
Sebastian had to keep from chuckling as Sherlock glanced around. "Study the watch, whelp. That's your only clue." And then he left.
Sherlock looked around rapidly, but he knew the Alpha was gone. Moriarty... the name echoed in his head as he caught a cab home. He let himself upstairs, and picked up the watch from where he had left it, then moved into the bedroom, looking at John.

"The pills help?" Sherlock asked quietly, sitting at the foot of the bed, not sure how angry John was still.

"They did their jobs," John replied, staying rolled over on his side, his arms folded across his chest, staring fixedly at the wall. "Hope you found what you were looking for."

Sherlock let out a breath. "Not as much as they found me... or were following me," he said, looking at John. "It was the Alpha... from the flat," he said quietly, looking at the watch in his hands, not sure what he was looking for.

John stiffened at the mention of the Alpha, but didn't comment on it. Sherlock was safe, and he still smelled like himself.

"You're angry."

"Great observation. One of your best," John said a bit snappishly.

Sherlock recoiled from the harshness in John's voice. "Would you prefer I care about you less?" he asked quietly. "Because I assure you, I've never found anything I cared about as much as you," he whispered.

"Then don't try to push me away!" John sat up quickly, turning to face Sherlock. "I am not a weakness and I am not a hindrance. I am your partner, which means that if I am able, then I am willing, and we do things together. I don't give a damn what the case is or how much danger I'm going to be in. Together or not at all."

Sherlock flinched a little, cradling the watch in his lap and cupping his hands around it. He nodded. "I don't think... I never said you were a weakness... or in the way," he said quietly.

Sherlock nodded again. "Together then," he said, looking up at John and holding out the watch. "He told me to study this... and then called me a whelp, but that doesn't really pertain much to the investigation," he explained.

"It pertains to my kicking his arse later," John said, taking the watch from Sherlock and rolling it over in his hands. "What do you think it means, this?" He held up the watch a little. "Study it but... for what? To what end?"

Sherlock shrugged. "I don't... I don't know," he said, looking at the watch. "The engraving is the same, the watch was a gift from my mother. The glass is cracked along the edge, presumably from..."
the accident," he said, swallowing. He thought the watch had been to rattle his cage, and he considered it sufficiently rattled. But as to what he should be looking for... he was lost.

"Then just ignore it for now," John suggested, taking the watch back and setting it on his nightstand. "Come to bed. You'll think of it, I promise." He reached forward, all of his anger forgotten, and took Sherlock's hands in his. "Just come to bed, love. No need to fret about it right now. You can do that in the morning."

Sherlock let out a breath, biting his lip. "Maybe... I should just ignore it," he agreed quietly. "Not play the game. That's all it is," he breathed. "He said... that they like to watch me dance. That Moriarty likes to play with his food... before eating it." He swallowed, not moving from where he was sitting. "Maybe... just ignore the watch," he said, not able to bring himself to say 'destroy it.'

John slid forward, running his thumbs over Sherlock's knuckles and looking up at him. "I think that sounds like a good idea," he agreed, leaning up to nuzzle against Sherlock's collarbone. "I'll keep it in my drawer."

Sherlock swallowed, nodding a little as he watched John put the watch away. He sighed, pulling away a little to strip out of his clothes. He'd been wearing them for two days now.

Wearing only his pants, Sherlock crawled back into bed, close to John, and shut his eyes with a sigh. He hadn't gotten that much sleep lately, and it just put him more on edge. "'m sorry... what I did... just wanted you not hurt again," he murmured drowsily.

John held Sherlock close, pulling the blankets up around them. "I know," he whispered, stroking his fingers through Sherlock's hair. "I understand, love. Just don't do it again," he murmured, pressing his lips to Sherlock's forehead. "Go to sleep," he said softly, humming to himself to try and make Sherlock rest.

Sherlock hummed, bending under the gentle order, exhaustion weighing down on him as he fell asleep soon after.

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It was late in the night when Sherlock woke up again, hearing John's regular, steady breaths behind him, indicating he was asleep. He shifted a little, feeling a bit warm, and agitated as well. He wondered why he was awake when the word came to him.

"Time," Sherlock breathed, sitting bolt upright, the room temperature air feeling cool on his somewhat damp skin. He shook his head a little, and then scrambled over John and off the bed, digging in the bedside drawer, needing to find it.

Sherlock tugged the watch out, looking at it.

"Time, John!" Sherlock exclaimed. "The crash was in the early morning at 9:25. If that's when the watch got cracked, then it should be stuck on that time, but it isn't, it's stuck at 5:30," he said, wondering what that meant, pacing the room, licking his lips and running his hand through his hair, finding it harder to think.

Think think think, why was it hard? Sherlock shook his head again, trying to clear it and crossing the room to throw open the window.

John squeezed his eyes open, pulling the covers closer to his chin. "Sherlock, shut the bloody –"

The cold air from outside pushed Sherlock's scent into the room, and John sat bolt upright. "Jesus,
Sherlock. Shut the window before you attract every Alpha in a ten-kilometre radius. Christ, you can tell you've been holding this one back."

Fully awake now, John crossed over to the window and shut it himself, nuzzling against the crook of Sherlock's neck and breathing deeply.

Sherlock was breathing a bit heavily, wincing a little. He looked at John as he crossed the room, shaking his head a little. "I can't... this means something, John; it's important!" he said, trying to pull away a little, trying to think. What was the significance of 5:30? What was it? It had to be something. He swallowed, his mouth a bit dry.

Sherlock groaned, feeling a cramp, and he doubled over.

"Easy," John said, holding him steady and walking him back over to the bed. "You're going to hurt yourself if you keep fighting this," he chastised, rubbing his hand over Sherlock's back. "You'll think better afterwards."

Sherlock's hands were shaking as he held the watch. "J-John... it's time... it's sensitive, it could be important!" he said, wincing again. He hummed, leaning into John's hand a little before he could help it. When he realised this, he jumped up again.

"Can't!" Sherlock said, looking at the watch, seeing the watchmaker's name on it. It was a shop downtown. He licked his lips, leaping over the bed still in his pants and pulling out his phone, doing a search for it. Not a shop anymore... They'd gone out of business. "Whatever is there... something... is going to... to happen," he panted.

John sighed, forcing himself to stay put, watching Sherlock from the bed. "What do you mean?" he asked, watching Sherlock curiously. "You need to calm down love. You're not making any sense."

Sherlock paced a little, running his fingers through his hair. He winced, another cramp hitting him as he started to feel almost sick. "I... I have to go... stop them," he panted, moving slowly towards the door. He had to have some of that compound left, though he hardly knew what it would do to him in the middle of a heat.

"Oh, no, you don't," John said, jumping from the bed and guiding Sherlock back into the room. "Every unbonded Alpha in the area would be on you in minutes. You're staying here. Call your brother if someone needs to go down there." He set his hands firmly on Sherlock's shoulders, stroking his thumbs along his skin.

Sherlock whined, trying to dig his heels in to leave, but he couldn't, and he found himself following with John. He pulled out his phone, sending a quick message to Mycroft, or trying to, his hands shaking. He sent it, and then dropped his phone to the floor.

Sherlock wrapped his arms around himself. "It's... worse. It feels worse this time," he said, rocking himself slowly as the wave started and he got another cramp.

John stroked through the Omega's hair, pushing it back from his forehead and blowing cool air on him. "Probably because you haven't had one in nearly eight months," John said, pulling him close and rocking him gently through the cramp.

Sherlock let out a shuddering breath, leaning his head over to John's neck and inhaling. He moaned a little, unwrapping his arms from himself and winding them around John. He whimpered a little, running his nose along John's jaw, stealing up his lips for a kiss, pressing firmly to his mouth.

Sherlock broke away panting, his head fuzzing over. "Can't... can't think... just so... John," he said,
John's name almost coming out with more reverence than anything, and need.

John hummed, wrapping his arms around Sherlock's waist and twisting his body to roll them over. He braced himself above Sherlock, leaning down to kiss him against, sliding their tongues together.

John nipped his way down Sherlock's neck, holding his teeth over a spot on the side of his neck, and then one lower down, towards the back.

Sherlock whimpered a little, his eyes closing as John's mouth moved down his neck, teeth grazing the skin.

John reached down slowly, pulling Sherlock's pants off and tossing them to the floor, kissing and nipping his way down Sherlock's chest, his hands firmly holding his hips down.

Sherlock writhed beneath John, already feeling damp, the hollow ache just starting. He sat up a bit, pressing his mouth greedily against John's again, almost fighting for control in his desperation, biting a little at John's lip.

John grinned, sucking Sherlock's bottom lip between his teeth, growling playfully. He quickly, and a little awkwardly, stripped himself down, leaning down against Sherlock before he rolled them over so that Sherlock was on top.

Sherlock ducked his head down, breathing deeply by John's neck and nipping gently. He whimpered, not able to think. His whole body shook, the tags around his neck rattling gently. He grabbed them to steady them, looking at John with wide eyes, pupils blown.

John ran his hands along the Omega's overly warm sides, gazing up at him with nothing but love and lust. "Take what you want," he murmured, letting Sherlock have his way.

Sherlock was wearing John's tags, but it wasn't enough, and they had talked about it already…. "Yours..." he panted, "you... you take... please," he begged, knowing it was what his body wanted, what he wanted.

John reached between them, slowly pushing a finger inside of Sherlock, slowly thrusting it into him. His other hand wound into Sherlock's hair, tugging his head down and locking their lips together. He slid a second finger into Sherlock, a little admirable at how wet he was already.

Sherlock's eyes slid shut as he felt John's fingers, one by one. He rocked back onto them, biting down on his lip as he did so.

This is why there aren't suppressants for Omegas, John thought.

John nipped Sherlock's neck playfully, pushing in a third finger, and as soon as they all moved easily, he flipped them over again, thrusting into Sherlock at the same time, openly watching his expression.

Sherlock gasped as they rolled suddenly, and he felt John thrust into him. His eyes rolled back for a moment and he moaned, fists balling up in the bedding. His breathing was erratic, and he swallowed thickly, looking up at John. He knew he'd have to move, he wanted to be John's on the first knot, he wouldn't wait, and that meant John had to be able to reach the back of his neck, as well as the side. But for now pushed himself down more with a whine.

John smiled, reading everything on Sherlock's face. "One at a time, love," he promised, leaning down to lock their lips together as he slowly started moving his hips, sliding in long strokes. "It still counts if I do it that way." He took Sherlock's hands and pinned them above his head, winding their
fingers together as he held them against the mattress.

Sherlock bit his lip again, a whine coming from him as he tightened a bit around John. He was beyond words, not having a heat this extreme since his first one, maybe not even then. He wanted to say that the side one was more for show, and that the one on the back, along with scenting John at the same time, was the one that counted, but he couldn't say it, and he knew... soon.

Sherlock nodded, another whimper coming from him which quickly turned into a moan.

John rocked slowly, gently, inside of Sherlock, nuzzling against his neck. He was teasing, and he knew it, but God, he was going to enjoy this. He nipped under Sherlock's jaw, nibbling along it, knowing the Omega was completely at his mercy.

John growled, his territorial and possessive nature rising forth. He wanted Sherlock, and he desperately wanted him to be his.

John pulled out, letting go of Sherlock's hands and rolling him over onto his chest before thrusting back in again. He lowered his head to Sherlock's neck, making his thrusts deep and fast.

Sherlock was almost close to actually coming with John nibbling at his jaw, and he blinked his eyes open when John suddenly pulled out of him. Before he could even know what was happening he was rolled harshly onto his stomach, and he sat himself up on his knees just as John pushed back into him. He gave a yelp of half pleasure, half pain, which really only made it better.

Sherlock bowed his head to the bedding, panting roughly when he felt John leaning over him, and he sat back up a bit on his elbows, nuzzling his head back into John's chin.

John grinned with pleasure at having pulled the yelp from Sherlock. He nipped at Sherlock's ear, wrapping an arm around his chest to hold them close. He pounded into Sherlock, knowing he was hitting his prostate on nearly every thrust. Sherlock shook beneath him, making small submissive sounds that John's Alpha reacted to, reaching under him and slowly stroking his length. John pressed his forehead between Sherlock's shoulder blades, feeling his knot swelling already.

Sherlock bit down on his lip, not realising that half the noises he could hardly register were in fact coming from him. He felt John's hand close around his length, and cried out as he came, John's touch being the final straw atop his precise thrusts. He felt like he left his body almost, weightless and floating.

John thrust into Sherlock as the Omega came, burying his knot as he came as well. He instantly bit down on the back of Sherlock's neck, his vision going white for a moment and a shudder running through him. He released Sherlock and turned his head automatically, biting down on the side of his neck, where it would be visible even when he had that stupid coat collar turned up.

Sherlock's weightlessness ended and he came slamming back to reality when he felt a sharp pinch on the back of his neck, making him yelp again before everything seemed to freeze, and then another which made him take a sharp breath in.

John finally pulled away, licking over the wounds to seal the bond from his end.

Sherlock’s eyes fluttered shut, head hanging down as he panted, feeling himself eased onto his side as John moved, his knot still firmly in place. As if on its own, Sherlock's hand reached down for John's, holding it up close to his face and nuzzling the scent on his wrist, breathing it in. He hummed quietly, feeling like he was inhaling a part of himself, filling a small gap in his chest, and being completely wrapped up in John, like a blanket.
John hummed quietly, nuzzling against the back of Sherlock's neck above the bite, trailing his nose up into his hair and just breathing for a moment. "I love you," he purred, nipping at Sherlock's — his Sherlock — skin. "I love you, and you're mine. You're mine. Always," he murmured, tracing his fingers along Sherlock's cheekbone before settling it on his chest.

Sherlock nodded, in haze and almost not understanding John when he spoke. He whined a little when John's hand moved away to touch over his face, and then his chest. He twisted his fingers with John’s and setting his cheek in John's palm, allowing him to run his nose along John's wrist, basking in his scent. He would have rolled over, but was a bit stuck where he was for the moment.

John chuckled good-naturedly, letting Sherlock breathe in his scent, which was slowly starting to become a combination of both of their scents. John inhaled deeply at the juncture of Sherlock's neck and shoulder, shuddering at the delicious mixture of smells. Nothing short of death could separate them now, and John was not going to allow death to happen until they were both old and decrepit.

Sherlock hummed lightly, nuzzling his head back against John. He swallowed, trailing a small line across John's wrist with his tongue, and then kissing his wrist, nuzzling his face against John's hand. John was perfect, and this moment was perfect, and how he'd ever thought of trying to push John away was beyond him.

Sherlock sighed, feeling John's knot start to recede. Humming, he scooted forward a little, pulling himself off of John and rolling over to snuggle against his chest, burying his face in John's neck, peppering small kisses there. "Mm love you..." he purred.

"I love you too," John replied, his hand slipping into Sherlock's hair, rubbing small circles over his scalp with the tips of his fingers. His other hand moved slowly over Sherlock's smooth back, feeling the bumps of his spine that weren't nearly as evident as they had been last time.

"You know what this means, right?" John asked quietly, rolling his head to the side to give Sherlock more access to his neck. "Together always," he hummed, his chest rumbling with pleasure. "No matter what."

Sherlock pressed another kiss to John's neck. "Always." he murmured quietly.

Sherlock sighed quietly a few minutes later. "We have to do the eating and drinking thing, don't we?" he asked, his mouth still dry. He couldn't remember eating since that sandwich.

John laughed, capturing Sherlock's lips with his own, melting into the taste of his mouth for a long time.

"We should probably eat something before you fall asleep, yes," John replied a little breathlessly when he had pulled back, smiling broadly down at Sherlock. "Come on, I'll fix us something. Do you want me to put a bandage on your neck?" he inquired, standing from the bed and walking into the kitchen, starting the stove and pulling out a couple cans of chunky beef stew, pouring them into a pot and setting it over a burner.

Sherlock groaned, not wanting to get up. He pulled the duvet off the bed for now, dirty anyway, and wrapped the top sheet around himself as he walked down into the kitchen. He touched his neck gingerly, wincing a small bit at the sting, but it was okay.

"'m fine," Sherlock said, looking into the kitchen at where John was cooking, stark naked. Sherlock smiled dazedly, not picking up John's scent anymore, but rather a different one. He followed it to John and realised it wasn't his anymore, it was theirs.
Sherlock smiled, wrapping him and John up in the sheet. "Isn't there some safety hazard involved with cooking this bare, doctor?" he asked, pressing a kiss to John's scar on his shoulder.

John sighed, dropping his head backward and leaning back into Sherlock's touch, laying his head back on Sherlock's shoulder to look up at him. "No, but there might be a safety hazard to you distracting me so much," he teased, turning around in Sherlock's hold, reaching up to wrap his arms around the Omega's neck, minding the bites as he leant up to kiss him. "I love you," he murmured, his lips brushing against Sherlock's, moving them with his own.

Sherlock hummed, smiling against John's mouth. "Love you too," he murmured, pulling away a little. "Better mind that before it burns," he said, nodding towards the bubbling stew.

John turned around obediently, keeping Sherlock beside him as he stirred the stew until it was well heated. "Get some dishes, love?" he asked, looking over his shoulder and watching as Sherlock moved away, grabbed two bowls, and then returned.

John dished up their portions and turned around to lean against the counter, eating his like that. "Do you... would you like control next time?" he asked slowly between bites of his food. "It's fine if you don't, but with a defiant streak like yours, I'd be surprised if you didn't want to."

Sherlock blinked a couple times, spooning up a bite of the stew, sitting at the table wrapped up in his sheet. Control? He swallowed. "I... I hadn't thought of it," he said truthfully. "I fight all the time, stubborn like you said but..." He shook his head. "It's weird, it just turns off when... well during this. Maybe another time, outside of my cycle but... John, understand, I don't like anyone controlling me, telling me what to do or making me do things, but with you..." He felt himself flush a bit more than he already was. "It feels good... right. It always has, especially like this," he said. "Yeah I fight but... I suppose I like it with you," he said.

John smiled a little wolfishly, his eyes sparking as he looked up at Sherlock. "Well now you've done it, haven't you?" he teased, walking forward to lean down, nipping at Sherlock's ear. "Given me all sorts of reasons to take control over you."

John leant back, finishing his stew and setting the bowl in the sink. He filled a glass with water and set it in front of Sherlock. "When you finish those, come back to bed," he instructed, kissing Sherlock's forehead before he left the room.

Sherlock shook his head a little as John teased him, smirking as the Alpha walked away. He quickly ate the rest of his stew and gulped down the water. He refilled the glass once and chugged the whole thing down before stepping down into the bathroom.

Sherlock looked at the bite on his neck, a dark purple bruise already forming around it, but he couldn't help but smile a little. After he cleaned up a small bit and went to the bathroom, he moved into the bedroom, looking at John.

John leant up on his elbows, practically unable to feel his wounds at the moment. "Hello, gorgeous," he said, smiling cattily and beckoning Sherlock to the bed. "I left a spot open for you," he teased, patting Sherlock's side of the bed.

Sherlock smiled a little, stepping over to the bed wrapped in his sheet, and crawled onto it next to John, snuggling close. "Hello," he said, shifting slightly so he didn't lay much on either mark on his neck.

"You sure you don't want me to put a bandage on those?" John asked, wrapping his arm tightly around Sherlock's shoulders after he had rolled onto his side to face him. "Wouldn't take very long,"
he murmured, nuzzling under Sherlock's jaw and inhaling their scent, with just a touch more of Sherlock's spice coming from him.

Sherlock let out a breath, yawning a small bit before he nodded. "Alright," he murmured, sitting up carefully, feeling almost light headed. "S'pose has to be cleaned anyway... Don't want my bondmarks getting infected," he said, reaching up to touch the one on the side gingerly. He blinked. "It have to be so high up?" he asked with a small smile to John. "You think I'm going to try and hide it?"

John threw a grin over his shoulder as he walked into the bathroom to retrieve the first aid kit. He walked back in short order, sitting beside Sherlock and taking out the rubbing alcohol, peroxide, and iodine, as well as a couple of bandages and some gauze. It may have been overkill, but he didn't want the marks to get infected.

"Had to be sure," John replied with a wink. "I know you like to pop up the collar of your coat, and I didn't want anyone to think that you weren't mine."

Sherlock hummed a little, eyeing all the supplies with a small smirk. He felt drained, and his eyes closed as John started to dab at the bites. He winced, the alcohol burning painfully and he let out a breath through closed teeth. "Mm...s'fine though. Think they could tell...nyway," he murmured, swaying a small bit where he was seated.

"Hey," John pressed a kiss to Sherlock's lips, nipping sharply at his bottom one. "Stay awake for another three minutes, alright? Please?"

Sherlock hummed lightly, starting a little at the small bite on his lip, blinking his eyes open before nodding.

John kept dabbing with the alcohol, then poured peroxide over both marks, wiping off the bubbles that formed and using a cotton ball to apply the iodine. He pressed a kiss to Sherlock's cheek, setting gauze and then a bandage over each mark before packing away his things. "Alright, you can sleep," he said, stepping away with the first aid kit.

Sherlock held still as John finished with his bites, starting to nod off again when he stepped away. "Mmkay... not without you," he mumbled drowsily.

John smiled to himself, setting the kit down by the chest of drawers before he moved back to the bed, curling up and pulling Sherlock close to him. He nuzzled against his neck and then his temple, kissing his forehead lightly. "Alright, now you can sleep," he murmured, holding Sherlock close.

"Mhm... can now," Sherlock murmured in a small voice, not having felt this safe and comfortable and loved in a long time, possibly in his whole life. He nuzzled close to John, his fingers closing around the tags hanging around his neck still, along with the other signs on his neck that he belonged to someone, and was wanted. He drifted off then, a small smile on his face.

John watched Sherlock's movements, humming to himself at the happy look on his face. His Alpha roared triumphantly at pleasing the Omega, but his more human side was just relieved that he had managed to find something that he could do to make Sherlock happy and calm. He ran his fingers through Sherlock's hair, trying to put some order back into it while he slept.

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Sherlock slept for a few hours before shifting a little, starting to feel a bit warm again. He was always warm during his cycle, but it rose and fell, spiking every so often. A small noise escaped him then as
he moved around, tangling uncomfortably in his sheet.

John noticed the change in Sherlock's temperature, not surprisingly more in tune with him now. "Shh, love," he murmured, unwrapping Sherlock from the sheet so that he wouldn't be so warm. "Rest a little longer," he whispered in his ear, stroking his fingers soothingly down his back.

Sherlock curled into a ball when the sheet was gone, moving in his sleep to press up against John. He mumbled incoherently in his sleep as he started to settle again, a sheen of sweat on his brow.

John held Sherlock closer, knowing it wouldn't be much longer before his second wave hit. He kissed Sherlock's forehead, holding his lips there despite the feverish heat, resolutely waiting until Sherlock woke up.

Sherlock woke with a whine, curling into himself as a painful cramp hit him. His face twisted as he doubled over, shaking his head a little to wake himself up. He groaned. This wasn't how he'd have liked to wake. Those suppressants hadn't been worth it.

John cupped Sherlock's cheek, manoeuvring himself so that Sherlock could smell him, hoping the scent would ease some of the pain he was experiencing.

"You're alright, Sherlock," John promised in a murmur, rubbing his back and kissing the top of his head.

"I... detest. Those. Suppressants," Sherlock forced out through gritted teeth, relaxing a small bit at John's scent, the cramp dying out a moment later.

Sherlock looked up at John, his breathing a bit off already. "Did you sleep at all?" he asked, peppering John's chest with small kisses, making his way up.

"I'm definitely not letting you anywhere near them again," John agreed, his words turning into noises of pleasure at Sherlock's kisses. "God, you have soft lips," he murmured, tipping his head back to let Sherlock do what he wanted. For the moment, anyway. "And no. I was... mmm... worried about you."

Sherlock hummed. "Don't be worried... 'm fine," he murmured. "More than fine..."

Sherlock nuzzled into John's neck, nipping a small area there. He moved his mouth down to the star shaped star on John's shoulder and pressed an open mouthed kiss there, teasing the raised skin.

John sucked in a breath through his teeth, bringing his hand up to comb his fingers through Sherlock's hair, leaving them there as he continued kissing him. "Enjoying yourself?" he asked a bit breathlessly, having never had a lover pay close attention to him. He circled his fingertips lightly at Sherlock's hairline, curling a strand of hair around his finger.

Sherlock hummed again, nodding as he tilted his head up to look at John. He smiled lazily up at the Alpha. "Taste amazing," he murmured quietly, dragging his nose back up to John's neck again, his hand moving over his chest, exploring a little. "Mm love you," he said.

"Love you too," John promised, tipping his head down to steal Sherlock's lips in a kiss, sucking slowly on his tongue. He shivered a little when Sherlock brushed over a sensitive spot on his ribs, a spot he knew was held by a scar that had nerve damage around it. "Easy there," he murmured.

Sherlock stopped moving his hand, seeing the scar he was near. He made a mental note and avoided
it. "I'll want it's story someday," he said, "All of them I'll want all..." He trailed off, another cramp hitting him but he let out a breath, trying to ignore it. It was followed by what he couldn't ignore though, and he pressed an insistent kiss to John's lips, pleading with him almost.

John kissed him back fiercely, rolling them over and bracing himself above Sherlock. "I know," he murmured to Sherlock’s silent pleas. He ran his fingers down Sherlock's side, tracing the V of his hips down to the inside of his thigh.

John didn't waste any time, knowing what Sherlock needed, and wanting to give it to him. He slipped two fingers in right away, knowing he would still be mostly stretched from before, and quickly added the third.

Sherlock hummed, his eyes slipping shut when John's fingers moved inside of him. He shook his head, the wave hitting faster this time and he batted at John's hand. "Just... God, please just..." he panted, his hips bucking a small bit.

John laughed low in his chest, taking his fingers away and rising up above Sherlock. He slid in with a quick, sharp thrust, watching the look of relief pass over Sherlock's features. Snapping his hips one more time, he picked up a relentless pace, knowing now that he didn't have to be gentle with the Omega.

Sherlock's back arched a little with the first thrust, a groan coming from him as he pushed himself down more towards John. He panted, rolling his hips a little in time to John's motions. His fists balled up on top of the sheets, trying to find purchase where there was none. He moved his hands instead to cover John's where they were rested on his hips.

John lifted Sherlock's hips a little, aiming his thrusts until he was hitting Sherlock's prostate dead on. He grinned, his knot already swelling, which was ridiculously fast for him. Reaching over with one hand, he started stroking Sherlock, rolling his thumb over the head until he knew if he waited any longer that he wouldn't be able to get his knot in. He thrust deep into Sherlock, holding himself still as he came, managing to keep stroking Sherlock through it.

Sherlock was whimpering and moaning with the pace John kept, and he finally couldn't stand it anymore with John stroking along with each thrust. He finished as he felt John's knot in place, crying out a little before laying boneless on the bed, his head rolling to the side as his chest heaved, eyes slipping shut.

"Christ," John panted, dropping to his elbows and resting his forehead against Sherlock's chest. He side ached after that, and each of his deep breaths didn't help, but he didn't mind too much at the moment.

"Going to sleep on me already?" John teased, looking up at Sherlock and kissing the base of his throat.

"Mmm... no..." Sherlock breathed, pulling his eyes open. "I just... fuck me, I... Christ," he breathed, still not able to move much. He reached up one heavy arm and weaved his fingers into John's hair a couple times before letting it fall listlessly back to the bed.

John laughed, though it hurt, and peppered Sherlock's chest with kisses. "Yeah, that sounds about right," he agreed, closing his own eyes as he slowly came in control of his breathing.

Sherlock's breaths finally slowed down a bit and he hummed quietly, opening his eyes to look up at John. He smiled lightly, swallowing a bit before a yawn tore out of him.
Sherlock shook his head, fiddling with the tags around his neck. He turned his head to see the clock by the bedside table – 3:00. "Two and a half hours to whatever it is," he said quietly.

John followed Sherlock's gaze to the clock, watching as it changed to 3:01. "Don't worry about it," he murmured, directing Sherlock's attention back to himself with a long kiss. "You can't do anything about it until you heat wears off, so you're stuck with me for the time being."

John rested his forehead against Sherlock's, feeling his knot recede and pulling slowly out of him, almost collapsing onto his back beside him.

Sherlock hummed, nodding a little. "I know... just wish I knew what the game was... what they want. What he wants," he said quietly. "I want it over," he said. He heard the chirp of his phone from the floor and rolled over, snatching it up and looking at the message.

*Bomb recovered from old shop, had been converted into a medical clinic some years ago, set to go off at 5:30. Clinic doesn't close until 7:00. MH*

Sherlock let out a breath, dropping the phone on the bedside table, and rolling back towards John with a smile. "Solved it, problem solved, done with," he said with a grin, kissing John.

John smiled, turning his head to nuzzle against Sherlock's palm. "Alright," he said, his eyelids refusing to open, "what does it mean?" He lifted an eyebrow, running his fingers down Sherlock's bare back.

Sherlock smiled. "Well the bit about how the time on the watch had been changed was easy; the only other information on the watch available was the engraving. The engraving, and the watch itself had been custom made for my father by my mother when they got married. The shop that did it is long out of business, so I sent a text to my brother to investigate the address, telling him that it involved the bomber, who we can only assume at this point is Moriarty and that Alpha of his. I would have checked myself but my cycle started. As for the shop, it was converted and the address now houses a medical clinic which runs later hours and still would have been open with patients and doctors at 5:30," he said, taking a breath. "Presumably my brother sent men there to ascertain if there was an issue and a bomb was in fact retrieved that would have gone off," he finished.

"It's a good thing you're so intelligent," John murmured, beaming with pride. "I guess the only question now is why they're doing it, but..." he yawned, his arm tightening around Sherlock, "I think that can wait a few more hours. I need to sleep, and so do you." He shifted a little underneath Sherlock, rearranging himself so that his ribs stopped hurting. "I'll tell you about that scar when I wake up," he promised.

Sherlock smiled a bit, snuggling up to John to keep him warm since he himself was still running hot. "Okay," he murmured, "but only when you're ready..." he yawned, starting to doze off himself as well. He thought briefly about what John said, about figuring out what they wanted, but Sherlock was at a loss of finding out why, and fell asleep before he could think on it too long.
Chapter End Notes
This was commissioned from rutobuka2 specifically for this chapter. Thank you so much, it's beautiful!
Chapter 5

John fell asleep a little after Sherlock, his hand falling from around his shoulders as he went limp. He woke a few hours later, not entirely sure what had stirred him awake. The flat was quiet, Sherlock was still sleeping, and both of them were warm. Sighing softly, he put his arm back around Sherlock's shoulders and fell asleep again.

It was late, or perhaps very early when Sherlock woke up finally. He still felt a bit warm, but he didn't feel like he'd get another wave. Perhaps, then, his heats had levelled out to just two knottings. He supposed that was nice, so long as someone was actually there, otherwise it dragged on endlessly.

Sherlock sighed, seeing John, and shifted a little. He frowned, feeling a bit sticky from sweat as well as other things. He slid out of the bed carefully, looking at John who had been awake for most of that, and decided to let him sleep. Sherlock stepped into the bathroom, closing the door most of the way and started to run a bath.

John rolled over a short while later, feeling an empty bed beside him. He groaned, pushing up on his elbows and peering blearily around the room, seeing the bathroom door closed.

"Sherlock?" John called, pushing open the door a little and seeing him in the tub. He smiled softly. "Morning," he murmured, still drowsy. "Mind if I join you?"

Sherlock was in the tub no more than ten minutes when he heard John come in. He turned his head, smiling a little. "Morning," he murmured, sitting up and pulling the plug in the tub to make more room. "You don't have to ask," he said, stretching a little. "Was hoping you'd wake up, I just didn't want to wake you," he said with a small smile. He scooted forward a bit so John could slide in behind him.

John smiled, stepping up and sliding into the tub behind Sherlock. He wrapped his arms around the Omega's waist, running his hands over his chest and torso. "Probably still could've kept sleeping if I hadn't rolled over and felt that you were gone," he murmured, nuzzling contently against the back of Sherlock's neck.

"Mm... didn't wake you directly... s'not my fault," Sherlock said with a smirk, leaning back against John's chest. He turned the tap back on to fill the tub with warmer water, shutting it off when the tub was full again.

"We need a bigger one of these," Sherlock muttered, thinking about the one that was at the manor. He let out a breath. Maybe when this was all settled they could go. John didn't have a job yet, after all, and it would be nice. Peaceful, even, in the country. It had driven him mad before, but he thought maybe... it could be nice. John needed the country, maybe, after everything that happened over there. More green and quiet than sand and... everything else.

"And just where are we going to put a bigger bathtub?" John asked with a chuckle, kissing above the mark on the back of Sherlock's neck. "There's no room in here." He traced circles around Sherlock's chest, nipping gently at his skin.

Sherlock hummed a little. "We can shave a meter or so off the bedroom," he murmured with a small smile, his fingers tracing small equations on John's arms under the water.

"Mm, yes, that'll work," John murmured, closing his eyes with his head resting against the wall.
behind him. "Don't let me... slide under the water," he requested, humming quietly.

Sherlock smiled, turning a little in the water and looking up at John. "Then don't fall asleep," he said, leaning up to press a kiss to John's jaw.

They soaked for a little bit before the water started to get cold again and Sherlock sighed.

"Come on... let's get out," Sherlock said, climbing out and drying himself off. He set the towel on the toilet lid for John. "Need to take care of something," he murmured, stepping into the bedroom and stripping the sheets off the bed, fixing it up again nice with clean bedding. He sighed, pulling on a pair of pyjama bottoms and waiting for John.

Groaning, John pulled himself out of the tub, drying off with the towel Sherlock had left for him. He hung it back up, padding into the bedroom, glancing at the freshly made bed. "Thanks love," he smiled, pulling on a pair of track pants and walking over to the Omega, resting his hands on his hips.

Sherlock smiled a little, pressing a chaste kiss to John's mouth. "Least I can do," he murmured. "I'm not as warm now, you'd get cold," he said, tugging John gently over to the bed. "You need more sleep though; I can stay with you, wouldn't mind a thinking lie down," he said with a smile.

John chuckled, but he knew Sherlock was right that he needed more sleep. "Yeah," he agreed, crawling into the bed and under the covers, "you need to think through that puzzle. See if you can figure anything else out."

John made a small noise when Sherlock crawled in next to him, and he wrapped his arm around Sherlock's waist. "Wake me if you need anything. Wake me up. I'm serious."

Sherlock snuggled up close to John, nodding when he said that. "Yes, very serious," he teased quietly. "I'll wake you, don't worry, now go to sleep," he murmured. He wasn't sure what all he could think through. He'd solved it, stopped the bomb. He didn't have anything else to go on.

John made a noncommittal noise, reaching up to comb his fingers through Sherlock's hair. He fell asleep with his fingers still wound in those dark curls.

Sherlock smiled a little, watching John, his John, sleep. He was there for a while and eventually drifted off a little as well. That didn't last too long, though, before he resumed his vigil. Around ten in the morning he grew restless and disentangled himself from John's arms, moving into the living room and took up his violin, playing softly.

John came awake slowly, his mind still foggy from his dream. Nightmare? He wasn't sure.

Pushing out of bed, John made his way into the living room, walking up behind Sherlock and wrapping his arms around his waist, even though he was playing his violin. "That's the best way to wake up," he murmured, his voice muffled from his lips brushing along Sherlock's bare shoulder.

Sherlock smiled, his eyes closed as he continued to play. He swayed a small bit to the music, moving both their bodies slowly until the song was over.

Sherlock lowered his violin, looking over his shoulder at John. "I can't think of what to do next... about them, I mean. There isn't anything else to go on," he said softly.

"Just let it go then," John suggested, leaning up to quickly kiss Sherlock's cheek. "For now, at least. Not focusing helped with the last clue, maybe it'll help with thinking this whole mess through." He turned Sherlock gently around with his hands on his hips. "I'm confident you'll get it."
Sherlock sighed. "There's nothing to get, though; the bomb was found, no other clues were found. Unless he does something else, we won't know," he said, already a bit frustrated, looking down. He sighed, setting his violin to the side. "Too much to hope he'd leave us alone. There's only one way it could end, and that's if they were gone. Have to find them first," he said.

John stared at Sherlock for a long while before he finally spoke up. "Well... how do you suggest we do that?" he asked, reaching up to cup his cheeks.

John sighed lightly. "Here, come sit down," he murmured, taking Sherlock's hand and guiding him to John's chair, where he sat down and tugged Sherlock forward.

Sherlock shook his head in answer to the question, his brow furrowed a bit as he was led over to John's chair. He settled onto John's lap when he was tugged forward and curled up there quite like a cat, nuzzling his head on John's shoulder before steepling his fingers under his chin. This was quite more comfortable than his regular thinking pose, that was for certain.

"I'm not sure," Sherlock said, going back to the question. "I didn't have time to send the name to Mycroft to try and look it up, though my guess is it won't turn up much," he said.

John hooked both of his arms around Sherlock's body, resting his cheek on top of his head. "Perhaps you should start there. Ask him if he got anything from the men he has in custody."

Sherlock hummed. "Yeah... suppose I should," he murmured quietly, not wanting to get up to get his phone.

John sighed, really unsure what to say or do. He wished he was intelligent enough to help, but he knew he wasn't. Sherlock was the brilliant one, and he was fine with that.

"How's your neck?" John asked, turning his head to kiss Sherlock's forehead.

Sherlock sighed, thinking a moment before he remembered John's question. "Fine... fine. Bit tender, but it's nothing," he murmured. "How's your ribs?" he asked, his hand moving up to brush across John's head where there was still a small bump.

John made a small noise, nuzzling against Sherlock's wrist and whining a little when he found his scent to be less intense. "They're fine," he said, licking and kissing the inside of Sherlock's palm and wrist. He ran his fingers up through Sherlock's hair, looking down at him and nearly drowning in his shifting eyes. "I was going to tell you about that scar, wasn't I?" he asked softly.

Sherlock hummed lightly. "Mm, yes you were," he said quietly, looking at John. He smiled a little when John seemed to be trying more for his scent. "It's different now isn't it?" he asked quietly, looking down. "Sorry," he murmured.

"What on earth are you sorry for?" John asked, raising his eyebrows. He kissed his way down the inside of Sherlock's arm, paying special, gentle attention to the crook of his elbow, and then raised his head to steal up his lips. "If you're apologising for your scent fading away, don't, because it's biological. If you're apologising for your scent being different, don't, because so is mine, and I love it."

Sherlock nodded a little, the corner of his mouth tugging up. "Alright," he said softly. He met John's gaze, looking at his cerulean blue eyes. "You were going to tell me that story?" he asked quietly, resting his head gently on John's shoulder.

John kissed the corner of Sherlock's mouth, wishing that he could get him to smile more often. "Yeah," he said, pulling back a little and looking over at the fireplace. "It was night, right around
three in the morning. Me and two of my teammates were just scoping this area, having a look around, right? It was supposed to be deserted, but we weren't about to take chances, so we went out late, when most activity happens."

John closed his eyes for a moment, running his fingers through Sherlock's hair to keep himself grounded. "We didn't see them coming. Dropped down from rooftops and landed on our shoulders, knocking us down. Mason hit his head and got knocked out cold, which actually ended up saving us. They ignored him, focused on Stephen and me for at least five minutes. That's when Mason came 'round and drew his side arm – shot two of them." He tapped his side lightly. "Knife wound from close combat fighting. It was about four inches deep. Just missed my kidney."

Sherlock listened quietly, playing with the hair at the base of John's neck, trying to keep him calm. He knew these things weren't easy for John to talk about. He tensed a little when he got to the part about being attacked, swallowing thickly. He ghosted his fingers of his free hand along the scar, gently tracing it. "I'm sorry," he said quietly. "At least you're safe though..." he said, nuzzling against John's neck a little.

John shrugged, looking back over at Sherlock and smiling, though he knew that a blind man could probably read the memories on his face. "What's done is done, right?" He ran the tip of his finger around the bandage on Sherlock's neck, letting the silence sit for a moment. "I don't regret anything that I did over there, including killing people. I only regret the things that I didn't do."

John let his eyes close while Sherlock held him, relaxing against him for the time being. When Sherlock stood, he watched him fix the tags and then leave, wondering what he was up to until he heard the kettle running. He ducked his head down, rubbing his hands over his face and breathing slowly. "Could you bring me a mug?" he called into the kitchen, fairly certain Sherlock had figured out what he put in his tea by now anyway.

Sherlock was already halfway through preparing tea, only one mug though – John's. He moved back into the living room and parked himself on John's lap once more, holding the mug out to him. "Thought you could use it," he said quietly, resuming his new thought pose on John's lap, head resting on his shoulder where he could just scent John all he wanted.

Sherlock pressed himself closer to John, nuzzling against his neck. "Done is done," he echoed quietly. He sat up a little, pressing a kiss to John's mouth and cradling his head for a moment before standing up and adjusting the tags around his neck. He sighed, walking into the kitchen to turn on the kettle.

John smiled happily, taking the mug and sipping from it. "Mmm, thank you," he whispered, nuzzling into Sherlock's hair. He took a few more sips of tea, letting the liquid warm him, breathing in the mixed scent that he and Sherlock shared.

"You were in my dream last night," John said out of nowhere.

"Oh?" Sherlock asked, opening his eyes.

"We were in a chopper in the desert, and you looked worried but you wouldn't tell me why; you just kept saying to not look out of the window. I did anyway, and all I could see was this huge fire in the shadow of a mountain." He rested his cheek on top of Sherlock's head, shrugging. "I'm sure it's nothing, just thought I'd share."

Sherlock listened quietly, tilting his head up to look at John as he spoke. "That's... interesting," he said quietly, trying to think of what any of that could mean. "Probably is nothing, just merging things that are on your mind," he said, pressing a small kiss to John's jaw. He let out a breath, looking at
John’s tea.

"I wish it wouldn't. I'd rather not think about you in that horrible place." John sighed, taking another sip of his tea and then following Sherlock's gaze to his mug. "Would you like some, love?" he asked, holding the mug out to him. "Probably wouldn't be a bad idea to get some liquids in you. And I'm assuming you haven't eaten yet?"

Sherlock shook his head. "No, that's yours, I made it for you," he said quietly. He glanced up at John, sighing a little. "No I haven't eaten anything. I'm not hungry, and I'm on a case now anyway," he said quietly. "Transport can wait, I'm thinking."

John huffed, but he didn't say anything, knowing that he wasn't hungry and didn't want to eat at all, and if he made Sherlock eat then Sherlock would make him eat too. "At least go grab yourself something to drink, please. You've got to be dehydrated, and no one can think very well when their body isn't functioning correctly."

