The Sentimental Detective

by Witchly

Summary

I have no idea how to summarize my writings, let alone this one, but I'll give it a shot I guess... if anyone even reads my work. Haha. Ha Ha. Ha Ha Ha. Ha.

A couple of years after the fall, Sherlock returns to London, failing to have taken down Moriarty's network for reasons he struggles to figure out. During the time of his attempts to shut it down, he feels strangely about Jim's death and has some kind of hope in his heart that he's still alive, finding himself drawn to the supposedly deceased criminal mastermind. But he keeps brushing aside his obvious feelings, chalk ing it up to nonsense, or some kind of hormonal issue he doesn't talk about to anyone, but keep to himself. After he returns and
realizes his distance from John after he's moved out and is with Mary, he realizes how lonely he becomes, often miserable and having fallen back into old habits, sometimes using drugs to cope in secret. But one interesting text draws him the very fascination of his heart that he would never admit aloud, let alone himself. What shall become of the Great Detective of London?

Notes

Hi everyone, I'm not sure if this is flawed or not with certain things, but to the best of my knowledge, I tried to write this accurately in different aspects and also in accordance with the show's plot. Some things may seem off, so if anything is unclear or wrong, please alert me in my inbox or the comments so I can fix it! trying to write a fanfiction that won't be unfinished for once, after years of leaving my fanfictions OFTEN unfinished. Please forgive me in advance, but otherwise, I do hope you enjoy it! I will try to update as much as I can, as life as an adult can be rather busy and tiresome. If you do end up liking my work, please give kudos and/or a comment so I know this community is still very alive, and have a love for Sheriarty still. <3 Thank you for reading!
When a spider is famished, he will do the utmost in getting his fix.

Sherlock Holmes was caught to the spider’s web like an easy prey. Entangled, bound by his own fears, his own desires, demons all of which were of unspoken due to pride, or perhaps even the suppression of harsh views of his own self. And there the spider circled him round, starved, longing, eager to make a meal out of the willing host. And would the meal last, and last, and last, his mind would be subdued, would be the spider’s, to fully relish in having for his possession—and his heart?

Truly, a heart beneath those fleshy overlays lied within the great detective. Often, he hid it. And Jim Moriarty, daunting spider, could see it. He could see it in the simple gestures, or how a note higher in Sherlock’s tone could shift the very demeanor he once walked with. Understandably, he was a human being, though sociopaths could be just as changeable. And with his predictable counterpart, amusement took form in Jim, and laughed at each attempt made by Sherlock to thwart him; to resist. It was in his deceptive nature to coil round the Englishman as a snake, fool even the smartest man by rival, and convince him that he too was ordinary. However, Jim knew better; he knew more. He knew within his own dark heart, Sherlock was beyond extraordinary, which was exactly why he proceeded to toy with him. Even if on the side of angels, Sherlock swayed his mind enough to believe his own word. He wasn’t one of them even fighting amongst the angels. Though, Jim held onto his strategy to what he believed could sway the most stubborn martyr to his will.

This was the great stirring.

And it took great delight in provoking.

It was soundless, shapeless, and should one daresay ageless. How unforgiving it was, in the midst of the chaos in his mind, for it was merely coaxing the man deep within his abdomen. The stirring took greater force, conquering the remaining bits of reason he willed himself to take into consideration. Though, all fled, and was stolen away by craving. And the stirring became a fire, wild, untamed in his belly, and spread throughout his body—his soul. Cleansed? Or corrupted? It would be up to one’s own judgement, for he was at a stalemate in his own decisions. And thus, the damage was done. The game ceased.

Supposedly.

An invitation to dinner was all it took to ignite the flame of disaster.

*I’m just positively starving... I could eat a whole detective. Let’s have dinner. JM*

The message was well received, most definitely. However, it took the sleuth ten minutes in total to really digest the entirety of it and how it could exist. For two, dreadful years, Sherlock was in the midst of dismantling a rather impressively large criminal network Jim had built for years. Disappointedly, he had barely made a dent. It wasn’t very long until a few months earlier that he faltered from his task. Mycroft had been rather curious of his progress, though Sherlock refused to face him about it. It was typical of the younger Holmes, to ignore big brother at every chance given, lead a life in shadow. Yet, it was the desire to do away with the remains of James Moriarty
that, for some odd reason, displeased Sherlock to no end. Not only did it seem impossible in the sense of his own desires, but to eliminate years worth of work of a criminal web that continuously grew. It didn’t dawn upon Sherlock that Jim was in control. Every leader often had a successor. That was where Sherlock stumbled. Just who would that be? Even if temporary? But, enough with this useless thinking. He was back. This couldn’t have been just any silly hoax, surely. Either way, he relinquished his boredom to this newfound game.

Sherlock narrowed his eyes in thought. Fake Jim, real Jim, there was little concentration on that matter; he was now very intrigued. It was worth a shot to go on and explore the messenger. Deep down, he secretly wished for this moment which felt as eons in his mind. A bit of hope bubbled in him that this was no jester, but the very man himself, for his mind would be at ease from mundane life, that the stimulation it so well deserved after all this torturous time would return. There was no comprehending why his heart beat at a certain rhythm, or why his throat went dry, or his knees felt weak at the thought of seeing him alive in flesh and blood again. He blew his own brains out and now? He resurrected from the dead and walked the Earth in sin, intending dinner with Sherlock.

Without further ado, it was within a few taps to his keyboard which designed his hesitant, though eager response, that he finally acknowledged his message.

Let’s. SH

Tanaka’s Kitchen in Soho. 7PM. JM

Of all the questions he wished to ask, he forced himself not to. Not until he saw it with his own two eyes. Anyone would find him mad doing this. Anyone found him mad for most things he’d done, but this, this could have been exceptionally dangerous. But the detective hadn’t a care in the world, no. Danger thrilled him. Danger swayed him away from every substance and narcotic his hands could reach. He had his stash of his old friend Morphine beneath the floorboards under his bed. Undetectable and discreet, but a fine, quick way to quell any symptoms of withdrawal or unpleasant feelings. Nothing could be as daunting as his own mind. He already deduced a high chance of this being the real thing. Unsure, but with several possibilities in mind, he knew it was a chance he were willing to take. So this was good. It was five thirty now and the sun would be setting soon. He had time.

Sherlock showered, dressed in his finest, sprinting on a bit of Armani cologne— a gift from Molly earlier that year. He barely wore it unless he felt it was necessary. It was most definitely necessary now, for whatever reason compelled him to. He used styling product on his hair to define his loose curls and keep them in place, shaved any stubble which may have grown in the past weeks he sulked around the flat. He made damned sure that he was meticulous and presentable, not being able to place his finger on why he felt a pang of insecurity rise inside his chest just then. No. He waved it away. To please Jim was utterly unfathomable and not to any interest of his. What a random thought. He hushed it away as he pulled out his coat and scarf.

He hailed a cab to the location Jim requested him at. The drive wasn’t very long at all and traffic wasn’t bad for a Friday, but Sherlock could feel himself grow more impatient, tapping away at his thighs in anticipation. He checked his phone several times after every minute obsessively to see if he’d gotten any closer to the unheard of restaurant. Must have been new. And assuming by the name, it was a Japanese-owned business. He only expected the best at this point, true authenticity.
Sherlock was no hefty eater, but did enjoy a plethora of cultural dishes if made right. Asian food, particularly Japanese food, was one of them.

Soon enough, he arrived at his destination, paid his cabbie, and exited the vehicle a bit too quickly for his own tastes. He mentally berated himself to get a grip and keep it together, not wanting to appear like a silly, little juvenile presented with sweets. Sherlock was a grown man, not an ordinary child. He almost instinctively dusted his coat off as he crossed the street, not even bothering to carefully look both ways. It was just dinner. It was just dinner with his arch nemesis he hadn’t seen for the past two years. He wouldn’t stay long, just long enough to figure out what he truly wanted, and part ways with him again. He reminded himself, it was just dinner.

As he approached the restaurant, he opened the door, and his ears perked up the sound of bells. He glanced up and noticed they dangled at the corner, then gazed around, taking in his surroundings. Tatami flooring, shōji doors, the interior was very traditional. Customers, unless disabled or with certain health issues, sat or knelt on pillows as they dined upon a low, wooden table, and a skilled musician nearby playing the koto beside a small koi fountain. It was soothing, watching as the shishi-odoshi rose and fell. Sherlock was entranced and lost in thought when he was approached by a young woman dressed as a Geisha. She had to be no older than 25. She was elegant in the way she moved and spoke, her long, flowing garments in sync with her gestures, her makeup clean and bright on her features.

“Welcome, Holmes-san, my name is Kotoko, and I’ll be your waitress for tonight. Moriarty-san has already informed us you would be his guest for the night. Please, allow me to escort you to your reserved room after you’ve removed your shoes and coat.” She smiled, outstretching her long-sleeved arm forward, the kimono possibly woven from real silk. Impressive craftsmanship in the gold and blues of the dye and its patterns.

A small smirk touched his lips at the thought of a reserved dinner. It was so very much Jim to organize something so posh. There was no need and yet, there he went, splurging his money on him for what? An hour or so together? He was calm enough to play it cool and thank Kotoko, but inside, his heart was pounding in his chest, as if it were about to rip from it and leave him. He casually slipped off his loafers and placed them to the room on the side of the entrance, hanging his coat right above them, allowing her the lead and following suit. Luckily enough, he managed to arrive to their room shortly after without falling over, bracing himself. He observed as Kotoko slid the door open, and lo and behold, there was James bloody Moriarty sat at his end of the chabudai table, comfortably on his little zabuton pillow. Of course, the two of them were only in there, but he expected his people in close distance, watching him like a hawk. But his people were of little importance to him, especially when Jim was his entire focus now.

Sherlock slowly meandered forward, sitting down across from Jim. There was a kyūsu teapot and two cups placed down for them, just boiled, steaming for Sherlock. Flabbergasted was an understatement when describing how he felt in that moment. It felt silly, knowing it was truly him right there before him, but no one could have survived such a horrific shot. He watched him fall. He watched him die. Kotoko had long left at this point to assist other customers and silence permeated the room until Jim decided to break it.

“Unless I see in his hands the mark of nails, and place my finger there, and place my hand to his side, I shall not believe.” mocked Jim, slipping his white fingers around the fine porcelain cup. “Resurrection done us both well, it seems.”

“Yes, I suppose it has.” replied Sherlock, dully.

“And I suppose you have burning questions. No, actually I’m sure you do.”
Sherlock was silent.

“Please, help yourself.” gestured Jim to the teapot. “We have tonight to ourselves, it will be on my tab.”

“I don’t want any tea.”

“An Englishman refusing tea, are you even Sherlock Holmes anymore?” teased the Irishman, taking a moment to take a sip of his tea. “You came here on your own accord.”

“I came here because I was invited to dinner.”

“I don’t recall a gun to your head in making the decision.”

“As far as I know, there could have been. Snipers aren’t always present, are they?”

“Clever boy,” he chuckled, “but I regret to inform you that no snipers are involved on my behalf.”

“Then you would’ve paid me a sweet, welcome home visit, I’m sure.” A brief, wry smile made its way to Sherlock’s lips.

“Perhaps I would’ve, Sherlock, but what matters now is that you’re here, and it’s because you wanted to see me.” Jim set his cup down, smiling at him. “I know I certainly wanted to see you.”

Sherlock’s heart began to race at the words spoken of his darker counterpart. It made him oddly warm yet equally excited, and that was exactly what spooked him. The fact that Jim could make him feel such an array of emotions in such a short amount of time, even at the lone thought of him. Of course he wanted to see Jim, it was only ever so obvious. But he loathed more than anything to appear desperate or eager, only because he was Sherlock Holmes. He was unattached. He was a man of his work, not his heart, in which he was informed in not having one. Love and sentiment were chemical defects found on the losing side, that much was certain. He reminded himself that at the core, he didn’t love Jim. He did not care for him. His only interest was in the unique and complex cases only created for him to solve. Nothing more, nothing less. So why did he feel so small in his presence now?

Sherlock took a few moments to digest the simple happening as they sat in the restaurant, studying his expression, trying to see through the meaning of every word and phrase and any emphasis on a word or syllable spoken. Yet alas, he was at a blank in his mind for any hidden agenda behind those words. And that evil smile that did so much to him. It coupled in frustrating him and placing a spell on him. There was no fairness in the advantage of that, and so, he relinquished his recent role in attempting to attain coded information not there, and proceeded on to responding.

“How did you survive the gunshot? I saw you take your own life before my eyes. The blood, the damage, I saw it all. How could that have been staged so well? There’s no way. I replayed that moment in my mind for days at a time, I couldn’t understand it. I still can’t.” Sherlock rambled on and on, one of his most terrible habits when his mind went haywire. Oh, how Jim made that wonderfully high, intellectually-minded computer of a brain short circuit. He could only laugh at his enemy’s confusion.

“I guess it can’t be helped that even you, yourself, can be a real idiot sometimes, my dear. As you said, it was staged. Richard Brook couldn’t be a better inspiration for checkmate. My years as a boy were spent mostly in the theatre. Blood packets, a gun without bullets, and a trick of the ear gun-shot recording. The cold, stillness of my body is just another bragging right.” sighed Jim as he toyed with his unused chopstick. “Just like you, I played dead.”
“Then you didn’t have a successor take on your role.”

“Obviously not, Sherlock. I can’t trust anyone with my work. The moment I truly die is the moment the network dies with me.” He smirked. “I shall leave my legacy in the criminal world behind unmatched. Even if there were to be another consulting criminal, they would only be a try-hard, worthless copy. After all, no one can replace an original, honey.”

“But of course,” remarked Sherlock, “you played your cards well in making sure your return was discreet. I couldn’t expect any less. So, where were you hiding all this time whilst you had your dirty work done?”

“Hiding places are often secret. If I told you, then I would have to kill you.”

“That would be rather bold of you.”

“Don’t encourage me, as I have no desire to kill you.”

“Just what are you getting at, Jim?” His sharp, baby blue eyes searched Jim’s for answers before Jim could even speak, and yet again, found nothing. No hidden agenda in a means to cause harm, wreak havoc. No ploy devised. He could never truly read him well any time before, so he supposed that it’d be no different now. Jim remained unreadable.

“Not everything has to be clever, remember. That’s your weakness. And here I thought you’d’ve grown from that after two whole years. One piece of advice I shall impart to you, my dear, is to not make mountains out of molehills. It’s fair to assume the worst of me, but as you can see, it’s just dinner.”

“Are you suggesting that I trust you?” scoffed the detective.

“I’m suggesting you let loose for a night. If you aren’t aware of what you’ve gotten yourself into, then I’ll make it quite simple for you. We’re on a date. I should hope to see you enjoy yourself.” Jim sipped at his tea again. Periodical sips signified that perhaps the tea was fine to drink.

A date? Jim had to be using code again. That was silly. Something had to have been off. Jim was unnerving in a sense of unpredictability. He could not trace a pattern with him. Yet then again, when could he? Was he just so lucky all those times before? More importantly, why did he doubt himself so much now? It didn’t seem right. He was just on edge. He didn’t bother entertaining anymore thorough deductions. Alright. Fine. Yes. Good. He’d play along.

Taking a chance, Sherlock glanced into the pot with an expression that conveyed his personal distaste. Perhaps, having a cup of tea would be adequate. After all, Jim has had every chance to kill him since he’s arrived, just as when Jim visited Sherlock that one time at his flat for that little IOU message. He didn’t like walking blindly into something without reliable reassurance, though he threw caution to the wind.

“I prefer oolong.”
Since Sherlock was served a different tea, he had relaxed some in Jim’s company. Periodically, he also sipped his tea, thinking about something to say. If this was a date, it was important for him to find something to talk about. It was difficult and yet so simple. Perhaps, he took on this role a bit too seriously, because he was afraid of appearing silly. With anyone else, he had an upper hand in playing it fake to get what he needed with ease. Like with Molly, or Irene, or Janine. Even with John that one time, to make him unknowingly follow into his plan of LAZARUS, so he nor anyone else would be killed by Jim’s snipers. He was good at pretending to be attached when unattached, but now feared he was becoming his very role. The only way he could find himself comfortable with it was to go about things subtly.

Ever since he broke the news to John about the fall, he’s known John to be distant. He was distant and with that new woman in his life now. Mary, was it? He had proposed. That was certainly the canker of his return, spoiling everything he had planned to happen. John Hamish Watson. That man who was supposed to be his friend. That same man he had yet to hear from since the baby. His heart only sunk at the thought, as much as he loathed feeling that way. He loathed being built that way, with a tendency to fall into the pits of sentiment. He knew this was a fight that would result in defeat. He was never one to accept defeat, he was a sore loser at that. Sherlock was always the triumphant, the winner, the man of success, and the man of complete intellectual domination. However, the very one thing that tugged and tugged at him were these feelings of love and pain. And looking to John, he had never felt so betrayed. Mind palace John only ignored him beyond a closed door as Sherlock banged on it, earning no answer, always. And mind palace Jim was always there in the end. They were the misfits of the universe and in turn were left amongst the ashes; two fallen angels embracing in the midst of Hell. And John Watson appeared to him as the cruelest angel amongst the ordinary world. He was the angel that turned him away for a new life. It hurt. But that, he would never admit.

His eyes flickered over to Jim’s curiously, tracing over every line, every shape and curve of his features. Jim seemed a bit tanner than last they’ve met, meaning he’s been spending his days somewhere warmer throughout the time of his death. He could think of several countries that came to mind, perhaps it was spent like a holiday of sorts at a resort or a maybe a beach house he rented out or bought. There was no way he could turn a shade or so darker in the midst of London’s very freezing Winter. That slicked back, luminous raven hair, he barely noticed a grey in sight, and even in the age lines that bracketed his mouth, and the crows feet outside his eyes hardly changed. He could recognize, interestingly as well, how very detail oriented he had been, for his suit was put together meticulously and without wrinkle. Not to mention, he could immediately tell whatever he was wearing, possibly Tom Ford, was very expensive. What he could deduce about those fine, pale pink lips… well, they were pale pink, neither big nor small, possibly soft and tasted of tea, perhaps mint, and…

No.

His thoughts were drifting. He could barely focus. Jim was so handsome and so well put together, Sherlock momentarily felt out of place. He didn’t understand his thoughts, the way his eyes constantly grazed over him like a camera, mentally snapping him into his mind palace for safe keeping. What was his problem observing him like some specimen beneath a microscope lens? Like bees to the petals of a flower, he was drawn in, especially to those pursed petal-like lips… what were they doing? Were they moving? What were they saying?

“Like what you see?”

Sherlock snapped from his thoughts and squeezed at his steaming cup.

“What?”
“You’re staring an awful lot. Thinking.” Jim leaned a bit forward, a mischievous smile spreading across his face. “Wondering what my lips are good for? Want me to show you?”

Within the overwhelming moment, Sherlock’s darted his eyes from Jim to the oolong tea in his cup, embarrassed by the mere reflection of himself. His face was warm. There were flutters in his chest. He was blushing. Jim only predicted Sherlock would be this way, it was much too easy. And to his great fancy, teasing Sherlock, the great Detective of London, Sir Boast-A-Lot, Mr. Virgin who happened to make a lesbian dominatrix enamored; it was the most fun a man could have, even to compare it to a night of whiskey whilst Sebastian did his nightly rounds on the town. The screams and terror it drug from the pathetic, little people, much fun indeed. But this, playing with Sherlock’s mind— was comparably better. It was cute. He was so innocent, he didn’t realize how innocent he was. He even rejected the very concept, the daft man. He could just gobble him up. No, Jim was not snaking his way beneath his skin. Sherlock was guarded for a reason. He was prepared for anything, any tricks the man kept up his sleeve. He supposed playing along would be a lot more difficult when Jim had the upper hand, striking him at his core. The bastard was too powerful for his own good with that smooth, sexy Irish brogue, and how debonair he presented, and with the language his body spoke. Perhaps, he felt closer to carelessly waltzing into a lion’s den more than just approaching it. But Sherlock stood unafraid. He was fearless in the face of his gruesome foe… nothing alarmed him. Nothing of the materialistic or superficial sort. There was nothing he couldn’t handle.

“I don’t fear you or anything about you.” Sherlock pursed his lips defiantly. It was a partial lie, according to how unprepared he suddenly felt. His trust in Jim could not even begin to be built. Not that it was ever truly there to be completely frank.

“I’m offended. Completely wounded, Sherlock. I didn’t invite you here for lies. Of course you fear me. You fear that I have become the root of your deepest obsession, now isn’t that tragic?” purred the Irishman, those dark, impish eyes pulling him in. “But I’ll tell you what, darling. You want me, you’ve got me.”

Sherlock swallowed thickly, chewing at his bottom lip in thought, as each and every one went in every other direction in his mind. No longer was there a one track way of thinking— he felt completely and utterly vulnerable in his clutches. The spider woven his web and caught him in those silky bindings, and how he wished at that moment Jim Moriarty, spider of his terror and his affections, consumed him whole, for his ache to cease in every sense of the word. The stirring, the yearning, the time traveling back inside his mind, the dreams, they were all hitting him at once. And Jim was there, right before his observing eyes, thinking more than feeling. Sentiment, rejected for so long. So suppressed. So intertwined with his work. There was something missing that his sleuthing could not give fix to. The addiction in long unrest. And they both knew what that was.

Just then, Kotoko entered into the room, a little notepad in her hand petite hand. Sherlock was thankful for her presence, for any longer he sat there beneath that heavy gaze, he could simply fall to pieces. Once more, on his guard. He adjusted his posture and pulled his cup of tea closer to him, licking his lips as he tried to calm himself. Kotoko smiled sweetly and politely excused herself for interrupting, taking out her pen from within her sleeve.

“Is Moriarty-san ready to eat?” She inquired, though glancing at both of them curiously for an answer. “Should we start off with an appetizer or have the meal?”

“I think we’ll skip right to the meal, love.” His eyes floated over Sherlock for a moment before flickering over to Kotoko. “I’ll have the Tempura.”

Sherlock squeezed at his cup. He didn’t even as much glance at the menu since he sat there. He
wasn’t very hungry, but decided to get something small and simple. “Sushi.”

“Okay, a bowl of Tempura Udon and a platter of Sushi. It’ll be ready shortly. Is there anything else I can do for you?”

“No, thank you.” Sherlock placed his cup to his lips, shyly averting his eyes to his lap.

Once Kotoko exited the room, shutting the door behind her, Jim picked up a single chopstick and studied the craftsmanship of it’s design, the paint and the letters drawn onto it clean and precise. “You know, we’re fools whether we dance or not. Japanese proverb.”

Sherlock raised a brow. “Obviously. But what should that mean to me?”

“That should be obvious to you, detective. Perhaps you should think on it if you aren’t quite getting the clue.”

The detective rolled his eyes. “It’s a fitting theme.”

“Ah, yes, not my usual choice, but this one was a bit special. The owner comes straight from Tokyo. He’s an ex-Yakuza member on the run from his old friends. He turned to me for protection and a new life, works here with his wife and children. Kotoko’s the eldest.” He placed the intricately designed chopstick down. “His sukiyaki is to die for.”

“So, you invited me here to a wanted criminal’s restaurant for dinner, lovely.” sneered Sherlock.

Jim scoffed. “Don’t be so dramatic, he’s been established for almost a year now and business is booming, I should say. Always dreamt of being a chef, the family’s enjoying their new life.”

“I didn’t take you for a generous man.”

“You’d be surprised. I’m not a bad man, just simply misunderstood.”

“You kill people for sport.”

“Correction, I have services, dear. I have to make a living somehow. And if I have brilliance, why waste it?” laughed Jim. “But I’m not here to talk morality with you, not when we both know we couldn’t care less for it.”

“I can’t deny that morality does not hold my interest, but if you think I won’t try to stop you as I’ve always have, you have another thing coming.”

“Better be careful with that attitude, you might just end up entangled in my web,” Jim’s hand reached forward and grazed over Sherlock’s, “or, just perhaps, you already have.”

Sherlock’s face immediately began to prickle with heat. Ever so slightly, his hand began to tremble as Jim rested his hand over his, gently squeezing it. It was soft, warm, and strong over his, almost protectively, nothing short of even possessive. It was a feeling he’d never felt before— literal heat rose from his belly to his chest. Did it get much warmer? The owner ought to turn his thermostat down some, no? His hand was touching his, holding his, and Sherlock felt himself slipping away faster than expected. It was an immense wonder why he didn’t jerk away, scream at him, punch him, anything to thwart him. He just sat there dumbly, unmoving, blushing as madly as a schoolboy. And now, with his guard lowered, he faced the menacing spider who wore a pleased look, with those hungry eyes lingering over him like a meal.

Jim leaned closer, dark eyes shifting from oceanic blue to the pinkness of Sherlock’s lips, then
back to his eyes again. They were only a few inches apart, but Sherlock could feel the heat of his breath tickle his cupid bow lips, making them quiver with want. The Englishman had never been in such a predicament before, when his thoughts were loud and buzzing, so much that it was brain static, and could do nothing about it.

“Do I make you nervous, Sherlock?” crooned Jim, wearing an amused smirk.

Sherlock was as stiff and mute as a statue, unable to move and speak in that moment. Of course, many things have rendered him bewildered or amazed, in awe, in utter shock and disbelief. But this, among many other things, had left him speechless. And this was a man who was programmed to always respond with some quip. It was plainly clear, however, times have changed and new doors have opened themselves for him. Sherlock Holmes was now presented with his newest challenge yet; sentiment.

“Your pupils are dilated,” drawled the Irishman observingly, “and I’ve counted 80 beats, though your resting pulse is 60. And your breathing, I should add, is a lot heavier than when we were apart. Dear me, Mr. Holmes, dear me, what might we deduce about that?”

Sherlock’s baby blues melted at Jim’s intense gaze, almost as if those dark brown eyes were swallowing him into oblivion. He shuddered, his lips pursing in discontent. Not because of how intimate Jim was, but because of the impasse of the situation. But all Jim did was tease him. And Sherlock loathed every moment of it.

There was a tapping at the door and Kotoko’s soft voice from just beyond it, but the two didn’t quite break apart. Still locked on one another, Jim awaited Sherlock’s response, and smugly too. It was quite certain that his silly detective was caught in his silky threads for good.

“The release of dopamine, the chemistry isn’t difficult.” finally replied Sherlock, narrowed eyes flickering to Jim’s lips, before returning to Jim’s eyes again.

“Dopamine is a chemical of pleasure.”

“So?”

“You’re pleased to see me.”

“I’m not bored.”

“No, but if we were to test this chemistry out on you, I endeavor it'll earn some interesting reactions…”

Sherlock averted his eyes bashfully, ripping from the man’s gaze. Before Jim could further torture the man sat in front of him, Kotoko had already barged with their meals, causing Sherlock to awkwardly move away. She frowned a bit from inconvenience, but said nothing of it. She set her tray down and placed the two dishes onto the table before them.

“Everything looks fantastic. Tell your father he’s done a lovely job.” hummed out Jim, moving chopsticks close to his bowl.

“Arigato, Moriarty-san.” The young woman bowed respectfully. “Will you and your guest be watching my performance tonight at nine thirty?”

“Apologies, Kotoko, darling, but I won’t be able to stay tonight for your performance. I’ll make it up to you another night.” He poured himself more tea. “Give me a call the next time you do.”
She nodded understandingly and cast a jealous eye to Sherlock, who was quite unaware as he stared at his lap, still stunned by the heat of their moment. He felt like putty in his hands. He didn’t like it.

“Itadakimasu, Sherlock.” He tapped the corner of his platter with a chopstick to gain his attention, then proceeded as if nothing happened between them.

Sherlock nearly jumped at the tapping noise, having been lost in thought for the past couple of minutes. Focusing on his meal, he picked up his chopsticks, sighing to himself.

“Itadakimasu,” he toyed with a piece of ginger garnished on the side of his plate, trying to grasp whatever senses in him that were left, “listen Jim, I will figure out whatever plans...”

“This again,” sighed Jim, cutting him off, picking up a piece of egg with the ends of his stick, “I really should wish to see the expression on your face when you realize.”

“Realize what?”

“That you really are more idiot than you are a genius.” Jim popped the egg into his mouth.

Sherlock made no comment but scowled, huffing as he picked up the ginger garnish and placed it on a piece of sushi.

Their meal consisted of a very comfortable silence, aside from the clinking of chopsticks against the ceramic. The wheels in Sherlock’s mind were spinning consistently, digging for answers that perhaps his mind palace could give. It was harder to solve when he was eating. He hoped by that night or tomorrow, once digested, he could think better— and not in the space of the very man who stirred him like a pot.

Periodically, Sherlock would sip at his tea and ponder, think of how lonely he’s felt since John was with Mary. Ever so often he would stop by, message him, but it eventually became a rarity. Even Mrs. Hudson would comment on it, suggesting Sherlock go out and pay him a visit. But that was the problem— Sherlock didn’t want to. He couldn’t. He liked Mary, but seeing them together brought a sort of ache in him he couldn’t explain. John was his good friend. His only friend. However, Sherlock felt a loss greater than that of losing a friend, even when he didn’t truly lose him at all. Communication was just fractured. And with the presence of an unborn child, of course he’d have his hands full. And now— he had the presence of Jim again, in perfect timing of events and matters. He should have been thrilled, no longer would he be bored or lonely. He’d have the company of danger and not misery. Their games would return and give something Sherlock to chase after. Life had purpose again. So why did he feel so strangely about it?

Once their meal was finished, Sherlock adjusted the buttons of his blazer and cleared his throat, glancing up to Jim.

“Thank you for dinner. It was... eventful.”

Jim raised a brow. “Interesting way to describe it, though it was entirely painted by your ignorance.”

“My ignorance?” inquired Sherlock, bewildered.

“Indeed. That’s what’s made dinner quite eventful for tonight. I’d like to see you again, Sherlock. Perhaps, invite me over your flat sometime. We can have tea, biscuits, you can put on a sexy performance and play me violin. I’m only a call or a text message away.” He stood and stretched.
“You’re unbelievable.” snapped Sherlock impatiently. His ignorance? When did Jim become so friendly and intimately assertive?

Jim only laughed, approaching Sherlock with a relaxed demeanor. “How so? You’re the one blocking everyone out, like you always have, hiding behind an armed heart. I can’t blame you—me too… but, that mindset died in me the moment I realized something significant.”

“Enough with riddles, get on with it!”

“You.”

“Me? What about me?”

Jim tilted his head and deviously smiled up to Sherlock, being the only one of the two standing there amused by his clueless counterpart. Once more, they were only inches apart—Jim could hear Sherlock’s breath shake, exhibiting all the same symptoms of his interest from before. It was much too precious.

“You’re cute.”

Sherlock’s eyes widened and turned many shades of red upon that unmarked, white skin. He was taken aback for words and unable to think properly—again. Thoughts jumbled and scrambled about, trying to make sense of the words just told to him. It almost felt unreal.

With that said, Jim reached for his hand and placed a chaste kiss to one of his knuckles, that same bastard smile plastered onto his lips as he turned round, and exited the room. But Sherlock remained, eyes still wide, glancing at his pale hand where the Irishman placed his lips to shamelessly. Every moment that went by after that only made the detective blush more. Such affections were not of his area. He was now more afraid than anything. Not only by what he presumed was some kind of affectionate act as a front for plans, but how he craved them in deep recesses of his heart.
I worked on this ALL DAY. My head hurts. I’m exhausted. And I have so much to do. I did my best to read over it and edit, but if I find this needs more editing, I will either take it down and rewrite, or thoroughly edit it and update it. Haven’t decided yet. Ah well. Things are getting interesting, I suppose? Hopefully? I’ll let you be the judge of that.

Sherlock Holmes was a user and abuser of many known narcotics. Anything that could bring him away from reality, that would do just fine. He counted every year after 40 to be narrowing closer towards his own current age with every hit taken. It proved to be most helpful in times of need when his depression or anxiety would erupt, or when he had his cravings, or to alleviate the ache of boredom, or when he was longing. In longing of what, one may ask. Sherlock Holmes was a man of amazing brain power, great Detective of London. What could a man with so much under his belt be so without? It was left a mystery to others, but well known to Sherlock himself, and Jim. Not his clever brother Mycroft, not his parents, not even his good friend and colleague John was aware of his internal struggles. He recoiled from the world into the depths of his mind palace, in isolation.

It had been weeks since dinner.

Every case offered had not the name of Jim Moriarty upon it. It was a waste of time. He already could solve them where he sat— upon his usual seat in his flat. It was no secret that he was alone. The flat was emptier without his dearest doctor. John had little time for Sherlock now, with Mary and their unborn baby. But he did not blame John for having such a life he so craved, he was sure, since the time of their meeting. Anyone who was not like himself, so ordinary with ordinary expectations to fill in their lifetimes, made it all the more respectable. He still could not quite understand the concept of his fellow humans, who acted upon their feelings instead of logic with every task. Yet now… thinking of Jim, as he ripped the needle from his arm, it was most desired. He could only fantasize, build a dream in his mind palace, to have a life with the consulting criminal, as mad as the idea rang. Any neurotypical would reject such a silly dream and call it a sick, immature obsession. Sherlock did not mind that point of view, but as to being not a neurotypical, he saw it rawly.

Jim Moriarty was the only one who knew him whole and whole. They mirrored each other, so well, as Siamese twins. Their minds, their behaviors, their interests and fancies, all the like— in perfect congruence. He did not take much, though his body limply laid across the chair, without his match made in Hell. Arm dangling from over the cushioned armrest. His body only clad in a white towel, as he had spent at least an hour in the shower sleuthing to bring about the reason in his mind as to why he had yet to hear from Jim. At first he waited and waited, eons it felt like. And impatiently, breaking his aloof demeanor, messaged Jim in eagerness so he could see him. His pride was being torn asunder and to smithereens, thinking back on the lack of response received, in which he considered a form of response in and of itself. Surely, the man also looked forward to another meet. Another kiss. A kiss Sherlock could not shake from mind, even if was just on the hand. A kiss that melted him, he could only imagine those kisses upon his needy lips, and elsewhere. He was high. The fix had yet to do its job. Though his mind could not think anymore of the situation when he gave out at last, unconscious.
You’re ordinary, Sherlock Holmes…

How boring you truly are.

Love does not exist. Only pain.

You brought this upon yourself and now you suffer the arrows of your involvement.

This is your downfall.

Look at you, pathetic.

Ordinary.

Upon rousing, Sherlock had stirred from his unconscious state to a dimly lit room. At first, his sight was blurry, but he could tell perhaps it had not been day or becoming evening. The scent of burning wood and the sensation of warmth made him hyper aware. He rubbed his eyes groggily and sniffled, blinking a few times before his sight seemed steady. Ah, yes. He knew exactly where he was. It was a place of dread, even more so of the person who resided in it. Judging by the type of wood and feeling of heat against his body, he deduced that this was not his flat any longer, but Mycroft’s god forsaken office. He sighed irritably and sat up straight, casting a dark eye over the cushion of the sofa he had been laid across. When did he end up here? And who put their wretched hands on him and thought it was necessary to dress him?

Mycroft stood staring out of his window, blinds closed, but cracks of light flooding through. He had not been paying attention to see whether Sherlock awoken or not, but to the outside world, hands behind his back. Had he been anyone else, Mycroft would have been a cryptic and unsettling sight. But to Sherlock, he was just his older prick brother who had nothing better to do than poke
his nose where it didn’t belong. He was the British government, his arse! He couldn’t get high in peace, could he? He’s already tried marijuana, it wasn’t the same. As if Mycroft even cared about the affairs of his life, he just enjoyed playing mother, and having some form of control over his life as he did since they were children. Making unauthorized visits to his flat, when he was there and when he wasn’t, spying on him, it was violating, and pissed him off to no end.

“Caring is not an advantage, Sherlock. Didn’t I already tell you that? Making me repeat myself is a tedious task for me.” began Mycroft, unmoving, icy. “Your attachment to Dr. Watson has made you soft and more self destructive than you always have been.”

“I’m not attached,” hissed Sherlock, “John can do whatever he pleases, he’ll be a father soon enough, so good for him. People have lives.”

“But do you really believe that, though? I only wonder…”

“Shut up! Why the hell am I in your office?” Sherlock was enraged.

“Because you don’t know how to behave, which is why I’m giving you my final warning. I will send you back into rehab if you end up with drugs in your possession again.”

“I… don’t know how to behave? Piss off, you are not Mum.” He narrowed his eyes to his older brother.

“Brother mine,” Mycroft turned on his heels, his attention now to Sherlock, “you know very well Mum would say the same things for your own benefit.”

“But you are not Mum, is what I’m saying.”

At this point, Sherlock was seething, wanting to punch that big nosed jackass right in the face, and hopefully break something valuable. The Englishman was not shy to express to Mycroft the infuriating things he made him feel. His habits, be them healthy or unhealthy, were not of anyone’s concern, including his. Sure, he’s struggled for a long time with things like this, becoming bored or depressed; it was his easy way out of things. But he had more pressing things to worry about. Jim. Not hearing from him since that night at dinner. He hated how obsessed he had become, but the man was the only thing that could distract him from what he considered a painfully dull life.

But he wondered, was it actually real? As the weeks went by, it felt almost too unreal to be real. He’s had hallucinations before, but nothing like that. And unlike most people, Sherlock’s mind could create very realistic things. His mind palace was vast and could create scenarios deemed so real, it was like living in a separate reality. He often visited his mind palace when under the influence, sometimes without even trying to. Very little he dreamt, for his insomnia would force him awake, which only added to his distaste of reality. Reality was the bad end to his games, a state of dreariness when he’d lose. His mind was the only place he could live without the immeasurable disappoint life brought.

“You’re right, I’m not Mum, Sherlock. But that doesn’t matter. Look at you, this is pathetic. You are a detective, aren’t you? Why don’t you solve cases again?”

Sherlock felt a pang of insecurity shoot through him when he heard Mycroft call him pathetic. Those words were familiar. Almost as his own, right?

“I’d solve cases if none of them weren’t so boring. I don’t solve cases less than a seven, or have you forgotten that?”

“I gave you a case. I wanted you to work on shutting down Moriarty’s network. For over two years
you have done nothing but waste my time. It isn’t anything you can’t handle, especially when you have all of my resources to your disposal!” scowled Mycroft. “And it is still open for you to work on. Whenever you’re ready. Moriarty’s dead. It’s possible.”

Sherlock bit his tongue. He wished to scream at Mycroft that it wasn’t true. Jim wasn’t dead. He had seen him just weeks ago, had dinner, almost kissed, almost slipped into his hands like putty. Almost submitted to him. But he had not said a word, for perhaps it was just all a hallucination. He was high half of the time. Most days Mrs. Hudson would tut away to herself, not knowing what to do. She would remind herself she was only his landlady, feeling guilty as she left him to his strange ordeals. Drugs were the devil, she’d sigh to herself. But the bigger devil was heartbreak, and she knew it was something Sherlock had to move past by himself. John was blissfully unaware, and most were, but Mycroft and Mrs. Hudson. They knew how close they were, the habits exhibited by Sherlock were nothing new.

“You’re right. Moriarty’s dead.” mumbled Sherlock in defeat.

“I’m putting you on the case again. Don’t disappoint me, Sherlock. I’ve recently found an area that his people are lurking in. There’s a penthouse suite in South London I need you to wipe clean. They are terrorists, I imagine, and have my suspicions they are planning on doing something nasty with the Prime Minister. There are several IP addresses from that location there that means there is more than one computer with information about their next moves. If you bring that to me, and help shut down the rest of his network, then I will make sure you receive more cases to keep you busy. I know how you feel about traveling, but since there isn’t much in London right now, I will put you on for travel through UK channels. Scotland, Ireland, the rest of England, whatever you want. I’m not sure who else is leading the network, if anyone is leading it anymore, but we need to hurry before someone else takes over.” Mycroft walked over, slipping out a flash drive from his breast pocket, handing it to Sherlock.

Sherlock snatched it from his hand irritably, tucking it into his pocket. He hated doing favors for Mycroft, but it would baffle him if he just turned away from this case. He knew that if there was a slim chance that Tanaka’s Kitchen did indeed exist, Jim had to still live.

“Fine, but I am not doing this for you, but out of my own interests,” frowned Sherlock, “I don’t need your resources either. I never have. Just leave me alone.”

With that said, Sherlock stood up, still feeling a bit light headed from his heroin in his veins, and the weak. But, he stood successfully steady, eyes cold and determined.

“Mycroft.”

“What is it, brother mine?”

“Tanaka’s Kitchen.”

“That restaurant in Soho? What about it?”

A smirk curled onto the lips of the detective.

“Nothing, just heard someone talking about it the other day.”

“It’s a splendid little place. The owner is an immigrant from Japan if I’m remembering correctly. It’s quite the popular spot, I should think.”

“I don’t care about that.”
After his last remark to Mycroft, Sherlock exited the office, no longer irritated, but adrenaline already pumping through those veins. Now, the games have really begun. Jim Moriarty really was alive, not a figment of his drug induced imagination. Whatever happened in that restaurant with Jim would be whisked away. He was unattached and prepared to get rid of the nasty spider and his web. He refused to fall into an ordinary trap, no, he would not be sabotaged by a slip up on his end. The world was his tool and he would use it to fix what was necessary and move forward. Sulking over something that has long died was boring, wasn’t it? Let it rest in peace and rot away. There was no use in crying over spilled milk, or in this case, something that has been long buried. It was not just the mortality of humans, but the mortality of its nature Sherlock remembered. He no longer would dare to cling to it.

Another taxi hailed to South London. His attention drifted outside to the passing cars and intersections, though paying them little mind in their existence. Traffic wasn’t too bad again, nor was he impatient as usual; just indifferent. Sherlock’s mind drifted on all sorts of things, like a monkey jumping from tree to tree, his thoughts were never ending. From his intentions of receiving the terrorist information from Jim’s people, to John, to Mycroft with mild frustration, the flat, his violin, then Jim, and Jim again, and Jim again and again. However, one thought stuck to him among the rest. His night with Jim at Tanaka’s Kitchen.

You know, we’re fools whether we dance or not.

The meaning of it was obvious, but how it pertained to him was not. In what way was he a fool? Sherlock didn’t consider himself one. In fact, he found others around him to be fools. His mind held supreme intelligence and he got the job done in every case, unlike Scotland Yard. People told him to piss off because he was too smart for his own good, so how exactly was he the fool? In what context? To be called ignorant and a fool frustrated him, just a little, like a tiny voice telling him, motivating him to prove it wrong. Then Jim was close to him, taking his pulse, observing him the same way he observed Irene Adler when he had just beat her at her own game. Sherlock knew deep down that Jim was his weakness. John shared in being his weakness, his pressure point, but it was Jim ultimately who had him kneeling, eating from the palm of his hand when every case arose, no matter the danger and the price. It made him feel special, superior, clever, unbeatable—cherished even. He felt as if his knowledge was appreciated, those games were solely for his own solving. Why was that so?

No, but if we were to test this chemistry out on you, I endeavor it’ll earn some interesting reactions…

Sherlock covered his face as he felt himself warm at the memory of those seductive words. He wondered why he reacted this way, that his arch nemesis could make him feel so small without even being there. He loathed it. What was this feeling in him? It was like being caught in Hell’s flames, his skin burned at the thought of him, his lips, his touch, those words that echoed in his mind. He wanted to taste him, feel him, have him. He wondered what it was like for a moment to be like others, blissfully lost in their tiny brains, caught in their emotions and their hormones. It was laughable, but he did not laugh. Sherlock was not a man of attachment, this he reminded himself. He was not a man of such… grotesque, ordinary things. Lustful thoughts were ordinary,
but he could rise above them. They had no power over him.

Nothing did.

He huffed to himself and attempted to whisk away the thought. Mrs. Hudson. His annoying brother. His parents. Molly. Anything to make that torturous ache go away, for his heart to return to its normal pace. It had to be about five to ten minutes before he was able to relax himself from the intrusive thoughts. Why not women? A good question indeed, but it was already solved years ago. He never had interest in women. But he also believed all those years before that he was indifferent to either sex. Throughout his school years, however, he remembered becoming aroused by men he barely knew or were a complete stranger. It was his first porn video that piqued his interest after he was taught about sexual education in his classes one semester. When he compared it to videos with women, he realized how his hormones reacted to each. He deduced this meant that he was a homosexual. When he listened to Type O Negative and sneakily bought a Playgirl magazine with naked Peter Steele in it and was then exposed by Mycroft with it, he knew at that moment he was a homosexual. That was the scientific gist of it. But just because he felt his way, it didn’t mean he had to act on it, right? Sex and love were beneath him, it was just another way for people to get temporary gratification in their mundane, pathetic lives. His life wasn’t pathetic nor was he. Surely, a little mundane with the lack of cases and John being gone, but he reminded himself of his life before John. It wasn’t as bad as he remembered.

When his cell phone buzzed, he snapped back to reality, fishing it from his coat pocket. It was an attachment sent from John. His eyes widened and he immediately unlocked his phone, punching away at the digits of his password, and gazing at the picture sent. It was a selfie of John at the bar, and by the looks of it, he was alone. Mary wasn’t in sight, supposedly. He had his old graduated cylinder from the stag night drinking and being foolhardy drunkards. It was completely embarrassing and out of character for him, but he couldn’t deny the fun they had that night. It took Sherlock five minutes to think about how to respond. He felt sore just even seeing his face again, remembering the times they shared together. He refused to acknowledge the irritation that came with the photo, pushing it aside, and gaining the courage to respond in a calm, cool manner. He didn’t want John to think he was hung up on their past or anything.

*Trying to get alcohol poisoning? That is quite filled to the brim, John. SH*

*You could say that. I’m sorry I haven’t reached out much at all, I’ve been busy with Mary, and since she’s pregnant, my attention is at higher demand. Are you free tonight? JW*

*Mycroft has me on an assignment, as if I’m his bloody minion meant to do his bidding. How about tomorrow night? SH*

*Tomorrow night works. Mary will be with a cousin or something like that for the weekend, so I have time to myself. JW*

*And… I just want to add, Sherlock, I know how long it’s been since I’ve last said anything. If*
Sherlock’s heart sank at the words he read on the screen. How silly. Why would he care? John and Mary were a happy couple with a child on the way, his life was of no interest to him anymore.

Don’t be. Let’s have a cuppa tomorrow and you can tell me all about the happy marriage. SH

This wasn’t even said in a sarcastic manner. Genuinely, Sherlock said this, even if he had no interest. This was because he enjoyed John’s company. He was the only unordinary ordinary man who has ever had the privilege to be his friend. He liked his input on cases, some of the things he came up with even if they meant folly, his determination, his immense fascination for Sherlock’s magnificent brain, the way he praised him in his blogs, how he stood up for him when others were against him. The thought, momentarily moved him.

He had almost forgotten that he had requested his cabbie to take him into South London. The driver turned around and had practically yelled to him that he was at his destination. Sherlock’s attention was withdrawn from his cellphone to the older driver. Wordlessly, he drew his wallet from his pocket, handing him £30, not even paying any mind the amount of whether it was over or under the price, and swiftly moved out of the car, the door slamming shut behind him.

The winter was brisk, and if he was remembering correctly after hearing the forecast on the radio, it would be much colder that night. He adjusted his scarf and moved in on the hotel building.

As anticipated by the people Jim worked with, wealthy, stuck up, posh people came and went about their business. Everything was fanciful, polished, luxurious. Golds, marble, fake smiles and overpriced clothes. He could deduce several people just passing by him generations of unhappy marriages, childhoods, and unhealthy bonds. To pretend to be something you weren’t… oh, it was asinine. It made his eyes roll. Sherlock fled to the nearest elevator without a line, up to the 60th floor. Luckily, he was able to catch an elevator with no one else in it, and hoped he was lucky enough to get to his intended floor.

As he reached the penthouse floor, he exited the elevator and into the hall. Room 6010. He initially had a blueprint idea of how he intended to go about this. Mycroft sent him information by photographs he had taken of the individuals who came and left that area of the hotel. Three men; two English and one American. They were to be armed, which is why Sherlock wasn’t careless enough to not bring a gun with him. He hid behind a few of the hallway ferns left out for decoration. Surprisingly, they were plastic. He assumed such a posh hotel could afford real ones. But they were strangely immaculate, not a particle of dust in sight.

As he hid, it was a while before the door had opened. He kept a keen eye on the door, glaring through a mound of plastic leaves as he noticed the American leave the room.

“Let me know when Mr. Moriarty gives us the go. I’m going to get a coffee, the room service sucks.”

“I really do hope you have the key this time. It’s tedious for us to keep letting you in.”

“Yeah, yeah.”
Good, the stupid one was the American. Forgetful, immature, bad haircut after a recent breakup with an ex girlfriend who had sex with his brother, accidentally cut himself shaving that morning due to the few cuts at his chin, sunburned easily, had bad eczema according to the way his sleeves were rolled down so much trying to hide red patches on the skin he absentmindedly itched, and due to the position of his hands tugging his sleeves, he was insecure. By the way he held himself, he could deduce by posture and weight of 180 pounds, this man was not a threat physically. He would have to subdue him, knock him unconscious, and confiscated his firearms and key. Easy peasy.

Once the door shut, the American approached the elevator, pressing the down arrow as he waited for his car to come. Sherlock seized the opportunity and attacked him from behind, dragging him to the next hall and shoving him against the wall, hand clamped over his mouth. For a few moments, the American struggled to get to his pocket knife, and angry, muffled curses left him barely comprehensive. Bored already, Sherlock kneed him in the crotch, watching him pathetically fall to his knees.

“I’ll be taking your key and any weapons you’re carrying, thanks.”

And to not waste time further, Sherlock punched him square in the face, immediately knocking the man out cold. Quickly, the Englishman retrieved his key, pocket knife, and patted him down for any guns. In the American’s University of Michigan hoodie, which he was quite sure was not truly his nor did he attend the institution, he felt a lump in the pocket. To his success, he withdrew a gun. Bingo.

But of course, Sherlock couldn’t just leave him lying there like that, unattractively bleeding from his head. Would be a bit of a problem and might draw attention. The detective dragged him through the hall and glanced around, finding a closet for housekeepers to his right. He patted around his body and with luck, he managed to find a bobby pin he often used for his lock picking. He twisted it into a useful shape and slowly wiggled it inside the lock, careful. It wasn’t very long before he was able to unlock the closet door. He dragged the American in, shutting the door tightly. No way to get in. No way to get out.

After leaving the unaware American in the hands of the next hotel staff to check the closet, his attention affixed on room 6010. He slowly took out one gun, the key in the other, cautiously approaching the door. His heart was racing, though not out of fear but excitement, something he had not felt in ages. He pushed the key into the lock and slowly turned it, opening it to reveal a large, luxurious suite. As he entered inside, he cocked his gun pointed it around, eyes scanning the premises alert and observant.

As he arrived to the first bedroom where he heard people talking, his eyes narrowed as he aimed the gun at them. Four laptops sat around the two men left alone.

“No, I would be careful about how you approach this matter. Your friend didn’t even last a minute with me, I should hope you’re both wiser as Englishman.” warned Sherlock.

They stared at him dumbly for a few moments and did not react in any way. Sherlock knew in his mind it’d be simpler to just hold them hostage and get the information that way, but also considered several other possibilities, his arrogance overtaking him. Though, the victorious, overconfident attitude didn’t last long. In the next moment, searing pain was made known to the back of his skull, and with a thud to the hardwood floor, Sherlock was unconscious.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Oh LAWD, okay so, shit goes down in this chapter. Finally a bit more Sheriarty, but also some violence, so prepare yourself for fluff and hurt Sherlock. I did what I could, so hopefully this isn't choppy, as I tried not to rush through it. Currently with cousins so I may not update until I get home in a few days or so! This will probably be my last chapter for 2019 until I am able to update again soon. Happy Near Year and hope everyone is having a wonderful holidays! Enjoy! <3

Follow the herd and you’ll see
that solitude is not your enemy.
For in your heart you’ll know
All must reap what they sow.

There was a blaring, white noise. It was deafening, like a banshee clinging to his ears, howling for eternity. It was a mystery how much time had passed, but the moment Sherlock drowsily stirred to consciousness was when it all flooded back to memory. Lurid colors danced in his vision as a kaleidoscope, not being able to quite make out his surroundings. All he knew was pain, hot, burning pain in the back of his skull. He deduced that whatever hit him would bruise him for the next few days, thanking his lucky stars it did not kill him. But he could barely move. Any jerk was met with constraint, which meant he was tied up. His mouth tasted of cotton and his jaw ached, which also meant he was gagged. Rough was their style, wasn’t it? Though, he supposed it was warranted, he had a gun on them with a very holier-than-thou threat that followed after. Three men, three terrorists, one down, two left. But no. The two left were in front of him. What or who else got to him last? How did he get to this point?

Once pondered briefly, he willed his body to blink away the blur of lights and little black spots, squeezing his eyes shut for a moment to make them vanish. Little by little, the specks and blurred, blinding light faded, and his vision became more aware of his surroundings. Clothes and shoes were stacked and hung around him, so it was simple enough to see that he was in a closet. It hurt to move his neck, but he was able to notice he was sitting in a chair. The opened door gave visual access to his captors, all who were typing away at their computers.

“Did you find Jones?”

“Jones isn’t our priority right now. Someone from the government found us out. That means more know about our location and what we’re doing. They can come at any time.”

“If you’re so concerned about the agent than our assignment, then I suggest you interrogate him, Philips.”

“If he’s not dead.”
“I doubt she hit him that hard.”

“Then why don’t you check on him?”

“Enough! We have to back this information up and send it off to Moran and Flores via email. Either you get on with it or have a chat with the sod in the closet, yeah?”

With a harsh sigh, Sherlock noticed one of the men from earlier shove his laptop away and made way in his direction. He would have feigned being unconscious again, was it not for the man having caught his gaze. Sherlock deduced from the pivot of his body and the way he walked, he had arthritis in both of his knees and a sore back from working out at the gym this past week. He also was fuming from that exchange, which was not good on his part, now that he was tied up.

Once he arrived, this man by the name of Philps, he ripped the gag from Sherlock’s mouth, prompting Sherlock to wince at how sore his jaw felt in the aftermath of his mouth’s freedom.

“Who sent you and where’s your backup?” hissed Philps, shoving the chair into the wall.

“I was sent by God to absolve you of your sins.” sneered Sherlock in sarcasm, wincing as his head collided with it. He’d have to buy himself time to figure out how to escape.

Philips scoffed, punching Sherlock in the nose. Crimson trickled from his nose and streaked down his face, causing Sherlock to groan from pain. Of course, he could have avoided that, but he already deduced how to free himself from his restraints. His hands were tied rather well behind his back, bound to the strip of the fiddleback and his ankles to the chair’s legs. Harsher ropes wrapped around his body, and so, it was hardly possible to flex a muscle, or nurse his poor nose from the immediate agony his nose suffered.

“Keep it up, smartarse, and I won’t hesitate to send you back to him!”

“I don’t think your boss will like that. He said to interrogate me, not kill me. Can’t find out anything from a corpse, can you?”

Philips kicked Sherlock down to the floor, the wind knocked from his body. Wheezing excruciatingly, whooping coughs escaped him as another kick came to stomach. The detective gagged and shuddered, spitting blood onto the floor he lay on. Sherlock was as fragile as glass in this state, but it was obvious they didn’t care if they treated him like a pitiful rag doll. He was worthless in their eyes and would be just another body to dispose of like junk.

“I will ask you again. Who sent you?” growled the fed up man.

“You’re divorced,” began Sherlock observantly, ignoring his question, “judging by ring mark on your left ring finger with the lack of ring. She disapproved of your apparent drinking problems, according to the tremor of your hand. She was afraid it would get out of hand so she took custody of the kids, never let you see them for eight years now, I believe. Your day job is spent in a dull, little office cubicle, no one ever talks to you or invites you to any social outings, and it makes you lonely. Your boss is a bitch, your colleagues find you strange but associate with you when they have to, you’re thousands in debt because of a business you’ve tried to launch and failed, and your boss over there who yelled at you finds you insufferable. I know you chose this path to outlet how you feel… but what if I made you a deal?”

Philips was in immense shock, wide eyed, looking Sherlock up and down as if he’d seen a phantom manifest before his eyes. “What… what are you? How the bloody hell do you know all that?”

“It’s a gift.” He smiled weakly. “Now, don’t you want to get back at your boss for yelling at you?
Aren’t you tired of being treated like this all the time?”

Philips pressed his lips together thinly for a moment, a thoughtful expression coming to his middle aged features. Rogers was rather bossy. Even if he was appointed head of this project, he had been working with him for a month and a half now, and found his style of working tacky. He even felt bad for the foolish American they had to put up with whilst they did this job for Jim Moriarty. But they were getting paid a lot of moolah, so like hell would he ruin it. Not to mention, if he were to try and pull out from the project now, he knew Jim would make heads roll.

“Nice try, mate, but I need the money, even if I can’t stand Rogers.” Philips smiled wryly. “No matter what you say and what you can find out about me.”

Sherlock deduced with the slight pivot of his body no other weapons but a pocket knife tucked away in its sheath beneath his shirt. He hypothesized that if he were able to get Philips close to his face, he could knock him unconscious with the blunt force of his head. Even if it would hurt, and even if it didn’t render him out cold, the likely outcome that it would still stun him was rather high. He smirked, wiggling about as he struggled to get himself up.

“But what if I were to tell you a secret? I know a little someone who can arrange a greater price than what you’re being offered and it’ll be completely confidential…”

Philips curiously perked up at the sound of his words, moving his head close, casting a shady eye to the door. Questionable, but definitely worth listening to. Loyalty was never the endgame, but an act throughout it.

Without notice, Sherlock immediately smacked his head against the other man, making him fall hard to the ground. As he was writhing in agony and holding skull, Sherlock had the chance to fall purposely on his legs, crushing them with his weight and the chair. His wrists ached as they fought to search about his belt from behind, and after a few moments, victoriously found the knife, slipping it out of its sheath. Slowly and carefully, he cut through bindings that linked his hands together. Once they were freed, he massaged them, focus falling onto his ankles.

When escaping the room, he hurried out, knife immediately going into the back of Rogers. Rogers howled from the immediate pain and snapped around, eyes narrowing furiously at Sherlock, who threw a punch to his face. In one gaze, Sherlock could already draw out his weakest pressure points, and knowing how to hit one was what made this next part the easiest and probably most delightful. His hand darted at his ribs, knocking him back with one blow, and attacked again at the solar plexus. Rogers may have been larger in height, weight, and girth, but that did not make up for his lack of agility and balance. He was always unprepared. He grabbed the pocket knife and ripped it out of his back, ready to stab at a major artery, but failing to do so as he was knocked to the ground by an unknown force.

“Stay down,” hissed the voice, “or else I will shoot.”

The voice was familiar, female, laced with fury. But the accent was something he had never heard before. Was it French? He tried to glance over his shoulder, but was kicked in the face, provoking a cry of pain, before that same hard toed boot attacked him at his spine. Sherlock whimpered as he felt another presence approach him, Rogers having a go at him, kicking him repeatedly in the stomach, as he prompted more blood and even bile to spit from the detective’s trembling mouth. However, his blows ceased when his phone began to ring. There was an instant, sharp sensation that was felt as his neck, and Sherlock croaked out, his body becoming useless in its cling to consciousness. His vision was blurring and his senses were becoming paralyzed. It was then and there he knew he had been sedated and would probably not wake up at the rate of his beating.
“Je dois y aller,” The French voice cooed, “give Mr. Moriarty my love, it seems like you can handle yourself here.”

Before Rogers could react, he fished his cell phone from his pocket, and answered it briskly. “Sir?”

“Have you finished what needs to be done?” drawled the Irishman from the other end of the call.

“Unfortunately not, but we have a good reason why. Some government official came in with a gun, probably found us out by hacking into our connection and taking our IP addresses. We knocked him out, tied him up, and he still managed to get free. Some dandy in a coat and scarf.”

“Ah, I see, and you’ve been hurting this man, right?”

“Yes sir, we couldn’t let him interfere with our plans. We have have out cold again and he may not last long, so there’s really nothing to worry about.”

“Lovely, I’ll pop on over and see to it. Don’t kill him, okay? Just wait right there.”

The call clicked off and Rogers glared down at an immobile Sherlock, shoving him away with his foot in disgust. Philips stirred in the other room and groaned, holding his head as he limped over to where Rogers stood, carefully watching Sherlock’s unconscious body.

“What the hell happened to you?”

“The bastard tricked me, Rogers.”

“Well he’s about done now. Mr. Moriarty just called and he’s coming over to handle it.”

“We can’t kill him?”

“Said not to.”

“Damn, I would have enjoyed pulling out his eyeballs right from the sockets.”

“Me too. Whatever. We’ll wait now.”

It was within an hour that Jim arrived to the penthouse suite. He glanced over to Sebastian and outstretched his waiting hand. Sebastian handed over a black leather case as cue. He knew his silence was like poison, lethal to whoever wished to engage in it. He took pity on the poor bastards who would ever have to witness such a horror. It was like unleashing a wild lion upon a hare, there was no chance of survival once that was over, and no prayer could release you from it. Nightmarish would be relatively the right word to describe him. For anyone to double cross him, disobey him, piss him off, and not just slightly irritate him, but truly put a damper on his mood, was a one way ticket to their downfall. For a man who did not favor in getting his hands dirty, he’d take delight in making sure you wished you never knew the man named James Moriarty.

As the two walked in, Jim was taken aback by the sight. He noticed how Sherlock Holmes looked; beaten to a pulp and still. Something in him was boiling and he knew precisely what had to be done now.

“Sebastian, take him to the hospital.” ordered Jim.

“But sir—”

Jim shot him a harsh glare. If looks could kill, Sebastian would have been on the ground at that point. Sebastian sighed and lifted Sherlock up in his arms. Jim knew it would be a lot faster for
Sebastian to drop him off at the hospital rather than wait for an ambulance. As he carried him out, Jim placed the black leather case to the side and cracked his knuckles.

“Rogers, Philips, where’s Jones?”

“We have no idea, sir, but we believe the government official got to him when he left the room for a coffee earlier. But Rose—”

“No worries, boys, I’ll be sure to find him eventually. No search party needed.”

“Are you keeping our captive alive then?”

Jim chuckled, opening his case. Once the top flopped open, there were multiple tools and weapons revealed in the bag. He rarely used them unless needed. Torture, mostly, when he needed to interrogate a spy or someone who was indebted to him. But this, this would be much more interesting for him to play with.

“He’s valuable to me right now, which is why I must keep him alive. But you on the other hand, are not, and are easily replaceable.”

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Once again, it felt like ritual, stirring to consciousness from unconsciousness, from the depths of what was black and unseeable, to the blur becoming clearer and clearer; he saw lights again. He wondered if this was death at first, with the white noise burning in his ears, drowning him away from what was real and true. It hurt to think, to see, to move. But Sherlock was managing. He’s been through worse before, hasn’t he? He supposed so, the thought seeming very much farther away from him now. A few more blinks and he could see a white ceiling where the light was becoming more blinding. He squinted and squeezed his eyes, fighting past the harsh light, where image was slowly molding along his vision. And soon, he could hear faint beeping, and the sound of a voice. Within his momentary ability, he moved his aching head, glancing around to see he was in a hospital room, laying in a hospital bed. And…

The Woman sitting in a chair. She left a rose on his table in thin, white vase.

“About time you’ve returned to us, Sherlock.” She smiled. “We weren’t just going to let you leave like that.”

“What? What are you doing here, Irene?” Sherlock’s voice was weak, but audible.

“Obviously to see you, silly. I heard you were in bad shape, so I made it my goal to see you when you’ve woken up. That charming, blonde nurse just came in a few moments ago, and told me you should be waking up anytime soon. She made good time.” Irene crossed her arms and made her way over to the side of his bed. “Those poor cheekbones got a bit of damage.”

“Yes.” replied Sherlock, grunting as he tried to move.

“Ah, painkillers must be wearing off. I should probably alert the nurse about that. Not a lot of damage, but a fractured rib. You’re bruised up quite a bit, but I think you’ll heal quickly, as you always do.”
“What happened to the terrorists?”

“What the nasty boys who did this to you? Jim handled it.”

His eyes widened. “Jim?”

“Mm, he took care of them. They’re probably floating in the Thames river now.”

“But… why?”

“Darling, I don’t have all the answers to your questions. If you want to know, simply just ask Jim himself. He’s outside now as we speak.”

“What?!”

“Try not to get too worked up or it’ll show on your heart monitor,” winked Irene, her hips naturally swaying as she was leaving the room, “you know how to reach me if you need me, dear.”

Before Sherlock’s brain could comprehend what was happening, Jim entered the room a few moments after Irene left. It had been weeks since he last heard from him, seen him, and still he managed to have the same effect on Sherlock as when they reunited in Tanaka’s Kitchen, or whenever he received a text from him, or when they first met at the pool. Dear god, did he miss the man. He craved everything Jim had to offer at this point, he knew how his attention made him feel. It drove him mad, like meat presented to the carnivorous beast. And how handsome he still looked! Same, luminous slicked black hair, pressed, wrinkle free expensive suit, and alluring dark eyes that haunted his mind.

Sherlock’s heart monitor began to beep at a rapid pace, and all Jim could do was smile at his reaction. Approaching the bed Sherlock lay in, he sat beside him, cupping his face with his left hand.

“Miss me?”

Sherlock was flustered, his eyes glancing around in disbelief, then falling back to him. His heart was pounding in chest, just ready to break through his chest at any given moment. His hand cool, soft, but he felt hot against the sensation of it. No one made him feel the way Jim made him feel. And ridding of those terrorists who worked for him? What was that all about? He swallowed thickly, feeling like a fly caught in Jim’s web again. Or, perhaps he only imagined he was free from it fleetingly? It took a few moments for Sherlock to think of a response, trying to relax himself, though his body kept betraying him.

“P-perhaps…”

“No need to beat around the bush, sweetheart, it’s well apparent you have,” teased Jim, his thumb tracing over his cheekbone, letting his fingers trace down and cup his jaw, “you’re burning like a wildfire.”

“Why did you do it? They could’ve killed me.” Sherlock’s baby blue eyes searched Jim’s chocolate ones for an answer, some ulterior motive that just would not expose itself to him, if hidden. But nothing surfaced.

“Because they could have killed you, dumbarse,” Jim moved closer, barely making space between their faces, “and I couldn’t have allowed it.”

The warmth of his breath once more tickled the lips of the detective. His own lips pursed and
trembled at the feeling of his closeness, waiting impatiently for Jim to quit lingering. He understood now, that Jim had the perfect opportunity, multiple times throughout their encounters, even now to kill him. But no, he insisted that he live, enjoy himself, and that was what Sherlock wanted in this moment more than anything in the world. Misery followed him like a shadow, and if Jim was to bring solace, so be it. He welcomed it with every inch of his body and every cell of his being.

Softly, Jim’s lips brushed against Sherlock’s pink, plush ones, instantly melting them both to the core. Slow, sweet, tender Jim treated him, wanting only the best experience for his detective to have this moment. His white fingers slid up his face and ever so gently threaded through Sherlock’s messy dark curls. Those curls he always imagined to be as silky as ever lived up to his fantasy. And Sherlock was in bliss, tasting the mint and hints of cigarette lingering on him, this kiss unlike anything he’d ever felt and tasted before. He didn’t kiss very many people unless he were manipulating them like Janine, but those kisses were empty and did not suffice his hunger the way Jim’s did for him. And now, he no longer feared the Spider’s web, or the Spider himself. Not when he was the antidote for his ills.

How memorable this was, against Sherlock’s defined cupid bow lips. Oh, how he adored this sensation, how it stimulated him so. He drew a warmth from him and filled him with a euphoria unlike any drug he had ever consumed. He had already deduced this was the dopamine release that was said to come with a kiss, though never experienced for himself. Yet, the feeling of such a kiss, it was beyond comparable with drugs. No, drug could not give him the provided sensation of security that Jim was made of in most gentle affections, and Sherlock could finally appreciate the present moment of his lips, as they brushed against his again and again.

Heatedly, Jim tilted his head, deepening their passionate exchange. Jim let his teeth graze his bottom lip, biting at it to provoke a reaction. And a reaction did it provoke. Sherlock let out a soft, barely audible moan, dipping his head back into his pillow. As anticipated, Jim took pleasure in taking his time, knowing about instantly where and how to push those buttons, flick those switches. Sherlock’s hungry lips parted almost instinctively when Jim gently lapped his tongue over that same bottom lip, sucking gingerly at it, letting those fingers tangle and untangle himself in those curls. A shudder of pleasure passed through him when Jim moved his tongue into his mouth, brushing briskly against the other’s. And Sherlock, most obliging, allowed him all entrance, even brushing his tongue back against Jim’s in response. The consulting criminal groaned at this, savoring the reaction and the sensation. It sent chills through him. No one else could gift him with this much pleasure. No past kisses could compare.

Sherlock panted, his hand gently grabbing at his tie that hovered over him. His heart was still beating rapidly at this point and Jim moved away reluctantly upon hearing a female voice behind him. Turning round, he noticed the nurse awkwardly coming in with medication for Sherlock to take, much to his disappointment. Sherlock almost whined childishly as he did, blushing as he noticed the nurse catch them in the act.

“Oh hi...you are?”

“I’m his boyfriend, Jim.” Jim smiled, outstretching his hand. Sherlock nearly lost it at his words. “I’m sorry, I can get a bit carried away with him, he’s just so cute.”

The nurse cordially shook it, smiling. “Hi Jim, it’s fine. I’m Emma. I came here to give Sherlock his medication, his brother called and said he would be here shortly to discuss a cat scan with the doctor, just to double check and see he doesn’t have internal bleeding.”

“Oh, I would hope not, but I’m sure my darling will be okay. He’s so resilient.” praised Jim,
squeezing at his hand. “Always the fighter.”

“Ah, yeah, I heard this was an assault or something like that. Poor boy, but I’m glad he’s pulling through.”

“Exactly. I know what they did to my dear Sherlock and I won’t let them get away with it!” Jim feigned tears, wiping his eyes. He was a brilliant actor.

“I’m so sorry, Jim. I do hope you find them out. Do you think it was a hate crime?” Her eyes softened as she prescribed the medication to Sherlock, pouring him a cup of water.

“Probably. You know how the world is nowadays,” sniffled Jim, “homosexuals condemned to Hell for their sins, I can’t even hold his hand in public.”

“It’s such a shame. My sister is a lesbian and she’s gotten a bit of that herself. Just know I’m on your side!”

Sherlock raised a brow at Jim’s acting, taking his medicine as he listened to them converse.

“Yes, gays, lesbians, our entire community always under fire.” The Irishman sighed melodramatically. “I appreciate the support. When his brother does come, could you please not let him know that I was here? It’s just...”

“Oh, I get it, love, no worries, I won’t say a word.” She smiled sweetly to him. “Homophobic brothers are so terrible.”

“They are,” frowned Jim, turning to Sherlock, “I’ll call you tonight and we can have a chat about everything, alright? We can make plans for when you come home, when your brother isn’t around...”

Sherlock immediately understood what Jim was coding and nodded, a soft smile coming to his lips. Though, this smile wasn’t feigned, but very much genuine at the tenderness Jim supplied him in his words. He watched as Jim pressed a soft kiss to his forehead and waved, sending Sherlock a sneaky smirk that read, *she bought the act.* Sherlock was still trying to wrap his mind around the kiss. His blush once more surfaced on his face, contrasting the white of his skin. He couldn’t believe that it happened, and even more so, how he was reacting. His feelings were conflicted with what he always believed was true and what happened now and what he felt. He realized now that there was a high possible chance Jim deeply cared and wanted to protect him. That was what love was then? He kissed him and killed the men who hurt him? And Jim made him feel oh so warm and for a moment, all his troubles left him, and he felt safe. Though, he strangely didn’t seem furious with his involvement. Now, there would be a load of impossible questions from Mycroft he didn’t feel like answering.

Then again, how could he?
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

I’m REALLY hoping this doesn’t flop lmao. I’m sorry I took a month, but I’ve been balls deep with work and college courses. But I digress— shit happens in this fic and I apologize for it!

Stay tuned. I’ll try to get the next chapter up sooner or later when I DO have the time.
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In passing hours, Sherlock could not shake his mind from the kiss he shared with the cunning Irishman, that graced him in his lowly presence, bound to a hospital bed. Feelings. They were awfully strange to him. Was he becoming ordinary? Was this what Jim was trying to prove to him? Or was this kiss very much a genuine representation of the truth, that love could indeed be felt? For any possible scheme Jim could conduct with killing his own employees only drew a blank. It made no sense, and so, he ended up doing process of elimination in his mind as a way to completely comprehend the situation that still baffled him to no end. But Jim wanted to see him again, perhaps discuss what the devil would become of them. All he knew that was whatever feeling that made him ache in his chest, it was very much a mutual feeling, if this was what Jim felt for him.

The time in the hospital had been a dull one. Sherlock had been given a high dosage for his pain killers, and in turn, was numb and drained, but couldn’t grasp a wink of sleep. It was complete torture. The crap telly playing from the small little television and the beeping sounds from his heart monitor drove him mad— but, all he could do was lay there. Though, when the time had come after his cat scan, and his brother arrived, that was when the Englishman loathed being in hospital even more. He was fortunate enough to thank his lucky stars that he wasn’t placed in a room with another mindless individual. He’d go absolutely ballistic with the amount of stupid that would bring. Alone was fine. Alone was good.

As nurse Emma changed his IV fluid, Sherlock turned away from the figure that approached his door irritably. Seeing Mycroft’s face was never a pleasant sight or time. It was always followed by words of belittlement, treating him as a child or trying to entrap him into what he desired of him, never letting him have a moment’s worth of thinking for himself. Surely enough, with great persistence, he hoped, that Mycroft would eventually come around in that aging mind of his, and realize his disinterest in the affairs of the government. After all, just because big brother was the English government, didn’t mean Sherlock Holmes would be. Was that treason? Maybe so. Did he care? Not in the slightest.

“I see he’s awake,” began Mycroft, stepping inside with his long umbrella in his hand, never appearing anywhere without it, “I can tell he’s getting better since he can’t bear to look at me.”

There was a faint smirk he could sense laced to his words. This, Sherlock could easily deduce, having had many blind conversations with Mycroft, and easily being able to paint a picture of his expression by the judgement of his tone. At most, it was one of the easiest things to among many things, like a second nature. All it did to Sherlock was further irritate him, and so, he remained silent, not wishing to speak a word of his experiences. He refused— and Mycroft couldn’t make
him do a single thing he didn’t want to.

“Mr. Holmes, your brother here still feels very much ill,” frowned Emma, casting a dark glance to Mycroft that bewildered him quite a bit, “he’ll probably be fine to go home tomorrow morning if we see he’s doing well. After all, we just ran tests. Just let him rest.”

“If that’s the case, then I’ll do so.” circled Mycroft round to the side Sherlock faced, a curious expression on his features, “want to tell me what happened with the errand?”

“You don’t have to tell him if you don’t feel comfortable, Sherlock.” frowned the blonde, her icy eyes darting at Mycroft once more coldly, not leaving him even as she left the room.

Mycroft furrowed his brows, momentarily pondering what could be the issue with the nurse and her strange hostile behavior towards him.

“She can’t be the same bubbly woman I spoke to on the phone earlier.”

“Mycroft, go away.”

“I mean, it’s just strange.”

“It isn’t to me. Seeing your face always sends me into a rage.”

“Brother mine, you know why I’m here.”

“Then it should be obvious to you I don’t have it.”

“What?”

“Are you losing your hearing?” hissed Sherlock. “I don’t have it.”

“The terrorists stole it from you then? I mean, that’s fine, it’s a blank… but what the hell happened?”

“You can’t be my brother anymore, asking stupid questions.” Sherlock painfully rolled away on his other side, once more facing away from the elder Holmes.

“Sherlock! You know what I’m asking! Stop beating around the bush, you are not a child.” Mycroft’s eyes narrowed, and in that moment, the Ice Man rose from its hiding. Though, Sherlock was not deterred.

“We certainly aren’t getting into that discussion.” scoffed Sherlock.

“Just answer the question.”

For a moment, Sherlock took a sharp breath, heart beating rapidly as he tried to search for an answer in his own mind. For some reason, he could not answer his brother, for his tongue was tied. It refused to speak of Jim’s name or signify his arrival back in London. His lips only pursed in frustration and all the detective could do was pull the hospital blankets over him. He was beaten up and nearly killed, that much was obvious. But it was Jim who had him taken to the hospital, who wiped out the penthouse suite and killed his own terrorists, and also visited him not long before he came to kiss him and see him conscious. That was all the truth, but the truth would not free itself from his tongue, and remained imprisoned for his thoughts to keep.

“I…” began Sherlock for a moment, fighting to keep Jim his dirty little secret. If Mycroft really did know the truth, all of the happenings that have gone on, he would become a hound on his trail.
“...Irene Adler.”

There was a brief silence for a moment before he heard chuckling. Sherlock didn’t bother to pull the covers down. “Irene Adler? Those painkillers must have gone to your head, Sherlock.”

“No, they haven’t. Irene was the one who stopped them. Saved me. She left that rose over there. See for yourself.” explained Sherlock, a tiny panic rising in him. “She was the first to see me awake.”

“I see,” unbeknownst to Sherlock, Mycroft was wrinkling his nose at the sentiment, the little ‘get well soon’ note along with a heart attached to the stem was far too much for him to digest, “I wonder what Miss Adler was doing there, coincidentally at the same time of the case I put you on. If she’s helping you, then I shan’t interfere, but I will be asking her my own questions to see if your story fills in the blanks. I know you’re hiding something. And I will find out what it is.”

“Piss off.” sighed Sherlock. And to his luck, he heard footsteps retreating away from his bed, the clanking of his umbrella against the hospital floor. He was leaving. Good.

It really did hurt to move, which was why he planned on sleeping where he lay. He usually didn’t feel this tired, his insomnia always kept him from getting a full night’s eight hours. But after the events of that past day, he was exhausted, worn out like an old sweater, and Sherlock wished nothing more than to relieve the issue with some sleep.

His eyes were growing heavy, and the beeping of the heart monitor and the nonsensical chatter from the small television seemed to be lightyears away, becoming nothing more than a minor absurd buzz his mind was working to push out. Slowly, but surely, the noise was fainter and fainter, being driven out with the intentions of the most supreme rest his body could give itself after all this time. After all, it was most deserved, and his mind needed to adjust to the newest events— and find new ways to get past this Jim saving his life ordeal.

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The morning had come and the detective was very much well rested. Mycroft had someone sent out for him, and much to his distaste of taking the offer of a ride home, he did indeed take it up, and allowed for the government car to drive him. Of course, otherwise, he wouldn’t really have anyone else to call on. And he had no wish to either. For now, he was just a touch grateful that he could be transported without the inconveniences of a temporary struggle.

It was when he arrived, things became absurd. Mrs. Hudson whining over him to lay down and rest, even though Sherlock was very much restless after a whole ten hours of slumbering away in a ridiculous hospital. His fracture was said to not be very long to heal, but the Englishman was absolutely prepared to exceed his bodily limits, and do things it was not fit for. Being lethargic was boring, he had something else to look forward to. Jim. Whatever that man had plotted, whatever would become of them in their next meeting, whatever words would be communicated— Sherlock craved it. To be in the presence of his obsession, his heart and his ache, would be all the more sacred. His mind was so tied to the arrival of his savior, as he sat comfortably in his seat, placed his hands together as if in prayer, and placed his chin upon his fingers as if to think, when suddenly...
John.

For a moment, Sherlock was taken aback by his own forgetfulness. He had not spoken to John since the day before last, which meant that John must have visited when he was in the hospital. How asinine! Sherlock mentally cursed to himself and ever so carefully pulled out his cellphone to check the time, to see if he could request John to come again. Yet, before even a full sentence could be punched away at his phone screen, he heard Mrs. Hudson’s jolly, sing song voice ring through his ears, as if like a child on Christmas morning.

“John! Oh my love, I haven’t seen you in ages! Why do you never ring or visit? Sherlock? Oh, silly dear, Sherlock just arrived home— oh, he was in hospital, fractured rib. An accident on a case, I suppose… I was just wondering if you could drop by.”

Sherlock took a sharp breath, trying to relax himself. To see the one he called his best friend, after all this time… it was very much anxiety provoking. What would he think of him? What would he say? Sherlock wasn’t the kind of man to reach out, to have deep, consistent connections as most neurotypical, common folk would. His mind was not constructed that way, and yet, there Sherlock was. He was withdrawn from empathy, sympathy, all things warm and tender… until it came to his friend. Perhaps even Jim was another subject he had yet to explore, but John was the first man who outstretched his hand and offered companionship above being an ordinary flatmate— and Sherlock was the one who accepted it.

There, footsteps were like the marching stampede of horses on a trail, and it was obvious Mrs. Hudson was leading a very excitable John Watson up the stairs. Sherlock braced himself.

“Sherlock, are you alright?” frowned John, immediately scrambling to his side the moment he saw him. “I heard you were the hospital— I had no idea, I thought you were still on that case…”

A smile couldn’t be helped as it twitched upon Sherlock’s cupid bow lips in amusement. “Do you really believe that I’m incapable of such circumstances?”

For a moment, John could remain immobile where he stood, stood frozen at the words of response received from his detective friend. And then, a twin smile mirrored itself on the thin lips of the ex-army doctor, then it widened, as if to say, you bloody idiot, I’m so glad you’re still here.

“No, no, I don’t think so.” replied John, warmly.

“I’ll just leave you boys at it, I think you have quite a bit to catch up on.” winked Mrs. Hudson, prompting Sherlock to knit his brows together as he watched the older woman leave them.

“I’m rather glad she’s left. She hasn’t been quiet since I arrived.” sighed Sherlock, glancing from the now closed door to John quizzically. “How’s the domesticity?”

“Rather fine, actually. Mary just returned home yesterday, but she’s already back out shopping for baby stuff… with one of her work friends, I think. Just hoping she doesn’t do too much, you know… ah, I know you probably don’t want to hear all about that.”

“No, but it’s polite to ask.”

“Sherlock Holmes being polite? You are definitely not the same man I remember from before.”

“In more ways than you can imagine.” Sherlock crossed one leg over the other. “Would ask Mrs. Hudson to make us tea, but I’m trying not to move very much, as you can see.”

John chuckled, removing his coat as he hung it up on the coat rack.
“I’ll make it. Have milk?”

“Probably. Probably expired.”

“Jesus, Sherlock. I’ll ask Mrs. Hudson if we can borrow some.”

Sherlock briefly smirked.

It almost seemed like everything returned to their early years.

*Almost.*

Sherlock relaxed in his seat a bit as he shut his eyes, listening to the clinking of silverware and plates, the sound of the kettle being put on. The silence between them was comfortable. There was no need for words to fill every empty moment. It was the simplicity of John making tea for them that in some way satisfied the space. Any other time, despite his love for silence, a soundless atmosphere was always a torturous one. From the crinkling of John turning the pages of his newspaper, to the sound of the telly, or tea, or clicking away at his laptop after yet another solved case. He’d rather been driven mad by those small inconveniences to his thinking than a silence so deafening that it craved attention to its name.

Then of course, it would all go away, like snow melted by the sun, it would cease to be any longer. When new snow came, if at all, it would never be the same. Winter was his to have, the eternal ice preserved all that was. The clouds hid every bit of preservation from the dangers that lurked above them. And now, the comfortable darkness revealed a light that exposed all his most gentle treasures. It felt that now it was being stolen, that even in the caverns of his memories, they could not be protected, restored. No, this was fleeting, something to cling to when he knew what he was really hiding from, was his own mind.

Sherlock was unusually startled by the loud clink of spoon against ceramic as John set his tea down before him on the coffee table. He sat across from him in his old seat, raising a brow at his as Sherlock opened his eyes at attention.

“That’s never worked before. I have to say I’m impressed with my skills. Capturing your attention has improved.”

“Certainly.”

“Thinking hard, I presume, then? Mycroft’s case?” John lifted his own cup of tea to his lips.

Sherlock also reached for the cup of tea made for him, bringing it to his lips; the strong, pungent scent of Earl Grey almost nostalgic. He hadn’t had a cup in while, strangely enough, especially when he had two full boxes of it left in the cupboard for him to enjoy.

“You could say that. I’ve been rather busy with it. He’s put me onto dismantling Moriarty’s network, as I’ve said before. But now he wishes for me to take it more seriously.” Sherlock gently blew at his cup before pausing for a careful sip. “I despise doing favors for Mycroft, but I have nothing better to do when England is peaceful.”

“I suppose I won’t be of any help then?”

“You have a wife and a child on the way, I don’t expect you to push that aside for my company.”

“Well…” John placed his tea down, searching for the right words to say in his mind. “...I think being around her all the time, aside from when I’m at work, can be overbearing every now and
then. And she seems fine, she often is at a friend’s house or cousin’s if not at home now, so we
don’t drive each other crazy.”

A faint, sad chuckle left him as he proceeded onto replying to Sherlock.

“I also just really miss our adventures together.”

Sherlock glanced over to him, baby blue eyes filling with sadness, something he rarely ever felt.
Something in him seemed to sink, as if he were sinking in that moment from being anchored in the
moment, to drowning in a whirlpool of conflicting thoughts and feelings. How in the world could
he respond when he was still trying to grasp the reactions to every event that’s happened thus far?
And these sentimental words? They were a stake through the heart, slaughtering memories once
fresh and alive in his mind, only now eroding him like a plague.

Sherlock cleared his throat. “Well, John, if you feel so inclined to, those adventures don’t have to
end.”

“No, they don’t.” smiled John. “I’ll be your blogger again, when I’m able to. Like old times.”

“Yes.” Sherlock reached for his cup of tea again and savored another sip. “You are the only one
for the job. Would be unusual to even think of replacing you.”

“I’m honored you feel that way, Sherlock. I… I really did miss you. I know you probably find it
redundant that I’m repeating myself, if I am, but I do mean it. I’ll swing by here more often, even
bring Mary since she enjoys seeing you.” spoke John as he tried to make light of the situation,
though struggling.

“Right. Yes. Don’t feel obligated to.” He waved his hand dismissively. “You know where to find
me.”

“Well, I feel at least a little obligated as your friend.” John stood, reaching across the table to put a
bit more sugar in his tea. “You are hurt. You should have someone helping you whilst you’re
healing your fracture.”

“That’s not important. I’ll manage.”

“It’s a fractured rib, it is nothing to just shrug off. It causes you pain, right? I don’t mind helping.
I’ll help cook your meals, make sure you’re sitting comfortably, assist you to bed…”

“And accompany me in the loo? Have you become my housewife now?” Sherlock raised a brow.

John felt himself warm. “Just doctor’s orders.”

“Doctor, spare me.” sighed Sherlock. “It’s just a fractured rib.”

“Is there anything I can do? Just to redeem myself, of course.”

“If you’re so adamant, then please hand me my prescription.” His hand outstretched toward John,
awaiting the bottle of pills. “My painkillers. Nurse told my to take them every morning and
evening. It’s in the kitchen, by the stove.”

John nodded, setting the sugar down that he was about to use for his tea, and immediately tending
to Sherlock’s need for his medicine. The bottle was retrieved and brought back to Sherlock within
a minute. He also handed him a glass of water, his touch lingering on Sherlock’s fingers, though
nothing of it deemed of deeper meaning but an absentminded brush of skin.
“Say, Sherlock,” John pursed his lips as he thought to make conversation, a shy expression coming to his features, “I know you’ve said you’re married to your work and all… but… have you ever thought of actually dating, you know? Seriously?”

Sherlock froze for a moment, pill just inches away from his lips. Jim was the very first thought that came to mind. John, the second. Jim was the one he longed for, as he recognized. John was the one he couldn’t have. As he pondered for a moment, he thought of some excuse to fill in the empty blank. He could simply call him fatuous and let him know he still felt the same about love, or lie. He had no problem with lying. But, in this moment, Sherlock hadn’t even the ability to lie to himself.

“I suppose not.” said Sherlock finally, slipping the pill between his lips, then swallowing with a gulp of water that followed afterwards. “Why?”

“You’re alone often. Have any boyfriends, girlfriends, someone, when um, I’m not around?” He cleared his throat, his grey-blue eyes meeting Sherlock’s oceanic ones. “Just a thought.”

“Why are you worrying so much about my romantic affairs?” inquired Sherlock, now peering quizzically into his eyes, searching for answers, though somewhat oblivious.

“Well, I do worry about you.”

John leaned forward, his hand brushing into Sherlock’s again as he took the bottle from his hand. And as his face was moving closer, Sherlock immediately understood from the intimate directness of his words and closing of space between them, that it was indeed true that it was John who did more than worry about his romantic affairs; he wanted to be involved in them. The detective was taken aback by his affectionate advances, looking him up and down in curiosity and even concern. But, this was speculation, clouded by his judgement of John. He wished to hear it from the horse’s mouth.

“And why is that?”

“Because, I think I’m in love with you.”

Sherlock’s eyes widened, his heart pounding in his chest. So, what he theorized only moments ago had come into light and shown its truth. His best friend had feelings for him that were beyond what he would ever imagine, even when with the woman he loved. Sherlock was conflicted, un bekownst of what he even felt about anything anymore, now only just starting to become accustomed to acknowledging emotions of sentiment. It was almost terrifying, only this time waves of fear, which was not usually well acquainted with him, overflowed and drowned him in this moment of immense bewilderment. This was tricky. This was most uncertain of all expectations he had ever considered.

“John, I…” sighed Sherlock, fumbling in his mind to begin with whatever he found most useful, “...I don’t understand.”

“I do, I mean it, I love you. Not just as a best friend.” John felt a bit tense, but proceeded onto speaking. “I know what you might be thinking. Truth is, I have felt this way for a long time. But when I thought you died, and I found Mary, I did fall in love with her. I also do love her. Though, as of now, she’s been making herself nearly scarce, we barely see each other, but we have had a few times where we have had a go at each other, and… I feel like we are drifting apart. My trust is wavering. We’ve been hardly civil. And I’ve missed you. I have, and…”

“I think you should go home, John.” Sherlock licked his lips, trying to grasp what was happening
between them just then, immediately shutting down. Thin, pink lips just about hovering over his, it was rather close. Dangerously. He couldn’t fight the knowledge in knowing that his friend was indeed handsome and that he hadn’t a care in the world for consequences, depraved as he was. But of all things, he still was dignified enough in recognizing that their differences were much too real to be ignored. His eyes returned to his friend’s immediately. “And rethink this. Mary is your wife, you married her for a reason. She is yours and you are hers, and you have a child of all things on the way. Do not ruin that because of me. Yes, the flat is a bit emptier now that you’re gone, and sure, perhaps I have felt lost without a second mind at my side… but you must understand, a new chapter has been written. I do appreciate your companionship, but you have a family now. A new life. I can share in it, but I will not be the cause of anyone’s downfall. I refuse to participate. Nothing changes what I feel about you. Reconcile with Mary.”

John was silent for a moment before he nodded, he too trying to make sense of the happenings of now, and his rejection from Sherlock. He knew Sherlock had a deep respect for Mary and a soft spot for him, which was why it was easier to cope. The strange warmth of it that filled him instead of fully saddening him like a defeated, wounded animal. He knew, deep down, Sherlock was correct in every right, and he not only had to respect his words, but his space. Though, he couldn’t help but feel a bit embarrassed. He didn’t believe he would confess that late morning, but he also just couldn’t help himself. It was tempting, just rekindling a flame of a nearly lost friendship that could have slipped through his fingers like grains of sand.