Sherlock sighed, not moving from John's lap. "I'm fine... drank something when I came out here," he lied easily, still thinking quietly. He let out a breath, swallowing thickly. He glanced up at John, running one finger along his jaw.

John leant into Sherlock's touch, his jaw muscle moving under Sherlock's finger. He knew Sherlock was lying about drinking something, but he decided not to push the topic. "Is this somehow helping you think, or am I distracting you?" he asked quietly, looking softly down at Sherlock.

Sherlock thought about that for a moment. "If it is, then it's a welcome distraction," he decided, looking at him with a small smile. He sighed, shutting his eyes and resting his head on John's shoulder again.

John hummed happily, sipping from his tea and closing his eyes. He let the silence envelope them for a while, continuously sipping from his mug until the tea went cold. "Up you get," he murmured, gently nudging Sherlock's side. "I want more tea."

Sherlock sighed, looking at John. "You know, you're the most comfortable place I have for thinking, and you having to get up isn't helping," he said, narrowing his eyes playfully. He got up, and stretched dramatically. "Just make sure you go to the bathroom as well, can't have you getting up right away when the tea goes through you," he teased.

John sighed a bit sarcastically, poking Sherlock playfully as he passed him. He dumped out what was left of his tea in the sink, and then headed for the bathroom to relieve himself. He came back into the kitchen, fishing around in the fridge for the creamer, not wanting to use milk this time, only to find that they were out of it, along with eggs and butter... oh, and apples. He sighed, writing down a list that he could continue later.

John poured himself another mug of tea, making one for Sherlock as well, before he returned to his chair, pushing Sherlock's mug into his hands when he resumed his position on his lap. "Drink at least a fourth of it," he said sternly, arching his eyebrow as if daring Sherlock to contradict him.

Sherlock blinked when he sat back down and a cup was shoved into his hands. He furrowed his brow a little, taking a sip. "There's sugar in this... and milk... John, that'll slow me down," he said, looking at him and still holding the cup in his hands. He met his gaze and sighed, slumping back against the armrest. "Fine," he said, nursing off the mug a little.

"Thank you," John murmured, brushing his fingers through Sherlock's hair. "I'm going to need to run to the store soon. We're in need of groceries. I'm assuming you're going to stay here and continue
"thinking?" he asked, leaning forward to kiss Sherlock's forehead, nuzzling against his hairline.

Sherlock waved one hand dismissively. "We can just order takeaway," he said, humming a small bit when John was nosing around his curls. Distracting, yes, but he wouldn't begrudge him that.

"Not for the rest of our lives, we can't," John murmured, his voice dropping into a seductive purr. "God, I love your hair." He ran his nose through the heavy, silky curls, wrapping his fingers through a few stray strands at the back of his head.

Sherlock's thoughts stuttered a small bit when John's voice took on that tone. He hummed lightly, his head leaning into the touch, one of his bandages tugging as some of his hair got caught under it, probably from sleeping. "Mm love your everything," he mumbled. "Does that mean I win?" he asked, his eyes closed, a small smirk on his face.

John chuckled, trailing his lips down to run the tip of his tongue over the shell of Sherlock's ear. "Absolutely not, because I love your everything more than you love mine," he teased, nipping at Sherlock's earlobe. He pulled back, sighing softly and taking a long drink of his tea. "Sorry, I'm being distracting."

Sherlock hummed, his head rolling back a little as he nuzzled closer to John before realising. God, how was it that John could be everywhere at once? It felt like he was wrapping around him again.

Sherlock sighed, blinking his eyes open. "You are... yes, but I wasn't complaining," he said with a small smile. "Why don't we... I don't know... go shopping then. Get your mind off it, and then we come back, and I can think?" he asked.

"Can't bear to be without me?" John teased, though he knew it would be hard for both of them to be separated this soon, harder for Sherlock than for himself.

Sherlock felt his face warm a small bit, not agreeing to John's statement, even though he knew it was true.

"Alright, then. I'll go finish my list, and then we can be off," John murmured, gently nudging Sherlock from the chair and returning to the kitchen to finish filling out his list. Noodles, some more soup, and other various items joined the list.

Sherlock got up with a nod, moving down the hall to get dressed, keeping it more casual. He didn't want a button up so it wouldn't touch his bandages. So instead he wore jeans and a t-shirt, pulling on his coat. He knew John still had to get dressed, but he'd wait... watch even. He stepped back into the living room to wait for John.

"Alright, I'm done," John announced, walking back into the living room.

"Good," Sherlock said, looking at him. "So, new jumper; you're not to re-wear any of them yet," he said.

John raised his eyebrows at the demand, but he wasn't going to argue. "Still on about that, are you?" he asked, moving towards the bedroom. He heard Sherlock following him, and the sound made him smirk. He stripped out of his track pants, tossing them onto the bed before turning to the chest of drawers and tugging on a pair of jeans, pulling a black jumper over his head before he turned back to Sherlock. "Good enough?" he asked.

Sherlock smiled, watching John get dressed. He was leaning against the doorway and nodded. "Perfect," he said with a grin. "How long do you think this shop run will take?" he asked, walking over to John and wrapping his arms around him. "Don't want to have to deal with other people..."
they don't deserve to be around you right now," he said stubbornly.

John laughed lightly, leaning up to kiss Sherlock firmly. He pulled back just to nuzzle above his collar, nipping lightly on one of his tendons. "Someone's possessive, hmm?" he teased, a grin spreading across his face, his eyes gleaming as he glanced up at Sherlock. He took hold of the lapels of his coat, pulling him down more to his level to kiss him again.

Sherlock dipped a little, returning the kiss to John. He hummed a little, practically purring when John nipped at his neck. "Keep it up..." he breathed against John's lips, "and I won't want to go anywhere," he said. "I'm fine not eating, are you?" he asked with a smile.

"Yeah," John breathed, nipping at Sherlock's lower lip and then sucking it into his mouth, rolling his tongue over it. "I'm perfectly fine not eating for the rest of my life if I can do this for eternity," he murmured, keeping his hold on Sherlock's coat and running his tongue along his jaw, grazing his teeth as he returned to his lips.

Sherlock hummed again, leaning down into the kiss more. He smiled against John's lips. "If we don't leave in the next minute and a half, I won't be dressed enough to do so," he said, almost not finding a problem with the idea.

John hummed, winding his fingers in Sherlock's hair to deepen the kiss, not thinking it to be a bad idea at all. Finally, he did pull back though, with a last nip to Sherlock's lip. "Alright," he said dejectedly. "We can leave."

Sherlock rested his forehead against John's, "Sooner we do, the sooner we're back," he said quietly with a small smile. He straightened himself up, grabbing his scarf up from the footboard and wrapped it around his neck. "After you," he said, waiting to follow John.

"I guess I can understand that logic," John said with a smile, walking out of the room with Sherlock on his heels. He grabbed his jacket on the door, shrugging it on over his shoulders with a wince.

"Hang on," John murmured, walking back into the bedroom to grab his bottle of painkillers, tipping two out into his hand and swallowing them down. He walked back into the living room, taking Sherlock's hand and smiling at him before making his way down the stairs.

Sherlock smiled, squeezing John's hand as they started down the steps and out of the flat. "We never did get my spare keys made," he said, eyes moving over the street a little. "Not that I mind picking the lock every time, but it is a bit tedious to explain to an officer," he said with a smirk.

"We can get you some today, if you'd like," John offered, turning to the left to head towards the shop.

"We walking to the Tesco then?" Sherlock asked.

"Yeah, we can walk. My rib isn't complaining too much," he said with a smile, nudging Sherlock's side, inadvertently pushing him off balance for a moment.

Sherlock stepped to the side to correct his gait, shooting John a look, though he still smiled a small bit. "Yeah, alright," he said. He looked up at the sky, clouded over grey as usual. "Going to start getting colder soon," he commented.

John laughed, following Sherlock's gaze up to the sky. "It's almost September," he said in agreement.

"You know, you missed my birthday while I was in Afghanistan," John thought aloud, remembering that Harry's was coming up in a few weeks.
Sherlock stopped mid-step, blinking a few times and looking at John. "I didn't know... you didn't say anything," he said. That made John... what was it... twenty-three now? Twenty-four? He couldn't remember. "When was it? Why didn't you tell me? And for the record you missed mine as well so... we'll both just have to make up for it," he said.

John shrugged. "I didn't want you to feel bad about it. It was March 31." He blinked, furrowing his brow. "No wonder I didn't tell you about it. That was seven days after I got shot." He kicked his foot at a rock on the pavement. "Well damn... it completely passed over my head while I was out there."

Sherlock winced a little, gripping tighter to John's hand, and continued walking. "Yes well... we'll do something for it next time," he said, not wanting to talk about that, and not wanting John to dwell on it for long.

John squeezed Sherlock's hand back, silently agreeing with him. "Yours too," he said, walking a little slower to push away a kink in his side. "We'll spend both of them at home, just the two of us."

Sherlock smiled. "Sounds good to me. Anything to avoid another pub run with Lestrade and Molly," he said. "You did get that picture, didn't you? Mind you, that was before the drunk spilled his beer on me," he recalled, his nose wrinkling a little.

John laughed despite himself. "Yeah, I got the picture. You didn't exactly look like you were enjoying yourself very thoroughly."

An Alpha walked by just then, ramming his shoulder with John's enough to make it throb. He turned, watching the man walk away without a backward glance.

Sherlock stiffened when the man walked into John, and he jerked his head to the side to look at him. He glared, opening his mouth to shout at him. He was too used to not being affected by Alphas that he would have.

"Don't," John said, feeling Sherlock bristle. "It's fine."

"Why not?" Sherlock asked incredulously.

John started walking again, tugging Sherlock along with him. "Not worth getting into a row over," he said, shrugging. "So what if he ran into me? I'm not going to hold a grudge against a stranger."

Sherlock narrowed his eyes.

If it was a stranger.

Sherlock swallowed and then nodded, following along with John. He sighed, looking around the street again, starting to feel a little anxious.

John glanced up at Sherlock, casting him a worried look. "That wasn't the Alpha that was in our flat. Different scent, see?" He turned his shoulder so that Sherlock could smell the scent left behind by the other Alpha on his jacket. "You're alright, love."

Sherlock shrugged a little, still on edge. "Logical to assume he has more than one," he muttered as they kept walking. He wondered briefly where the gun was, if John had it. "John, maybe we should just go back to the flat, do shopping another time," he said finally.

John paused, pulling Sherlock to a halt beside him and staring up at him. "You can go," he said, squeezing his hand. "Gun's wherever you left it. I really need to get this shopping done, love." He gave him a small smile, figuring that the Alpha running into him was just a coincidence.
Sherlock blinked a few times, looking at John. "I don't... you had the gun. And I'm not going anywhere without you I just... I want to go home," he said. "I want us to go home."

John sighed lightly, reaching up to comb through Sherlock's hair. "Alright, love. We can go home." He squeezed Sherlock's hand, turning around and leading him back toward the flat.

Sherlock let out a breath of relief, not sure where the anxiety had come from. Perhaps it was just so soon after bonding that did it? He nodded, pressing a small kiss to John's cheek. "Thank you," he murmured quietly, ears a little warm as they started home.

"You're welcome, love," John replied, smiling a little as he led Sherlock home. He kept his eyes out for any other Alphas that would be a potential threat, but he saw none. Pulling his keys from his pocket, he unlocked the door, pushing it open and gesturing Sherlock inside first before closing the door behind them.

Sherlock relaxed instantly when they arrived at the flat, stepping inside the familiar door and watching as John slid the locks into place. He sighed, wrapping his arms around John. "I can order takeaway, or even have groceries delivered. I don't care, it just didn't feel right," he said.

John returned the embrace, resting his forehead on Sherlock's shoulder. "We can get takeaway later," he murmured, pressing a kiss to Sherlock's neck before pulling away. "And you don't have to explain anything. It's fine, I promise."

Sherlock nodded a little. "Alright," he said quietly, smiling a small bit. He pulled away, turning to head up the stairs, stepping into the living room and hanging up his coat, pulling off his scarf. He winced as one of his bandages snagged on the fabric, and he reached up, peeling it off the rest of the way.

John crested the stairs and turned into the room to see Sherlock peeling off his bandage. "Guess I should put a new one on?" he mused, leaning up on his tiptoes to take a look at the mark. "It looks good though. Not red or swollen. That bruise looks a little touchy though." He smiled to himself, planting a kiss on Sherlock's cheek before he dropped back down on his heels.

Sherlock nodded. "Well you did put just about every disinfectant known to man on it, so I would be fairly shocked if it was infected." Sherlock said, reaching back to pull the bandage off of the back of his neck as well, hissing a little as it pulled at some of his hair.

John smacked at Sherlock's hand once it was away from his neck. "Those are supposed to stay on for at least another week, and that one wasn't coming off at all. I bit down pretty hard; they're not just skin wounds." He sighed, taking the bandages from Sherlock. "Go sit, please. I'll got grab some new bandages." He turned for the kitchen, tossing the old bandages into the bin and then continuing into the bedroom to retrieve the first aid kit.

Sherlock sighed, pacing the room a little as John walked away. He gingerly touched his neck again, glancing out the window as he did so. "They're fine," he breathed, watching outside. Mycroft was no doubt watching the flat, after what had happened. He looked at the blown out building across the street, the inside being cleaned out now. He sighed, still standing in front of the window, picking absently at a scab on the side of his neck.

John walked back into the room with a couple of bandages and a large amount of gauze, letting out a long breath when he saw Sherlock standing by the window. "Sherlock, love, no one's coming, alright? I'm fine, you're fine, everything's okay. So stop picking at your neck." He stepped up and took Sherlock's hand, leading him over to his chair and forcing him to sit down. "Now stop moving so that I can re-bandage these."
Sherlock furrowed his brow, falling back into his chair. He blinked a few times, still on edge. "They're fine," he said, shaking his head a little, looking at his hand, seeing a small bit of blood on his finger. He sighed, trying to stand again.

John pushed Sherlock down by his shoulders, firmly holding him there. "Sherlock Holmes, if you do not stay seated and let me treat these, so help me, I will walk out of that door and go get the groceries without you." He released Sherlock's shoulders, reaching for the bandages and hoping that he finally got through to him.

Sherlock looked up at John and narrowed his eyes a little, not letting the clench he felt in his chest show. "I'd just follow you," he said.

John shrugged. "Doesn't mean I wouldn't do it," he replied, setting strips of gauze over the mark on the back of Sherlock's neck and spreading the bandage over it. He then repeated the process on the other mark.

Sherlock sighed, wincing a little as the bandages were put in place.

John patted Sherlock's shoulder and stepped away. "Alright, commence pacing."

Sherlock stood up and did just that, chewing away at his lip. "I don't like not knowing. Drives me mad," he said, pulling out his phone and sending that message to Mycroft to have him look for Moriarty. "I almost wish something would happen at this point. Have the gun ready," he said, still pacing, practically wearing a hole in the ground. "I won't miss this time. I won't hesitate," he muttered, shaking his head.

John watched Sherlock warily, able to tell that he wouldn't be able to calm him down. He walked into the kitchen, starting the coffee pot and grabbing a banana from the hanging basket, though he still wasn't hungry. He chewed it rhythmically, leaning against the counter as he waited for the pot to finish.

Sherlock looked up when he smelled coffee, and stepped into the kitchen, leaning against the counter opposite John as he drummed his fingers on his arm. He let out a breath. "Half wish it was still my cycle... would have the distraction at least, hard to think when that happens," he said, thinking about another thing that made him stop thinking. He shook his head, scratching his arm.

"Patch!" Sherlock suddenly said, forgetting about it and striding into the living room, slapping two patches onto his arm. He sighed, scratching at his arm a little, his bruising going away now, though the scars remained.

John furrowed his brow worriedly, watching after Sherlock before he poured himself a mug of coffee and walked back into the living room, taking a seat in his chair and setting his mug on the table beside it. Making the coffee had mostly just been for something to do. "Did you ask Mycroft?" he asked, looking up at Sherlock where he was pacing.

Sherlock nodded, walking into the living room and sitting down in his chair. He sighed, fiddling with his fingers, running them along the faint scars on his wrists from the ropes almost a year ago. After a moment he sighed, getting up and climbing onto John's lap again without permission, feeling like he was sliding into place. He sighed, closing his eyes as he relaxed marginally. "I did... haven't heard anything yet. I'll know either way when he does," he murmured.

John was slightly stunned about Sherlock sliding onto his lap. He smiled a bit, wrapping his arms around Sherlock's waist and pulling him a little closer. "Hopefully he gets back to you soon," he murmured, nuzzling against Sherlock's temple and kissing down to his jaw.
Sherlock let out a breath. "He won't find anything, or the chances of him finding anything are unlikely. He was never found to be in charge of the auction house, or any of the other ones that have been shut down since with the new laws. Which means that whoever he is, it's more than just auction houses he's involved with. And people are afraid to pin him, which means he's dangerous," Sherlock said, swallowing thickly.

"Yes, well..." John sighed, cupping Sherlock's cheek and directing his gaze towards himself. "I'm only concerned about you and your safety. He's after you, for some reason, and he's playing with you." John stroked through Sherlock's hair, brushing it back from his face. "If he comes after you, I'll kill him."

Sherlock raised his eyes to John's, looking at him steadily. "And if he comes after you?" he asked softly, swallowing. The only reason he could see an Alpha wanting him was to take him for themselves. Though why he was so special he didn't know. The only thing he could think of was his mind and his connection to Mycroft. Which meant the only thing he could give the man was already taken. He reached up and touched his neck lightly.

"I'll kill him then, too," John replied, resting his hand gently over Sherlock's. "He's not going to separate us, love. Not if I can help it." He kissed Sherlock's forehead, holding his lips there for a long moment. "We'll be fine," he promised, tightening his arms around Sherlock's waist.

Sherlock nodded once, though he still felt a sense of unease. "You forgot the gun though... when we went out. If something had happened, I..." He silenced himself; worrying out loud did little to accomplish anything. He let out a breath, calming himself down some and leaning into John.

"But nothing did happen, right? We got back fine, we're both safe." He tucked Sherlock's head under his chin, gently rubbing his back and running his fingers along his arm. He rocked them both softly, closing his eyes. "Nothing's going to happen, alright? They would be stupid going after you. You have a brother who keeps track of you twenty-four seven, a brother-in-law who is a DI at NSY, and a bondmate who just came back from the war and doesn't blink at shooting people."

Sherlock nodded a little. He wasn't sure how to tell John that it wasn't really him he was worried about. He would try and keep himself safe because that would make John happy, but he'd do anything to keep John safe.

Sherlock let out a breath closing his eyes and resting his head against John's chest, hearing his heartbeat. "Right... both fine," he murmured, groaning when he heard his phone chirp. He tugged it out of his pocket.

_Nothing on Moriarty, but we think we tracked the Alpha from the flat. Followed his car CCTV might have picked up his face. Any of these look familiar, they're the closest match we have. MH [Attached Images]_
Sherlock froze, looking at the faces on his phone. The first few were similar, but not him. He lingered on the last one.

The fourth one. SH

Sebastian Moran... this gets us closer. MH

Sherlock kept looking at the picture, he had a name now... a name with a face.

"Everything alright?" John asked, his gaze flicking from the phone to Sherlock's face, studying them both as if trying to glean their deepest secrets. "Is that Mycroft finally getting back to you?" He traced his fingers from Sherlock's temple down to his jaw, trying to get him to relax. "What is it? What's wrong?"

Sherlock blinked a few times. "Nothing on Moriarty yet but.... Moran. Sebastian Moran. He was the one in the flat," he said, swallowing thickly. He turned the phone slightly to show John the picture.

John just barely managed to hold back a snarl at the picture, holding Sherlock tighter against him to the point where his grip was probably bruising. "I'm going to kill him. I am. It's just a question of when and how."

Sherlock winced a little, biting his lip when John squeezed him. Sherlock shook his head. "S'not him we need to worry about," he said, taking in a short breath, not able to take much of a deeper one with John's grip like it was. "Bit looser... be appreciated John," he said.

John blinked, looking down at Sherlock. "Sorry," he murmured, loosening his hold on him. "What do you mean we don't need to worry about him? He beat the hell out of me and came into our flat and nearly killed you. I'm a little worried about him."

Sherlock let out a breath, licking his lips. "Puppet does little without the Master pulling the strings," he said quietly, exiting out of the picture on his phone and starting a search. "And he wouldn't have killed me, even if I was standing by the door when he fired, it would have only hit my legs. He said his intent was to take me, but seeing as he didn't pursue me I can only assume he meant to frighten me first," he explained.

"And you don't think being shot in the legs is bad enough?" John asked, incredulous.

"Of course not, I merely meant that he wasn't going to kill me," Sherlock said, still tapping away on his phone.

John scrubbed at his face. "What are you searching?" He tried looking at the screen, but was unable to see anything from this angle.

"I'm searching him," Sherlock murmured. "Colonel Sebastian Moran, special forces sniper,
dishonourably discharged," he murmured. "Explains his reasonable confidence with a weapon and placement of the bullets he fired at the door."

John arched an eyebrow, tilting his head with curiosity. Another military man. "How long did he serve and when was he discharged?" he asked, wanting to know as much about him as possible. Strategically, he knew that the best way to take down the enemy was from the inside, and that meant knowing them.

Sherlock continued reading, typing in a new command now and then. "Seven years, signed on when he was a teenager. Reasons behind his discharge aren't on record, can't find it anywhere, but it was three years ago," he said.

"Probably got trigger happy," John mused, absently running his fingers through Sherlock's hair. "Do you think he knew Moriarty before he was discharged, or do you think he was recruited by him after?"

Sherlock hummed a little. "Perhaps... the amount of dedication suggests what could be childhood closeness, but it could also indicate another relationship. Recruitment seems more likely, though. Special Forces Alpha, with no qualms for killing. Could be just what Moriarty needs," he mused.

John shuddered a little. "What the hell does this guy do? Obviously he's not just in the Omega auction business; he wouldn't need a killer for that, would he?" The thought that they could be pulled into something bigger worried John immensely, and he fought to tamp down his fear.

Sherlock was quiet for a moment, lost in thought. "He's busy, the auctions were only a portion of his business. Perhaps not even his, if he helped in the trafficking then perhaps he got a cut. With more and more of the houses being shut down that could be putting a dent into his business, and is looking for areas to branch out into more," he said.

Sherlock glanced at John. "After the raid in the auction house I was in, NSY spontaneously started to inspect more of them, got a governmental grant to do so," he said, knowing Mycroft played a hand into that. "Because of me, they're being shut down... and because of you, for letting me have the chance to," he said.

John stared at Sherlock for a moment, his stomach twisting. "So that's why he's coming after us? Because we're shutting down a portion of what he does?" He made a face, shaking his head and gently nudging Sherlock off of his lap, needing to move. He paced in circles around the room, stuffing his hand in his hair and clenching his fist for a moment before he let go with a sharp huff, pacing over to the window and glaring at the sky as if it had personally offended him.

Sherlock was quiet for a moment again. "Not you, John," he said, shaking his head. "This type of man, who deals in the subjugation of Omegas, he wouldn't want a compassionate Alpha, no... it would be the Omega that wasn't intimidated," he said, knowing that if he played things right, John would be okay. "Most in my position wouldn't have said anything, would have been too afraid to. I nearly was... and that's me. I wanted to start a row with an Alpha while we were out, you saw."

John turned around, his arms crossed over his chest. "Well he's not getting you. You're mine, and I'm not in the habit of sharing." He looked away, taking a deep breath to stamp down his possessiveness. "I'm not letting him take you from me," he finally said, his voice a little smaller. "I'm not losing you. Not when I just got you back."

Sherlock looked down, nodding a little. "I know I'm yours," he said quietly, letting out a breath. "And I don't want to go anywhere; I want it to be just us, and not have to worry about this," he said softly.
John smiled a little, looking down at the floor. "Then that's the way it's going to be. Just the two of us." He wasn't sure how they were going to manage that, what with them being hunted by a trained killer and a psychopath, but he was sure as hell going to fight to keep Sherlock at his side.

Sherlock smirked a small bit, sighing slightly. "Alright so..." he looked up at John, "did... did we want to try shopping again? Perhaps with the gun this time? Might make me feel a bit better," he said quietly.

John grinned up at Sherlock, walking forward and wrapping his arms around his waist. "Alright," he agreed, nuzzling against his shoulder for a moment and breathing him in. "But I'm going to give it to you, okay? I'll have my knife. I'd rather you have the best means of protection."

"Best is really in terms of who can use it the best," Sherlock pointed out. "Though I haven't really had much experience with knives," he admitted. He scented John's neck a little, then nodded. "Alright then," he said.

John hummed, backing off to go get his gun, checking to make sure that the clip was full, then slid his knife into his pocket and walked back into the living room.

"Here," John said, handing Sherlock the butt of the gun. He moved to stand behind him, pressed close against his back, his arms lining up with the Omega's and his hands resting over both of Sherlock's on the gun. "I'm assuming you've shot before, but this one's a bit different from most 9 mils. You have to hold it with a teacup grip, or you won't be able to sight properly. She's fussy, my gun," he explained a little fondly. "Big kick on her, too, so when you're sighted, keep your head a little to the side, because she'll come back to here." John pulled the gun up to just about Sherlock's nose. "Let it kick that far. If you stiffen your arms shooting her, you'll miss, guaranteed."

Sherlock held still as John directed his arms, instructing him on how to use his gun. He swallowed, letting out a breath as he felt John standing behind him. He nodded. "Seems simple enough," he said, flicking the safety and shoving it into the back of his trousers, under his coat. He looked at John, "You're good with that knife, yes?" he asked.

John arched his eyebrow, deciding not to show off. "Yeah, I'm good with it," he replied plainly, almost itching to use the blade that he hadn't touched since he came back from the desert. "I bloody better be. I practiced on it for a good three weeks before I could throw it accurately." He smoothed Sherlock's coat over the gun, making sure it was completely hidden, before he moved towards the door. "Alright, come on then."

Sherlock nodded, following John to the door and then passing him down the steps.

John locked up the flat and then followed Sherlock, who was on-edge enough for the both of them.

They stepped outside and started down the sidewalk, Sherlock glancing around the whole time. "I know it's a short walk, but we could... take a cab... if you want," he said.

"I don't mind taking a cab," John shrugged, stepping up to the edge of the street and flagging one down. He held the door open for Sherlock, smiling over at him as he slid in behind the Omega. "Everything's alright," he promised, reaching over for Sherlock's hand.

Sherlock slid into the cab, fingers drumming on the seat. He looked down when he felt John's hand cover his, giving his fingers a small squeeze. "Of course it is," he said, adjusting his scarf a little and giving John a small smile.

The cab ride was short-lived, and John paid the cabbie before sliding out, waiting for Sherlock to
join him on the pavement. He linked fingers with him for a moment, giving him a reassuring smile, before he released his hand and led the way into the store. He stiffened for a moment when he noticed how busy it was, not remembering that it was, of course, just after the work day – the time when most people did their shopping. Sighing, he grabbed a cart and pushed it forward, glancing over his shoulder at Sherlock.

Sherlock followed along with John as they walked into the store, scanning his eyes over the crowd as John pulled out their list. He grabbed things from the shelf, tossing them into the cart, eyes still moving. He let out a breath, watching as a small child raced past them with a bag of sweets, proceeding to beg his parents for them.

John saw the little boy too, and his eyes softened at the sight for a moment. He smiled to himself, reaching out to brush his knuckles with Sherlock's, smiling up at him. "Will you finish in this isle? I think there are still a couple more items we need from here. I'm going to go grab the creamer and eggs." He reached up to cup Sherlock's cheek for a short moment. "Don't worry, the crowd's too large. Even if he was here, he wouldn't try anything with so many witnesses."

Sherlock nodded a little. "Yes, but… well it's not as if we can't just get it later," he said, knowing he was being unreasonable. He sighed. "Okay, just hurry with them yes?"

John smiled. "I just want to get home sooner. I'll be right back." He turned to go, then turned back and kissed Sherlock chastely. "Love you," he whispered, pulling away and walking quickly towards the refrigerated section of the store.

John had the creamer in hand and was heading towards the eggs when he felt something prick his neck, like a bug bite. But when he reached up to feel what it was, he was met with what was obviously a needle. He pulled it out, stumbling sideways a little into one of the freezers.

"Tranquiliser?"

"Nice to see you again, Dr Watson," a deep voice whispered in his ear at the same time a strong arm wrapped around his torso, guiding him forward a couple of steps. John tried to resist, to say something, to call out for Sherlock, to reach for his knife, but his motor functions weren't working very well. The voice spoke up again, cheerfully telling concerned strangers that they were friends, that John was sick.

He was going to be if he didn't pass out first.

The man – Sebastian, his mind supplied from somewhere fuzzy – pulled him through an employee door to a loading dock, and that was when John blacked out, slumping in the strong grasp of the other Alpha.

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Sherlock calculated the distance to the freezer section and accounted for the crowds as he grabbed the last few things. John should have been back by now. He quickly pushed through the people around him. He was just in the refrigerated section when he saw it – a dropped bottle of cream.

Sherlock felt his stomach drop, eyes scanning about, not seeing John. He spotted an employee door, only place they could have gone if John was incapacitated. He quickly ran through it and down the hallway, past crates, running towards what could only lead to a loading bay.

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"Johnnyyyyy."
John groaned at the irritatingly cheery voice, trying to fight off coming awake. His mind was too fuzzy, and he didn't want to get dizzy. He heard an irritated sigh and a sharp snap.

"Seb, be a doll and wake him up for me. Call me when he's thinking." The sharp clip of dress shoes met John's ears, and then the slam of a door and he was out again.

"Hey!" There was a sharp slap to his cheek, and John pulled his eyes open with a groan to find a very rugged, masculine face right next to him. A hand slid into his hair, fingers tightening and pulling his head back. "Hello, Dr Watson," Sebastian smiled, his teeth glinting off of the few white lights that were in the room.

Sebastian stared hungrily at the young doctor's face, tightening his fingers in John's hair. His boss wanted Sherlock, that stupid Omega that had been causing them so much trouble, but Seb... he had his eyes on forcing this Alpha to bend to his will. "The Army looks good on you," he said, not pulling away in the slightest, watching John's eyes slowly lose their glassy glaze left over from the tranquiliser.

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Sherlock's stomach dropped when he was met with the empty loading bay. No John. He felt himself on the edge of panic and being sick, but he shoved all of that aside. He thought for a moment. How far could they have gotten? Really though, in a car, they could be anywhere, but they wanted Sherlock, so closer was likely.

There was nothing left for it. He sent a message to Mycroft, telling him that John had been taken and where from. Hopefully that would turn up something, but until then... he pulled up John's number.

*Give him back. SH*

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John raised his head to Sebastian, locking his jaw. He was determined not to speak, no matter what.

"Aww," Sebastian grabbed John's chin, tilting his head and studying him. "Cat got your tongue? I could help with that," he whispered, leaning forward and ghosting his lips across John's.

John twisted his head away, the motion painful with the grip Sebastian had on him. The fingers in his hair tightened, jerking his head back and exposing his neck.

"Keep resisting, doctor, please. So much hotter."

John fought not to gag, his heart racing at the implications the other Alpha was leading up to.

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Sherlock thought, and thought, finally getting a message from Mycroft, an address where John's phone gave off a signal last, though it appeared to be off now. He knew where that was near, and he knew where they'd be.

Sherlock took a cab to a few blocks away, then slowly approached the auction house. He took the gun out, listening at the door and hearing the voices. He was on edge, but focused, as he rounded it, holding the weapon out and training it on the blonde that was gripping tightly onto John's face on the stage.

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John jerked his head to the side, pulling at the ties that bound him to the chair. He took in Sherlock standing in the doorway, so close, yet so far. He wasn't sure if he was happy to see him or not, knowing that Moriarty was somewhere nearby.

"Jim! Your date is here!" Sebastian called, combing his fingers through John's hair, reveling in the tremble that coursed through the small doctor's frame. He smirked down at him for a moment, wondering what hell he was remembering from the desert that was making him shudder so much at this.

Sherlock took a few steps forward. "Don't touch him!" he said, trying to sound more forceful as he kept the gun trained on Moran. "Step back, Moran!" he said, swallowing thickly. "You know I'll shoot you; I won't hesitate this time," he said, his voice wavering slightly as he took in the man's stance, and what he'd heard.

So he was one of those Alphas... who liked the fight in other Alphas, sought to break them as well. Liked it, and didn't bother with Omegas. He narrowed his eyes. "One more time and I swear..."

The blond's fingers weaved once more through John's hair and Sherlock squeezed the trigger, the gun kicking back as the bullet flew towards Moran and buried itself in his leg.

John flinched as Moran screamed for a moment in pain, the noise still too raw and familiar from his time in the Afghan desert. The noise cut off, replaced by whimpers and grunts, and John chanced only a quick glance at the Alpha who was trying to put a stop to his blood gushing out of his femoral artery.

John looked over at Sherlock, his eyes wide. He wanted to ask if he had aimed at Sebastian's leg, if he had meant to let him bleed to death. He wasn't sure what he would do if that was what Sherlock had meant to do. Because killing a man was one thing in the right situation, but he couldn't imagine much worse than slowly bleeding out, feeling your life slip through your fingers. He shuddered, the thought hitting too close to home.

Sherlock stood stunned for a moment before moving over to them, reaching down and pulling the firearm off of the Alpha, and the knife in his boot. He looked down at the sheer amount of blood and knew what would happen. He stood there for a moment, and couldn't find it in himself to have pity for him.

Sherlock turned to John, looking him over. "Are you okay?" he asked, looking at John's eyes, still somewhat sluggish looking from the drugs no doubt. John wouldn't have gone willingly otherwise.

John blinked rapidly, swallowing forcefully and nodding slowly. "Yeah, yeah I think so," he murmured, his voice sounding a little wrong even to his own ears.

Sherlock set to work on the ropes holding John, setting down the gun to pick up Moran's knife, cutting at them.

John brought his hands forward when Sherlock cut them free. He winced, gritting his teeth against the sharp stinging numbness that came with the sudden blood flow back to his fingers. He was glad Sherlock had the gun, because he most certainly couldn't use one at the moment.

"Good, because we're leaving," Sherlock said, hauling John to his feet after freeing those as well. He looked down at Moran, who was pale already, not even strong enough to keep pressure on the wound. Sherlock blinked once, then started walking away, taking the gun back up in hand as he helped John away. He was hoping Moriarty had just run off now that his gunman lay dying, but then... one didn't know. And he wanted out of there.
John leant heavily on Sherlock, far more affected by the tranquiliser than he had thought while sitting in the chair. He swore quietly, his fingers digging into Sherlock's coat as his knees refused to work, his side burning like a mad bastard. "Sherlock, I can't," he whispered, slipping in his hold. "I can't." The sound of a door opening behind them caught his attention, and he twisted to see a black haired Alpha walk towards him.

"Poor Johnny boy can't even walk," Jim tutted softly, shaking his head. "Guess Seb went a little crazy on the tranquiliser." He looked down at Moran lying on the ground, almost dead, and ignored him. "And Sherlock!" He clAPPED his hands together, walking forward another couple of steps. "How very nice to finally meet you." He waved, wiggling his fingers like a little kid. "James Moriarty. Hi!"

Sherlock turned around, the gun up again, but with his left hand, the other holding up John. He narrowed his eyes a little, John growing heavier on his arm. "Not sure why it took so long. I've been here a year, where were you?" he asked, wetting his lips a little.

"Playing with you, of course!" Jim put his thumbs in the pockets of his trousers, glancing down at Moran as he gave a last shuddering breath and died. "Good riddance, incompetent fool," he muttered lazily, kicking the dead man off the stage and ignoring the crunch his body made as it landed hard on the floor.

Sherlock looked over at Moran, watching as Moriarty carelessly kicked him off the stage. "Pity that...I think he rather loved you. Had a thing for Alphas apparently," Sherlock said, straightening himself up a bit, though he still kept his arm around John.

"Oh, but our games have been fun, haven't they? Unfortunately, though, playtime's over, Sherlock. Daddy's had enough nowwwww."

John shuddered at the malicious gleam in the other Alpha's eyes, the wrong tinge that mixed into his scent. He made a small noise, trying to pull himself up farther and stand on his own, knowing Sherlock wasn't as accurate with his off-hand – few people were. He noticed that Moriarty was weaponless, though. Tactical advantage. "What's..." he winced, swallowing down a groan, "what's keeping us from leaving? You're unarmed... we... we could just walk out."

"Quite done with the games myself, though John strikes a good point. We could just leave, and we will," he said, taking a few steps back, John still at his side. His heart was hammering in his chest, but he kept his expression stern.

Jim laughed, loud and perhaps a little manic. But wasn't that everything he strived to be? "Not so fast, you poor, poor idiot." His eyes drifted up and then to John, where three red sniper dots were fixated on his head. "If you thought Moran was my only gunman, you were WRONG!" He balled his hands into fists, tired of playing games with people that were so below him.

John jumped at the sharply raised voice, his hand tightening around Sherlock's coat. It hurt, but it was one thing he could do... hold on. "Sherlock..." he whispered, "why is he looking at me like that?" Like a lioness stalking her prey.

Sherlock turned his gaze to John and felt his stomach drop. He swallowed, wetting his lips. He hesitated, his grip around John tightening for a moment. He looked at Moriarty. "What do you want?" he asked. "What is it you want with me?" He trembled slightly once, then let go of John. "Just... let him leave. And I'll go with you," he said quietly.

John practically fell to his knees when Sherlock released him, his legs unable to support him without help. "Sherlock!" he snapped, reaching up for his hand and missing. He tried to will his mind to clear
so that he could react, but it was impossible to force drugs from a person's system. "Don't you dare!"


Sherlock licked his lips, glancing down at John for a second before adjusting his scarf. He let the gun clatter to the floor of the stage, ignoring the tug he felt at John needing help, and at John telling him not to. He had to, wasn't that obvious? He knew he had his phone, he just had to give Mycroft time. "John... go. Crawl if you have to," he said, taking out a tenner from his wallet. "Get a cab and... and go.. just go see your family, you still have an in-law to talk to," he said, hoping John understood to talk to Mycroft, though he implied Clara.

"Sherlock, please," John begged, not able to raise his head to look up at him. "Please don't leave me. What do you expect me to do without you?"

Jim sighed dramatically, stepping forward the last couple of metres and yanking Sherlock forward. "Very touching, Johnny, but Sherlock's mine now." He had stepped away, crossing the stage with Sherlock willingly in tow, when the scent hit his nose. He froze, spinning around to Sherlock and backing him up to the nearest wall, scenting his neck. "No," he growled. "You bloody BASTARDS!" He let his composure slip for three seconds before he calmed with the flip of a switch. "Fine." He knew how to break a bond. "So sorry, nice meeting you Johnny. Kill him!" He yelled at the snipers situated above them.

As soon as Sherlock felt Jim freeze he knew what was wrong, their bond. It took him only a second to know what his next move would be. He shoved roughly at Jim as he kicked out one of his knees, dashing towards John with a shout and tackling him off of the stage as shots rang out, John's gun clattering to the ground next to them. Sherlock felt a searing pain on his upper right shoulder, closer to his neck than was probably considered healthy, but he ignored it. He scrambled for John's gun and leant up over the stage to shoot at Jim.

Jim laughed, ducking behind a doorway before Sherlock had got a proper shot off. He waved teasingly and then calmly went on his way, knowing he had plans to make now.

John's breath wasn't coming into his lungs properly, and he realised it was more than likely shock causing it. He was alive though, because why, if he was dead, would he be experiencing shock. Something warm and wet trickled down his temple, and he knew before he had raised his fingers that it was blood. He assessed with just the barest brushing of the tips of his fingers. Graze along the side of his head. Trigger-happy snipers. Probably a new guy. He looked up at Sherlock, rolling over and then pushing himself into an unsteady sitting position. "Please tell me you killed that mani– Sherlock, you're bleeding." He stared at the wound on his shoulder, grabbing Sherlock's hand and pulling him down beside him.

Sherlock blinked a few times, eyes moving up but not seeing the snipers, probably cleared out with their master. His heart was hammering in his chest and he stood there, stunned for a moment before he looked down, seeing the hole in his coat and the red staining it. He fell to the floor when John tugged on him, his knees giving out. He blinked, feeling warmth move down his front and back – through and through, then. "Mm... my coat..." was all he could think to say, not able to think much else.

John swore, catching Sherlock against him as best as he could, reaching into his pocket for his phone as he fought to support them both. He dialled 999, trapping the mobile between his head and shoulder while he pressed his hands to both sides of Sherlock's wound. Too low for the subclavian artery, thank god. He yelled at the woman who picked up, watching the awareness level in Sherlock's eyes, relieved when he didn't close his lids or fade out or pull back into his mind. "One
ambulance, two stretchers," he demanded, not stupid enough to think he was fine. He dropped the phone, not bothering with hanging up.

"You're an idiot," John whispered, putting as much pressure as he could on Sherlock's shoulder, ignoring the blood running through his fingers.

Sherlock jerked a little at the pressure, realising a moment later that he was shaking... interesting. He swallowed, a small cry escaping as John seemed to press harder. "S-stop... stop it..." he whined, weakly trying to wriggle out of the pinned grasp. His head held felt light and he blinked rapidly, breath hitching slightly.

"I'm not... would have killed you... re-rebonded me... god knows... what else," Sherlock worked out, looking at John. He swallowed again, already hearing sirens, the auction house not far from the hospital. "S-still... don't like hos...hospitals," he said a little slower, starting to feel tired.

"Hey!" John shook him, wincing internally, because he knew what kind of pain that was. "Stay awake. They're probably just outside of the door."

A strangled cry escaped Sherlock when John shook him, and he recoiled a bit, trying to curl away from John.

John gritted his teeth, his arms already weakening from exerting so much effort on such little strength. "Buggering fuck," he muttered to himself, dipping his head down for a moment and gasping deeply, trying to get more oxygen into a system that was desperately lacking it. "You're going to be fine," he murmured, leaning forward to kiss Sherlock. He heard the door open, and, though he couldn't see if it was friend or foe, yelled for their help.

Sherlock whimpered when he heard other voices, and he felt another set of hands on him, feeling John's get pulled away. He realised then that his eyes were closed, pulling his head away when each eye was forced open and a blindingly bright light was shone into it. He gasped as more pressure than he thought was possible was put onto his shoulder, before he was lifted up onto something. He struggled weakly, confused, and terrified. Where was John? He felt a small stab into his arm, and heard shouting as it all just sort of blinked away, all the noise and sensation disappearing at once.