A weak smile touched on the lips of the rejected man, and so, John quietly bid him goodbye for that morning, collecting his coat, letting him know he would be in touch again, wishing him his best health back, then fled from the flat of 221B.

Mrs. Hudson could be heard downstairs playing her Imagine album by John Lennon. She was always playing some old vinyl of hers around this time, no later than noon, which meant she was in her cleaning mode. She would be this way for at least an hour, singing along to every song on the album. This, Sherlock could deduce from past pattern. It was her therapeutic way of coping with filling the soundless flat with sound, so lonesomeness felt less lonesome, as if to become comfortable with the discomfort of being widowed and old. She was an interestingly cheerful woman, but even Sherlock could read between the lines. And, of course, who could argue with his analytics of others? Foolery, it was! Complete buffoonery!

His mind was going fifty miles a moment, running on thoughts of confliction, his grasp on things still not quite understanding— well, at least to his logical mind, which took up most of his brain and thinking, was the situation of suddenness something of slim concern, a piece of floating wonder in the back of his mind now. But no. He was focused on Jim, the one to whom he was his mind and matter of interest at the given moment. He would ring him.

Yet, before Sherlock could dial a single number, there was a knock at his door. Sherlock restlessly placed his cellphone aside and glanced up to the door, slowly struggling to get to his feet. The fracture hurt, but he was managing to do what he could alone. After a few moments, he arrived at the door, unlocking it swiftly, and pulling it open to reveal his visitor.

Jim.

“Your timing is impeccable, having me open doors after I left the hospital with a fractured rib.” huffed Sherlock, glancing to Jim, feeling a bit underdressed for their meeting. Sherlock was only clad in a black t-shirt, grey sweatpants, and his silk blue robe.

Jim smiled dangerously as he stepped inside the flat with irritation twitching at his lip. Sherlock, unable to properly or accurately read Jim, who was ever so spontaneous, and never a man of true
pattern, was intrigued by what he had to say after the both of them kissed in his hospital room.

Sherlock shut the door behind him.

“Perhaps I’m punishing you for your interference. You’re not helpless.” responded Jim, turning around as he stopped walking mid-room.

“I was almost warmed by your gesture of saving me, that I would explore your advances. Should I be so bold as to rescind it?”

“By all means, Sherlock, do as you wish. You certainly have found a replacement for your cravings.”

“What?”

“Your pet. I imagine he was a good sport for you, hm?”

“John? I didn’t kiss him.” It was then at this point Sherlock deduced the installment of cameras hidden in his flat, done just the night before when he was unaware and sleeping at the hospital.

“Then you were tempted. Your eyes speak more than your lips, my dear.” Jim slowly sauntered towards him, lips pursed, accent low and drawled. “I imagine you wished to claim his lips as I claimed yours. You were ready to give into him any moment. Do you think he’d taste any good, Sherlock? Do you think he’d taste like me? Better? Would he have succumbed to you so easily? Would you for him?”

“Stop it.”

“Stop what, Sherly, read you like an open book? He touched your hand. You didn’t pull away. And a married man at that, I do wonder what Mary should think.”

“I convinced him it was wrong. He left.”

“And for not a single moment did it cross your mind who taught you such pleasures that gave you urge?” Jim stopped upon approaching Sherlock, their bodies only a breath apart. “Must I remind you?”

Sherlock’s face warmed at the closeness of his arch nemesis, as his minty breath lingered over his lips like a ghost of past pleasures haunting him again. Never did he wish to feel such lips against his own. Before, when John dared a kiss, it was as if he were being drowned in old feelings that were being mourned and buried, like raising a corpse to make dance, momentarily stupefied, unaware of what he wanted. And now, he was very much conscious of it and his desires, how strongly they swayed him to a man who was just as he was, one in the same, two sides of a single coin. Sherlock couldn’t bear the torture further, smashing his lips to Jim’s in an instant, feeling himself gently pressed against the door whilst he grasped him by the tie.

Teeth clinked, tongues collided, lips were smacking wet and heated, pulling them both into a hypnotic frenzy. Sherlock admittedly missed his kisses, the sweetness and softness, the vulgarity and tenderness he could taste in a single moment of bliss. He remembered once more how Jim made him feel, how he relinquished his suspicions and doubt, casting them aside for pleasure, knowing in the back of his mind the selfless deed Jim done for his benefit. It was immense chaos, how Jim could make him feel, with breathy moans swallowed by the walking incubus before him, melting him bit by bit. Jim’s anger seemed to fade for some time, just focusing on his beautiful Sherlock, his taste and unique beauty his wordless answer to him through lips and tongue and moans. And though it satiated his appetite for him, it did not satisfy his trust. Cynicism,
unquenched, thirsting for evidence, as he did not believe Sherlock was past his woes of friendship and heartache. He refused to be a replacement, something Sherlock could tamper and be finished with, like an experiment for his lab toys. Jim was a puppet master and his playthings were marionettes of misfortune. Not for a moment would he relinquish that role. He never lost control before, and he certainly wouldn’t now. Not to Sherlock Holmes of all people. It was the key to the fall of an empire. It was risky when playthings found a way to bind him in their strings. He refused to perform their dance.

Jim reluctantly parted from Sherlock’s lips, panting lightly, tasting of Earl Grey, sugar, and a faint hint of oxycodone from his medication. Staring at those wet, red petal like lips, he was almost tempted to return to them in a heartbeat. But his uncertainty made him questionable. He would not rest until he knew that Sherlock was his. Jim was never one to be threatened by another, but it was very much true that he was not impressed by Sherlock’s ignorance to what he felt for him. They were made for each other. John was just a pawn. Sherlock was his queen, and he’d be damned if anything else fought to claim him first. John had his hand on him, his lips near his. It was more than enough to set ablaze a Hellish envy. He wished him dead. Perhaps even Sherlock too for it, but would also never wish to hurt a single hair on him.

“You’re claimed.”

“By you.”

“Oh? Not by me, my silly detective.” Jim brushed his hand over Sherlock’s broad chest, earning a sharp, shaky breath from him. “A verdict has been reached, and I must disappear for both our sakes. I’m warning you, Sherlock Holmes. Do not try to find me, or you’ll regret ever knowing my name.”

With that said, he gently pushed Sherlock aside, opening the door. His dark glare met with baby blue sullenness. Cupid bow lips were pursed, unsure of what to say, if to say anything at all. Fear whirred in his mind. He was drowning again.

“Farewell.”
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Whew chile, it’s been a while since I posted. I will try to keep popping out chapters when I can, but please remember I do get busy. Also please let me know if things are wrong in this, such as culturally or if something is offensive or if I’ve gotten geographical locations wrong and such! I’m not English or Japanese, and this fic is written for fun, but I still want to be as accurate and respectful as possible.

I’m sorry if it may seem a little slow in the story for a while since Jim is grumpy over John getting close to Sherlock. Hope it makes sense, as I’m trying to piece it together as clear as possible for everyone!

It was an ordinary Tuesday. Perhaps, it was ordinary for most. Wake up, get dressed, take the train to their respective jobs. That was the ritual of the day, and then, return home, make dinner or order takeaway, relax, then go to bed. It was all so very simple that it was the very opposite of Sherlock Holmes’ life. After the incident with John and now Jim, he was very tempted to drown himself in his narcotics, and let himself rot away with a dying mind and a dying heart. However, it was Mrs. Hudson who was more at his side with his fractured rib, and the Woman making her periodic trips to the flat on Baker street. And so, self destruction was of no option for him.

After a month, he had healed quite well and was able to do more meandering about the city and his flat without the help of Mrs. Hudson, who insisted on her aid. John had even returned to Baker Street to properly talk to Sherlock about his next mini case to occupy his time. Of course, the network was his main focus, but he had yet to discover anymore ongoings of Jim’s work since. It was almost as if he became scarce with the rest of his criminality, and to Sherlock, did not bode well. It only made it all the more difficult in not only desecrating a notorious business, but to find his darker counterpart in the fog that was the ordinary of the world.

Two barely identifiable bodies were found just a day before its announcement in the Trent river, just 124.7 miles from the Thames, which the first was found. It was apparent that a family of four were sailing through on a private yacht, upon the Thames, and a rotted finger was caught unto the fishing hook of the father’s fishing rod. It so happened that they were floating well and alive above a very unanimated and quickly decayed corpse. The next had been found floating in the Trent by a ferry passing through to West Butterwick. The two murders, which were done just hours apart, were suggested to be linked, though it was mainly up to Sherlock Holmes to decide such claim, who was put onto it the moment news went out. The remains of the body found in the Trent were transferred to St. Bart’s morgue, along with the body which was found in the Thames once it was concluded there was no other evidence to be found by Scotland Yard, who took on both cases from the authorities in North Lincolnshire.

At first, Sherlock wondered about the possibility of them being his captors from before, but immediately had been mentally slapped by recollection that if Jim was much too wise to just leave corpses floating carelessly in English waters. He’d make them unrecognizable or easy to break down before discarding, not to mention, it also would have been impossible to have them taken this long in finding the bodies that were over two months old. There was no preservation from the harsh weather and the bacteria eating away at whatever it could latch to, and be nothing but mere
skeletons. These still had flesh, by comparison. To add, Irene mentioned both bodies of his captors were ridden in the Thames exclusively. These were thrown in carelessly in two locations and by his own presumptuous hypothesis, a personal attack rather than a random one. This was not Jim’s signature. This was sloppy, impulsive work.

Though, shortly before calling onto the great detective, it was revealed that two bodies were of two brothers, after the forensics unit returned with a DNA analysis that had a very similar match. The first, having been found in the Thames, and the second in Trent, both blonde and what had seemed to be left of their fair skin turned ashen and spotty from erosion. Sherlock met with Molly in the morgue, having brought his usual equipment to make his own deductions. John followed behind like a clueless puppy, though it was absolutely necessary for his being there, as Sherlock thoroughly enjoyed hearing another mind on the matter, despite their differing levels of caliber. Besides, what was a better way to mend the fracture of their relationship than to embark on solving a crime together?

Sherlock slipped on latex gloves and drew out his tiny magnified glass from his coat pocket, searching the first body from the Thames for any leading clues that Scotland Yard or Molly would have severely missed.

“Forensics believes them to have been these twin brothers, even though it’s hard to tell from the erosion and severity of mutilation.” informed Molly, watching closely as Sherlock morosely circled the first corpse found in the Thames. “Collin Michaels and Theodore Michaels. Collin here was a chef and owner here in London for the posh restaurant Cloud Nine. It was very exclusive to high class people, like celebrities and wealthy conservatives, so it was often difficult to book a seat if you weren’t either of those things. Notorious for its high prices, but some people have expensive tastes, I suppose. He was the eldest brother.”

Sherlock was quiet, peeking at every nook and cranny his eyes could take in of what was identifiable of the corpse before him. He was concentrated, though also distracted in the back of his mind with thoughts of Jim. The events of that solemn day once John fled the flat and misled Jim to believe there was something between them, he hadn’t the same excitable spark he once held for his work. John could feel out from the energy Sherlock radiated that there was something off, but did not want to pry— well, at least not during their case. He simply observed Sherlock and what he considered the poor bloke lying on the slab.

“I’ve taken Mary there sometime after we got married.” sighed John. “Food was great, but they have the worst staff. Found them rather snobby. Mary was so offended by it, I was sentenced to the couch.”

“Another argument lost, I suppose?” teased Molly, lightly. “Oh John, we women enjoy fine establishments. But bad waiters could drive anyone batty. Should’ve read the reviews.”

“You could say that.” shrugged John, glancing at the other dead brother lying on a parallel slab. “She’s just picky. It was for her birthday and she wasn’t having the best day as it was. Something at work. We ended up having a night in the next night after and ordered takeaway. Watched Bond films til two. Just brought us closer.”

Sherlock cleared his throat loudly as he was exasperated by the conversation between Molly and John, and how the topic did not help not only his train of thought, nor the mood he had been in. John immediately hushed and so did Molly, who had opened her mouth to reply to John, only to close it out of respect for Sherlock’s brain to properly deduce.

The detective eventually moved to Theodore Michaels where he investigated him thoroughly. Molly followed him and tried to inform Sherlock of any information she learned on him, hoping it
would prove in any way useful to his expertise.

“Theodore, like Collin, was into culinary arts. He wasn’t as successful as his brother, but they still mutually bonded over their interest in food and often kept in touch, despite their distance, sometimes making trips to visit him. There isn’t much known about Theodore, but we do have their mother’s number.” She stuffed her hands into her pockets and wet her lips, noticing the off behavior of her dear friend.

“John,” Molly turned to the ex army doctor, “Could you bring me more gloves from the lab? I think I have an extra box in there I’ll need. I’ve run out.”

“Oh sure, no problem.” said John, wanting to help in any way he could. He left the morgue, shutting the door behind him, leaving Sherlock and Molly to themselves.

Molly pursed her lips as she was finally alone with Sherlock, moving to his side worriedly.

“Sherlock, you look so sad. I don’t mean that to be rude, but I really want to help. I don’t like seeing you this way. You haven’t looked like this since…”

“I’m fine, Molly.” mumbled Sherlock, eyes narrowing as he moved close to a very close to his neck, noticing a mark made post-mortem. “Send me that phone number so I can contact Mrs. Michaels for more information.”

“Right. Okay.” frowned the forensic pathologist. “I’ll send the number, but please be honest with me. I know you don’t like talking about your emotions, but I promise I won’t say a word. I really do care…”

“Molly!” shouted a distracted Sherlock to the blonde, now looking at her in irritation. “I just want to focus on the case. Everything else is irrelevant.”

“Do you see, Sherlock? You are never this easily provoked.” protested Molly, wanting to be there for him, not caring how he treated her at that moment. “I know something is wrong and I won’t quit until I know you are absolutely okay.”

“Jesus, Molly, I—” Sherlock ripped off his gloves to rub his face, trying to relax himself from letting his anger get the best of him. “—I’m fine, it isn’t anything severe, nothing I can’t handle. I’ll be alright, if that reassures you enough.”

“No, it doesn’t…but I want to let you know, I’d do anything for you. I’ve told you before that I’m here, whatever you need.”

Sherlock made a small grunt of acknowledgement and placed his gloves back on carefully, moving back to Collin to investigate his upper body.

“Is it about John? You completely isolated yourself since…”

Sherlock fought to ignore her prying questions, examining the neck of Collin, raising his head ever so gently to avoid any damage. What he saw next was a faint, matching mark made post-mortem. It seemed to be a pattern of sliced off flesh, almost as if the perpetrator didn’t want whatever mark on their neck seen. It hinted at some kind of tattoo, perhaps a gang affiliation, or criminal organization.

“John and I are fine. Please, let it rest.” frowned Sherlock, not being able to rip himself from the thoughts of Jim. Their last kiss. The taste and scent of him still lingered in his memory, and every moment he thought of it, he revisited and lived it again and again. The reminder of Jim’s distaste
for what almost took place between him and John, however, caused a miserable ache in his heart he could not fight away for the life of him. “There are two marks on their necks, sliced off by a pocket knife. I assume there was a mark there that our murderer did not want us to see.”

“Like a gang tattoo?” piped Molly, eyes wide. “I didn’t think about that when examining the post-mortem marks. I figured it was somehow made from floating debris in both of those rivers. Sometimes excess trash ends up there, often sharp.”

“That’s what the murderer wants you to think.” Sherlock once more ripped off his gloves and tossed them in the hazardous waste bin. “But that mark is too cleanly cut to be a mere accident. And on both of them. It was most intentional.”

Just then, John returned through the door with a box of latex gloves, handing them to Molly kindly. “Sorry I took so long, I had a call from Mary. She’s been having pregnancy cramps all morning at work, so she’s leaving early to go home.”

“Oh god, is she okay?” inquired Molly with concern.

“She’s reassuring me that she is, Janine is with her, making sure she’s okay and all.” He waved it off. “That’s normal for pregnant women. As long as it’s not too intense, she should be fine. She’s just been overworking herself.”

“Oh good, she’s not alone. Sherlock has found us some kind of lead.”

“Hm?”

“We’re having dinner tonight at Cloud Nine. Reserve us a table, John, would you?” He raised a brow at him before walking out of the morgue.

“There he goes, marching to the beat of his own drum.” sighed John, shaking his head. “He never tells me what he’s found out, so I suppose I have to figure it out myself.”

A light giggle escaped from Molly at John’s reaction, gratefully taking the box of gloves. Her smile was faint for a few moments before it rested to a soft frown. “Thanks. I think you should keep an eye on him, he doesn’t seem to be himself, I don’t know if you could tell.”

“No, I could. He’s been strange since he fractured his rib a month ago.” He folded his arms. “I’ll try and talk to him, but we both know that’s about impossible. The man isn’t about feelings. Just logic.”

“You’re very right, but you’re also his best friend. I’m sure you’ll be able to find out something I can’t.” She assured him with one of her smiles again. “Well, off you go. Perhaps dinner will help him loosen up.”

Cloud Nine, thankfully, allowed them their seat above someone else once John lied persuasively and informed the assistant manager over the phone that they were both the British government, authorized to have a table for a business dinner, lest they wished to be shut down in disobedience.
It was simple enough that with a few tricks, he was able to have a table for two at one of the most prestigious restaurants in London for him and Sherlock.

That night, he dressed in one of his casual night-out suits, something that was very unusual for him to dress in. But if he were playing the part, he’d look the part, and at a very exclusive eatery of all places.

Sherlock was dressed to the nines with a classic Armani suit, the scent of Calvin Klein stuck to him like glue, and old Italian loafers he never broke out and wore, perhaps some gift from his parents one year for Christmas. Whatever he did, he completely fit right in. He even nicked Mycroft’s government ID in case anyone were to ask for proof of their identity. John had been made a fake last minute. Nevertheless, the two of them were able to snake their way into the restaurant without trouble following them. As they sat in their seats in a reserved booth, he noticed a secluded VIP section cut off from the rest of the restaurant. He assumed it was held typically for extremely important people, like the famous or…

“Criminals.”

“What?”

“It’s extremely rare for someone to be able to get into VIP unless they are a really important figure, like a celebrity. Or a criminal.” noted Sherlock. “I deduce, considering there’s a bodyguard at the door, watching everyone like a hawk, that he’s there protecting whatever’s going on inside.”

“How do you know that isn’t a celebrity inside? It sounds like a very similar scenario.”

“Yes, but look at how he is standing. He’s shaking his leg and tapping his foot, almost anxiously, as if he knows he’s not supposed to be here. And no, it’s not to the music. It’s extremely off beat to Rondo a Capriccio in G Major.” he rolled his eyes. The bodyguard was on the far left of their table, right across from where the pianist was sitting. A wall nearly separated them so they were watching him discreetly. “He’s also too hyperaware. A bodyguard of a celebrity would be a bit more relaxed, confident. Hands are folded, wrists are wringing. He’s somewhat fidgety. This man is clearly guilty of something.”

“Right.”

“Did you know about the VIP section?”

“No.”

“It wasn’t offered to you?”

“Well, no. I didn’t even know it existed. My table was reserved for me last time in another area of the restaurant. It’s by chance we are able to get a table here.”

“Why do you think it wasn’t offered?”

“Because of how frequently it’s reserved?”

“Obviously not, John. It’s because you told them we’re from the bloody British government. They usually offer VIP at other hours to book your spot before it’s taken. Now we have to bypass their security.”

“Well, the only ones who are able to go in are waiters and waitresses.”
“I was suggesting that. I’ll go.”

Sherlock got up from his seat and John immediately grappled onto his arm protectively.

“Are you mad? You don’t know what you’re walking into.”

“I actually do,” Sherlock pushed his hand off of his arm, “don’t worry. I have my phone on me, I’ll send you a text if need be. Now, if our waiter returns back with our drinks, just reassure him that I’m in the loo and will return shortly.”

“Right. Okay. Fine. Just be careful, for Christ’s sake.” John rubbed his temples, nervously watching as Sherlock walked through the restaurant with ease, focused on attaining his disguise.

Sherlock made it seem as though he was heading toward the restroom, though instead, made a quick entrance into the kitchen, where many of the chefs were creating dishes at fantastic speeds. There was much strenuous energy stirring in the atmosphere, so he knew such people were preoccupied with their own troubles to appease the public. He snuck into the back, where everyone held their belongings until the end of their shifts. It was a real pity they didn’t consider a locker of sorts to secure their things, it was most dangerous to have it lying about. But, he supposed the posh were not typically ones involved with theft. Chefs even made a fortune just working a few days a week from such a highly established restaurant. One would think that after it’s founder and head chef passed on, the restaurant would be closed for grievance, or hold some sort of memorial. However, it proceeded business as if nothing happened, with rare mentions of Collin Michaels’ passing. Perhaps it was bad for business, or should one daresay, bad for the business of criminals and their work.

He stripped of his black Armani blazer and tossed it to the side, grabbing at the first apron saw, assuming this person was no longer on shift or had yet to come. The nametag clipped to the hem of the neckhole read *Conor*. He also noticed a pair of glasses left on top of the cubbies that may have been left there accidentally. Sherlock presumed being Conor for a while should have been simple enough. He’d be a socially awkward man new to the restaurant, straight from Dublin. He ruffled his hair messily and fixed the apron over him as he snuck back into the kitchen, stealing a table’s order of refreshments to take with him. As he exited the kitchen through the double doors, and made a trip past the corridor of bathrooms and employee only bathrooms he made out to seem he was going into earlier, and walked the floor with the buzzing waiters and waitresses going about to and fro

As he approached the VIP area with a tray of drinks, looking to the bodyguard with a goofy smile. “Hello sir, I hope you don’t mind me coming in to deliver beverages to our esteemed guests. The last server is busy with, um, cleaning, I think. So I was sent out instead.”

“Conor…” he read the nametag on Sherlock’s chest. “...we usually know when there’s been a change in waiters. Her shift wasn’t supposed to be over until eight thirty. It’s only seven o’clock now. Who are you?”

“I’m Conor, I’m a trainee. I’ll be working til closing.”

He seemed sceptical at first, raising a brow at Sherlock who gave him a sugary sweet smile to feign innocence of his act, as much as loathed doing so. It was so unappealing and out of character for him to do. Yet, after all, playing pretend was a must in this scenario. And after a minute, apparently, it was bought, because the bodyguard moved aside and let out a faint grunt of what he assumed was approval.

Sherlock wasted no time and entered into the VIP quarters carefully, taking in his surroundings.
Unlike the rest of the restaurant, it was darker, with blue neon lights illuminating inside, setting the cool, atmospheric tone for a diabolic dinner. It was very grand and the interior contrasted the outside, which seemed more vintage in comparison to this more modern take on the design and layout. As he sauntered about the long and narrow hall leading to where the heart of his deductions lied, he glanced around at anything that could have been used as a means for a trap. To his naked eye and his very good nose, he did not detect anything that would have rang suspicious. He was somewhat safe. Good.

Just as he approached the large table littered with food, alcohol, and people, he could deduce from each one that they were a dangerous lot. Guns and sheathed knives, could be used at any moment if need be. That meant there was someone to protect, something they all had to do in order to keep their own loved ones safe, or themselves. They were bound to them like glue, and that head of such an insidious movement sat no other than at the far left, conversing about with two other men. He held a glass of champagne and laughed, crows feet eyes crinkling as they taunted one of his henchmen seated diagonally from him, second to the first man to his right, who also laughed at him.

The henchman who listened to his mocking tone fought to laugh along with them, deep down quite bitter about his years of torment from the head of their group. It was most insufferable, but he managed to bear it out of the fear of his own family being harmed. Insecure, overweight single father, who wished nothing more than to see his children grow up and have families of their own. He was a member of the Liberal Democratic Party and was active in politics himself, despite undergoing tremendous amounts of crime that did not respect the government he lived under in any way, shape, or form. Sherlock wondered if this man was bound to him by blackmail, rather than a motive to be a criminal. That also could have been the reason for Collin and Theodore Michaels’ sudden deaths. Though, it was only small speculation. He’d see for himself.

Upon walking forward with drinks, he earned many sharp, vigilant stares from the party sitting round the table. They were like warriors ready to strike any minute had Sherlock even brought them the wrong order.

“Ehm, h-hello, I’m Conor, ‘an I will be your waiter for tonight. I was scheduled for your table until the end of your time here.” Sherlock feigned his Irish accent impressively, though he was sure if Jim were there, the man would be in a fit of laughter. “Here’s more champagne, sir. I hope I’m not intruding.”

The head of their lot leaned in curiously, one could suggest even suspiciously, raising a dark brow as he studied Sherlock from head to toe.

“I know everyone who works here and who is to be hired here. Who the hell are you?” inquired the man, setting down his own glass of champagne. “I didn’t ask for more champagne.”

Thirty protective and unfeeling guns were immediately pointed directly at the Englishman, who placed the drinks down slowly and threw up his hands to gain their trust. They didn’t care if Sherlock died on the spot, it was mandatory they were alert and aware for any holes to burn through their plans. Sherlock tried to study as he went. The boss’ accent was American.

“Settle down, all of you,” the boss glared at all of them, dark eyes emotionless and cruel, “I can take it from here.”

Slowly, everyone put their firearm away, dragging out a breath of relief from Sherlock, who didn’t want to slip into action right away.

“I-I’m new, I’ve come from Dublin.” He twiddled his thumbs awkwardly. “I’m afraid we have
not met properly. Might’ve mixed your table up with someone else.”

“No, we haven’t… Hayato Aizawa.” smiled the man, outstretching his hand forward. “Now my memory is coming back to me, Jasmine, your manager, was the one who interviewed you extensively for the position. She said you were calling out sick today, so I imagine you’ve had a change of heart?”

Shit. Sherlock reached out to shake his hand, returning a smile to paint a picture of his innocence.

“I was feeling unwell,” began the detective as he formed a perfect lie, “I have frequent migraines, and sometimes they’re so severe that I faint. When I was better, that was when I decided to come in, so I hope you don’t mind the bit of confusion.”

“It’s quite alright, Conor,” he smiled like a shark, “just be more careful in letting me know these things, or you should end up like my friend here.”

The henchman having been tormented cruelly by his boss had looked away in shame, covering his fingers in disgrace. He seemed to be quite unhappy with the sudden attention, and so, smiled weakly to try and cope with the wave of embarrassment flooding him. Despite him immediately going to hide his hand, it was clear to Sherlock in a brief second of exposure that his fingers were replaced with prosthetics. This was rather familiar, the form of punishment inflicted on the lesser man.

“But of course.” replied the Englishman, knowing when he’d been warned. “I do not underestimate your power.”

“Good. Welcome to Cloud Nine, Conor. I do hope we can become good friends in your time here. That is all for tonight. Mayumi will show you out.” He gestured to the entrance.

A young woman, who he presumed to be Mayumi, approached Sherlock with a feline smile, hooking her arm around his. “Let me show you out, handsome.”

Another American accent, it seemed. Sherlock only gave her a shy smile and said nothing, letting her do as she wished as his eyes trailed upon her exposed skin, observingly. Tattoos, dozens, adorned her body. They were not what one would expect the average woman would wear. As his eyes were trailing up further and further, he noticed a strange symbol on her nape that stuck out like a sore thumb. There was probably more to discover down beneath, but Sherlock wasn’t particularly fond of the idea. He believed the one symbol as it was gave him a good clue. He took a mental snapshot to save into his mind palace, taking his leave from the sanctioned off VIP area.

Mayumi sent him a flirty wink and spun around to walk back inside. As she did so, the guard glanced at him questionably and Sherlock received the cue that it was time to leave. As he traversed by his table with John, he quickly sat down for a moment. John had taken his first sip of a very expensive wine he did not want to pay for. £40 for a bottle of wine? Frankly, that was absurd, and he’d feel a lot better paying that much at a Nandos for a meal than Cloud bloody Nine.

“There were thirty of them. I caught one of them with prosthetic fingers, particularly his pinky, ring, and middle finger, and the escort with a multitude of questionable tattoos. But there was something in common they both had.”

“Oh? What did you find out?”

“The Yamabishi.”
“The what now?”

“They symbol of a notorious business. The Yakuza. They work with the largest family of criminals based in Japan, but have various stations set up in different countries. But they aren’t the family, though I do believe they work for them.”

“Oh my god. So now what?”

“We need to hail a cab. I know just the place to go.”

“You do?”

In an instant, the detective rose to his feet excitably, much to John’s puzzlement and perhaps relief, knowing his friend was returning to his old self. The Englishman ripped off his apron and hurried on out, not paying mind to John who was left behind with his slow deductions to try and keep with his pace. The ex army doctor only rolled his eyes, hurrying after the very rambunctious man who took off without another word. The only thing he could hear is faint fussing through the wind rushing past his ears, from the waiter without the pay.

During the cab ride, Sherlock had been preoccupied with thoughts. Something deep inside him, perhaps it was wishful thinking, that this was all set up by Jim. That it had to be with the connection of the Yakuza with these two murders linked as one. Not for a moment’s worth did he desire to even think that this was mere coincidence. Mycroft always asked him what he said about coincidence. Sherlock always replied, with full confidence, that the universe was so rarely lazy. And this was true. This was fact. The universe did not simply throw these things, these obstacles of mere, temporary puzzlement, all for the sake of its sick kicks. No, he truly believed that this was the one thing that would bring him closer to Jim again. Perhaps, it would not make the slightest sense to anyone else, but to his deep and slowly shapen emotions, it did. Logic be damned. It was crucial to remember that this was all a test. Hope was useless. If he believed it strongly enough, with every little intricate deduction calculated, then it was surely the result that he would find Jim again through all of this. His obsession. He was adamant. Sherlock recalled a dream he had that night before, that both sparked pleasure and pain within him, like bolts of electricity giving life to which was once dead, like a creation fashioned by the wicked Dr. Frankenstein. Jim was his Frankenstein, Sherlock his creation reborn from the ashes and shed skin of detachment.

Now, he was bound by chains of unreason, the chemical defect he so preached. He was caught in this spider’s web, driven mad, made a thing of what he despised most; sentiment. And how very unlike him was this? He loathed how Jim made him feel, what Jim made him crave. If this was his sinister plot all along, to tease him with what he could never have and just up and go, then he loathed him too. What a intoxicating combination, to loathe and to yearn. He’d never wish it on his greatest enemy, though now with even that had he second thoughts.

Perhaps he didn’t want to be a free man.

John glanced at Sherlock who was still awfully too quiet and wrapped up in his thoughts. Sure, the man has scolded him before for speaking in the same cab or room with him when trying to
think, or was just silent for days or weeks in the flat without a word said, but the doctor wasn’t as stupid as most thought him to be. He could pick up on strange behavior, and the behaviors of his detective friend were nothing short of strange. He understood his own behavior was crass in their meeting from a month ago when Sherlock returned home with his fractured rib, but he tried to appreciate what he had as it was. He truly did care for Sherlock and did not expect Sherlock to care as much, including such an embarrassing profession of love gone awry. John still loved Mary and tried to take Sherlock’s advice, but no matter what, even with his rejection, he still would be there for his good friend of many years nourished by many wonderful adventures.

“Sherlock.” said John quietly though audible, trying to get the attention of the cryptic, curly haired man.

Sherlock, to the rare luck of John Watson, glanced over to the doctor after hearing his name, then back to the window to where he watched passing cars.

“Yes, John?”

“You aren’t going to talk my ear off about our newest discovery in the case? Dazzle me with your deductions?”

Sherlock’s baby blue eyes flickered from the passing cars, back to his friend wearing a curious and something of a concerned expression.

“I’m still thinking.”

“Though not about the case.”

Sherlock chuckled dryly. “And how can you come to that conclusion?”

“I’m friends with you, aren’t I? You said that I see, but I don’t observe. I won’t ever be as great as you, but at least, to my humble deductions, can tell when something is wrong with my best friend.” replied John.

The faint smile that once hung on Sherlock’s lips, now rested into a firm frown. There was no use in trying to push John away as he did Molly, everyone would eventually figure out that he was not his usual self, whatever that meant. He knew no one could read his thoughts, but the closed off body language and the lack of spewing, fantastical deductions were indeed a portrayal of someone who has lost their spark. And even idiots like Anderson could figure out something so simple, as much as he did not want to imagine giving him such intellectual credit.

“You’re not wrong…” sighed Sherlock, his one leg folding over the other. “...I am what some people would describe as ‘hurting’.”

John’s face softened with empathy. “Oh… Did something happen recently?”

“Nothing that I can tell you without facing its repercussions.” Sherlock once more turned to the window as his heart sank at bitter recollections of Jim.

John raised a brow.

“Are we keeping secrets now?”

“I must, for now. For my sake.”

“Sherlock…”
“John, don’t worry about it. I’m not in any danger or anything.”

But that was it; Sherlock truly contemplated the truth of that. The probability of being in danger was rather high when he did weigh his chances, because, in truth—sentiment was the ultimate weapon, the most lethal disease of the brain one could be ailed with. It took you by surprise, it captured you completely, paralyzed and set you ablaze in a fire you were far too addicted to escape. The warmth was enticing, but then you realize that it too can incinerate in the slowest and most excruciating ways. And you forget how winter felt, where the heart only knew acres of a comfortable, icy solitude. Alone protected him, suited him even, like an armor of emotional immunity. But he supposed its material has worn with age or that he was a fool to believe he was safe from its wickedness.

“I should hope not. I’ve never seen you so low before.”

Sherlock simply said nothing to John’s response and remained silent, trying to calm himself as time brought him closer to their destination.

It was in the next fifteen minutes that they arrived in Soho, where the night was still young for many, as they hustled and bustled about with friends and lovers, and tourists captivatingly taking photographs of their visit to England. John bewilderedly looked to Sherlock as he paid the cab driver, wondering why they were surrounded by an area of eateries and young people walking about.

“There.” was all Sherlock said as he crossed the street hurriedly without looking both ways.

John’s brows only furrowed even more in curiosity and frustration as his friend just left him to pick up unfitting pieces to put together. He simply followed behind and for a moment felt the irritation of the driver’s that could’ve hit them on that road.

And as they approached Tanaka’s Kitchen, Sherlock didn’t even bother holding the door for John as he rushed inside, nor took any respectful interest in taking off his shoes. John simply followed Sherlock’s lead, knowing quite well after the end of this secretive and silent ordeal, questions would be asked.

Ignoring the stares and whispers, and even the fussing waiters, he proceeded on like a bull in a china shop. This puzzle was his maze, a sacred labyrinth solely for his own, and he would solve its end, even if it meant losing everything he had, in exchange for a just a word with his darkest and finest obsession yet. He shoved through people and doors, his heart pounding and his breathing shaky, but not from the compromised energy of his running about, but the sheer anticipation he felt. He could taste it on his tongue, the taste of Jim, the taste of his kiss lingering, his words only a motivation to prove him wrong, to prove himself in intellect most impressive and seductive.

Taking the turn into the kitchen, he searched around, past the busied and clueless chefs, his mind only certain on one thing and one thing only. There were some questions shouted at him, such as ‘who are you’ and ‘what are you doing back here’, but they all remained unanswered—much to the first and second hand humiliation John felt for himself and his detective friend, trespassing in a premises not meant for them. But Tanaka was of Yakuza interest, if the Yakuza dwelt in a country that was not of their based locations. The rare chance of them being in London was rather low, but in the instance of another one of their kind here in such close proximity, it was a rather high chance that they were here for Tanaka. Of all the criminality in England, and the linked murders of Collin and Theodore Michaels, the Yakuza was here not out of mere boredom like certain consulting criminals. They shunned attention. They lusted for blood, and though the reasoning behind it was unclear, it was certain for an ex member that revenge was in store.
Sherlock approached the storage room, his eyes narrowed on the silver door knob. There was cooking oil smeared onto it. The Englishman swiftly pivoted round and searched the kitchen, immediately shuffling through cabinets until he dug out a box of latex gloves. He slipped one on and carefully turned the knob, shooting John a glare. John only hurried beside him, trying to be as observant as his clever friend, eyes widening as the door opened.

Inside, lay the body of a middle aged man of Japanese descent. His chef’s uniform was splattered in bright crimson, along with a puddle that surrounded him from his cut open throat. He was certainly immobile, but the murder had been done so swiftly, that the perpetrator left without opening that door again and shutting it. Blood was pooling the room and all Sherlock could hear behind him were horrified screaming and grieving wails of the now deceased Tanaka of Tanaka’s Kitchen. John slowly sauntered in as well as Sherlock, taking out his small magnifying glass.

In searching about his body carefully, he noticed on his left hand, Tanaka had one severed pinky, but the rest of his fingers were taken as punishment post mortem. There was a note that was left behind in the disfigured hand that puzzled Sherlock in figuring out what it meant. With his protected hand, Sherlock reached towards the note that was stained with the blood of the restaurant’s founder and owner, pulling it close for him to read.

“They left a note?”

To John’s question, Sherlock only turned the note around, letting him see for himself.

‘彼女は私たちのものです。あなたは何をするべきか知っています。’
It didn’t take Scotland Yard very long to arrive. They were so quick to come to Sherlock’s call, John assumed he practically had them on speed dial. Though, it made sense, with Sherlock’s line of work, which was often impulsive and dangerous. After the body was thoroughly searched, it was to be taken away. The restaurant had been closed for the night and the family, as well as the chefs, were questioned and consoled, Tanaka’s wife Mei wiping at her tears with countless tissues in the lobby, with officers trying to talk her out of going into the gruesome scene of the crime. Of course, something felt off to Sherlock, though the detective couldn’t quite place his finger on it. He fished out his cellphone from his coat pocket. He hadn’t texted the man for what seemed like ages.

_Solved it. Easy peasy. Suppose I’m speaking your language now. SH_

Sherlock waited, however, given the calculated time Sherlock measured of how long Jim took to usually respond, he had long surpassed what was normal. There was an inkling within him that Jim was indeed still angry with him, that much seemed obvious, and now that same dread hit him in waves as he drowned in realization that this was not the work of the criminal. The spark once more vanished, snuffed by the breath of sheer disappointment and sorrow. It was as if he were playing tug o war with Jim’s attention for a change, addicted to his praise and his validation. Perhaps the tables have turned, and now, now, Sherlock was tasting his own medicine. Was it worth it to continue pursuing a man who wished not to be found? Sherlock craved to find him, even in the smallest triumphs like these, when Jim lived in his mind, directing his thoughts with these games that seemed to never end.

The detective turned on his heels, pivoting, ready to exit the restaurant, when a familiar hand on his shoulder kept him from going any further. He sighed and glanced over his shoulder, turning back again when he realized who it was.

“Lestrade.” said Sherlock observingly.

“Sherlock, just a minute before you go. How did you know about Tanaka?” inquired Greg, stuffing his hands into his coat pockets as he prepared to listen to a lengthy response from the brainy detective. However, he was shocked to hear what Sherlock said next.
“Been here before. Knew of him, did a bit of research. He’s an ex Yakuza member.” waved Sherlock dismissively. “Anyway, I have an idea of where they are and what they want.”

With that, Sherlock turned back around and went to go walk out. Greg followed behind, a curious and irritated frown on lips, his brows knitted together in deep confusion.

“What?” snapped Sherlock, his voice, perhaps raised a bit too loud.

Greg was taken aback by Sherlock’s sudden change in behavior, backing off a bit as he watched Sherlock lean against the front door, prepared to head out. For a moment, other officers and some chefs pulled aside for questioning, looked to the duo as they stood together by the entrance.

“Why in such a rush? You know way too much to and to just leave, I don’t know how I’m going to explain—”

“Not this again—”

“That’s not what I’m suggesting—”

“Gavin, just trust me, I know what I’m doing,” his eyes narrowed, “when have I failed you before?”

Just then, John was approaching them, having overheard everything. He sighed, shaking his head as he noticed Greg’s expression of firm disappointment.

“His name is Greg, Sherlock. How do you keep forgetting that?”

“That’s not important. Just explain to him that I have it figured out.”

“You do?” the ex army doctor raised his eyebrows. “I’d like to hear about it, because you’ve kept me in the bloody dark this entire time.”

“John, please—”

“No, Sherlock, you’ve been dragging me around and I have barely understood anything going on. It’s not like you haven’t done this before, but did you forget that this isn’t a game? That people have died? That someone’s been kidnapped?” He crossed his arms.

Sherlock sighed, trying to pull himself together. He not only felt it, but looked very weary. It was then after he pushed through the doors and went on ahead. This was unusual for the detective, and so, John and Greg grew a bit concerned for their genius friend.

“I’ll leave you both to it. John, let me know what you can, since Sherlock is being a tough nut to crack.” His eyes lingered on Sherlock for a moment, before smiling warily to John. “You’re his closest friend and all, you…”

“Maybe. He’s been acting strange lately, so I don’t expect to know anything any time soon. He gives me bits and pieces, you know how his mind works.” briefly smiled John. “We’ll call if we need you again. I’m just following Sherlock’s lead at this point.”

A few moments after, John hurried out, not far behind Sherlock. He was frustrated and ready to get to the bottom of things, even if Sherlock wouldn’t admit things himself. He knew the detective opened up about hurting. It was rare and definitely unusual for Sherlock to admit his times of
trouble and often open up. He tried to not jump the gun in knowing his situation, but was still
adamant on making sure this case was easier to follow. Keeping secrets, acting strange about his
feelings and talking on, how he would expect, knowing so much, it was much too maddening. It
was not just typical, Sherlock behavior. John has known him for far too long to believe in such a
thing.

Of course, he was no perfect angel either. The state of his and Mary’s relationship wasn’t the best,
nor was the stress good for a baby on the way, nor their state of minds dealing with the everyday
world. He felt guilty, because almost kissing Sherlock was his dirty little secret as a married man.
He was selfishly unfaithful and broke the vows of his marriage with the one woman who thought
the world of him. He loved Mary, so he tried to make it work, knowing Sherlock was the one thing
he couldn’t have, the one thing that he respected for the sake of healing their friendship; one that
still lived on beyond the tied knot.

As John tried to form the words, he couldn’t. He just followed Sherlock like a lost puppy, as he
always did. He was clueless, silent, and simply just the shadow in Sherlock’s steps. It felt pointless
to follow when he believed he contributed nothing on Sherlock’s behalf. Was his own presence
that suffocating, even when Sherlock wanted him here? It was a terrible thing, this situation. This
was just another regret in declaring his feelings. He never claimed himself to be perfect, thankfully,
as he knew he was far from it. But could he be terrible himself? Were terrible people aware of their
terribleness? Did they continue to be terrible even after the realization? He wished to mend things
with Sherlock. Despite their chat on the situation, something felt off to John that may not have
been present for other people. How interesting life was, when John’s head was filled with thoughts
of Sherlock, when Sherlock more than likely only was thinking of the case as he tapped away on
his cell phone.

“What did the note say?”

Sherlock stopped in his tracks, pivoting around to face John. His coat swished with the flow of his
movement.

“Didn’t I tell you?”

John scoffed, trying to stay as calm as possible. “Ahm. No. Not really. I can’t read or speak
Japanese, Sherlock! Where are we even going?”

“The airport.”

“The airport? Which one? On foot?”

“Heathrow. There’s a cab on the way.”

Sherlock turned back around and crossed the street when the light was green. John sighed and
followed suit behind him, hands stuffed in his pockets.

“Why are we going to Heathrow?”

“Obviously the schedule. The next flight to Japan is in an hour and a half. It’s the closest and had
the soonest flight.”

“No, not obviously, Sherlock. Why to Japan? Are we going all the way to Japan to stop these
killers?”

“Not if we stop them in time before then. The note read, ‘She is ours. You know what to do.’ They
abducted the daughter after murdering her father.”
Before John could get a syllable out, their ordered cab arrived.

“Interesting. It’s five minutes earlier than I expected it to come.”

Sherlock opened the door and ushered John to get in on the other side, before stepping in, and shutting the car door behind him. After letting the driver know where they were headed, Sherlock relaxed, his aloof gaze set outside the window, much to John’s irritation.

“Once this case is over, do you think you’ll return to the… usual you.”

“The usual me?”

“The one that fights to have the last word and deduces my ear off, instead of the mopey sod I’ve been dealing with lately.”

Sherlock pursed his lips. “It doesn’t make any sense how Collin and Theodore Michaels are related to this. I’ve thought about ten different possibilities, none of them are likely, given our current forms of evidence.”

John blinked for a moment, then looked to him oddly. “That isn’t what I was talking about.”

“Well, this is much more interesting.” He frowned as he noticed a change in lanes leading to another direction. The Englishman looked over to the cab driver, eyes narrowing. Was this cabbie new? “You’re going the wrong way, I said Heathrow Airport.”

Just then, there was an abrupt stop where the cab driver pulled over to the side of the road, no longer on the highway and away from other cars. John and Sherlock were stunned by the suddenness of the stop, and the loud screeching of tires—tensed, not expecting what would come next. It was at that moment the cab driver turned around, a glock pointed right at them. The beholder of their fate: Theodore Michaels.

A dark expression crossed his features and a smirk twisted at his lips at the sight of them. Sherlock was in complete awe, eyes wide with befuddlement. John was also flabbergasted, frozen to his seat.

Of course, this was outside of what Sherlock deduced of this, and ever so rarely did these things happen to him.

“I do believe, gentleman, that I must stop the ride here.” threatened Theodore with dangerous ease.

Realization immediately dawned upon Sherlock as he sat there, now with his hands raised above his head. “You hacked into my cab order and stole the location of where I was, and then decided to pick us up. The original driver was dismissed. Interesting.”

“You’re pretty good at this for a cop, Mr. Holmes. Don’t worry, I will let all my friends know how bright you really are.”

Sherlock smirked. “I find it insulting to even be read as one. I’m nothing of the sort. I see now that the body at the morgue was simply replaced with someone else who just looked exactly like you, using your DNA to pass it off as you. I applaud you for it.”

“Oh, thank you. I had a bit of help, of course, I can’t take all the credit.”