John whimpered when Sherlock was pulled out of his hands, but he let him go, knowing that he needed treatment as soon as possible. He let himself get loaded onto the stretcher, snapping at the responder who tried to inject him with anaesthetic, knowing it would potentially kill him with what was already in his system. He didn't make any complaints as he was loaded in beside Sherlock, an IV being stuck into both of their arms. He reached over for Sherlock's hand, having to remind himself that it was limp because he was under anaesthesia. Pressure was applied to his head and his side throbbed, and he forced himself to pass out when the urge rose.

The ride to the hospital was a short one, and Sherlock's stretcher was taken out first, pushed down the halls, the nurses telling John that he needed a bit of surgery just to close things up, make sure it was sound.

John had roused as soon as the ambulance had stopped, barely listening to the nurses as he watched Sherlock being led away. All he could think was that Sherlock was going to have a scar now, too. Just not quite as big as his, not as consuming thanks to the smaller calibre bullet.

John was led to a room straightaway, Mycroft already there, watching as they worked on John, getting him something in his IV to counteract the drugs in his system. "We're on this John...my people were already on their way when you called, which is why they got there so much quicker," he said, looking tired almost. He looked at his phone, letting out a breath. "Sherlock will be fine; I'm
leaving here to go check on their progress. He'll be sent here for recovery and I'm sure you'll stay," he said with a nod. "You've every right after all..." he said, looking up at him. "I was harsh with you before, but know that I was only looking for his best interests. I worry about him... constantly. And now you, apparently. You'll both be under surveillance. When you leave, the flat will be watched. You won't see us... and pay us no mind. Our only hope of catching him is if he gets close again, and we will be prepared this time," he said, giving John a small nod.

John was nothing if not pissed as all hell when he was being stitched up. That's how he dealt with pain on his own. Just get angry about it, the adrenaline that built up blocking most of the pain. He listened to Mycroft, though, paying close attention to his words. He returned the nod the elder Holmes had given him, barely managing an all-encompassing 'thank you' before Mycroft left the room, leaving him alone with the nurses to finish his stitches and to realign his rib, which was pressing uncomfortably against his lung.
Chapter 7

It was a couple hours later when Sherlock was rolled into the room, and the nurses set to adjusting his drip and monitors. Along with his IV and morphine drip, there was a second one with a pint of crimson-coloured blood hanging to replace what he'd lost.

It was another couple hours before Sherlock started to come to, his breathing picking up a little as the fingers on his left hand flexed slightly and he groaned.

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John had slipped off to sleep as soon as the nurses had left, knowing he would need it for when Sherlock woke up. He promised himself only two hours, but with his internal clock having been abandoned for a while and no alarm set, he had no way to wake up.

He jerked awake nearly four hours later, screaming out Sherlock's name, gripping the sheets in tight fists. He gulped down cold hospital air as his body shook down from the nightmare, his rib arguing at the sudden movement. He glanced over to his left, surprised to see Sherlock there, looking startled awake but still under a few effects of anaesthesia. "Sorry," John murmured, sinking back down onto the mattress, knowing it wouldn't take too long for a nurse to rush in and check on them.

Sherlock was barely starting to wake up when he heard the shout, jerking awake and gasping a bit at the pain in his shoulder. He looked over to see John, blinking stupidly as he tried to remember where he was. A nurse came in quickly, looking over the two of them, and determining Sherlock as the one to help first. She gave him the whole spiel about where he was, what had happened. Saying something about a very clean wound, through and through, minimal damage. She then showed him his little morphine button, which he clicked quickly in hopes it would work.

The nurse then moved to John, checking on his side and drip. "Should be mostly out of your system now love," she said, unhooking John's IV gently. "Can give you something for pain, but you're free to go when you wish," she said.

John snorted, still on the edge of his nightmare. "I'm not going anywhere. Can I keep the bed for tonight?" he asked, and when he got a nod of approval, he slid off the edge of the bed, walking over and pulling up a chair beside Sherlock.

John winced at the reminiscence to the second day they had been together, when John had forced Sherlock to the hospital for his stomach. "Hurts, doesn't it?" he asked, gazing worriedly at Sherlock's opposite shoulder, taking his hand and stroking his knuckles. "I wish you weren't going through this right now," he murmured, brushing his fingers through Sherlock's hair.

Sherlock wet his lips a little, blinking slowly. He nodded, biting his lip. "Mm... Morphine, s'not enough anymore," he said slowly. "Just... takes edge off," he murmured. "The cocaine abuse... makes it less... effective," he said quietly. He swallowed, looking at John, squeezing his fingers weakly.

John closed his eyes, laying his torso on the edge of the bed and hugging Sherlock's arm to his chest. "I'm so sorry, love. I'm so sorry." He wasn't going to cry, he wasn't. That's not what Sherlock needed right now. He rested his hand on Sherlock's chest, nuzzling against his palm and kissing his wrist. "I'll talk to the doctor about the pain, but the best way to fix it is mentally. Just try to forget about it."

Sherlock hummed. "'m working on it," he murmured quietly, looking at John. He saw his stitches
and blinked a couple times. "You... got hurt," he said slowly. "What's the point of taking..." he trailed off, mumbling incoherently but obviously annoyed in his drugged state, "...get hurt anyway?" he said.

John sighed, running his fingers over Sherlock's chest, then reaching up to comb his hair. "I'm fine. It doesn't hurt that bad. Just a small graze." He smiled teasingly up at Sherlock. "I'm pretty sure you broke my rib, though, when we fell off the stage."

Sherlock let out a small breath of a laugh. "Better than a bullet in the skull though... right?" he asked, ghost of a grin on his face. "Broken rib... s'not the worst... you've had... Captain," he said.

John grinned, leaning up to kiss Sherlock's forehead. "No, not the worst," he agreed, his lips brushing over Sherlock's skin. "You should rest, love," he murmured, pulling back to brush their noses together. "I'm not leaving, don't worry. Just going to go ask for some painkillers and then I'll sleep too."

Sherlock hummed lightly, his eyes fluttering shut already. "Mm... alright. Don't leave... could be anywhere," he mumbled softly. He swallowed thickly, pressing at his morphine button, though he knew it wouldn't give him any more until the set time had passed. Could he have moved, he would have set it himself.

"Not right now," John assured him. "Mycroft says he's keeping an eye on us. Which I'm fine with until we're safe." He squeezed Sherlock's hand again before leaving the room to track down a nurse. He got some painkillers from her and asked her to change the timeframe on Sherlock's morphine drip. She followed him back to the room and complied, then left after John thanked her.

"Go to sleep now, Sherlock," he murmured, lying down on his bed and falling asleep.

Sherlock heard the nurse talking quietly to John, feeling her warm hand move over his to make him press his button. A moment later the pain started to ebb away more to where it was more ignorable and he let out a slow breath, slipping unconscious soon after.

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It was a week before they even started to consider letting Sherlock go, though it would be another three days before they unhooked him entirely. He felt good considering he'd been shot, even able to move his arm some. He really had lucked out with the placement of the bullet, barely tore some muscle, and didn't touch bone. He was going half mad being in there, would have gone completely mad if it wasn't for the painkillers, and having John there. John didn't leave, and the hospital didn't ask him to; which was probably Mycroft's doing since no one once asked John to free up the extra bed. Mycroft had also seen to have some of Sherlock's clothes delivered that weren't covered in blood, as well as a replacement coat, exactly the same as his old one. And Sherlock had thought Mycroft beyond that kind of sentiment, though it was appreciated.

Sherlock was sitting up on his bed now, carefully buttoning up a shirt as he looked at John. "Soon as we're back, we're ordering some proper food. I've had enough jelly for a lifetime," he mumbled.

John laughed, running his fingers through Sherlock's hair. His rib was mostly healed and didn't bother him anymore, he just had to be sure not to do anything that could harm it again, because it was a weak spot and would snap easily for at least another week. His head was on the mend – didn't need a bandage anymore and the stitches were out. It was scarred, and his hair there wouldn't grow back for a while, but he was fine with that. "Thai Thai place down on Baker Street, how 'bout? Haven't had that in a good long while. We can just have a lie in tonight, watch some films or something."
Sherlock nodded a little. "I want to play my violin," he said with what could only be described as a pout. He moved his arm gingerly. He'd be able to hold the instrument, but not for long enough, even for a short song.

Sherlock sighed, finishing with his shirt. He looked down at his sock clad feet. "You mind helping with those?" he asked, nodding to his shoes. "Hate to ask..." he mumbled quietly, ears a little warm. He didn't like being helpless, in any respect, really. Not when it came to lacing up shoes; he'd done that since he was four.

"Don't make a habit of getting shot if you want to keep playing your violin," John said, hopping from the bed and snatching up Sherlock's shoes. "No matter what your reasons may be," he said levelly, flicking his gaze up to Sherlock. It had been bothering him, what had happened at the auction house. He just didn't want to bring it up, figuring to leave a sleeping dog lie.

With a soft sigh, John slowly did up Sherlock's shoes, trailing his fingertips over his ankles and up to his calves while he did it, trying to get the Omega to stop feeling so self-conscious and helpless.

"Wasn't planning on it," Sherlock muttered quietly, closing his eyes a bit at the touch on his legs. He sighed. "Though if I'd been shot anywhere else other than my arms and shoulders I could still play," he pointed out.

John snapped his eyes up at that comment, his jaw tightening for a moment. But he didn't say anything.

Sherlock looked over and saw the nurse bringing in a wheelchair and sighed once more. This again. Swallowing, he stood up, carefully manoeuvring over and sitting down into the chair. "Mycroft will no doubt have a car for us," he said, knowing he would.

"Yeah, I suppose he will have," John commented, taking the wheelchair from the nurse and pushing Sherlock from the room. Paperwork was already done – he had taken care of that earlier.

"Here, come on. They're being ridiculous." John stopped the wheelchair at the edge of the lobby, holding out his hand for Sherlock to take, helping him to his feet.

Sherlock sighed gently, standing up and keeping a grip on John's hand. He nodded, and they made their way to the door and outside. A black car was there, and Sherlock eyed the driver, recognising him. They both slid into the car and there was a black case there. Sherlock smirked, opening it and pulling out John's gun and knife. "Believe these are yours," he said with a small smile, before pulling out another gun. "Ah, and this one's mine," he said, running his hand over the glossy metal. "Don't have to share anymore."

John blinked kind of blankly at his weapons before he took them in hand, slipping the knife into his pocket and tucking the Browning into his waistband under his jacket. "SIG Sauer?" he asked, nodding slightly at Sherlock's gun. "It's nice. Nine plus one round capacity or twelve plus one?" he questioned, knowing that his own was the military fifteen plus one.

Sherlock took the clip out, looking at it. "Twelve, I think," he said, sliding it back into place as the car started pulling away. He gave the address of the Thai place that was close to the flat; they could just walk back. He swallowed, leaning up against John a little, his left shoulder against John's right.

John glanced over at Sherlock, examining the profile of his face. He was thinner now than he had been before, a week of eating crappy hospital food – or, in his case, rather refusing to eat the crappy hospital food – definitely taking its toll on his body. He smiled when Sherlock looked over at him, the dark bags under his eyes pulling more grey from his eyes than green or blue, the yellow splotches
standing out gold. *I love you*, he thought, trying to communicate the words through his eyes, a soft squeezing of his fingers.

Sherlock mirrored John's smile, returning the pressure on his fingers.

"I suppose he'll disappear for a little bit... Moriarty," Sherlock murmured quietly, taking a bottle out of his pocket and dry swallowing two pills. "He waited a year last time. He's patient." He sighed, looking out the window, knowing that they were being watched, though it was a comfort, he supposed. He'd felt safe when he was younger, knowing Mycroft was looking out for him, and the same kind of comfort returned. Though he wasn't falling off garden walls any longer, and Mycroft almost never spoke to him. Still, it was his way of caring, he supposed. And they kept that secret. "Means we can relax for a while."

John wasn't pleased at the mention of Moriarty, and he wanted to ignore the topic all together, act like nothing was said the way Sherlock sometimes did with a subject he didn't feel like discussing. "We can try to relax, at least," he half agreed. "I probably won't be doing much relaxing. Though I do feel a little better knowing we've got your protective old brother keeping an eye on us."

Sherlock hummed in agreement. "Yeah, feel a bit better," he said with a nod. He looked over at John. "Not quite what you were expecting coming home though, I'm sure. You ever wish you were back there?" he asked softly, knowing he was just causing trouble for John. At least there you knew more about your enemy, and you had everyone around you working for the same thing.

John furrowed his brow at the unexpected question, turning away from Sherlock to look out of his window. "That's a complicated question, Sherlock," he said quietly. "And there's a complicated answer behind it. And I don't think I'm quite ready to share all of those reasons with anyone just now."

Sherlock blinked a few times, looking at John still. He'd hoped that if John would tell anyone anything, it would be him. He looked down for a moment. "I see," he said. "Perfectly understandable," he added, moving towards the door when the car pulled to a stop. He got out, forcing himself to his feet on his own, standing outside the restaurant, waiting for John.

*Good one, John,* he thought to himself, thanking the driver and getting out after Sherlock. He pulled the door open for him, following after as he walked into the restaurant. He found a booth along the wall, all of the tables in the middle occupied.

Sherlock followed John to the circular booth and slid into it, picking up a menu and glancing over it. He reached up and gingerly touched the mark on the side of his neck. He hadn't had bandages on them for a few days now, mostly healed over though still a little bruised. He smiled softly, his stomach feeling slightly out of sorts, though he ignored that, just like he ignored the constant throb of pain in his shoulder. He just needed the edge off, and the rest he could deal with.

John followed Sherlock's hand as he touched the mark on his neck, his gaze softening quite a bit. He didn't look at the menu, having a favourite and not willing to change. The waitress stopped by with a kind smile, asking for drink orders and if they were ready to order food. He glanced over at Sherlock, who shrugged in indifference. John ordered his meal, smiling at the waitress and thanking her.

Sherlock ordered a small dish, handing back the menu with a small nod and a murmured thanks. He let out a breath, glancing up at John. He smiled a little, then looked down at his hands where he fiddled with a fork on the table. He leant heavily against the back of the booth, rubbing his chest a little before resuming playing with the utensil.
"You okay?" John asked, cocking his head and watching Sherlock closely. He was on edge still, jumpy at everything that he deemed unusual or out of place. He reached out for Sherlock's hands, running his thumbs over his knuckles and looking up at him, knowing that worry was tingling his eyes.

Sherlock looked at John's hand, then up at John with a nod. "Yes of course. Apart from my shoulder, I feel fine. Feel a bit out of sorts, but I probably just picked something up at the hospital. Possible of course, the nurses see so many people. Probably just a bug," he said with a small smile.

"Alright," John gave him a weary smile, knowing his logic was sound but still unable to stop himself from worrying. "How bad does your shoulder hurt?" he asked quietly, glancing over at it as if he could see the wound through his layers of clothing.

Sherlock thought about that for a moment. "About a seven... on a scale of ten. Maybe a six. I try not to think about it," he said, nodding at the waitress as she brought their meals and drinks. He smiled a little at John. "It's fine, really. You went without for a month in the desert, and I went to hospital straight away. It's nothing, really..." he said, taking up his fork again to poke at his food.

"That's not the same thing," John argued, though not forcefully. He picked up his fork, eating a bit of the pasta dish and taking a sip of his water. "You should eat, love. A couple of bites, at least," he commented, gesturing with his fork to the meal Sherlock had ordered.

Sherlock nodded, stabbing up a bit of chicken on his plate and eating slowly. He hummed a little. "Definitely better than the hospital," he said with a small smile. He swallowed, looking at John. "You mentioned watching films, why not that one... the one you watched when it was on last week while we were in the hospital. Granted, I was pretty drugged. What was it... Doctor something or other... I'm assuming it's on every week?" he asked, hoping to make some kind of normal conversation.

"Doctor Who, you mean? Honestly I can't believe you've never heard of it. I grew up watching that show." John ate a little more, setting his fork down for a moment, knowing they weren't in a rush. "Yeah, it's on once a week. Reruns are on most nights, though."

Sherlock shrugged with his uninjured shoulder. "My parents didn't... well we didn't have a telly growing up. They believed there were more worthwhile things to occupy our time and engage ourselves with," he said. "We had a library. Suppose it's still there actually, but I haven't been to the manor since... since it happened," he said.

"We could go visit it sometime. If... if you want to," John said, looking down at his plate for a moment, knowing they weren't in a rush. "Yeah, it's on once a week. Reruns are on most nights, though."

Sherlock blinked a few times, his brow furrowing a little. "Erm... yeah, we can," he said, waving at the waitress a little and asking for a couple boxes and a check. "Are you okay?" he asked quietly. "Can we just go home?" he asked not looking up at Sherlock. He felt small and stupid, and he just wanted to go home and watch telly, maybe fall asleep on the couch with Sherlock. He just didn't want to be here anymore.

Sherlock blinked a few times, his brow furrowing a little. "Erm... yeah, we can," he said, waving at the waitress a little and asking for a couple boxes and a check. "Are you okay?" he asked quietly. "Look, I'd like to go back to the manor sometime. I think... that I'm ready. And you'd be going too and I think you'd like it," he said, looking at John. "Really, it's fine," he repeated.

John glanced up at Sherlock, putting his food into one of the boxes and placing enough money on the table to cover their meals and a tip. "Yeah, I'm fine," he said, not commenting on anything else. He stood, waited for Sherlock to do the same, and then headed for the door, his box of food in hand. His mind wandered to the question Sherlock had asked him in the cab, and the more he thought about it as they walked, the more concerned he became.
Sherlock caught up with John, sliding his hand into John's. He smelled a sort of worry coming off of John and felt it settle heavily in his chest. He looked at John. "What is it?" he asked, narrowing his eyes. "Something's wrong, I can feel it," he said. "And my stomach is off enough without adding it on top of it," he said, keeping his gaze on John as they walked.

John shook his head. "It's nothing, Sherlock. Let it go." He stopped when they reached the flat, unlocking the door and stepping through. He went upstairs immediately, putting his food in the fridge and then returning to the living room to hang up his jacket and drop heavily onto the sofa.

Sherlock sighed, rolling his eyes as he let himself inside and hung up his coat, tossing his leftovers in the fridge as well.

"Alright, fine... one of those... tell me when you feel ready things," Sherlock said with a small nod. "I can... respect that," he said, letting out a breath. He looked at John, already feeling tired from the walk. He walked over to the sofa and sat down next to John, rather wanting to be held again, like he hadn't been before. Like he hadn't been able to in the hospital.

John instinctively turned his body so that his back was in the corner of the sofa, reaching his arms out and pulling Sherlock onto his lap. He held him loosely, his arms a protective cage around his slight frame. Resting his cheek atop Sherlock's head, John stared off at the fireplace, losing his mind for a moment as he blanked off.

Sherlock settled against John with a sigh, relaxing instantly and resting his hand on top of John's.

John drew in a long, shuddering breath. "The desert was... pure," he said quietly, so much so that he was barely heard.

Sherlock listened to the statement, trying to work through it. "Which makes London..." he led, wanting to hear John. Wanting to understand.

"London's dirty. Cluttered. Filled with impossibilities and people who don't give a damn about you. I can count on one hand the people who would miss me for a long time if I died here." John took a breath, still staring blankly across the room, lost in himself. He was just speaking, not reacting. "Out there, in the heat and the sun, it's just you. You and a team of seven others. You become a family – one single body that works together as such. There are people on the base that you interact with every day, people who know everything about you and who accept you for who you are and where you come from, holding no expectations except the 'watch my back and I'll watch yours.' There's purpose out there, a definite mission waiting for you every morning when you wake up. But there's no rhythm, so it keeps you sharp.

"But here..." John blinked, drawing in a ragged breath and then closing his eyes firmly, swallowing down his rising emotion. "Well, I've got you," he whispered, his broken voice reflecting how he felt. "And that makes up for it all. Balances everything on the edge of a blade."

Sherlock nodded slowly, listening to John. "I understand what you're saying, John. Just know that you have a purpose here, too, though," he said softly. He let out a breath, thinking. "Routine... perhaps, well... do you want to get a job or something? At a clinic maybe? Something that's expected, and you'd be helping people. And you wouldn't be cooped up with me all day," he said quietly.

"I've been thinking about it," John whispered, his eyes still stubbornly closed. "The biggest problem is that they'd have me tested for PTSD, because that's standard for a doctor fresh back from war. And I know that they would find it." He sighed, knowing, really, that he was just coming up with excuses. "I haven't even gone to see a therapist yet, though I said I was going to."
"Hasn't been time, no thanks to me," Sherlock said lightly, reaching up with his left hand and touching John's jaw. "You can though, someone good who won't treat you like some nutter or some fragile thing. And then... you get a job. If they'll be picky, Mycroft can take care of it. If you think... the routine will help," he said quietly.

John leant heavily against Sherlock's hand, closing his eyes tighter at the warmth and smell that radiated off of him. "The routine might be a pain in the arse, but I think the purpose might help." He finally opened his eyes, looking a bit helplessly at Sherlock. "But not tonight. Tonight, I'm with you."

Sherlock smiled, nuzzling gently against John. "Yes, you are. We're having a night in," he murmured quietly. "Maybe not what the doctor ordered, but it's what I've ordered," he said, pressing a small kiss to the corner of John's mouth. He let out a breath, his eyes shut as he relaxed against him. "Won't always be like this," he said. "I promise..." he murmured.

John dropped his head, kissing Sherlock properly, though gently, their lips moving softly together and going no further. "Why? I like this," he murmured teasingly, resting their foreheads together and brushing noses with Sherlock. "Just this, forever, would make me happy."

Sherlock half shrugged again. "I don't know, there are other things we could be doing were it not for the holes in me right now... but, another time maybe," he said with a small smile, determined to get John to do so as well. "And well... I could always just throw on some eyeliner later," he said.

John drew back, practically felt his eyes dilate as he stared at Sherlock. He wasn't sure he should give that a response, wanting to say god, yes and wanting to say not yet. Both of them were injured, Sherlock more so, and he knew they shouldn't be pushing it.

Sherlock blinked once, smirking a little. "Well that's something at least," he said, glad to have gotten some kind of reaction from him. "Really, John, it'll be fine. And don't worry, I haven't actually got any eyeliner just yet, so it would have to wait regardless," he said, pressing another kiss to his mouth. "But I bounce back quickly, even the nurse noted on my progress. I'm not going to let something as base and simple as an injury keep me from doing what I like for long," he said.

John smacked his good arm gently, a smile tugging his lips. "Don't tease about that, Christ." He ran a hand down his face, still smiling, and willing his heart to slow. He moved to kiss Sherlock again, one on each corner and one in the centre. "I just... sorry. I'm a doctor; can't help but worry."

"Well I wanted some kind of reaction out of you," Sherlock said with a smile. "And it's fine... your job to worry about me, I guess," he said, touching the marks on his neck as was his habit now. He blinked a few times, then got up. "Erm... excuse me," he said as he walked away down the hall, speeding up a little as he made it to the bathroom. His stomach flipped and he was sick in the toilet, coughing a little. He wiped at his mouth as he flushed the toilet with a sigh, moving to brush his teeth. Maybe it was just a reaction to being off his morphine drip or something, because he felt fine otherwise.

John was on his feet, walking to the bathroom and opening the door when he heard the toilet flush. He rested his hand on Sherlock's forehead, looking for a temperature but there wasn't one. "Come here," he said gently, tugging Sherlock after him when he was done brushing his teeth. He led him into the bedroom, sat him on the bed, and slowly worked off his shirt. "I'm going to check your shoulder, just to see if it's warm," he explained, gently resting his palm over the bandage. A bit warm.

Sherlock settled onto the bed with a sigh and his usual, "I'm perfectly fine, John."
John peeled back a corner of the bandage. *But not red.*

Sherlock winced as John pulled back his bandage a bit, looking at him. "See? Fine," he said, not even bothering to re-button his shirt. He stood up and slowly started to undress, pulling on some pyjama bottoms and another hole-riddled shirt. "Probably just a bug," he said indifferently, though he had a feeling it wasn't. He didn't have a fever or anything.

"Not any bug that I've ever heard of," John replied, taking hold of Sherlock's hand and redirecting him back to the living room, where he took up residence in his chair, pulling Sherlock along with him. "I'm debating on taking you back to the hospital right now, truthfully," he murmured, brushing his lips across Sherlock's temple.

Sherlock sighed. "That would be highly ambitious of you," he said. "The only three times you've got me near one of those places I was either dying or unconscious and therefore not able to make a coherent decision," he said, settling onto John's lap. "I feel fine, stomach's just a bit..." he waved his hand non-committedly. "Alright?"

John made a small noise. "I don't like hauling you in there when you're dying. It scares me." He didn't try to argue though, knowing he wouldn't get anywhere. "Just... don't do anything strenuous. *If it gets worse, you're going.*"

"Really? Well there go my marathon plans," Sherlock said, rolling his eyes a bit before he settled closer to John. They were flipped around; normally he leant on his right, though his time it had to be his left. He reached over and grabbed the remote.

"Shut up, Sherlock," John said fondly, taking the remote from him and flipping over to BBC One.

"You watch that show, and I'll... listen," Sherlock murmured, his eyes already closed and nearly feeling on the edge of sleep.

The episode was about halfway through, but John didn't mind. He had seen it before, relaxed in the familiarity of it. He could feel Sherlock loose against him, and when he looked down, he saw the Omega sleeping. He smiled fondly, stroking his fingers through Sherlock's hair, resting his chin on top of his head and watching the show.
"Sherlock, would you stop fussing about? You're going to make me late."

Three weeks had passed since Sherlock had been officially released from the hospital. His arm was healed, and he hadn't stopped bouncing around like a person half his age since he'd been deemed 'healed.' John was great, fine. Completely healed, hair starting to grow over the scar above his ear. He was heading to a job interview, his first after going through a week of therapy, and his wonderfully irritating bondmate wasn't letting him leave without perfecting every last thing about his image. "Sherlock, for the love of God, my hair is just going to get messed up the moment I step outside anyway."

"Interviews are important John!" Sherlock said, straightening the ridiculous tie John insisted on wearing. "I may not much care for first impressions, but I gather that normal people do so... there," he said, stepping back. "Fine then, you're ready, just... go. Erm, good luck or whatever it is people say. Is it bad to say good luck?" he asked.

Sherlock was antsy, he wouldn't deny that. No cases, John insisted until he was healed, despite the fact that he didn't so much as need his arms to use his eyes. No development on the Moriarty front, but perhaps he'd busied himself with other things, and Mycroft's security had proved most satisfactory, put to the test when they'd almost been mugged. They got to it before John did, and that was saying something. He'd gotten sick another four times since the first time, though he'd managed to hide that from John as well, not daring another trip to the hospital. He felt fine, so he saw no issue.

John stood on his toes, pulling Sherlock in for a full kiss, sweeping their tongues together once before he backed off. "That's all I need for luck," he murmured, smiling, as he backed up and out of the door. "I'll be back in a couple of hours," he called over his shoulder, and then he was gone, trotting down the stairs and hailing a cab once he was on the street.

Sherlock let out a breath as soon as John was gone, letting how tired he felt show. He swallowed, then pulled out his phone, tapping away at it for a bit before tossing it onto the sofa, agitated. He sighed, willing himself not to be sick, though he knew he wouldn't be. It just felt like it, but he could always tell the difference.

Maybe Sherlock didn't want to admit it, or even think it. God knew how John would react. He thought about what he had bought, tucked away in one of the trousers he never wore. He waited a while, knowing John would have to be in his interview now.

Ten minutes later he was pacing the flat, not thinking about what was sitting in the bathroom, waiting on the counter. He chewed on his thumbnail, massaged his shoulder a bit before he finally went in.

Sherlock felt like everything around him froze when he saw the little plus sign on the stick. Plus, as in positive, which was supposed to be good, right?

Sherlock put it away, not so much as throwing it away because John might find it in the bin. He slipped the stick back into the box and put both of them in his violin case. After pacing a little more he sank into John's chair, not even noticing his hand resting on his belly.

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John returned from his interview a little over two hours later, hanging up his coat and pulling off his tie. He noticed Sherlock – asleep? – in his chair, his head propped up on his hand, his breaths steady
and slow. Christ, John couldn't remember a time when he had seen Sherlock sleep in the middle of
day that wasn't during his heat.

John walked over and knelt down in front of him, resting his hand over the one Sherlock had spread
out over his belly. "Sherlock, love, I'm back," he whispered, pressing a soft kiss to his forehead.

Sherlock blinked his eyes open slowly, seeing John there. He sucked in a sharp breath, waking
himself up more as he sat up. "Oh, you're back. How did... how did that go?" he asked, moving his
hand from his stomach quickly, though hopefully not too quickly. "Just ah... resting," he said,
running a hand through his hair.

"I got the job. Few hours a week. They really didn't need another doctor, they just wanted... well,
me, apparently." John shrugged, watching Sherlock's hand move from his belly, his fingers slide
nervously through his hair. He sat back on his heels, tilting his head and studying Sherlock. "You
alright?" he asked, trying to think of why he could be so on edge, wishing he had the man's
deductive skills.

Sherlock blinked. "Of course," he said, furrowing his brows a little. "Of course I'm alright, and that's
good, about the job," he said with a small smile. "Should get out of your chair," he murmured,
standing up and walking into the kitchen. He pulled out a couple cans of soup and started opening
them, dumping them into a pot. "Got some bread in? Should be fine for tonight," he said
absentmindedly as he busied himself, needing to do something.

John stayed where he was, his gaze a little fuzzy as he thought through these past weeks, Sherlock's
odd behaviour. He had heard Sherlock get sick once more after the first time, in the middle of the
night when John had barely been asleep. Sherlock was sleeping more, fussing more, and now this,
the nervous evasive manoeuvres.

Wait... what did that sound like?

Second year of school, they spent nearly an entire three weeks on it. His eyes widened, John walked
into the kitchen, stopping in the doorway and looking at his bondmate. "Sherlock?" He swallowed,
finding it difficult to get the question out. "Sherlock, are you... are you pregnant?"

Sherlock stopped stirring for a moment before quickly continuing to do so. He swallowed, not
turning back to look at John. "Not sure where you got that idea, John; best leave the deductions to
me," he said, feeling his stomach twist.

John shook his head, noticing the hesitation. He wasn't as good as either of the Holmes brothers, but
he was a doctor and a soldier, and he was observant. And with a conclusion in the forefront of his
mind, things were clicking into place. "No, don't brush it off like that. Sherlock, I want to know." He
stepped forward, easing the soup off of the burner and turning Sherlock to face him.

Sherlock pulled his hand away quickly, not meeting John's gaze. "There's nothing to brush off!" he
quipped, taking a step back. He shook his head, letting out a breath. "I'm going to NSY for a case,
demand one from Lestrade; lunch is half cooked," he said quickly, stepping to the side and moving
into the living room, quickly tugging on his coat. He didn't know why he felt so flighty, and
defensive about it. If anyone should know, it was John.

John let him go, turning the burner off and sinking down into one of the kitchen chairs. He crossed
his arms over the table, dropping his head onto them. He was sure of it now. Sherlock was pregnant;
they were going to be parents. He was tremendously happy, and yet his heart was pulling another
direction – worry. Worry that Sherlock wasn't ready, that he didn't want them yet, that he had
changed his mind and didn't want them at all.
John stood and walked into the bathroom, turning the shower on as hot as it would go. He barely caught himself still dressed and stripped down before stepping in.

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Sherlock never made it to NSY, but rather just to the cafe downstairs. He sank into a booth and wove his fingers up into his hair. He let out a shaky breath, looking up at the ceiling and wondering what John was thinking. He'd known... how had he known? John didn't deduce things like that – it just wasn't something he did. But then perhaps he'd just picked up the uncanny ability from his mother.

They hadn't been careful, Sherlock's heat had snuck up on them, and he'd been so preoccupied with the case he'd forgotten about emergency contraception. And then he'd been shot, and had been on all that medication... god, what if he just ended up losing it? What if he was going to lose it anyway after everything that had been done to him? After what he'd done to himself? Then how would John feel about him?

He stayed in the cafe, glancing out the window anxiously, not knowing what to do.

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John stood in the water until his skin was raw, until he couldn't feel anything, until the water was cold as ice and he was shivering. He shut the shower off, stepping out and walking into the bedroom to pull on his pyjamas and crawl into bed, on top of the covers. He wasn't sleeping anyway, just wanted to lie somewhere he shared with Sherlock. He rolled over after a few minutes and walked into the living room to grab his phone, then returned to the bedroom.

_I love you. JW_

_Come home, please. JW_

He sighed, not knowing what else to say. He knew that if Sherlock was busy, he wasn't going to answer his texts, and he probably wouldn't be home for a long time. Late night, probably.

_It's alright if you're scared. JW_

He let it be at that, hoping Sherlock replied. If he didn't... well... then John didn't know. He felt unsteady, mixed with too many emotions to sort them all out and demand order.

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Sherlock felt his phone go off once, twice, and then finally three times. He swallowed, looking at the messages about 20 minutes after getting them. He stared at the phone for a while after that, finally standing numbly. It was starting to get a little dark out now, and he wondered just how long he'd been sitting there – didn't feel that long.

He moved up the stairs slowly, letting himself into the flat and hanging up his coat. After a glance at his violin case he retrieved the test from it and walked slowly to their bedroom, lingering in the doorway of it as he looked down at John. He cleared his throat softly, biting his lip as he stepped inside and held out the box.

John had curled up around Sherlock's pillow when he hadn't gotten replies from him. He looked up at Sherlock when he entered, gently taking the box from him and opening it, staring at the positive mark. He smiled softly, warmly, looking up at Sherlock and pulling him onto the bed. He wrapped his arms around him, holding him close and rocking him. "Why aren't you happy?" he asked quietly,
Sherlock let John drag him onto the bed, staying quiet for a few minutes. He let out a breath, swallowing. "Because... because you said you didn't want them yet. You've only just got back, and because of everything else. And because I don't think I'd be any good at it, and I'm a risk, a walking risk and because..." he shook his head a little. "I don't know... I want to be. I... I didn't think I'd want it, but... I do, it's just..."

_Terrifying, unknown, unpredictable? All of the above._

John leant up and kissed Sherlock fully, stopping his worries and replacing them with something good. "I want them, Sherlock, of course I do," he said, cupping Sherlock's face and staring at him steadily. "And what do you mean, that you'd be no good? You'd be the best. I can't think of anyone else better suited for raising kids." He wiped at a tear that escaped him, wrapping his arms around Sherlock's neck again, burying his fingers in his hair.

Sherlock closed his eyes, swallowing thickly. He was shaking a little, and tried to stop, but found it difficult. "I... I keep body parts in the fridge, John," he said, stammering a little, looking at him. He reached up and covered one of John's hands with his. Opening his eyes again he looked at John, still feeling nervous.

John's eyes were wide, kind, and encouraging. He smiled, stroking his fingers over Sherlock's cheek. "So what? It's not like our kids are going to know the difference or care. And they won't be allowed in the kitchen until they're at least five, when they know better that to grab anything shiny and interesting."

Sherlock wet his lips a little, looking at John steadily. "So... you're not... upset with me?" he asked quietly, not sure why he needed to hear it. He'd been feeling off for a while, and he supposed this was why. "You want this?" he asked.

John found his hands cupping Sherlock's face again, staring at him steadily. "You're a genius, Sherlock, but sometimes you can be a little dense." He stroked his thumbs over Sherlock's cheekbones, smiling kindly at him. "Of course I want this. Why the hell would I be mad at you?"

Sherlock shook his head a little. "I don't... I don't know," he said honestly. "I don't know what's been going on with me, I've just been thinking things like that lately," he said. "Of course, I suppose it makes sense now, and how much fuss I was making about that interview, and how you looked. God, am I always going to be this annoying?" he asked.

John burst out laughing, long and hard, wrapping his arms around Sherlock's neck and holding him close, half laughing, half sobbing against his shoulder. "It's a nine month pregnancy, and then your maternal instincts won't disappear for eighteen years at least. But that's normal people, and thank god you're far from normal," he said, still laughing and holding Sherlock tighter. "Hug me back, you idiot. Be happy with me," he commanded after a moment, running his fingers up and down the back of Sherlock's neck.

Sherlock blinked a few times, wrapping his arms around John more, burying his face in John's neck. He twisted himself around and onto John's lap and wrapped his legs around John's waist, clinging to him. "I'm sorry... was being stupid I-I love you," he said quietly, squeezing John tighter, despite the fact that it made his shoulder ache a little.

"I'm getting used to it," John murmured a bit sarcastically. "I love you too. I love you so much." He nuzzled against Sherlock's neck, inhaling his scent deeply, kissing his pulse under his jaw, kissing the mark on the side of Sherlock's neck, both white crescent curves still beautifully visible.
Sherlock hummed lightly, feeling himself relax against John when he kissed his mark, shivering a little. He let out a breath, pulling away slightly. "So... what now?" he asked quietly. "I mean, well, you're the doctor," he murmured.

John shrugged. "Not much to do for now. Should go to your favourite place in the world, though. They'll check your vitals and record them, make sure everything's on track, give an estimated due date and put you on record for having pups, which will basically just guarantee that they'll have a bed waiting around your due date so that we can get in." He chuckled softly to himself, tracing around his mark at the back of Sherlock's neck. "Guess that's quite a bit more than 'not much,' huh?"

Sherlock hummed a little, all but going completely limp in John's arms as he traced over the mark on the back of his neck. "Mm... can go to... clinic for that... can't I?" he asked. "Though... different from the emergency ward. God, do I have to take pills or something? Prenatal or whatever they are?" He'd done some reading when he started to suspect but hadn't thought he was, trying to brush it off like John said.

"Best if we go to the hospital," John replied smoothly, making his tone one not to be argued with. It was one of finality. "And you technically don't have to take them, but it's strongly encouraged."

Sherlock swallowed. "I don't... I don't like hospitals John," he said. "You hear about some people doing it other places, at home even," he said softly, carefully with John's tone.

John looked closely at Sherlock. "Yeah, but I'm not..." he shook his head, "that's not what I'm trained for. I don't know how to deliver a pup, I just know how they grow and develop. And you can't do it by yourself."

Sherlock looked down, then nodded a little. Of course John would be a large supporter of hospitals – he was a doctor. That was like a priest refusing to step foot in a church.

Sherlock let out a breath. "I... I'll do what you think best," he said softly. "I mean I'm only... God, I'm only nineteen. What do I know?" he said. It made him seem so... ordinary. He knew a lot of people were barely starting uni at his age. He was going to have a pup. Seemed a bit... odd. He looked up at John. "Even if it means going to that vile place... I... I'll go."

"Is it really so vile if I'm there?" John asked, resting his hands on Sherlock's hips. "You're young, yeah. Christ, I'm twenty-three and I feel young as hell, but it'll be fine. More than fine. You'll do great," he murmured, his gaze flickering between Sherlock's eyes.

Sherlock thought about it, then nodded. "No, you're right. It's better that you're there," he murmured softly. He traced the small scar on John's neck, the one from the knife wound he'd gotten. He swallowed thickly, sighing a little as he rested his head on John's shoulder. He felt a sort of relief he supposed – John knew, and he wasn't angry about it. He smiled, sitting up and pressing a kiss to John's lips, deepening it tentatively.

John rested his hand over Sherlock's on his neck, deepening the kiss as much as Sherlock was, letting him stay in control of it. He wasn't sure if Sherlock was still on edge, and he didn't want to push him too far. He hummed happily, running his tongue along Sherlock's lower lip and squeezing Sherlock's hand reassuringly.

Sherlock pulled away, his lips a bit red, face flushed. He swallowed, running his tongue over his lips as he looked at John. "Ten minutes," he breathed, looking at John before he tore off of his lap and dashed to the door. He pointed at John. "Ten minutes, just... stay," he said, running out of the flat and down stairs.
John looked after Sherlock curiously, wondering where the hell he could be going, but he stayed.

Sherlock burst into Mrs Hudson's flat, murmuring something about needing something for an experiment. He grabbed what he was looking for and ran back upstairs to the mirror in the living room. His face was still flushed and he licked his lips again as he pulled the cap off the black pencil in his hand. He swallowed, hands shaking slightly as he carefully drew it onto his eyes, trying to remember the steps from what he'd watched a while ago. He smirked a little, dropping the eyeliner on the mantel before heading back to the bedroom, keeping his eyes down until he was back on John's lap, pressing his lips to John's neck and jaw, finally flicking his gaze up to him.

John was pleased when Sherlock returned to his lap, concerned that he was keeping his gaze down until he finally looked up. John's breath hitched. He rolled them over quickly, staring down at Sherlock, gulping down how he looked. The black around his eyes pulled out every colour in his irises. His pupils were dark, his lips parted in a bit of a smirk. He looked dangerous, deadly, and in complete control of himself.

Sherlock sucked in a sharp breath at the sudden movement, unable to stop smirking when he saw John's reaction to it. He shivered a little, seeing the shift in John's look though and god... it was something else.

John growled a little, leaning down to claim Sherlock's lips.

Sherlock hummed when John's lips pressed firmly to his, and Sherlock stayed pliant against them. His breathing was a little uneven, and he met John's darkened gaze and smiled. He took up John's hand and placed it on his neck so that his fingers were on both marks, and he hummed. "Yours," he told John, still staring up at him.

John felt a shiver race down his spine, and he trailed his lips and grazed his teeth across Sherlock's jaw and down his neck. He bit lightly over the mark on the side of Sherlock's neck. "Mine," he responded, his fingers starting to work at the buttons on Sherlock's shirt, his lips finding Sherlock's again as he pushed the fabric from his shoulders, using it to pin his arms to the bed as he kissed him with increasing intensity.

Sherlock hummed, nodding a little as he huffed out a small breath. His shoulder ached a little at the pinning, but it was barely anything, and it... god, it almost felt good. He shifted a little under John, lifting his hips a bit to lean up into him. "Yes..." Sherlock breathed.

John growled, pressing his hips down against Sherlock's, pinning him to the bed with them. "Don't move your arms," he instructed, nipping at Sherlock's lips and wondering just how well Sherlock felt like listening as he worked off the Omega's trousers and pants.

Sherlock leant his head up to try and steal up John's lips again, but he'd already moved them. He didn't move for a moment, but couldn't stop his fingers from trying to weave into John's hair, a smirk on his face, almost in challenge, wearing nothing now but John's tags.
John took his time, ignoring Sherlock's lifted hips. He pressed his mouth everywhere, using his tongue to run soothing lines over milky skin, then nipping it to put him on edge. He ran his hands over Sherlock's thighs, kneading them gently and gradually spreading them as John sunk lower.

Sherlock writhed as John's attentions moved down his body. The longer John did this the more desperate he was starting to get.