Help? The Yakuza? Sherlock wondered to himself as the man kept on speaking, quickly diverting his gaze to John, sending him a verbal signal to take the gun whilst Theodore was distracted. John immediately took the hint and tapped into the ex-soldier he once was, his swift movements knocking the gun out of Theodore’s hand. John immediately grabbed the gun where it fell and
pointed it to Theodore, who’s hands immediately raised over his head, eyes wide with panic.

“Your brother’s body was also there. Quite a nasty grudge you held, I don’t suppose it was jealousy, or…”

“I didn’t exactly do it!” cried Theodore immediately.

“No, but the Yakuza, I presume?” Sherlock’s eyes narrowed.

“There’s no time to figure that out, Sherlock. Have him drive to the airport so we can save the girl.” reminded John, ushering Theodore to continue driving.

The elder man in the front seat began to drive again on the correct route, making sure he was following the directions in his head of where Heathrow airport was. It was evident to the detective that Theodore was hiding many things. If this so happened to be a trap, he would never forgive himself for being so stupid as to trust the man to take them there. Sherlock sighed irritably, knowing he’d have to find out all he wished to know once they arrived.

It wasn’t very long before the trio pulled into their destination. As they left the vehicle, John discreetly held the gun to his back as they entered the airport. Tons of people rushed by them so typically, it was unlikely he would be caught like this. Sherlock, past the crowds of bustling people, scanned his cerulean blue eyes around the area for the familiar pack of Yakuza members with Theodore walking them. The Englishman loathed places like this, too many people, how noisy it was. He couldn’t wait to return back to the flat, away from everyone. This case was becoming dull, despite how a case usually made him feel. Jim was his fuel to the fire that was his passion. And how could passion die so quickly when he was absent? He was ignoring his messages, playing dead. How like him and how frustrating it was. He was going to find him, no matter the circumstances. He was adamant.

As they walked through another corridor, they ended up passing a small, airport café where people were resting before or in between flights, having tea or coffee, and chatting about nonsensical things like the weather or sports, or the trips they were going to be taking next. The smell of coffee and pastries were filling his nostrils, the sweetness stinging them teasingly. He was never the type to eat during a case, nor was he the type to often feel hungry or drawn by the mere scents of food. But he had to admit even this was a bit distracting, as he had fasted for the sake of a murder. He hoped John wouldn’t feel too strongly towards him bringing him past such a place and having not consumed a crumb the entire day. He noticed John’s gaze lingering towards it and swore to himself he’d make it up to him once this was all over.

John removed the gun from his back as the crowds started to disperse and the halls became more spacious, giving slight ease to Theodore, though who still remained under the pressure of a potential bullet. They continued on through the corridor until they were led to the gatehouse area, where many people were waiting to get on their next flight for Japan. Sherlock cast a side glance at John as Theodore stopped in his tracks, their attention following his to the shady group that were gathered around in the center seats.
“Aizawa!” cried Theodore.

Just then, four guns were on them, minus Hayato’s, who simply turned around at the commotion, where dozens of people were running off at the sight of guns and screaming. He had Kotoko in his arm, a petrified expression on her doll-like face. It was almost the look of a frightened kitten, ready to scurry off. Hayato smirked as he forcefully pulled her closer.

“Gentleman, gentleman, please. You’re causing a scene.” said the head criminal.

Four guns were withdrawn, one of them shakily. Sherlock’s eyes narrowed closely at the details of the one gunman, recognizing him behind the black sunglasses that he was the man with the prosthetic fingers, He was reluctant, fearful. Terrified of Hayato but also hesitant to kill; it was the mere proof of a conscience. And Sherlock could use that to his advantage. He also mirrored Hayato’s haughty smirk, not at all daunted by the dire situation.

“I believe you have something we want.” drawled Sherlock, observing every blink and movement of the other men.

“I don’t plan on giving her back.” replied Hayato.

“A Japanese-American leader of a very notorious criminal empire. I’m impressed. The Yakuza isn’t fond of giving outsiders entryway into their network so easily.”

“One can be so lucky when he has connections.”

“Oh, I don’t doubt that for a moment.”

“But I’m in a bit of debt, so unfortunately I must keep her for some profit. She’s a pretty thing, no? A face and body sells faster on the market than drugs.”

Sherlock pursed his lips. “And what if I said I can get you out of it?”

Hayato laughed, stroking the shivering young woman’s hair. “I think not, Conor.”

John uneasily glanced at Sherlock.

“But you need Theodore, which is why you kept him alive.”

“No, not anymore. Simply used him as a tool to get to Tanaka’s girl. He was just a pawn in the game, even did every task I asked of him. Was quite obedient, in fact. Or is that just British politeness?”

Theodore looked shocked. But it was in the next moment that Hayato immediately pulled out his gun and shot Theodore in the chest, causing him to fall several feet away in front of John and Sherlock. John jumped from surprise and immediately aimed his own gun at Hayato, whereas the other four guns were pointed toward them. Kotoko was crying, her hands clasped over her ears to avoid hearing the shots. Of course, in this, he noticed the hesitant gunman again. His eyes pleaded for help, despite the fierce stare he tried to pass it off with.

“Thanks for reminding me to get rid of him.”

Sherlock was taken aback by the suddenness of every action, but kept his composure for the sake of John, the gunman, and Kotoko.

“So, is that what you do, then? Kill your employees when you’re finished using them, like toys?
Sounds rather distasteful to work for someone who only turns against you in the end.”

“Sherlock, what are you—” began John, though was cut off by Sherlock as the detective proceeded talking.

“I wouldn’t want to work in a business like that. Seems pointless to put your life on the line for little to no benefit in the end— lest you have a deathwish, then by all means…” Sherlock finished off his words with an aloof shrug. Hayato’s men glanced at each other discreetly, the more hesitant gunman slowly putting his gun away.

“What the fuck are you doing, Yuki?” asked Hayato, his tone now much more solemn.

The henchman now known as Yuki turned to Hayato, tears brimming his eyes as if he didn’t want to do this for all the money in the world. He shot Hayato straight through the heart, making Kotoko scream and jerk away, as his body fell limply to the floor from his seat. Before any other gunman could shoot, all three of them were shot in the head as it was. It was only in a blink of an eye and Sherlock was bewildered at the speed of everything happening so quickly. He looked around, with wide blue eyes, trying to find the source of it. No, it was left unknown.

“Come on!” called over John to the young woman, who sobbed with immense fear.

Sherlock never felt so at edge, whipping his head around at every angle to see who had shot them from a distance, and wondering if they were next. He decided not to linger on the thought, ushering John and Kotoko away as the authorities were reached.

“We needed money when we first came here, I was desperate to help my family,” began Kotoko, the blanket around her only clutched tightly. She trembled like a leaf on a windy day, chilled by the horrific events she had faced in those mere hours, “I slept with Collin to support my father’s business. He was rich, he was willing. But I eventually got pregnant and my father found out, nothing short of raging. He wanted me to give it up, abort it even. He refused for me to keep it. And I had to admit, I too wasn’t ready for it. I didn’t want it. I’m only 19.”

Sherlock was silent as he listened. He was with Greg, John, and the rest of the police, outside in the parking lot, hearing Kotoko inform them of the horrible things that happened when involved with the Yakuza and her family business.

“I’m sorry to hear that.” said Greg as he wrote down what he was being told.

She shook her head and smiled weakly. “It just gets worse from there.”

“Tell me, what else happened with Collin? With Theodore?”

“Well, my father went to Collin’s home and cursed him out. He was so angry the he threw him out and one day visited our restaurant, leaving a nasty review around the time we started to grow. Our business was failing and so, I had no choice but go back and beg his forgiveness. But that one night, I’ll never forget it. I arrived to his home and he let me inside. However, his brother, Theodore, was there. He said if I slept with him first and then Theodore, that I would get more
money than I usually did. I remember before I left, he told me that if I had said anything to my
father, that he would spill any information about my father and family to the Yakuza. I knew my
father left that life behind, but somehow…”

Kotoko began to sob, her face planted into her shaky palms, and Greg reached and placed a
comforting hand on her shoulder. John sighed, empathy inside of him only growing faster by the
minute for the poor girl.

“Take your time, love. You don’t have to force yourself to tell me anymore if you don’t want to.”

She nodded, sniffing as she wiped her eyes. Despite how much it scared her to talk about such
personal and heart wrenching things, the young woman persevered. There was an ache in her chest
she fought to ignore, grievance taking over her little by little.

“...but somehow, it still followed him. He left Japan because he wanted to go somewhere far and
start a new life with us, give us a normal life growing up so we could be happy, even if it was in
England. I returned home with the money, but my father found out again. It was unfortunate that
the next day he arrived to the restaurant he worked at, not long before he was going to go live for a
show, and he threw my father out after he came in raging. He threatened us both to leak
information on us. I assume he found out through a lot of research on us or something. I don’t
know how he found out. When I was taken away by Hayato and his men, I heard them talking
about how they killed Collin after they met with him and got our information. They used Theodore
as a tool to get to me, promising that he would be richer and more successful than his brother if he
did this one thing for them. But he had to fake his death to do it.”

“I know your father must mean a lot to you, Miss Tanaka. Have you heard the news of…”

Kotoko immediately nodded, her eyes heavy with sadness. Those same dark eyes studied the
ground, as if feeling to be responsible, not being able to do more. “He’s dead. I know.”

“Yes, it’s terrible news. We spoke with your family about everything as the restaurant was closed
and we took them home. They’re glad to know now, despite this tragedy, you’re safe.”

She smiled weakly for a brief moment. “Yes.”

“Your father would be very proud of how strong you are. Do you think you’ll take over the
restaurant one day?” asked John, trying to make the situation a bit lighter for her.

“It is up to my mother. But I would do it for him.”

Sherlock sighed and gazed off to the starry sky above them, hands tucked in his pockets. He was
bored with the exchanges of empathy and storytelling, letting his mind drift. However, it stopped
drifting with Sally returning to them with her arms crossed. Her eyes narrowed at Sherlock.

“We just went around the entire airport and looked at the security footage, but we haven’t found
out who shot the three gunman.” reported the curly haired woman. “They were really clean shots
too, it only makes you wonder.”

“And no one has found the fourth yet?”

“The one who escaped? No. He’s gone.”

“He was the most reluctant one too, went by the name of Yuki.” said John in recollection. “He was
the one who shot Hayato, the man responsible for kidnapping Kotoko.”
“We’ll do what we can to find him.” reassured Greg to Kotoko, looking to Sally. “It makes me wonder why he was reluctant.”

“Why can’t you figure it out, freak?” taunted Sally, making John furrow his brows.

“I don’t see you figuring anything out, Donovan.” Sherlock smiled at her bitterly. “I deduce that the hesitant henchman was the one who hired them and used them as a means to escape with. Who they are is unknown to me, but they didn’t try to kill the rest of us. That’s what matters. Do you think that is adequate, Inspector?”

Greg perked up at the sound of his title being used. “I… I suppose.”

Sally rolled her eyes and walked off. It was John who looked to Sherlock with an apologetic gaze.

“I have to get home and make sure Mary is alright. And have a meal, I’m starving.”

“No exactly the best time to have dinner with you, then, I guess.” teased Sherlock. “Get some rest, John. Who knows what’s next.”

It was on the way home when everything hit Sherlock. No more was he an object of interest to Jim. Was this what he had to look forward to next? Knowing he has become boring in the eyes of a man who found him quite fascinating since god knows when? Sherlock felt insecure, worthless even, at the thought of one minute being craved by the world’s most notorious criminal to the next, being shut out. Jim didn’t believe in his words, his innocence. John was lovely, but no more than a good friend. Why was it so destructive, this sentiment thing? It made him a messy and disheveled man, a fool, and utter imbecile. Sherlock wished nothing more than to forget about him, forget he had ever kissed him, forget he had ever wanted more with him than their shared rivalry. It truly was nonsensical for him to become like this and to even think of him any further. That was it. The Englishman swore to himself that he would will away these feelings and thoughts of Jim Moriarty once and for all. If he longed to be a ghost, then Sherlock invited it. All he had to do was exorcise whatever lingered of him, before he drowned in his own sea of pointless sorrows. And the more he did, the more other’s suspected. He truly was glad the ones around him weren’t as clever as he was, for he would have met with insufferable consequences.

When the detective was home, he didn’t bother eating. He simply had a shower and he was off to bed. He didn’t often sleep or very well, but he could feel fatigue weighing on him so heavily that he could pass out at any moment. He crashed into his bed, tangled in his sheets, with that fresh cotton brushing against his smooth, warm skin after a very soothing shower. It wasn’t long before he succumbed to sleep.

Sherlock gripped at his bedsheets. Insomnia was indeed a beast, but sleeping this way was truly horrific. As always, he slept without a single garment of clothing, and was only tangled in sheet and bed cover in that very cold London winter. But within the confines of the detective’s bedroom, of four white, plain walls and shut windows where moonlight poured through the cracks of blinds and curtain, it was a cursed desert, and nothing but a sheen of sweat clung to his body. Of course, this wasn’t the first he has dreamt so wildly, as if a demon were fighting to escape him beneath those very human flesh and bones. Sherlock hardly felt human sometimes, and that was due to his lack of
emotion; but how deep and high and far the measures of his emotions reached now were a thing most complex to comprehend. He has felt many lows and many highs, but the range of what he felt now was a maddening cycle, and so he wondered subconsciously, was this what Hell was like? It brought him to realization that he was so very human.

The Englishman tossed and turned, his dark, luminous curls stuck to his forehead, sloshing about with every movement of his head whipping back and forth, where his body arched, curled, rolled, and his legs provocatively spread like a cloud pulling apart in the sky. There were lips ghosting his, ghosting his skin which burned beneath vulgar, insidious words murmured into it, embedding into it a dark spell into the bank of his mind; and the flushed, pale skin of his in hopes the seeds of sin would bury, and in turn, grow from him roses of all things lascivious. They kissed away his thoughts, his anxieties, his loneliness; deduction was scarce and replaced by pleasure, and that was what made this all the more a terrible fate. But to say this was a nightmare, how laughable. As torturous as this was, Sherlock could not deny that he loved every moment of it as much as he loathed it. He couldn’t resist it, resist him. Jim was taking him completely, in never ending black waves, and Sherlock allowed himself to drown in that sea of unknowing darkness, as much as he fought against every thought, fantasy, desire that sparked at the idea of the wicked Irishman. Had he known at St. Bart’s rooftop the calamity that would follow, would he shut Jim out completely?

When I first met you on the roof,
You caught me in your web of youth,
But now I know the wicked truth,
It's much too late so what's the use in fighting?

“You’re trying to distract me… derail me…”

It was in his own bed. James Moriarty straddled Sherlock, his lips attached at every bit of skin Sherlock wore, as if they belonged on it. He left his mark everywhere possible, drawing sweet sounds of approval. Of course, here, Jim was no longer angry with him, there was no pain, no sadness, no regrets; just good feeling. And back again, he tasted him on his lips, as if they never left, of mint, tea, cigarette, the scent of Armani stinging his nostrils. Everything was a blur, his surroundings morphed into each other in colors and odd shapes. Every time Sherlock tried to say something outside what pertained to their kisses and touches, it was here that Jim moved his attention back to their passionate exchanges, making him silent, this writhing creature of filth. Jim towered over him like a tree, dominating, claiming his lips with his own, his tongue ravaging his mouth, their bodies moving together in sync, flowing like a wave in perfect harmony. Sherlock tried to linger away and return to thought, but Jim parted from his lips to whisper,

“You invited this, Sherlock… you can’t run from me… Don’t try and fight it…”

You peel me like an onion skin,
And wonder at the state I'm in,
One day you'll turn up to begin,
And find there's nothing left but innuendo.. (innuendo)

The scene changed and Sherlock was now being pleasured by that familiar mouth, one belonging to a certain notorious criminal who knew how to tangle the strings of his mind and steal his breath away with such ease. He couldn’t breathe! Oh, how he couldn’t breathe! His cock, it was pulsating in the warmth of that velvet mouth and wet, teasing tongue. He felt bound to Jim’s web, like a fly being feasted upon, observing it all unfold before him—and willingly. All Sherlock could do was moan, whimper, grip at that silky, raven hair, and encourage him to taste him more. Every vein, every inch of that gorgeously pink erection was well acquainted with lips of a handsome and dangerous devil. He was a forbidden fruit, like the apple left behind. IOU. Jim took the first bite and Sherlock took the second, third, fourth, fifth bite, so on and so forth, until it was nothing more than a core, letting his tongue run over the seeds and browning insides, in hopes that he get inside of Jim’s mind, taste his knowledge, and yet; it was Jim who invaded his own mind, tasted his knowledge, toyed with him like a cat and mouse. That apple of evil, that malevolent man. This wasn’t Eden, but a Hell on Earth they’ve carved themselves out of the mold of their minds.

Beside you others fade away,
Like amateurs in love's charade,
Much more than just a game you play,
The certain rules become a way of living.. (way of living)

“Oh... Jim, please, I need you inside of me...”

Sherlock never begged a day in his life, not like this anyhow. He felt so vulnerable, unlike anything he ever felt before. It was so hot, he wanted a window open, to breathe... no, oh, sweet bliss, Jim’s sweet mouth, sweet touch upon his erect nipples, Sherlock’s shaky hands clutching at his tanned, toned back. He could practically feel out the firmness and shape of every muscle, full in his palms, making Jim shudder in delight, who loved a flustered, lecherous Sherlock, who wanted Jim just as much as Jim wanted him. And those words, they burned and made themselves permanent, floating in the air around them, bringing wanton joy to the consulting criminal. After all, Sherlock’s wish was his command. For no past plaything of his would receive the same treatment Sherlock would. Sherlock was special and would be spoiled plenty. He would let him know through the language of his body, as they entangled and became one, what Sherlock truly meant to him among the rest, and why Jim wished for no one else.

“You need me inside of you?” chuckled Jim, thrusting a lubricated finger into his entrance. It almost seemed like butter, no ache, just ecstasy. “Just how much of me? Do you think you can take all of my cock?”

“Oh fuck!” cried Sherlock, clawing into the suppleness of Jim’s skin. “I’m yours!”
Night after night I try to prove
That I can resist you
Tied up inside your Love Voodoo
Designed to manipulate

It was a moment or two before Jim had to remove his teasing finger of preparation, a pleased smirk on his lips at the words of praise. The scene changed and now, Sherlock was arching his back in the most beautifully, sultry fashion, as his legs shook, with Jim’s head separating them both. It was like a victory, but it was unclear for who. Was it Jim or was it Sherlock, against all logic and old ways of thinking, that lost a long and hard war, fought to keep him in line? It was the sentiment, the stigma of being ordinary. No, this was not ordinary. He and Jim were beyond ordinary in an ordinary world. Of their passion, there was nothing ordinary about it. Sherlock was a fallen angel and Jim was waiting there for him in Hell, knowing they both were feeding from the forbidden fruit without a care in the world for consequence. This was folly, but Heaven was in Hell for them, and all that made sense for them. This was beyond neurotypical compatibility. This was sensually neurotic, a desire explored, a need fulfilled, madness so ravenous it melts to unpresent passion, the object of obsession seized to capture. This was their sick, despicable, intoxicatingly amiss, taboo togetherness. No one needed to understand. They understood each other, and that alone would suffice.

The Queen of sensuality,
You shelter me from liberty,
It's nothing short of piracy,
That's not to say it doesn't please me sometimes.

Now this may come as no surprise,
But I'm content to compromise,
Until the day you realize,
That I have been manipulating you.. (no surprise, no surprise)
(Man-ipu-lat-ing)

Night after night I try to prove
That I can resist you
Tied up inside your Love Voodoo
Designed to manipulate
Every thrust was like magic, and god, Sherlock was spellbound. Jim hips moved against his, his own cock twitching and throbbing once again at the feeling of Jim inside of him. And that was good. He wanted him completely and nothing more. If this was how he could taste him, feel him, have him, Sherlock invited it all. IOU, they fed, Jim owed him a fall. But it was Sherlock who fell the hardest. That golden halo rusted, became dust, and those white wings were tainted in stark black of his betrayal to all he used to believe in. But the heart craves what it craves, and no amount of logic could save him anymore. And as Sherlock felt that heat bubbling in his belly, he knew he hadn’t long. It seared through him, coursing like electricity, hot and scorching. He was engulfed in arousal, sex permeated the air as embers, and the spark; their minds and bodies morphing into one.

“Don’t go running off like that again, my dear… or I’ll… get… you…” purred Jim in between moans and pants, biting into his neck; and once more, the sweet sucking, taking him away from all rational thought.

“This fire was unlike anything he felt before. The burning didn’t bring pain, but pleasure. But all pleasure had come to an end, fading out slowly like an orgasm whirling in him, sending waves of arousal through his body, lasting him for what seemed like eons.

(Yes, I’m tied up inside your loving
   But it’s voodoo to me
   Every night how I try
   How I try to resist you
   But it’s no good to me)

   Night after night I try to prove
   That I can resist you
   Tied up inside your Love Voodoo
   Designed to manipulate

Sherlock roused from his slumber, wet and sticky, never feeling more repulsed by his own state of being as he unpeeled his dark bed sheets and messy curls from his face and body. The dream was short, despite how long his body and mind felt and remembered in his REM state, which went on like hours. His heart rate spiked through the roof, his body still trembling, still swallowed whole by lust. All Sherlock could do was pant, and in the darkness of his bedroom, with the faint luminance
of moonlight, make out the tent beneath his sheets that was his half erect cock, twitching as it was in the midst of release. Cum was splattered all over the sheets and coated all of his shaft and tip; pearl white evidence of where his mind had been again. This was the second time he dreamt this, though as it reoccurred, it had become all the more intense, detailed, and memorable. He missed Jim, he craved him, needed him, not just sexually, but his emotions could not cease its nagging, his mind needed his stimulation once again. It called out for the consulting criminal and Sherlock couldn’t deny it. He knew who he was meant for, that Jim was meant for him, and their belonging never was more right in a world that pulled away at their magnitude.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

The chapter I've been waiting so long to WRITE. Oh my God, I am spoiling y'all, so look forward to some Sheriarty goodness. I worked on this ALL DAY, please give it feedback. <3

“James Moriarty is after you? What a coincidence, I’m after James Moriarty.”

The middle aged woman raised her head from the shameful position it hung from, hugging herself with sheer terror pulsing through her body. She was fighting her own mind and trying to come to a conclusion and decide whether or not this was the right path to take. The last thing she did was wish to hurt someone, especially people she cared for. Unlike most in this field, she wore her heart on her sleeve, even if it wasn’t the clearest view. The woman was still human nonetheless. Her entire life almost seemed like a twisted fairytale and it was up to this point where she wished to cease living like one. Like the citizen of a kingdom, her treason has cost her quite a bit. She knew there was a price to pay, but she was ready to move forward with a new life but with the same people. So, like any reasonable person would, as guilty as charged, she groveled at the feet of her newest hope, who watched people come and go out of the building through the cracks of his office window blinds.

“He wants to hurt me.”

Her newest hope turned around and faced her with the most insidious gaze.

“So, you need me to offer you protection? You must have fucked up quite badly, Rosemund. Or, Mary, as your friends call you. But that’s not even your real name, is it?”

To the sound of his taunt, Mary began to tear up, her eyes watering with fear and anguish. They showed lifetimes of suffering in one woman merely in her 40s. With her research done right, she was hoping by a thin thread this man would be her sword and shield. But the hope she held was fading quickly and could only be salvaged by her next words.

“Please, I did something I wasn’t supposed to. I’ve never seen him this way before. You must believe me, I only worked for him to bury the past, because I knew what he was capable of.” whimpered the blonde, who looked as if she’d seen better days. “I know what he wants. And I know what you want. If I were to help you formulate a blueprint of what has to happen, I am in your greatest debt. All I need is a new and better life with my husband and my child on the way. I’m pregnant and it’s not long before the baby will be born. I want to be safe with my family.”

The man smiled dangerously as he drummed his fingers against the surface of his desk. His free hand gestured to her to get up from her hands and knees, his demeanor becoming more aloof with the sound of family and husband and pregnancy. He adjusted his thick, black framed glasses up the bridge of his nose as he finished listening to her speak.

“Clearly, you didn’t know what he was capable of, Mary, or else you would’ve been more careful.
For people like us in such positions, it’s easy to become nasty when things don’t go our way. I’ll give you a bit of wiggle room because you have information on my most profound subject. Since most people pay me for my services, I will lend you my hand if you devote a month’s worth of work to me once your pregnancy has run its course.”

“A month? But, I’ll be away from my—”

“Yes, I know, your family. But it’s either my way or the highway, dear.”

It was that next morning that came to 221B like a surreal dream. The detective had carried his sheets and quilt to the laundry room, where he dumped them his sheets first into the washing machine. With a bit of detergent, and a few twists of the knobs, he started his first load. He couldn’t help but let his mind drift back to his dream from the night before. In fact, how could it leave his mind? It was like a parasite, it couldn’t leave his system. It was changing him in incredibly strange ways. After a cold shower and some web hopping for any new side cases he could work on, it seemed almost futile to escape the maddening thoughts surrounding his dream. Sherlock loathed how frequently his mind switched back to the erotic memories of his mind palace. It was as if his mind palace was trying to sabotage every chance he got to fight away the thought of Jim and aim to move on. But he wondered if moving on was even an option at this point? It seemed so out of reach.

It was then that there was a knock at the door. Sherlock curiously raised a brow, having not expected anyone so early in the day, especially not a client he hadn’t agreed to meet. He got to his feet from sitting at the couch and sauntered over to the door, arms behind his back.

“Who is it?”

“Dearie, your girlfriend is here!”

Sherlock furrowed his brows in thought for a moment before he remembered that Mrs. Hudson was talking about The Woman. He unlocked the door and opened it. Of course, as his suspicions went, the detective was no further from right, inviting the smiling dominatrix inside.

The raven haired woman made her way over to Sherlock’s chair and plopped herself down right in it as if she owned the place.

“Thank you, Mrs. Hudson.”

“Anytime! Oh Sherlock, you didn’t tell me you had a—”

Sherlock shut the door before the elder woman could finish her sentence. He sighed and glanced over to Irene, who toyed with the tassle of one of the mini pillows on his seat.

“And what the hell are you doing here?”

Irene feigned a hurt expression, her eyes wide with faux innocence. She tossed the pillow aside and crossed her arms. “Is that any way to speak to your girlfriend?”
Sherlock moved back to his seat at the couch, his eyes narrowed onto her.

“I can do a lot worse.”

“Ugh! You have no manners, how you turn a lady off!” teased the woman.

“Did you forget that you’re supposed to be pretending you’re my girlfriend when Mycroft is around?” inquired Sherlock, rubbing his temples in irritation.

“Well, the more who know about us then the more the Iceman is convinced, darling.”

“Just tell me what you’re doing here.”

“Obviously, checking on you. What I do best.” she laughed. “Whenever I come over, we discuss different ways to fool Mycroft into thinking we’re an item. But lately, I’ve noticed a change in your behavior. Not the same detective I got myself tangled with.”

Sherlock frowned and picked up his laptop on the side of the couch to look for more cases. “It doesn’t matter.”

“Of course it does, Sherlock! You are so much more touchy than usual. It’s unattractive.”

“Then you’re more than welcome to leave.”

“Have you had sex?”

“What?”

Sherlock’s eyes were wide, flabbergasted the dominatrix would ask such a thing. What followed was a rosy blush and all Sherlock could do was avert his eyes back to the screen.

“No.”

“Funny, could’ve sworn… oh! I got it now, you’re touchy because you haven’t had sex with Jim yet.”

Sherlock swallowed thickly at the mention of Jim. The sound of his name sent chills down his spine but it also stung to hear, knowing that their situation was definitely a special case for two people who have shared affections for one another.

“I don’t want to talk about that.”

“But it’s written all over your face. What is it, get into a little fight with him? Boys are just so easily upset these days.” She sighed, crossing her legs as she moved to face him.

Sherlock was silent and forced his mind to focus on the screen. However, his attention was cut short by the pillow thrown at his face. Sherlock could feel rage boiling inside the pit of his stomach.

“I said I don’t want to talk about that!”

“Admit it, love, Jim has gotten under your skin and you have gotten under his. You have been hiding it up to this point and just when I’ve finally figured it out, you want to scurry from the truth. Well, Mama Adler ain’t no dummy, and she’s going to help you sort it out.” winked Irene.

Sherlock pursed his lips as slammed his laptop shut and pushed it aside.
“What do you even get out of this?”

“Entertainment. Now, let me guess how it ended. Jimmy got all jealous, hm? Caught you with a pretty boy and got all hot headed?”

“Oh John…”

“John?” She made a face. “Hardly something to get jealous over. Pretty cute to look at, but awfully boring to talk to. Unlike Jim to get jealous over plain boys.”

“He’s convinced I want him.”

“How absurd, giving you the cold shoulder because he believes in a false reality. Well, if you want this to go anywhere, you need to do something about it. What’s being stroppy going to solve?”

Sherlock shook his head. “I might as well forget him. He might as well forget me. He clearly has stopped associating with me for good reasons. It’s probably best left that way.”

“But I’m not a lesbian, even I’m not blind or deaf. I know sexy and charming when I see it.” She crossed her arms. “Come on, you have to admit, you really are the shit.”

He was silent for a moment before cracking a bit of an amused smile. “I suppose I am kind of the shit.”

“Now that’s the spirit.” praised Irene, swinging her legs a bit from her seat. “Show him the man he’s been missing out on.”

“The man he’s been missing out on doesn’t even know where he is.”

“Sherlock, you are a detective, and you mean to tell me you can’t find him?”

“With Mycroft up my arse about shutting his network down, not exactly. He’s warned me not to try and find him.”

“Bollocks, the network is a good excuse to go out and start trying to find him. Don’t let a silly little warning like that make you step away from it. Jim is just letting middle age and cynicism get to him.” She waved her hand dismissively. “Staying here and doing pointless tasks is just laziness, and that’s just boring. You want to find him, don’t you?”

Before Sherlock could even answer that, the front door of the flat flung open, and smoke began to fill the living room. Sherlock became alert and hopped to his feet, ready to protect Irene from whatever was happening. But a sharp pain shot through his shoulder before slowly encasing his body, thus forcing him to fall to the floor with little effort. He could hear Irene screaming and whimpering as she too fell to the floor, coughing and wheezing for air. Sherlock fought to speak, for any sound to leave him, but it was to no avail as he strained so much to the point of exhaustion. And gradually, darkness took over his vision as he was rendered outcold for the time the drug flowed through his veins. The last thing he saw was the opened flat door, and several people swarming in through the thickness of the smoke.
It had felt like a millennia before sensation returned like a blink of an eye. Memory was scarce for a moment, before it gently flooded back like an unusually calm tide in the midst of a storm. Irene Adler was returning to her current time with heavy eyes and soft, irritable moans of pain. It took minutes to have her eyes adjust to the light pouring through the window. She blinked, again and again, for at least another passing minute before her vision provided an image. The first thing she saw was a man of 5'8 stature, 5'9 with the shoes he wore, black hair, fair skin, and dark eyes. As her vision steadied, she noticed it was Jim Moriarty standing over her, and the woman nearly let out a scream.

“Jim! What the hell are you doing here? Where’s Sherlock?” She gasped as she looked around, noticing she was still in the flat.

“You were ambushed, Miss Adler.” sighed the criminal. “And so was Sherlock, only he was taken.”

“Ambushed? Taken? I don’t follow…”

“Forgiven, your mind is working slower now that the drug is starting to wear off.”

Irene, who had been lying down on the couch, slowly moved herself up into a sitting position, rubbing her head from the dull ache it felt. She rolled her eyes at Jim.

“Why was Sherlock taken?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well you know he was taken!”

“Because I have cameras installed. Thankfully, Sherlock was careless enough not to remove them.”

Irene smirked at this new information. “Out of possessiveness?”

“Out of protection.”

The smirk on her lips fell to a resting, concentrated frown.

“He was held captive before, so I wanted to be sure it wouldn’t happen again.”

“This is interesting, coming from someone who refused to talk to him over a little teenage boy trouble.” The dominatrix crossed her legs, smoothing out her black skirt. “Even when you’re angry at him and threaten him to not find you, you still are looking out for him.”

“Oh shut up.” sneered Jim. “I heard your middle aged comment.”

“But you are middle aged and cynical. That much is obvious.” chuckled Irene. “We have no time to waste, though, as much as I’d like to pick your brain about you being jealous. Was there anything you could find out about who took him?”

“No. Every time I replay the video footage, it’s just a bunch of smoke blocking the camera views, and any person I do see is wearing a gas mask. Next thing I knew, there was no one else in there but you lying on the floor and silence.”

“And you came to me, because?”
“Because I figured you would have probably seen something I didn’t. Though, I should have expected you wouldn’t.”

Jim’s phone started to ring in that moment, *Stayin’ Alive* was becoming an irritating sound at every call rather than groovy, and the Irishman wished nothing more than to have changed it before he chucked his phone out of a window in agitation. As he looked onto the screen, he noticed the number was unknown. A scowl crosses his features and he briefly glanced over to Irene, before returning his attention to the ringing object, swiping to answer before placing the phone to his ear.

“Who is this?”

“James Moriarty, it’s a pleasure to finally chat with you.”

Jim tensed at the familiar voice, shoving his free hand into his black trouser pocket.

“Samuel George.” said Jim finally, after a few moments of silence.

“Yes, indeed. I won’t keep you long, I know you’re a busy man and all that.” said the man on the other side of the phone. “I have something valuable of yours in my possession, which I’m surprised by, considering you’re a man who values his work more than people, though I suppose that too has changed about you.”

Jim’s throat went dry. “...Sherlock.”

“I believe that’s the man’s name I was told. I have him here, comfortable in one of my rooms. He may become conscious at any given moment, though at any given moment I can take that away from him again.”

“What the fuck do you want?”

“Ah ah ah, profanity isn’t very professional, Mr. Moriarty. I’ll keep this short and simple. I just want you. Alone, of course, or it wouldn’t be very fair. And in exchange, I’ll let Sherlock go, free and unharmed. But you must hold up your end of the bargain if you’d like me to hold up mine.”

“Why? Why all this?”

“Because I have a bone to pick with you. If you aren’t here by sunset, I will do away with Sherlock Holmes like the ashes in my ashtray.”

Jim thought to himself for a moment. This was certainly a test of his sentiment, his pride. For so long he had been in denial of what Sherlock meant to him and now the truth was resurfacing in a physical situation where Jim couldn’t hide it anymore. Sure, he had become more accustomed to showing his affections to Sherlock by killing the terrorists who harmed him and sending him to the hospital, but even then it was something he had been learning to cope with. Feelings were not his forte. It was Irene who taught him that these things were okay. Besides her, who else would understand such predicaments? Jim was a complex person that only other complex people could understand, at least to a certain extent.

The Irishman swallowed thickly, as he unfortunately had come across someone who knew his pressure point, for the first time ever. “Fine. I’ll be there before sunset.”

“Marvelous, Mr. Moriarty. I do await your visit with bated breath.”

Jim turned to Irene as he ended the call and tucked the cellphone away into his pocket. He licked his lips as he tried to process everything and sort out what he planned next in his mind.
“Samuel George has him.”

“Who is Samuel George?”

“A man I have wished to never have to see again. He’s atrocious to work with. He’s the cousin of Charles Magnussen, a very vile bastard that has tried to sully my network and it’s reputation dozens of times. Samuel George is no different. But he is more active in his threats and blackmail.”

“And you know where he is?” inquired Irene, getting to her feet. “We have to hurry.”

“No, he wants me to come alone. You’ll just be in the way or even killed.”

“Well, thanks for putting that so kindly.” She smiled bitterly. “At least take Sebastian. Or else you’ll be killed too. You need help.”

“I can’t risk Sherlock being hurt.”

“He’s in danger either way! You can’t trust what this man says. You both might as well be writing your tombstones, because that is exactly how you’re going to end up if you don’t try and be careful!”

Jim sighed. “I am being careful.”

“No, you’re scared. You’ve never been scared, not like this. You’re letting your fears get ahead of you and you can’t. If you want to walk out of there with Sherlock unharmed, you need to get your people involved in this.” argued Irene. “You need to think rationally about this. This is exactly what this Samuel George wants. You need to be calm about this, think of Sherlock, and yourself.”

The Irishman nodded to her words, trying to devise a plan in his mind before fishing out his work phone, which was separate from the phone he finished using to speak with Samuel George, from his back pocket. His fingers tapped away at the phone like lightning, writing up a very informative and detailed email to his employees. It didn’t take very long to finish and draw many instant responses, eager to help with Jim’s newest assignment. He placed it back into his back pocket and hurried to the door. Before he left, he cast a glance over his shoulder to the dominatrix.

“If I happen to come out of this alive, it will be a while before I return back to London.”

“You’re going back home then?”

“Precisely.”

“Then I’ll get on it. Make sure you take good care of Sherlock. Solve your little issues.”

Jim sat restlessly in his seat as he watched cars pass by his window. He had an employee drive him whilst Sebastian was orchestrating ways to break in as Jim confronted Samuel George. He watched as he rode down the A4, heading into the city, where cars rushed past his car. He could feel the air hit his face, and he hoped in that moment, that this wouldn’t be the last of life’s simple delights. It was refreshing to feel the wind whipping his hair about, kissing his face, keeping him alert for the next plan of action. It wasn’t very long before he pulled into the parking lot of the office building.
It was a joint building shared with a real estate agency, but Samuel George’s half was made up of offices kept for his employees. It was a posing law firm. It was quite contradictory that Samuel of all people owned it when he himself was as criminal as Jim.

As Jim exited the car, he shooed away his driver to signify that the plan was in action. He knew he was on camera, so he did his best to look as apathetic as he often presented. All he could think of was Sherlock in this moment and tried to convince himself that the detective was doing better than he was at this moment. He approached the doors of the building that Samuel George would be in, opened them, and stepped inside with a considerably concerning ease. Perhaps he expected much more complications, but that could have been his paranoia of high expectations. Inside, there was a front desk, empty, with two elevators and a fire exit staircase. He glanced around and noticed a man to his right waiting by the entrance.

“[S]uppose you’re here to take me to him?” snarled Jim.

The man nodded. He was silent, taller than he was, wearing a sleek, black suit, with an earpiece meant to pass information. Jim followed him as the nameless man led him to the elevator, entering inside once the doors opened. The fifth floor was chosen and Jim crossed his arms, waiting for them to arrive at the correct floor after every ping. When they reached the chosen level, Jim proceeded to follow the man if he were taking a tour of the building. It drove him mad, making Jim want nothing more than to claw him to bits. But he kept calm, dangerously calm, clenching his fist as they walked down halls and made irritating turns, all to meet Samuel at his office in the south wing.

Jim knocked at his door before hearing an obnoxious, ‘come in’.

He twisted the doorknob and opened the door swiftly, seeing Samuel George sitting in his black leather office chair, two feet propped up and resting on his desk. He had mousy, slicked back hair, aside from a few stray strands that hung by his eyes, narrow brows, cold, mad jade eyes, and pale skin that hasn’t seen sun in some time. He dressed similarly to Jim, his Versace suit pressed and immaculate, looking as if he had stepped out of a magazine. He was five years younger, but ultimately a deadlier threat than what Jim considered anything else in the world right now. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and smiled.

“So good to see you. It’s been some time.”

“Let Sherlock go.”

“Impolite, impolite.” He chuckled, getting to his feet. “That is no way to greet a friend after seven years.”

“I don’t have friends.”

“I can see why, you gloomy man! Sherlock remains unharmed, as I have kept up my end of the bargain.”

“What do you want with me?”

“Vengeance, of course. Did you forget what you’ve done already? Left me for the police to devour while you escaped our last operation together. I just got my life back three years ago, but I don’t think it’d be quite complete lest I made sure you were getting what you deserved.”

“I left you because you chose to stay behind to steal. You were one of my worst employees.”
“Are you suggesting I’m greedy?”

“Is it not obvious?”

“I would be careful of how you speak of me, Mr. Moriarty. At least one of us is still showing respect.” He got to his feet, pulling out a gun from his drawer. “I wanted a souvenir from the experience. Thought you would be the understanding boss man to help me get home, but you didn’t bother to even look back as you left on your helicopter. I don’t like South American prison. To be quite frank, it was Hell. But I made a name for myself and have been on a witch hunt for you for ages.”

“By running a law firm, Samuel?” sneered Jim.

“Well, that is one way to make a name for myself. I’m thriving too. Perhaps my work involves tending to the defendant's needs, but alongside my own growing network, my main objective is killing you.”

“The irony in that is lovely.” smiled Jim. “But I want to see my boy walk free before you do whatever is necessary on your part.”

“Mm, no, I don’t think it’s going to work that way.”

The gun was pointed to Jim and a loud crack rang through the air. A bullet was shot, though not from Samuel’s gun. Sebastian smiled inside the air vent above them as Samuel George fell to the ground with a loud thud and his henchman behind Jim, with a bullet in his skull. Just then an emergency alarm went off and Jim hurried, looking around to see where Sherlock was located. He was running at a tremendous speed, leaping at points, scanning the halls and empty offices for any sign of vital life. He called out for Sherlock’s name, hoping it would make the slightest difference, wishing on his lucky stars it wouldn’t be a pointless task. Hall after hall, room after room, and rushing through corridors proved an extreme nuisance.

Jim was out of breath as he panted, a light sheen of sweat coating his forehead as he arrived at the final room he had yet to check on that floor. He heard footsteps stampeding behind him from the opposite hall and wasted no time as he scrambled into the room and locked it behind him, closing the blinds over the door’s little window so no one would see him in there. He turned around and was about to get Sebastian to handle it by calling him, but noticed Sherlock bound in rope on the floor, in the corner of the room. He was thankful for the moonlight pouring in through the tall glass windows that sat behind the desk, or else it’d have been too dark to see. The criminal immediately rushed over to Sherlock, and knelt to his height, a weight lifted off of him knowing that he was still alive.

Sherlock heard him come in, though could not see, as a blindfold encased his vision. But the scent of Armani clung to his nose as it filled the air and he immediately became breathless as he felt Jim’s hand upon his cheek. Sherlock knew.

“I’m glad you’re safe,” noted Jim, searching his belt for his pocket knife to cut the ropes, “they didn’t hurt you, did they?”

Sherlock was silent.

Jim frowned. “Answer me.”

Sherlock sighed, tilting his head the other way as if disinterested in what Jim was saying.

“I am bloody rescuing you. If you wish for me to leave, then I will.” threatened Jim. “But you
listen, damn it, I’ve been searching everywhere for you, alright? I apologize. The only reason why you’re not dead is because I installed cameras in your flat. The reason why I did was because I was worried for your safety after you were taken the first time. Even when I said I didn’t want you to come looking for me, I was sure I couldn’t stay away for long. Sherlock, I adore you. I was angry. And I was wrong to ignore you.”

Sherlock returned his attention to Jim with a slight tilt of his head, lips pursed as he listened. “They didn’t hurt me.”

Jim instantly lit up, joyous to know that Sherlock was now on speaking terms with him. He finally found his pocket knife on his belt and slipped it out, cautiously cutting through the thick rope that bound his ankles together.

“...I missed you.” breathed Sherlock. “I thought I was being treated like one of your playthings. No more than a chew toy for a dog.”

“You are nothing of the sort.” Jim brushed curls from his face, trying to relax the detective.

“I don’t believe you.”

To this, Jim only smirked. He knew Sherlock was only being moody and there were a plethora of ways to convert that thinking. Of course, he had to admit Sherlock was right in this, but Jim wanted to convince Sherlock, now more than ever, that he was the moon among a sky of countless stars. It was Sherlock who painted the night with beauty, who stood out above the rest. It was he who pushed and pulled the currents of tides and illuminated the darkness of his world. If Jim were to marvel at anything so divine, it would be his moon, his pale angel ever so beautiful, with every phase in all its unique glamor. He wanted to draw an eclipse with their minds and their bodies, and send Heaven and Hell into armageddon.

“Then I’ll prove it.”

Jim moved closely to Sherlock, his hand cupping his chin, admiring such a chiseled face before his eyes, so handsome it put Adonis to shame. His thumb brushed over the uniquely shaped cupid bow lips upon Sherlock’s face, causing the detective to quiver. It was as if he were going to receive his first kiss again, but it was just his first kiss in what felt like ages. Sherlock felt as though his heart would jump out of his chest, it beat so quick. It was happening all again. And fever filled him. And it burned in the depths of his chest. Slowly, Jim leaned in, eyes shutting, his lips brushing against Sherlock’s gingerly; the relief his body felt tasting him again, by god, it was a feeling that could not be put into words. Sherlock’s lips parted with need, and so did Jim’s, his tongue and Sherlock’s reunited in their desperate heat. Sherlock spread his legs and invited Jim closer, who pressed him against the wall, their lips nearly inseparable as they kissed minutes away. Gunshots and screaming could be heard just outside the door, but it didn’t make the slightest difference in this atmosphere.

“Jim….,” moaned Sherlock, taking great comfort in the warmth of Jim’s hand on his face.

Sherlock couldn’t breathe, but managed on the breath and low moans of Jim as he swallowed them in every kiss. The Irishman parted at long last, raising the pocket knife to Sherlock’s wrists as he readied himself to cut the rope that bound them together. His lips fiercely attacked Sherlock’s neck, causing Sherlock to fight to silence himself in the darkness of the office. Sherlock wriggled, aching to grip at Jim in any way. He wanted his hands to be free, to roam every bit of the criminal. He couldn’t take the restriction, and more importantly, he couldn’t bear the incapability of not being able to see Jim. A small pout touched his lips as he felt the ropes fall from his wrists as he realized this. But it was then that Jim pulled away from his neck, slipping the knife back into its sheath.
“If it weren’t such a dangerous situation, you would’ve been all mine on sight, with that impressive bondage work.” teased Jim, letting his fingers brush across his face, relishing in how warm and soft Sherlock against the tips.