John brushed his lips up Sherlock's length, the touch the barest of teases as he pressed Sherlock's hips into the mattress, keeping him from moving. He bit sharply at Sherlock's hip, almost enough to break skin, and in an instant, he swallowed his length down.

"You're just teasing me now!" Sherlock complained, yipping a little at the bite, but it was swallowed by a moan as John took him into his mouth. He tried moving his hips up, needing that friction, good god... John's mouth. He whimpered, still squirming lightly.

John hummed, pleased beyond reason. He didn't completely hinder Sherlock's movements, rather enjoying the small amount of control the Omega had, loving how desperate he was. He worked diligently, his tongue moving independent of his lips, brushing sensitive areas and focusing more heavily on them until he had turned Sherlock into a quivering mess, the noises he was uttering making John impossibly harder. He pulled off when he felt Sherlock tensing, knowing he was right there, and keeping him from falling off.

Sherlock's breaths were coming quicker now, nearly there... he opened his eyes when John stopped his movements. He looked down, complaint building on his lips. "I... John, god... please," he breathed, looking at him pleadingly. "Christ I need...." A whine came from him as he felt himself backing off from the edge.

"Oh, I know, love," John purred, moving up to nuzzle against his neck, nipping and laving at his delicious skin. "We'll get there." He smirked, pressing his fingers into pressure points over Sherlock's body that would calm him down.

Sherlock hummed, his head rolling back into the bed a little, his breaths steadying somewhat as John's hands moved over his body.

John kissed Sherlock heatedly, sucking on his tongue before he slid back down, taking Sherlock between his lips and pulling off when he was just about to come.

Sherlock writhed and tried to thrust up a little, a frustrated whine coming from him this time. "God, I... fuck!" he swore, not something he commonly did, but it was so close again. He tried to pull his hands free, his arms starting to fall asleep a little from lying on them, and if he could just free them, he'd finish it himself. "You... are using your abilities as a doctor..." he let out a breath, swearing again quietly, not able to think.

John grinned broadly, engulfing Sherlock's mouth in a heady kiss. "You're damn right I am. Have to best you somewhere, don't I?" he teased, starting his gentle applications of pressure points again until he felt that Sherlock was calm enough.

Sherlock realised more what John was doing this time. "P-pressure points... b-bastard..." he panted with a small smirk.

John undid the restraints on Sherlock's hands, quickly grabbing his wrists and pinning them above his head, tying him to the headboard.

Sherlock winced a little as his arms were moved, tilting his head up to look at his hands, and then
down at his shoulder, seeing the still dark pink scar.

John kissed Sherlock steadily, controlled, and reached over to the drawer of his nightstand, rooting around until he found the lubricant. He coated his fingers, then slowly started stretching Sherlock open, paying special and close attention to his slightly swollen prostate. He grinned as he worked, knowing he was just going to deny Sherlock again this time as well.

Sherlock moaned a little in anticipation, seeing John grab the lubricant, adjusting his hips just as John slid a finger up into him, a second following quickly. He whimpered, feeling it build so much faster this time, John barely getting the third finger in before he was just about to come.

John paused, just holding his fingers in place, studiously avoiding touching Sherlock's prostate. He kissed his way over both of Sherlock's thighs, then over the V of his hips and up his torso until he felt Sherlock relaxing again. He started moving his fingers once more, this time completely ignoring Sherlock's prostate until he was stretched and he could pull them out.

"God, you're gorgeous," John murmured, completely taken by the sight of Sherlock spread out before him, the black lines still circling his eyes and making them so much more intense. He stood up, quickly stripping off his clothes, and then just stood there for a moment, studying Sherlock from the top of his head to his toes.

Sherlock was quivering slightly, a thin layer of sweat covering him. He watched John get up and strip, seeing his own swollen member. He blinked a few times, wriggling a bit on the bed. "Christ I... please, just, get your arse over here, John, I swear to god I..." he groaned a little, a whine tearing out of him as something akin to a pout formed on his lips.

"Look at you," John teased, a laugh covering his tone, "so desperate, and not even during a heat." He leant down, kissing Sherlock softly, sucking his bottom lip between his own, rolling his tongue around it. He reached down with his hand, his index and middle finger barely touching Sherlock's glans, spreading the precome leaking from it.

Sherlock was muttering pleads and swears under his breath. He was a mess, and knew John was just getting off on that. He moaned as John teased at the tips of erection. He rolled his head back, trusting up against John's fingers, needing him. "Jesus fuck! John!" he snapped, whining as John moved teasingly slow.

John smiled more at the noises Sherlock made, then finally crawled in between his legs, reaching for the lube to coat himself.

Bracing himself above Sherlock, John aligned himself and slowly, oh so slowly, pushed inside, revelling in how Sherlock spread around him. "Christ, you're so tight," John murmured, his lips pressed against the mark on Sherlock's neck. He snapped his hips, thrusting quickly in the last few inches. He didn't give Sherlock time to recover, thrusting inside of him in short quick strokes, purposefully not aiming for his prostate.

Sherlock moaned when John pushed inside of him teasingly slow, sucking in a sharp breath as he thrust forward. His back arched slightly when John did so again, and again. He tugged at his hands a little, straining just to reach down and touch himself, Christ... it was almost unbearable, and yet perfect at the same time.

John chuckled, nipping at Sherlock's collarbone, biting a line up to his jaw and finally stealing his lips again. He ran his hand over Sherlock's chest, pressing different pressure points that made Sherlock produce those beautiful sounds again. "Beg for it, love," he murmured, snapping his hips faster, feeling his knot filling as he stared down at Sherlock.
Sherlock whimpered and wriggled, bucking his hips as best he could. He'd been denied it for so long, and now he was supposed to be coherent enough for speech? "I… I, please I… fuck!" he shook his head, frustrated. "J-John... please. Let. Me... come... Christ!" He blinked rapidly, needing it.

John grinned, snapping his hips in a way that angled against Sherlock's prostate, holding his hips steady as he tried to squirm underneath him. "Alright, love," he whispered, his voice low, kissing Sherlock fiercely as he reached between them and stroked him quickly, twisting his hand to pull everything he could out of the Omega. "Come for me," he commanded in a whisper, biting at Sherlock's bottom lip.

Sherlock yelped in surprise that he was actually being allowed this time, his whole body shaking and giving a jerk as he finally came. He tensed up, tightening more around John, crying out as it was almost painful this time but in the most perfect way. He saw white, back arching before he fell back onto the bed, limp, shaking, and panting, spent.

John slammed against Sherlock, burying his knot as the Omega came, clenching around him and milking his own orgasm out of him. "Christ," he whispered, holding Sherlock against him and stroking him through his violent release until he became boneless. Panting, John reached up and untied Sherlock, rubbing his fingers around his wrists and then rolling them over so that Sherlock was on top. "Alright?" he asked quietly, stroking his hair.

Sherlock let his arms fall down, staying limp as they rolled over and his head rested on John's shoulder. His breathing was still erratic, and he didn't open his eyes yet. "Mm... good... christ... perfect," he murmured softly, still trembling a little.

John smiled, running his hand over Sherlock's back, settling it at the dip of his spine. He continued combing through slightly damp curls, both of them breathing hard. Their scent filled the room, heady and enticing, and John breathed it in like a drowning man gasping for air. "Someone likes being controlled," he murmured, his breath teasing Sherlock's ear.

Sherlock shook his head a little. "N-no... not that... 'm in control," he murmured. "By giving... it to... to you," he breathed, swallowing thickly. "And only you," he said, letting out a breath.

John chuckled at Sherlock's logic, though it made sound sense to him. "I love you," he murmured, gently lifting Sherlock's head so that he could kiss him slowly and languidly. "I didn't know what love really was until I met you," he said quietly, his lips moving against Sherlock's, breathing in his air and giving his own to Sherlock.

Sherlock hummed lightly, returning the kiss lazily and allowing his face to be cradled in John's hands. "Mm love you too," he murmured against John's lips, letting out a breath. He dragged his eyes open to look at John, lifting one hand up to trace his features. He shivered a little, a small bit cold, but he didn't mind in the least.

John leant into Sherlock's hand, turning his head to kiss his palm. He noticed the shiver and ran his hands down Sherlock's back, raising goosebumps and enticing another shiver from him. "I'd draw the covers if I could," he said, skimming his fingertips over the top of Sherlock's arse. "But I don't want to move and accidentally hurt you."

Sherlock hummed, mumbling softly, "S'fine... 'm fine. Taking... shower after, anyway," he murmured. "Even though you already took one," he said, knowing that John had had damp hair when he came back.

John snorted softly, kissing Sherlock again. "A rather long one, really. Not sure we have that much hot water left. It's gunna have to be a quick wash."
Sherlock sighed. John would take the hot water.... He tugged John's hair lightly with a small smirk. "Wanker," he muttered under his breath.

Sherlock thought about his news again, and it just didn't seem real. Him... and John, having a pup? A small pink little human thing?

John ran his fingers through Sherlock's hair, twisting one of his curls around his finger. He smiled suddenly, broadly. "I can't believe we're actually having a pup," he murmured, a bit awed and dazed by it.

Sherlock paused for a moment at that comment. "I... I know," he said quietly. "Doesn't... doesn't really feel real," he said quietly, truthfully.

John laughed, smiling affectionately at Sherlock. "Give it a few weeks. It'll start feeling very real. For you, at least. I'll just be able to see it and experience your emotional swings," he teased, giving him a wink and a light kiss to the tip of his nose.

"When are you going to tell Mycroft?" John asked, figuring he would have to tell Harry and Mum at some point too. "'Cause he'll find out on his own if you don't tell him, and that could get a bit... intrusive."

Sherlock sighed. "I don't want to. It's not his business," he muttered, knowing he'd find out regardless. "And he'll know as soon as we go to the hospital, because he'll look up why we went, and then he'll know," he said, not sure he liked how John mentioned emotional swings. "I am not going to have anything swing," he murmured quietly.

"Oh, yes, you are," John chuckled, a little amused at how stubborn he was being. "All those hormones racing through you? You're going to be pissed off one second and then crying the next. Just you wait." The thought was a bit intimidating, when John really thought about it, given Sherlock's wide and sharp range of emotions as it was. "Then again," he mused, "it may just calm you down, mellow you out." He shrugged. "Hard to be sure, really. But you're more likely to get emotional."

Sherlock sighed, muttering something about transport and something else that boiled down to something along the lines of mind over matter. He was completely relaxed against John, though, and he started to doze off, despite the mess that was pressed between them. He hummed lightly, his mouth slightly open as his breathing evened out.

John made a small noise as his knot receded and he slowly slipped out of Sherlock. "Hey," he whispered, nudging him gently. "Let's go get that shower in, yeah?" he asked, knowing he was stirring him from a half sleep.

Sherlock hummed, brow furrowing slightly. "S'gonna be cold," he mumbled, not moving from where he was. He was exhausted; he'd been tired before, like he had been for a couple weeks now, and now he was just... spent. "Used all the hot water," he muttered.

John sighed softly. "Alright, shower in the morning then, hmm? You still need to get up, though, so that I can get us under the blankets." He rolled Sherlock over, pulling him up with a steadying hand on his hip and flipping down the covers. "Here, come on, love," he said gently, sliding under the covers and pulling Sherlock against him.

Sherlock mumbled, getting up a little bit and settling back on the bed. He reached up to where his shirt was still on the bed, having been used to tie his hands, and wiped up his front, leaning over and doing the same to John before chucking the shirt across the room. "Mm... s'better," he mumbled,
settling against John, eyes closed again.

John held Sherlock tight against him, pillowing Sherlock's head against his chest. "You can sleep, love," he murmured, pressing his lips against the top of his head.

Sherlock murmured something unintelligibly, going limp in John's arms as he fell unconscious. He shifted a little, rolling over and curling up into John's chest, nuzzling closer in his sleep before settling again, his face smoothed over, breathing steady.

John stared up at the ceiling, a stupid smile on his face. He was going to be a father. He repeated the thought in his head until he couldn't discern words, only the stupid happiness he felt. He fell asleep after a while, his fingers wound into Sherlock's hair.
Chapter 9

Sherlock woke up early the next morning, still wrapped up in John's arms. He let out a breath, shifting slightly, wondering why he was awake. He moved his glance up to look at John, who was smiling lightly in his sleep still. Sherlock smiled a little himself as well, before he realised what he woke up for. He lurched up out of bed with a sigh, moving into the bathroom and leaning over the toilet, getting there with ample time before he got sick.

John stirred in the early morning, finding the bed empty beside him. He got up, seeing the bathroom door closed, and walked inside, kneeling down beside Sherlock and stroking his back soothingly. "Alright?" he asked quietly, helping Sherlock up so that he could brush his teeth.

Sherlock stood up, flushing the toilet as he walked over to the sink. "Yes, getting more used to it at this juncture," he murmured, brushing his teeth. He glanced up at John through the mirror, spitting in the sink. "Can get in the shower... be right there. Try not to use up all the heat this time?" he asked, scrubbing his tongue a little.

John kissed the back of his neck, running his tongue over his mark. He smacked Sherlock's arse just enough to make him jump in surprise, stepping back to turn on the water. "Don't you get snippy with me," he teased, walking into the shower and leaving the curtain open for Sherlock.

Sherlock jumped a bit, turning his head around to shoot John a look, though his mouth still quirked up a little. He finished brushing his teeth quickly after that and climbed into the shower. "Still warm... that's a relief," he teased, poking John's side a small bit.

John laughed, smacking Sherlock's hand away before resuming scrubbing his hair down. He rinsed the suds from his hair, stepping out of the water to give Sherlock his chance at it. He watched the water trail down Sherlock's pale body, noticing a few bruises he had left on his hips. Smirking, he stepped up and settled his fingers over the darkening skin, looking up at Sherlock.

Sherlock wet down his hair, watching John's hands trail down his body and settling on his hips. He blinked, seeing the bruises before he looked up at John. "Don't... don't worry about those, I bruise easy anyway," he said. A bit of water got in his eye and he wiped at it, his hand coming back smudged black. "Oh, god, I probably look like a bloody raccoon!" he said, furiously rubbing at his eyes now.

Chuckling, John reached up and pulled Sherlock's hands away, gently rubbing the makeup off with his thumbs. "You look gorgeous. And I wasn't worried." He gave Sherlock a rather possessive look, placing his fingers over the marks again. Mine they said; another way that proved Sherlock was John's. He reached up, playing with his tags against Sherlock's chest. He tugged on the chain, pulling Sherlock's head down for a good, long, proper good morning kiss.

Sherlock saw the look in John's eyes and felt a small swell in his chest, a feeling he only ever got from John. When he felt the tug on his neck he obliged, pressing his lips to John's and humming lightly as he leant into the kiss.

John pulled back after a moment, nuzzling against Sherlock's cheek. "I love you," he whispered in his ear, kissing his jaw before he took a step away, reaching for the shampoo and scrubbing some into Sherlock's hair while his head was low enough for him to reach.

Sherlock hummed lightly as John's fingers worked the shampoo into his hair, a soft smile on his face. "Mm love you, too," he murmured.
John took his hands away when he was done, giving Sherlock the opportunity to rinse.

When John pulled away, Sherlock nearly protested, but he rinsed his hair instead. He reached over for the soap and lathered himself up, handing the bar to John to do the same as he rinsed.

John accepted the soap from Sherlock, scrubbing at his skin and stepping under the water when Sherlock moved aside. "This should be an every morning thing," he thought out loud, pulling Sherlock to him under the water, just enjoying warmth and closeness for a moment.

"Would hardly be special then, though, would it?" Sherlock said, nuzzling John's neck a small bit before pulling away and stepping out of the shower to dry off. As per usual, he tossed the towel to John when he was done, striding into the bedroom to get dressed. He couldn't help but cast a look towards his flat stomach, thinking about what it would look like in a matter of months.

John shrugged. Like he cared if it was special, he just wanted to spend more time with Sherlock. He turned off the shower and stepped out, picking up the towel Sherlock had used and drying off. Walking back into the room, he caught Sherlock look down at his stomach, easily reading the expression on his face. He walked up, wrapping his arms around Sherlock's waist and nuzzling against his shoulder, as was becoming a common reaction for him. "Beautiful," he murmured, kissing Sherlock's halfway damp skin at his collarbone. "You're going to look beautiful, like you always do."

Sherlock relaxed a small bit, running his hand over his stomach once before stepping out of John’s hold, shrugging on a shirt and buttoning it up. "I don't know how to do this, John. You can't read this in a book because it's different for everyone. There are too many factors; I can't... deduce what's going to happen," he said, ruffling his damp hair as he always did. He huffed a breath, sitting on the bed.

John pulled on a pair of jeans and sat beside Sherlock, leaning against his shoulder. "What's the fun in knowing how everything will go?" he asked softly, wrapping his arm around Sherlock's waist and holding him gently. "This isn't like everything else in life, Sherlock. You have... another person growing inside of you, and there's nothing predictable about that."

Sherlock huffed a sigh, eyes boring a hole in the floor. "I know, and it's maddening," he complained. "I don't like not knowing, I don't like being on that side of things. Just like with your mother and..." he trailed off. "Oh... we um, we'll have to tell them, won't we? What am I talking about, she'll probably just know just by looking at us. I know my scent hasn't changed yet, but I know it's going to at the second trimester," he said.

John laughed, taking odd pleasure in Sherlock's frustration. "I'm sure you'll survive," he said with a smile. "And yeah, we should probably pay them a visit and let them know. Lord knows if I call they'll suspect something right away." He kissed Sherlock's forehead and stood. "Let's eat something and then run to the hospital quick and get that over with."

Sherlock sighed, standing up and walking out of the room to the kitchen, mumbling under his breath about not wanting to go to the hospital. He wasn't going to argue with John, though, because he knew he'd lose. He sank into the kitchen chair, quite not feeling like fixing, or eating anything.

John walked into the kitchen, popping some bread in the toaster and putting the kettle on. "You're eating, by the way," he said over his shoulder as he dug the butter and jam out of the fridge. "Pregnant people don't really have a say in the matter," he jibed gently, walking over and nudging his side. "And I know you don't want to go to the hospital, but I can't do it, and neither can you, so we need some help."
Sherlock sighed, looking at the toaster as the bread popped up. "They might want to do something like blood work... doesn't one normally fast for such things?" he asked, looking up at John.

John shook his head, putting two pieces on each plate and setting them on the table along with the butter and jam and mugs of tea. "They won't be doing blood work today. Just questions and blood pressure and temperature and things like that." He spread jam over his toast and took a bite.

Sherlock sighed laboriously as he sat forward and dragged the toast and butter closer, as if such an action warranted great effort. "I'm not particularly looking forward to the question bit," he muttered, thinking about everything that had happened in the last year, and then the three before that.

John made a small sound, sipping studiously from his mug. "Well, they're not going to ask questions like that. They're not allowed to get too personal, and I'll stop them if they do. They're going to ask about eating habits and things that are going to potentially affect the growth of the pup."

"Medical history, John," Sherlock mumbled. "They'll want to know about my drug abuse," he said, scratching his arm a little. He polished off his toast then got up, wandering into the living room, rummaging in the desk for his nicotine patches.

John sighed irritably, taking his mug with him into the living room and sitting down in his chair. "Those'll be on file already, so they may not ask," he said, sipping his tea.

Sherlock shut the drawer quickly and moved over to where he kept more of his patches usually, pulling out a box and tossing himself in his seat, tearing it open. "I suppose so," he said quietly.

John refrained from pouting at Sherlock sitting across from him instead of on his lap. He sipped his tea again, reaching for yesterday's paper on the floor that he hadn't quite finished yet.

Sherlock pulled out a patch and smoothed it onto his arm, deciding to only have one, rather than the three he wanted. He wanted something else as well, always did, but he ignored that. He looked at John. "Surprised you're not lecturing me on this," he said softly, smoothing the patch again. "I suppose it's preferred to smoking though?" he asked, shifting a little and almost getting up to sit with John, but he'd picked up a paper so he stayed where he was.

John folded the paper on his lap, laying it across one of his knees. "Well what am I supposed to say about it? You know it's bad, but you do it because you want to, so I don't comment." He shrugged, nearly given up on the paper anyway, and picked up his tea again. "There's not much I can do, and, yeah, it's better than smoking."

Sherlock looked down at the wrapper on his lap. "I don't do it because I want to," he said softly. He did it because smoking had been his vice before the other one. He wore the patches because he promised John over the letters that he would quit.

Sherlock swallowed, then gripped the patch, yanking it off his arm with a wince and rolling down his sleeve. "Ready to go when you are," he said quietly.

John watched and said nothing, knowing there was nothing to say. A 'thank you' wasn't sufficient, but anything else felt like either too much or too little. So he stood, took his mug of tea back into the kitchen, and returned to the living room to shrug on his coat. "Alright then. We'll make it quick."

Sherlock stood up, walking over and pulling on his coat. He let out a breath, hating going to hospitals, though by now perhaps he should have expected it. He sighed, standing by the door for John. "I'm sorry, I'm just... nervous, I guess," he said, feeling like it had gotten quiet. "I don't... no, I won't even try to say I don't understand, but it's just new, I'm not sure how to handle it yet," he said,
meeting John's gaze.

John nodded, reaching for Sherlock's hand. "I know, love. I'm just asking you to trust me, like you've done for nearly a year now." He smiled up at him, cupping his cheek with his free hand for a moment. "I'm not going to let anything happen."

Sherlock let out a breath, leaning into John's hand lightly as he nodded. "I know," he said softly. "I do... I guess it's me I don't trust," he said. He shook his head a little. "God, ignore that... just the… whatever, hormones or some bollocks like that," he said with a small huff, furrowing his brow a little. "Let's just get this over with, and then go see your mother so she can predict all of it," he said.

John laughed a little, leaning up to kiss Sherlock chastely before he led him from the flat and down the stairs onto the pavement. He raised his hand for a cab, holding the door for Sherlock before he slid in after him. He pulled his phone out, sending a text to Harry asking if they could come over later, then settled in against Sherlock.

Sherlock looked over at John, leaning towards him a little as the cab started towards Bart's. "You know I... I've actually only been in the A&E and the Morgue of the hospital. I haven't been anywhere else in there, other than my rooms, but it's not as if I remember going there, I'm usually unconscious," Sherlock noted quietly.

John nodded, looking up at Sherlock. "It's a bit different, walking in yourself. More control. As opposed to falling unconscious elsewhere and waking up in a strange bed with IVs and tubes hooked up to you." That had only happened to him twice – once in the desert and once when he was a boy. "Hopefully it'll help you rationalise or whatever it is you do."

Sherlock shrugged a little. "I suppose," he murmured. "Probably no more than an hour though, no bed stay which is definitely a positive in my book," Sherlock said with a nod. He squeezed John's hand after weaving his fingers with his. "And you're there, so... that's good too," he said.

"Always." John squeezed back, leaning over to kiss him. "I love you, you know. Forever and ever, and probably beyond that, too."

Sherlock smiled a little, looking at John and murmured an "I love you too," his ears a little pink. He wondered where John stood on forever, and what he believed beyond meant. Sherlock never took much stock in religion, but if there was a beyond, he hoped John would be there.

John turned his attention out of the window, watching some people moving about on the street, talking animatedly to each other, or muttering into a phone, or dashing for a cab. Oh, normality. John had never had it, and neither had Sherlock, and maybe that was why they fit together so perfectly.

Sherlock rested his head on John's shoulder, closing his eyes to think. "Tell me when we're there?" he murmured.

John nodded, combing his fingers through Sherlock's hair. After a few minutes, he caught himself tracing his mark at the back of Sherlock's neck, hidden under the collar of his coat. He smiled softly to himself, watching the city flash by.

"Sherlock, love, we're here," John said a few moments later, kissing the top of his head.

Sherlock blinked his eyes open just as the cab pulled to a stop. He let out a breath, sitting up and straightening his coat as he climbed out of the cab. He looked up at the building and wished he could just go around the back to the morgue and dissect something. "Alright, then," he said, taking John's hand when he got out of the cab. "After you; I don't know where we're going, after all," he
mumbled.

John took Sherlock's hand, leading him into the hospital, only a half step or less ahead of him. He walked over to the lift, waving at one of the nurses behind the desk as they passed. He pressed the up button, and as soon as the doors opened he stepped inside, Sherlock beside him.

Sherlock let out a breath when they got into the lift. "Really wish this was going down," he murmured as the elevator lurched up. He drummed his fingers along his forearm, trying to quell some of the anxiety he was feeling.

They stepped out and John led Sherlock down the hall and through a pair of doors. The scents hit Sherlock at once as he looked around the waiting room, seeing a mixture of Omegas at different points in pregnancy. He looked down, a little more tense than he supposed he should be.

John looked over at Sherlock, feeling and sensing the tension rolling off of him. "Hey," he whispered, squeezing his hand. "You're alright," he promised, glad he was bonded or the scents would be driving him into protective mode. Now all of his Alpha instincts were directed at and centred around Sherlock, and he wouldn't have it any other way. He led Sherlock up to a desk, checking them in, and then pulled Sherlock over to the far wall and sat down.

Sherlock sank down into the uncomfortable chair next to John and his foot proceeded to bounce as he observed the other couples, and the few Omega's that were there on their own, either their Alpha working or gone. He looked at the table next to him, seeing nothing but a stack of out-dated parenting magazines. "God, would it kill them to have something decent to read?" he murmured quietly, his fingers twisting a little bit where they were sitting in his lap.

John wordlessly reached his arm around Sherlock's side, pulling him close and half onto his lap – the chairs not having sides for obvious reasons. He tucked Sherlock's head onto his shoulder, resting his cheek on top of his curls and taking hold of his hands. "Long, deep breaths," he instructed quietly, knowing that his scent had changed to be more calming, his body reacting to the stress his bondmate was experiencing.

Sherlock huffed out a breath, drawing the next breath in a little slower. He swallowed thickly, exhaling a bit slower as his body relaxed a little. He blinked a few times, looking around though no one was looking at them. Even with the display of affection, everyone else was too wrapped up in his or her own business to care. He let out another breath, closing his eyes part way as he slowly calmed a little more.

"Everything's alright, love," John whispered, rubbing his hand over Sherlock's back, nuzzling against his hair. "Wouldn't be here otherwise," he assured, pressing a few kisses to his temple, and then his forehead, his fingers tracing random patterns over his shoulders.

Sherlock nodded a little. "I know," he murmured, adjusting his head on John's shoulder so he could breathe in his scent a little easier. They stayed like that for a little while before he heard his name called, and he let out a breath. He sat up a little, glancing over at John. "You are coming... and you're not leaving," he said.

"Wouldn't dream of it," John assured him, rising to his feet and pulling Sherlock with him.

The nurse smiled at them, gesturing them along down a hallway and then pointing them into a room, saying that the doctor would be right in, that she preferred doing everything herself.

That gave John some relief, at least. He was exactly the same way.
Sherlock stepped into the room, watching the door close. He saw an ultrasound machine and a sort of reclined chair that no doubt was meant for him, but he moved and sat in one of the hard plastic ones in the corner, letting out a breath.

The room was pained pastel green. It was hideous.

John stood beside Sherlock, his hand on his shoulder, squeezing lightly. He couldn't sit down, couldn't relax with Sherlock as tense as he was. "Please be nice to her, Sherlock," he asked, glancing down at him momentarily. "Just remember that she's doing her job and is just trying to help."

Sherlock let out a huff. "Why do you assume I'm not going to be nice to her?" he asked, looking up at John. "Ye of little faith," he muttered, scratching at his arm where he'd ripped off his patch. He knew the skin was likely red there now.

John rolled his eyes. "Oh, no reason at all. Nothing to do with your prior history with authority figures." He waved his hand sarcastically, arching an eyebrow down at Sherlock.

Sherlock sighed, nodding a little. "Yes well... I'll be on my best behaviour," he said, only half sarcastically.

John glanced over as the door opened and an older woman – Omega – walked in, taking a seat on the wheeled stool tucked over by a low shelf serving as a desk.

Sherlock's foot was still tapping a bit when the woman came in, and he stilled it, looking her over for a moment before looking down. He felt his stomach tense a little, though she wasn't as intimidating as he'd thought she might be. But then, of course, they would have more Omegas in this line of work.

"Sherlock?" The doctor wheeled her stool over, holding out her hand and shaking Sherlock's first and then John's. "I'm Dr Maria, nice to meet you. You don't have to be nervous," she said kindly. "Nothing scary happening today, just some basics." She reached over for the blood pressure cuff, wrapping it around Sherlock's upper arm and starting the process.

Sherlock shook her hand, shrugging off his coat and holding still as the cuff tightened around his arm. He winced a little, wondering if that would bruise too, most things did with him.

Dr Maria checked Sherlock's temperature, listened to his heart and lungs, keeping up idle chatter with the two of them, intrigued to hear that the Alpha was a doctor.

John was talking so easily with her, each discussing doctor things that Sherlock partially tuned out for. He wondered what she would ask, if she'd end up seeing his scars, asking about them.

"Alright, dear," Maria said, setting her pen down from where she had been scribbling information. "Just a few questions for you. Well, it's mostly just information intake." She smiled kindly, folding her hands. "What's your daily food intake, calorie count, would you assume? Are you taking blood thinners or have you in the past? Are you on any medications? How much do you exercise daily?"

Sherlock blinked a few times, looking at the notes she was taking. He shifted in the chair, letting out a breath. "Less than a thousand calories per day. Not currently on any blood thinners, unless you count the nicotine patches I tend to wear as I'm quitting smoking. I was recently on copious amounts of a painkiller, the name of which I never bothered to memorise, which I took because I was shot in my right shoulder. As for exercise, apart from the occasional chase of a murder, I don't, though I haven't even done that in a while," he said, finishing with a small sigh. God, he needed a case.

Maria looked up, exchanging a knowing look with the Alpha before returning her attention to
Sherlock. "Alright, for starters, bump the calorie count up to fifteen hundred per day. As the pregnancy progresses, you're going to be consuming upwards of three thousand a day, and it'll be exceedingly helpful for you to have some weight on you already when that baby starts leeching off of you." She smiled kindly, making a small note. "Secondly, there's nothing wrong with nicotine patches, and you can stay on them if you wish, but absolutely no smoking. I'm assuming that you work with the Met, and you can obviously continue to do so, but I wouldn't recommend running after about week twenty. Not for the sake of the pup, but more for your sake. It'll kill your back, and if you throw that out... hard to fix with a pup inside you."

Sherlock rubbed his arm a little – that was a lot of food. He nodded a couple times. "Alright," he murmured, shifting a little again. He swallowed, glancing over at John. "I'm sure I won't want to be running much when I'm the size of a planet anyway," he said, looking down at his stomach.

"Anything else?" Sherlock asked, almost asking if they would be able to see it, but at just barely over a month it probably didn't look like much more than a peanut.

"Good for now," Maria said, standing and smiling, holding out her hand to Sherlock. "I've got you scheduled for another appointment with me in two months, at your twelve week mark, just to check up on things and see how you're doing. If you have any questions or concerns before then, you can call me at any time. My mobile's always on me."

Sherlock nodded, standing up and shaking her hand quickly. "Thank you," he said, shifting a little on his feet and licking his lips. He hesitated a moment, glancing at the ultrasound machine again before starting for the door, pulling it open and stepping out into the hall with John in tow.

"To your sister's then?" Sherlock asked, walking a little quicker now, not wanting to be there. John moved to keep up with Sherlock, stepping into the lift beside him and leaning back against the wall. He reached into his pocket and took out his phone, reading the message that he had received from Harry. "Yeah, she says we can come over for as long as we want. She also snapped at me for not visiting sooner." John rolled his eyes, putting his phone back into his pocket and stepping out of the lift when the doors opened.

"She would," Sherlock murmured, stepping out into the lobby and out the door, his hand folded inside of John's. He hailed a cab and they slid in, Sherlock giving the address.

"So, do we even bother telling your mother or just see if she figures it out?" Sherlock asked, feeling significantly more at ease not that they'd left that place. "Might be more fun, and I'm honestly curios to see if she does."

John laughed, able to relax now that Sherlock wasn't so on edge. He wrapped his arm around Sherlock, pulling him in against him. "Don't say anything to her. My bet is that she'll guess within... twenty-five minutes."

Sherlock smiled a little, relaxing more at John's ease. He sighed. "I would say fifteen. She knew about my parents, after all," he pointed out, resting his head on John's shoulder. He was quiet for a little while after that. "It made it feel a little more real... going there," he said.

"Is that why you were so uncomfortable?" John asked quietly, kissing the top of Sherlock's head and then resting his chin on it. "That's just her way of caring. She's always believed that secrets were stupid and hurtful, so she always pulled them out of Harry and me and made us face them. She did the same to you because she cares."

"Not all of them. Sometimes secrets protect people," Sherlock said softly. He let out a breath. "It
doesn't matter anyway, not really."

Sherlock looked up at John. "Do they know? That we were in hospital almost a month ago? That I was shot?" he asked.

John slowly shook his head, realising that that had been one of the last things on his mind at the time. "They don't even know that I was shot in Afghanistan," he admitted, meeting Sherlock's gaze.

Sherlock blinked a few times. "I'm sure Harry suspects – I saw her eying you – but she won't pry. Doesn't want to scare you off of visiting," he murmured quietly.

John nodded softly. "Surprised Mum doesn't know. If she does, she's keeping it quiet for the same reason." He sighed, rubbing his eyes.

Sherlock nodded, humming a little as he looked out the window. "Perhaps they don't want to bring it up... figure you'll bring it up when you're ready."

John looked outside, vaguely recognising the part of town they were in. "Almost there."

Sherlock sat up a bit more, pulling out some cash for the driver. When they arrived, Sherlock paid the driver and climbed out, moving up the steps to the house and waited for John before knocking.

A minute later, Harry answered the door. "John! Sherlock, nice to see you two again, took your bloody time with it, though, come in," she said, waving them in.

John rolled his eyes at Harry's comment, though he was smiling as he walked inside, Sherlock behind him. His mother was waiting in the entryway, and she moved to wrap them both in hugs as soon as they had shrugged out of their coats.

Sherlock hung up his coat before he was caught up in another one of those hugs that left him blinking and stunned.

Mindy left her hands on Sherlock's shoulders a moment longer than John's, then stepped back to study the both of them.

"Alright," Mindy said unexpectedly, "which one of you is pregnant?" she teased, winking at John and smiling at Sherlock.

Sherlock looked at her when she started speaking, and then felt his stomach drop. His mouth was open a little and he stammered, ears going pink beneath his curls. "I... h-how..." He was lost for words.

Harry however, was not. "Bloody hell, John, didn't waste any time did you? Congratulations!" she said, clapping John on the back, her comment making Sherlock's face warm even more.

"E-erm... bathroom..." Sherlock said, stomach flipping even more and he dashed up the stairs, able to find the toilet easy. He gulped down air, feeling like he was going to be sick, but it wasn't happening yet.

John smiled apologetically at his family, but his mother shook her head firmly.

"He's new to it and young. Not to mention growing up an in un-ideal and unorthodox way." She smiled at him and cupped his cheek. "Better go be with him."

John nodded, thanking her with his eyes and trotting up the stairs and to the bathroom. He nudged
open the cracked-open door, lowering himself to the floor beside Sherlock and gently rubbing his back, murmuring calming things to him that didn't really make much sense.

Sherlock was trembling a little, not sure where the almost panicky feeling had come from. Out of nowhere, it would seem, but it was probably chemical imbalance, he rationalised, but that didn't make it go away, knowing what it was. He took gulping breaths, dry heaving a few times, though his toast was no longer in his stomach to toss up.

Sherlock leant into John when he was done, wrapping his arms around his middle and hiding his face against his chest, trying to get his breathing under control.

"Shh, easy, love," John murmured, holding Sherlock close. He turned so that he was leaning against the cabinet under the sink and pulled Sherlock easily onto his lap, cradling him against his chest. "You're alright. Deep breaths, and keep them slow," he said quietly, running his fingers through Sherlock's hair. "Try to match my breaths and pulse."

Sherlock let out a puff of air, trying to draw in the next slower, but it just got pushed back out again rapidly. His heart was racing in his chest and he gripped onto John's arm, trying to ground himself. He'd never had a panic attack before, but now that he felt this way it couldn't be anything else.

"J-John... make it... stop," Sherlock worked out, curling up into a ball. He thought of those points John had pressed last night, frantically trying to find them with his own shaking fingers and soon giving up.

John moved Sherlock gently and slowly, turning him so that they were facing each other and Sherlock's legs were around his hips, preventing him from curling up into a ball. He connected their lips, focusing Sherlock's breathing by supplying and taking his own breaths for a while. He moved Sherlock's hands to his shoulders, then gently found some of the pressure points Sherlock was searching for. He pressed a few softly, massaged some others, and pressed hard against still others, easing Sherlock down from where he was.

Sherlock's head felt light, his breaths uneven, pushing against John's. He was hit with John's scent, and that, combined with the pressure on his torso and sides, made his breathing start to slow. The panic started to ebb from his head and he rested his forehead against John's, matching his breaths with John's as he wound his arms more around his neck.

"Thank you..." Sherlock breathed, his eyes shut. "I don't... know where that came from I... sorry," he murmured quietly. "Made an arse of myself in front of your family," he muttered.

"Don't," John whispered, threading his fingers into Sherlock's hair. "Don't apologise. It's not your fault. You can't control panic attacks, trust me, I know." He kissed Sherlock gently, not moving his lips too far away, maintaining his level breathing by some miracle. "And no you didn't. Mum understands, and she's explaining it to Harry. Probably with a lot of sarcasm, if I know my family."

Sherlock sighed a little, blinking his eyes open. It was gone now, completely gone. "Okay," he said quietly. "Do you just want us to go or... well, I could probably do with some tea maybe," he murmured softly. Next best thing, considering he didn't have a patch on him, couldn't smoke, and wouldn't touch the other, especially now. "Could you? You make it perfectly," he said quietly. "I'm okay now... I can go downstairs and... I dunno, make small talk with your mother or something," he murmured.

"Alright," John murmured, brushing some of Sherlock's hair back from his forehead. "Alright, I'll make you some tea. I'll drag Harry in with me so that I can deal with her curiosity. Mum'll be nice to you." He stood slowly, pulling Sherlock with him. "I love you," he whispered, cupping Sherlock's
face and kissing him lightly over his chin and lips and forehead.

Sherlock nodded, standing up and wrapping his arms around John again. "Mm love you too," he murmured quietly, letting out a breath before pulling a bit away, his hand on the doorknob. He pulled it open and stepped out into the hallway, looking at the staircase. He waited for John – his family's home after all.

John left the bathroom and took Sherlock's hand, leading him down the stairs and into the living room, where his mum was seated in a chair and Harry was sprawled out on the sofa.

"Harry, come help me make some tea. I don't know where you keep everything." John squeezed Sherlock's hand before letting go, gesturing for Harry to follow as he walked into the kitchen.

Sherlock swallowed, looking at the two of them. He gave a small smile at John, glancing at Harry as she got up and walked past Sherlock, grinning like a Cheshire cat. He let out a breath, moving over to the sofa and sinking down onto it, not saying anything, not sure what he could say.

Mindy looked at Sherlock, assessing before she said anything. "I was scared my first time too," she said quietly, not looking back down at the scarf she was knitting. "I knew what was happening, obviously, but everything that I tried to predict went another way." She glanced up at Sherlock, making eye contact for a second. "It's alright to be scared."

Sherlock looked down at where his hands were in his lap, not meeting Mindy's gaze – she would only read more off of it. "I'm not..." he didn't bother finishing the lie. Truth was, he was terrified, completely.

"Oh, child. It's alright. No need to lie to an old woman." Mindy made a few more stitches before she cut the yarn and moved to a different colour. "If anyone can understand what you're going through, it's a mother of two. And trust me, child, you've got the best protection of anyone, with John beside you."

Sherlock nodded a little. "Yes... I know," he said softly. But then who was going to protect John? He couldn't tell John's mother about Moriarty. Or how he'd tried to kill John just so he could take Sherlock.

Sherlock felt a clench of fear then. If Moriarty had taken him... what would he have done when Sherlock was found to be pregnant? He swallowed, not he could say that. She'd be likely to chase him off with those knitting needles.

Mindy looked up at Sherlock, hearing the hesitancy in his voice. "What is it, child?" She took in the mask he had put on, the pain and fear she could see through it in the tremble of his leg, the stiffness of his back, and the clench of his hands. "Why are you so afraid? And don't lie, please. Save us the trouble."

Sherlock stammered a little, glancing at the door. Why was it taking so bloody long to make tea? He looked down, letting out a breath. "Like you said, perfectly normal to be afraid. That's all it is, nothing more," he said.

Sherlock paused a moment. "I'm not... I'm not good for John," he said finally. "I've only brought him trouble, and I can't promise there won't be more," he said quietly. "And now it's even worse, because it's not just him I'm going to put in trouble anymore," he said, looking down at his stomach. He wouldn't have said that to John, he knew that. Something about Mindy... god, where was John?

Mindy was quiet for a moment, letting them both sit in silence for a while. "Something you should
know about John," she said, setting her knitting aside and crossing her legs, her hands folded on her knee. "He was a troublemaker. He got into fights at school, argued with the teachers. I couldn't teach him humility, because he was fearless. He broke his leg playing rugby because he got into a shoving match with one of the bigger boys before practice and they tripped him. He came back from the hospital and the first thing he did was get suspended for punching that boy and knocking him out cold. It wasn't until..." she swallowed, turning away for a moment. "Until Harry got taken the first time that I realised he was standing up for her, not looking for fights. You're not putting him in danger; he's putting himself in danger because he wants to. He has a firm belief that people shouldn't be alone, and he will defend that belief."

Sherlock swallowed, wondering if he should mention the bullet he took from the sniper that was going to kill her son. Mindy didn't understand all the details, and she couldn't. "Yes well... I don't want him to have to do that," he said. "Fact remains, whether he puts himself there or I do, he's still put there, and it's to do with me," he said, shifting uncomfortably. He sighed, looking down.

Mindy smiled slightly. Christ, no wonder they were so good for each other. Both stubborn as all hell and willing to sacrifice everything for the other. "Sherlock." She said his name to get his attention, drawing his eyes and holding him. "That fact remains," she repeated his words, "that John wants to be there. He wants to be on the front lines, taking bullets and patching up friends. He wants to defend what's right, and what he believes is right at the moment is you. And even if you keep pushing him away or lying to him or whatever it is you're doing to protect him, he's going to figure it out, he's going to get pissed, and then he's going to increase his effort tenfold." She sighed. "I may not like knowing that my son is protective as a bloody mother bear, but it's better than keeping him in a cage."

"Perhaps a cage would be better," Sherlock said softly. He sighed; it was clear that Mindy wasn't going to back down. He rubbed his shoulder lightly, which had started to ache a little. "I want John here, but it's not just about me, and..." he said, looking back up at her, "I'm not doing anything that he doesn't know about," he said.