Sherlock immediately became scarlet at the vulgarity Jim so shamelessly spewed, making the detective swallow hard and let out an embarrassed huff, turning his attention away to the window. Jim could only laugh, removing the blindfold that once stole Sherlock’s vision from him. It took a moment for Sherlock’s eyes to adjust to the room as Jim knelt before him. Jim opened his mouth to tease him further but was stopped when Sebastian kicked the door down, sweaty and panting for air as commotion still carried on outside of the room.

“Boss, let’s get out of here now while we can! Our ride is waiting outside!”

Sherlock tried to get up but immediately stumbled, wondering if the drug was still in his system working its way out, causing temporary paralysis in his legs. Jim gestured to Sherlock and Sebastian hurried inside and lifted him up, throwing the Englishman over his shoulder as they all ran out. Sherlock couldn’t tell reality from dream anymore, as it was just simply surreal to have been kidnapped twice within the span of less than six months. And the man who one would assume would be the responsible party was actually his savior. His head throbbed as the sounds of gunshots permeated the atmosphere and filled his ears.

When they were on the first floor, Sebastian led Jim out and tossed Sherlock inside the car like a mere ragdoll, much to the annoyance of the consulting criminal.

“Sebastian, you bloody brute! Be careful!” hissed Jim at the ex-colonel.

Jim slid into the car and shut the door, telling the driver the address he needed to go to. Sebastian would be fine on his own, he knew it. It was what he was paid for and so were the rest of his people working in his network. This is what they signed up for. There were no hard feelings and shouldn’t have been, as every potential employee should read the fine print of their contract. His attention was caught by Sherlock moaning in and out of consciousness, having hurt his head when he was thrown in. Jim stroked his hair and pulled him close whilst laying Sherlock’s head on his lap.

“Sherlock, are you okay?” inquired the raven haired man.

Sherlock didn’t verbally respond with anything coherent, but clutched at Jim’s thigh, almost as if to fight to talk— though, he eventually passed out from exhaustion once again after the third minute of trying. Jim quickly checked his pulse out of fear that perhaps something did happen to Sherlock, only to sigh as he was consoled by Sherlock’s gentle breathing. The criminal’s head lolled back against the seat’s headrest, periodically glancing down to Sherlock, and then back to the window as cars passed them on the highway. He needed to leave London for a while— as the amount of headache it caused him lately had been burdening. But now he could at least say he had the remedy to his troubles and aimed to be far away from here, with work in the back of his mind, and Sherlock the priority of his care. The rest of the world was of no concern to him; that much he knew.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I will NOT be surprised if I find something I need to edit later. I've just been spewing words onto a page pretty much as of late, so if you DO find something incorrect, please please PLEASE point it out to me so I can fix it. It helps become a better writer. (: So, here's some more of our boys. Don't expect smooth sailing just yet, folks! There's a lot of shit on the way. Sorry too if this chapter seems a bit short, the next one will be filled with much, MUCH more! Guaranteed (or ya money back).

Well, kidding about the money thing.

I'm broke.


(:

Wicklow, Ireland was grand. The greenery of grass and thickets stretched miles and miles, with a latitude and longitude of 52.9808° and 6.0446°. It was famous for its countryside and immensely breathtaking landscapes. Despite being smaller in population, compared to cities like Dublin which were livelier and had more opportunity, Wicklow was more than ideal for obvious reasons for someone like James Moriarty. And of course, how lucky was he, since the estate he lived in was an inheritance with a bit of remodeling. Of course, it needed a bit of the Moriarty touch, for the 19th century beauty would have eventually fallen to smithereens otherwise.

It was spacious and large enough for more than one person, but with visitors and employees coming and going, sometimes even living or staying there for important meetings, operations, or protection, it was perfectly fine. It was even enough for the chefs he hired to make his meals when he did stay there. Depending on where his work took him, it was rare he was able to stay home for long periods of time. In London, he had bought out an apartment complex for him and any employees near headquarters whenever he did need to do work there, but it was Ireland that he had mainly wished to stay. He adored London, truly, the man was all about the city and would usually prefer it; but Wicklow was quieter, prettier, and held a lot of rich history. And most importantly, it was his final resort when being tracked by the British government if worse came to worst.

Sherlock Holmes stirred from his state of slumber, groggily coming back to reality, gently wrestling in what felt like… sheets? His memory was slowly fading back to his mind as he tried to make sense of the situation, with his blurry eyes adjusting to the room. Before he could even see properly, he immediately deduced by the scent and texture of the sheets, the direction of where the light shone, and the altitude of the air pressure that he was not home. The detective shot up from the sheets, rubbing his eyes with ease, though they became wide when they finally focused on his surroundings. A bedroom. And he lay in an unfamiliar bed. The bedding scheme was crimson and black, king sized, with polished crimson walls, and curtains to match the latter.

The flooring was polished wood, with a black rug near his personal desk, made of oak and black as well, with a silver, unattended Macbook upon it, plugged in and charging. There were quite a few darkly inclined renaissance, Romantic and Victorian, even baroque paintings hung about his walls,
most notably catching his eye, the painting of Dante and Virgil, oil on canvas, circa 1850, created by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. It was a classic piece of highlighted vampirism in history, and appealed greatly. Across from the painting, which sat at the right hand of the bed, where Sherlock lay, was a walk-in closet, and beside that, a cherry wood vanity beside a closed bedroom bathroom. Behind him was a painting hung right in the center of Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, painted by Il Sodoma, circa 1525. It was quite intriguing, the decor— he was momentarily captivated by it. But Sherlock knew now was not the time to admire the interior.

He narrowed his eyes as he finally began to recall the prior events he remembered. Talking with Irene, the kidnapping, waking up in an empty office bound by rope, the shooting, the kissing, and lastly…

Sherlock’s face reddened at the thought, eyes much wider with shock as the realization settled in. But was it one he could digest? Now, that was simply a stretch. Of course, he had exhausted himself and fallen asleep in Jim’s lap, not knowing where he’d be riding to. The only logical explanation was that he was in Jim’s home. The scent of the sheets were more than comforting, with hints of Armani cologne, cigarettes, shampoo, and bodywash. And knowing Jim’s scent, he knew it was a keen match. Looking outside now, he came to the easiest conclusion he could in figuring out that he was out of the country, in a very spacious and fresh countryside, which was most unusual for the tastes of the very urban accustomed Irishman.

There was a sudden pit of irritation that sparked within his chest once he slipped out of the bed and gazed outside. It was definitely morning and Sherlock could tell because the sun rose in the East. He didn’t quite understand, but now wide awake, it hit him that Jim had taken him out of London without his permission. In fact, he had deduced by the sights of greenery and groves yonder lush hills, thinking hard and further realized he was in Wicklow. When he kissed Jim, he realized how out of his mind he actually was. For weeks and weeks, Jim did not reach out to him, ignored him, made him feel lifeless. He almost was lifeless, had not Mycroft drug him out of his flat and threatened to send him to rehab. Christ, how he didn’t care, how he needed the sweet flow of heroin in his veins.

He couldn’t deal with the rush of feelings that pulsed through him. It was the strangeness of Jim’s words, how they coiled so easily around his heart and caressed it gently like it was a rare treasure. It startled him, made him second guess himself and drown him in wonder, wonder that perhaps this was an illusion, and one that would cease. It didn’t make sense why the consulting criminal would save him, punish the ones who took him captive, flirted and kissed him with a shared desperation that made his body tremble and his heart race. He knew the chemistry of sentiment and had thought it was figured out. Yet now, he was adamant on the idea that this was another one of Jim’s games. He couldn’t understand it yet, but he knew he had to in time. He was Sherlock fucking Holmes, a man of his genius could understand most things. Feelings…. were just a tad more legwork to get around.

As soon as his racing thoughts relaxed at the soft breeze coming from the window, which was cracked ajar for fresh air, he was knocked out of the daze when he heard the doorknob turn. His head whipped around and he noticed upon the door opening, Jim entered the room. He was dressed differently as opposed to the day before. A dark grey plaid suit with a crisp, light blue button up beneath, and navy blue tie littered with tiny, gold crosses. His hair combed back, bangs slicked neatly out of his face as usual. He looked so handsome that Sherlock had to remind himself to keep his cool.

“I had a feeling I should check on you to see if you were alright. You passed out on me before I could give you another kiss.” flirted the criminal, approaching him.
Sherlock frowned. “You needn’t bother yourself with that. Why am I here? In Ireland of all places?”

A sigh escaped Jim. “Sherlock, you need to understand something…”

“I understand enough that you’ve practically kidnapped me too. I didn’t decide to come with you, I didn’t ask you to do anything for me.”

Upon hearing this, Jim crossed his arms, a bitter smile stretching across his lips. “Yes, I can see that your gratitude is overflowing. No, I did not kidnap you. Don’t be stupid. If I were kidnapping you, you’d be in a much more uncomfortable situation.”

“Then perhaps you’d like to explain to me why the bloody hell I’m not home!” Sherlock’s eyes narrowed with agitation. “I don’t understand you, Jim, I haven’t since you’ve returned from the dead. Don’t toy with me.”

“You’re angry because I saved you?” Jim raised a brow.

“Because I don’t know your intentions. One minute I want to kiss you, because you’re kissing me, and I crave you like the taste of nicotine. You give me that look, you say these words, you make me feel all these things I’ve never felt before and I hate it.” Sherlock rubbed his face, walking past him before stopping at the door, then going back as he paced around in his thoughts. He was boiling in the midst of confusion. “One day you’re my enemy, the next you’re… you’re… I don’t even know!”

Jim pursed his lips. “Do you want me to stop?”

Sherlock wasn’t listening. He was too busy caught in his own thoughts, rambling. Tears were pricking at his eyes from confusion.

“I don’t even know how I can trust you— you up and left because you thought John and I were together and told me not to find you, pushed me away at a time I needed to understand. How can I understand a man who I can’t read! You lie and deceive others, play with them, and I never know what you’re ever thinking. What do you plan with me now that I’m here? Was it a ploy to experiment with my mind? Make me dance? Why is it you? Why is it always you?”

Now, Jim had become more serious, brows furrowing. “Sherlock, Sherlock listen to me. Sherlock — calm down. I’m telling the truth when I—”

“Why are you doing all of this!” cried the detective.

Jim was taken aback by the rage in his voice, his eyes darkening at Sherlock’s words, his heart aching.

“Because I care about your wellbeing! You don’t think I would kill someone if they tried to hurt you? I willingly put myself in a life or death situation yesterday to keep you safe!”

“Why shouldn’t I believe it was a set up?”

Jim could feel his mania stirring within him, his eyes wide with fury. He gritted his teeth.

“Because it wasn’t a fucking set up! I took you here to keep you safe! You want to know something, Sherlock, it’s very interesting you’re quick to question my motives, but don’t even look at those closest to you that could be your downfall.”
“What the hell are you talking about?”

“The man who kidnapped you was Samuel George, an ex employee who had wanted revenge on me. He took you as a means to lure me there. But I had him killed before he could try anything and made sure you were out of there unharmed, leaving my own people in danger. It isn’t even speculation anymore but sheer obviousness that Mary fucking Watson had gone out of her way to do it.”

“Leave her out of this.”

“I don’t think I will, you don’t want to hear it. You’re convinced I’m playing games.”

“Oh, don’t you always?”

Jim scoffed. “Oh please. Mary has been working for me up to this point. Why do you think she’s been so absent from home with Johnnyboy? She wanted to work for me as a way to hide her past. You wanna know what that is? A bloody CIA assassin! That’s right, and in order for me to do for others, I have them do for me. She who is closest to you tried to betray you the way she betrayed me. She went out of her way to put you in danger as a way for her to protect herself from me. And you want to know why I was after her? Because she hurt you and left you to die with Rogers and Philips at the hotel! And when I found out, she knew she was in for it.”

Before Sherlock could retort, Jim raised a finger up to silence him.

“You really are an interesting man, Sherlock. I realized I was rather in the wrong for reading your relationship with Watson incorrectly, but I was really a fool to think you’d actually figure it out. Actions are quite rubbish, aren’t they? They don’t speak volumes the way they are said to, no, not with you. You are utterly useless at decoding! For a man so clever, you are awfully stupid.”

“And what are you trying to exactly prove? That you care? Can you really care for me? You? A man who finds everything ordinary?” inquired Sherlock, wryly. “After all we’ve been through together, how do I know this is part of your changeability? You’ve proven it well enough that my attraction to you makes me falter.”

“Because I fucking love you!” bellowed the criminal, eyes almost flaming. He never imagined saying it, especially to the likes of Sherlock. The last time the criminal said he loved someone, they had killed themselves and abused him drunk. So what all these years he believed love wasn’t real? So what if he believed it was ordinary and predictable? Jim, somehow, frustratingly found it in a man he wanted dead. And up until this point he realized how deep he was in. Tears pricked at Jim’s eyes and for a moment in time, Sherlock could read deeply into what seemed an oblivion at first, but the darkest of seas, filled with bursting emotions that screamed for cessation.

Sherlock was rendered speechless at this sudden confession, tears rolling down his cheeks. He didn’t even notice it himself— and he was a man who never expressed his emotions properly, a man who was convinced he was above all emotion and functioned on reason, a man who believed sentiment was not a part of his DNA despite his beating heart. The last he cried was as a child when Redbeard was gone, but this was a different kind of ache. The ache of bewilderment, caught in wonder, swallowed by his pride. Why did it feel like losing? What was brought about were such overwhelming feelings washing over him like a thick, stubborn tide, mocking him, as if to say he too is a man of sentiment, and there was nothing he could do about it. Fight it all he can, and Sherlock Holmes would be the ultimate loser to his own game.

But love. Love. How did Sherlock feel? He knew that he once regarded it as a chemical defect. He knew it was tied to the innate instincts of humans, to procreate, so it was a highly debatable topic of
whether or not it was real among scientists of modern day. But it was also said to be tied to
chemicals like oxytocin and dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is tied to mood and pleasure, and
even serotonin, the chemical responsible for happiness. As he thought deeply about it, trying to
string it together and process the information like a simple chemical equation—he was left
blanked. To try and imbed every deed done by Jim and tie it in as though it would make sense only
placed him in a greater perplexity. For once in a rarity, Sherlock Holmes was stumped. He couldn’t
make sense of love, but studying the patterns by memory of what is considered love in nature and
Jim’s actions, made the knowledge dawn upon him like a new day. The selfless deeds of a man
who time and time again they met, battled with wit and with words, peered into each other’s eyes
for answers as to what their story was, enticed Sherlock with a mind so magnificent it may have
even surpassed Einstein himself; he knew he was caught, quite bound in this spider’s web. After
all, he admitted to him the night before he missed him and felt used. What did that mean for
Sherlock? Why would he be afraid of such? What truth lied behind missing something? Was Jim
ever his at all? These questions racing through his mind tugged and pushed at him, again and again
drowning him in his own foolish insecurities.

The next thing Sherlock knew was that Jim was leaving. But he couldn’t stop him. He was stiff, he
felt frozen in a shell of his feelings that conflicted thought and reason. Was it possible for Jim to
love? Was it possible for him to love? With their conditions, could it be the rare and exclusive
occurrence upon the Earth in a several sequenced formations of probability that love could be
found in someone like Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty? Many things were possible by
chance in the universe and coincidence was a myth to him. No, it had to have been meant to
happen. Despite what Mycroft always said about caring, how it wasn’t an advantage, constantly
telling him since childhood that being tender was the lowest of the low, it drove him to a fierce
suppression of identity, of one’s own nature. But the science of it was that it had to be possible,
that he could’ve been wrong all these years and not have known it because of the influence of his
brother and his pride.

It was the next hour, Sherlock recovered from his shock and was ready to find Jim. He became
alert with the sun shifted in the sky and the light of the room cast his shadow at a different angle.
He exited the bedroom, only to find himself taken aback by the structure outside of where he fled.
Twists and turns of many halls and corridors, with many rooms with doors that looked all too
similar. One of the doors nearest, which was most likely a closet, had intricate, interlaced patterns
upon the doorframe, following small crosses that broke them apart from a new start of more
interlaced knot pattern. He’d seen such a pattern before in a cathedral, so there were only two
possibilities: this was a remodeled cathedral at a point or this was for mere aesthetics.

The many doors he passed were encrusted with two large spiral knots in the center, followed by
polished, unmarked wood. As he continued on, taking note of every door he passed, he then came
across another room. It was a guest bedroom. These too had knots encrusted upon the fine, clean
and polished wood, two large Dara knots on both doors, the trim brimmed with infinitely looped
mandala knots in a row like pattern. He briefly visited his mind palace—he’d seen them before.
These markings were nothing new.

They were Celtic.

Digging deep into his stored information, he grappled onto what he could for an answer. Dara,
taken from Dara knots—derived from the word ‘doire’, an Irish word for ‘oak tree’. That much he
knew. It seemed like whatever this was at the beginning, he noticed how much Jim held onto it for
artistic and possibly sentimental value. He wondered, truly, where they were, and how the criminal
owned such a historical and beautiful home. He didn’t take the Irishman to have such regal tastes.
As he studied even further, he felt as though he were wandering around. It was quite easy to get lost
in such an extraordinary place. Of every door he checked behind, it was an unattended room. He
knew he was driving himself madder by the moment, his chest squeezing as he felt like he were in a dark labyrinth.

As he further sleuthed around, in his final attempts to find Jim, he arrived at two very large doors, stepping close to study the designs upon them. He had a better look at this now than before in comparison. Sailor’s knots in infinite ties looping round the doors, followed by writing at the very top his eyes couldn’t quite make out as the lighting was much too dark on a side where the hall windows didn’t shine much light in his direction. He reached out to the golden doorknob, turning it gently, before slowly opening it whilst releasing a deep breath. What was inside never Sherlock would have expected. A massive library. Within, held a luxurious and wide space with tall bookshelves, lined up in many aisles, and many books in alphabetical order, separate in genres.

So, Jim was quite the reader. And so was he in his spare time. He did not expect such a library, however, had he figured Jim was an avid reader. There were different areas of seating as he meandered aimlessly through the aisles, feeling as if he could almost become lost again if alone. The flooring was wooden, smooth, gliding with his feet—and about slippery had he been wearing only socks. He walked until a point where he reached a dark green sofa chair against the wall, which sat across a cherry wood desk with many books and papers upon it. Much different from an office—he deduced Jim spent his time here in leisure when business had become idle or slow, or even painstakingly dull, and needed brief and immediate stimulation for his mind. He could sympathize with that mode of living. When his eyes came across the hunched over figure writing away in his seat, Sherlock’s heart began to race. There Jim sat, writing away irritably and muttering to himself. That tall, dirty blonde who kicked down the door from the night before stood behind him, almost reading what he was writing. His name was Sebastian, wasn’t it? He wondered if he were ready to face him again, to give him the response he needed to hear.

“Jim?” he approached the desk, tugging at the bottom of his shirt.

Jim snapped from his thoughts and looked to Sherlock, a frown on his lips.

“What?”

The harshness of his tone sent shivers down Sherlock’s spine. He truly didn’t want to see Jim angry with him.

“I would like to talk with you, if it isn’t any trouble.”

Jim sighed, handing the paper he wrote on to Sebastian with a firm expression.

“Give this to the head chef or whoever made my tea down there and tell him to pay more attention next time. Salt does not belong in tea.”

Sebastian took the piece of paper and nodded, casting a shady glance to Sherlock before exiting the library. Sherlock was a bit relieved that the frustration wasn’t completely because of him. He folded his hands behind his back, sniffing for a moment as he tried to gather his thoughts.

“I apologize.”

“You apologize? Sherlock…” Jim rubbed his temples for a moment. “...you don’t have to say it if you don’t mean it. I will very much get you a ticket home if you so wish.”

“But I do.”

“Then I must too.”
Never did Sherlock ever believe the day would come where he would admit his faults. But it was an even greater shock to him that Jim would admit his. Sure, he apologized in the office the night before, as he gave Jim the cold shoulder. But he was still much out of it, still internally fighting to believe whether or not the criminal orchestrated the words to fabricate guilt, to make him believe that for a moment the man was human. That he himself was human enough to receive an apology. Sherlock realized how imperfect they were, how clearly flawed the cracks in the lenses were. But even with cracks, he still captured the most profound picture of beauty in the depths of all that was ugly and grotesque. It was in the midst of crowds he could draw Jim out in seconds, and marvel at everything he was, crave everything he had to offer, feel solace unlike anywhere else in the world. Why did he feel so safe and at ease with him around? The very thought made him question and doubt everything he ever stood for. It made him panic. Why was he so drawn to a man once hellbent on dragging him through the mud.

“You don’t.”

“I do. I’ve pushed you to the point of tears. I will never forgive myself.”

“You too.”

Jim smiled bitterly, still not used to expressing his sorrow in such a manner. He was told to stop crying so many times by his own father as a child that the rules were finally beaten into him and scarred, it marred the way of his development and thinking. He was trying to learn more about love, but for one thing, he understood he loved Sherlock, and that was that. He was afraid of having it taken advantage of and perhaps that was why he found it taboo. He hardly cried, but not because he didn’t want to. It was because he forgot how. But among the frustration that the man he loved was blind to it still caused a rift, and made his body betray the rules he was once forced to submit to.

The one thing he felt so passionately for drew out a sensitivity in him long untouched for years. It was unsettling to open up, but he thought through his actions Sherlock would understand, because Jim, like Sherlock, was never fond of communicating his feelings through words. Physicality was the easiest method of expression, which is why kissing and flirting were natural. It was difficult if the feeling was genuine. For manipulation, it’d only be easy in the sense of acting. He portrayed lovers so many times throughout the years in his work, to lure, to learn information, but never to someone he admired.

“Yes. I suppose so.”

“I don’t get what you see in me. What is so important about me?”

“Your mind, Sherlock. All those games I designed for you…. they were to attract your attention. Yes, at a point, I was not fully aware of my feelings or attraction for you. It was almost subconscious. It wasn’t until the rooftop where I realized, but you didn’t. I faked my death and wrestled with the idea that I was just kidding myself. But every night it became real. I dreamt of you, constantly, wanted you in ways I never wanted someone before. I wanted to do things that were ordinary. I even had erotic dreams, of taking you in places that I would’ve never imagined. I knew these feelings of wanting to kiss you, hold you, be near you, listen to you speak, hear you say my name, having sex. I was angry and I didn’t understand. Every person I shared my body with, I started to envision you. Every time I lied in bed, all I could think of was holding you. For years I have admired you, that brain could solve just about everything. I adored it. It rivaled my own and so, I wanted its attention. And when I first saw your face, I was taken aback by a god. I wanted to worship you. I still do. From the ground you stand upon to the follicle of every curl. You are a gorgeous man, my dear. Everything about you is all I’ve ever wanted. You are sacred to me.
because I never found anyone who could understand me the way you do. For the first time in my life, I’ve found someone that can stimulate me. Give me a greater reason for this lifetime than the work I’ve thrown myself into.”

Sherlock blinked, feeling his heart swell with warmth, his cheeks pink with flattery. He was delighted to know the criminal could express this to him with unexpected honesty. He could read a bit of him now with his guard down, that yes, this is what love meant and even more so, Sherlock felt mutually. This was exactly how he felt. But it was Jim who finally could put it into words. For ages, Sherlock was clueless, a fool as he tried to escape the very foundations that made him human. And now he surrendered to the feeling called love. He embraced it. There was no more hiding, no more pretending. Sherlock wet his lips, shyly gazing to the criminal who just professed his love. Never did anyone feel so strongly for the way he felt for the detective. But in this, Jim taught him lessons. But Sherlock felt indebted in comparison, unaware that he had taught Jim as well.

“I love you too.”

A pleased smile touched Jim’s lips and the Irishman stood, pulling Sherlock by his wrinkled shirt collar, and pressing a chaste, brief kiss to his lips. An inexplicable warmth passed through the Englishman, and Sherlock wondered if Jim could feel it too. How he adored those soft lips! They felt even better against his own after they spoke such words of adoration.

Jim pulled away after a moment, cupping Sherlock’s cheek, his eyes wandering over the details of every shadow and line that formed his face.

“Let’s have breakfast together out on the balcony.”

Sherlock nodded first, quite hungry for a change, but looked at his wrinkled and unsightly clothes. He hadn’t realized it til now. He blushed.

“Perhaps I could change?”

“Whatever you’d like. Your suitcase is packed away in my closet. Just use my bathroom.”

Sherlock raised a brow. “You packed my things?”

“I did not, Miss Adler did. I told her that if I survived Samuel George with you, that I would be leaving London. She got the idea and packed your things for you. I picked it up before we left England.”

Sherlock reddened, not used to people going through his belongings. “Right. I should hope she packed away things I would want to wear.”

“I should hope so, too. I would be… awfully disappointed to have you walking around in my clothes, or… naked.”

Sherlock huffed upon hearing these words, scurrying off as he tried to find his way back to the consulting criminal’s bedroom, cheeks burning. Staying here would surely reap interesting memories, wouldn’t it?
“So, how long exactly should I stay here?”

Jim placed his tea down on his saucer. Luckily, he hadn’t been given salt instead of sugar when it was brought to him, and that Sherlock was content with things Irene packed away for him. They sat outside on the library's backdoor balcony. The air was fresh, crisp, almost sweet, though it could have been the many fragrant flowers that sat around them as they sat across from each other. But nothing was as sweet as the freshly cut fruit, a personal preference of Jim’s to eat every morning. Sherlock stabbed a piece of honeydew melon with his fork and ate it, his curious baby blue eyes floating up to Jim as he awaited a response. His hair was damp from the shower he was able to take, the light breeze blowing through his messy curls, tossing them about. He felt fresher and lighter now as he sat there in his house clothes, a simple blue dressing down, black t-shirt, and grey sweatpants. He felt terribly underdressed in comparison to Jim and his suit, but decided not to linger on it.

“"As long as you’d like." replied Jim, picking up a piece of buttered toast. "I am currently making sure my employees are updating me on the issue with Samuel George’s people. Once something like that happens in the criminal world, it can have a troublesome domino effect. So, at the moment, you are safer here than if you were in London.”

As he finished his response, Jim bit into his toast, his eye catching a purple emperor butterfly fluttering near them and landing on a widely bloomed, purple Iris. From afar upon this hill, they could see many other hills of vast greenery and if one could look close enough, a few farms could be seen, with tiny blobs that were supposed to be cows and horses. Sherlock never did familiarize himself with such a setting before, and now, he was at ease, sitting across the man he wholeheartedly adored. He swallowed his honeydew melon before stabbing his fork into a strawberry.

“Thank you.” faintly smiled Sherlock for a fleeting moment, absorbed in the life around him. He was lost in his thoughts for a moment before turning to Jim. “Who’s place was this originally?”

“My great-grandparents’, they were farmers in the 19th century. They left the estate to my grandparents, who left it to my parents… and when they were gone, I inherited it. So I own it. Not exactly my scene, but I’ve become accustomed to it after all these years now. I rather be alone than with all those stuffy city people.”

Sherlock smirked as he bit into his strawberry, the texture cool, scaley, and wet, and the taste sweet, ripe, and succulent. Fruit never tasted so wonderful, and he remembered that it probably was due to the fact they lived in the country, where the natural world presented itself to him at every corner. Jim finished his toast in a few more bites and returned to his tea.

“But the city isn’t that bad, otherwise. I enjoy it. More activity, faster access to things. But out here, I could drive for hours without disturbance, and past the shortcut in the groves, I can ride to Dublin, where more interesting activities lie as London.”

“I’d like to see Dublin.”

Jim chuckled and turned to Sherlock. “Want me to take you on another date? I’ll be sure no ex criminals are involved.”

Sherlock hummed in amusement. “Mm, please, just you and I. Where shall we go?”
“We can do some driving around, take a trip to the Cliffs of Moher. I know a delightful restaurant in Dublin by the water. I haven’t been there in years, but it should still be around.” Jim got to his feet and stretched, making his way over to Sherlock, sliding his arms around him from behind.

“When are you going to play me violin, Sherlock?”

“That depends on if you have one. Mine wasn’t packed with my things, I don’t think.”

“I can get one for you."

“How dangerous. You know I play violin for nights on end, for all the hours of slumber. I should think you’ll find me troublesome.”

“I have ways of taming troublesome boys.”

“Do you now?”

Jim had opened his mouth to retort, but was rendered silent by his cell phone going off. He reluctantly excused himself with a chaste kiss to the cheek and picked up his cellphone off the table, answering it promptly.

“What is it? Don’t bother me, I’m with my boyfriend. Flores, you’re killing me. Now? With the client? Who? Romanov? Christ, alright, just give me a second.” He turned to a very confused Sherlock after the call ended, tucking his phone away in his pocket.

“I have to go. But be ready by 1:00, that’s three hours from now. I have to take care of a client that one of mine has somehow offended.”

“It’s all fine, Jim, really. I don’t mind waiting.” encouraged Sherlock with little care.

Jim smiled, walking over in front of Sherlock and leaning forward to press a kiss to his lips.

“I’ll be back soon enough. And when I am, I can spoil every bit of you, Holmes. You can count on it.”

As expected, Sherlock became instantly flustered, averting his eyes to his to the chrysanthemums in the corner of the balcony, noticing a few tiger butterflies swarming the bunch fiercely.

“J-just go, before I change my mind.”

The Irishman couldn’t help but laugh, finding the detective just absolutely adorable with the precious reactions. He exited back into the library and Sherlock was relieved that he was in a better mood leaving than he would’ve been. It was a little while before he could thoroughly relax himself again, deciding to finish his breakfast with a good book. Sherlock got to his feet and entered through the balcony doors and into the library again, sauntering through the long and intricate aisles. In the S-section, he searched for Mary Shelley, wanting to read a bit of Frankenstein before he decided to get ready. But a little white blurb caught his eye, and he whipped his head around, seeing it was no other than a cat. When did a cat get in there? Was it Jim’s? He slowly approached the feline with calmness and curiosity, kneeling down as it rubbed its face against a shelf. It was purring.

Sherlock reached forward, his steady, pale hand letting the cat sniff him before he was allowed to touch. To his great fortune, Sherlock was permitted to brush the silky, white fur that coated the dear thing, and the cat meowed sweetly and rubbed against his thigh. Its bright blue eyes radiated with an immediate love and trust and Sherlock couldn’t be more intrigued. A Norwegian Forest cat. They were lovely. He had to admit, he really adored cats, and always wanted one himself—
however, Mycroft was allergic, and forced his parents to forbid one from ever entering their childhood home. He rolled his eyes at the memory. How stupid.

As he inspected the cat further, he noticed a little jangly piece on its gold and diamond studded collar, and lifted it to the light to read.

*Miss Moriarty*

*12/10/14*

“I didn’t know about you,” began Sherlock to the cat, affectionately, “I bet Jim spoils you rotten, doesn’t he?”

The cat only meowed again, as if to confirm his question earnestly. She was utterly perfect and Sherlock could see why Jim had her. He was almost envious; he would give anything to have her for his own at the flat. She’d make for excellent company, especially when he needed opinions on a case, or a distraction for when he was suffering from depression or withdrawals. He simply continued to pet her, finding her fantastic in her immaculate beauty. He wondered if he could read now or even go out knowing that he’s found one of Jim’s little, secret treasures. In fact, Sherlock was sure for the next few hours that this cat would have his utmost attention. What a way to occupy the mind!
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Oh hey hey hey, spoiling y'all with some cute ass shit. (;

Anyways, I really would like if more people gave me feedback in the comments! I know people like to read fanfictions, but it is nice to know what someone thinks too! No pressure, I don't need big paragraphs on why you loved or hated it, but as a writer I DO look to improve as a writer.

Blessings!

Three hours passed like the flicker of lightning in the sky.

In all it’s Irish beauty, Wicklow decided to brew a nasty storm. It would start off with thunder, follow with heavy rain, and end with a perfect calm as light, spitting rain finished off the afternoon. Trees were swaying, skies were darkening, and farmers were guiding livestock back into barns for their protection. It was unexpected for a day that started out as almost heavenly, with bright blue skies and clear sun, few clouds, and sweetly chirping birds. It was almost unreal how quick and smooth the change was, when the countryside was showing its best.

Sherlock had taken Miss Moriarty with him to Jim’s bedroom, with intentions to change soon enough, but having never gotten around to it. It was with the first crack of thunder that made the poor cat jump out of his arms and hide underneath Jim’s bed, cowering with fear. He felt momentary sympathy for the feline and peeked beneath the bed, though after calling for her a few times, he had given up. Sherlock glanced at the clock and almost fell off the bed when he noticed what time it was. He had ten minutes to get ready! However, before he could get ready, Jim came in, sopping wet and with a scowl on his face. Sherlock blinked at the sight.

“Should’ve taken an umbrella, I presume?”

Jim cracked a wry smile. “You should be a comedian.”

Sherlock got to his feet and straightened out his dressing gown, looking to the Irishman with a snarky smile. “Now we both know that’s boring.”

Jim rolled his eyes and gently kicked off his shoes, not caring where they skidded off into the room. They ended up sliding under Jim’s bed and hitting Miss Moriarty unintentionally, causing the Norwegian Forest beauty to scamper out the room. Now Jim blinked whilst he closed the door.

“I see you’ve met my spoiled little girl.”

“We ran into each other at the library, stole my heart.”

“Then I should be inclined to vie for it back.” hummed out Jim, loosening his tie. “I assume that she’s the reason behind why you aren’t dressed yet.”
“Should I, now that it’ll begin to storm?” inquired Sherlock, glancing out the window.

“It’ll only last for a few hours.” shrugged the Irish genius, tossing his tie aside to the swivel chair at the desk with his laptop. “Why? Getting cold feet already?”

Sherlock turned to Jim and shook his head. “I’ll go rain or shine.”

“Fantastic. By the time we’ve had our meal, it should have cleared up. Would have moved it to tomorrow, but for the rest of the week, however, I’m awfully busy. How lovely it is for clients to decide to fill my inbox right when I have you around. It’s irritating.”

“No matter, you already know how much I’m a homebody lest it involves a case.”

“And that’s why I adore you.”

Sherlock smiled once again, but this time to himself; it was genuine. Not many were tolerant of his kind of personality, introverted and reserved, but knowing Jim was the exact same way was all the more reassuring. If there was anyone who could understand the life of a loner, it would be Jim, naturally. And being alone together, no matter the location, was always ideal. He slipped off his dressing gown and tossed it onto the bed, ready to undress. He was lost in his thoughts until his shirt reached midriff as he was beginning to tug it off his torso, turning to glance at Jim, who watched him in amusement. Sherlock whipped his head back around, a small huff escaping his lips as he felt heat prickle his face. He nearly forgot he had never been undressed or even naked around Jim before, the very thought making his heart race.

“Perhaps you could turn away so I can continue?” mumbled Sherlock.

Jim cracked an amused smirk. “Why? Have secrets to hide?”

Sherlock, now flustered, grunted and grabbed a pillow off of Jim’s bed, throwing it square at the Irishman’s face, nearly hard enough to where Jim almost stumbled and lost his footing. Jim turned away, huffing as well, though not long after, snickering. Sherlock’s shy behavior had to make him laugh, knowing Jim himself was nothing short of shameless, a complete opposite of the same coin. He simply undressed himself as well bit by bit, stripping down every bit of wet garment the bothersome rain got to. What was worse, was that it was a brand new suit, just ordered only a few months before from Italy. He had only hoped that it wouldn’t be ruined if he placed it in the dryer. Not that money was an issue, but it was still a problematic situation nonetheless.

“Well if that’s how you feel, don’t even bother to look at me naked right now as I go to take a shower.” He teased, placing the suit down on the chair before he entered into his bathroom.

Sherlock was tempted to have a peek but refused to betray his intentions of keeping his eyes to himself. For now, the little rebel inside of him had to rest. Instead, once he knew Jim had truly gone, he finished undressing down to his boxer briefs, going over to his suitcase to search for something better fit for him for dinner. He was glad there were plenty of clothes to choose from. He hadn’t seen all of it yet. Irene must have packed half of his closet, because there were things in his suitcase he didn’t wear as much as others. The Englishman dug around left and right, pulling out different things and until he came across a small and slender grey box in one of the small pocket compartments of the suitcase where he had his toothbrush usually. Curiously, Sherlock slipped it out of the pocket, and carefully opened the lid to examine what was inside. He noticed a bunch of black tissue paper hiding what heaviness was inside and placed it down to the floor and got to his knees. He was uncertain as to why he couldn’t deduce what it was like he normally could with gifts and started to unravel it. He wondered if he was becoming rusty but banished the idea from his mind knowing that was well a foolish one.
It was at this point he finished unraveling the paper, revealing a flesh colored dildo. Seven inches. Sherlock almost felt his soul leave his body and ascend to another plane of existence seeing it, his heart racing at an extremely rapid pace. He studied it closely, nervously hoping Jim for some reason didn’t leave the bathroom and see him with it. Where did it come from? Sherlock hardly owned things like this. He never had the nerve to, anyhow. He found a little switch at the end of what would form the balls, seeing that when he flicked it, it began to vibrate. He quickly shut it off and stuffed it into the box, seeing a little piece of white paper sticking out. Sherlock ripped it out without hesitation, reading it closely.

Hope you’re enjoying yourself with Jim, dear. Only a phone call away if you need any advice. xox IA

Sherlock hurried and put the note back into the box and hid the dildo as much as possible, shoving it deep into the suitcase, burying it underneath all of his clothes. Sherlock never felt more humiliated in his life and he was starting to question if murdering Irene was possible and worth it from all the way there in Ireland. Criminal life surely paid well, given Jim’s position, and Sherlock wasn’t afraid to flick that switch and become a notorious mastermind out of spite. He swallowed hard, trying to relax himself by mentally listing the periodic table by memory. He knew sex weaken his mind, distracted him, derailed him, made him think things he never often thought of at all. He breathed deeply, shakily reaching into his suitcase again for clothes.

Hydrogen, Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen — for a moment he thought of Jim using the dildo on him, wondering how good it would feel, wondering if it would even compete with whatever Jim had down below. Sherlock gasped for air, oxygen leaving him for a moment at the brief, lecherous fantasy, mentally slapping himself for letting thoughts like that claim him at a time like this. He just needed to change, just swap clothes, and nothing more.

He pulled out a simple white button up, searching for proper black trousers in the mixture of clothes he had packed away in his suitcase. Never again would he let Irene near his things. Another deep breath and he was once more regaining his focus, going over the periodic table again in his head. Fluorine, Neon, Sodium, Magnesium, Aluminum, Silicon, Phosphorus, Sulfur, Chlorine, Argon, Potassium... excellent. Sherlock found trousers he wanted to wear, standing tall to slip them on with ease. He then picked up the shirt and placed it on, carefully buttoning it with every correct hole so it wasn’t uneven. As he tucked his shirt in, he tried to proceed with listing the periodic table to himself.

Calcium, Scandium, Titanium, Vanadium, Chromium, Manganese, Iron, Cobalt, Nickel, Copper, Zinc, Gallium, Germanium, Arsenic, Selenium, Bromine, Krypton— he felt something soft and warm against his nape, making Sherlock jump from shock. He jolted his head around, nearly getting whiplash from how quickly he turned to see that it was Jim half naked, now registering that he placed a kiss to his neck when the man was caught within his own thoughts. Sherlock immediately zipped his suitcase, making Jim laugh.

“H-how long have you been there?” inquired Sherlock, straightening his posture as he adjusted the collar of his shirt. He averted his gaze from Jim’s upper body, still refusing to let his eyes linger, knowing it’d bring trouble elsewhere.

“Long enough to hear you count from Calcium to Krypton.” drawled Jim in that thick, Irish accent.

“Was I really saying them out loud?”

With an affirming hum, Sherlock embarrassingly went on to slip on his shoes, hearing Jim on the other side of him walk into his closet and pull out a dry suit. It was the same suit he had on from
court when Jim stole the Crown Jewels. Grey blazer and trousers, a crisp, white button up underneath, with the yellow tie he wore along with it. The only difference between then and now is that Jim grew a bit bulkier in body and had a bit more facial hair. Sherlock couldn’t help himself and peeked over to Jim who had just pulled the trousers up to his hips. His back muscles made him melt and seeing the suit brought back memories, seeing him look so handsome as he spoke in court of their meeting.

He remembered when Jim was at his flat, carving at the apple, speaking to him of the final problem. Their final problem. How he walked in, possessing his mind like a ghost, haunting him after the gunshot. The final problem was the realization that time stands still for no one, let not something be left taken for granted, for what you could have had is left a could-have-been by choice than chance. Just when he thought the last thing he would ever feel was Jim’s hand in Sherlock’s, Jim reappears, kissing him, proclaiming his love, making him feel cherished unlike anything in the world. For anyone who watched their stories intermingle, they would find it absurd. How could a consulting criminal love a consulting detective? How could a consulting detective love a consulting criminal? It was interesting, truly. Just when one thinks that something such as this is folly, one must think to themselves; once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth. What remained of them were two hearts that searched for solace and found it in each other. The solace of outcasts finding themselves in each other. The truth, beneath what they believed they were above, was love in the deepest and strangest form. Their love was the most improbable, but it was the rarest truth that anyone could ever believe.

Sherlock smiled, almost nostalgically.

“Still have that old thing?”

“I’ll have you know this old thing is rather special.” retorted Jim.

“Hm, wonder why it’s special. Getting all soft on me, Jim?”

“Well, as I’ve told you, we’re fools whether we dance or not.”

After spending time in the library reading to pass the few hours, the storm eventually calmed into a very light shower. Jim brought an umbrella along this time as he guided Sherlock to his garage. At least now he kind of understood Mycroft’s strange obsession with carrying an umbrella around at all costs. But upon entering the garage, Sherlock felt inclined to pinch himself at the many cars that were in there, seeing them all lined up like bottles on a shelf. There had to at least be twenty. He boarded on thinking whether or not these cars could also belong to his employees who were stationed at his estate as guards, but he decided against asking. There were some things that weren’t always worth finding out if he couldn’t deduce them. But as expected, Jim chose the sleek, black one in the center.

As they approached the car, Jim opened the door for Sherlock before entering the car on the other side. The car was as immaculate as though it could be new. It almost seemed brand new if it
weren’t for the bits of dirt of the wheels or the bit of dust on the windows. It was that new car smell that hit Sherlock once he gazed upon the leather seats and clean dashboard. He wondered how Jim retained such a scent after having it as long as he did, though he supposed without much wear to it, it would remain as brand new as usual.

He adjusted himself in the passenger’s seat, buckling himself up as he took small glances around the car before watching Jim buckle himself up, placing the umbrella in the back seat. Even in the library he looked so well put together, in the sacred silence they could call their own. Sherlock could hardly pay attention at points as Jim read his book in the opposite seat he sat in, as rain pitter-pattered against the glass of the windows and sliding doors leading to the balcony. He wondered to himself, right there in that car, if he ever wanted to even return to London. Of course, there’d be no doubt in the world that he would miss it. But something nagged at him that he couldn’t shake. It was the feeling of completion being with Jim in Ireland. He felt like he was hiding a big secret, like a juvenile teenager whilst living at 221 Baker Street. And surely, he was hiding a secret. Jim was his secret, even more so because no one else but him and his employees knew that he was alive. The network was still expanding and Sherlock has forfeited all desire to try and take it down. He was indifferent to Jim’s criminality at this point. He still loved more than anything a good mystery to solve, a case to pick and choose when he was bored, but there was nothing more to it than that. He was devoted to his work and sure enough he was, being with the consulting criminal himself, but it felt more like a chore when it involved the interests of others. And when did Sherlock care about the interests of others?

He was knocked out of his thoughts when his ears picked up a soft, melodic sound, only suddenly recognizing the familiar tune. Gnossiennes No. 4 by Erik Satie. The classical station. He smiled to himself, the next small thing about Jim he could appreciate. Their shared adoration for a genre that seemed so rarely cherished in the modern world. He could recall his years as a young boy, at all hours of the day and night, playing his violin. He played Vivaldi’s Four Seasons for a recital once and received first place for a flawless performance. He was already a bullied child because of his intelligence and odd social skills, but the recital gave it all the more reason to make him seem worthless or strange because of what he knew and what he liked. He was only seven. He fell passionately in love with violin after he was taken to a concerto at the Royal Albert Hall in South Kensington. It was a treat for his and Mycroft’s outstanding grades. Afterwards, he begged his parents for a violin so often it was almost the only thing he ever said to them for a whole month until they agreed. However, no lessons. But he didn’t mind. Sherlock taught himself with books and tapes, and it didn’t take very long at all before he was playing perfectly by ear. He was a prodigy. And going home to his violin everyday was his escape from the ridicule he faced at school.

He winced at the memory, the thought stinging. Of course, the casual bullying from peers didn’t harm him so much now as they did then, but the words still circulated in his mind, haunting him sometimes, whether from it was his looks, or what he liked, what he wore, and how he spoke. They no longer were the words of others, but his own to himself. Perhaps that was why it was so hard to believe Jim of all people could love him. Sure enough, he had Molly, Lestrade, John, and even Irene time to time… but it seemed that he was disconnected on certain levels when it came to them. Jim was the closest thing he knew to himself and it didn’t scare him so much as it did comfort him now. Jim made him feel as though he were special for his attributes. He was not a freak in his presence, not a machine, not ugly nor even stupid, as his brother used to consider him growing up.

Sherlock watched as they drove down a path through the groves, noticing it was a shortcut to get to Dublin quicker than riding through the farms. With the sound of Satie, seeing gentle raindrops hit the windows, and seeing trees pass them beneath a grey sky, Sherlock couldn’t help but be brought back to the present moment, with Jim at his side, away from the troubled recollections of a not so nice childhood. Though, as he thought about it, he wondered about Jim’s. With most people, he
could typically deduce their entire life stories without a word said. But with Jim, he seemed so
closed off like a book, so changeable like the weather, and so well put together for someone who
crime for simply laughing at him. If Jim had reached that point, then he only deduced,
with process of elimination, that Jim had dealt with more ridicule than Carl, and the thought
strangely hurt him. Jim’s entire past was shrouded in mystery. Perhaps it was like that for a reason,
but Sherlock couldn’t help but feel curious.