_Not yet anyway._

Sherlock rolled his shoulders a little. "I should see what's keeping them... might need some help or something," he murmured, standing up and starting towards the door.
Chapter 10

Harry clapped John on the back again when they were in the kitchen. "Proud of ya, mate," she said, smiling as she leant against the counter. "Even Clara and I haven't decided on them yet... she has to travel a bit for work still, so…. We figure in a year or so," she said with a shrug.

John smiled, letting himself be happy. "Well it wasn't exactly... expected." He grinned sheepishly, walking over to where he remembered the tea being. Creative half-truths. "But I'm happy. I'm just worried about Sherlock."

Harry smiled. "Yeah, well, heats can be tricky I guess. I had one come early once; I'm just glad Clara had left the day before for work again." She paused. "Well not glad, but still. But you don't need to hear all this. I want to hear about you, where haven you two been? I see you once, and then... nothing," she said.

John furrowed his brow, looking over his shoulder at Harry. "Are you and Clara alright?" he asked, concerned as ever about his little sister. "What's going on?"

Harry looked at John steadily. "We're fine," she said. "She's just away a fair bit, paying dues for her company. Of course I wish she were here more, but that's just how it is," she said, making her and Mum's tea. "It's not forever," she said with a small smile.

John made his and Sherlock's tea, setting them aside to walk up to Harry and hug her. "I'm sorry, sis," he whispered, holding her tight and kissing her cheek. "I know that can't be easy. And I'm sorry I haven't been around lately. Been busy as all hell."

Harry smiled. "Thanks brother. Just make sure you come round more. I want to be able to see my niece or nephew," she said, taking up a couple mugs.

"I will," John promised, grabbing Harry's elbow before she could leave the kitchen. "Hang on. I'm..." he looked toward the direction of the living room. "Sherlock won't tell me what's bothering him. I'm hoping he'll talk to Mum."

Harry blinked, looking at John. "You're leaving him to be interrogated you mean. You know mum, she gets right to the quick of it, and perhaps Sherlock's had enough time alone with her for now. Don't want him freaking out again, he'll never come back to visit," she said.

John kept staring at the kitchen door, his hands in his pockets. "He needs this, Harry. He needs to talk to someone, and he isn't talking to me, because it's probably about me. And I trust Mum, she'll be gentle on him if he needs it, and harsh if he needs it. I know he's only nineteen, but he's... well, he would say he's superior and above all that nonsense."

Harry sighed. "Christ you're stubborn, you really are," she muttered. "Look, Mum's tea is getting cold, so I'm going in there. You can do as you like," she said, walking past John and into the hall where she nearly ran into Sherlock. "Oh! Careful there, he's back that way," she said with a nod towards the kitchen as she took the tea into the living room.

Sherlock lingered in the hall between the two rooms. Why hadn't John come out too?

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John sighed, leaning back against the counter with his hands braced on either side of his hips. He tipped his head back, his eyes closed and just breathed deeply. His shoulder burned, the way it did
when he was freaking out or stressed or worried or... well, basically always, but now it was more prominent. Un-ignorable. He heard the door open but didn't bother looking up. He knew who it was.

Sherlock slid into the kitchen, seeing John there. He walked up to stand in front of him before he wrapped his arms around his waist. "I thought we were going to talk to your mum together," he murmured, breathing in John's scent. He was worried, Sherlock could tell.

"Were you hoping she was going to pull it all out of me?" Sherlock asked with a small smile. "I can't tell her everything John... if I did then those knitting needles would end up in my spine," he said quietly. John wouldn't even tell them that he got shot while at war, when one was more likely to get shot, how could Sherlock hope to explain how things were now?

John tipped his head forward, resting it against Sherlock's shoulder. He set his hands on Sherlock's hips, pulling him closer. "I'm worried about you, love. I just want you to have someone to talk to, because you're not talking to me." He nuzzled against Sherlock's neck, taking a deep breath. "And she wouldn't blame you, she knows me too well."

Sherlock blinked. "I talk to you," he said quietly, sighing a little. "And fine, why not tell them?" he said, looking at John. "But you haven't even told them about Afghanistan so... I figured it wasn't the best idea yet," he murmured.

Afghanistan is different. But the argument died in John’s throat. Was it really all that different?

Sherlock tugged John's hand. "Come on, I want that tea, and I want you sitting next to me when your mother reads my mind again," he teased.

John sighed, handing Sherlock his mug of tea and walking into the living room, taking a spot in the corner of the couch.

Sherlock followed John out into the living room, sitting more towards the middle of the sofa to sit near John.

"I haven't even told you all about Afghanistan yet," John murmured quietly in Sherlock's ear, squeezing his hand. "How do you expect me to tell my family?"

Sherlock looked at his mug when John murmured that to him, and he nodded. "I understand," he said softly, lifting his cup and sipping off of it.

Sherlock swallowed, glancing up at Mindy. "So... how did you know?" he asked. "About... about the pup?" he asked.

Mindy smiled over the top of her mug, the liquid warming her hands. "Comparison. There was a difference between the two of you today compared to the last time you were here. John had a look in his eye that said he'd been in a hospital recently, and he could never hide anything important from me." She looked solidly at her son, raising her eyebrows.

John ducked his head, knowing then that she already knew something bad had happened in Afghanistan, though probably not the particulars. He sighed, taking a long drink of his tea and not meeting his mother's gaze.

Sherlock nodded a little. "Very perceptive," he murmured. "And I doubt anyone could hide anything from you for very long," he added quietly, rubbing his elbow a little against John's. He figured a change of subject was probably best, small talk. He could do that. "I'm sure it was interesting with any boyfriends or girlfriends he brought home," he said.
Mindy snorted. "John never brought anyone home. I told him as soon as he started dating that he wasn't allowed to bring anyone home until he was sure they were the one. You were the first."

"And last," John said, looking up at his mother and then back over at Sherlock, running their elbows together.

Sherlock felt his ears warm a little, and he looked down at his mug, though he couldn't help the corners of his mouth from quirking up a little. He leant a bit more against John, bringing his feet up onto the sofa after toeing off his shoes. He wouldn't dare put those on the furniture in front of John's mother. "But you did date though... didn't you?" he asked, tilting his head up to look at John.

John shrugged. "Yeah. Women, mostly, but a couple men. None of them ever really clicked, and one of us would end up cutting it off." He rested his hand on Sherlock's knee, smiling at him for a moment, thinking of all the ways Sherlock clicked with him but saying none of them because he didn't want to embarrass him.

Sherlock smiled a little, understanding John's meaning when he looked at him.

John looked over at his mother with a sigh, casting a glance at Harry before his eyes drifted back to his mum. "May as well ask, Mum. I know you're dying to."

Mindy raised her head more, her smile slipping a little before she nodded. "What happened, child? Over in that warzone?"

Sherlock let out a breath, wondering what it was that Mindy was going to ask about. He let out a breath when she did ask. He looked at John, taking hold of his hand. You don't have to... only if you're ready, he thought at him, giving his hand a squeeze.

She already knows. No point keeping it a secret, John thought back, squeezing Sherlock's hand in response.

"I uhm..." John sighed, rubbing his eyes. "I got shot." He blinked, and everything tumbled out, describing the whole experience in as detailed a way as he could with the oath he was under. He leant heavier against Sherlock as he spoke, squeezing his hand.

I need to borrow your strength. I'll give it back later.

Sherlock felt his chest tighten as John spoke, feeling more and more terrible for him, holding his hand tightly. He pressed closer to John, trying to be sturdy for him like he was for Sherlock.

John finally ran out of words, his head resting on Sherlock's shoulder, his eyes looking anywhere but at Harry or his mum.

There was silence after John finished, finally telling for the first time to anyone what had happened. He wished it was just them; he would have crawled onto John's lap and wrapped himself around him for a week.

After a few minutes, Harry stood, feeling terrible for the comment about John getting shot at from their last visit. "I-I need a drink," she said, stepping out into the kitchen.

Sherlock tightened his hold on John's hand, lest he be tempted to try and get up to do the same.

John looked after Harry, tempted to go after her and do the same until Sherlock's grip tightened. He swallowed thickly, burying his face in Sherlock's neck, wordlessly thanking him. "Sorry for bringing the mood down," he said softly to whomever was in the room.
"Nonsense," his mother chastised, rising to her feet. "I'm going to go check on your sister."

Sherlock watched her stand up and leave the room, closing the door. He swallowed, waiting a moment before shifting himself up onto John's lap and wrapping his arms around him. "I am so sorry John, and... for the record, the mood was brought down by my nonsense panic attack over your mother knowing I was pregnant," he said, kissing John's jaw and cheek gently, eventually gently taking up his lips as well. "I love you, and you're home now," he said quietly.

John took a deep breath, fighting down his own panic that had been rising. "I know. I know. I know I'm home. It's just..." he rested his forehead against Sherlock's, ghosting their lips together. "They were family. All of them." He sighed, squeezing his eyes shut for a moment, his arms circling around Sherlock and holding him closely.

"Christ, I think that's enough emotional trauma for the day, don't you?" John asked, trying to lighten the mood a little.

"I don't know," Sherlock murmured. "Harry's yet to have an existential crisis," he said, pressing a chaste kiss to John's lips. He traced his fingers down John's jaw, sighing a little. "We should... I don't know, go out or something. Apparently I have to get fat or something... and we've yet to celebrate. That's what normal people do right? Celebrate these kinds of things?" he asked, his hand going to his stomach a bit.

"But since when are we normal?" John teased, kissing Sherlock again. "Yes, though, we should. And you're not supposed to get fat, it's nutrients for the pup." He placed his hand over Sherlock's on his stomach, running his thumb over his knuckles then twining their fingers together.

Sherlock sighed. "Fifteen hundred calories a day, John, that's loads," he said with a sigh. "S'pose I'm going to get fat anyway, though," he murmured. He wasn't that vain really, but there were certain things he was particular about, and stretch marks were not something he wanted either.

John snorted. "Fifteen hundred calories is five hundred less than what I ate before..." he waved his hand to encompass going to war.

Sherlock sighed, taking the opportunity. "Reinstating the old rule, you have to eat the same as I do, if not more. You're stocky, or should be," he muttered.

John chuckled. "We'll head out when I'm sure Harry's not going to have her own panic attack or drown herself in Bourbon."

"Right, well... guess I'll have to get off your lap to do that," Sherlock said, shifting off of the sofa. "You should ah... check on her then," he said.

John stood up, kissing Sherlock again, and walked into the kitchen, knocking before he went in. "Harry? You alright?"

Harry was holding a glass in her hand, not much of a dent being made in it; she was mostly just holding it. She looked up when John came in. She nodded, then shook her head, then nodded again.

"I'm... I'm fine," Harry said. "That was just... a lot to hear is all. You went through all that, and I didn't even know. I didn't know where you were or anything... and if you died... Christ..." she said, shaking her head before setting the glass aside and wrapping John up in a hug.
John hugged her back tightly. "It's alright, Harry, it's alright," he murmured, his hands knotting in her shirt. "It's not your fault; I didn't want you to know. I didn't want anyone to know. I went through it, it happened, and I didn't want to drag anyone into it." He took a breath, stepping back with his hands tight on her shoulders. "I love you, sis. Don't let this eat at you."

Harry nodded, smiling a little. "I won't... you're back now. We just work on that," she said, glancing over John's shoulder at where Sherlock was peeking into the kitchen. She smiled a little. "Looks as though we're being watched," she said softly. "He's interesting, seems nice, if a bit... skittish," she said, looking up at John. "Pups'll be adorable too with the two of you," she smirked.

John smacked his sister lightly. "Oh shut up," he said, looking back over at Sherlock and gesturing him into the kitchen.

Sherlock blinked once when he caught John looking at him. He hesitated before moving into the kitchen.

"Yeah, he's a bit coltish, but I can't blame him for it." He wrapped his arm around Sherlock's waist when he came in, pinning his sister with a look.

"I don't want to interrupt," Sherlock mumbled quietly, feeling John's arm go around him.

"So when do we get to meet Clara?" John asked, pressing a kiss to Sherlock's temple.

Sherlock glanced up at Harry, shifting slightly before letting out a breath, one of John's hands resting on the bruise on his right hip.

"She's due back in a week or so, but by that point I'll want her to myself, trust me. Feel like she's been gone for ages," Harry said. "Soon though, I hope. Her schedule is really unpredictable," Harry said with a small nod.

John smiled, squeezing his hand over Sherlock's hip a small amount. "I can understand that," he said, looking over at Sherlock. "Just let us know when it's a good time and I'll try to pop in. Hopefully dragging Sherlock behind me." He leant his head lightly against his bondmate's shoulder.

"We should probably go," John said after a moment. "Gotta go eat and then sleep for a long time. Did Mum go upstairs?" The door opened and he turned to look as his mother walked in.

"Leaving?" Mindy asked, walking up and pulling Sherlock into a hug, then giving a long, tight one to her son.

Sherlock didn't tense this time when Mindy pulled him into a hug, though he still blinked a couple times as if bemused.

"I'll see you soon." Mindy pulled away, stepping back beside Harry. "Love you both."

John smiled at her. "Love you too, Mum."

He shifted a little on his feet, listening to John return the sentiment, while he stood there, unsure what to say, or if he ought to react in some way. After a moment, he looked up again. "Nice seeing you again," he said quietly, and finding he meant it. He liked John's family, as odd as it was to be around them. But that was more culture shock than anything else.

John smiled, taking Sherlock's hand and leading him from the house after they had shrugged on their coats. He hailed a cab and slid inside, his arm automatically circling Sherlock's waist. "Your call on the restaurant," he said, looking up at him expectantly.
Sherlock leant against John, shutting his eyes in response to being close to his scent, relaxing again. "Well since caloric intake is the goal, why not Angelo's again? Pasta and all those carbohydrates or whatever it is I need." He blinked a couple times. "That doctor never said anything about prenatal medication. Do I have to take them?" he asked. Wasn't that better for the pup?

John gave the address to Angelo's to the cabbie, turning his head to kiss Sherlock's forehead. "I can get you some, if you'd like. Most of them are over the counter. Like I said, you don't have to take them, they're just recommended." He ran his hand over Sherlock's side, nuzzling against his hair.

"Alright," Sherlock said softly. "I want... I want to do it right, give it the best chance that I can," he said quietly. "After everything I did to my body, and everything that happened to it before... I don't want to take the chance by not taking one small pill a day," he said.

John smiled. "I understand, love. I'll get you the pills in the morning, how bout? Tonight I just... I want to eat and then I want to hold you and then I want to sleep for at least nine hours." He pulled Sherlock closer, taking his hand and squeezing it.

Sherlock nodded, smiling a little, and gave John's hand a squeeze. "Good, because I'm knackered," he murmured quietly, his head resting on John's shoulder. Despite the shorter man's stature, Sherlock had no problem curling up and feeling so small tucked next to him. He smiled again, resting his eyes for the cab ride.

John held onto Sherlock until the cab stopped, then he nudged him into a sitting position and paid the fair, hopping out of the cab and waiting for Sherlock on the pavement. He took his hand, squeezing it as he led the way inside.

Angelo was overjoyed to see them again, quickly leading them to the same table they had sat at before. Sherlock sank into the booth with a sigh.

"Promise I won't go running after any murderous cabbies," Sherlock said with a small grin, looking over at John.

John laughed, taking the seat next to him instead of across. "That's good, because I'm not sure you could convince me to move out of this seat for anything besides going home." He leant a little against him, smiling up at Angelo when he came back with glasses of water. Ordering a pasta dish, John handed the menu back over to Angelo, taking Sherlock's after he had ordered as well.

Sherlock watched Angelo walk away and sighed a little, looking around the restaurant a bit. "I wonder if Mycroft ever gets bored," he murmured. "Though admittedly he's not watching us personally, but he probably reads reports. I expect I'll get a text any time now about my appointment," he murmured.

John set his hand on Sherlock's thigh, running his thumb over his leg lightly. "Not sure if he gets bored or not, but he worries about you, and to him it's most likely worth it." He squeezed Sherlock's leg a little, smiling over at him and then people watching.

Sherlock shrugged a little, humming a small bit at John's hand on his thigh. He looked at John's smile, giving one of his own before seeing John look over at the restaurant. There were a few people looking at them, smiling. He felt his ears warm a little again and nearly scooted a small bit away, but he bit back the urge.

"You should work on that self-conscious tendency of yours," John murmured, casting another smile at Sherlock. "I know you're used to mostly negative attention, but, love, most people aren't like that. Most people are, if not good, then indifferent." He leant over, purposefully pressing a kiss to his
cheek.

Sherlock flushed furiously, letting out a breath. "I know," he murmured quietly. It was something he needed to work on, he knew that. It was difficult though.

Sherlock looked up when Angelo came back with their plates, and then again a moment later with a candle, as well as holding out a bottle of wine.

John laughed, himself going a little red when the wine was produced. "That sounds lovely, Angelo, thank you," he said, holding their glasses for the man to pour the red drink into. When he left, John lifted the wine to his lips, taking a small sip. "It's good," he commented, picking up his fork and taking a bite of noodles.

Sherlock took up a fork, and stabbed up some pasta, looking at his glass. "Actually, Angelo can I get some water?" he asked after the restaurant owner, to which the man nodded.

Sherlock ate a few bites of his food, taking up a bread stick and biting into it. "You can have my wine, John," he murmured, knowing that he shouldn't have any himself.

John shook his head, taking a couple more bites followed with a sip of wine. "I'm really not a wine man. And I don't need it, anyway." He pushed his pasta around, hunting a piece of chicken before pointing at Sherlock's dish. "You have to eat half of that, at least," he said, stealing a couple of his noodles.

Sherlock nodded, eating some more on his plate. "Alright," he murmured, though he already almost felt full from just a handful of bites.

Sherlock chewed thoughtfully for a little while. "Where will we put it?" he asked. "Upstairs?" He looked at John.

John glanced over at Sherlock, thinking about it. "When it gets old enough, I think. It'll have to be in our room until it can actually sleep through the night, though." He chuckled softly, taking another small sip of his wine. "Don't know about you, but I really don't want to be running upstairs six times a night or more."

Sherlock blinked a couple times, furrowing his brow a little. "Six times? I thought babies slept most of the time," he said. They weren't really his area, and Sherlock would be lying if he said he didn't feel out of his depth.

John chuckled to himself, finding it a little amusing to have him be the knowledgeable one on something and Sherlock be mostly in the dark. "Six times at least. I know some pups are fussy or sensitive and can wake up around twelve times a night."

"Twelve times?" Sherlock asked, nearly incredulous at the thought. "Good lord, why on Earth would they even do that?" he asked with a sigh.

John shrugged, taking Sherlock's hand and soothing his thumb over his knuckles. "Food, mostly. They get hungry at night, too. And then to change them every so often."

Sherlock said nothing. They'd have to get all matter of things, including bottles, he guessed. That was how they fed small things like that. He sighed, poking at his food a little, before making himself take a few more bites until the plate was about half empty.

John kept eating past when Sherlock stopped, finishing most of his food and then half of his wine before he pushed it away and leant over against Sherlock. "We can trade off nights, though. I don't
expect you to do it all. I don't want you to do it all."

Sherlock nodded, murmuring a quiet 'yes please, thank you' to Angelo when he asked if they wanted boxes. "My mother told me I was a very quiet pup," Sherlock murmured.

John took the boxes from Angelo when he brought them, smiling his thanks. "I wasn't quiet. Harry was, though. She was always smiling and happy, and I was most often fussy or upset about something. Ironically, we swapped out personalities at about five years old."

Sherlock hummed, loading up his pasta into the box and sticking a couple breadsticks in as well. "Well... guess there's no knowing about it then," he said with a small sigh. "Everything about it is just... unknown," he said. They got up, Sherlock nodding at Angelo with a small smile as they left, and started to walk home. It was only five minutes away, anyway. Sherlock felt his phone go off and pulled it out to look.

*I waited for you to inform me, however I believe congratulations are in order. MH*

Sherlock smirked, looking up and easily finding a CCTV camera, trained on them. He smiled, shaking his head a little.

John followed Sherlock's gaze when they were outside, noticing the CCTV camera. He smirked, taking Sherlock's hand and squeezing, leading him away down the street. "I'll never understand the two of you," he said, glancing up at Sherlock with a small smile. "Just a text and an acknowledgement, and then it's done."

Sherlock looked down. "Yes, well... I suppose it's what we're suited for," he said. "Like I said, our family was never extremely affectionate. My brother and I were close at one time, but then everything sort of drifted when he left for uni, and then got recruited to the government. And then after everything else... it's enough, I suppose," he said, glancing at John. "It's why I find your family and your interactions so intriguing and... confusing. What your mother said..." That was confusing as well. She'd met Sherlock twice.

"What?" John asked, looking up at Sherlock curiously. "That she loved you?" He smiled, squeezing Sherlock's hand again. "My mother has a very big heart without many people to love or love her back. And she has a very simple, straight forward mind. She knows that I love you, and, as far as she's concerned, that means that she loves you too." He lifted Sherlock's hand to his lips, kissing each knuckle individually.

Sherlock thought about that, letting out a breath and squeezing John's hand softly in return. He could only really think of one person he loved. Though perhaps Mycroft? He cared for his brother, as annoying as he was. And in their own way, they showed affection. But John was different. "I see," he said softly.

"You alright?" John asked, looking up at Sherlock as they waited for traffic to thin so that they could cross the street.


John nodded, squeezing Sherlock's hand again as they crossed the street, making their way down the last block to the flat. He unlocked the door, stepping inside and holding it open for Sherlock. "Well,
let's get inside and you can nap while I hold you, how bout?" he offered, locking the door behind them and starting up the stairs.

Sherlock nodded a little, moving up the stairs and setting his box in the fridge. He realised that it would be too early in the day just to go to sleep. He sighed, hanging up his jacket and coat and walking over to John's chair to wait.

John crossed into the kitchen, setting his box on top of Sherlock's and tossing his jacket over the back of a chair. He walked into the living room, lowering himself into the chair and gently pulling Sherlock onto his lap.

Sherlock allowed himself to be pulled into John's lap with a small smile. He sighed a little, snuggling closer to John and resting his head on his shoulder. He looked up at John for a moment before shutting his eyes. He swallowed, letting himself relax a bit. "'m just taking a nap," he murmured, his fingers playing with the hair at the nape of John's neck as he started to drift off.

John made a noise of acknowledgement, sighing softly at Sherlock's fingers in his hair. "Sleep well, love," he murmured, resting his cheek atop Sherlock's head and running his hand down his back until he felt his body go limp. He smiled, closing his own eyes, half-resting while Sherlock slept.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Angst. So much angst.

Sherlock slept for a couple hours, his breathing even. He shifted slightly on John's lap as he started to come to, blinking his eyes open and looking up at him. "Hey," he murmured quietly, letting out a slow breath as he stretched a small bit.

"Hello, love," John whispered, parting his eye lids and kissing Sherlock's forehead. "How'd you sleep?" he asked, gazing up at the window, mulling over something in his head the same way he'd been doing for the last few hours.

Sherlock didn't answer; he could sense that John was going to ask him something important, and he wondered what it was that was bothering him.

"Sherlock..." John sighed, combing his fingers through the Omega's hair to calm himself down. "Love, when you shot at that Alpha, at Sebastian, did you purposefully hit his femoral artery?" He looked down at Sherlock, needing to know.

Sherlock blinked at the question, looking down. He swallowed. "I wasn't... not aiming for it," he said slowly. "But I wasn't really aiming for it either." He shook his head a little. "I knew it was there, and I knew I could hit it. I didn't care," he said steadily.

John nodded slowly, swallowing and tightening his arms around Sherlock. "Alright. I just wanted to know," he murmured, resting his forehead against Sherlock's curls. "Ready to go to bed? I'm properly knackered."

Sherlock turned to look at the light outside the window, noting the time. He looked at John. "You didn't have to stay awake the whole time," he murmured, sliding off of John's lap and stretching out his limbs a little. He strode over to his violin. "Been a minute since I tended to it... I'll follow along in a little bit," he said, looking back towards John.

John stood, shaking out his leg, which was starting to fall asleep. "Don't be too long," he said quietly, walking up to Sherlock to kiss him drowsily. "I don't like sleeping in an empty bed anymore." He smiled softly at Sherlock before stepping back and walking into the bedroom, stripping down to his pants and crawling under the covers. Unwillingly, he was asleep within minutes.

Sherlock nodded, tuning his violin after John had left for bed. He did that for an hour or so before he too went back to their room and crawled into bed next to John, snuggling close to him.

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Time moved quickly after that it seemed, and before he knew it, the time for Sherlock’s heat had come and past, much like when he was on his suppressants, only everything was different. To say Sherlock had developed an appetite was an understatement, and he had a particular fondness to chips and the spring rolls from the Chinese restaurant down the road.
Sherlock had, to count, four near melt downs since that first one, one of them almost happening on a crime scene. He had to leave quickly and call John at work to come get him. He felt different too, his chest tender, which was irritating, though sometimes everything was irritating, and then it wouldn't be.

John had laughed the first time Sherlock had had a meltdown, wagging a finger and saying "I told you so." He had nearly gotten slapped for it, and a pillow had been thrown at him. He had called a halt to their agreement of whatever Sherlock ate, so did John, because the Omega was wolfing down nearly twenty-five hundred calories a day at this point. He wasn't even twelve weeks along, and John wondered what that meant, exactly. Sherlock's stomach was a little rounder than normal – alright, quite a bit rounder than normal – and that pleased John to no end, but he was worried about how little sleep his bondmate was getting.

Sherlock's next appointment was only a few days away, and he had yet another night where he couldn't really sleep, listening instead to John's breathing. He dozed eventually, and woke again in the early morning, feeling sick again. He got up, walking into the bathroom when he felt the cramp, doubling over a bit. He winced, reaching over and shutting the door, not knowing why. He sat down on the edge of the tub, holding his abdomen lightly. After a little while it passed, and he sighed, still not feeling right. He felt something on his thigh and scratched it, his hand coming back a bit red, and he froze, eyes widening as it felt like his heart stopped.

John woke up when he felt Sherlock get out of bed, walking over to the bathroom door as was becoming the norm, to comfort Sherlock until he was done being sick. He froze just on the threshold after pushing open the door, staring at the red on Sherlock's hand. "Sherlock?" he asked worriedly, searching his face.

Sherlock blinked slowly a few times, still staring at his hand. He furrowed his brow, gaze lowering to the floor to see a couple small droplets. He felt numb and terrified all at once. He looked up when he heard his name, looking at John with wide eyes, not knowing what he should do, what was happening. He winced when he got another cramp, a whimper rising from him. "Wh-what did I do?" he asked in a small voice, sinking down off of the tub to the floor, curling up.

Oh, shit. John forced himself to stay calm, not wanting to drive Sherlock to fear or panic, though John was well beyond the point of both. "Nothing, love, nothing," he assured, lifting him up by his waist and pulling him back into the bedroom, easing him into his dressing gown and tying it around his waist before he hurried to get dressed himself. "Come on, love, we're going to go check it out."

Sherlock was shaking slightly as John pulled his robe on around him. "N-not nothing... did something... wrong..." he said, voice a wavering a little. He doubled over again, sitting abruptly onto the bed, his arms wrapped around himself. Sherlock clamped his eyes shut, thinking through every little thing, any small thing he could have done. He'd forgotten his pills for a couple days during a case. He'd still been wearing patches – maybe he shouldn't have at all.

"Heyheyhey," John said, a little bit of panic rising out of him at the sight of Sherlock in pain. "You didn't do anything wrong, I promise," he murmured, wrapping his arm around Sherlock's shoulders and pulling him to his feet again, ignoring the spot of blood on the duvet and slowly guiding him down the hall to the door. He didn't bother with jackets and barely got them both into shoes. "I would have told you," he promised, half carrying Sherlock down the stairs.

Sherlock clutched onto John's arm as they moved down the steps, Sherlock's breath a little unsteady, still trembling. They stepped out into the cool air, Sherlock leaning heavily onto John. It was late, and there wasn't a cab in sight. He let out a breath, looking up at one of the cameras that he knew was constantly trained on the flat.
"W-wait," Sherlock panted, whimpering again at another cramp. It was a couple minutes before a car arrived, and they climbed into it, Sherlock all but lying down on the seat, curling into a ball.

John pulled Sherlock against him, letting him lie down with his head resting on his thighs. "You're alright. It's going to be alright," he murmured, over and over again, stroking his fingers through Sherlock's slowly dampening hair. He tried to run through what was happening, tried to figure out what was going on, but his brain wasn't working, clouded with fear for Sherlock. Not good, was all he could think.

Sherlock was still trembling, resting his head on John's lap, murmuring quietly, incoherently. He didn't care about himself, but he felt a clench of fear in the thought that he'd lost it. That he'd ruined everything. He swallowed, feeling tired and scared, not even registering that his cheeks were wet as his eyes closed.

John brushed the tears away, willing the car to go faster.

They turned the corner and there was the hospital. John leapt out as soon as the car had stopped, lifting Sherlock up into his arms despite him being heavier, and all but ran inside, yelling for help as soon as they were in the lobby.

Sherlock hummed a little as he was lifted up from the car.

John gripped Sherlock tighter as nurses ran toward them, pressing their foreheads together and brushing his nose past Sherlock's. "It's alright, it's okay," he murmured, his tears dripping down to join Sherlock's before the nurses pulled him away.

Please, God, let him live.

Sherlock felt other hands on him though, feeling them replacing John's. He frowned, blinking his eyes open slowly and looking around as he was wheeled away. He tried sitting up, being pushed back, the nurses murmuring reassuring things to him. He shook his head, not wanting to hear it; he just wanted to know it was okay, for a fact. He faded out again, though, not knowing any more after that.

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It was a few hours later when someone came out to the waiting room for John, it was Dr Maria. John jumped up when he saw the doctor, exhausted from pacing and tense from worrying. "What happened? Is Sherlock okay? Is... is the pup?" He didn't dare let himself hope, as a doctor knowing the likelihood of survival for the pup was severely low.

Dr Maria gestured for him to follow, leading him down the hallway and down a few corridors. She led him into a room where Sherlock was sleeping, a small drip in his arm. His face pinched a small bit as he slept, but he stayed unconscious.

"He's fine, John. I wanted to tell you that now. Sherlock is absolutely fine," Maria said, nodding at the other Omega. She let out a breath, looking at John. "He did have... a miscarriage, John," she said slowly. "It's common among Omegas with their first pregnancy," she said, looking at Sherlock. "However," she continued, "one of the pups is still alive," she said softly. "Fraternal twins. Had they been identical..." she trailed off, looking at Sherlock.

John gazed into the room, watching Sherlock sleep with the aid of anaesthesia. He swallowed, so many emotions raging through him that he wasn't sure which one was the most dominant. "Christ," he breathed, pressing the heels of his hands to his eyes, leaning heavily against the doorframe and
nearly sliding down it to the floor. "He's going to blame himself; he already was. What am I supposed to tell him?" For once, he was at a complete loss, not used to having Sherlock so close to death. Now he knew how Sherlock felt all the time, and he didn't like it.

Maria blinked a few times, furrowing her brow a little. "Well... I suppose you tell him the truth," she said gently. "It wasn't his fault; it's very common, as I said," she said softly, walking over to pull a chair over to John. "I want him here for today; he can go tomorrow morning if everything stays stable. The important thing John... is that you didn't lose both of them, there's still one in there," she said, giving John's shoulder a small squeeze before leaving again.

John somehow made his way over to the chair by Sherlock's bed, folding his arms over the edge of the mattress and dropping his head into them. He choked on a sob, letting himself cry because, hell, he wasn't really sure why. Relief? Probably the number one reason. And an after-effect of the stress and panic of the last few hours.

John found Sherlock's hand and held it, gently stroking his thumb over his knuckles.

Sherlock's brow furrowed a small bit, though he didn't start to come to for another half hour. He hummed, rolling onto his right side and pulling his eyes open. He blinked, seeing John there, his hand wrapped around Sherlock's. Sherlock gave his hand a small squeeze, not meeting John's gaze when the man looked up. "It's gone, isn't it?" he asked after a minute.

John had stopped crying a while ago, just focusing on Sherlock's hand in his. He returned the pressure when Sherlock squeezed his hand, looking up at him. "One of them," he murmured. "You had twins, fraternal. Miscarried, but, we've still got one," he whispered, reaching up to cup Sherlock's cheek.

Sherlock blinked once, then again. "One of... twins," he said, still not looking at John. He swallowed, curling up a little more as a small frown tugged at his lips. He bit down on the inside of his cheek as he shut his eyes again, turning his face more into the pillow, hiding it as a sob bubbled up out of nowhere and tore out of him.

"Oh, love."

Ignoring hospital procedure and rules, John toed off his shoes and climbed into the bed behind Sherlock, having no wires or tubes to avoid on this side, and wrapped his arm around Sherlock. He pressed his hand against his chest, kissing the back of his neck gently. "It's alright, sweetheart. It's okay," he murmured, rocking him gently.

In hindsight Sherlock would count this as meltdown number six, though really, it was the only one that had been completely warranted. Sob after sob came out of him, and he curled up a little away from John, or tried to, the Alpha's embrace seemingly everywhere. Why would John still want him? He'd probably just kill the other one too.

Sherlock covered his face, not sure where the surge of emotion was coming from, but he didn't even try to analyse it this time. He mumbled between sobs and hiccups in what sounded like French, coughing a few times before burying his face again in the pillow, shaking.

John just held Sherlock closer, knowing it was the last thing he wanted but the first thing he needed. "Shh, love, it's alright, you're alright." He couldn't think of anything else to say, and in the back of his mind, John knew there really wasn't anything he could say if Sherlock was refusing to listen.

"Will you look at me, love?" John asked after Sherlock's sobs had stopped, trembles still wracking his body.
Sherlock's whole body was tense and shaking, and he almost didn't hear John's request. He sniffed, rolling over a little, his IV tugging a bit but he didn't care. He rubbed his nose, not meeting John's gaze, electing to stare at his chest instead, his expression blank save for the pain in his red rimmed eyes.

John cupped Sherlock's face in his hands, tilting his head up so that their eyes met, even if for only a short, fleeting moment.

"Hey," John whispered, lightly placing kisses on Sherlock's forehead, and then his lips. "I don't blame you, and I don't hate you. It wasn't your fault. The doctor said it's common for young, first time Omegas." He wrapped his arms around Sherlock's shoulders, tucking his head against his chest. "It's going to be alright."

Sherlock's face fell into a frown again. Why couldn't John just be mad at him? It would be so much easier if he hated Sherlock. "But... but I lost it," he said. "We had two of them and it's dead. Gone," he said in a small voice. "I'm so sorry John."

John's heart ached for Sherlock, and he combed his fingers gently through his hair. "No, love, I'm sorry. I'm sorry you have to go through this." He kissed Sherlock's forehead again. "You're still alive, though, and we still have one, don't we?" He rested his forehead against Sherlock's, looking him in the eyes. "We have to go on for this one. He or she is still healthy and alive, love." He cupped Sherlock's cheek, stroking his thumb over his cheekbone.

Sherlock let out a breath, breaking down and nuzzling closer to John. He breathed in his calming scent, still shivering a little. "Still one... for now," he said quietly, looking down again. "John, I want... what if something else happens? What if..." he choked on the thought. "What if I can't have them?"

"Oh, love, no," John whispered, holding Sherlock closer. "Don't torture yourself, please. Everything is going to be fine. You're going to have a healthy pup and we're going to spoil it senseless, alright?" He nuzzled against Sherlock's hair, rubbing his back when he felt him shiver.

Sherlock leant into John's chest, pressing his forehead to the Alpha's chest. He nodded a little, wanting it to be true. But even if it was healthy... what about everything else? Moriarty.

Sherlock swallowed, pushing those thoughts away for now. "Mm love you," he murmured, starting to doze off again as he slowly calmed.

"Christ, I love you too," John whispered, stroking his fingers through Sherlock's hair until the Omega fell asleep. He let out a soft sob, the pain in his chest for Sherlock this time. "I'm so sorry, Sherlock," he breathed, his lips moving softly against Sherlock's hair. He held Sherlock tighter, rocking him slowly until he drifted off as well.

Sherlock slept for several hours, waking up just after noon. He blinked a few times, seeing John pressed close to him again. He let out a breath, looking around the room to see a nurse scrawling on a clipboard. He wondered if Mycroft was going to stop by, but he supposed he wouldn't this time. He sighed, wanting to go home and go to bed for a month.

John felt Sherlock stir, and it pulled him from his light doze. "Hey," he whispered, pushing some of Sherlock's hair back from his forehead. "How are you?"

Sherlock half shrugged a little, glancing down again. "'m okay," he said quietly, leaning into John's hand a little.
John glanced back at the nurse, watching as she smiled at them and hung the clipboard up on the end of the bed.

"Your doctor is coming in shortly. She would like to talk to the both of you."

John nodded and said thank you, sliding off the bed as the nurse disappeared into the hallway.

Sherlock glanced over at the nurse as she left and sighed, feeling the bed move as John got out of it. He rolled back over to his other side and curled up there, knowing John was just going to go back to his seat anyway. He scratched at his hand a little, picking at the tape that held the IV in his hand.

John looked back over at Sherlock from where he had started nervously pacing. "Don't pick at that, love," he chastised softly, walking back over and stilling his hand. "You could knock the needle around and tear the vein." He ran his fingers lightly over the back of Sherlock's hand, leaning down to kiss his forehead.

Sherlock's brow furrowed a little as he watched John's hand fall over his own. He pulled his hand away from the tape, shrugging a little indifferently. "Wouldn't be the first one I destroyed," he murmured quietly, curling up a small bit more. He let out a breath. "What does she want, anyway? The doctor. I don't need someone else telling me it's not my fault," he said.

"I don't know," John whispered, combing through Sherlock's hair and taking a seat on the edge of the bed. He looked up as the door opened, Maria walking through carrying a folder and a clipboard.

"How are you both feeling?" Maria asked softly, setting her items aside and walking up to check on Sherlock's vitals, which were pretty much back to normal.

Sherlock didn't answer when the doctor came in and asked how they were, not even looking up really when she was talking.

"I have something to show you," Maria said once she was satisfied, walking over to grab up the folder.

"Firstly, I just want you to know that the pup you lost was dead anyway, your surviving one wouldn't let it attach properly to the uterus wall, but your body couldn't expel it until it was big enough." Maria took out a dark photograph, and John realised it was an ultrasound. "Did this while you were out. She's healthy as can be."

John looked up at the doctor, who was smiling. "She?" he asked, glancing back down at the picture. Sherlock winced a little when she said the pup was dead anyway, like it had been doomed to begin with. He almost didn't register the last bit of the conversation until he heard John's question. He blinked a couple times, looking over at John and seeing the picture in his hand. He furrowed his brow a little, the slight confusion the only emotion on his face.

John took Sherlock's hand and squeezed it, tilting the ultrasound image so that Sherlock could see it better. "We're having a girl, Sherlock," he whispered, placing a soft kiss on his forehead, smiling gently to himself.

A girl. Christ. John hoped she had little blonde ringlets and eyes like Sherlock's. He giggled softly to himself, squeezing Sherlock's hand again. It felt so much more real now, more secure in knowing.

Sherlock blinked a few times, looking at the small ultrasound photo. He swallowed, glancing up at the doctor, and then to John. Sherlock felt something in his chest tighten a bit seeing John's face, how much he wanted it. And it only made him more afraid.
Sherlock looked over at the doctor again. "Isn't it early to know?" he asked. He was only barely out of a first trimester, he thought it took longer, but then perhaps some other test had been done other than the ultrasound, he had been unconscious.

Maria shook her head. "Blood test," she replied easily, noting the concern on Sherlock's face. "John," she said, turning to the Alpha, "can I talk to Sherlock alone, please?"

John looked up at the doctor, his gaze flicking between her and Sherlock. "Yeah, alright. I'll be right outside."

Sherlock looked between the two of them, not wanting John to go.

John stood from his spot on the bed, squeezing Sherlock's hand once more before releasing it, and left the room.

Sherlock furrowed his brow as John stepped out and shut the door, curling up a little more again. He glanced over at Maria, and then down again.

Maria looked back at Sherlock, pulling up the chair. "What's on your mind?" she asked.

"Nothing," Sherlock muttered softly, picking a little at the tape on his hand again.

"Sherlock," Maria folded her hands over her crossed knee, "I have been in charge of pregnant Omegas at this hospital for nearly twenty years now. There is nothing, through all of that, that I haven't seen. This is actually really common. A lot of Omegas, even fully mature ones on their second or third pregnancy, will lose one of their fraternal twins." She knew reaching out to comfort him wasn't in her best intentions, and she knew he probably wasn't going to believe her anyway. "So please, spare me, and just talk to me." She smiled kindly, not stopping him from his nervous picking.

Sherlock huffed a little, glancing up at her again. "John wants this so much. He wants her. And that's not to say I don't, but what if something happens? If not before it's born then after. And if it does, it will be my fault!" he snapped.

Moriarty, his fault. And that's what terrified Sherlock too, apart from losing the last pup they had. Or even how he'd be as a parent. Moriarty... and he was bringing a child into that life.

Maria sat quietly for a few seconds, sensing more to Sherlock's discomfort than what he was telling her. "Whatever happens, she's going to have two wonderful fathers looking after her." She shrugged lightly. "Sherlock, life is unpredictable. Bad things happen and people die. I do believe you're a detective, so you cannot argue with me that the world is cruel. But no two people, in my experience – which is covered with doting mothers who raise spoiled children – have been better suited to raise a child together." She stood, smoothing down her coat. "Just keep that in mind." She parted to the door, gesturing John back inside.

"Everything alright?" John asked once he was back beside Sherlock. "What did she say?"

Sherlock shook his head. "Nothing. Sentiment and such. Telling me it wasn't my fault," he murmured quietly. "And that everything's going to be fine," he said, sighing softly.

"'m alright," Sherlock said with a small nod, letting out a breath. "W-we... we're alright," he corrected, looking down at his middle, still finding it almost hard to fathom that he had something... someone, growing in there. Right now he had a small bump, but that could have just been weight for all anyone would know. Soon though...

Sherlock looked up at John. "My scent hasn't started to change has it?" he asked, wondering if that
had happened yet.

John smiled kindly, running his fingers through Sherlock's curls and placing a kiss to his forehead. He moved down to inhale at the crook of Sherlock's neck, brushing his lips along the mark on the side of his neck.

Sherlock let out a breath, relaxing a little more as John leant towards him. He shivered a small bit when John's lips pressed to one of his marks, and he hummed softly.

"No, not really. You smell a bit more like you, but it hasn't really changed," John assured, kissing Sherlock's pulse before drawing away to look down at him. He smiled. "Sherlock. We're going to be fathers."

Sherlock turned his gaze up to look at John, seeing him beam. Sherlock blinked a couple times, a small smile tugging at his mouth. "I... I suppose we are," he said softly. And then after a moment, "I know nothing about little girls."

John laughed, leaning down until he was half leaning on Sherlock. "Plenty of time to research," he teased lightly, ruffling Sherlock's hair with a playful smile.

Sherlock let out a breath. "S'pose so... and on babies in general. Squishy... pink things that they are," he sighed, shifting a little on the bed.

"I just hope she looks like you. Except with blond hair," John said, pressing a kiss to Sherlock's nose.

"Dark hair is the dominant gene, and your mother has it as well. It's more likely that she'd have the allele for it, so she'll likely have my shade," Sherlock said quietly.

John sighed, nudging Sherlock gently. "Please tell me that curls are dominant, at least." He moved a little, shifting to his side so that he was lying beside Sherlock, facing him. "We should both do a little research, I think. I'm probably going to talk to Mum about it, because, hell, she raised two squishy pink things." He winked, kissing Sherlock lightly.

Sherlock blinked a few times, not able to help the small smile that tugged at his mouth as John moved closer. He nodded. "Okay," he said quietly. "Just... don't tell her I lost the other one? Please?" he said quietly. "She'll probably know anyway, but I don't..." he trailed off, knowing John would understand. He hadn't wanted to tell her about Afghanistan, and this was what Sherlock wanted.

"I wasn't planning to," John murmured, nuzzling against Sherlock's neck. "She won't push, either, and she won't tell anyone if she does figure it out." He ran a hand down Sherlock's side, running his thumb over his hip. "I love you, Sherlock," he whispered, moving closer and hooking their ankles. "I will always love you, and don't ever doubt it."

Sherlock hummed a little, pressing closer to John. "Mm love you too," he said quietly. He was quiet for a moment, thinking. "What will we call it? Um... her?" he asked, almost thinking it was too soon to think about names, but why not? John would probably love it.

John chuckled, thinking that it was a bit early to start naming, but it sounded like fun. "Christ, I don't know. I thought we were going to have a boy, so I wasn't even..." He sighed, resting his forehead against Sherlock's. "We are not naming her after my mother. No need to make her ego any larger," he teased.

Sherlock smiled a little bit at that. "No, not the best idea," he murmured, thinking quietly.
Sherlock let out a breath, biting his lip again, a little harder. "Well there's... but I mean you never... knew her, I... god, never mind," he said, shaking his head a little. Stupid really, in all likelihood.

John tilted his head, brushing his fingers through Sherlock's hair. "What?" he asked quietly, running his fingers down the side of Sherlock's face. "Who, love? You can tell me."

Sherlock blinked a few times, letting out a breath. "Well you mentioned your mother, and I..." he trailed off, thinking about his own mother. She'd definitely been the more affectionate of the two, and her only fault was not being around. When she was, though... Sherlock had loved it. And when she was there for his first heat, it made it bearable.

"Katherine," Sherlock said finally. "Katherine Viola Holmes was her name," he said quietly.

John smiled, running his fingers lightly over Sherlock's cheek and into his hair. "That's a lovely name," he whispered, brushing his lips across Sherlock's forehead. "How about Katherine Nichole?" He ducked his head, picking at the bed sheet. "Nichole was my other baby sister. Harry doesn't remember her, and Mum and Dad wanted to keep it that way. She died when she was young from pneumonia." He glanced back up at Sherlock. "Seems like bad luck to name her after a girl who died young, but..." he shrugged, not knowing what else to say.

Sherlock looked up at John when he mentioned that, leaning forward and nuzzling a little closer to John. It started to make him feel a little better, thinking about it... her as a real thing. As a real thing with a name, that was going to be theirs. He smiled a little. "I like it... s'nice," he said, looking up at John and tracing John's chest a little with his fingers. He sighed, relaxing a bit more. "Know what would be really nice as well?" he asked quietly, looking up at John.

John tilted his head in question, pressing his hand to Sherlock's chest, his brow furrowing when he felt the absence of his tags.

Sherlock smiled a little, realising that John was feeling for his tags. He'd taken them off the other night, forgetting about them after his shower, and then not able to put them on when... well, last night.

"What else?" John asked, mulling their daughter's name over in his head. Katherine Nichole. It had a nice ring to it, and it pulled a small smile to his lips.

"Some chips from the cafe across the street from the hospital," Sherlock said with a small smile. "The hospital ones are ghastly," he said. "And at this point, I'd just about murder for some, but I don't think Lestrade would be pleased with me."

John laughed, long and hard, nearly doubling over with his forehead resting against Sherlock's shoulder.

"Yes, I'll go get you some," John said with a smile once he could breathe. He pressed a kiss to Sherlock's forehead, rolling from the bed. He snatched up his coat off of the back of the chair, shrugging it on. "I'll be back in a bit," he promised with a smile, leaving the room and closing the door quietly behind him.

Sherlock nodded a little, watching John leave. He let out a breath, sitting up a bit and adjusting his bed so it was propped up. He looked around the room, then down at his stomach, lifting his gown a little bit and looking at the tiny bump there. He blinked a few times, resting his hand on it with a sigh.

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John jogged across the street to the cafe, ordering the chips and paying for them. He popped one in his mouth as he trotted back across the street, hopping into the lift and riding it back up to Sherlock's room. "Got you some, love," he said, opening the door and handing over the chips to Sherlock. "Bought you some orange juice, too. Just in case."

Sherlock heard the door open and hurriedly shoved his gown back down, moving his hand away from his stomach. He blinked a few times, seeing the bag in John's hand. He smiled, snatching it quickly out of John's hand and digging his hand into it, pulling out a chip and putting it in his mouth. He moaned a little, chewing it quickly and eating another. "Mmm... John Watson, you are a saint," he murmured with a smile.

John laughed, shucking off his jacket and tossing it to the chair. He perched on the edge of Sherlock's bed, reaching over to steal another chip from him, eating it before Sherlock could try to take it back from him. He laughed lightly, snaking his arm around Sherlock's waist and resting his hand over the bump of his belly, leaning his head against his shoulder.

Sherlock sighed a little, sitting back against his bed now that it was sitting up. He looked down at John's hand, resting where Sherlock's had been moments ago, as he continued to wolf down his chips.

"Apparently I can't leave until tomorrow morning," Sherlock mumbled, only half irritably, as he was too chuffed about the chips to let all of his irritability show at the moment.

"That's pretty much what I figured," John said, nodding. "Your body went through a trauma, one that's statistically worse than a gunshot wound. So, yeah, I can't really blame them for keeping you." He nuzzled against Sherlock's shoulder, kissing it lightly.

Sherlock blinked, his mind a bit torn on that. A gunshot wound was physically more traumatic, but the pain of it... it felt different. And had he the choice between being able to save that pup and being shot again later... he would take the bullet. It wasn't even something he had to think about. He let out a breath, slowing a little as he ate the chips.

"You alright?" John asked quietly, rubbing his thumb over the small bump through Sherlock's hospital gown. Sometimes Sherlock's mood swings gave him whiplash, but they weren't all that bad. "Need to talk about anything?" He kissed Sherlock's shoulder again, moving his lips over to his neck so that he could kiss his pulse.

Sherlock let out a breath. "No, just thinking," he said quietly. "About... about the other one," he said, eating another chip. "We don't know what it was do we?" he asked. "Boy or girl or if it even developed far enough for us to know. It just... was there. And then it wasn't," he said quietly.

John pulled Sherlock closer, his hand moving up to card through his hair. "Oh, love, I know," he whispered. "It's alright, though. It's alright." He wasn't sure what else to say that Sherlock hadn't already heard today, so he just held him, comforted him, his lips pressed against his temple.

John pulled Sherlock closer, his hand moving up to card through his hair. "Oh, love, I know," he whispered. "It's alright, though. It's alright." He wasn't sure what else to say that Sherlock hadn't already heard today, so he just held him, comforted him, his lips pressed against his temple.

Sherlock nodded, leaning against John a little. He let out a breath, a small smile tugging at his mouth as he looked at John's hand on his stomach again. Picking up a chip he lifted it towards John's mouth, nudging his mouth a little with it. "I know," he murmured.

John parted his lips, accepting the chip from Sherlock, not willing to admit how hungry he was. "Good, I'm glad," he said, once he had finished chewing. He poked Sherlock gently in the side, leaning against him a little more.

Sherlock scooted down a fraction so he could rest his head on John's shoulder, passing over the small
baggy and what was left of the chips. “I've had enough, and you haven't eaten,” he said, knowing John. He reached over to the small table and grabbed the orange juice, drinking off of it with a sigh.

John rolled his eyes, though he smiled at Sherlock's knowledge. He picked up three chips and popped them into his mouth, chewing slowly. "Not going to fall asleep on me, are you?" he asked quietly, teasing, as he kept eating. He tightened his arm around Sherlock for a moment, running his hand over his side.

"I'm technically not on you though, am I?" Sherlock murmured, polishing off the orange juice and adjusting the bed a bit so he could lie on his side without it being uncomfortable. He rolled onto his left side, draping his arm over John's lap and also bending one leg, resting it over John's as well. "That's better," he murmured.

John chuckled, setting the mostly finished bag of chips aside. "You're ridiculous, and I love you," he whispered, keeping his arm wrapped around Sherlock, holding him against his side and pillowing his head on his chest. "Go on and sleep. I'll probably drift off at some point at well," he said, stifling a small yawn.

Sherlock hummed; he was still really tired. And no doubt the wonderful Dr Maria was going to put him on bed rest anyway. He sighed a little. "S'not like there's anything else to do... 'cept watch crap telly," he muttered, his eyes shut already.


"Mm no I wouldn't," Sherlock mumbled, a soft snore escaping him almost instantly after saying it.

"It's fine, love. I'm off to bed as well," John murmured, closing his eyes and relaxing against the mattress, not realising that Sherlock was already asleep.

Sherlock sighed in his sleep, nuzzling against John's chest a little, his long hair getting more frazzled. He hadn't cut it since before John got back and it was nearly as long as when John first got him.

John eased his fingers through Sherlock's hair for a few moments, smiling to himself as Sherlock nuzzled against him. He finally drifted off to sleep, settling down into a heavier one than last time. He clung tightly to Sherlock even as he slept, reminding his subconscious self that Sherlock was here and they were both safe.
Chapter 12

Sherlock woke up a few times during the rest of the day, and into the evening, always managing to drift off again. It was so easy now that he felt so tired most of the time. It was probably around one or so in the morning when he carefully slid out of John's arms, unable to stand it anymore. He carefully took his IV cart with him and padded into the bathroom to use the toilet, sitting on the closed lid after he was done to rest his hand on his stomach again, not sure why he kept doing it, and why he only did so when alone.

John stirred when he heard the wheels of an IV drip turn, the sound unmistakable even when sleeping from his time in the hospital. He didn't move or get concerned, though, until Sherlock didn't come back for a while.

"Sherlock?" John called, getting out of the bed and padding over to the adjoining bathroom. "Love," he knocked, "are you alright?"

Sherlock jumped a little, moving his hand from his stomach and flushing the toilet. He stood up, pulling the door open. "Yes," he said, reaching over across the room to wash his hands. "I'm fine," he said.

John knew that spooked look in Sherlock's eye. He stepped into the room, wrapping his arms around Sherlock's waist and pressing up against his back, resting his head against his shoulder blade. "You're okay," he promised, though he wasn't sure what was bothering Sherlock.

Sherlock shook the water off his hands. "I know," he said, swallowing. "You just startled me a little. I was thinking, didn't want to wake you up," he said, drying his hands off and turning to look at John. "That's all," he said, pressing a small kiss to his lips.

John smiled back, returning the kiss just as softly as it was given. "Alright, love. You know I just worry about you." He took Sherlock's hand, leading him back to the bed and crawled into it, leaving plenty of room for Sherlock beside him.

"I know," Sherlock said quietly, following John back into the room, dragging his damned cart with him. He crawled up into the bed and curled close to John on his left side, letting out a sigh. He snuggled a little closer to John, shutting his eyes and trying to make himself go to sleep. It started to work after a few minutes and he began to doze lightly, not realising as his hand slid to his stomach almost protectively.

John smiled fondly at Sherlock, wrapping his arm around his waist, his free hand linking with Sherlock's over his stomach. "She's safe," he breathed, nuzzling against Sherlock's hair and letting out a long sigh. Katherine was safe; their daughter was safe. They were safe. He slowly fell asleep, nuzzled up against his bondmate.

For what seemed like the first time in a long time, Sherlock didn't wake up feeling nauseous. He pulled his eyes open, hearing a nurse in the room, scribbling away again. He let out a breath, feeling small fingers wrap around his wrist and pick it up. He blinked, turning to look at her.

"Oh! Sorry," she said softly. "Just thought I'd take this out for you," she said in a small whisper, gently pulling out his IV and placing a plaster over it. "There'll be a small bit of paper work to be done, and then you two can go," she said softly before leaving.

Sherlock sighed; good, home. He wanted to go home. Though he'd be going home in pyjamas,
because that's what he'd come in.

John stirred, hearing a soft voice but not exactly what had been said, and then there were footsteps and a door opened and closed again. Yawning, he stretched his arms behind Sherlock and pulled him closer, nuzzling against his next and the mark that was there. "Morning," he whispered, kissing a line up to Sherlock's ear. "Feeling alright?" he asked, breathing in his scent, which seemed more... solid this morning. Less wavering and unsure.

Sherlock hummed a little, closing his eyes as John kissed his neck and up. "Mhm. Mm feel fine," he said quietly. He stretched his legs a little out along the bed, looking at the plaster on his hand and sighing a small bit. He was really getting tired of hospital stays, though he knew he was going to keep finding himself here, especially as the pup got bigger.

John smiled, leaning up to kiss Sherlock gently, stealing the adorable yawn from him. "Have I ever told you how adorable you are when you're sleepy?" he asked, kissing him again. He brushed the tips of their noses together, resting his forehead against Sherlock's. "I love you," he whispered, brushing his lips across the length of Sherlock's jaw.

"Can go home soon," he said, yawning a little himself.

John hummed quietly. "Can't wait. Though we probably won't be doing much more than we are now. It'll just be in our own bed."

Sherlock smiled. "Already sounds infinitely better. You can't order spring rolls from that Chinese place while sitting in hospital," he said, sitting up. "Fried rice sounds amazing to... and something with pineapple now that I think about it," he said, bringing his legs over the side of the bed and wandering over to get his pyjama bottoms, having been washed, though the dark fabric was stained. He'd have to remember to burn them when he got home. He tugged them on, then tore of the ghastly hospital gown, picking up his own dressing one.

John laughed quietly to himself, rolling onto his back and scrubbing his hands over his eyes. "Christ, slow down, love," he said, pushing himself into a sitting position and stretching again before hopping down. "You're pregnant; you're not supposed to be faster than I am," he teased, walking up to Sherlock and poking him lightly. "Here." He picked up his jacket, helping Sherlock into it. "It's cold outside, and I've got a jumper on.

Sherlock sighed, pulling on John's jacket over his dressing gown. It was nearly December, but John would be cold too, though. "I take offense to that comment regarding my speed. Regardless of my being pregnant, my legs are still longer, and I was told I could run," he said, rolling his eyes, though he smiled a little. He reached down and tugged on his slippers. He knew he wasn't going to run though. He'd still help on some cases, but from a distance he supposed, take cold cases to keep him sane, but he didn't want to risk this. John wanted it too much, and he was finding... that he did too.

"You shot off like a bullet," John smiled, cupping Sherlock's face and leaning up to kiss him. He pulled on his own shoes, then walked back over to Sherlock and took his hand. "Ready to go? I'm assuming there's some paperwork, and probably the date for our next appointment." He took a step forward, tugging Sherlock with him as he left the room.

Sherlock sighed, then nodded. He followed John outside and down the hall where they were stopped at the nurse's station. He sighed again, just wanting to go home. He scrawled his name where it should be and shoved the clipboard to John, since he dealt with this kind of paperwork more, and then sank into the obligatory wheelchair that his nurse brought over to them. He saw Dr Maria show up, who handed John a card with their next appointment with a smile.
John filled out the paperwork as quickly as possible, taking the card from Maria with a smile and tucking it into his pocket. He walked back over to Sherlock, pulling him up from the wheelchair with a cheeky smile at the doctor once the nurse had turned her back. "Mandatory my arse," he murmured, squeezing Sherlock's hand. "I'm pretty sure this is Mycroft's doing." He smiled up at Sherlock, leading him outside and onto the pavement.

Sherlock grinned, getting up and following John out. He wrapped an arm around John's and held it close to himself, looking at all the people passing by them as John hailed a cab. He slid inside with a small sigh, leaning up against John when he did the same. "Mycroft didn't even come this time... did he? I know he always comes when I'm unconscious, but I can tell. He stayed away this time," he said softly.

John nodded, tucking Sherlock's head against his shoulder and resting his cheek on his hair. "No, he didn't come. I don't know why. Perhaps he knew that I was pissed off at him and worried about you and I probably would have killed him," he murmured, only half joking. He sighed, running his hand over Sherlock's upper arm.

Sherlock shrugged lightly. "I don't know, not really his thing I suppose," he said quietly. "For all he knows, I lost it entirely," he murmured. "Though he might check the records eventually," he said with a small sigh. He leant his head on John's shoulder more, settling more against him. "God, I'm starving. We're getting food like... as soon as we're home. Pineapple though, remember," he said.

"Here," John handed Sherlock his mobile, "may as well order now. Then it'll be there by the time we get home. Order what you want, that way I don't have to worry about messing it up." He winked at Sherlock, pressing a kiss to his forehead and holding him closer.

Sherlock nodded, taking the phone and dialling the number he had memorised. He ordered spring rolls, fried rice, sweet and sour chicken with extra pineapple, as well as the duck he knew John was fond of, and some crab cream cheese wan tons. He hung up the phone, leaning up to kiss John's jaw as he handed back the phone. "Thanks," he said with a small smile.

"Why are you thanking me?" John asked, turning to kiss Sherlock's forehead before he completely sunk down again. "All I did was hand you my phone." He nuzzled against Sherlock's hair, closing his eyes for a moment.

Sherlock shrugged a little. "I don't know, felt like I needed to," he said with a soft smile.

"Hey, guess what? Tomorrow you're officially in your second trimester."

Sherlock hummed a little, blinking a couple times when John mentioned that. He looked down at his stomach again, letting out a breath. "She's going to get big isn't she?" he teased, nudging Sherlock's thigh with his knee. "You're taller, but you're not made up of much." He chuckled to himself, poking Sherlock's ribs, which didn't have any space between them anymore since he had been eating.

Sherlock leant a little away from the intruding finger with a smile. "Yeah well, give it another month or so... I'll be made up of much more," he murmured, almost a little self-consciously. John called him gorgeous when he'd been rail thin, and when he was lanky but a bit muscled. But soon, well... he sighed. "I need to get some of this lotion... read about it; I don't want to be covered with hideous marks," he said, touching his stomach.

"I can get you some," John murmured, pressing a kiss to the top of Sherlock's head. "Though you
shouldn't worry about it too much, you're beautiful no matter what,” he whispered against his hair. "And of course you're going to be made up of more; you've got our daughter growing inside of you, and you have to eat to support her." He nuzzled down against Sherlock's temple, smiling to himself.

"Hence the pineapple," Sherlock mumbled. "I hate pineapple, John," he said, looking up at him. "I don't like it but... I want it. A lot of it," he said with a sigh. "It's tedious," he said, leaning against John a bit more. He sighed softly, watching the buildings pass by them through the window.

John laughed, hugging Sherlock against him. "Well, you haven't started on the pickles and yogurt yet, so there's that," he teased, nuzzling against him.

John looked up when the cab stopped, paying the cabbie before opening the door and stepping out, helping Sherlock to the door. He unlocked it and stepped inside, leading the way upstairs to find a bag of Chinese food on the coffee table, a note in Mrs Hudson's handwriting that said 'dinner's on me tonight'.

Sherlock elbowed John lightly with a small laugh, climbing out of the car and moving up the stairs with John. The smell of Chinese food was in the flat and he moved towards the bag, opening it up. "Disregard my previous statement, Mrs Hudson is the resident saint of this flat," he said, tearing into the box of spring rolls and falling back onto the sofa, cradling the box in his lap.

John smirked, loving how little kid-ish Sherlock was being. It was nice to see him in a good mood after, well, yesterday. "What does that make me, then?" he asked, moving into the kitchen to grab them both glasses of milk and a fork. He returned to the living room, sitting down beside Sherlock and handing him his glass and utensil before grabbing the paper box of duck and assorted vegetables and digging in.

Sherlock scooted over a little and pressed his hip against John's. "Mine," he answered simply, happily munching on a spring roll. He looked down at his stomach, sighing a little as he kept eating. "Better than a saint I promise, more important," he said.

John looked over at Sherlock, a bit surprised he had said that. "Look who's getting all sentimental." He wasn't teasing, and he leant forward, kissing Sherlock fully. "Much better than a saint," he agreed with a smile, leaning back against the cushions and eating more of his food.

Sherlock flushed a bit at that statement, looking down at the food in his lap. A small smile tugged at his mouth. He knew it was sentimental, and he wasn't sure where all the affection was coming from, but then... didn't he? He leant his head on John's shoulder, inhaling a bit. "You smell different somehow," he murmured.

"I smell different?" John cocked an eyebrow, looking down at Sherlock leaning against him. He set his food aside, wrapping both arms around him and pulling him closer, almost onto his lap. "How so?" he asked quietly, resting his chin on top of Sherlock's head.

Sherlock blinked, then shrugged a little. "I don't know, you just do," he said, nuzzling closer to him. He didn't relinquish his spring rolls though, lifting another one up and biting off half of it. He sighed, "Something just... different. Feels different somehow," he said, not knowing how to describe it.

John hummed, rubbing his hand over Sherlock's arm. "Good different, I hope," he said, nuzzling against Sherlock's hair, kissing his way down to his temple and nuzzling there.

Sherlock nodded. "Wouldn't be this close to you if it wasn't good," he said, finishing off his spring roll and setting the container down.

Sherlock leant off the sofa, scooping up the sweet and sour chicken and his fork, opening up the box and stabbing a large chunk of pineapple. He hummed a little biting into it, quickly fishing out another.

John chuckled softly at Sherlock's antics, grabbing his fork and stabbing a piece of the chicken, biting into it and chewing it slowly. "Don't like pineapple, huh?" he teased gently, mocking stealing one before he twisted his fork and stabbed another piece of chicken instead.

Sherlock almost hissed at John when he went after the pineapple, nudging his hand away and stabbing the chunk himself. "No, I don't," he quipped. "Katherine does apparently," he said, stabbing up a bite of chicken and the fruit. A month or two ago he'd already be full, but he was amazingly still eating.

Laughing loudly, John tossed his fork to the table again, wrapping his arms once more around Sherlock. "Wonder what she'll be," he mused, combing through Sherlock's hair. "Alpha, Omega, or Beta. Your family is mostly Alpha, my family is mostly Omega, even on my real father's side of things, though admittedly I only know that because I did a background check on him."

Sherlock settled against John more, slowly chewing on his next bite of chicken. "She'll be human," he said softly. "And hopefully by the time she presents, we'll be in a world where more people will treat her as such," he said, knowing things were already changing, but he wanted them to change faster. He thought once more to Moriarty, ever present in the back of his mind. He would have to end that, and soon once the pup was born. He'd send John and her away or something... he had to keep them safe.

"Hey," John whispered, nudging Sherlock's side, "what are you thinking about?" He carded his fingers through Sherlock's hair, massaging his scalp slowly. "You got really tense and you made that face again." He held Sherlock tighter, rocking him slowly. "What's worrying you?"

Sherlock shook his head. "Nothing, and I don't have a look on my face, it's just my face is all," he said with a shrug.

John nuzzled against Sherlock's neck. "Your face has a look when you're thinking and worried and everything else," he said, the words nearly routine by now.

Sherlock let out a breath. "Just... well I want things to be different for her than it was for me, or for Harry and your parents. If she does end up an Omega," he said.

John sighed lightly. "Things will change," he promised, though he wasn't sure how. How do you change a society rooted in old ways?

"They'd better, but then with Mycroft practically running everything, they will," Sherlock murmured quietly. He set the box of chicken down on his lap and sighed a little, shutting his eyes as he leant against John. "We... won't let 'nything happen... to her," he murmured quietly, his stomach all at once feeling ridiculously full, and he felt tired for it.

John closed his eyes, pressing kisses to Sherlock's face. "No. No, we won't," he agreed, taking the chicken off of Sherlock's lap and setting it on the table. "Do you want to go to bed or sleep on my lap in the chair?" he asked quietly, nuzzling against Sherlock's cheek.

Sherlock hummed a little, mumbling incoherently in French again, already half asleep. He swallowed, licking his lips a little as he shifted a small bit on the sofa, leaning heavily on John.
Smiling to himself, John stood and lifted Sherlock with him, walking over to his chair and sitting down, settling Sherlock against him, his head on his shoulder.

Sherlock hummed as he was lifted up, settling down onto John's lap, his legs hanging over the armrest of the chair.

"Sleep, then," John murmured gently, kissing Sherlock's head before resting his cheek there.

Sherlock sighed, nuzzling into John's neck a little, still mumbling quietly. "Mon John..." he sighed, falling asleep, a soft snore escaping him.

"Yes, love," John whispered once Sherlock had fallen asleep. "Of course I'm yours." He stroked his fingers through Sherlock's hair, rubbing his hand down his back. He got a little warm after a few hours, shifting a bit to reposition Sherlock in an attempt at cooling down.

Sherlock's face pinched a little as he was moved, a small noise of protest escaping him as he started to stir a little. He hummed a little, settling against John more.

"You're really warm, Sherlock," John muttered, sighing and holding him close regardless. He held him for another hour, and then his eyelids started drooping, and he decided it would be best to just go to bed. He stood, keeping Sherlock in his arms as he walked into the bedroom, setting him down before he stripped down to his pants and crawled in beside him.

Sherlock didn't wake up when he was lifted, his breathing still even. He rolled over onto his stomach when he was set down on the bed, sprawling out on most of the bed, his face burrowing into John's pillow a little. He sniffed a little when the bed moved, wrapping himself around John when his presence was recognised. He hummed, settling again, still asleep.

John huffed out a breath of laughter, settling back against Sherlock and holding his hand to his chest. "You're ridiculous," he muttered, closing his eyes and letting himself drift off to sleep. His eyes pulled open later, and he checked the clock to see what time it was.

3:30.

John was still hot, but then again, Sherlock was still curled up beside him. He cleared his throat as softly as he could, but that soon turned into coughing, and then his stomach rolled. He jumped out of bed, half jogging into the bathroom and just barely making it to the toilet before he got sick.

Sherlock was roused out of his sleep when he felt John jerk away. He had a moment of terror where he thought John had been taken away, and he sat bolt upright, hearing him retch. He blinked, getting off the bed and edging into the bathroom. "J-John?" he asked, his question interrupted by a yawn. "What's wrong? You can't have morning sickness, that's my bit," he said, his voice concerned.

John groaned a bit, reaching up to flush the toilet and moving to lie down on the cool tile. "Dunno," he said, closing his eyes and scrubbing a hand through his hair. "Bad duck? Hospital germs?" His stomach rolled again, but he forced it down for the time being.

Sherlock thought a moment, filling up a glass by the bathroom sink with water and handing it to him. "Anything in the hospital that you would have got, I would have got. I'm more susceptible to such things right now anyway," he said. "Probably the duck, as I didn't eat it," he said, feeling John's forehead. "I'm sorry... I ordered it for you," he said quietly.

John smiled softly at the gentleness in Sherlock's touch, the worry in his expression. "I'm the one who ate it," he muttered. "Would've ordered it anyway." He left the glass on the floor, slowly rolling over to press his other cheek against the cold floor.
Sherlock sighed a little, bending down to sit John up. "Come on, I'm not allowed to lift much. Up you get," he said, leading John back to the bedroom when he complied.

John groaned when Sherlock helped him stand, almost sure he was going to be sick again, but he fought it down once more.

Sherlock pushed him gently to the bed, going to refill the glass and wet down a cloth with cool water. He set the cloth in John's hand for a moment, and the glass on the bedside table as he tugged John's jumper off. "You're warm, don't need it," Sherlock muttered, pressing the cloth to John's forehead after wiping down his face real quick.

John lay down on the bed after Sherlock had stripped him of his jumper, closing his eyes for a moment when the cool cloth ran over his face, finally settling on his forehead.

Sherlock moved back into the bathroom, grabbing a bucket from under the sink and setting it by the bed. "In case you can't make it back in there," he said softly, not sure how to do the whole... taking care of a sick person thing, but he'd try.

John hummed quietly, glancing over when he heard something plastic on the floor, seeing the bucket and nodding up at Sherlock. "Thanks, love," he whispered, closing his eyes again. He reached out for his hand, squeezing it gently. "You can sleep again if you'd like. Don't have to do anything more for me."

Sherlock shook his head, climbing onto the bed and scooting close to John. He wriggled in behind him and had John half lying against him on his lap. "S'fine. I'm not that tired anymore," he said quietly, readjusting the cloth.

"Sorry," John said softly, nudging against Sherlock's hand. He sighed, folding his hands over his stomach and settling down as much as he could for sleep. "And thank you." He let himself drift off lightly, not wanting to get caught off guard again.

Sherlock shook his head again. "Don't be," he said softly, running his fingers through John's hair for once. He swallowed, gently smoothing the blond hair down. It had grown out so much since John got back, and it was no longer what anyone would call a military cut.

John hummed happily when Sherlock combed through his hair, a smile tilting his lips. He took a few steadied breaths, letting himself drift off a little further, until he was almost completely unconscious.

Sherlock didn't sleep again, sitting there watching John, categorising the way his eyes flicked under his lids as he went through different layers of sleep.

John laid like that for a few more hours before his stomach turned again, and he got up, walking into the bathroom and sinking down with enough time to spare for it before he got sick again.

John pushed to his feet and brushed his teeth before returning to the bedroom. He made a displeased sound at the sight of the water glass, not wanting to upset his stomach again. "Yes, alright," he sighed, picking up the glass and sitting on the bed, slowly sipping from it until it was half gone.

Sherlock nodded, pleased that John had had something to drink at least. "Most food poisoning breaks after a few more hours," he said. "This part anyway, you'll probably still feel like hell for a day or so. But I'm sure you know that, Doctor," he murmured quietly, wiping down John's face again with the

"you get," he said, leading John back to the bedroom when he complied.

John groaned when Sherlock helped him stand, almost sure he was going to be sick again, but he fought it down once more.

Sherlock pushed him gently to the bed, going to refill the glass and wet down a cloth with cool water. He set the cloth in John's hand for a moment, and the glass on the bedside table as he tugged John's jumper off. "You're warm, don't need it," Sherlock muttered, pressing the cloth to John's forehead after wiping down his face real quick.

John lay down on the bed after Sherlock had stripped him of his jumper, closing his eyes for a moment when the cool cloth ran over his face, finally settling on his forehead.

Sherlock moved back into the bathroom, grabbing a bucket from under the sink and setting it by the bed. "In case you can't make it back in there," he said softly, not sure how to do the whole... taking care of a sick person thing, but he'd try.

John hummed quietly, glancing over when he heard something plastic on the floor, seeing the bucket and nodding up at Sherlock. "Thanks, love," he whispered, closing his eyes again. He reached out for his hand, squeezing it gently. "You can sleep again if you'd like. Don't have to do anything more for me."

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Sherlock nodded, pleased that John had had something to drink at least. "Most food poisoning breaks after a few more hours," he said. "This part anyway, you'll probably still feel like hell for a day or so. But I'm sure you know that, Doctor," he murmured quietly, wiping down John's face again with the
fresh cloth.

"I'm never eating duck again," John murmured, leaning against Sherlock, not wanting to fall asleep again until he knew he was done throwing up. He rested his head against Sherlock's shoulder, breathing in his scent, which settled him a little.

"But you like duck... and it rarely ever happens. Someone careless once," Sherlock murmured, combing through John's hair again. It would be fine. John would feel better tomorrow, if not a bit tired. They could just be tired together.

Sherlock sighed softly, thinking to himself. "Do you want me to call your mother?" he asked with a sly smile. "Have her come and take care of you? I'm sure she'd love it," he said.

John slapped Sherlock's knee weakly, glaring up at him. "You are so not funny," he said, though a smile tugged at his lips. He hummed again at Sherlock's hand in his hair, pushing it back away from his forehead and letting cooler air reach his skin. "Need a hair cut," he said, resting his head against Sherlock's shoulder again and closing his eyes for a moment.

Sherlock shrugged a little with a small laugh. "I thought it was a little humorous myself," Sherlock murmured quietly. "And your hair is fine. Don't have to shave it all off," he murmured.


Sherlock sighed a little. "Feel a bit out of my depth with them; with you, it's easy. You know how to take care of yourself, so there's not much I can screw up," he said. "Little pink... screaming things, I... I wouldn't know how to..." he shook his head a little.

John rested his hand on Sherlock's knee, stroking up to his thigh. "It's all instinct," he assured him quietly. "And I'll be there to help, remember. You're not on your own through this, not ever."

John gritted his teeth again, standing from the bed. "Hopefully this is the last one," he said as he departed for the bathroom.

Sherlock nodded a little, letting John get up and move to the bathroom, hearing him retch. He let out a breath, waiting patiently for him to finish so he could hold him again. It was odd, him holding John. Still nice, if different. But John needed it this time.

John returned to the bedroom after flushing the toilet and brushing his teeth. He retook his seat beside Sherlock, wrapping his arm loosely around his waist and placing his head on his shoulder once more. "Mind if I..." he broke off to yawn, "if I fall asleep like this?" he asked quietly, nuzzling against Sherlock's shoulder.

Sherlock settled back more into the bed with a small sigh. "Of course not," he murmured quietly, brushing a bit of hair out of John's face, exposing his forehead more and blowing on it gently. "You sleep," he ordered gently.

John nodded obediently, resting heavier against Sherlock until his body was all that was holding him up. "Love you," he murmured before he slipped off to a deep, heavy sleep.

"Love you too," Sherlock murmured. "Always," he added with a small sigh, settling down even more and looking across the room.

Eventually, the sun started to creep up, and Sherlock's eyes pulled shut a little, dozing lightly. He
was amazed at how easy it was to nap now.

John's fever broke around seven, and he woke up not too long after, blinking his eyes against the light in the room. "God, I feel like shit," he groaned, reaching for the glass of water and draining it. He flopped back onto the bed, not caring that he was laying the wrong way, and curled up onto his side.

Sherlock blinked his eyes open when John sat up and rolled over, flopping back onto the bed. He smiled a little, ruffling John's hair a bit. "I'm sorry," he said quietly, stroking John's temple down to his jaw. "I'll get some soup made in a little bit," he murmured.

John smiled, the movement and offer reminding him of his father for a moment. "You sound like my dad," he commented quietly, parting his eyelids to look up at Sherlock. "He used to say that when I was sick." He reached up, taking Sherlock's other hand and squeezing it gently. "Soup sounds great."

Sherlock smiled a small bit at that, letting out a breath. "That's what our Nanny did for us when we were sick," he murmured quietly, returning the pressure on John's hand a small bit.

"Universally used, then. Shame, thought it was something special," John teased, winking at Sherlock. He brought his hand up, nuzzling against the inside of Sherlock's wrist and inhaling slowly.

"Oh, I'm definitely special," Sherlock murmured, tugging at John's hair lightly with his free hand. He let out a breath, smiling as John nuzzled his wrist. "I love you," he said softly, scooting down and cuddling down more to wrap himself more around John.

John hummed happily when Sherlock pressed against his back, able to feel the small baby bump against his lower spine. "God, I love you too," he whispered, settling down and relaxing back against him, on the verge of sleep again.

Sherlock nuzzled gently against the back of John's neck, breathing in his scent. After a little while of staying with John, wiping down his face occasionally, Sherlock got hungry again so he got up carefully and padded down the hall to get some leftovers out of the fridge, tossing away the duck. He took the box of chicken, deciding to eat it cold, and settled back on the bed with it, eating quietly while watching John. Eventually he ate himself full again and then fell asleep, the empty take away box on it's side on the edge of the bed, and Sherlock wrapped back around John.

John made a small noise, rolling over and snuggling up against what he drowsily recognised as Sherlock. He nuzzled against Sherlock's chest, breathing in his scent and smiling slightly. "You ate," he whispered, kissing below Sherlock's collarbone. "Good."

Sherlock hummed, his arm still wrapped over John. His brow furrowed a little, and he blinked his eyes open, looking at John. "Mhm... got hungry," he mumbled quietly, looking at the scar on John's left shoulder, nearly parallel to the one on Sherlock's right, though his was covered with his shirt. He let out a breath. "How..." he yawned. "How do you feel?" he asked.


Sherlock brushed a little bit of hair from John's forehead, pressing his hand there. "Your fever's down," he murmured. "Never got that soup for you..." he said, sitting up a little. "I can make it..." he said, yawning again with a stretch.
John made a noncommittal noise, pushing up onto his elbows. "I could probably handle soup," he said, smiling slightly and reaching out to brush through Sherlock's hair. "Not going to burn it this time, are you?" he teased, leaning over and kissing the mark on the back of his neck, having to push down his shirt a little to reach it.

Sherlock hummed, shivering a small bit with a smile. He stood up, rubbing his back a little. "If I do, you'll still eat it," he said, grinning. He padded down the hall and into the kitchen, heating up some chicken soup. Ten minutes later he walked back into the room with a mug of soup and a spoon for John. "There, it's mostly broth, so I'd like to you try and finish it."

"Thank you," John said with a smile, taking the broth and leaning up against the headboard. He sipped some of the broth first, letting the liquid settle in his stomach before scooping up a piece of chicken. "It tastes heavenly," he commented, reaching out to squeeze Sherlock's fingers quickly before he returned to the soup.

Sherlock smiled a small bit, picking up the takeaway box and tossing it out in the bedside bin. He settled on the bed, watching John eat. It was good that he was eating, it would make him feel better sooner.

"You look so concerned," John commented lightly. "It's a good look on you. Caring." He leant over against Sherlock's shoulder, spooning some noodles into his mouth. "Thank you for this," he said, finishing the broth and setting the mug and spoon on the nightstand.

Sherlock felt his ears warm a little, smiling softly. "Of course," he said. "You need it," he said quietly with a small shrug. He settled back against the headboard and snuggled closer to John. "Can't have you sick forever, can we? Don't you have work today?" he asked. "I can call in for you," he offered.

"Damn," John breathed, resting his head on Sherlock's shoulder. "I forgot about that. Stupid work," he muttered with a sigh and snuggled closer to Sherlock. "Would you please? I'd probably get guilt-tripped into going in if I called them."

"Not possible with me doing it," Sherlock said, standing up. He'd heard Lestrade call him blunter than sledgehammer at times.

Sherlock grabbed his phone from the living room, calling John's work and explaining simply that he had food poisoning, and that his patients would be better served if he wasn't vomiting on them. He hung up the phone and walked back into the bedroom, climbing back into bed with a small smile. "There, handled," he said.

John had lain down while Sherlock was calling, and now he rolled over to curl up against him. He rested his hand lightly over Sherlock's bump, running his thumb over it. "Thanks," he murmured, kissing above Sherlock's collar. "You're lucky this isn't something contagious, or I'd be sleeping on the couch and would make you stay away from me."

"Well it's obviously not contagious. If you had got it from the hospital then I would have had it as well," Sherlock said with a shrug. It was that simple. "Just bad duck... like you said," he murmured, looking down at John's hand on his stomach. He let out a breath. "That's something... that's going to be something we can hold..." he said quietly, trying to picture that, though it was difficult.

"So long as I don't keep getting food poisoning," John joked, leaning up to kiss Sherlock softly. "She's going to be perfect and small and just... the best of both of us," he whispered, nuzzling against Sherlock's collar. "And with any luck, she'll have your eyes. And don't ruin my hopes by saying your eyes aren't a dominant trait. Mine aren't either," he said, leaning back to look at Sherlock.
Sherlock smiled softly, sighing a little as he leant close to John. "We both have blue eyes... she probably will too," he said quietly, looking at John and then covering his hand with one of his own. "She's probably not going to feel so small soon though... not from where I'm standing," he said.

John chuckled quietly. "Eight pounds, love. That's the ideal." He chuckled, pressing light kisses to Sherlock's eyelids. "I've got brown around the pupils, and you have just..." he sighed. "Yours are gorgeous."

Sherlock smiled again, though his smile fell a little when John said eight pounds. So, a small bowling ball. He sighed, looking at John's eyes. He really underestimated the beauty of them. He sighed, settling down next to John. "What do you want to do today? You can watch that show maybe? I was just thinking of putting together another song... feeling... I guess one might say inspired?"

John smiled, cupping Sherlock's cheek and stroking his thumb across his cheekbone. "I'll just listen to you, I think," he murmured. "Are you going to play in the living room or come back in here?"

Sherlock smiled softly. "I think better out there, I think," he said. "By the window... you can lay on the sofa if you like," he offered. He looked at John, knowing he should be resting more.

John hummed, nodding. "That's what I was thinking," he said, slowly rolling from the bed and stretching with a low groan.

Sherlock smiled, then nodded. "Okay," he said, padding down the hall after pulling on a dressing gown. He picked up his violin, then brought a blanket from John's chair to the sofa for him before assuming his position in front of the window and his music stand.

John smiled at the sight of the blanket on the sofa and pulled it over himself when he laid down. He smiled softly, pillowing his head on his folded arms and looked over at Sherlock, closing his eyes as he started playing.

Sherlock started with a familiar piece, John's song, since he was right there listening. He smiled, losing himself in the music. Eventually he slowed, repeating different pieces, adjusting pitch. He'd pause occasionally, writing something down, erasing occasionally. He started over, creating a new notes and seconds. He glanced over at John occasionally, sighing softly with a smile before going back to his work.

John wasn't surprised when he found himself getting lost in the melody. Sherlock was amazing with that instrument, better than John had ever been with his stupid clarinet that his mother had made him play in school. He sighed lightly, his eyes closing after a while, letting the song lift him up and down with its tune, only looking up when Sherlock paused his playing.

It was a couple hours of tuning and playing before Sherlock felt he had a good first draft of a song, a nice slow one. He wasn't sure why it ended up being that way, it just did. He looked over at John when he set down his violin. "I'm sure you're bored by now... did you want to watch the telly at all?" he asked, meandering into the kitchen to fix a snack, already hungry again.