“What was your life like to this point?” blurted out Sherlock almost instantly afterwards, hoping
not to regret in asking such a subject. What a way to break the silence ever so peaceful.

Jim, who was driving, remained unflinching at the question. Of course he was taken aback by it,
but did not admonish Sherlock for asking. Perhaps it was fair since he knew Sherlock’s growing
up, but Sherlock didn’t know his own. It wasn’t something people often asked and most people
didn’t care to know, or were too afraid to ask at all. Jim was cynical, he often believed when people
asked these things, they were motivated to use it against you in the end. He didn’t trust easily. But
he knew Sherlock was different, which was why it wasn’t so disturbing when the question left his
lips.

“Why?” simply inquired Jim, pulling to the side. He turned the car off and looked his way, almost
blankly.

Sherlock felt immediate panic. “Well, you don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to, I just figured
—”

“Figured that it’s only fair you know what I was like as a kid growing up in Ireland?”

Sherlock nodded.

“You don’t have to stop the car for this.”

Jim shrugged. “We have time.”

“Don’t tell me that after you tell me your life story, you’ll kill me.”

The criminal laughed heartily, sliding his hand into Sherlock’s and bringing it to his lips to kiss.

“Okay, I won’t tell you then.”

Sherlock smirked.

“I’m only telling you because you’re the only person worth telling.”

Sherlock’s heart raced at these words. The moment felt so intimate to the Englishman that he knew
whatever Jim would tell him would be stored away in his mind forever. It was the story of his
lover, a man before his criminality. And that was what he wished to learn about the Irishman.

“I’m honored, truly.”

Jim planted another kiss to his hand.

“Because I have a feeling you won’t see me differently when I finish.”

“I won’t.”

Jim smiled faintly to himself.
“Hard to believe, but I was ordinary once. I let the events around me control who I was. My mam was a stay at home mother and my Dad, when he wasn’t drunk or high, was a rugby coach at a school. Of course, as his addictions worsened, he ended up losing his job, and that made him worse as a person. Beat my mother and I a lot when he was drunk and threatened us when he wasn’t.” He shrugged. “She tried to stick up for herself, but it got to a point where the beatings were so severe, she would have to send me to my room when I heard screaming out of my own protection. Locking myself in there was my best bet. At least until he calmed down and sobered up. She ended up killing herself because it became too much.”

Sherlock was horrified, but had said nothing out of the respect of Jim.

“After her funeral, I became more aggressive towards my father than cowardly. I was angry at him for pushing her there, angry at her for leaving me behind with him. He would still overpower me and make me thank him for being born. We were very poor and oftentimes I didn’t really get to eat and my father wouldn’t feed me anyhow when he was drunk. I used to go to school using my mam’s makeup to cover up any marks because I couldn’t risk him coming after me even if I were taken away. I was scared to speak up. But one night I snapped. Stole his gun and killed him. Made it look like a suicide. Used his hooker money to leave for England. Quite a ball, if you ask me. The English can be so unfriendly with the Irish,” he frowned for a moment in thought, “I did not fit in with my accent or how I looked. All the English boys found me loathsome. And I found them quite horrible myself.”

Jim turned to him and cupped Sherlock’s cheek reassuringly. “Except you, of course.”

Sherlock smiled momentarily.

“That was around the time I killed Carl Powers. Laughing at me because I had no friends and because I was more interested in the stars than humans. As I got older, the bullies were mostly rugby brutes who reeked of sweat and stupidity. It was either because I was gay or smarter than them. It was pathetic, really. I got into many fights. I ended up drinking and drugging myself up to feel numb, but I couldn’t shake it. After ending up hospitalized and in rehab, I became better with my addiction, treated my body better, and soon enough found what I was meant to do.”

Sherlock’s face softened. He knew Jim didn’t want to get into the nitty gritty details, but he was sure this was a lot to share on his part already. He wanted to say he couldn’t believe it, but he had to admit, he did a little. Knowing Jim had gone through so much, he couldn’t blame the Irishman with feeling a certain way about the world. Everyone and everything was rubbish.

“And here you are now, at the top of the world. Above the ordinary.” praised Sherlock.

“And with you.” added Jim, brushing his thumb across the sharpness of his cheekbone. “I want to spend the rest of my life with you, Sherlock. You are the one thing that matters most to me.”

Once again, his heart raced at his sentimental words, making Sherlock blush. He was still becoming accustomed to hearing such things, sharing such things; his eyes locked with Jim’s, making it all the harder to find the right words.

“D-ditto.” he stammered, averting his eyes shyly. Of course he meant it, wanting to stay with Jim for the rest of his life, but he was so terrible at communicating it properly.

Jim only chuckled to himself and started up the car again, glancing over to Sherlock before he drove off.

“Well, I hope it satisfied your curiosity.”
Sherlock blinked for a moment, trying to gather his thoughts again. “A bit… I am just wondering how you’ve managed all your life to be confident enough to deflect it.”

“Deflecting the views of others? By knowing it’s their word against yours. Anyone with a simple mind can’t hardly be worth the battle. An idiot will find something to mock you about if they can’t compete with you mentally.” He smirked. “As it’s usually the mentally weak who try to make themselves bigger than they are. They use their fears as a weapon. A pretty shit weapon at that. Then, you see nothing but how pathetic they are.”

“Doesn’t it still haunt you?”

“Sherlock,” began Jim, “you need not give into the ordinariness of the world. People will always mock what is different. But you already hold something greater than all of them of which they’ll never have. That is your power over them.”

Sherlock couldn’t help but smile to himself and lean over to press an appreciative kiss to Jim’s cheek.

“Now, let’s get going before a bear finds us and tries to maul the car.” said Jim.

Just as the rain was letting up some, the sun started to peek through the clouds. For late afternoon, the clouds were orange and pink from the sun and melting into the sky in the most beautiful pastels. Jim led Sherlock to the restaurant, taking a seat outside on the balcony, with a fantastic view of the Dublin bay. The sun glittered upon the water almost like magic and the after storm breeze and smell of rain was like a strange, comforting high to the detective. Thankfully, the outside seats were dried of the rain, so they could lounge comfortably with the marvelous sight of the water to go with their meals. From inside the restaurant, there was a skilled harpist that played Dublin Streets, the sound of the sweet and melodic song lulling the atmosphere into a relaxed state.

As Sherlock let his mind drift, he imagined a small, very young Jim, running about the streets of Dublin, causing trouble and having fun; completely swallowed whole in his youth. That was only just a thought, a very sweet one at that, but nothing short of false after the life Jim had lived. It was strange to think that being in his hometown didn’t bother the Irishman any. It was stranger to think he found solace in it than anywhere else. He wondered if this was the closest way of Jim sticking to his roots. He may not have been seen as that type of man, but it was a mere observation, seeing as how he seemed so at ease. He watched as the criminal sipped at his whiskey and placed it down on their table, also lost in his own thoughts as his dark eyes mentally recorded the view before him. Even though Jim stayed in Wicklow, it was clear that Ireland as a whole was as dear to him as England was to Sherlock, with London as his beating heart. There was a saying that you can take the man out of the country, but you couldn’t take the country out of the man. It couldn’t be more true.

Sherlock sipped at his own glass of whiskey as he gazed out at the water, having already finished his meal which consisted of Irish coddle stew and soda bread with butter. Jim, of course, ordered the same thing. He reached his hand out towards Jim’s, as though it were magnetically attracted to
his. It took a few moments before Jim felt Sherlock’s skin brush against his own and he took his
hand, gently squeezing at it. A dreamy sigh escaped Sherlock, relishing in the better sight of his
lover as Jim sat there watching the glittering water and seagulls fly about. Though, in the next
minute, Jim turned to him, his own eyes warm as he now gazed upon Sherlock. Their silence
couldn’t be more comfortable, but Jim decided to break it.

“What do we say we head over to the Cliffs of Moher?”

Sherlock nodded eagerly and the two downed their whiskey. It gave Sherlock a little buzz for a
moment, unlike Jim, who loved his whiskey so much that downing it had little to no effect on him.
Jim ended up paying for the both of them and headed inside and down the spiral stairs for the exit.
Their hands hadn’t parted from one another’s til they reached the car, which was parked outside
the restaurant.

Sherlock sat in the passenger’s seat again, buckling up as Jim buckled up in the driver’s seat, the
song he heard from the restaurant stuck in his head. It was a lovely piece, very loyal to its Irish
roots. He was never so connected to a song than that one. Perhaps it was because it now held a
memory. A memory with Jim that was so dream-like he wished he would never wake up if it was.
He knew staying here was for his protection, but he boldly questioned if he ever wanted to go back
to London. He knew how much he loved it there, but he also knew how alone he felt. He just
wanted to be with Jim, no matter where they were to reside. This he knew, but was uncertain if he’d
ever open up about it to the criminal. On the way to the Cliffs of Moher, Sherlock couldn’t help
but admire Jim as he placed a cigarette between his lips. Ultralights. Sherlock smirked at his tastes.
He looked rather handsome with the wind whipping through his raven hair, wearing his dark Fendi
sunglasses. He couldn’t ignore that gorgeous stubble, or that intoxicating cologne that filled his
nostrils with the reminder of what life could be if he threw caution to the wind.

It wasn’t very long before they arrived at their intended location. The Cliffs of Moher presented
themselves to them along with Hag’s Head at the very end. They exited the car, once more hand in
hand as they walked toward the green cliffs, hanging over Liscannor bay, the waters ever so deep
and blue. But Jim swore that Sherlock’s eyes were bluer than any sea he’d ever cross. They were
filled with things so grand that the bay herself would envy such beauty. Jim had rid of his cigarette
and blew out the smoke, letting their hands clasped one another, swing to and fro as they enjoyed
the sight, journeying to the end where Hag’s Head stood.

“You know,” began Jim, “before all that shit happened, my Mam used to take me here sometimes.
She knew I liked looking at the water. I would bring my books out here to read as she got away
from home, when my dad was at work or at the pub. She knew I also liked fairy tales. It was the
one way I coped. One day, when I finished my book, I got bored. She told me the story of Hag’s
Head. The child version, anyhow.”

“What’s the adult version?” inquired Sherlock, stopping as they finally reached Hag’s Head.
Moher Tower stood tall, visibly aged by the weather and lack of upkeep over the years. It was a
Napoleonic-era watchtower, built to keep vigilant of Napoleon’s reign in the early 1800s.

“A woman named Mal fell in love with a hero named Cú Chulainn. She was madly in love with
him, but he didn’t feel the same. Everywhere he turned, she was there, and he grew to dislike her
more and more. He ended up in Loop Head to escape her, putting the sea stacks to use as a way to
escape her. She tried to follow him and lost footing, ending up being taken by the sea. Her blood
has been said to stain the sea to this day.” He explained as Sherlock leaned against the stone wall of
the tower. At this point the sun was setting and twilight was taking over. “Quite lovely, isn’t it?”

“Now I wonder what the child version of that could be.”
“That Mal had cooties and Cú didn’t want them, so he ran away so fast that Mal fell into the water, so humiliated, and became a part of the sea.” smirked Jim.

Sherlock snorted.

“Children will believe anything.”

“They sure will.”

“My Mum said I would be the best pirate one day.”

“Oh Sherlock,” grinned Jim, “that’s adorable. You know it isn’t too late to be a pirate.”

“Not the pirate I’ve always wanted to be.” teased the detective.

“Well, one day you and I will take my yacht, and you can live your dream.”

Sherlock hummed softly, daringly pressing a kiss to Jim’s hand.

“And I get to be Captain Holmes?”

“You get to be Captain Holmes.”

Jim leaned up and planted a kiss to his lips. But Sherlock craved more. He slung an arm around him and pulled him close, making the Irishman smile against his kiss. Jim cupped Sherlock’s face with both hands and held him just as close, their eyes fluttering shut, time seeming to stand still to them. Sherlock could taste the whiskey, cigarette, and faint mint on his lips and tongue as they stood there, feeding off of each other’s lips and breaths on Hag’s Head. He still tasted divine. And how delightful he was to kiss. He missed this. After all that time spent away from the consulting criminal, the Englishman truly understood what it was like to suffer from a lack of such gratifying physical affection. It was dreadful. It frustrated him, when there was hardly an outlet, a way to satiate the urge. Sherlock sometimes felt insecure with how he kissed back, with the shorter man more experienced than him. But he started not to mind so much, since the more he kissed, the more he learned.

Jim couldn’t contain himself. He brushed his tongue over his bottom lip, earning permission immediately as Sherlock willingly parted his lips. The only sounds that could be heard were the waves crashing below against the rocks, the sound of lips smacking, and soft moans filling their ears. Sherlock’s nails gently dug into the back of Jim’s blazer, panting, trying to get a grasp on reality as his eyes fluttered open to see that the sky was darkening. That was cue for Jim; he parted from Sherlock’s lips, craning his head to his lovely, slender, white neck, to kiss and to bite. After removing the blue scarf from out of his way, softly, Jim sucked at the unmarked skin with concentrated vigor. He only wanted Sherlock to feel good, to mark him and show the world who he belonged to. Not a soul would he share him with.

“Jim…” Sherlock was biting at his lip so hard he thought it would bleed. “...not here, don’t tease me here…”

Jim removed himself from Sherlock’s neck when he felt he had finished, admiring the red-purple work of art he left behind. He longed to decorate Sherlock in his kisses, let the canvas of his body be painted with passion. Upon hearing Sherlock beg, he looked up to Sherlock’s flustered expression, making Jim smile slyly.

“Are you implying that you want me to tease you at home?”
Sherlock affixed his eyes to the grass, bashfully.

“W-we might be seen…”

“There is hardly a soul here today. But thank you for tip-toeing around the question, Sherlock, I find your enthusiasm most amusing.”

“Just take me back!” cried Sherlock, already a mess tangled in his spider’s web.

Jim stepped away from Sherlock as he slid his hand into the detective’s, holding it to his lips, peppering worshiping kisses to every knuckle.

“Your wish is my command, darling.”
Chapter 10

The ride back to Jim’s estate certainly felt like a long and arduous journey. The entire time Jim drove, there would be occasions he would periodically reach over and grab Sherlock’s thigh, then slide his hand up and down as though it were an animal which longed to be pet. Sherlock couldn’t help that his legs would naturally part at the lewd touches of his lover, nor could he help that a certain something was growing a need for more attention. Sherlock breathed deeply, trying to fight whatever wanton sounds wished to leave him, trying to recount the chemicals of the periodic table to himself mentally. He was needy, and never had he felt so needy before. Not like this. He didn’t often have the libido of a teenager, but in this moment, it was extremely high (with no thanks to the Irishman), but he managed himself. It was almost as if years of repressed sexuality was finally coming to haunt, to possess him, remind him that he was very much indeed human. He didn’t understand why a part of him tried to resist his touch, as much as he craved him in that seat. Perhaps it was the fact he was still trying to find his footing in the entirety of this relationship. He didn’t know what sex was really like and he never had it with anyone before. Aside from the rare porn search, he really was clueless, and wondered how Jim would go about it, and if he would please the man who seemed to long for him so much.

Sherlock couldn’t help but feel a bit insecure. He knew that Jim was an experienced man. The criminal was difficult to deduce, but there were very obvious signs that easily suggested he knew exactly what he would be doing, and with no doubt a confidence that the detective lacked. For one thing, it was very much capable for him to do the things that Jim did, but mustering up the courage in feeling as though he did it right or was attractively saying something or doing something wanted, was a stressful thought within itself. He also had to admit that if that is where things were heading, then he wondered if that dildo needed to be taken out of his suitcase upon their return. Would Jim really believe that Irene set him up with it? He was much too intelligent to think otherwise, but that thought also made him blush. Perhaps he would keep it to himself until he was ready. It was still very embarrassing. For their first time, it most likely wasn’t necessary, and just wanted to feel Jim’s skin against his own.

Yet all these questions wouldn’t cease their nagging. Would it hurt? Would Sherlock get boring? Would Jim hate him if he wanted to stop? For a moment, fear bolted through him, and he felt his heart leap when he heard the other man call his name.

“Earth to Sherlock,” began Jim. They were already in the garage again, “I’ve been calling your name for the past then minutes.”

Sherlock’s jaw untensed and his eyes flickered over to the shorter man in the driver’s seat, who raised a brow at his silence.

“Sorry— I do that too often.” replied Sherlock rather awkwardly, fumbling with his seat belt. He noticed he was still semi-hard, his insecurities and Jim’s voice piercing his thoughts notably the
reason why he mostly softened.

Jim reluctantly moved his hand, cupping Sherlock’s cheek.

“Don’t be. What’s on your mind, sweetheart?”

Sherlock absentmindedly licked his lips, which felt awfully dry.

“N-nothing important.”

As his seatbelt clicked from the lock, he could hear Jim hum in a I don’t think so kind of tone.

“Mm, is that why you were reviewing the periodic table aloud again?”

Sherlock, of course, immediately became bashful. “W-was I?”

Jim nearly responded when Sebastian entered the garage to find his own car. As he sauntered through with his keys slinging around his finger, whistling some annoying tune he heard on the radio earlier that day. Sherlock turned his head to the source of the sound, opening the car door to step out from the passenger’s side. This was the first time he had seen the sniper more up close without being in the middle of a shooting or right when he was about to make amends with the Irishman. There was something about the blonde, however, that didn’t quite feel right. He deduced him properly at first glance. They were the same height, 6’0. Sebastian recently got a haircut, most likely his bangs were becoming harder to manage during different assignments, not to mention the nuisance it would cause trying to snipe. He was an ex-colonel. This was easy to point out because of the marks on his right thumb and index, marks that inferred a long period of pressing against the edge of a trigger of a M24 rifle. There were also lines formed above his forehead and lines that could have been mistaken for crows feet, yet instead, were from times of strenuous use on the eyes, to get very careful and accurate shots of his targets. He could also tell the job did him well, because Sebastian walked with a confident poise, through his thin, black button up, with a body that has undergone extreme training through the years beneath it. He could tell by his muscles beneath the rolled up sleeves that he was always on active duty, needing to stay in shape for what he was asked to do next. He was extremely skilled, considerably, the second most dangerous man in London. Jim being the first. Sherlock was mildly impressed.

Jim also exited the car as he noticed Sebastian coming through, realizing he hadn’t quite introduced Sherlock to him properly. Sebastian’s attention was caught as the two stood by his car, which was parked right next to Jim’s, and thankfully right—not a single scratch on the Irishman’s car or else there’d be Hell to pay. Sebastian was extremely careful, not only because his head was on the line, but because his trust with his boss was either all or nothing, and he didn’t want to lose it.

The sniper halted in his tracks once he reached his car’s rear, leaning against the truck. He studied the detective who stood outside his car, curious, not exactly impressed the way Jim painted him up to be. But before he could say anything, he watched as Jim approached Sherlock’s side, interlocking their hands together almost as instinct. This made Sebastian narrow his eyes, the keys no longer swinging on his finger.

“I don’t think we’ve properly met.” Sebastian reluctantly reached his hand, pursing his lips as he was finally face to face with Sherlock.

Sherlock noticed that he reluctantly reached his hand out, and with a slightly quizzical look, also accepted it reluctantly within his free hand to shake cordially. The grasp on the Englishman’s hand was tight and rather uncomfortable, but Sherlock persevered until Sebastian pulled away.
“No, I don’t think we have. But thank you for getting me out of that office…”

“Simply following orders.” replied the other man, wearing an obvious fake smile.

Sherlock placed his hand which was shaken into his coat pocket, wishing to nurse it with his other hand, but instead let the sting of his grasp subside. The detective also feigned a smile. It was clear the sniper was being purposely unpleasant behind a pleasant exterior. Sherlock was no angel, but he even put aside his pride to thank him. British politeness, he supposed.

“Right.”

“Well, we won’t keep you, Moran.” hummed Jim, not at all having paid mind to that exchange. “In the morning I’ll need to see you in my office about our next operation. Be there at nine.”

Sebastian nodded, watching sharply as the two men began to walk off. Sherlock’s gaze fell to his feet as he passed by the blonde, feeling as though his insecurities were swallowing whole him. He tried to recall the words that Jim said earlier on, about how he managed confidence with everything he had gone through, but they seemed so far off from his mind now.

But as Sherlock was walking, his scarf fluttered with the pace of his movement, and Sebastian caught a glimpse of the large, red-purple mark on his neck. This prompted Sebastian to unlock his car, hurrying inside as he let himself crash into his seat, his eyes darkening at the sight. Envy rose in his chest like a wildfire, spreading through his entire being like a ghost released from its unholy prison.

How he loathed the consulting detective, who had nerve to be the object of Jim’s thoughts and desires for years! Sebastian never heard the end of it, not once. Sherlock Holmes this, Sherlock Holmes that -- it truly was horrific. Never had he met someone so hellbent on a single man.

At first, it was an obsession of plotting Sherlock’s demise. Sebastian didn’t quite mind, he was on board with that. But he could see the changes in Jim’s behavior during the lapses of time Jim didn’t see Sherlock. His mania was much more triggered in these periods, where not even his boss’ medication would keep him under wraps. And how could he forget Irene Adler visits, where they would talk hours about a man who meant so little to the ex-colonel. Soon, he saw the slow changes, perhaps the ideas planted in his mind from the wicked mouth of the dominatrix. From bloodthirsty to smitten, then from smitten to love. He was in major disbelief that the head criminal loved. He didn’t think a cold blooded criminal like James Moriarty, who often lacked empathy for those around him, was hardly capable of it. What was so precisely profound about Sherlock Holmes? And how did he change Jim?

Sebastian rolled his eyes, buckling his seat belt. He felt compelled to hurt Sherlock, a flicker of irritation flashing through him at the thought of Jim kissing or touching him. Of all people, he chose a man on the opposite side of the law. He wondered if his boss really thought this one through. More than likely, as he also sickly hoped, that it wouldn’t last, and the Irish menace would return to how he used to be.

As Sherlock and Jim ambled down the long hall, the detective turned to Jim.

“I don’t think I’m ready, for um…”

Jim perked up at Sherlock’s voice and stopped in his tracks, looking Sherlock dead in the eyes as though Sherlock said something completely outrageous.

“Sherlock, I shouldn’t hope you’d think I’d force this upon you.” He leaned forward, pressing a
lingering, chaste kiss to the Englishman’s plush lips. “Are you alright?”

Sherlock felt a flood of warmth rush through him, almost like the sun that morning beaming down at him during breakfast. It was that moment where Jim awakened a feeling of relief in him in which he never felt before. It was like a partial weight that lifted from his shoulders. The reassuring kiss was certainly the cherry on top. Though, admittedly, there was still the small weight left that burdened him, one in that he could not shake. Sebastian Moran. Sherlock wasn’t a fool, he could easily deduce that Sebastian felt some immediate resentment towards him. He didn’t know when it began or how it started, but he knew that being who he was, at Jim’s side, where the criminal world prowled, was immensely provoking for the criminal employee. But he reminded himself to stand firm. He couldn’t be daunted by one unwelcoming force. Just because he wasn’t a criminal, it didn’t mean that they couldn’t be together.

As they arrived back to Jim’s bedroom, Sherlock kicked off his shoes and placed them to the side, slipping out of his coat and scarf, hanging it in the closet. He entered the bathroom, flicked on the light, and picked out his toothbrush from the holder, watching Jim follow behind to do the same. The silence was comfortable between them, Sherlock knew neither of them had to speak in order to fill a gap that already spoke so loudly. It was a language only known to them and one Sherlock wouldn’t trade for the world.

Once they were finished, Jim turned from Sherlock and stripped of his garments one by one, placing his clothing into his hamper, before exiting the bathroom to find some pajama trousers and an old shirt to sleep in. Sherlock stood dumbly like a statue for at least a minute before realizing that he often slept naked. Granted, he only slept little at night, given his insomnia, but sleeping nude was his default state of comfort. He glanced outside the bathroom to see Jim slipping into his pajama trousers. He decided to himself that he would have to make do in at least showing off some skin, but not without shyly covering up his bum and the rest of his body.

Jim had pulled back the covers and was about to slip underneath his sheets, yet turned his head when he heard Sherlock yawn behind him. There he was, stretching, trouserless, only clad in a pair of boxer briefs and t-shirt. With that tall and lean physique, slender yet muscular build he could see peeking from beneath the shirt as it raised with his posture and arms, chiseled features, and toned legs, Sherlock looked good enough to devour. Jim grinned, beckoning him with a finger as he slipped into bed. Sherlock chewed at his lip and slowly sauntered into bed alongside him. This would pretty much be the first time he would ever sleep beside Jim, who seemed properly dressed for bed, unlike him.

“This is a huge step from earlier, big boy.” flirted the Irishman. “Come to daddy.”

With that said, Jim opened his arms wide, and Sherlock couldn’t help but blush, moving next to Jim on the other side of the bed. Slowly, Jim wrapped his arms around him from behind, placing a soft kiss to his nape that sent a shiver down the Englishman’s spine. Jim buried his face into the crook of Sherlock’s neck, chin resting against his shoulder.

“Well, I usually am most comfortable sleeping nude.” said Sherlock. “Not quite ready to sleep nude, at the moment, I suppose.”

“And that’s alright, my love. You mean more to me than a nude body. Whatever you want.” Jim kissed his cheek.

Sherlock couldn’t help but smile. He appreciated the fact that he didn’t feel pressured by him at all. Of course, more than anything, he would have wanted to be this comfortable with him. But the detective, oddly, had no idea why he felt too shy to do so, at the moment. Jim moved his hand to rub his shoulder and arm, but how his skin brushed against the detective’s made him giggle in
response. Jim curiously raised a brow for a moment before a wicked smile spread across his lips.

“Is the great Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective of London, ticklish?” He feigned a flabbergasted gasp.

Sherlock’s eyes widened. Of course he was ticklish, very much so. His mother used to tickle him all the time as a small child, it was a dark secret of his for years. He never liked admitting it and would hope no one would find out.

“N-no.”

A sinister laugh escaped Jim as he heard the hesitation and fear in Sherlock’s voice, prompting Jim to tickle up and down Sherlock’s abdomen, showing absolutely no mercy. Sherlock cried with laughter as he twitched and squirmed in his arms, mentally slapping himself for ever stuttering, gently kicking Jim’s legs as he felt his fingers move about his belly, chest, and sides.

“Liar.” breathed Jim.

He moved his hand to Sherlock’s back and his other to his nape, making the detective arch his back and dance, whining as he tried to move away with soft pleas. Jim, of course, dodged Sherlock’s every attempt to thwart him, pressing against him and wrapping his arms around him tightly, continuous tickles pouring from his fingers.

“J-Jim, p-please!”

Jim loved Sherlock’s laugh, but nothing compared to this. The taller man was so adorable laughing so heartily, it simply made the smaller man melt with joy. Jim adhered to his wish, for now—though there were no promises he would return with it as a tactic for torture. Sherlock relaxed, wiping tears from his eyes as he turned to Jim.

“I shall never trust you again.” huffed Sherlock.

“Trusting me was your first mistake, Sherlock.” He teased. “Now I’ve found a weakness I can use to my advantage.”

Sherlock was pink from laughter and a hint of embarrassment, moving his hand to Jim’s stomach to tickle as a way of payback, only earning a smug expression in response. Jim didn’t laugh one bit.


“And there’s a thin line between love and hate, Sherly.” He snaked his arm around Sherlock’s waist, pulling him close. “You’ll cross back over it soon enough.”

Jim kissed Sherlock’s nose, his hand gently trailing up his spine. Sherlock relaxed at his touch and moved closer, but before Sherlock knew it, he tensed and laughter erupted from his lips, those in which smiled against its will. How cruel Jim was! Sherlock thought this was the end of his antics. He tried to grab his hand, making Jim move it toward the front again. He tickled at his belly, to what Sherlock also tried to shield with his life, but failed. It only took two minutes before Sherlock had enough, gripping at Jim’s wrist, stopping the hand that did the most damage.

“You’re despicable. Don’t torture me like that anymore.” grumbled Sherlock.

“I have to find some form of punishment for you when you’re this cute.” sighed Jim.

“I’m not cute. Stop.” warned the detective, flustered, burying his face into Jim’s chest. He didn’t
understand why Jim made him feel this way or how. “I’m a grown man.”

“You are so cute, I simply can’t help it, darling. But if you wish, I’ll find another form of punishment.” smirked the criminal. “I think hickeys are in season.”

“T-that’s not necessary.”

“You have something better, then?”

“Be quiet, before I give you a proper thrashing.”

“Mm, but I love you, Sherlock.”

“But do I love you? That’s the real question.”

“You dooooooo.”

Sherlock smiled sheepishly to himself. Of course he still loved Jim, he just wouldn’t give him the satisfaction of hearing it now.

The silly conversation soon subsided into yet another comfortable silence. Sherlock’s eyes were shut, and so was Jim’s, but neither did the two fall asleep for a very long time. The Englishman’s arms wrapped around Jim’s neck as he nuzzled his face more into his chest, the scent of his cologne and body wash strongly hitting his nose. Hours passed, but it wasn’t until 2AM, that the two men drifted off into a peaceful slumber, entangled within one another.

By morning, Sherlock awoke not long after Jim. As he stirred, he could hear moving around in the bathroom, causing him to rub his eyes sleepily. A gentle yawn escaped him and Sherlock glanced around before he caught up with his mind and realized it was Jim. He could pick up on the aroma of cologne coming from the bathroom, making him dizzy with neediness. It was obvious that the criminal was preparing for work, and glancing at the time was only just confirmation of it. It was half past seven. Quite early, but rather common for people who worked like Jim did. Sherlock could only partially relate. When he worked cases, they didn’t have specific hours of what time he needed to do such and such. It was all in the time he was able to figure everything out for Scotland Yard.

Before Sherlock could even rise up from bed, he saw Miss Moriarty come casually strolling in, hopping onto the bed Sherlock lay in, and plopped right beside him. She greeted him with a soft meow and brushed her tail against his hand, hinting to him to spoil her with affection. Sherlock chuckled sweetly, reaching out and petting her head, brushing his thumb behind her ear. As he started to know the cat more, he became more fond of her. This gesture earned him delighted purrs and a good headbutt right into his hand. He found her quite therapeutic and still wished to himself he had a cat for his own at Baker Street. For a moment, he forgot about the weight of Sebastian and the meeting of last night, all which worried him melted away. But it all flooded back when Jim sauntered into the bedroom, adjusting the cuffs on his shirt; even the breathtaking sight of Jim in one of his designer suits, looking like a million bucks could not lift what weighed him in this next
“Good morning, dearest,” greeted Jim, walking over and to press a kiss on his lips. Sherlock could taste and smell the mint on his breath from the toothpaste his lover used, “I’ll be with Sebastian all day and a client. I won’t be home until three, but from then I’ll be in my office until seven tonight.”

Sherlock’s heart dropped. That was approximately 12 hours without him. Sherlock didn’t understand why he felt so clingy, but he knew that it was quite a long time not seeing Jim. Of course, they spent weeks, months, and even years apart before, but now, more than ever, he didn’t want to part from him. He nodded in understanding, knowing it was best to honor his space, and let him work in peace. He didn’t try to stop him because he had no real desire to. Jim using his brain to skillfully craft master crimes only made Sherlock more attracted to him, and had the only real and true desire to solve each one.

“And you,” began Jim, looking at his cat, “what are you doing here, you spoiled, little gremlin?”

The cat perked up when Jim paid her attention, getting up to brush against his hand affectionately, making the criminal smile.

“Better behave whilst I’m gone. And don’t harass Sherlock.”

“Hardly harassment. She’s lovely company.” admitted Sherlock, carefully picking her up to hold her in his arms. Miss Moriarty began to lick at his jaw and chin, which tickled the detective as well.

“She’s found your tickle spot, it seems. But when I did, it was harassment.” teased Jim.

“Because you’re cruel. You’d probably try to make me piss myself.” Sherlock pressed a gentle kiss to the head of the soft, white feline. “Your daddy is just the worst.”

Miss Moriarty only responded with a quiet meow, as though she understood and agreed with Sherlock’s comment. Jim only scoffed.

“Don’t you two make a wonderful pair.” He rolled his eyes. “Don’t miss my presence too much.”

“Noted.” smirked Sherlock, setting Miss Moriarty down as he brushed down her back.

Jim only mirrored his smirk, gently pulling on his blazer and buttoning it up, making sure there were no hairs on him and his collar and tie looked presentable. It was at this point he was finished completely getting dressed, not looking forward to parting from Sherlock. He reached over and ran his fingers through Sherlock’s messy bed curls, gazing down at him as Sherlock gazed up to see what Jim wanted.

“I don’t mean to be so busy as of late. I’ll make it up to you, I promise.”

“I should hope so, Mr. Moriarty, I’m already much too fond of your attention as it is. Taking it away is just like taking candy from a baby.” teased Sherlock.

“Well, I’ll be here later on. If you miss me that much, feel free to stop by and remind me how awful I am.” joked Jim, leaning down to give Sherlock another kiss. How his lips were always so soft. “Au revoir, Mr. Holmes.”

Sherlock loathed the feeling of Jim pulling away, ever so reluctant, wanting to have kissed him longer and longer. Perhaps he was a bit greedy, but they did just reunite and go on a date. He was hoping to let that feeling settle instead of waiting for Jim to return again so soon. He shooed the
feeling off. He didn’t want to seem too needy for his attention, remembering that there were other things he could do to fill up that time.

Miss Moriarty cried out to Sherlock for more attention from him, yet all Sherlock did was gently scratch beneath her chin. He didn’t feel like wasting away the day lying there. That was boring. Instead, the consulting detective got up from bed, and went on ahead to the bathroom. To get ready. First, he brushed his teeth, took a well needed shower, dried off, shaved, threw on a simple blue t-shirt and grey sweatpants, and finally let his damp curls air dry. By the time it was 8:45, Sherlock had just about finished. He dug through his suitcase for some socks when he came across his phone and his charger in one of the small pockets. He didn’t realize he had forgotten it. The last place he had it was charging in his bedroom before he was kidnapped by Samuel George’s goons.

The consulting detective tried to flick it on, noticing that it was just about dying from a low battery. He found the outlet just above Jim’s desk beside his laptop, plugging it in and widening when he noticed all the missed calls and messages he received. John, Mycroft, Molly, and Irene. He nearly fainted. Over fifty of them. How would he be able to explain that he was with the world’s most dangerous criminal? How would he expand on that further in reassurance that he wasn’t kidnapped, but indeed having dates, kissing, and flirting with him? He rubbed his temples in frustration, sighing. He decided to call Irene first, as much as he despised the idea.

“Well, look who decided not to be a stranger,” answered Irene after the first few rings, “I was hoping all the great sex didn’t make you forget about me.”

“Oh be quiet! I saw the little gift you left me.” snarled Sherlock.

“Wonderful! I was going to ask you about that. Did you use it yet?”

“No! Why would you do that?”

“Why not? It was a token of my generosity. Be grateful, you fussy virgin.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes. “Thanks.”

“Sarcasm noted. Why have you called? Must be serious if you aren’t texting me as you always do. Have you and that naughty Irishman patched things up yet?”

“We have. Everything’s fine.” said Sherlock, but it didn’t sound particularly confident.

“Sounds unsure. Care to explain?”

“I don’t know… Something’s off.”

“Something?”

“Someone.”

“Someone, now that is more interesting. Who?”

“His sniper... I don’t feel comfortable. I sense resentment from him, more than I believe should be earned.”

“Well, dear, you are still an enemy. Many of his employees won’t be quite happy that their boss is consorting with the enemy.”

“It seems targeted.”
“Well, which one is it? He has quite a few snipers. But none of them are as skilled as Sebastian. And Sebastian, from what I remember, seems to be with him often.”

There was a pang in his chest. “Yes, him.”

“Ah, Sebastian. He’s a charming fellow, and was always a gentleman when I was around. Though…”

“Though?”

“I remember he was always so protective of Jim. Granted, that is his job, but he has the fiercest way of going about it. Though it meant nothing romantic on my part, he seemed a bit upset when I kissed his cheek one time as I greeted him goodbye. He might be jealous of you. Just keep a lookout for more clues. Don’t let your feelings cloud your deductive skills. You’re better than that.”

Sherlock’s throat went dry. No wonder why he felt so tense meeting Sebastian. He felt like a deer in headlights when shaking his hand. There was something in his demeanor that seemed untrue to how he tried to present. Now he realized that Sebastian was jealous of him. Perhaps he couldn’t realize it at first. Being the most observant man often came with its flaws. Chances are, Jim didn’t realize it either. But Sherlock didn’t want to think about it. He was silent for a long time before Irene broke the wordless conversation between them.

“I wouldn’t worry too much. Jim is crazy about you. Literally. He did all those things just to get your attention. He saved you from Samuel George. You were the biggest topic we spoke about before he revealed he was alive to you. But don’t tell him I said that, though. I was sworn to secrecy. Sebastian is no real threat and even if he were to try and hurt you, Jim would really make sure to wipe him off the planet.”

Sherlock was a bit relieved to hear that. After all, he would expect Irene to know the truth about Sebastian and what he was like more than Sherlock did himself. He did just meet the man yesterday. But he would try not to let whatever jealousy the sniper felt get in the way of how he felt for Jim. Jim was important to him and that would never change, not even for a moment.

“Thanks…”

“You’re welcome.”

There was a bit of feminine giggling from the other end and Sherlock raised a brow. It strangely sounded familiar.

“Who is that with you?” inquired Sherlock, suspiciously.

“A friend.”

“What friend?”

“A friend. Our friend. But most specifically, my new friend. Met her when she came to check up on you the day before yesterday whilst Jim was coming to your rescue. She’s awfully cute, Molly, this lovely girl.”

Sherlock’s eyes widened. “She’s with you?”

“Well, I was just about leaving. She seemed really concerned so I told her the truth, about Jim and all. She was rather shocked and angry and said she was going to tell the police, but I think I’ve
convinced her quite well to keep quiet. She’s rather obedient.”

Sherlock furrowed his brows, not wanting to even think of what Irene was hinting at.

“This— well, good. Tell her I said hello.”

There was a brief pause for a moment before Irene returned to the phone.

“She says hello back. We may come visit up there and have ourselves a double date if we’re able to.”

Sherlock didn’t know how to respond.

“Um… okay… should I let Jim know?”

“No need, I’ll handle it. Oh! I’ve reassured John with a lie that you’re away with me on holiday and I also told Mrs. Hudson the same. And big brother believes it too, as much as he is furious with you because he needs you to work on dismantling Jim’s network. Within a month, everything should be cleared up and you can come to Baker Street again.” Sherlock could hear her grinning on the other side of the phone. “Have fun, dear, don’t forget to tell me how it goes.”

“Like I would ever tell you anything about that!” Sherlock’s cheeks dusted pink.

Irene laughed heartily as if Sherlock said the most humorous thing in the world.

“Sherlock, please, I’m only joking. Don’t overheat your circuits. With how much you two slob over each other I figured it’d happen by now.”

“Well it hasn’t.”

“I’m aware. You’re clearly frustrated.”

“Frustrated?”

“Yes. Extremely. Sexual frustration can be solved in many ways. And here you are having not solved it yet.”

“I’m just…” Sherlock’s cheeks reddened from the light pinkness it once held. “…not ready.”

“Aw, there’s no rush, love. But try not to worry too much either. Do it in your own time. Jim is a lot gentler than meets the eye and he wouldn’t be in love with you if he didn’t find you ideal.”

As Sherlock listened, he softened completely. Of course he knew Jim wasn’t vicious or forceful, but he was just so insecure about what he would’ve thought about him. And it was strange too, considering how often Jim complimented him and placed him onto a pedestal. Sherlock didn’t see himself through Jim’s eyes. Sometimes he wished he did.

“Thank you.” replied Sherlock, glancing at the clock. It was 9:25.

“Of course. What can I say? I’m an expert at this sort of thing. Now beat it, I have to go do some important work.”

Sherlock wondered for a moment if Irene actually had work to do or if that alluded to just messing around with Molly. He’d never really know or understand her mind. But he had to appreciate what she did for him and Jim. A lesbian wingwoman with solid expertise. He almost felt at this point he could trust Irene with his life, but perhaps even that was a bit of a stretch.
The call had then ended and Sherlock set his phone down, locking it and leaving it be. He allowed himself the liberty of entertaining himself with another book. He supposed Jim owned a copy of Edgar Allan Poe’s complete works. The Murders in the Rue Morgue was his favorite. He did a little stretch and it grabbed a pair of socks from his suitcase, slipping them on, and going to leave. But as soon as he twisted the knob and tried to leave, there was one of Jim’s employees already before him. He was a few inches shorter than he was, mousey hair with light silver stands indicating his age no older than 39 or on the cusp, freckled, and had light blue eyes. Sherlock could deduce that from his calves and his biceps, and even his figure, the man was athletic and always kept fit. He had the personality of an ambivert, judging by his hand in the pocket of his phone— he adored his alone time and yet enjoyed socializing at the same time.

“Yes? Can I help you?” inquired Sherlock, stuffing his hands into his pockets.

“My name is Patrick and Mr. Moriarty had me assigned to you today. He informed me that should you need anything, I’ll have it done for you.”

Judging by the gun on his waist, he was definitely one of Jim’s bodyguards, and from the sound of his voice he was definitely English—an East End Londoner with a very prominent cockney accent. But for some reason, he was trying to hide it. Most likely to sound more proper. Not that he cared. But Sherlock found himself in a very awkward position, however, trying to figure out the reason why Jim went such lengths to pamper him. Granted, Sherlock was lazy, he was one of the biggest procrastinators one could ever meet, though he wasn’t sure if the man was necessary for a day of reading and lounging around. Though even then, maybe a bit of luxury wasn’t too bad.

“Sure…” he stepped out of Jim’s bedroom, glancing over to him once he stepped past. “...Perhaps some tea? Earl Grey? I was just on my way to the library.”

“Alright then, I’ll get it for you.” said the bodyguard, following him. “Anything else?”

Sherlock wet his lips and sighed, really not used to such attention from someone other than Jim.

“Just talk normally. I can tell you’re trying to sound more like me than yourself.” He proceeded onto walking.

But the bodyguard rushed over beside him once more, taken aback by what Sherlock said.

“Y’know?”

Sherlock’s brows knitted in bewilderment. “Of course I do, it’s obvious.”

Patrick stood there almost speechless as he watched the detective march on through the long hall, making his way down to the library, with Miss Moriarty rushing behind him.

As Sherlock entered inside, he took delight in the scent of old books that filled the air. And the smell of pine that came from the outside trees near the windows. It was a wonderful combination. With the lovely feline following his lead, Sherlock strolled through the different aisles until he finally reached the P-section, browsing the many books aligned alphabetically upon the shelf. It took him at least five minutes until he was able to find a plethora of different collective works, be it a book of Edgar Allan Poe’s entire works or single books that included each short story or collections of his poems. He reached up and grabbed the book that included the entirety of Poe’s works. It was quite a large and lengthy book, though it was nothing Sherlock couldn’t handle.

The curly haired man was set on reading from it. He slipped it out from in between two other books, carrying it to the dark green sofa chair that sat near Jim’s writing desk. Sherlock sat down
comfortably, opening up the book and flipping through until he reached his desired page. Miss Moriarty made her way over to Sherlock and hopped onto his lap, curling into a ball as she rested her eyes. But how could the detective mind? It was much too precious of a sight. Patrick had delivered his tea—a cup of Earl Grey on a saucer, with a pot, milk, sugar, and chocolate wafers on a tray, setting it down on the side table. Sherlock thanked him and prepared his tea, watching as he left the room.

He wondered if it was because Jim instructed him to do whatever he asked of him, but he noticed a great difference in the personalities of Patrick and Sebastian. There was a slight chance that not all of his employees felt the same resentment towards him as Sebastian did. Sherlock was willing to further investigate as time went on. He took a generous sip after stirring in the mixture of sugar and milk to complete the taste, then set it down back onto the saucer. In starting to read, he felt his mind escape, as though he were solving the mystery as C. Auguste Dupin. Throughout the reading, he periodically drank his tea, had a wafer, and flipped through page after page. He was in a world where no other thoughts lingered.

After reading The Murders in the Rue Morgue and the rest of the series, he decided to binge on every story and poem. Sherlock often wished to himself that Poe’s stories were as fantastical as his. Sure, Sherlock was over the moon with the cases he received sometimes, but he would have found it a real treat if he got to solve something like these stories in real life. Yet, he supposed it would have been predictable if he already read the works, right? Sherlock simply continued on reading, at points, his eyes growing heavy. He didn’t quite understand how he was sleepy, though he received more rest last night than he usually did in the night alone.

He wondered if the huge changes in his life, that being especially Jim, contributed to the reason why he needed longer hours of sleep. But he couldn’t think further, the power of his heavy eyes making it a struggle to remain awake. However, in reading the last few lines of The Cask of Amontillado, his vision began to blur, and it was in the moments he drifted off into sleep.

The next time Sherlock roused from his nap, he noticed the lighting changed in the room. The sunlight from outside and shadows casted moved across the room a bit. It had to have been late afternoon, at least around 4:00. He rubbed his eyes and let out a yawn, adjusting himself in his seat as the book laid on his chest, and Miss Moriarty was absent from his lap. He glanced up when he heard the rolling of a chair and noticed Jim sitting at his writing desk. His eyes widened, rather curious as to what the man was doing there.

“Jim, you’re early.”

The criminal turned around in his seat, smiling when he saw Sherlock wake from his nap.

“Obviously.”

Sherlock smiled in return.

“Did you miss me that much?”

“Of course I did, don’t ask such ridiculous questions,” scoffed Jim, “our client happened to be a hitman incognito. Another criminal trying to kill me for my network. I don’t feel like working the rest of the night, so I decided to take off and spend it with you.”