John hummed. "Never bored around you," he said truthfully. "And I love listening to you play, and you know it, so don't get sassy." He curled his legs up, making room for him on the couch when he walked back in.

Sherlock sat down on the corner of the sofa, munching on the cold spring rolls. They weren't as good that way, but they were good enough for the purposes of a snack. He looked at John, smiling a little.

John lifted his head, bring his elbow up to support himself. "Don't think I'm ever going to get over
the fact that you're actually eating now without me forcing you to," he said with a smile. He squirmed his feet under Sherlock's thigh, warming them up. "I love you," he reminded, lowering himself back down.

Sherlock smiled a little, purposefully biting into a spring roll. "Yes, well don't get used to it. Probably won't be eating this much once this," he said, poking his small bump, "is out of the way," he said with a smirk. He shifted a little with John's feet poking under him. "I love you too," he murmured quietly, looking over at John with a small smile.

John hummed idly, smiling at Sherlock's returned sentiment. "Yes, and then you have the thrills of feeding her as well. Her appetite is not going to decrease by much," He sighed, turning over and resting his head in Sherlock's lap. "I can't wait to see her," he mumbled, falling asleep rather quickly.

Sherlock opened his mouth to ask how exactly he accomplished that when he looked down at saw John asleep. He let out a breath rather than his question and leant against the sofa, reaching down to comb idly through John's hair in thought. He sighed, looking around the flat. His pocket vibrated and he tugged out his phone, looking at the message.

News? MH

It's fine. SH

I'll just look up the records. I was trying to give you what privacy I can. MH

[delayed] One of them is still fine. And... a girl apparently. SH

There was no response – there wouldn't be. Mycroft had heard what he needed, and to offer congratulations would be downplaying the bad news, to offer condolences would be downplaying the good. Silence was the opted-for route.

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John slept for another solid two hours before he stirred, his stomach rumbling in a demand for food. "Think I'm feeling better," he muttered, patting Sherlock's knee affectionately before standing up and wandering into the kitchen. He moved around, taking stock of what they had before starting to construct a simple pasta dish, one that shouldn't upset his stomach.

Sherlock lifted his head up from where he'd been leaning on his hand. He blinked a few times, looking after John. He got up and walked into the kitchen, leaning on the table. "You should make a small bit extra," he murmured, sitting down.

John smiled kindly over at him. "I was already planning on making enough for two," he replied kindly. He stepped away from the noodles, working on the simple sauce over another burner until the noodles boiled properly and he could strain them.

"Could you get us some milk, love?" John asked over his shoulder, dishing up their plates.

Sherlock stood up and walked over to the fridge, pulling out the milk and pouring two glasses. He opened up the cupboard above the counter to pull out some tea. He gave a frustrated growl, looking at the box and pulling out another. "What is with all this decaffeinated tea!?!" he snapped out of nowhere, finding the concept of it irritating. He huffed, looking at John. "Where's the stuff we normally have?" he asked.

John furrowed his brows as he set the plates on the table. "Tossed them in the bin last week. You're not allowed to have caffeine, love." He walked over, taking the glasses of milk and putting them on
the table. "Officially in the second trimester; you have to start being more observant of what you're consuming."

Sherlock's jaw dropped a little. "You tossed them out? But what about coffee?" he asked, moving through the cupboard to look for that, finding once more decaf. "John, really... what's a little caffeine going to do?"

"Stunts growth," John replied smoothly, taking a seat at the table and gesturing Sherlock to sit beside him. "It causes developmental and heart problems. Not always, but I'd rather not take that risk." He looked up at Sherlock again, gesturing to his chair.

Sherlock huffed, looking at his chair and moving over to it. He sank into the chair, his arms folded as if in a pout. He almost quipped that the baby being a little smaller might be a good thing, but then he realised how horrible that would sound. He let out a breath, then started in on his plate. "I'm not happy about it, but... fine," he said. "What else can't I have?" he asked, looking up at John.

"Well, alcohol and drugs should be fairly obvious. Aside from that, nothing that you consume is really going to harm her." He paused to take a small bite of the pasta. "But, as the pregnancy continues, you're probably going to develop... bad tastes? I don't know, but your body is going to start rejecting certain foods like they're poison." He set his free hand on Sherlock's knee, looking over at him reassuringly.

Sherlock's brows furrowed, stabbing a piece of pasta. "When you say rejecting, you mean more throwing up don't you?" he asked. He looked over at John, then back to his plate. "I want this go quickly... I feel like it's just going to get more tedious."

John laughed a little, eating more noodles before sipping his milk. "We have eighteen years of hardship ahead of us. Enjoy this," he gestured at the small bump on Sherlock's belly, "while it lasts."

Sherlock looked down at his stomach again. "You call it a hardship... makes it sound like it's going to be horrible," he said, furrowing his brows a little. He scooped up a large forkful of pasta and shoved it in his mouth, swallowing it without chewing much.

John sighed, pushing noodles around his plate. "That's not what I meant. I just meant that it's not going to be easy. Raising a kid is not easy. It has it's rewards, yeah, it's just..." he drew in a long breath, setting his fork down for a moment, "scary."

Sherlock nodded a little, thinking about that. "I know," he said, looking down at his stomach. He was already terrified, but not entirely for those reasons. "But we can manage. And knowing us, our child won't be normal. And that's good," he said.

John reached out for Sherlock's hand, squeezing it tightly. "Normal is boring," he said quietly, resting both of their hands on Sherlock's bump.

Sherlock smiled a bit, nodding once and taking another bite of pasta before getting full again, it had only been a couple hours since the spring rolls. He sat back against the chair, looking around the kitchen.

John ate a little longer, having only had the soup today. Finishing his milk, he stood and took their dishes to the counter, dumping out any food not eaten and putting the dishes in the sink. "Going to need to wash dishes soon," he said, walking back over to Sherlock and taking his hand. "Come on, let's go to bed."
Chapter 13

It had been almost twelve weeks. Six months pregnant now, and Sherlock swore he was going to go crazy. He wasn't even going to try and count his "meltdowns" he'd had in that time.

Sherlock shifted in bed with a groan, his back starting to hurt again. He finally just sat up, his hand resting on his more swollen stomach. He let out a breath, getting up to go to the bathroom and then just sitting on the toilet lid. Christ, he was tired.

John stirred with a tired sigh, rubbing his eyes and sitting up. "Sherlock?" he called out, his voice tinged with a hint of fear. He hadn't been sleeping well lately, worry for Sherlock as he neared his third trimester overriding his need for sleep. It was a short moment before he noticed the bathroom door closed, and he threw off the blankets and knocked on the door. "You alright, love?"

Sherlock sighed, reaching out and opening the door. "I'm fine," he said, sitting up a little straighter. "Back hurts a little is all," he said quietly. He stood up, looking down at the bulge of his stomach. "You know I read online that it's the size of a cantaloupe, John. A bloody cantaloupe! And she's getting bigger," he said, pacing the bathroom a little.

John leant against the door-jam, watching Sherlock pacing for a while before he stepped up and wrapped his arms around him, pulling him back against his chest. He nuzzled against his neck, kissing his mark lightly, over and over again. He delicately traced lines over Sherlock's rounded stomach before pressing his palm against it. "Would you like a back massage?" he asked quietly, his lips brushing over Sherlock's skin.

Sherlock hummed a little, closing his eyes when John's lips pressed to his neck. "I can't lay on my stomach... hard to accomplish," he mumbled quietly. He sighed, leaning back against John a little. "I just want sleep..." he said, wishing he could just take something for it.

"But you can lie on your side, and I can rub your back like that," John murmured, nuzzling closer to Sherlock's neck, inhaling his new scent, on that was richer and sweeter, belying the daughter he was carrying inside of him. "It'll help you fall asleep," he promised, reaching for Sherlock's hand and leading him back into the bedroom.

Sherlock sighed, nodding a little. "Have to switch sides..." he said quietly. "Supposed to lay on my left side," he murmured quietly as he followed John into their room and walked along to John's side of the bed, sitting down.

"I just want her out of there," Sherlock said, looking up at John, rings under his eyes.

"Oh, love," John said softly, cupping Sherlock's face in his hands and kissing his forehead and then his lips. "She's coming, I promise. Just a few more months and then she'll be out, and your back won't hurt anymore and you won't be eating so much and we can both relax a little."

Sherlock shut his eyes, too tired to contribute much to the kiss. "A crying, demanding little pink thing isn't going to give much cause to relax," he mumbled, leaning drowsily against John.

Sherlock sighed. Three months couldn't come fast enough. He thought about the day ahead, and sighed. "We still visiting Harry and your Mother?" he asked. "She's just going to badger me about a baby shower again," he murmured.

John chuckled, easing Sherlock onto his side and slowly starting to massage circles into his lower back with his thumbs. He kissed his shoulder lightly, working his fingers up a little higher. "We'll go
once you're rested," he promised, nuzzling against him. He knew Sherlock was bound to get
snappish when he was tired – Lord knows he had yelled at John enough times. "Clara's going to be
there, too," he said, moving his thumbs up along either side of Sherlock's spine, knowing which
muscles to hit and where. "Got the text from Harry after you went to bed."

Sherlock hummed, relaxing at the firm pressure tracing along his back in just... the right places. He
winced as John hit a knot, then sighed as he started to work at it. "Mm I know..." he murmured.
"Bound to happen... the company is on rotation, she's home for a while now," he said, shutting his
eyes. He felt himself sink into the bed more as he relaxed, starting to drift off mid conversation.
"Mmm... s'nice," he slurred, a soft snore escaping him as he fell asleep right after that.

John smiled kindly, rubbing his hands lightly over the length of Sherlock's back before he stood and
walked into the kitchen. He started the kettle, leaning back against the counter as the water boiled.
He reached into his pocket for his phone, sending a quick text to Harry to let her know that he was
letting Sherlock sleep and then they would be over soon after. He took a teabag down, setting it in a
mug and pouring hot water over it before returning to the bedroom.

Sherlock was curled around his belly, which was how he slept now, on his left side, curled
protectively around the bump. Well... bit more than a bump now. He slept for a couple hours, before
his face pinched a little in worry, a dream.

*It was happening, any day now it would happen, and they could start everything together. Sherlock
sat up though, and saw a flat stomach. He looked up at John, question in his eyes. "She's gone
Sherlock," he said, looking at Sherlock, in a very not-John way. "And it's your fault she is. I'm
leaving..." Sherlock's eyes widened and he tried to follow, but then he was gone, too, and Sherlock
was alone.*

Sherlock sat bolt upright from the bed, gasping as he looked around the room frantically.

John startled at Sherlock's sudden movement, and he quickly set his half-empty mug down and
reached out for Sherlock's hand. "Sherlock? Love, what's wrong?" Concern raced through him, and
he steadied Sherlock with a hand on his back as he swayed a little.

Sherlock's head snapped over to look at John, his hand gripping tightly onto John's. He looked at
him with wide eyes before lunging forward and wrapping his arms tightly around him, shaking a
little as a small sob escaped him. He buried his face in John's neck, gulping down his scent. "Y-
you're here..." he said, his hand moving down to his stomach. "Y-you're both here..." he said.

John's brow furrowed in confusion and worry, and he wrapped his arms around Sherlock, holding
him tightly. "You're okay, you're alright," he murmured soothingly, rubbing Sherlock's back and
nuzzling against his temple. "Of course I'm here, I'd never leave you," he promised. "Never in a
thousand years. Not for anything."

Sherlock was still trembling some when he nodded. "I-I know... I know," he said, slowly relaxing a
little more. He pulled away a few minutes later, looking down at his stomach. "I-just a dream.
That's... that's all it was," he said, nodding. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand, having
been sweating a little. "I've been... having some lately. I read that... that that's normal," he mumbled.
"Been reading a lot... lately," he mumbled.

John nodded, continuing to slowly rub Sherlock's back. "Vivid dreams are quite common," he
agreed. "Do you... do you want to talk about it?" he asked quietly, setting his palm on Sherlock's
cheek.

Sherlock leant into the hand gently. "No... no, it's fine," he said. "Like you said... you're not leaving.
And it was just a dream," he said quietly.

Sherlock stood up, stretching a small bit. He walked over and pulled out one of the hideous shirts he had to wear, along with the trousers to go with it. He sighed. "I don't like these either... almost as much as the tea I have to drink," he mumbled, pulling on the trousers with the elastic. He sighed, running his fingers through his hair a little, looking over his shoulder at John.

John let out a small sigh and stood from the bed, slowly walking over to Sherlock and wrapping his arms around him. "You keep worrying so much, and you're going to make my shoulder start aching again," he murmured, hugging Sherlock tightly with his head against his shoulder and his hand on his stomach. "And I think you look sexy in them," he said with a smile, stepping back so that he could get dressed.

Sherlock blinked a few times, looking over his shoulder at John. "I'm sorry," he said. "Look, I'm not... worrying; it was just a dream okay?" he asked, letting out a breath. "And there's no way this," he said, holding up the maternity shirt, "is sexy," he muttered, tugging it on as well, hiding the elastic on the front of his trousers.

Sherlock let out a breath. "I'm just over-thinking, I guess. And then Harry and your mother are going to try and pressure me into letting them throw a baby shower. Is that what people do? Have showers?" he asked.

John laughed a little, pulling on one of Sherlock's favourite jumpers and a pair of loose, comfortable jeans. "Yes, people usually throw baby showers. And yes, we should let them throw one because then they can buy us stuff for the baby and we don't have to spend the money on it." He winked at Sherlock, taking his hand and leading him to the kitchen. "Let's eat, and then we can go."

Sherlock sighed, following John out into the living room. "I still have my trust fund," he said. "And we already got some baby stuff for Christmas. And my birthday," he said, looking at John. He felt his dog tabs around his neck, looking at John.

Sherlock looked over at the new strings and sheet music John had got him for his birthday; he'd already started to polish off the final draft of the song he'd composed.

John followed Sherlock's gaze around the room, remembering their Christmas. Sherlock had got him a "proper suit," the dark green dress shirt pulling out the gold in his hair.

Sherlock sighed softly, still feeling on edge. He wet his lips, hearing his phone go off. He knew it was Mycroft, knew what he wanted. He knew it was Mycroft, knew what he wanted. He wasn't going, he couldn't go. He swallowed, thinking back to his birthday. It had been perfect, just them. Just like John promised.

John sighed softly, glancing at Sherlock's pocket and the ringing phone in it. It took him a moment – remembering Christmas and Sherlock's birthday – to recall that it was the sixteenth today. He mentally cursed himself, bringing out his phone and texting Harry that they weren't going, that he would call and explain later.

"Come here, love," John whispered, walking up and wrapping his arms around him.

Sherlock looked up at John when he said that, blinking once as John embraced him suddenly. He leant his head on John's shoulder, wondering what brought it on.

Sherlock sighed. John remembered, then. He pulled away gently. "I'm fine," he said quietly, reaching into his pocket for his phone and switching it off when it went off again. He let out a shaky breath, letting the phone clatter to the counter.
John just tightened his hold on Sherlock, pulling him back into his embrace and shaking his head slightly. "No you're not, and that's fine," he whispered, running his fingers up into Sherlock's hair. He pressed a quick kiss to his cheek and backed off a little, cupping Sherlock's face and looking at him intently. "You should go," he whispered, stroking his cheekbones with his thumbs. "I already told Harry that we're not going over there."

Sherlock looked down for a moment; so John did know. He swallowed, letting out a breath. "I-I don't think I can," he said quietly. Five years now. He looked at John. "Will you... can you come with me? If I go?" he murmured quietly.

John smiled, combing through Sherlock's curls and leaning up to kiss his cheek. "I was hoping you would ask me. You shouldn't do this alone." He hugged Sherlock tightly for a long moment, then pulled back again and smiled softly at him.

Sherlock sighed, looking at John, leaning back against the counter. "I don't want... I don't want to do it at all," he admitted, looking down. "I keep telling myself next year... that's what I said last year. And I already lined up the excuse that I would wait for you to come back, because you were going to be gone for two years." He let out a breath. "I don't know why I'm.... It's probably not even a big deal. It's a rock. It's a rock with their names on it," he said.

"Sherlock, you and I both know it's so much more than that." John leant against the counter, his hands in his pockets. "You haven't gotten to say goodbye yet, and I know you probably want to say sorry. It's... it's therapy. And you made me go through therapy, and it helped as much as it could." He sighed, looking down at the floor for a moment. "I think you need to go."

"You went for a week," Sherlock said with the corner of his mouth tugging up a fraction.

John laughed. "Yes, well, you made me do that plate thing too, which was basically therapy."

Sherlock rubbed his upper arms a little with his palms, letting out a breath. "After Mycroft has left. I don't want to... to go when he's still there. I don't want to deal with him," he said.

John smiled gently, nodding his head slightly. "Yes, I can understand that. I don't particularly want to deal with him either. When do you think he'll leave?"

Sherlock thought a moment. "Approximately twenty minutes after he sends his next text, whenever that is," he said quietly. He looked at his phone, which was still turned off, and picked it up. He turned it back on, seeing a new text.

_Perhaps next time, brother. MH_

"Which was... fifteen minutes ago," Sherlock mumbled with a sigh.

John smiled lightly, moving over to take Sherlock's hand. "Come on, then. Let's get our coats on and we can go." He knew Sherlock didn't really want to, that he was genuinely afraid, but he had to bring him. Sherlock needed to face this. It had been five years, after all. "You've got a lot to tell them," he said softly, helping Sherlock into his coat before tugging on his own.

Sherlock was frowning a little as he wrapped his scarf around his neck. "There's no one to tell anything," he insisted as John led him downstairs. "They're dead, John," he said, folding his arms as he stood on the pavement, John flagging down a cab.

John sighed insufferably, rolling his eyes as he flagged for a cab. "Doesn't matter if they're not really there, it helps to talk to them. Twenty pounds says that that's what Mycroft does every year. It's nice to just get things off of your chest."
Sherlock blinked a couple times, looking down when he felt an uncomfortable nudge. He furrowed his brow, he'd hardly felt anything before... just small flutters that felt like nerves, but this... was different. He put his hand on his stomach, not able to feel it from the outside, but inside was different.

John turned back to look at Sherlock as a cab pulled up, noticing his hand on his stomach. "Everything alright?"

Sherlock blinked again, looking up at John. "Yes," he said quickly, moving his hand off his stomach and sliding into the cab. He sighed, feeling the nudge again, like she was moving around a lot in there. He blinked again, his brow furrowed still as he categorised the odd sensations.

John gave Sherlock a funny look as the cab started moving. "Sherlock, what?" he asked, knowing that there was obviously something bothering him.

Sherlock looked over at John, his hand having moved to his stomach again. He still couldn't feel anything on the outside. "I can... feel her," he said slowly, blinking a few times. "She... she's, ah... moving. And kicking," he said.

John's face broke out in a huge grin, and he reached over to set his hand on top of Sherlock's, knowing he wouldn't be able to feel anyway. "She's letting you know she's in there," he said with a smile, reaching up to comb through Sherlock's hair. "She's a little early for active kicking, so she's probably just going to keep on doing it. Which is fine, because the theory is that the more active they are in the womb, the quieter they are when they're born." He winked at Sherlock, leaning over to kiss his cheek.

Sherlock touched his stomach, rubbing it a little to try and get her to stop. "Yes well... I'll never be able to sleep if she keeps it up," he muttered, sighing a little as he saw the buildings pass by them. No doubt Mycroft would know soon enough where he was going.

John chuckled quietly, resting his head against Sherlock's shoulder. "You barely sleep as it is. You get crabby enough to bite my head off," he said gently, nuzzling against Sherlock's neck.

"I do not bite your head off," Sherlock said quickly with a small huff. He looked out the window again with a small pout.

John laughed. "Yes, you do. I've gotten rather impervious to it now, though, so I don't mind."

"How far is it?" John asked, looking out of Sherlock's window in an attempt to follow his line of sight.

"Ten minutes," Sherlock mumbled quietly, tilting his head to lean on John's.

John nudged Sherlock with his elbow. "It'll be alright," he assured, closing his eyes for a moment.

Sherlock sighed. "I'm sorry," he mumbled. He set his teeth on edge, looking out the window.

Eventually, the cab pulled to as stop at the gates of the cemetery. Sherlock let out a breath, swallowing thickly. He didn't move to get out of the cab. "How about lunch instead?" he asked, his voice shaking a little.

John looked out of the window for a moment, reading the cemetery's name on the iron sign five times before he wordlessly took Sherlock's hand and all but dragged him out of the cab. It was going to hurt, probably tremendously, but it was going to get better as well. He just needed a little push in the right direction. Well, maybe a big push.
Sherlock stopped outside the gate when John finally got him out of the cab. He let out a shaky breath. "L-lunch, John, I just... I'm hungry.... K-Katherine n-needs me to... to eat," he stammered, trying to use that as an excuse. John already doted on everything to do with her.

"Liar," John said, turning to face Sherlock. He stepped up to him, squeezing his hand tightly and kissing his cheek. "You can do this, love. I'm here, I'm beside you. You made me face my family, and now I'm returning the favour." He turned back toward the gate, tugging Sherlock with him as he walked through it.

Sherlock grimaced. "I... John, I'm not... lying, I...." He was pulling for straws, digging in his heels lightly. "I won't tell you where they are. It's a big enough cemetery," he said, feeling his heart start to race in his chest. He felt a few more kicks, the pup obvious agitated by his state.

John stopped at the first row of headstones, turning to face Sherlock and cupping his face. "Love, look at me," he commanded softly, and he didn't speak again until Sherlock had complied. "Take a deep breath, hold it, let it out slowly, and then repeat. Please, just do this for me.

Sherlock did as instructed, struggling at first with it, but eventually forced his breaths to slow. He felt his eyes burning a little, knowing they were probably red. He frowned, wishing that it didn't feel like this. That he couldn't feel, as much as he'd tried not to. With John... with what was inside of him... he couldn't help but to feel. And he didn't know how to cope with it.

"John I... I killed them. I can't... be here," Sherlock said, voice breaking a small bit, though his gaze moved over to the corner of the cemetery that they were in.

John didn't turn to follow Sherlock's gaze, as much as he wanted to. "No," he said, firmly but gently. "No, Sherlock, you didn't kill them. It is not your fault, and that's one of the reason's why you're here. You need to apologise to them and to yourself for carrying that burden with you all of these years. You need to forgive yourself, and you need to talk to them." He stroked his thumbs over Sherlock's cheeks, smiling softly up at him. "Tell them about our daughter, about solving murders, about all of the good things that they're not here to see."

Sherlock was still shaking, and he shut his eyes to avoid looking at John's. They were dead; there was no one to say anything to. He could tell John wouldn't give this up though, and he nodded shakily. "F-fine... n-no lunch then. Have it... y-your way," he said shakily. He looked down, starting to move his feet a bit down the path, his arms wrapped around himself.

John followed a bit behind, wishing that he could take some of the ache away from Sherlock, but he knew he had to do this. He watched Sherlock carefully, stepping up with a hand on his back to steady him as they walked over the grass and turned down a row of headstones.

Sherlock kept his feet moving, not looking up from the bottom of the stones. He looked ahead and saw them, the carnations, Mother's favourites. He froze when they were there, slowly looking up to see the names there.

KATHERINE VIOLA HOLMES and DAVID HARRIS HOLMES.

Sherlock tightened his arms around himself, letting out a breath that held a pained noise as he tried to back away from it, bumping into John.

John circled his arms around Sherlock, both to support him and to keep him in place. "It's alright, love," he whispered, pressing a quick kiss to the back of his neck. "Don't back out now. You're here, I'm here, and so are they. Talk to them." He took a step away, giving Sherlock space if he wanted it.
Sherlock didn't want John to step away; he felt like he was falling and needed him there to stop him from drifting. He swallowed, looking at the names on the single stone, thinking.

*I'm sorry I yelled. You thought you were doing right by me. I'm sorry for the accident, for helping cause it, for never thinking about it, for trying to pretend it didn't happen. I'm sorry for not coming back, for giving up.*

Sherlock felt his cheeks grow damp and he slowly sank down to sit in the grass, weaving his fingers into his hair for a moment as a sob wracked his body. He felt Katherine kick a few times, and his hands slid down from his head to circle his stomach as he sobbed again, feeling like his chest had been torn open. "I'm s-sorry... so sorry..." he said, sounding almost like a wounded animal.

John ached for Sherlock, could practically feel the pain himself. He knew the guilt, the pain of loss, quite well. He walked up behind Sherlock and knelt behind him, setting a hand lightly on his shoulder, running his thumb over the shoulder blade. He didn't say anything, just gave Sherlock comfort, encouraging him to continue, to let it go. Placing his other hand on Sherlock's bulging stomach, he leant forward, resting his forehead on the back of his bondmate's neck.

Sherlock leant back into John, closing his eyes as more tears escaped them. He let out a breath. "I want... you here," he said, realising how stupid he must sound, talking to a rock. Even if his parents were alive, his father probably wouldn't want to be around; his mother though... she'd wanted grandchildren someday, she would have stayed.

"For this... all of this," Sherlock said, "I'm sorry..." He sobbed, not able to form words anymore. He slumped back against John, turning his head in and leaning against him. He fell silent after that, still trembling, silent tears coming from his still closed eyes.

John wrapped his arms around Sherlock, holding him tightly and rocking him slowly. He didn't realise he had joined Sherlock in crying until he sniffed, and he quickly reached up to wipe the tears away, nuzzling against Sherlock's hair and kissing the top of his head. "It's alright," he whispered, cupping the back of Sherlock's head to hold him close. "You're doing well, love; everything's alright."

Sherlock's arms were still cradling his stomach, and he was staring at the grass near the base of the headstone, almost looking through it. He let out a breath, closing his eyes as he let himself be held by John.

Eventually Sherlock's trembling subsided and he was still, the tears on his face drying, though the dampness had made them cold. The ground was cold, too – it was still winter after all – but he didn't move, feeling impossibly tired. Katherine, at least, had stopped kicking.

John pressed a kiss to Sherlock's temple, holding his lips there for a long time. "Come on, then, love," he whispered, standing up and pulling Sherlock with him. "We'll go home and warm up by the fire, drink some tea." He led Sherlock away, holding him tightly against his side, locking his fingers with one of Sherlock's hands.

Sherlock stood up, glancing at the stone again, and then down once more, letting John lead him away. He felt numb, physically from the cold, emotionally from everything else. He sniffed a little, blinking a couple times.

It didn't register that the car they slid into was one of Mycroft's until it had already pulled away and Sherlock saw the carnation petals on the floor. He rubbed his nose, resting his head on John's shoulder.
John held Sherlock close, thankful that at least that the elder Holmes brother wasn't seated in the car. He rocked Sherlock gently, his cheek resting on top of his head. Their journey seemed much shorter going home than it had going out, and John seemed to only blink a handful of times before they were in front of the flat. He exited the car, helping Sherlock out and into the building.

Sherlock looked around the living room when they finally walked inside. He let out a breath, shrugging off his coat as he walked and just letting it drop on the floor of the living room as he went down the hall to the bedroom. He didn't even take off his shoes when he climbed onto the bed and curled up on his left side. He would have preferred his right, but left was more comfortable and better for the pup.

John sighed, picking up Sherlock's coat and hanging it up with his own. He toed off his shoes and padded down the hall to the bedroom, taking off Sherlock's shoes before crawling in behind him. He wrapped his arm over Sherlock, resting his palm on his chest and pulling him back against him.

Sherlock curled a little smaller when he felt John wrap around him, leaning back into him. John's hand felt reassuring on his chest, and he let out a breath.

John kissed the mark on the back of Sherlock's neck, nuzzling against him and recognising the stress in his scent. "You're alright; you're home, love," he whispered.

Sherlock nodded a few times, relaxing marginally when John's lips pressed to the mark on his neck. He sighed. "Mm know," he mumbled quietly. "Jus' tired," he said softly, closing his eyes. He reached down and smoothed his hand over his stomach. "She's not moving anymore," he said.

"Neither are you," John pointed out. "She listens to you, Sherlock. She knows what you're feeling because she can feel it too. You're deathly calm and stunned right now, and she knows that." He held Sherlock closer, closing his eyes tightly. "You gave us both a bit of a scare, I'm sure."

"So she takes after your mother, then," Sherlock mumbled quietly, though her perception would make sense. His muscles probably tightened or something.

John couldn't help his small smile. "Maybe she does," he agreed, pressing slow, soft kisses over the back of Sherlock's neck.

Sherlock let out a breath, swallowing thickly. John said deathly calm... was he? He felt... nothing. "You're scaring me a little, love," John whispered, holding his hand over Sherlock's slow heartbeat, resting his lips over a section of his neck where his scent was strongest.

Sherlock swallowed. "I'm fine," he said, voice a bit flat. Perhaps it was good that John wasn't there last year, then. He'd told John in his letter that he'd spent time with Mrs Hudson... far from the truth. Though this time didn't leave him aching so much as... lighter, empty almost. Though he chalked that up to emotional exhaustion.

John burrowed closer to Sherlock. "Go to sleep, love," he whispered, pressing a long kiss to the back of Sherlock's neck before resting his forehead there. He wasn't sure exactly what to do for Sherlock, but he knew rest was probably a good idea.

Sherlock let out a slow breath, nodding once and shutting his eyes. He didn't think he could sleep, though. He lay there for a while, John's arms around him, holding Sherlock close to him. He hummed a little, settling more against him.

"Mm loved them... never said... when I got older," Sherlock murmured finally, the thought that had been needling him for a long time. He let out a breath, finally passing out, snoring softly.
"They knew, love," John whispered, only to realise that Sherlock was fast asleep. He sighed lightly, leaning up to kiss his cheek before he slid from the bed, grabbing his phone and walking out into the living room with it. He called work, explaining the situation and telling them that he wouldn't be able to go in tomorrow. Then he called Harry and apologised properly, talking to her and Mum for a while before he hung up and returned to bed, changing into his pyjamas before he crawled in beside Sherlock.

Sherlock felt gentle hands stroking the hair by his face, and could hear familiar humming. The body pressed up behind his felt safe and reassuring.

"Shh... it's alright, Lock. You're perfectly fine."

Sherlock blinked his eyes open as he woke up, feeling John behind him. He licked his lips a little, rolling onto his back and turning his head to look at John, who was asleep. He swallowed, letting out a breath. He watched John for a little while, thinking about him, and both Katherine’s.

John shouldn't have been surprised at how he had reverted back to light sleeping once Sherlock had progressed further in his pregnancy. It came in handy more often than not, and it pulled him awake now.

John reached out to brush Sherlock's curls away from his face, looking up at him quietly. Are you alright? he thought at him, continuing to card through his hair.

Sherlock nodded silently, leaning into John's hand. He rubbed his stomach lightly, looking up at the ceiling. He sighed, hesitating before looking back at John. "Thank you," he said softly, looking at him gently.

"For what?" John whispered, not recalling doing anything that was worth thanking. He set his free hand over Sherlock's on his stomach, squeezing his fingers lightly.

Sherlock looked down at John's hand, sighing a little. "For making me go... and for coming with me. And for everything else," he said softly. He looked up at John, and smiled a small bit. "Just... thank you," he said quietly.

John leant up to kiss Sherlock gently, pulling away with a small smile. "You're welcome," he whispered, nestling down against Sherlock. "You're welcome," he repeated softly, linking their fingers together as he drifted off to sleep again.

Sherlock sighed, rolling back onto his left side and reaching back behind himself to take hold of John's arm and wrap it around himself. He settled a little more into the bed, eventually falling back asleep himself. He didn't dream about his mother again, or anything for that matter, and slept soundly for the rest of the night.
John woke up late, nearly late enough for it to be lunchtime. He smiled when he felt Sherlock still beside him, getting the much-needed sleep that he deserved. He nuzzled against the back of Sherlock's neck before he slowly rolled out of bed, going to the bathroom before walking out into the living room, stretching as he gazed out of the window. He supposed he should make food or tea or something, but he didn't feel like it. He just wanted to stand and enjoy the late morning light filtering through a light cloud cover.

Sherlock shifted in bed a small bit, only waking up when he felt the kicking in his belly. He groaned a little. "Keep it up, and I'm going to be sick," he muttered as he sat up, since obviously he wouldn't be sleeping anymore. He stretched, seeing John gone already. Perhaps he'd gone to work.

Sherlock went to the bathroom, then ambled down the hall, seeing John by the window. "O-oh... I thought you'd be at work," he said softly. "Morning," he murmured.

John turned, leaning back against the windowsill. "Morning," he said, shaking his head a little. "I wanted to stay home with you today, make sure you're alright," he said, which was most of it.

John walked up to Sherlock, wrapping his arms around his neck and pulling him down for a few chaste kisses. "She kicking again?" he asked, figuring that was what woke Sherlock.

Sherlock nodded, resting his forehead against John's. "Yes... decided to be active, I guess," he mumbled. He wished John could feel it, but that would take another month or so. Still, from the inside it was interesting, but after a while it was tedious. He let out a breath, then breathed in John's scent.

"What should we do today?" Sherlock asked quietly. "Already doing good... I didn't get out of bed for a few days last year," he murmured. "Though... bed is only comfortable for so long with this one," he mumbled, nudging his stomach.

John leant back, looking up at Sherlock with his eyebrows furrowed. "You went last year?" he asked, linking his fingers with Sherlock's. "Why didn't you tell me?" But of course, he knew why. He had been busy, off in the desert, getting shot at or whatever had happened during that time.

Sherlock shook his head. "No. I didn't go last year; I... I couldn't," he said. "But it was the first time since it happened, that I knew what day it was. I never knew when it passed when I was at the auction house. I know I said last year went fine but…. Well, I might have polished it over a fraction," he admitted, looking down.

John reached up, cupping Sherlock's cheek and stroking his thumb over his cheekbone. "I guess I can understand why you didn't tell me," he murmured, looking up at him.

John sighed, resting his forehead against Sherlock's chest. "Will you come with me today? I have an
errand to run."

Sherlock let out a breath, looking at John. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"I need to go to the flower shop," he said, pulling himself back and walking into the kitchen, boiling a pot of coffee and pulling a chocolate bar from one of their cabinets, and he munched on it while the coffee brewed.

*Breakfast of champions.*

*Happy birthday, Stephen.*

Sherlock nodded a little, wondering why they were going to the flower shop. He wasn't going back to that grave anytime soon. He looked after John in the kitchen, brewing himself a pot of coffee – John had started drinking Decaf with him. That and if there was any caffeinated coffee in the flat, Sherlock would have drank it. He furrowed his brow at the chocolate; John never had chocolate in the morning.

John poured himself some coffee, wishing it was strong and caffeinated, but he could settle for this if Sherlock could. "Want any?" John offered. "The coffee, I mean. I'm not giving you any chocolate." He winked, sipping from his mug and leaning back against the counter, crossing his ankles and watching Sherlock, not letting any sign of his memories cross over his features.

Sherlock grabbed a mug, holding it up as he got some. He eyed John, watching him carefully. "You never eat chocolate in the morning..." he mentioned. He stirred some sugar into his mug. "Why are we going to the flower shop?" he asked.

John swallowed, finishing off the chocolate bar and holding the mug between his hands. "Stephen's birthday," he said simply, shrugging as he looked down at the dark liquid in his mug. "I wanna send flowers to his family, remind them that not everything is so bad." He glanced up at Sherlock, his eyes a little wide. "I've been doing this for a while now. 'S why I have the birthdays of the soldiers on that piece of paper."

Sherlock blinked a few times, looking down at his coffee. He walked over to John and wrapped his arms around him after setting down his coffee. "I'll go with you," he said quietly, pressing his lips to John's forehead this time. "You went with me," he murmured.

John set his coffee down as well, wrapping his arms loosely around Sherlock's waist, his hands resting on the small of his back, thumbs absently stroking along the dip in his spine.

Sherlock pulled back and met John's gaze. "Why haven't you asked me to go before?"

"Because," John whispered, "I either stopped by after work or you were busy. They weren't a big deal anyway, hardly knew most of them; I just wanted to show that someone cared, even if I wasn't signing the cards. This is... different. Stephen was my second, my best friend out there. He was practically my brother."

Sherlock nodded a little. "Alright," he said quietly. He licked his lips a little. "I'm sorry, but that's nice... the flowers," he murmured. He looked over at the sweet wrapper on the counter. "Can I ask about the chocolate?" he asked.

John laughed a little, resting his forehead on Sherlock's shoulder and closing his eyes. "He got a package from his parents on his birthday with a whole bunch of sweets in it. I was allowed a bit of a lie-in that morning, because I had been up until four treating a patient. He just... burst into my tent without warning, yelling at me to wake up and tossing me a chocolate bar and handing me a
steaming cup of coffee, declaring it the breakfast of champions."

Sherlock smiled a little, thinking it must have been one of John's few fond memories of his time in that desert, and yet it was tainted by his friend's death. He reached up and cupped John's neck a little, fingers tracing where his own mark was on his neck.

"I'll go with you," Sherlock said again. "And whenever you go again," he murmured quietly. He wanted to be there for John. There were few instances in which he felt he could.

John smiled softly up at Sherlock, leaning up to kiss him. "Alright. You should eat breakfast first, and then we can go. It'll just be a quick run. I want to spend the day with you." He stroked Sherlock's cheek gently then turned away to put some bread in the toaster. "What else would you like? Eggs, pancakes?" He looked over his shoulder at Sherlock, smiling gently.

Sherlock smiled softly. "Erm... eggs. But I can try and make them," he said, opening up the fridge and pulling them out. He'd gotten a bit better in doing so, the whole... cooking thing. He'd never told John, but him burning that purple shirt the first time wasn't an experiment. Well it was, only he'd been trying to cook at the time.

John set the pan on the burner for Sherlock, moving to standing behind him while he tried out cooking. Whenever he hesitated or seemed unsure, John wrapped his arms around him and guided his hands, whispering instructions softly in his ear.

Sherlock's mouth quirked up a bit when John stood behind him, though he playfully quipped "I know" and "That's what I was about to do, obviously" at John. After a few minutes Sherlock had produced a few broken, somewhat crisp eggs, but he deemed them edible enough.

"We should cook like this more often," John suggested, kissing Sherlock's shoulder.

Sherlock sighed. "I'm not sure I'm quite cut out for cooking. Seems like there's other, more useful, information to know," he murmured, sitting down with his eggs.

John smiled, sitting beside him with his hand on Sherlock's thigh. "That's why we'd keep cooking like that, obviously. Then you can delete it all and we can cook again next time." He smiled broadly, nudging Sherlock with his elbow. He moved his hand up to Sherlock's stomach, circling his hand absently. "I'm going to go get dressed," he said, standing up and kissing Sherlock's temple.

Sherlock nodded, scooping up his eggs and eating them quickly, piling them on top of the toast John had made. He sighed, stretching a little when he'd finished and dumped his plate in the sink. He ambled down the hall, rubbing his lower back a little before changing his clothes that he'd slept in. He glanced over at John, rubbing his thumb over the dog tags around his neck. He let out a breath, then moved his hand to his right shoulder, massaging the scar there which still hurt sometimes. At least he wouldn't sleep on it wrong, as he slept on his left side now.

John had stripped out of his pyjamas by the time Sherlock had come in, and he was pulling on his fatigues. "Mine hurts too," he said, noticing Sherlock's hand on his shoulder. "Leg's starting to bother me too."

Sherlock let out a breath seeing John in his uniform again. He looked down at John's leg; it didn't hurt, that was just John upset, he'd never actually hurt it. "Probably getting a change in weather soon," he murmured, looking at John. He looked so good in it, but he knew it was hard for him.

John sighed, tucking the tan shirt into the camouflage trousers and then walking over to Sherlock, taking his hand that was on his shoulder and kissing his knuckles. "Decided to go visit his grave,
too," he murmured, lowering his eyes for a moment before looking back up into Sherlock's, their fingers still laced together.

Sherlock swallowed, pulling on his shirt before pulling off the dog tags. "Do you want them back?" he asked, looking up at John. "For today... when we go?" he asked quietly, giving John's hand a squeeze.

John smiled, though it was wavering and thin. He took the tags from Sherlock's hand and slipped them back over Sherlock's head, settling them over his shirt on his chest. "No," he whispered, holding his palm over the tags. "Keep them. Stephen would get a kick out of it anyway." He squeezed Sherlock's hand back, then let it go, limping a little as he walked back to the closet and took out his boots. He tucked in the bottoms of the trousers and laced the boots up over the top of them. "Alright," he said, straightening and walking back over to Sherlock, "ready when you are."

Sherlock nodded, tugging on his own pair of shoes, though it was getting harder and harder to do up his own laces, and some days it didn't even feel like his shoes fit right. He stood up, taking John's hand and walking out to their coats, shrugging his on and handing John's over. "It'll be okay," he said, looking at John. He swallowed, looking down. "As hard as... that was yesterday I... I feel better for it. And at least you haven't put it off five years. It only gets worse."

"I know." John nodded. He wasn't afraid or worried or anything. He was just... he didn't know.

John took Sherlock's hand after shrugging on his jacket and led him downstairs, locking up behind them as he stepped onto the pavement. Had it just been him going, he would have walked to the flower shop and then to the graveyard and taken a taxi home. With Sherlock beside him, he didn't hesitate to hail a cab right away. He held the door for Sherlock and slid in after him, giving the address to the cabbie and rubbing his leg a little, sitting straight-backed in the seat.

Sherlock watched John carefully, seeing him already in the posture of when he came back home. It had taken a couple months before he seemed to relax all the way. He sighed, resting his head on John's shoulder, hoping his proximity helped him relax. "After, we should get some lunch maybe... get you something a bit more than chocolate," he murmured. He almost suggested more shopping for Katherine – three months wasn't a lot of time to get everything done – but he was quiet on that point.

"I'm fine," John whispered, wrapping his arm around Sherlock's waist and pulling him closer. He wasn't hungry, and it had taken a bit of effort to even eat the chocolate. He wasn't sure why it was affecting him so badly, this visit, until they were nearly at the flower shop. "PTSD is kicking in," he murmured, squeezing Sherlock's hand as he paid the cabbie and stepped outside. He could tell that his posture was stiff, formal, but he couldn't help it. It was a natural reaction to stress.

Sherlock let out a breath, nodding quietly. He knew that that was what it was, and he supposed it was good that John acknowledged that fact. They were still getting food. Sherlock would use the pup as an excuse, and then insist that John eat too. He felt almost as if it was holding their child hostage if he refused to eat too, but then if it would help John....

"I understand," Sherlock said, stepping out after John and into the flower shop.

John smiled at the lady behind the counter, who he was beginning to know very well. "Same thing?" she asked, knowing why John was there and what he was doing.

Sherlock wondered what the usual was.

John shook his head minutely. "White daisies and baby's breath, with red and gold carnations," he told her with a small smile, and he watched with a close eye as she made up the bouquet, writing a
small card without signing his name and then paying for the flowers. "Thanks," he said, leaving the flowers with her to be delivered.

Sherlock watched the care with which she made the bouquet, and he waited for John. He looked around the shop, eyeing the carnations. His mother's favourite. When John turned to leave, Sherlock took up his hand, giving it a little squeeze. "Ready?" he asked.

John took Sherlock's hand, holding tightly to it as they left the shop. He called for another cab, climbing in after Sherlock and giving the cabbie the name of the cemetery. "It's the only one I know," he murmured quietly. "The grave sight, I mean."

Sherlock squeezed John's hand with a small nod. He leant over and rested his head on John's shoulder with a small sigh. "I love you," he murmured, not sure what else to say.

"I know. I love you too," John whispered, resting his cheek on top of Sherlock's head. He squeezed Sherlock's hand, not letting go until the cab was stopped and they were there. Swallowing, John paid the fare and got out, holding the door for Sherlock and leading him into the graveyard after a moment's hesitation.

Sherlock walked alongside John, brushing their shoulders together. He looked around the cemetery, quite a different one from the one they had been to yesterday. He wondered if they would be doing this every year. Seeing Sherlock's parents on the day of their deaths and then John's 'brother' on the day of his birth. He let out a breath, applying pressure once more to John's hand.

John stopped around the middle of the cemetery and squared his shoulders. He glanced up at Sherlock for a moment before turning sharply right and walking down the row like the soldier he used to be; only his slight limp and pained shoulder telling the story of what happened. He halted again towards the end of the row, turning on his heel to address the white stone before him.

There were flowers on it already – white lilies of the valley.

John ducked his head, forcing himself to stay steady, and took a step forward, releasing Sherlock's hand as he went to kneel on one knee in front of the headstone.

"You're a dick, you know that?" John whispered, setting his hand flat on the ground in front of him. "Missing your damn birthday and all. Had to eat the damned chocolate without you. Had to improvise with decaf coffee, too." He bit his lip, clearing his throat. "I bonded with that Omega you were always giving me shit about. Your mate's fine; I sent her an email yesterday. Kids are good too. They miss their dad though." His voice broke and he reached his hand up to rest his fingers on the ridge of the grave.

"You were supposed to come home with me," John breathed, ignoring the tears that had slipped from his eyes.

Sherlock swallowed thickly, watching John's mannerisms and listening quietly as John talked to his friend. What was left of him anyway – a stone with his name.

Sherlock felt a tug in his chest, thinking about the children and bondmate left behind. God... if John was gone, after bonding especially... Sherlock wouldn't be able to stand it.

Sherlock knelt down in the grass beside John, wrapping his arms around him, wanting to comfort him as much as he could.

John closed his eyes, swallowing down the anger that was rising up. Anger that was directed at himself, Stephen, Bill, the world, and anyone else he could think to blame for fifty-three people dead.
He turned away from the stone and leant against Sherlock, his head resting on Sherlock's shoulder.

John stayed on the short grass for a long time, his leg paining him as badly as it had when he had first come back. "Wish I had my cane. Wasn't thinking about that," he murmured, turning his head to nuzzle slowly against Sherlock's neck, breathing deeply.

Sherlock reached up and played with the hair at the nape of John's neck. "You've got me," he said softly, not pointing out that John didn't need his cane, that the pain in his leg was just his grief spelled out differently.

Sherlock let out a breath. "It'll be a little easier next time," he said quietly. "Just like for me... it'll be easier," he murmured.

John held Sherlock tighter, nodding quickly. He closed his eyes tightly for a moment, letting out a long breath before eventually pulling back. "We should go. It's cold," he murmured, pushing himself unsteadily to his feet and keeping the weight off of his right leg. He held his hand out to help Sherlock up, not letting go once he was standing as well.

"If you're ready," Sherlock murmured, grateful to stand, he couldn't kneel for long these days. He rested his free hand on his stomach and let out a breath, the eggs and toast already well on their way to being gone. He gave John a small tug and led him from the cemetery. "We passed a café on our way here, why don't we go there?" he asked quietly.

John nodded, looking back over his shoulder once as he got back into the cab that was still waiting for them. Sherlock must have asked the driver to wait, because John had quite forgotten. "You've got to be hungry by now," he said, climbing back into the cab after Sherlock, letting him tell the cabbie where to go.

Sherlock nodded, brushing a little bit of hair out of John's face. He let out a breath, nuzzling a little against John's neck.

Soon enough they were at the café, and Sherlock led John into it, seating them in a more private booth, sitting next to John though, rather than across from him.

"I'm fine, Sherlock," John said quietly, though in all reality he was glad for the nearness. He linked their hands under the table, leaning over to kiss his cheek. "Thank you, though," he whispered, looking up as a waitress came up with menus and for a drink order. He needed a beer, but he ordered a glass of water, if only for Sherlock's sake.

"You're welcome," Sherlock murmured, twining his fingers with John's. He noticed John's gaze and let out a breath. He ordered water as well and then a beer.

The waitress glanced down at Sherlock's obviously swollen belly, and Sherlock just gave her a look. "Do you really think it's for me?"

She nodded and walked away. "Don't say anything... it's just a long day. I would have had one yesterday if I could," he murmured.

John let out a breath, pressing a kiss to Sherlock's cheek and resting his head against his shoulder. "I thought that waitress was going to tear you a new one when you ordered that," he said, chuckling softly. "Good thing she didn't, or I would have had to yell at her." He inhaled deeply, smiling a little at Sherlock's scent.

Sherlock shrugged a little. "Not really her place to," he murmured, looking down at the grin on
John's face. "What's so funny?" he asked – had he said something? Perhaps he should say it again if it made John smile.

"Nothing," John said softly, pressing a kiss to Sherlock's neck. "Just... breathing you in. You're scent tends to make me happy, especially with you so obviously pregnant." He tightened his hand around Sherlock's, sitting up as the waitress returned with their drinks.

Sherlock thought about that, picking up the glass just to shake up the waitress a little and then moving it towards John. He ordered a chicken plate and waited for John to order food as well, because he would order lunch.

John smacked Sherlock's hand playfully and reached for the beer, rolling his eyes. He sighed heavily at the look Sherlock gave him and ordered a pasta dish, just a random one he had seen when glancing at the menu.

After the waitress left, Sherlock looked at John. "It's different then? My scent. Yours didn't change, but it's almost like I need it more... I don't like you leaving. Like when you go to work. I get antsy. And of course Lestrade hardly has any cases for me these days, probably Mycroft's doing," he murmured, not mentioning that when he was just about at five months, the sight of blood at a crime scene had made him get sick, the smell of it. He shivered. "Anyway, I'm stuck on cold case files," he said.

"Yeah, it's definitely different. Definitively... I can only think to describe it using the word 'pregnant.'" He swirled the glass, blowing on the foam, and took a drink of the beer. "I'm glad Mycroft is keeping you off cases. I'd rather you home safe, even if I'm not home, which I do apologise for."

Sherlock shrugged indifferently. "Yes well... a bit after she's here I'd like to take another," he murmured, leaning close to John.

Sherlock furrowed his brows a little. "What if she doesn't like me?" he asked, spinning his water glass a little on the table.

"Why wouldn't she?" John asked, as if the question was ridiculous, which it was. "You're her father, of course she'll like you. One nice thing about kids is that they aren't born with negative opinions. They love what makes them happy and dislike what upsets them. And you won't upset her." He squeezed Sherlock's hand tightly, tipping back another swallow of beer.

Sherlock sighed a little, nodding a small bit. He nodded towards the waitress when she brought their plates. "I suppose she'd have to... to begin with," he murmured. He looked pointedly at John's plate. "You're eating, alright?" he murmured.

John opened his mouth, protest on the tip of his tongue, when he shook his head at himself. What was the point in arguing? Sherlock would just pull the 'eat or I won't' threat, and he'd end up eating anyway. Best to just save the argument.

John picked up his fork, pushing around some of the white pasta, twirling some around his fork and setting it in his mouth. He didn't taste it, and the starch hit his stomach like lead, making him a bit queasy, but he forced down a fourth of the dish.

Sherlock started in on his chicken as soon as John had taken a few bites. He paused when John pushed his plate away, half of his own gone already.

"I'll eat tomorrow," John promised.
Sherlock nodded. "Okay," he said, continuing to eat his chicken and rice. He finished soon enough, putting some money on the table and leaning against John, resting his head on his shoulder.

John started a little, blinking back the fog that had formed over his eyes. "Come on," he said, managing, somehow, to keep his voice from breaking, "let's go home. I just... I want to be home." He waited for Sherlock to stand and then he followed, shrugging on his coat and helping Sherlock into his own. He took Sherlock's hand, holding it tightly as they left.

Sherlock allowed himself to be led out, and the cab ride that ensued was a quiet and somewhat slow one. He let out a breath, nuzzling close to John, wanting him to feel better. Whole again.

Sherlock led John upstairs to the flat, tugging off his coat and then John's, before he gently took his face and pressed his lips to John's, humming a little as he kissed him.

John didn't remember the cab ride, nor the walk up the stairs. He wasn't sure how he had gotten in the bedroom, and then he blinked and Sherlock was kissing him. John sighed lightly against Sherlock's lips, kissing him back slowly and tenderly, reaching up to cup Sherlock's neck with one hand, his other resting over his tags on Sherlock's chest.

Sherlock smiled a little against John's mouth. "There you are," he murmured, resting his forehead against John's. "I'm not the only one that disappears in my head," he said, pressing more kisses to John's mouth, moving down to his jaw, and then his neck.

"Sorry," John breathed, tipping his head back with a soft hum, giving Sherlock better access to his jaw and neck.

Sherlock hummed, pressing a little closer to him, the backs of John's knees bumping the bed. Sherlock wasn't sure why it came on so quick, but he wanted John. He nipped gently at John's neck, practically purring a bit.

John smiled, feeling the bed behind him. "What's gotten into you?" he asked, sitting down and pulling Sherlock onto his lap, nuzzling under his jaw, licking a slow line up to his ear and sucking the lobe between his lips.

"Dunno," Sherlock breathed, moaning a small bit as John sucked his ear. "Don't... know..." he said again, reaching up and nibbling on John's ear. "I can... get eyeliner," he murmured. He rolled forward a little bit, his belly getting in the way. "H-have to be... creative," he murmured, sucking on John's neck a little. Christ, he needed him.

A low noise rumbled in John's chest, and his hands tightened on Sherlock's hips. "Don't need it," he whispered, his voice husky. His fingers worked under Sherlock's shirt, pushing it up and over his head. "Look at how beautiful you are," he said reverently, leaning forward to kiss and nip along Sherlock's collarbone, laving at the hollow of his throat. "Tell me what you want, love, and I'll give it to you." He worked his mouth up Sherlock's neck, grazing his teeth and pressing his tongue to leave small wet patches.

Sherlock hummed. "Anything... everything," he murmured, kissing John again. He looked down at his belly, one of his hands covering it. He hummed as John's teeth grazed over his skin. "Just want you," he murmured.

John nodded, his hands moving over Sherlock's exposed skin, one hand resting over his still-growing stomach, the other curving up into his hair and directing their lips together again, this time for a softer kiss.
"Can probably manage if you're on top," John murmured, his lips moving Sherlock's as he spoke because he didn't want to pull away. "Been wanting you on top for a while, anyway." He smiled, nibbling on Sherlock's lower lips and suckling on it, worrying it between his teeth without breaking skin.

Sherlock nodded a little, still straddling John's lap fully clothed. "Mhm..." he hummed, smiling against John's mouth. "Yes, sir," he said with a sly grin, biting on John's lip a little and sliding off of John's lap. He looked down at the horrible elastic trousers he was wearing, shucking them off with ease, standing there in his boxers after peeling off his socks.

John arched his eyebrow at being addressed that way. He stood slowly, circling Sherlock with a military posture and looking him over appreciatively. "You like addressing me like that?" he asked, still slowly circling, teasing, the pain in his leg forgotten.

Sherlock licked his lips a little, taking a small step back, taking in the look of John. He smiled slyly. "Maybe," he said, looking at John, still in his fatigues. Christ it was hot, with his posture, and the way he looked. This morning it was different, now... fuck.

"Take off your pants," John instructed, stopping behind Sherlock and standing at attention.

Sherlock blinked a few times. "You mean these?" he asked, pulling at the fabric of his boxers a little playfully.

John nodded once, briskly. "Off," he commanded, and this time there was no argument in his voice.

Sherlock let out a shaky breath, quickly pulling down his boxers and kicking them away. His pupils were blown wide and he shivered a little under John's gaze.

John watched Sherlock strip, gazing hungrily at him. He took a step forward, putting him close – within arm's length – but not too close. "Military kink, huh?" he said, his voice lilting slyly. "I may just have to fuck you with my clothes on, Mr Holmes."

Sherlock swallowed, trying to press a little closer to John – god he needed closer to him – though John held him away. Gentle still, but firm. He wet his lips a little again, meeting John's gaze.

John stepped past Sherlock and gestured him toward the bed. "Brace your hands on the mattress and bend over," he told the Omega, walking over to the nightstand and taking the lube from it. "I said bend over, Mr Holmes," he repeated more firmly, giving Sherlock's bottom a swat that was just firm enough to sting.

Sherlock jumped a little, already a bit hard, his heart fluttering in his chest. He moved over to the bed, letting out a breath as he bent over, bracing his hands on the edge as instructed. He couldn't stay like that the whole time, his arms would get tired, and the weight of his stomach would pull on his back. Christ, this made things tedious. He wet his lips again, holding still though, glancing over at John, already half hard.

John's erection was straining against his trousers, but he could wait. He could wait for eternity if he was waiting for Sherlock. He walked up behind Sherlock, burying his fingers in the Omega's hair and turning his head so that he was looking away, down at the mattress. "Stay that way," he ordered, releasing him and coating his fingers with lube. He rimmed Sherlock slowly, building up his bondmate's need even further, before he pushed one finger in.

Sherlock let out a breath, staring at the duvet. The bed hadn't been made for a couple days now, not that he cared. He was tempted to look back over his shoulder when he felt John tracing his entrance.
slowly. He moaned a little, tensing slightly as John pushed the digit into him. He hummed, eyes fluttering shut for a moment before he couldn't help but try and look back at John.

John smacked Sherlock's right buttocks again, reaching up to turn his head again. "Did I say you could turn around?" he asked, his voice long past the point of 'officially' Captain Watson. He moved his finger inside of Sherlock, bending it up until it hit his prostate. Sherlock's breath hitched, and John grinned, sliding in the second finger.

Sherlock moaned again, biting his lip a little as John's fingers sank into him. "N-no... sir," he breathed, tightening a little around John's fingers. It had been such a long time since they'd done this. He let out a breath, arms trembling a small bit from holding up his weight, but he didn't move.

"Didn't think so." John eased his hand down Sherlock's back, soothing the heated skin, from a simple exhilarated blush this time and not a heat. He bit his lip as Sherlock tightened around his fingers, rubbing his fingers along his shoulders. "Relax, Sherlock," he said firmly, ghosting his fingertips back down Sherlock's back.

Sherlock nodded a little, letting out a slow breath and pushing back gently on John's hand. His arms shook a bit more, and he shifted his feet a little. He didn't want to ruin this though, because this... was perfect. Save for the extra pressure on his arms.

"P-permission to get on the bed, sir?" Sherlock breathed, thinking it'd be easier on his knees on the edge, perched on his elbows then.

John drew his fingers out, nudging Sherlock gently. "Permission granted," he said, watching Sherlock crawl onto the bed, resting on his elbows and knees. He wished he could take his time, make Sherlock shake apart and beg, but he didn't really have that kind of time. Sherlock needed to get out of the position he was in.

Smirking slightly, John walked back up behind Sherlock and sunk two fingers into him again, hooking them up and rubbing his prostate while he added the third.

Sherlock's mouth formed an 'O', and another noise escaped him as John resumed his movements. His eyes shut a little and he rested his forehead on the mattress, definitely more comfortable now. He leaned back onto John's fingers a little, humming as he took them deeper.

"Christ, Sherlock," John whispered, reaching down to stroke Sherlock slowly until he was fully hard. He nipped a spot on the detective's back, smiling widely as he drew away, pulling his fingers out and quickly pulling off his belt before he crawled onto the bed and laid on his back. He undid his button and zip, pushing the trousers and pants down just far enough to expose his length. "Come here," he commanded, gesturing Sherlock over.

Sherlock whined when John pulled his fingers from him, and watched him lay down. He looked at John with wide eyes, nodding. "Y-yes sir," he breathed, crawling over the bed and leaning over him, pressing open mouthed kisses to John's neck. It would have been his chest, but it was covered, and he stole the kisses without permission.

John rolled his head back, winding his fingers into Sherlock's hair and tugging on the strands a bit. He didn't mind Sherlock's deviation from his orders, not this time. He reached up, wrapping the chain of his tags around his fingers and tipping Sherlock's chin up for a moment, kissing him languidly.

Sherlock groaned lightly at the tug, gladly kissing John's lips. He met John's gaze, pulling away a moment to look at him. "Please... n-need you... John, sir..." he corrected, letting out a breath, wetting
his lips.

John nipped at Sherlock's lips. "I know," he murmured, reaching for the lube again and coating himself. Slowly and gently, he guided Sherlock to straddle his hips, bending his knees up behind him to brace against Sherlock's back. He steadied Sherlock with a hand on his hip, the other running over his chest and stomach.

Sherlock hummed, settling down on John's lap and leaning back against his knees. He sighed softly, only slightly self-conscious about the bulge in his stomach, which was practically at John's eye level now. He nodded a little, lifting himself up on his knees a bit, ready. More than ready, Christ... The fabric of John's fatigue trousers was rough against the sensitive skin of his inner thighs and back, feeling perfect, and John's soft cotton shirt... the contrast was amazing.

John grinned, watching Sherlock's expressions as he settled himself and then raised up. John lined up, lifting his hips and slowly pushing Sherlock's down, meeting him halfway on the thrust. "Good?" he asked, rocking his hips a little to test it out.

Sherlock sank slowly down onto John with a moan; the stretching, burning sensation was amazing. Just the slight pain, but not too much. He nodded, rocking forward a small bit, lifting himself up a fraction then settling back down, getting used to it for a moment. "W-waited too long... Christ..." he breathed.

John smirked, lifting his hips up in slow, long movements, keeping his hand on Sherlock's hip to steady him. "No time," he said simply, pushing his movements a little faster. "Christ, you're gorgeous," he murmured, gazing up at Sherlock with an openly unguarded expression.

Sherlock moaned again, rocking a bit faster on John. God, it was perfect. "H-have to... m-make time... next time," he said, sinking up and down onto him. He looked down at John, breathing a little heavily, and reaching up to trace John's features lightly with his fingertips.

John turned his head to nip at Sherlock's fingers. He tipped his head back, arching his neck and letting out a low, heady moan, enthralled by what they were doing. Working together this time, Sherlock on top but John still technically in control and Sherlock still trumping it all by letting John be in control. "Yeah, definitely need to make time," he said, pulling Sherlock's hip down quickly as he thrust up to meet him.

Sherlock let out a small cry, lifting up to press down sharply on John again, rolling his hips a little. He moaned, nodding before he tilted his head back, facing upwards to the ceiling. He panted lightly, reaching down to take himself in hand, stroking upwards, though his limbs were shaking and it was difficult. He was so close...

**Oh fucking hell.** John lost his breath at the perfect site of Sherlock above him. His knot was swelling and his heart was racing, and it was wonderful. He reached up, taking over stroking Sherlock, making them quick and long, matching the sharp thrusts he was pounding into Sherlock. He felt Sherlock's body clench and quiver around him just before he slammed into him, his knot swelling to hold them together. He quickened his strokes on Sherlock's length, rolling his fingers over the tip to bring him over.

Sherlock gasped when John took over the strokes on his length, and lost it a moment later, finishing with a small cry, John's shirt getting a bit spoiled. He let out a breath, leaning back on John's knees, panting and trying to catch his breath. "Holy... fuck," he breathed, looking up at the ceiling.

John could only nod in agreement, panting for breath. He ran his hands up and down Sherlock's thighs, circling his thumbs against the inside of his legs. "You were so amazing," he breathed, his
head dropped back and his mouth curled up into a lazy smile.

Sherlock hummed, sighing a little at the circles being rubbed into his legs. He caught his breath, relaxing against John's knees while they waited, the occasional tremor going through both of them. He sighed again, lifting himself up carefully when John's knot receded and rolled onto the bed carefully, looking at John. "Sorry about the shirt," he murmured, lifting his hands up to try and tug it off of John.

John let Sherlock help him out of his shirt, tossing it to the floor. "Christ, it's not like I mind," he said, grinning, as he reached out to cup Sherlock's cheek.

"Mm-mind... ah like that shirt," Sherlock murmured with a small smile.

John kicked off his boots and shimmed out of his trousers, then moved over closer to his bondmate. "I love you." He leant up to kiss him, nibbling a little at his lower lip.

Sherlock returned the kiss, smiling a little. "I love you. Always," he breathed, shifting a little. He was laying on his right side, but he didn't want to face away from John. They switched sides of the bed so they could spoon when they slept, but he wanted to see John. "We need to move... swap," he murmured.

John lifted his eyebrows, but he didn't say anything, standing from the bed and walking around. By the time he reached the other side, Sherlock had moved, and he was able to crawl in, facing him. "I miss seeing you when we sleep," he murmured, combing through Sherlock's hair.

Sherlock curled up on his left side, shivering a small bit so he pulled the blankets up over them both, cuddling close to John. "I'm sorry," he murmured. "Have to be on my left; she can breathe better that way. And I like you holding us," he murmured. And it was 'us,' because where John sometimes put his hand on his hip, he often rested it on Sherlock's belly.

Sherlock smiled a little, tracing John's features a little with his fingertips.

John sighed lightly, smiling at the gentle touch. "What are we going to do when she's born and has to sleep in a crib?" he asked, moving closer to nuzzle into Sherlock's hair. "Won't be able to hold both of you then," he whispered and kissed Sherlock's forehead.

"Doesn't surprise me," John murmured, setting his hand next to Sherlock's. He blinked, furrowing his brow and readjusting his hand. "I think I felt her." He looked up at Sherlock when he felt the small bump on his hand. "God, yeah, I felt her." He was grinning, and he leant up to kiss Sherlock again.

"Strong little one, aren't you?" John murmured, rubbing his hand softly over Sherlock's swelling stomach.

Sherlock blinked, looking down at John's hand. "Most can't be felt until seven months..." he murmured. He smiled a little, looking down at his stomach, and then back up at John, seeing his face when he could feel her too. "Soon you'll be able to feel more," he said softly.

"She's a strong kicker," John said softly, leaning up to kiss Sherlock's nose. "Go to sleep, love," he murmured, wrapping his arms around him. "I'm right behind you." He nuzzled into Sherlock's hair,
breathing in his scent and slowly falling asleep.
Chapter Notes

Last chapter of this edition...
Stay tuned for the third part :D

Of course John just had to bloody jinx it.

Strong kicker. It seemed as if the pup had taken a liking to the title and decided to live up to it as if she'd been christened with the name.

Sherlock woke up to it, again, and rolled out of bed to go and pace the flat, the only thing that made it feel less uncomfortable. "She'd better be a quiet infant like you said," he muttered, mostly to himself, as he paced the living room, more at a bit of a waddle, which he hated. He was always uncomfortable, it seemed.

Though still not as uncomfortable as he had been at that damn baby shower. Still, it was needed. Now with only a couple weeks left they had everything they needed. The 'nursery' as everyone called it was done, crib and all. They probably had enough clothes until she was three, it felt like. A small cot was in their room, and they had diapers to no end. Sherlock despised the amount of pink, though there were plenty of other colours too, thank god. Some people hearing his protests.

So Sherlock paced, back and forth.

John watched Sherlock's pacing, trying not to look amused by his grumbling. "She'll be good," he said, as if he could actually predict such things.

Sherlock glanced over at John, who of course was awake, and had followed him out into the living room. Well at least they both weren't getting sleep because of this. Though John always seemed fine during the day. But then, he had gotten used to going without sleep. Sherlock was used to it too, only as it turned out, growing a person took a lot of energy.

The flat was very nearly baby-proof at this point, even though they still had a couple of weeks, and after that probably close to a year before Katherine started crawling and getting into things, but he wasn't taking any chances. John had treated too many children with careless parents, and that was not going to happen to them.

"You know," John said, glancing up at Sherlock, "we haven't talked about godparents yet." Beer a good idea in our situation.

Sherlock groaned – still pacing – his back hurting from standing now. He huffed; he couldn't win. "What about them?" he asked. "That's more of a religious practice isn't it? And even then, there really is only one logical choice," he said, as if that was obvious. "Harry and Clara, and by proxy your mother. What, did you think Mycroft and Lestrade a good choice?" he asked, shaking his head a little, irritated this early in the morning. He sighed. "He'd see to it she or them never want for anything, and they would see to it that she's cared for properly," he stated.

John stood up, walking over to Sherlock and forcing him to stop moving. "Come here, love, and
don't snap at me," he said, directing Sherlock over to the big grey chair.

Sherlock almost did snap at John, until John finished his sentence.

John forced the Omega to sit, turned a little onto his left hip, and leant him up against the armrest. Holding up his finger for Sherlock to wait before he argued, John went around the living room, gathering up pillows and blankets, stuffing them under Sherlock's belly and side to support him. He wasn't really lying down, now, but he wasn't sitting up or standing, either. "Now," he whispered, soothing his hand over Sherlock's belly where Katherine was still kicking away, "try to relax, and she will too."

Sherlock sighed, sitting down and humming a little when John lined the seat with pillows, taking the pressure off his back. He sighed, looking at John. "Hard to relax when you feel like something's about to burst out of you... Christ..." he breathed, tilting his head back for a moment, trying to do so.

Sherlock blinked a couple times, sighing. "Let me get back to this... I have to go to the bathroom." *Again,* he thought, struggling to get out of the chair for a moment before ambling down the hallway. He came back a few minutes later and sank back into the chair, fixing the pillows again. "I just want this bit over," he murmured, resting his head tiredly on his palm, leaning on the armrest.

"I know, love," John whispered, moving behind the chair and slowly rubbing Sherlock's shoulders and neck, easing some of the tension away. "It'll be over soon, I promise." He leant forward, kissing the mark on the back of Sherlock's neck softly. "I think you can make it another thirteen days," he said softly. "And don't rush it too much; I'd rather there be no complications."

Sherlock groaned a little, leaning into John's hands. God, that felt amazing. He swallowed, reaching up with his right hand and rubbing John's arm. "Mm-miss you," he murmured. It was hard to be so close to John anymore, *something* always getting in the way. He sighed, looking over at the pile of diapers they'd got yesterday, not having put the boxes away yet. "Thirteen days... is an eon," he murmured.

John missed Sherlock too, but he hadn't been complaining, just standing to the side and helping when he was needed. "Thirteen days isn't even a deep breath," he countered softly, moving his thumbs in circles over Sherlock's shoulders. "You're going to look back on it and not realise that it's gone already."

Sherlock took a deep breath then, letting it out in a huff. "No it's not..." he mumbled, shutting his eyes as he kept leaning on his hand. It was nice, having John around. Always nice, but it was nicer still him being a doctor, when it wasn't annoying, that is. The set up with the chair was perfect, and eventually Katherine stopped kicking, and his back wasn't hurting. He hummed, still leaning on his hand as he started to doze off.

John smiled knowingly, watching as Sherlock started to drift. He went for another pillow, folding it up beneath Sherlock's head and having him rest his head there. "Sleep well, love," he whispered, wandering over to the couch and dropping down onto it, sighing heavily as he fell into a light sleep.

Sherlock woke up a couple hours later – needing to use the toilet again – pushing himself up sleepily and padding down the hall. He ruffled his hair a little, turning to look in the mirror when he was done, looking at his stomach. He sighed, walking into the bedroom to pull on his dressing robe. He didn't really bother with clothes half the time these days unless he had to. He yawned, shuffling out into the kitchen to find something to eat.

John stirred, hearing Sherlock rummaging around in the kitchen. "Alright in there?" he asked, his voice heavy with sleep. They had both been getting crap for sleep, and while he was used to it, it
didn't mean he enjoyed it. But he wouldn't complain. If Sherlock needed him up, then he would be up, simple as that.

Sherlock had a roll of bread in his mouth as dug out some cold cuts. "Mhuh," he hummed, setting them down on the table and making a fast sandwich, tearing into it. He walked out and sat at the end of the sofa, just on John's toes. "I'm alright," he murmured, mouth full.

John hummed, pleased, and curled up on his side, pillow his head on his arms. "Wake me if you need anything," he whispered, closing his eyes and quickly falling back asleep.

Sherlock nodded quietly, looking at John. He sighed. He wanted sleep, too, is what he wanted. He finished the sandwich, then leant on his hand again. He started to doze again, lightly. He managed to grab a couple more hours before rousing again, though he stayed where he was.

John made a small noise, sitting up on instinct and moving over to wrap his arms around Sherlock, pulling him closer. He still hadn't even opened his eyes yet. "Mmm, why are you awake?" he asked softly, nuzzling against Sherlock's shoulder, moving his lips up to kiss both of his marks. "Kat wake you?" he murmured, finally pulling his eyes open and looking up at Sherlock.

Sherlock furrowed his brow, though he settled against John. "How do you do that?" he asked. "I didn't move. You're more like your mother than I thought," he murmured, letting out a breath. "She's fine, just can't sleep, I guess," he said softly.

John smiled softly, taking that as a compliment. "I'm just attuned to you and your habits," he breathed, holding Sherlock closer, one arm banded across his chest and the other settled over his massive waistline. He nuzzled sleepily against the juncture of Sherlock's neck, humming quietly to himself.

Sherlock felt a few sharp kicks, and let out a breath, breathing in John's scent. He hummed, rubbing his belly as the kicking subsided a little. Good, that worked then. If only that worked in bed. She was so picky.

"Mmm... so what are we doing today?" Sherlock murmured, reaching up to rub his chest, which was tender, and sore. And annoyingly swelling a little as well. Nothing too noticeable when he was dressed though, thank goodness.

John nuzzled against Sherlock a little more, kissing a gentle pattern up to his hairline. "I don't know," he murmured, brushing his lips over Sherlock's ear. "What would you like to do today?" he asked, closing his eyes again and resting his cheek against Sherlock's shoulder. "Enjoy some piece and quiet while we have it?" he teased, rubbing his hand over Sherlock's belly before resting his palm over the back of Sherlock's hand.

"Mm... not so quiet from where I'm standing," Sherlock murmured. "Hopefully you're right about her... active before being born, quiet after," he said with a sigh. "But I asked you, because the only thing I really want to do is get this pup out of me," he said. "We can go for a walk," he offered, knowing that exercise helped induce. She was so big, surely two weeks left was too long.

"Think you're up for a walk?" John asked, knowing that just pacing the flat tended to make Sherlock's back hurt. "That's quite a bit of strain on your back." He sighed lightly, opening his eyes again and leaning up to kiss him softly. "Perhaps just around the block?" he suggested, rubbing the tip of his nose against Sherlock's and humming quietly to himself.

Sherlock hummed. "Won't be a strain if she comes," he murmured. He was torn, though, really. He didn't want her to be in there anymore, but he was terrified for her to be born. Both for having to go
"You're tensing up again," John murmured, moving his hands up to rub softly over his shoulders and neck. "She can feel that; you need to relax." He leant forward, pressing his lips to the corner of Sherlock's jaw. "You're worried, aren't you? About her. About having her." He closed his eyes, resting his forehead on Sherlock's shoulder. "It's alright, love. I'm worried too. But we'll get through it."

Sherlock blinked a few times, looking over at John. "Look, I... one, you did that again. The knowing thing," he murmured, leaning against John. "I'm not... well, I am worried. I just... I don't know," he murmured, trying to relax against John. "Can't think much these days," he said quietly.

John smiled softly. "You're just not going to let that go, are you?" he asked, running his lips around the shell of Sherlock's ear. "It's alright, love," he whispered, wrapping his arms around Sherlock again and slowly rocking them. "We'll do this together, just like everything else, and it'll be fine," he promised.

Sherlock sighed, smiling a little.

"I still like Watson," Sherlock murmured, thinking quietly to himself. "She's yours too, and I am," he said, looking up at John. "I want people to know it... and it's not like she'll have a mark," he said quietly. He liked the name, though, not sure what John had against the hyphenated one, but he wasn't going to argue. He sighed, resting his eyes a little.

"Watson doesn't flow as well. And I'm going to teach her how to use a gun so that nobody doubts that she's mine," John grumbled good-naturedly, already fearing about boys that she could be bringing home, though that was years away.

"Walk sounds nice though," Sherlock said.

John sighed, linking his fingers with Sherlock's and squeezing. "Alright, go get dressed, then. Come back out here with your shoes and I'll help you into them." John was already dressed, having quickly pulled on clothes when he felt Sherlock awake the first time, just in case something was wrong and they had had to go somewhere.

Sherlock hummed, nodding a little as he pushed up off of the sofa. He moved down the hall into their room, looking longingly at his old clothes. He sighed, soon enough. After pulling on some clothes and the new coat he had had to get, he grabbed his shoes up, bringing them out into the living room with some socks. "It makes me feel so childish, needing help with my shoes and socks," he murmured, sitting down.

John moved to kneel in front of him, slowly sliding on his socks. "Thirteen days," he reminded softly. "And it's not like I mind, or that I'm judging you." He quickly tied Sherlock's shoes, standing up and kissing him chastely. "One nice thing about bonding with a doctor, hmm? I understand the natural process." He walked over to the door, sliding on his own shoes and slipping into his jacket, stuffing wallet and keys into the pockets.

"At most thirteen days," Sherlock corrected. The doctor had said as much. If she doesn't come by then, then they were going to induce, because she would be too big otherwise. He sighed, taking the steps slowly with John as they went outside.

It was almost April, and Sherlock could practically smell spring coming up. He blinked a few times, the thought slamming into him. He paused, looking at John. "You're birthday... it's soon," he said. "Isn't it?" he asked, head still not working right, he tried to recall the date John told him.
"Tomorrow," John said, tugging Sherlock along and resuming their pace down the pavement. "I didn't want to make a fuss about it. Didn't find it that important, compared to... well, everything else." He squeezed Sherlock's hand, deciding to just take a small walk around the block, as opposed to the longer one Sherlock was most likely wanting.

Sherlock blinked a few times – tomorrow, shit. "I don't... I don't have anything prepared I... you should have reminded... god, I should have remembered," he said, shaking his head. John had remembered his. And this meant that it had been more than a year since John was shot, and he'd let that day pass too, because he couldn't think. "John, I'm sorry, I didn't remember, I..." he sighed, trying to think of something to do. His birthday had been special, after all.

"Sherlock." John pulled his bondmate to a stop, reaching up and wrapping his arms around his neck for a moment. "I know. I understand, love." He pulled away, cupping Sherlock's cheeks and kissing him softly. "It's alright. I didn't want to throw another thing into what was already going on. I just want to spend the day with you, that's all." He kissed Sherlock again, reaching out for his hand and stroking his knuckles with his thumb.

John smiled, glad to know that nothing had happened to mark the day he had been shot, glad to know that he had been able to hide the ache in his shoulder and the pain in his eyes well enough that Sherlock hadn't noticed. He was getting better at that, then.

Sherlock huffed. "No, it's not okay. This whole pregnancy thing is throwing me off. I don't see as well as I should, and I can't think!" he snapped, shaking his head and pulling out his phone, arranging a few things. He sighed. "Come on. I want to be walking," he murmured.

John sighed softly, letting Sherlock have his way. He followed along, moving his strides in time with Sherlock's. "You're alright, Sherlock," he murmured, unable to help the tightening of his hand around Sherlock's at every look that was cast their way, thinking that everyone could be a potential threat to his mate and their pup.

Sherlock looked over at John, seeing his expression as he looked at the other people. "I know I'm alright, what's not alright was forgetting your birthday," he said. "I want to do something special for it. Give you something," he murmured, keeping his long strides. He felt himself slowly start to get a little tired, but ignored that; he hadn't taken a good walk in a while.

"Sherlock, it's fine, really. I don't want a fuss." John let go of Sherlock's hand to step around a woman who wasn't moving, then retook his hand again. "And you don't have to give me anything," he protested, glancing up at him for a moment and noticing the tired look on his features. "Let me know when you get too tired and we'll catch a cab for the way home."

Sherlock shook his head. "No, I'm walking home," he said. "I want to walk, John; I haven't done anything for weeks it feels like. I need the air," he said, still holding onto John's hand. "Need it," he repeated again, looking up at the sky.

John sighed, a bit heavier this time, but didn't argue. "Yes, alright. Just don't hurt yourself, please." He squeezed Sherlock's hand tighter, glancing up at the clear blue sky that was filled with returning birds. He sighed again, wincing a little as he remembered that he had more flowers to send in a few days. He pushed the thought aside, trying not to think about it.

Sherlock smiled a little, squeezing John's hand. "We're fine," he murmured quietly, slowing his pace a little. It felt nice, stretching his legs. They finally came up to a park and Sherlock led John into it, looking at the playground which was empty this time of day, all the kids in school. He walked over to the swings, sitting on one of them. "Suppose we'll be here in a year or so," he murmured quietly, resting his feet.
John stood behind him, ever the vigilant and annoyingly protective Alpha. "Little more than a year. She probably won't walk until she's nearly two," he said, looking out over the park, wishing that it was filled with laughing kids. "Christ, and then school. I don't think I'm going to want to let her go to school," he murmured, resting his hands on Sherlock's shoulders.

Sherlock pushed himself back and forth a little on the swing, rocking gently. "School…" he said quietly. "I hated school," he murmured, resting his head on the chain of the swing. "But then she won't have the problems I did," he said. He would make sure of it. She would be normal, not like Sherlock was. He wanted her smart, certainly, but he didn't want her to not know how to navigate social situations. He didn't want the name freak being called out in the schoolyard.

"No, she won't," John agreed, leaning down to kiss the top of Sherlock's head. "She's probably going to have everyone wrapped around her finger," he murmured, a smile slowly spreading across his face. "And she's got two protective fathers, so I don't think many people would be dumb enough to pick on her."

Sherlock nodded a little. "Suppose so," he murmured. He tilted his head up to look at John. "What do you want to do tomorrow, though… I want it to be special," he said.

John groaned a little, walking over to the other swing and dropping down on it. "Sherlock, I don't want to do anything, really. I don't want to make a big deal out of it, I don't want there to be a big fuss." He sighed, pushing back a bit and letting himself swing forward the tiny amount his kick had made. "It's not a big deal, it's just a birthday. If I'm with you, I'm happy. That's it, that's all I want."

Sherlock looked down. People liked birthdays, though. His family never put much stock in them, they were just days, marked with a card. His nanny had made him and Mycroft small cakes, though. That was another thing at school though, kids talking about their birthdays, parents sending cupcakes to class. And then even adults did it. His nineteenth birthday they'd insisted he go out, and John had made his special.

Sherlock huffed. "Fine," he said curtly. "Not a big deal," he said, looking at the ground. Other than the fact that when John's last birthday had rolled around, John had been dying, and Sherlock hadn't known if he was alive.

John looked away, biting his cheek. "I don't..." he sighed, not wanting to shoulder Sherlock with his troubles. He didn't want to celebrate, because last year he had been dying, costing his team their lives. He didn't want to celebrate because it just felt wrong that he was allowed to live another year when all of his friends were dead. He made a small sound, pushing to his feet and pacing a small ways away, hopping up onto the back of a bench and balancing on it.

Sherlock looked up at John, watching him move over to the bench. He waited a minute, then got up from the swing, walking over towards John and sitting on the bench. "I know," he said, looking over at John. "I know why you don't want to John, but understand that... I want to because... because you were here another year. And it was time that I got to have you back," he said. The year mark would be coming up soon. Of Sherlock's being sober. Of John coming home. Of them becoming bondmates. So many things he wanted to be special.

"Now you're doing that thing," John muttered, hopping down to sit beside Sherlock. He let out a long breath, leaning his shoulder against Sherlock's, staring straight ahead without blinking for a long time. "I know," he finally said, his hand finding his mate's and holding it. "I lived and they didn't. I was the one who was supposed to die and they all did instead. I –" He closed his mouth before he could say something that he would regret.

"We can do something, I guess, but I don't know what." John turned and looked over at Sherlock,
letting his guard down for a moment so that Sherlock could see all of the pain he had been hiding. And then the mask was back in place and it was gone, the way he had watched Sherlock do any number of times.

Sherlock let out a breath seeing John, seeing him, it almost pained him physically to see it, as it was Katherine started to kick a bit. "John... don't, don't hide from me... please?" he asked, wrapping his arms around him and leaning close. "I'm sorry, really I am," he said quietly, ignoring the almost painful kicks to his abdomen. She would have to wait; he wasn't going to walk right now.

"I'm inevitably going to go through this; that doesn't mean I have to drag you into it as well. Especially with what you're going through being pregnant and all." John didn't protest when Sherlock held him closer, though, just closed his eyes for a moment. "It'll go away," he promised quietly, not actually sure if it ever would or not, or if it would keep popping up and knocking all of the air from his lungs.

Sherlock held John tighter, nodding a little. "It won't go away completely, John; it, they, are a part of you. It'll get easier though, hurt less," he said. "I pro-" he cut off, tensing for a moment, "promise," he finished, sitting up, his hand going to his belly as he felt another painful kick. "Settle down..." he said softly to it, letting out a breath.

John took up Sherlock's hand, pulling him to his feet and steadying him. "Come on, let's get home," he said, smiling slightly at Sherlock, who was trying his damnedest for him. "She'll settle as we walk," he promised, resuming their pace from earlier.

Sherlock nodded with a wince, walking alongside John. He let out a breath, bumping his shoulder with John a little. "We could just stay in tomorrow," he offered, hissing a little at another kick. "Order some duck?" he asked with a small smile, looking at John.

"You're hilarious," John said dryly, though he smiled at the comment. "We could do that, yeah. Be nice to just be home with you." He looked over at Sherlock, hearing the hiss. "She acting up?" he asked, setting his hand over Sherlock's belly. "Be nice to your daddy, Katherine," he told her sternly.

"Just as... stubborn as me... and you," Sherlock murmured, letting out a breath. He stopped dead in his tracks though a minute later, doubling over when he felt a painful tightening. A small cry escaped him, and he wrapped both his arms around his stomach.

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