Sherlock’s heart raced and he stood. “That’s awful, you could’ve…”

“I know, I know, don’t work, darling,” he gestured for him to relax, “I have reason to believe it was one of Samuel George’s people. I’m having my people dismantle his empire. It was built on a
weak foundation because of his lack of skill, and now it is hardly stable enough to continue since he’s also dead. It wasn’t very big so more than likely it should be taken care of soon enough.”

Sherlock couldn’t help but feel protective. He knew Jim’s safety was his top priority, even if Jim’s employees could take care of it themselves. Sherlock would have been beyond devastated hearing if something were to happen to him. He wouldn’t know how to cope. But he trusted Jim, he seemed to know what to do and how to handle himself in the shadows of the criminal world. He simply heeded his gesture and nodded, trying to get himself to relax as he sat back down. Jim noticed that Sherlock seemed visibly upset over it and sauntered over to comfort him. As Jim approached the detective, he placed a hand on his cheek, letting his thumb brush over the smoothness of his pale skin. With a deep breath, Sherlock untensed at his touch, glancing up to see Jim warmly gazing into his eyes.

“I’m alright, Sherlock. I promise. I’ve dealt with them many times before.”

“Yes, but…”

“I promise.” repeated Jim. “I am well armed with many skilled workers and even I can fend off as much as I can alone.”

“You’re right. But the thought of losing you makes me uneasy.”

“I know. And I wouldn’t want to do that to you, nor would I want that to happen to me at all. But it isn’t going to happen, because I won’t let it.” He leaned forward, kissing Sherlock’s forehead.

“I’m not fully convinced. I deserve a better kiss than that.” Sherlock folded his arms, looking up to him smugly.

Jim laughed, cupping Sherlock’s chin with ease.

“And I’ll just give it to you.”

Jim smashed his lips against Sherlock’s fiercely, tastes of mint, cigarette, and tea combining, with teeth and tongues clashing. Their eyes shut in bliss. It was a kiss unlike anything Sherlock ever felt, and it seemed like each time the man was only upping the pleasure of it by each kiss they shared. Sherlock missed this. It had been all day since he had spoken to Jim, and was able to even kiss him again. He was more than grateful to his lucky stars that Jim was safe and here with him, brushing his fingers through Sherlock’s curls, and exploring his mouth with a yearning tongue.

Sherlock moaned quietly, dipping his head back into the coolness of the cushion’s back, gripping at Jim’s black tie and yanking him forward to be closer. A low growl rumbled from Jim’s throat as he used a single knee to kneel in between Sherlock’s parted legs for leverage, running a hand up his abdomen, melting at the tightness of his abs beneath the shirt. The same hand slid through his curls, finding an addiction in feeling those soft and loose ringlets tangle in his fingers. The feeling of Jim’s fingertips running against his scalp never soothed him more, so he takes this opportunity to tilt his head, kiss him deeper, and press himself against the Irishman, looping an arm around his neck, absentmindedly playing with his shirt collar.

Jim emitted a string of low moans, his other hand falling to Sherlock’s hip and thigh, the only air in Sherlock’s breathy moans. As Sherlock felt his hand on his hip and his thigh, he felt that familiar ache in his groin. It only lasted seconds but Sherlock wanted more. He didn’t know how far he would go or how much he wanted, but how he wanted. He craved. And almost as if it were instinctive, Sherlock removed his hand from Jim’s tie, to Jim’s hand on his thigh, and ever so boldly moved it over his bulge. His hand lingered over Jim’s for a moment, feeling his smooth,
strong hand enveloping a place untouched to all but Sherlock. This was a big step for Sherlock to take, allowing himself the freedom of this small pleasure before he threw himself into bigger things. He trusted Jim, and himself, to journey that road together. Where things came naturally and nothing felt forced.

Jim was astonished that Sherlock was so bold as to move his hand to his bulge, sighing into their kiss as he felt Sherlock’s stirring just beneath his hand. He was becoming stiff and it was a wonderful feeling. Slowly, Jim massaged his bulge from outside the fabric of his grey sweatpants, making Sherlock part from Jim’s lips in a gasp. To encourage him silently, with his eyes and his body, Sherlock spread his legs even further than they were before, the imprint of his cock ever so present through his sweatpants. Jim glanced down, then glanced back up to Sherlock’s eyes for the okay in taking it to the next step. Sherlock nodded, giving him that permission to proceed.

Jim moved his knee off of the chair to kneel before Sherlock on the floor. That’s how he liked to imagine himself, kneeling before a god. The only man who could ever bring the criminal to his knees—Sherlock Holmes. With such beauty and such brains, how could Sherlock not hold his heart in his hands? Jim wanted to please Sherlock in any way possible, whether it was to hold him, listen to what he needed, giving him whatever he asked, to kissing him, tasting him, and feeling fervently, he was wholeheartedly, without question, devoted to him. Sherlock was the embodiment of all the life in the world he wanted for his own, the personification of his dreams. He didn’t treasure that at first. Two years before, he didn’t dare to think of Sherlock in that way. But things had changed. Jim had changed. And so did Sherlock.

Carefully, Jim dipped his fingers beneath the hem of his sweatpants, rolling it down bit by bit, as if unraveling the paper withholding the gift. Sherlock felt a slight bit nervous, only hoping Jim would be delighted to find what called to his attention. As the sweatpants were peeled back to at least Sherlock’s knees, Jim could see there was another layer to his garment to get to before he finally reached his final destination. But he wasn’t disappointed by the sight before him; Sherlock leaning into the seat, with flushed cheeks and parted, pink lips swollen from kisses, and slightly trembling with need. And of course, going lower, the sight of his cock twitching for Jim’s touch just beneath his boxer briefs. Sherlock was stunning. He would seal this image away forever into his mind.

Jim moved his hand down to his twitching bulge, making him almost salivate at the thought of having Sherlock in his mouth. With nimble fingers, he palmed him, making the detective throw his head back, releasing another gasp, and buck his needy hips into Jim’s hand. It seemed as though Jim had this special power, a dark magic of sorts, to completely and utterly turn him into putty in his hands. At any given moment. Jim could only smile in amusement at how needy Sherlock actually was. It was truly adorable and Jim wouldn’t ever forget it. He liked seeing Sherlock like this, at his mercy, seeing him enjoy himself. Especially when he didn’t do very much at all. That was the most satisfying to see.

Sherlock felt a few soft kisses to his erection through his boxer briefs, making him whimper out, seeing Jim’s head block the entire view of it. He wasn’t sure if he should have looked or not, he just knew whatever he was doing, he didn’t want him to stop yet. Jim chewed at his bottom when he felt Sherlock twitch against his lips, making him so eager. The brunette chewed at his own bottom lip as he waited those seemingly long moments for Jim to decide what he wanted to do next.

And then he felt it.

Jim peeling away his boxer briefs, like another piece of wrapping paper. His heart sped in anticipation, feeling the cool air meet his sensitive skin. It was only just a few seconds before his erection sprang free. Jim’s eyes widened slightly in awe as he saw Sherlock’s cock stand tall and
pink for him, aching for something to be done, pulsating for Jim’s touch or kiss. Sherlock exhaled a shaky breath as he saw Jim admire him for a moment, then lick his lips, letting his dark and mischievous eyes float up to Sherlock’s.

“Why aren’t you just gorgeous.” teased the Irishman.

Sherlock didn’t know how to react, averting his eyes shyly when words somehow fled his mind. The cat certainly had his tongue.

Jim leaned forward, warm breath ghosting over every vein, and Sherlock couldn’t help but feel himself harden further at the feeling— his cock once more twitching. He loathed it, loathed how Jim had so much skill to make him like this. But he loved it with every cell in his body. Twitching at just his breath! He needed him to finish what was started before Sherlock became irritated.

“Don’t… tease me…”

Jim only hummed at this, as though to question him on whether or not that would be the case here. He loved to tease, he couldn’t help it, hearing Sherlock call for him and want more was certainly the goal he was trying to aim for. Jim started from Sherlock’s balls, kissing and gently sucking at them, letting his tongue run over them in a trail of bliss. Sherlock relished in the sensation and twitched again. His tongue gradually ran over the sides of cock, meeting every vein tasting his skin, glancing up every now and then to see Sherlock’s reaction. Sherlock himself let out a loud moan, lolling his head back into the sofa chair cushion, all before letting it roll forward to see the erotic sight of Jim and his reddening cock— growing more eager by the moment. Never did the detective feel so impatient by a moment nor embarrassed when he caught Jim’s gaze.

“Look at me, Sherlock. I want you to look at me whilst I suck your cock. I want you to look at me when you orgasm. And I want you to look at me when you cum.” He demanded, making Sherlock swallow thickly and nod obediently.

Jim flashed him a very fleeting, almost malevolent smile that could ever curve at those sinful lips. Sherlock only got to relax for a moment, aside from his erection, before Jim kissed at his shaft, allowing his tongue to brush over the tip, nearly taking the breath out of him. It was hard to keep his eyes on him, he wasn’t used to these sorts of things. The first thing he always did was avert his eyes. He didn’t understand it, but he was a bashful man. A man who never had the privilege of a lover to satisfy him so wonderfully. No, not until now. There was no clear reason he could think of as to why he wished to hide his face in his shaky hands. He just knew this was the most daring he’s ever done.

At this point, Jim enveloped his lips over Sherlock’s tip, his crown tingling from the feeling of his beloved’s lips and tongue encasing it. He twitched again, moaning out again, a shaky hand coming to Jim’s hair to grip and keep himself steady.

“J-Jim… please… d-don’t tease…” implored Sherlock, the heat in his lower belly spreading throughout his body like a wildfire.

To his words and his moans, Jim could feel himself twitch in his own trousers from the beautiful sounds. It was like music to his ears, a song he could draw with the crank of a handle on the side of the music box. He would never tire of Sherlock’s voice, be it erotic or natural. The way he spoke and said his name, it made his heart swell with the deepest joy.

The next thing Sherlock knew was Jim’s lips enveloping the entirety of his shaft, making him moan loudly, hoping those walls around them were in no way thin. The sound and sight of Jim sucking was too much for him to take. His chest heaved from the air being stolen from his lungs,
by no other than the incubus before him. Every dream he ever had of Jim and pleasure never could compare to how he felt in his moment. It was nothing like the real thing, one could say. Sherlock gently tightened his grip at Jim’s hair, earning a low grunt in response. It felt like Heaven in Hell on Earth, and like hell would Sherlock never not have Jim do this to him again.

Upon leaking precum, Jim’s eyes snapped back up to Sherlock and caught his gaze, pinning it right into place as he bobbed his head back and forth, making him watch the act of pleasure take place. What a masterpiece it was, the picture of Jim in his mind sucking his cock, with swollen, slick lips, slightly twisted into that same, impish smile. The faster he went, the deeper he went, making sure Sherlock felt every bit of him in his mouth, swirling his tongue around every vein as though he was a lollipop he craved to savor. He couldn’t hold back from crying out, soft pleading whines escaping him as he bucked his hips. A delighted sigh emitted from Jim and all he could do was moan, sending vibrations through his cock. To service Sherlock like this was the greatest honor. And to be the first— no doubt a greater gift. He would make sure Sherlock enjoyed himself every moment.

“Mmn… J-Jim! Jim!” He couldn’t stop repeating his name. It was as if it were a prayer and Jim were his saving grace, feeding and being fed such quintessential ecstasy. “J-Jim, you feel so good!”

Jim pulled his cock deeper into his mouth, balls deep, gazing down as his hands cupped his balls, massaging them as he began to deep throat his beautiful detective, watching as Sherlock was breaking, gently squirming and thrusting his hips against his face; never was there a more erotic sight. He observed as his oceanic eyes dilated and the innocence once filled within them darkened into a lustful state. It was perfect. Jim devoured it like a feast, feeding off that heated energy radiating from them both. Sherlock was building quickly, his libido on the brink of orgasm. The Englishman cried out again, gripping Jim’s hair so tightly that he was afraid to rip it from his scalp. At least he was glad that the man seemed to have a high pain tolerance, because never was Sherlock in such a deep realm of bliss.

“James!” he whimpered out, just on the edge of breaking, “Fuck, James! I’m so close, I—”

And there it was, the moment that Jim waited for. The moment where Sherlock finally broke, watching his eyes widen in such desire as his orgasm washed over him in heavy waves. Sherlock came in thick ribbons, his cum practically flooding Jim’s mouth. The criminal wasted not a drop, swallowing him and relishing in his taste, a taste that Jim would always remember and long for. How divine Sherlock looked when he orgasmed! One could say it had to be a grand experience if your lover shouted your full name in hysterics. It was like the fresh breath of Spring refreshing his Winter days. It made him ache at the thought of Sherlock orgasming during sex, and what beauty that would entail. But he was patient enough to wait until the time came.

Seeing him shiver in the aftershocks of orgasm was almost sacred, something only Jim himself would get to know and adore. His heart melted for the man sitting before him. There was something definitely not human about him in the best way possible. He removed Sherlock’s cock from his mouth with a quiet pop, licking his lips from superb satisfaction.

“You were perfect, Sherlock. I loved that. And I love you.” He reached a hand out to his cheek, leaning forward to press a soft kiss to his lips.

Sherlock kissed back his cock softening and going limp as his lust faded into tenderness. He smiled against his lips, slipping his hand over Jim’s as it held his face, parting for a moment, with that picturesque, rosy expression, and bright, admiring eyes. He could taste himself on Jim’s lips, the salty taste burning into his memory forever.

“I love you too.”
Sherlock pulled his boxer briefs up, along with his sweatpants, trying to adjust to reality all over again. Jim gave him one final kiss before straightening his posture and fixing his hair and tie. He certainly found that therapeutic for both of them and could go for that again when the time came around to it. For now, he outstretched his hand to the Englishman, who took it with a curious look.

“Dinner should be ready about now. Hungry?”

Sherlock thought to himself for a moment as he stood, getting to his feet. He realized that he hadn’t consumed anything but the few chocolate wafers and his tea throughout the day, nodding to Jim. He wasn’t always hungry, but even now he could recognize an appetite was coming on.

“Famished.”
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR THIS CHAPTER ;; w ;; THERE IS BETTER ON THE WAY I P R O M I S E EEEEEEEEEEE E E.

After his first meeting with intimacy, Sherlock couldn’t shake the memory of Jim servicing him from his mind. The way he appeared like a salacious devil on his knees practically burned into his mind palace like a burning hot branding iron pressed into it, marking him, as though now his thoughts were only involving that, as though his thoughts only ever involved and belonged to Jim Moriarty. Down the long hallway they went, silently, passing by dark windows which signified the night (it became dark early now). Since the halls were now dimly lit, it was easier to see the moonlight spilling through, casting shadows from cryptic looking trees. For a moment, Sherlock even made the reference to Dracula’s castle, how the atmosphere hung vampiric and brooding, much like the experience of Jonathan Harker. Eerie, but oh how it vibed with the inner goth of Sherlock Holmes. It made him reminisce of his teenhood, when he dressed more of the part, whereas now he was only one at heart.

And of course, to add to his imagined cliché, they arrived at an elegant dining hall, where a long cherry wood table shrouded in white tablecloth stood amidst a large room of art. Paintings and portraits of golden frame hung about mahogany and white striped walls, an oriental carpet to match, long and so wide, it stretched across the golden, polished wood floor to their destination. Moving forward, Sherlock took a seat at one end and observed as his darker counterpart swaggered past him to sit at the opposite end which faced him. Jim was a bit further away, much to Sherlock’s slight disappointment, but to be there with him was better than nothing at all, he concluded. He could still see the whites of his eyes. This was the first time he’s been in his dining room, and would have been damned if it didn’t belong to Jim at all, but the Queen’s.

Laid out upon the table were platters of food that Sherlock couldn’t believe. He didn’t understand how the two of them could eat all of that food, but didn’t question the chef’s generosity for a moment. After all, his stomach was calling his attention, rumbling for real sustenance that couldn’t be satiated with tea and some wafers. It demanded a meal for once, something Sherlock often neglected at home being so engrossed in his work.

But Jim was no better. He too was a workaholic and one who often forgot to eat. Occasionally, Sebastian would have to remind him that he hadn’t eaten a morsel since the night before and it would be night then, or the only thing his body ingested was a cup of tea or coffee. It was truly sad, but Jim was a head criminal of an entire empire, it was expected for him to be buried beneath clients and meetings with employees. Constantly upkeeping its status and making sure every employee stationed in other countries were doing their parts correctly was significant. Any flaw was crucially taken into account. He couldn’t help being so popular on the dark side of the law, but even that took its toll mentally and sometimes physically. But how Jim maintained his health was through eating healthy and exercising. He used to be more thin in his early years, but over time he found the importance of staying fit in case of an emergency where his people couldn’t be contacted, and built up strength and muscle. He could fight and fend off someone to an extent, but for instance, Sebastian, being his sole protector, his military experience came in handy. In the meantime, Jim had knowledge of bartitsu, similarly to Sherlock, and practiced his punches and
kicks on a beat up punching bag in his gym room, which he shared with other employees.

Sherlock only made his plate with what was closest to him, which consisted of sliced steak drizzled with gravy and mushrooms, cauliflower, and a couple slices of buttered ciabatta bread. One of the chefs approached him with a bottle of pinot noir. Sherlock did enjoy his wine, sweet or bitter, so he couldn’t pass it up for a moment. Though he didn’t drink often, this was the perfect time to have it.

“Would you like to have wine, Mr. Holmes?”

“Yes, thank you.”

The chef poured it for him in a glass and left him be, Sherlock gratefully accepting the glass and taking a generous sip from it. Chilled, the taste earthy and dry, the faint taste of berry following after. The taste was perfect and Sherlock could tell Jim valued which alcohol stayed in his home for guests, because no true connoisseur would simply allow anything in his cellar. It was an insult to himself and the guests.

He licked his lips as the taste, letting it linger for a few moments, before digging into his steak with a bit of mushroom. The meat was completely tender and after taking a bite, he knew that his chefs were carefully chosen, for the food was cooked so well that where they dined could be considered a five-star restaurant, but would that even do the setting and food justice? He found that the wine paired perfectly with the steak and he had to admit, it was one of the best meals he ever had.

Sherlock glanced up to Jim as he sat nearby, his plate made up with just the same food. He had also been offered a glass of wine, but only made it clear he’d have a single glass and no more. He wondered for a moment about his limitations and remembered that Jim had a dark past with alcohol, but seemed that Jim was doing better with it after all these years, for his control was a lot stronger than most people had. The detective felt rather proud of him and smiled warmly at the thought of the Irishman being so strong. But as Jim was eating, he caught Sherlock’s gaze, and that dreamy smile painted on his plush lips.

“Undressing me with your eyes, Sherlock?” casually inquired Jim, shamelessly, and of course, only half joking.

Sherlock had nearly choked on his steak and coughed, an embarrassed flush dusting his pale cheeks to hear such a very inaccurate accusation.

“Do you ever really think before you speak?”

“Sometimes.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes at the sarcastic quip. Jim was certainly a handful, but one he would never truly get tired of. He still loved the man, even for his immensely lewd remarks that knew no bounds.

“I was thinking about you.”

“But of course, I’m a dreamboat.”

“You are such a vain bastard.” teased Sherlock.

“I am, but go on.”

Sherlock smiled. “It’s just how much I just adore you.”
Jim smirked, cutting into his steak.

“And I adore you as well, sugar.”

Sherlock gently stabbed his fork into a piece of cauliflower and popped it into his mouth as Jim feasted on his buttered ciabatta, the two munching in silence before Jim swallowed his food first, ready to break it with casual ease.

“Play me violin tonight.”

“Do you have a violin for me?”

“Do I have a violin for you?” He glanced over to one of his bodyguards standing at the entrance doors. “Jacob, get the box for me from beneath the table.”

The bodyguard sauntered over to the table they dined at, kneeling down and sliding out a long, white box. Carefully, he stood up, and brought it over Sherlock.

Sherlock blinked and took the box, the heaviness of it easily giving it away as violin inside. He eagerly opened the flap and lo and behold lied a smooth black violin case. It smelled brand new. He popped open the two buckles that kept it safely shut, lifting the lid of the case to reveal a Carlo Lamberti, a very popular and expensively made violin. They were one of the best and always in the highest quality. He couldn’t even recall his own violin’s brand, as the one he had owned at the flat was old and worn out, and gifted to him in his early childhood. Sherlock studied the violin, in awe of how meticulous and spotless it appeared to be. It truly was very new, polished, and not a single fingerprint to soil its beauty. At least, not yet.

Sherlock looked to Jim, his deep blue eyes like a sea of emotion. He never felt so strongly about something as much as he did now.

“James, this must have cost a fortune, I… I don’t know what to say… thank you…”

“I can afford it, Sherlock. I want you to keep it. It’s yours.” answered Jim, warmly.

Sherlock immediately stood from his seat, violin and bow in hand. He was prepared to play Jim a song as a way to thank him. Jim didn't understand why Sherlock stood up so suddenly, however. He didn’t want him to play right away and was going to encourage him to eat, but Sherlock went on ahead before he could do anything. Sherlock carefully tuned the violin in little time and positioned it one end beneath his chin, pursing his lips. Within the time it had taken him to tune, he had come up with a song to perform for Jim that was not exactly Bach. Oh, would the man be so impressed! Sherlock too favored many classical composers and held them in high regard. After all, they were musical geniuses to him. They were all respectively enlightening and unique inspirations. Yet this next one was a piece he considered to be one of his personal favorites.

And sure enough, if it was his, he assumed it would only be Jim’s as well. With his finger positioned on the correct chords, and his bow readied, he slid it against the strings, thus sparking music to permeate throughout the room. Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso in A Minor, composed by no other than Camille Saint-Saëns. Of course, this piece was unaccompanied without piano in duet, or symphony to back him; but quite beautiful alone in solo, nevertheless. The beginning flew through the air sultry and velvety, as if the whole room could melt from its sweet sound. The floor was Sherlock’s and Jim was his adoring audience. As speed began to pick up vibrantly, Jim leaned forward in his seat in great interest, chin in his palm, absolutely astounded by his wonderful skill. Bow striking and gliding against string, string vibrating from force, those fingers moved so precisely without flaw. And indeed impressed he was. He predicted Sherlock to
play something romantic, yet he had him at which romantic composer’s music he would perform. He shut his eyes and let the music speak to him. And what pretty words they spoke to him. It was even fleetingly inspiring for his own pieces.

When Sherlock finished, he lowered the bow and violin, bowing as his performance had come to an end. Jim’s eyes fluttered open and immediately did he clap, glancing at his bodyguards to applaud the detective as well. Jim even gave him a standing ovation, smiling proudly at his sweet and talented Sherlock Holmes, who not only moved the room, but Jim in all his beauty and his sole glory. Sherlock only stood there, flustered, uncertain of what to say or do.

“Bravo,” praised the criminal, “now don’t I have the luck of the Irish? Sexy, brainy, and talented. Yum. Anyways, splendid performance, we’ve all been spoiled here tonight.”

“James,” he mumbled shyly, sweeping a few stray curls from his eyes, “it was just my way of saying thank you.”

“You never have to thank me for the things you deserve.” hummed Jim. “I would give you the moon and stars, Sherlock.”

Sherlock at this point had become so overwhelmed from his lover’s affectionate words, he hurried back to his seat at the table, placing his violin away in its case, cheeks burning. Never did he expect such a rogue criminal, as someone as Jim he would call his own— who would cherish him and lavish him with such gifts and give him the time of day. Never did anyone make such an extreme effort to love him the way Jim did, this man of all people was the least expected to make him feel secure. And what was most peculiar about their love was that Jim proved himself to him. Saving him again and again, no longer did the Spider feel like a threat, as he already threaded himself a home in his mind and his heart, knowing he wouldn’t plan on leaving anytime soon. Sherlock didn’t want him to leave anyhow, Jim was his. He felt this fiercely in his heart, but to say it aloud, to claim Jim for his own, it was a different story. Not so much out of shame was the cause of this, as it was fear. Fear that speaking it into existence would mean losing him at some point.

By the time dinner was over, the consulting pair made their way back to Jim’s bedroom. Sherlock prepared for bed by washing his face, brushing his teeth, and stripping down to his shirt and underwear again like the night before, snuggling against Jim as the criminal entered the bed after leaving the bathroom shortly behind him. His face was once more buried in his chest, Jim’s fingers tangled in those gorgeous brunette curls, not at all seeking to untangle themselves for a moment. Sherlock’s arm was thrown over around Jim’s waist, his fingers trailing up and down Jim’s back, actually quite soothing to the Irishman. They would stay in this position for hours until sleep captured one before the other in its inevitable embrace.

“Tomorrow I’ll be booked with meetings throughout the day, I can’t even begin to explain how bothersome it feels to meet them all at home, but I digress. I’m simply unforgivable leaving you to yourself the entire day.” mumbled Jim into Sherlock’s curls.

Sherlock, in hearing this, wasn’t at all surprised or upset. He slightly nodded with an acknowledging hum, only moving closer into Jim, his arm tightening around him almost instinctively, as if to protectively keep him away from harm.

“It is what it is,” replied Sherlock quietly, “I’m fine to wait again until you’re finished.”

“I’ll miss you.”

“And I’ll miss you, James. But I know you’re a busy man. If I had to lead an entire network, it’d be no picnic.”
Jim smiled, pressing a soft kiss to his head, letting his fingertips massage Sherlock’s scalp, prompting Sherlock to become drowsy to his gentle touches. He was sure he was being more spoiled than Miss Moriarty herself, who most likely received quite a bit of affection for just being such a charming little cat.

“I’ll be much more free soon, and then, I’ll devote my every living and breathing moment to you. I don’t trust Sebastian to do all of the important stuff for me. I doubt it would go successfully.”

Sherlock didn’t comment on the mention of Sebastian and how Jim didn’t trust him enough to temporarily substitute as head of his network, but responded with, “I very much look forward to seeing you keep your word then.”

“I always keep my word, Holmes.” huffed Jim. “Except when I’m lying to someone.”

“Are you lying?” teased Sherlock.

“Of course not! I’m my truest self when I’m with you.”

Sherlock melted at those words. He knew exactly how Jim felt. It was hard to be so authentic around others. For all the reasons Sherlock suppressed the sentimental parts of himself, it was the same reason why Jim was deceitful to others. It was not only in his criminal nature, but becoming close to someone, showing them a side of oneself so vulnerable, lies were the only way to protect yourself, masking and protecting what had the ability to be irreversibly damaged.

“Hm, you better. Because so am I.”

In the early hours of the morning, Sherlock felt that warmth against his body disappear into coolness, and it didn’t take long before his mind caught up with his body and recognized Jim’s absence. It was at least an hour after Jim left to work and Sherlock stirred awake, alone. He didn’t understand why, but a sense of sadness touched him. It was the same feeling he felt the night after meeting Sebastian and knowing Jim wasn’t exactly near him. It made him feel silly. The detective fought to push it from his mind and focus on the day ahead. Of course, Jim wouldn’t be gone forever, and he had a life outside of the criminal. Sherlock hoped his clinginess wasn’t an unattractive trait of his now that they were becoming more and more involved as the days passed.

But it almost seemed as if lonesomeness corrupted his mind again. Whether he was in a room with others, or alone himself, loneliness never felt so burdening before. As Sherlock sat up from his lying position, he hugged around his knees, pulling them close to his chest. He felt a lot cooler than usual, aside from the fact that he felt the small drop in temperature outside. There was something empty about this coolness, one that he wished to find solace from, one that clouded every other thought that tried to sway his thinking elsewhere. No, nothing his mind could have him separate himself from the thought of his beloved consulting criminal.

Sherlock pushed himself to get ready after a half an hour of sulking. He threw on another shirt and
sweatpants, with the same dressing gown from the day before. His curls were a bit messy, but he didn’t care much at all. He already brushed his teeth and washed up; now he craved a warm cup of tea to hopefully melt away the cold feeling he couldn’t shake away. With his arms folded behind his back, he made his way to the kitchen. He was glad he could be able to get it himself, because he really didn’t feel comfortable asking another criminal to make it for him. The chefs were thankfully scarce at this time, probably still having yet to start their work for the day. He preferred to be alone anyhow, despite the strange feeling of lonesomeness following him like a dark cloud above his head.

Sherlock grabbed a mug from the cupboard, setting it down as he looked for the kettle. He carefully dropped to his knees after the top cupboards failed to have it, looking beneath at the bottom to see if the rest of the cabinets would have it. With such a luxurious and wide kitchen, he couldn’t blame himself for not finding it right away. It only took the Englishman a few minutes before he found it in the back beneath the counter cabinet by the sink cabinet, carefully pulling it out so he put it to use. As he rose and placed the kettle on the counter, he tensed, feeling a presence behind him. Then suddenly, the entire atmosphere of the room he stood in became immensely dull, almost damp. The hairs on the back of his neck stood as though he felt a phantom pass through him and possess him with the most fearful spirit. He didn’t understand what it was and glanced over his shoulder, revealing Sebastian with his arms crossed.

“Sneaking up on someone is awfully rude.” commented Sherlock, visibly unamused.

“Would be awfully rude to tell you to move, wouldn’t it?” retorted Sebastian.

“I think there are other words for that.”

“Really now?”

“Yes, but it’s unsurprising you wouldn’t think of them. What else should I expect from you, Moron?”

Just then, Sebastian caught Sherlock off guard, shoving him against the counter, head hitting against the top cupboard. It wasn’t too hard, but hard enough to form a small bruise later. Sebastian’s gaze was almost feral, an icy blue that differed from Sherlock’s calmed, ocean blues. Sherlock was stunned and meant to push him away, but Sebastian leaned close to him in a very threatening way, with his grip on both of Sherlock’s wrists as they held them in place against the counter. Sherlock’s lips pressed flatly against each other, studying the behavior of Sebastian more, how he immediately resorted to violence as a way to prove himself worthy. He realized his words hit a nerve, though Sherlock couldn’t have cared less. Through his observation, with how fierce Sebastian’s body language conveyed warning, he read a story behind his eyes. A story of a man, who from childhood, felt the need to prove others wrong in order to be respected. He could tell by working with Jim, he was indeed a smart man, and with his military experience, rather equipped with the right tools for his line of work. But was he as clever as Jim? No. His weakness lied in the very evident nature of his defense mechanism: violence. His anger made him stupid. His jealousy made him entirely foolish. This had to be a reoccurring habit.

“Do not disgrace my family name with your vile tongue, Holmes, or I’ll be inclined to cut it out of your mouth with one of these kitchen knives.” hissed the sniper.

Sherlock wasn’t in the very least daunted by Sebastian. Then again, he hardly feared much at all. Few things in life he feared, Sebastian attempting to thwart him away with threats and shoving him against the counter was certainly not one of them. Sherlock pursed his lips, blinking almost robotically as he studied him further. Sebastian must have struggled with feeling inferior in his family, which is highly possible as to why he quickly jumped to the defense of his family before
himself. He wondered, who was it? The mother? The father? Did any of them value him over another sibling, compare them? Was his family so inclined to make him feel as though he owed them effort to show how worthy he was? The Morans must have been a line of interesting people.

“My apologies, though how will I ever move if you are keeping me here at bay?” hummed Sherlock.

Sebastian scowled. “Listen to me, Sherlock Holmes, you mean absolutely nothing to me. If I wanted to, I could have you immediately disappear like dust vanishing into thin air.”

“Dust is airborne for at least five days.” said Sherlock, pursing his lips.

“Shut up. Just shut up. You are such a smart arse, I don’t even know how my boss could ever find someone like you worth his time. You are nothing grand, neither your or your work. You are tremendously insufferable. Pathetic.” snarled Sebastian. “You’ve changed him.”

Sherlock felt a pang of offense in his chest at the insults hurled at him from the blonde Irishman, who hadn’t the slightest bit of filter. It was almost as though the words spewed from his mouth, like a faucet running cruelty. There was that word again… pathetic. He could hear it in his brother’s voice and even his own now, echoing in the chambers of his mind palace. It was so deafening, he couldn’t reach Jim’s praises in his mind. It was very nearly drowned out to the faintest whisper. He tried to remember that this had more to do with himself and Jim, than it did Sherlock alone. Sherlock gazed into his eyes, almost emptily, the back of his head starting to ache.

“I’ve heard worse.” Sherlock rolled his eyes, though his retort was only half true.

Sebastian’s lips curled into the most demeaning smile one could ever see on a man. He leaned closely, breath just warm against the lobe of Sherlock’s ear, making the detective grimace from the close contact, finding the sniper most repulsive. However, he remained as still as a statue, refusing to fight back unless Sebastian really did try to kill him. Besides, ordinary people were difficult to reason with at times, so he decided to wait until Sebastian finished wasting his time, hoping he could still make his tea. But what Sebastian did next was truly revolting. As he further violated Sherlock’s personal space, his lips hovered over the outside of his ear canal, making Sherlock extremely uncomfortable.

“Then how about this? I know what boss likes. What have you ever done to please him?” As Sebastian pulled away from his ear, he still stood there, smug as a man could be, “How sexually unappealing. Are you sure you can satisfy his needs? A pathetic virgin like yourself? A man with no history?”

The words were like bullets, each and every single one riddling into his body as though Sherlock wore the largest target on his person and begged to be attacked with them. He wondered how such small words made such a heavy impact on him. It was quite silly, but the insecure young boy in him believed them. The teenager in him believed them. And no differently, adult Sherlock internalized them, knowing they were his own words reserved for himself before Sebastian stole them and formed them into weapons that worked too well. He swallowed hard, feeling his stomach knot, feeling too sick now to even have a cup of tea. The damp, cold energy that Sebastian brought with him was too thick to ignore. It was desperate to be fed by his shame. No matter how much Sherlock tried to fight it, those thoughts grew louder and louder, now having a face to them to complete its mission in self destruction. Sherlock grew pale.

The memory of the previous night flashed in Sherlock’s mind like lightning, the memory of Jim servicing him on his knees in the library. He knew Jim couldn’t have faked it—right? Jim had to have enjoyed himself also, surely? Complimenting him and making him feel like the most
cherished man Jim could ever have in his life? It bewildered him to no end. What if Jim only did it to make it seem as though Sherlock was desirable? It didn’t add up with all the other things he did for him and it made him waver beneath the intensity of those icy eyes and that shark-like smile.

“Oh, the times we had, I was able to satisfy his every need. And you weren’t there. Not even a thought in his mind. Just wait until you both try to have sex, he’ll be utterly displeased with your lack of skill. Your ignorance. I can only assume he tolerates your average kissing.” laughed Sebastian, making Sherlock queasy at the thought. “Not good at everything, are we now, Mr. Holmes?”

Sherlock ripped his gaze away from Sebastian after he could muster up the strength, his eyes burning a hole into the wall of the kitchen. No amount of fighting back physically could remedy him after this exchange, nor could a book of countered insults be its match. There was now a pit of fear inside of him that sprouted anxiety around the thought of ever becoming intimate with Jim again. The fear of Sebastian being right. Last night’s improvement was just a false alarm, he supposed.

Sebastian’s grip loosened and he ultimately let go of Sherlock, who’s wrists were aching from the tightness of his hold. He grabbed the kettle and mug Sherlock pulled out from earlier, going to make himself the tea that Sherlock was going to make for himself at first. He was motionless for a minute, just thinking over the event that just happened. No words were said between them and Sherlock suddenly felt it. That heaviness in his chest, the need to flee, to seek shelter from the storm of acid rain and thunder in the form of words, ready to strike and turn him into ruin at any given moment.

And then his feet did it. They were moving faster than his mind and now he was hurrying out of the kitchen, nauseated by the thought of intimacy— knowing it would most likely lead to his humiliation. He didn’t even know where he was going, but all he knew was that he wanted to get away from Sebastian. Perhaps it was because he wanted to vomit after that exchange, or to try and find solace in a quiet place, though it was most likely because there were tears already streaming down his cheeks, only watering the seed of fear that Sebastian now planted inside of him.

Sherlock ended up at the library again, shutting the doors behind him, he slid down and cupped his hand over his mouth to prevent any noise from escaping. However, he failed, as small whimpers and choked sobs left him. He couldn’t stand the thought of feeling rejected by the very man he loved. It felt like everything positive that once entered the space of his mind palace was now fluttering away like a butterfly through an empty window. Could it have been possible that Jim was taking pity on him? As a mere plaything of all things? Could he have loved him up until the point of their true intimacy? He could hear Sebastian’s laugh haunting his mind still, like a dark spirit he couldn’t exorcise.

Sherlock wept for at least an hour and a half straight. But after this point, he heard soft scratching on the other side of the door. He sniffls and paused what he was doing, opening the door to see Miss Moriarty pawing at it, meowing softly at the sight of him— as if to tell him to let her in. Sherlock couldn’t deny her access, obviously because this was her home first, and respectfully opened the door for the spoiled cat, who made her way around him as he shut the door behind her. She plopped onto his lap and purred, head butting his rib and rubbing against his abdomen affectionately. Her feline instincts recognized when her new friend was sad and offered her full support even when she didn’t understand him or his situation. Sherlock softened at the sight and with his shaky hand, slowly stroked her head and back repeatedly.

To this, Sherlock earned some very pleased meows, and a few licks on his hand for being such a tender petter. Sherlock for a moment felt awfully relieved and it gave him a sense of peace to see
and touch the gorgeous cat, who showed the utmost respect and empathy for Sherlock when he most needed it. The detective picked her up in his arms and gave her a warm kiss on the head, prompting the Norwegian White Forest cat to purr all the more, delighted to be with the Englishman, no matter where and when.

“How often does Daddy even give you affection for you to be so starved for it?” He teased the feline who only slowly blinked at him, as a cat normally would.

Sherlock placed another kiss on her head before letting her down, watching as she scampered off. But before she was really gone, she glanced back to him, hinting as though she wanted him to follow. Sherlock couldn’t help but smile to himself and stand, dusting off any dust that could’ve gotten onto him whilst sitting on the floor. He felt silly, crying like that, but it seemed like it was much needed. In a way he felt better letting it out and having a cuddle with the cat who always sought for his affection. He dried his eyes with his sleeve and followed behind the cat, clearing his throat a bit.

As he followed her, she led him through the aisles of books, now realizing that this cat was more clever than what meets the eye. She knew that books picked him up, and so, Sherlock decided to pick out a book. The sick feeling he felt that morning only made itself known now and then, but he helped diffuse the feeling by taking *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. Jim had to at least have three or four copies of the book with a whole section dedicated to his plays and his poetry. It was actually rather cute, something Sherlock wished he could say aloud with confidence, but for obvious reasons would not. Knowing well a single novel wouldn’t suffice, he grabbed himself *Salomé*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and a book collection of all his poetry.

He returned soon after picking and choosing what to read, to read at the same chair from the night before, not at all focused on the fact that Jim had serviced him the night before as he sat in that very chair. He pushed the thought from his mind, finding his mind was better comforted being lost in the pages instead of lost in his sorrows. Instead of the day before, he was wide awake, sucked into the stories and every scene, the imagery, the symbolisms, all that was once very much alive for the man who wrote it himself. Even Miss Moriarty invited herself on his lap again. Sherlock was never the one who could put feelings into words, so he simply stuck to music. A language that could capture feeling even without a single word. But he imagined the amount of creativity it took to do that. He imagined for a moment what it would be like to be a writer. The power that he could have. After all, it was Lord Byron who said, “a drop of ink may make a million think”. It was awfully bold to assume most people thought, especially in this day and age, but there was plenty truth in the phrase itself depending on the few who were willing to think at all.

After hours had passed, Miss Moriarty jumped down from his lap, making Sherlock curious of where she would be going. He was just on the second to final page of *De Profundis*, which had been included in the collection, a letter to the horrid man named Bosie who broke the Irishman’s heart time and time again. Sherlock wasn’t fond of reading pieces like this, but Wilde was always the exception. Perhaps it was the same to Jim as well. He placed his book down and followed the sneaky cat, raising a brow at what he were doing. She made her way to Jim’s desk, jumping on top, though careful to walk around any piles of paper that was lying around with a bunch of writing on it. She knew her human father was ridiculously protective over his documents. She remembered staying up nights watching him write away in books and on pieces of paper any ideas that came to mind. She was always intrigued, though of course, did not know anything about it, as it was beyond her feline mind.

Sherlock tilted his head curiously at the silly cat, then his attention moved onto the papers and the books on the side. As he flipped through them, he was intrigued to find that these were creative writings. Of plays and stories in specific. He found some prose works that were even written in
Gaelic. He was taken aback by Jim’s incredible work, which focused on crime, murder mystery, suspense, horror, and homoerotic themes and references. As he proceeded to browse on, he noticed that there were a few books lined against the side of the desk and wall that had Jim’s pen name on it; Richard M. Brook. Of course he’d choose that name. He wasn’t in the least bit surprised by it, the name of the storyteller, though certainly not one for children. Though one book caught his eye — it was a book with his full name, James Moriarty, and the book was Dynamics of an Asteroid, and beside it, A Treatise on the Binomial Theorem. So, he wasn’t just a creative writer, it seemed. As he picked out Dynamics of an Asteroid from the stack, he flipped through the pages, skimming through what was the expansion of Chaos theory and extremely intricate mathematical equations.

Sherlock couldn’t help but be impressed. Jim was too clever for his own good. He placed it down and pulled out A Treatise on the Binomial Theorem, and in flipping through it, it also was written on similar intricate mathematics that Sherlock had to even think on for a few moments here and there in his mind for he came to the right answers on the following pages. As he looked to the beginning pages again, he noticed that it was published in 1997. Jim had to have been at least twenty-one! Even as a university student he was still intelligent enough to write such things. It only made Sherlock all the more attracted to him. How impressive. For a moment, he felt pride to call him his, though the memory of Sebastian and his cruel words instantly slithered themselves back into his mind maliciously. That nauseating feeling now returning.

However, Sherlock was cut off from his thoughts when he heard the library door open. Before he could shove the book back into the spot it originally sat, his gaze was met with Jim’s, who had just stepped into the library. He didn’t realize the time and now just side glancing at the clock, he noticed that it was 5:30 PM. He bashfully placed the book down onto the desk, averting his eyes away as the criminal made his way over.

“I-I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have been snooping.”

Jim only laughed, approaching Sherlock as he tried to touch his cheek with his hand to reassure him of it being okay, though Sherlock jerked away on impulse, that fear arising as Jim ever so slightly touched him. He didn’t realize how powerful this feeling was until Jim was starting to show his affection.

“Sherlock, what’s the matter? I really don’t care if you were reading my book. Am I not allowed to touch you anymore?” inquired the criminal, a bit hurt by Sherlock’s reaction.

Sherlock was quiet as he placed the book down, shyly gazing to Jim with soft eyes. As Jim studied him, he could tell that his eyes were rather red and puffy, immediately deducing that Sherlock had been crying. Oh how he utterly refused the knowledge of knowing those pretty my eyes cried, and of all things because of him. Jim reached for his hand but Sherlock slipped it behind his back, which started to annoy Jim.

“How am I supposed to know what’s wrong if you won’t tell me?”

“James… I just don’t want to displease you.” His shy gaze once more turned away from Jim and fell to his feet. “I don’t want you to find me boring.”

Jim blinked for a moment, unsure of where all of this suddenly stemmed from. How could Sherlock Holmes ever bore him, he wondered. Jim was at a loss for words for that moment, trying to even register the words and hope this was a joke. Sherlock was his lifeline. Jim refused to live if it meant Sherlock ceased to exist. All these years he was devoted to Sherlock through cases, and now, they were lovers. What could have brought on such a thought? It was suspicious. He would ask, but he also knew that Sherlock was insecure. But he didn’t realize exactly how insecure. And he wasn’t the best at knowing how to make it all okay again. But he would try.
Jim shook his head, stepping closer to Sherlock, a frown on his lips. His beautiful man with that gorgeous halo of curls, chiseled face, eyes like the sea, skin like the ivory of Greek statue, voice like the bass of a drum, and mind of a genius, how in the world could he not be in love?

“Sherlock Holmes, don’t you ever think I would become bored of you. You give my life significant meaning. You have stimulated my mind since our first games. I grew besotted for you with that brain of yours long before I discovered that breathtaking face to put a name to. Then I grew to love you in those times we met again and again. I couldn’t get enough of you and I still can’t. Sherlock,” Jim leaned up a bit, lips just inches away from the detective’s, a reassuring smile on his lips, “I love you. It took me ages to come to that realization, ages for me to make peace with the fact that I could love at all. But you make me feel more human and it was something that was much too inevitable to ignore. You shall never displease me, not when I adore every single thing about you.”

Sherlock ached at the words. Something in him felt his truth through each and every word and instinctively, he slowly pulled him close with both arms around his waist, and a sweet blush dusting his cheeks. For the time being, Sebastian’s words fled his mind and Sherlock once more dumped this memory into his mind as reassurance that Jim really did find him pleasing. Of course, they hadn’t had sex yet, but Sherlock tried to remind himself that when the time came to it, he would communicate his fears more openly. For now, he nodded, parting his lips as Jim made it clear he wanted to kiss him. For now, his demons were held at bay.

Jim’s lips brushed against Sherlock’s. The kiss was calm, warm, and sensual. Sherlock could taste the tea on his tongue, engulfed by the scent of expensive cologne and the feeling of his lover’s lips on his own. Sherlock’s eyes fluttered shut and for a moment, he was lost in time, not paying any mind to anyone or anything else but Jim. His thoughts only lived, breathed, and drank the criminal in like the perfect wine, and Sherlock was ready to get drunk off of him. Jim relished in Sherlock’s lips, how they were heaven at the end of a hellish day. Work was often fun, though as of late, difficult to even find remotely satisfying with having to tiptoe around certain situations and places because of Samuel George’s remaining people and the influx of clients taking him on. Sherlock was his solace, the only work he wouldn’t mind doing, always refreshing to see, hear, feel, and taste. His darling Sherlock.

“James…” Sherlock gasped for air as he parted from his lips. “...I love you too.”

Jim moved his hand to Sherlock’s cheek and caressed it gently, smiling more now as he believed Sherlock was finally reassured, his words and a kiss. He placed one more peck on his lips before letting his hand fall to Sherlock’s to hold and to squeeze.

“I have something to show you.” He stroked his thumb over Sherlock’s, letting his free hand browse his desk for a journal of his. He flipped through some pages before pulling out a small document. It was an envelope with Sherlock’s name scribbled onto it, and inside, a letter lied within—the handwriting naturally cursive and the scent of Jim’s cologne stuck to it like glue. He invited Sherlock to have a seat and read it and Sherlock took the offer up, intrigued, sitting in in his desk chair. He turned on the light as it was now becoming darker, sitting there as his eyes scanned over the words.

My Dearest Sherlock Holmes,

I’、“m not sure if I’ll ever give this letter to you. I might keep it for all of eternity. But I should hope this somehow helps me cope with the fact that I now have come to the discovery of being in love with you. Silly, isn’t it? How convenient, right when I return from the dead, and find you’ve done
the same. I’m infuriated. That damned brain of yours has done it again. It has completely and utterly brought me to my knees and I’ve never wanted to worship you more.

I’ve felt like this for a long time. Strongly attracted. Thought nothing of it, mostly because I know I’m a homosexual with very human urges. But that’s all I believed ‘love’ was. Just lust in disguise. It started out in thoughts and dreams. The random urge to take you would come to me when I thought about you solving my puzzles as a reward. I was haunted by it in dream, the amount of times I’ve woken up aroused, stiff and hard for you at the thought of fucking you in my bed, or over my desk, or on your stupid little chair at 221B. Then it turned into touching myself, at every sexy thought of you, riding me, begging me, sucking my cock, or on your hands and knees as I fuck you from behind. What would it be like to watch you touch yourself? Have you ever thought of me in such a way? What it would be like to hear your moans spill out like an overflowing tap or like a dam about to flood, I wonder. Every sexual partner I shared myself with no longer satiated me—their face would morph into yours and I couldn’t get you out of my head. Thoughts of killing you no longer resided in my head. I felt primal. But as I proceeded to constantly think of you, I only wondered about you, how you were feeling, if you were happy, if you were still solving cases like before. I thought about the most frivolous things like holding you as I laid in bed alone or kissing you when my mania was upon me and my moods were in full swing. Anytime I felt the urge to cry, anytime I was haunted by my past, I thought of you, and the pain seemed to melt away. I thought of how I treated you when I really wanted your attention. I can never rewrite the past, but I surely wish to write the future with you. I’ve realized now in my early forties that you are the one person I shall always want, but may very well never have. You never cease to amaze me with your intellect, with your beauty, and with that alluring air of mystery about you. I want you for myself. I’ve never been more greedy in my life.

Miss Adler has suggested we have dinner to find where we stand. I shall see. I miss my silly detective and watching him dance, my sweet English rose, as white and soft as the driven snow. Perhaps I’ll just spoil you with another case whilst I’m at it. I just want to see my gorgeous man feel the thrill and rush of my criminality run through his veins.

Until we meet again,

Undyingly Yours,

James Moriarty x

After reading such a piece, Sherlock was taken aback by it. He was, of course, flustered by the vulgar bits, and warmed by the sweetness of it. He couldn’t believe he was just reading this letter now, though more so, he was glad it was now instead of never, because now Sebastian’s words would have a hard time corrupting him the way they did earlier that morning. Even when Jim spoke of how much he loved Sherlock before, reading about his desire and adoration for him was a completely different realm, a different lense of seeing things. He couldn’t help but become caught up within his emotions from that day. He was still daunted by the thought of sex no thanks to Sebastian, but just about everything else the man said was disproven. Somehow in that intricate mind palace of his, he found it difficult to understand, but did not think about it further in these moments.

He grabbed Jim by his tie and yanked him down into a deep and passionate kiss, where lips and tongues collided. Jim moaned lowly and cupped his face in both his hands, holding it as though it were so valuable that if it fell from his hands the world could end in an instant. He brought those same hands through his curls, twisting them around his fingers, threading them into his gentle grip
— how soft they were, burying his hand in them, as if to plant seeds of love into his mind into the earthy soil of his hair. Sherlock eventually pulled away again and panted lightly, back against the chair, face flushed, lips pursed. How pretty Sherlock looked with that look of bliss on his face. It only lasted seconds before Jim kissed his knuckles, awakening him from that deep trance.

“Let’s have dinner, mm?”

“I’ll play you violin again.” offered Sherlock.

“I’d love that, Sherlock.”
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

HOLY SHIT. OKAY SO. I worked my ass off in this, PLEASE give it feedback. Comments. Anything. More chapters coming your way, but please if you are gonna read, it would appreciated to have y'all let me know what you think, because I am writing all of this for FREE and though it's for fun, it still took lots of time and energy. <3 Thank you!

ALSO EDIT: I forgot to add earlier that the unofficial song for this chapter is Space by Prince!

Throughout the following week, Sherlock tried to avoid Sebastian at all costs. It was a rather spacious estate, but the possibility of running into the sniper was quite high. He only met with him a few times, hearing the crude ex colonel insult him under his breath or discreetly shove past him in the hall. Sherlock never spoke of the incident between them in the kitchen, nor any of the other incidents, simply because it didn’t feel necessary to. It made Sherlock feel incapable, and he knew that he wasn’t. After all, he was a grown man, and even if Sebastian knew his pressure points, he was adamant on proving to himself he could take on his pressure, even if it hurt him in a very tender place. Truth be told, Sherlock had changed in the way he expressed himself. In a way, he found himself slightly more comfortable with his once suppressed emotions than ever before. He felt more human because of these scenarios and it did indeed harrow his way of thinking and being, it was terrifying, becoming this shadow that hadn’t shrouded his life in years. After the night before with Jim’s kisses and a very sweet, reassuring letter, Sherlock refused to back down. But he still couldn’t help but find himself uncomfortable with the thought of intimacy. Not because he was appalled by the thought of sharing his body with Jim, but the idea of his body not comparing to what he’s enjoyed before. After Sebastian told him that he knew what Jim liked, Sherlock felt extremely self conscious, knowing that they’ve already come this far, and he didn’t know a thing about what Jim did and didn’t fancy in bed. Why did it matter so much? It was bound to happen sometime, wasn’t it? Sherlock wanted Jim as much as Jim wanted Sherlock, the sexual tension between them was always so thick that one could cut it with a knife. It’s always felt that way since their first meeting at the pool. The flirting, the deep eye contact, the charm in every case Sherlock solved of his… their compatibility was surreal. But if he could not match how wonderful he was in bed, then wasn’t he disposable? He knew the authenticity of passionate sex wasn’t anything like what he saw in porn nor what he tried to imagine in his head, or capture in his dreams. It was obvious. But there was always that small fear at his core that would resurface to haunt him.

That morning Jim had reassured him that he would be there for Sherlock if Sherlock needed him, to stop by his office if he needed a bit of coddling. All he had to do was knock. However, Sherlock wasn’t the kind of person to take up such an offer. He didn’t want to sit there idle and be the center of Jim’s attention for such seemingly tedious and selfish reasons. Sherlock declined his offer and instead decided he would play his violin, and jokingly informed his lover that if he didn’t create a grand case for him to solve in the confines of that office, Sherlock would be upset. Jim was more than delighted to hear Sherlock’s attitude back, they shared a kiss, and was on his merry way.
Yet as Sherlock played his violin, which he did for hours in the lone space of the lavish living room, all he could think of was how Sebastian approached him the day before. Whatever Sebastian felt towards him, it was certainly a childish rage. But Sherlock still couldn’t help but feel as though he were right in some regard. Even if Jim tried to reassure him with that wonderful letter and words and kisses that made his heart swell with joy, there was something there he couldn’t shake. That feeling of inadequacy. He could dazzle with his cleverness and perhaps he was quite handsome, but in small ways he knew there were things Sebastian had that Sherlock lacked in. Sebastian had known him much longer and knew how to impress him in ways that Sherlock felt he would falter at. Intimacy was the one thing Sherlock was afraid of. More so because he had just come to recognize these oh so ordinary feelings of love he held for Jim and accepting them completely, after his entire life believing he was above them and all ordinary, human urges. Sex would be so much more than sharing his body. It was like inviting lions to a feast of rabbits. His mind was on the platter, his heart, everything he kept shielded and solely involved with his work. But Jim was his work, and that was the very reason why that small seed of fear still remained. No matter what was said, Sherlock always believed in the likelihood of becoming the source of his displeasure.

He tried to push it from his mind. That inadequate feeling. A stupid little feeling, it was. Like an itch one couldn’t scratch, he could only try to ignore it by distracting himself with the sound of the violin’s sweet melody. But the emotion was there, entangled in every note, every chord, speaking out to him, to the world, that this man was indeed human, and he too was troubled by something within the walls and depths of his mind. How it flowed like a creek, channeled energy into art, and breath of relief then bloomed from pain into bliss. There, now he was free, lost in the sound, drowning out the noise his mind created like a buzzing radio with no music.

But he lost himself in time. As evening crept upon him, he ceased his playing for the remainder of the night, the violin now within the confines of its little case. Sherlock ran his fingers over the sheen across the lower bout, then up the tailpiece before letting them glide over the strings. What stories he’d create with this instrument.

As he shut the lid and rose to his feet, Sherlock’s phone began to ring in his pocket. He raised a brow as he noticed the contact that came up on the screen—Irene Adler. His brows suddenly furrowed out of the slightest interest as to why she was calling him after a week of silence. It wasn’t as though they spoke all the time, but usually the woman was up to something when she called him on a whim. He answered and pressed the device to his ear,

“Surely this couldn’t be another scheme.” Sherlock’s voice dripped with sarcasm.

“What do you mean, Mr. Holmes?” teased the dominatrix on the other end of the line. “I’m never naughty.”

“I’m not answering that.”

“You’re no fun.”

“What do you want?”

“We’re approaching the estate now.”

“We’re?”

“Yes, Molly and I. Double date, remember? Told you we’d come visit.” sighed the woman. “Oh dear god, this means Jim must’ve forgotten himself if you didn’t know about it. I swear, all men care about is their work. When do you ever get to have fun?”
Sherlock smirked. “Often our work *is* fun.”

“Oh please, I’ll be there in approximately five minutes. Don’t have too much fun with your work now.”

Before Sherlock could even let out a single syllable, Irene already hung up. His face flooded all shades of red before he huffed and locked his phone, shoving it into his back trouser pocket. Of course he understood clearly what she was implying, as if Sherlock was fucking Jim around the clock. Her mind wasn’t anywhere but the gutter, wasn’t it?

The detective swept curls from his eyes and exited the living room, entering down the long hall of the extravagant estate. His hands were stuffed in his side pockets as he sauntered through, studying his surroundings as though he were trying to find something that wasn’t there. Double date… how quaint. He was hardly accustomed to a regular date with Jim, he felt it’d be quite awkward with Irene and Molly coming along. Especially Molly. But anything to spend time with Jim. He knew Jim had kept telling him time and time again that they’d have time to themselves, but it seemed as though every time Jim tried to make time, *something* pulled them apart. It could’ve been the smallest thing, like an email to a client, a meeting, to as huge as a heist, helping someone change their identity, or even consulting other criminals beneath him. There were about a hundred criminals or so who lived within the estate for local protection, Sebastian being the head criminal of them, but below Jim. Some came to visit, others he had to visit, or some he simply communicated via telephone or email if they were out of the country. By all means, Jim was indeed a busy man, but he couldn’t help but feel a bit envious of other criminals who received his attention more throughout the day. For an entire week the only times he ever saw him were in the mornings and the evenings. He had felt a greater need to be with him more frequent than that, as much as he didn’t like to admit it to himself. He was just too fond of Jim to be indifferent.

As he approached Jim’s office, he was shocked to see the door already open, with Jim receiving a scolding from Irene. He watched from the doorway.

“You self-absorbed Irishman, I told you specifically last week I’d be coming today!” She crossed her arms. “I should shove my riding crop right up your arse, you insolent little man.”

Jim smirked briefly as he stood from his desk, shutting his laptop. “I’m taller than you, Miss Adler.”

Irene’s jaw almost twitched. “Be bloody quiet, it’s not like you to forget. A certain someone has been pestering you a bit too much about work and you couldn’t take some time away for Sherlock?”

“I already have, quit nagging me.” He sighed, brushing some fluff off of his blazer sleeve.

Irene’s mood immediately changed. “Now that’s more like it! You better spoil him rotten, Jim, or so help me...”

Molly was giggling to herself at the exchange in one of the seats in front of Jim’s desk, though upon feeling a presence, turned to look behind, lighting up when seeing Sherlock standing at the doorway.

“Sherlock! Oh it’s so good to see you!” beamed Molly, a cheery smile on her lips.

Jim and Irene both perked up and looked over to see Sherlock as well, who briefly knitted his brows in bewilderman, wondering how she even got to Jim before he did.
“Hello Molly, Miss Adler.” greeted Sherlock, stepping inside. “Miss Adler, please don’t shove a riding crop up my lover’s arse, I’m not at all bothered by him working. Let him be.”

Irene chuckled softly, placing an arm around Molly who now stood from her chair.

“Oh? Rather it be something else?”

“Stop talking about shoving things up my arse.” frowned Jim, moving past her to meet Sherlock at the door, who’s cheeks flushed at Irene’s suggestive comment.

“Sorry my love, that I didn’t tell you. I’ve been so buried in my work that I’ve neglected you. Forgive me?” Jim cupped his cheek, leaning forward and pressing a kiss to the detective’s lips.

Sherlock softened at the kiss, eyes falling to Jim’s longingly. It seemed like ages since he kissed him, even though it was just that morning he kissed him goodbye. He nodded, which brought a smile to Jim’s lips.

“Wonderful.”

“Where’s this double date taking place?” inquired Sherlock, glancing at Jim and Irene curiously for an answer.

“The National Opera House in Wexford,” Jim’s hand fell to Sherlock’s, “we’ll be seeing Un ballo in maschera, then we’ll be dining at DeLuca’s, which is located not far from the Opera House.”

Irene chimed in with, “You’ll love it, it’s right up your alley. Murder and suspense, it’s plot revolves around the assassination of King Gustav III of Sweden. Jim picked it out.”

“That’s right, sugar,” Jim squeezed his hand, “you’re only treated with the best. The best performers, the best seats, the best food, you name it.”

Sherlock was taken aback by the thought behind Jim’s specially chosen opera and eatery.

He figured he and Irene had planned this together and he had to admit, this was a good way to end an unsturdy week. He smiled faintly and kissed Jim’s hand, which was very much wrapped up in his own, tight—and never letting go.

“I don’t have to change, do I?”

Jim shook his head. “You look good in anything you wear. We can go like this.”

Sherlock’s smile never faded from his lips, though he caught Molly and Irene’s lingering gazes, ones that read, ‘we need to talk’. He couldn’t place his finger exactly on what it was about, but it was quite obvious how important it was in the way their body language was displayed to him. Sherlock and Jim made sure to collect their coats at the door before heading out.

As they all filed out of Jim’s office, they exited the estate and entered Irene’s limousine. For the next few hours, which surprisingly flew by like the trees coming and going by Sherlock’s window, there was either silence at some parts, or chatter in another. Mostly if there was chatter, it was Molly, the most sociable of their group, who was catching up with Sherlock. But of course, behind her eyes, he knew there was something she wasn’t speaking about that made Sherlock’s mind fill with wonder. It was the first time he couldn’t completely deduce something of Molly that really did make him a bit uneasy. Yet nonetheless, he held that feeling deep down and instead masked it with light chatter.
He learned that Molly enjoyed the Adler woman’s company and has grown deeply fond for her, and only wished Sherlock introduced them much sooner— enough though they recently met by accident. As Irene listened to this, she ran her fingers through Molly’s golden hair, red, well-manicured tips playing with each strand. She adored Molly and Sherlock could tell by her admiring gaze and gentle touches. Good for her.

Molly leaned into her touches and rested her head against Irene’s shoulder, prompting Sherlock to do the same with Jim’s shoulder. As Jim felt his head weigh against his shoulder, he instinctively leaned over, pressed a kiss to Sherlock’s forehead, and draped an arm around him. That beautiful detective would be the death of him. Seeing him like this—it was a precious, sacred sight. One Jim could cherish for eternity. He would make sure not to take this time for granted ever again.

As anticipated, the opera truly was wonderful. Giuseppe Verdi did an excellent job creating it, even though it was not the full version of the opera itself. Each act was filled with fantastically exquisite voices and the orchestra blended in so well. It was one of the grandest performances Sherlock ever attended. Throughout the opera, Sherlock held Jim’s hand the entire time, often sneaking glances at him. Sometimes Jim would catch them and let his gaze linger, not only on his eyes, but his lips as well, almost teasing. How Sherlock wanted to have those mischievous lips against his own, totally and completely swallowed by nothing but bliss. However, he was quite a shy and very private lover, so in regards to such kissing, he preferred it to be left behind closed doors, knowing that such wild public affection was often frowned upon. What did Sherlock care? Very little, but watching eyes always made him rather bashful and quite uncomfortable. Though more brief, chaste kisses followed, the scent of their colognes intermingling as they were beside one another, close as two could be, engrossed in the dramatic music that took place.

During the last intermission, Jim excused himself to leave for the restroom, leaving Sherlock, Molly, and Irene to themselves. There was quiet chatter amongst the room and Sherlock turned to the two women beside him, whose fingers were entangled in one another’s. Irene, who was sitting beside Sherlock, noticed Sherlock peering at them thoughtfully and raised a brow.

“What is it, Sherlock?”

“You were both looking at me earlier as though you needed to talk, yet haven’t spoken on it at all. If it has something to do with James, then out with it.”

“Dear,” began Irene, “I’m just concerned about you.”

“Concerned? Why? You needn’t concern yourself over me. I’m fine.” denied Sherlock.

“I beg to differ, actually. There’s a bit of sadness in you lately that I can’t really describe. And I know you’ve been trying to hide it, even from Jim… Has it been because of that wretched sniper?”

Sherlock’s lips pursed. He was silent. How in the world could he answer that without feeling ashamed? Of course, he could lie, but Irene knew when Sherlock was lying and when he was
telling the truth for the most part. She was extremely clever, so trying to pull one over her was certainly not going to work. He also wasn’t sure if he wanted to speak about this now, mainly because every time he thought of Sebastian, it made his stomach tie in knots. It made him utterly sick. But Irene tilted her head to him after he didn’t respond for some time, pursing her own lips as well. Sherlock had no choice but to give in, a forfeiting sigh escaping him as he gathered his thoughts and his courage to give an answer.

“Yes.”

“That bastard, what’s he been saying? Whatever it is, don’t listen to him.”

“Erm…” trailed off Sherlock, eyes falling to his lap. “...just that he knows what Jim likes and how I don’t compare.”

Irene narrowed her eyes at the thought of Sherlock being treated so cruelly by Jim’s employees. Especially Sebastian of all people. She didn’t understand how Sherlock could let him be so sly to say such horrible things.

“Don’t listen to him, he’s just being an arse. I reckon he’s only slept with Jim once or twice, otherwise it’d be something Jim would brag about. Probably even a drunken hookup, I would take it with a grain of salt, Sherlock. He’s only jealous and therefore trying to make an effort to tear you both apart by hitting you where it hurts most.”

Sherlock glanced away. “But he’s right.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, everyone starts somewhere. No one magically learns what another likes. Intimacy is so much more than what is on the surface. He probably never had that kind of connection with Jim. But it is very likely he sees that potential in you. Don’t let him bully you.” frowned Irene.

“Bully? Sherlock? Who?” popped in Molly, her features twisted with a look of empathy for her friend. “Oh right, Irene has told me about him. Don’t let anyone treat you any kind of way, Sherlock, you’re so wonderful. After seeing Jim again after so long, I can see how you’ve changed him. How he’s changed you. I trust that you’re in good hands. He really does love you, I can see it, and I bet if you spend more time with him, you both will strengthen completely.”

Sherlock blinked, eyes falling to his lap again before moving to Molly shyly. “Thank you, Molly.”

“You’re just the sweetest, Hooper. I could eat you up.” Irene leaned forward, pressing soft kisses to her cheeks and one single kiss on her lips, much to Molly’s delight. She then turned back to Sherlock, her red lipstick slightly smudged now.”Honestly, darling, it’ll take time. But you will see how right you are for one another. It’s practically written in the stars.”

Sherlock did note the advice he was receiving. After all, this was his first proper relationship and hopefully his last. He refused to even think of being with anyone else. It was far too impossible to even think about. How could he love someone else? Jim was his match made in Hell and even if insecurity lingered within him, he was adamant on defeating the feeling once and for all.

Just as the conversation about Jim subsided, Jim stepped into the room again, making his way back to his seat beside Sherlock, giving him a quick kiss. Speak of the devil. He tucked his phone into his back pocket, snaking an arm around him firmly.

“You look so dreary.”

Sherlock blushed, not realizing his own expression. He didn’t think whatever thoughts or feelings
going on inside of him were starting to appear on his face.

“I’m alright, promise.”

Sherlock smiled at him and once more let their hands find each other. It was then that the third act began and silence befell the audience.

Irene was right. And so was Molly. But of course, he never expected ever getting relationship advice from either in his time. He didn’t even expect a relationship with Jim, yet here he was, on a double date, discussing his relationship and intimacy as though it were a hot topic. Sherlock had to be firm in where he stood. His love for Jim was stronger than his fear and he refused to be pushed around by words that should’ve meant little to him. If he were truly loved by Jim, he had nothing to fear at all. It was fairly simple, but something he was trying to slowly affirm for himself. He would try to be more courageous, show Jim just how much he meant to him, in the ways Jim showed him. Who knew how long it would be before Sebastian would forfeit this silly game he tried to play.

What he believed in held more weight than those dark thoughts which pierced him again and again like arrows of pointless sorrow.

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The bottle of Barolo was nearly empty. They at least all had a few glasses each (except for Jim, who only had a single glass), though Sherlock, Jim, and Irene were only slightly buzzed, whereas Molly was affected more by it. Not quite tipsy, but not fully sober either. Here and there she would go quiet, the alcohol taking its time on her, making her a bit drowsy. The restaurant was extremely nice— and Jim reserved them a good table by the live music, a smooth jazz band that often played there on Friday nights. Two candles sat in the center of the table, which was elegantly prepared when they arrived, with serviettes folded into pyramids on small, porcelain plates, sitting by crystal glasses of iced water. They were seated in a private booth, and only rarely were visited by the waiter who served them from the start, leaving their conversations uninterrupted.

Sherlock pushed around the very little bit of orecchiette on his plate, drawing patterns in his tomato sauce as he listened to Irene speak about a time where during one of her meetings with a client, she had to immediately leave because the client turned out to be a criminal who was after her for whatever blackmail she used against him. The Englishman was only half listening, his attention focused on Jim was he was listening as well, his eyes on her. Feeling a bit greedy for his attention, his hand reached beneath the table cloth upon the table and found his lover’s outer thigh beside him, gently squeezing, to get his attention. In an attempt to subtly flirt, he supposed. Jim’s jaw very nearly twitched at the feeling of Sherlock’s hand and he side glanced at him, a sly smile curving onto his lips briefly.

“Must be thorough about our clients. Some of them are quite… naughty.” Jim reached his hand out towards Sherlock’s thigh in return, squeezing at his inner thigh rather harshly, making Sherlock almost yelp. “Background checks are always a must, never be too careless.”

“Indeed.” replied Irene, finishing the rest of her wine, noticing Sherlock blushing from the corner of her eye.
“Such a dangerous field, I imagine.” commented Molly. “Especially you, Jim, I’m sure you have all sorts of people after you. I see how you’re always prepared for the worst.”

“I make an effort to have protection against all costs.” hummed Jim, running his hand up and down Sherlock’s thigh. “Most who are caught are afraid of me anyhow, then they’re thoroughly punished.”

Sherlock already got the warning message loud and clear to refrain from continuing to tease Jim.

“Oh, what a tough, tough, man,” teased the dominatrix, her blue eyes crinkling with amusement, “I sure wouldn’t want to get on your bad side.”

Jim rolled his eyes. “You already do.”

As the three laughed, Sherlock was the only one who wasn’t, looking at Jim with pleading eyes.
Jim knew exactly what he was doing and it was clear in the gleam of his eye that caught Sherlock’s soft gaze that he was teasing him there in that restaurant. The bastard. Sherlock turned away with a huff, looking to the musicians as they started with their next song in the lineup. So much for being brave. Jim made it so hard when Sherlock was easy to fluster. Perhaps he’d have a better shot next time, when he wasn’t so clueless on how to subtly seduce a man he fancied in a public setting. He wondered if it really was his personality or a lack of skill. Irene was good at that, wasn’t she? He’d try to take by her example more and hope for the best.

Jim removed his hand when he noticed Sherlock turn away, smugly and playfully kicking his foot his own beneath the table as he picked up his fork to eat his salad tomatoes, making the detective around to the group.

“Should we have dessert? I was thinking of tiramisu, though I’m not sure.” suggested Irene, fixing her lipstick as he looked into a small compact mirror.

“I’m not huge on sweet things.” admitted Jim, looking to Sherlock. “Dessert?”

Sherlock shook his head and watched as Irene looked to Molly, showing her the menu.

“What do you think?” She pointed to the list of options. “They have gelato.”

“Mm, but the cassata looks delightful, very colorful and sweet.” thought Molly aloud, a bit indecisive, pushing her hair behind her ear. How precious she looked in the dim light of that restaurant. “What do you think?”

“What do I think? I think you should be on the menu.” cooed Irene, stroking her hair flirtatiously.

Molly laughed softly, her cheeks dusting pink with flattery from her date’s affections and words. Surely, Irene was the charmer, and she truly did enjoy how she was treated by her. She felt like a queen in her eyes, and never anything less. The pathologist turned to the other Englishwoman, fingers just barely grazing her knee which peeked from beneath that gorgeous, shimmering black, backless dress she wore.

“You silly woman, you can’t eat me here.” flirted back Molly, her brown eyes lingering over Irene’s for a few moments rather daringly.

“Don’t think I wouldn’t try.” smiled Irene in the most endearing manner, her running her manicured nail over the hem of Molly’s matching red dress. Molly often wore more red subconsciously after Irene told her how much it suited her and Irene couldn’t relish in it more.
As Sherlock observed the exchange take place, he felt a bit jealous of Molly being able to flirt back with Irene so casually. Sherlock often felt tongue tied when Jim did it to him and that’s when he decided things would change the night. At least, for a start. Sherlock cleared his throat to gain Jim’s attention, his eyes averting to his lap sheepishly for what he was about to say.

“James, I’d like the tartufo.”

Jim furrowed his brows. “I thought you didn’t want dessert.”

“I changed my mind.”

“It appears so.”

“We can share it.” offered Sherlock.

“I’m not very fond of sweets.” reminded the criminal.

“It has fruit in it.” added Sherlock.

Jim thought for a moment, pondering on what exactly made Sherlock so adamant on having dessert suddenly. He nodded after a minute and placed the menu down, signaling for their waiter across the room to come and take their order for dessert.

When their dessert arrived after around ten minutes of waiting, Irene and Molly shared theirs, feeding one another from the sponginess of the fruity flavored, moistened cake. Just as Molly said, it was very colorful, and sounded delicious to positive comments they both made on them. But Sherlock took one look at it and saw it as unappealing and tacky. The tartufo was the size of his fist and looked quite good, coated in chocolate, but inside filled with chocolate and vanilla ice cream, and two strawberries in the center. There were also sliced strawberries on the side drizzled in chocolate, which seemed to pique Jim’s interest a bit. As Jim went to start, Sherlock tugged at his sleeve.

“What is it, Sherlock?”

Sherlock shyly glanced to the dessert and back to Jim, trying to hint at him that he wanted to be fed as well. Jim immediately received the subtle hint and sighed, breaking the treat open with his spoon, taking a generous scoop, and placing it near Sherlock’s mouth.

“Honestly,” he began, watching Sherlock open his mouth, “making me do all of these things for you… what a hassle.”

Sherlock was fed the tartufo, chewing at the chocolate and strawberry that mixed together in his mouth. It melted on his tongue and Sherlock was looking forward to another bite. After he swallowed, he answered Jim with,

“Then don’t hassle yourself.”

Jim smirked at Sherlock’s retort, scooping another spoonful up and placing it towards Sherlock’s mouth.

“Smart arse. You’re lucky you’re cute.” teased the Irishman.

But when Sherlock was about to be fed his second spoonful, Jim placed the tartufo in his own mouth instead, eating up what was supposed to be Sherlock’s, making Sherlock pout as he watched his lover gloat with a satisfied hum before him.
“Bloody hell, I hate you. You just did that to spite me.”

“Obviously.”

Sherlock huffed and used his own spoon to scoop out the little bit of tartufo left, going to feed it to Jim. As Jim opened his mouth, Sherlock placed it in his own mouth, almost challengingly.

“Foolish to think I would even serve you any.”

“Foolish to think I didn’t expect you to do that.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes at his boyfriend’s quip, watching as Jim cut off a piece of chocolate and scooped up some ice cream for him, feeding it to Sherlock this time. Sherlock lit up and happily took the bite, his baby blue eyes once more soft for his beloved’s generosity.

“But I can be fair. Sometimes.” said Jim, his dark eyes flickering over his lips and eyes, though Sherlock was more focused on the taste of his dessert. He scooped out a spoonful for Jim, placing the spoon right into his mouth. Jim appreciatively took the spoon and ate from it, letting his tongue visibly lick the utensil clean. Sherlock never knew up until this night that he could be turned on by such a sight, biting his lip, knowing well that Jim was suggesting something else.

“J-James…” he mumbled warningly, looking to see if anyone saw. Thankfully Molly and Irene were too engrossed in their own conversation, but he was still shy about it nonetheless.

“Don’t ‘James’ me, sexy. You grabbed my thigh earlier, I look to return the favor tenfold.” He purred, pulling Sherlock close with an arm around his waist. “Maybe I’ll just eat you up like this dessert.”

Before Sherlock could even think, Jim already smashed his lips to Sherlock’s, kissing him deep and long, the taste of wine and tartufo on their tongues. Sherlock felt as though it was Heaven on Earth. For the first time, his mind was at complete ease, not trying to any further in the future, not being stuck in the past. For once, he was focused on this moment here and now, storing it in his mind forever. The taste, the aroma, the sight, the feeling, the sound of calming music being played near them. Their eyes shut and the two became lost in their own world. Sherlock nearly whimpered out as Jim sucked at his bottom lip, almost biting down on it from fear as the waiter called their attention upon approaching the table. He pulled away in embarrassment, cheeks burning, muttering a quiet apology before the waiter excused it, placing the check down for Jim. Irene offered to pay and so did Molly, but Jim declined it, paying with his debit card and a handsome tip.

“I suppose that wine has gotten us a bit in the mood, hasn’t it?” joked Irene, eyeing the two with mirth dancing in her eyes.

“Certainly.” replied Jim, sending a wink to an already bashful Sherlock, who glanced away from him to avoid looking anymore red for the night.

After receiving his card back, Jim stood and took Sherlock’s hand, the four of them all heading outside to the limousine. For the rest of the ride back, Sherlock’s hair was stroked by Jim as they sat in silence, watching the moon so round, pale, and full in the sky float above them as their beacon in the darkness.
Sherlock and Jim were dropped off by Irene’s limousine back at the estate. It was quite late and Molly had already fallen asleep on her lap an hour before, not being able to wish the two goodnight.

As they entered the estate, they were on their way to Jim’s room to change out of their clothes. Sherlock looked forward to a night with Jim, to hold him and kiss him within an inch of his life. They strolled up the stairs together, holding hands, and Sherlock felt proud. He really felt more open and relaxed and was feeling rather bold. He already planned it out. Once they were in bed, Sherlock would attempt being as suave as Jim, brushing his hand over his chest, letting their eyes meet, and lean in for a steamy kiss. His imagination was so wonderful to him, but also very cruel, when reality immediately hit. Sebastian had stopped them dead in their tracks, making Sherlock scowl.

Sebastian stared Sherlock down coldly, looking him up and down with the most disinterest before letting his gaze rest on Jim. Of course, he must have been waiting the entire night to see Jim, because he appeared awfully disappointed to see him returning so late— and with Sherlock of all people. Sherlock felt that sick feeling return and discreetly gritted his teeth, fighting those thoughts that fled that evening.

“Boss, I don’t mean to interrupt you, but Sergei Malikov has been meaning to get to you all night, says it’s quite important you contact him. I urge you to call him tonight before he declines your deal.” gestured Sebastian to his office down the hall. “It should only take a minute of your time.”

Before Sherlock could argue, Jim sighed, letting Sherlock’s hand go and turning to him briefly with an apologetic, weary smile.

“Go no ahead without me, I’ll be there shortly. Promise.”

In hearing this, Sherlock was far from pleased. He had more faith in Jim than this, and to expect him to change suddenly was much too hasty, he found. He glanced at the two of them back and forth for a moment before giving Jim an assuring nod, permitting the man leave to office. However, internally, Sherlock was fuming. Of course Sebastian had to snatch him away with the excuse of work. He stroppily returned back to Jim’s bedroom, his whole body heavy with deep discontent. How could a man feel so entitled to their life where he did what he could to split them apart? It was utterly ridiculous and Sherlock was fed up with it. He almost felt like letting Sebastian win. Though, something nagged at him, this feeling to fight fire with a greater fire. It was the reminder of Irene telling him to pull through it and win Jim back. He ran his fingers through his curls for a moment, trying to think of how that would go. Certainly, Sherlock was feeling bold tonight, but how bold could he become? What was deemed acceptable and what wasn’t? Should he have left it up to chance and throw caution to the wind?

The Englishman grumpily removed his clothes, stripping down from head to toe until he was completely nude. He threw his clothes on the desk chair and brainstormed, his eyes flitting from the chair, to the bed, to the wall, to the bathroom, then back to the bed again as an idea began to spark in his mind. He crawled into bed and got beneath the silky crimson sheet. Should he surprise him from beneath? Would Jim dare or care to see if he were nude beneath the covers? Sherlock’s thoughts were racing and so was his heart. And that’s when the unthinkable entered his mind, like the sunlight beaming down from the heavens, breaking through cloudy, unnecessary thoughts which felt like they never had an end. It was like a candle’s flame suddenly lit like a light in his
darkness. Yes, this is what he would do, there was nothing else that seemed more perfect than an idea like this in such a moment.

Sherlock wrapped himself in the sheet and carefully rolled out of the bed, getting to his feet and hugging it tight around his body. He couldn’t believe he was actually doing this. He’s believed to have lost his mind many times before, but this was a different level of bold that Sherlock was attempting that both frightened and excited him. He only hoped it earned a positive response.

Meanwhile, Jim pulled out a pen and paper and dialed the criminal’s number. He recently made a deal with a Russian Mafia leader for his services in exchange for support with a few operations he had plotted out just a month beforehand. He knew losing this group wouldn’t be a dire cost, but the opportunity was clearly not going to slip through his fingers. As he sat down in his seat, Sebastian tried to stall him by asking if he wanted tea, but Jim was becoming quickly annoyed with him. He waved him off and told Sebastian to leave him be and that they would speak in the morning. Sebastian only frowned, mentally cursing Sherlock in his mind, and left his office, letting the criminal mastermind handle business on his own.

“Hello? Mr. Malikov? This is Moriarty. Yes, Sebastian has forwarded to me that you wished to speak.” began Jim, taking a pen from his pen holder, ready to write down whatever he needed.

As he wrote down the information passed onto him, he hummed here and there in acknowledgement that all which was said within the call was noted and to be taken care of by certain dates and times. It was painstakingly long the more he wrote and the Irish criminal felt irritated with having to listen right when he was ready to take the rest of the night off. It was not as though he loathed his job, but in times like these, he was very sure he needed a break from it. A long one, in fact. He scribbled down significant people next who were in need of a house sweeping, thinking of various ways already of how the work could be taken care of. His thoughts were placed at a halt however when the corner of his eye noticed a silhouette at the door. His fight or flight mode immediately kicked in and Jim glanced up, eyes widening at the sight.

Oh, the sight.

Sherlock was leaning against the doorframe, with his ruffled, dark curls, pursed, plush pink lips, and pale skin that clashed against the deep crimson of his bedsheat. His back was turned to the man seated at his desk, his heated gaze just shot over his exposed shoulder. Slowly, ever so slowly, slower than molasses, Sherlock let the sheet fall slightly, exposing his back and all those gorgeous muscles that defined the strength no one would even think the man held dressed in that silly, black coat of his. Jim was at the edge of his seat, barely listening to Sergei Malikov as the Russian on the other end went on and on about business that now Jim couldn’t care less about. The majority of his focus was on Sherlock, who let the sheet fall no further past his waist at this point.

“Do try to hurry, James, I’m a very impatient man.” spoke Sherlock shyly, his cheeks colored by a rosy blush, heart hammering in his chest with a speed unlike anything he’d ever felt before.

With that said, the sheet slipped lower, and lower, and lower, then fell to the floor completely. Of course, Sherlock was still holding one end of it which covered his front on the other side, though his back was fully exposed now to Jim. All Jim could do was bite his bottom lip, earning fussy Russian complaints on the other end about Jim’s silence. An erection was certainly forming.

“Excuse me, Mr. Malikov, we’ll continue this conversation tomorrow. I must go…” hung up Jim before the man could complain any further.

Sherlock smiled to himself as he heard Jim ending his call with a Russian client who was more than likely not worth a single moment of the Irishman’s time. But Christ, how Jim was in deep.
Sherlock truly was a work of art, even if he were just seeing the back of him, with his moon kissed back, followed by a long, lean, and slender figure, followed by an incredible view of his perky, shapely behind, and of course, muscular thighs he wouldn’t mind going to Heaven with. He stood from his desk, tossing the pen aside and setting the notebook by his laptop. He was just far too stunned by Sherlock’s radiant beauty to even think of anything else. And that ache in his trousers surely needed to be dealt with.

As Jim sauntered over, Sherlock immediately threw the sheet over him again, covering his full body, and fled to the bedroom, making Jim have to chase him down to see any goods Sherlock had in store. All Jim could do was follow behind, beyond eager to rip off his sheet, and gaze upon a god, and worship Sherlock with every offering he could bring to his altar of a body.

Once Sherlock and Jim entered into his bedroom, Jim shut the door behind him and locked it, making Sherlock become flustered. He observed as the spider of a man approached him, those impish eyes looking him up and down like a meal, as though he’s been starving for so long, and now finally had the chance to feast. Sherlock practically trembled, the sight of Jim desiring him also very much arousing. The next thing he knew was Jim yanking his sheet to the floor and for a moment, circling Sherlock slowly like a shark with a lone fish, or more so like a spider weaving its web around its prey. Sherlock practically burned under Jim’s lascivious gaze and touch, his touch so ginger and yet so teasing, with fingers tracing upon his collar bone, over his chest, around his nipples, down to his hip, to upon his biceps, down his spine, gripping at his exposed backside. Sherlock only whimpered out as he did and finished admiring him, pulling him close as they were face to face. He licked his lips.

“You’re positively divine, Sherlock,” crooned Jim, “you’ve certainly caught my attention.”

Sherlock was at a loss for words. This was it, Sherlock finally opening himself after a long awaited time. But he finally was able to express his desire for intimacy without fear poisoning it as a factor. This was the key that unlocked many doors and shut away ones that once invited Sebastian’s petulance. Yes, this was the key that made everything feel freer, that perhaps Sherlock was enclosed in one of those locked doors himself. His mind would no longer be a prison, his body would no longer be a desecrated pile of shame nor a burial ground of discarded remains, where offerings were to go to waste. He wouldn’t be a forgotten god, not at all. He would be a remembered one, by no more than his loyal worshipper, Jim Moriarty, who would make sure every waking moment of his existence was devoted to the one before him.

He smashed his lips against Sherlock’s, seizing him like a lost diamond kept from man. He kissed him unlike ever before, with teeth clashing, tongues dancing, lips brushing over one another’s again and again. Their eyes shut and Sherlock was transported to another world. Jim’s hands grazed up his lover’s torso and felt out the broad chest of Sherlock’s. What a beauty he was, a true masterpiece. Jim didn’t care what Sherlock thought, he certainly was the lucky one of this relationship. He gently shoved Sherlock to the bed, just devouring him with every bit of lust that stirred within him. Jim stripped of his blazer, tie, and shirt and tossed them to the floor. He usually was more careful about his very expensive and designer clothes, but tonight he hadn’t a single care in the world.

Sherlock could feel his own excitement twitching and brushing against Jim’s that were still in his trousers. He moaned deeply, gently tugging at them, needy, legs ever so slightly spreading just for Jim. Jim noticed his lover’s need for his trousers to go, and so he stripped them as well, along with his shoes, socks, and boxer briefs. He refused to let Sherlock be naked alone. He sucked at Sherlock’s bottom lip and grinded against his cock, creating an addictive friction, causing Sherlock to whine into the kiss. He gripped onto Jim’s arms and shoulders, only feeling out the broadness and fullness of them; it was very evident this man was active.
“James—” moaned Sherlock, breaking from the kiss for air. “—James, fuck—”

They were barely coherent sentences, but Jim knew that meant the detective yearned for more. He moved towards Sherlock’s neck and attacked, no mercy shown. He peppered kisses along the side, listening to those sweet, sweet sounds serenade him, making his cock twitch. Jim let out a moan as well, grasping Sherlock’s cock and rubbing himself against him, making Sherlock’s hands fall to the sides of him and clutch the bedding, his moans much louder now. How their bodies pressed against each other, it was so intoxicating. Jim’s skin felt smooth against his own and the scent of his cologne made him dizzy with lust. Sherlock didn’t know the limits of his pleasure but he was sure to find out, wasn’t he? Opening his eyes, he saw Jim in all his exquisite, naked beauty, and was in incredible awe. Not only was he handsome in his face, but underneath too. He lingered to his ear for a moment, lips grazing the lobe, allowing his free hand to follow Sherlock’s natural shape.

“Mm… fuck, Sherlock, I’ll take such good care of you…” whispered Jim, that seductive tone making Sherlock hot to the core.

He moved down to his neck again. Jim sucked at his supple skin, in various patterns and trails; some down Sherlock’s neck, some across his throat and Adam’s apple, leaving him looking as though he were a blank canvas and Jim was his artist, painting devotion into his flesh with his lips and his tongue, those hickeys would be worn proudly with honor. He looked utterly delicious and Jim admired the sight beneath him as he pulled away. Those rosy cheeks clashing with his pale skin, those dark curls, and those flushed, Cupid bow plush lips; what an honor it was to make love to him there on that bed. He would certainly cherish every bit of him, no piece of him neglected or ignored. Lower the Irishman moved, kissing down his chest, how buttery his skin felt against his lips, so soft one could tear it apart like paper. It was feasible, but Jim was delicate with him, careful not to become too harsh, for he’d only become harsh if that wish lied in Sherlock at one point or another. He paused when he reached one of two of those perky nipples, pink and erect to his every kiss and touch. His gentle breath encased the nipple, causing a shiver to bolt down Sherlock’s spine. In the following moment, Jim pressed a soft kiss to it, glancing up to Sherlock to see his response.

That lovely, breathy baritone answered, his cock reacting with even just the slight brush of skin. Sherlock knew he belonged to Jim then and there, his heart was his for eternity, til Hell froze over, and til the Earth exploded.

Jim’s tongue circled the nipple, prompting Sherlock’s back to arch, delving into the deepest depths of bliss itself. Jim’s hand glided up his abdomen, feeling those tight abdominal muscles beneath his hand, like a monument of a Greek god erected for the pleasure of his eyes alone. Then, those wicked lips enveloped his entire nipple, sucking it slowly, the sound it made giving off a gentle, wet noise. Sherlock’s face was that of greatest delight, and Jim’s name flowed from his lips like a river, his name like a prayer on repeat as if it were his saving grace. Those sweet noises of approval, like a song Jim would never grow tired of; the sacred hymns of his dark angel. They rejected the world and found god within themselves, found all they ever needed in each other, drawing an eclipse with their minds, drawing earth and sky with their bodies.

“You’re just so pretty…” drawled Jim, parting from Sherlock’s now softened nipple, moving to his other to tease. “...my pretty, pretty man, how I adore you so...”

Sherlock gripped at his hair, his cheeks still flushed, not only from pleasure but the words Jim spoke, burning into his mind, his skin, like a mark of Jim branded in him for the rest of his years. He was oh so needy and desperate, his hand faltering in its own grip, practically slipping from Jim’s very silky raven strands. A string of moans left him, though were only cut short, when Jim
Jim took him into his mouth, a hum of approval leaving him as his cock pulsed against his hot tongue, making Sherlock gasp out for air. The grip on Jim’s hair tightened, almost as if Sherlock was afraid he would fade away from his hold at any given moment. Jim wasn’t shy to bob his head, allowing Sherlock’s cock to go deeper into his throat, running his tongue along veins, pulling out a bit to run his tongue across the tip, brushing his tongue right across the slit, before returning it into his mouth wholly in a swift and sensual movement. This was far better than his dreams, any fantasy that ever dared to enter his mind with a promise of a good time. He imagined that sex would feel good, but never this good. As for Jim, of all the sex he’s ever had, having it with Sherlock was a completely different experience. It was otherworldly, something beyond what words could truly describe.

As he slowly entered Jim’s throat with that same, repetitive movement, Sherlock knew he didn’t have very long. His hips weakly thrusted upwards, needing and craving Jim all the more, his hand now gripping so tightly that he was mildly frightened he would pull his hair out. It only slightly hurt, but Jim didn’t mind it. In fact, he invited it. He didn’t mind Sherlock being a bit rough with him, for he too longed to be marked in the ways he marked Sherlock. There Sherlock was now, slowly building, as he leaked precum, balls deep in Jim’s mouth. He could only ever speak in shaky curses and sighs, each and every one going straight to Jim’s cock. The Irishman was hardening more and more by the moment it was almost unbearable. Pleasuring Sherlock was his own pleasure and nothing could arouse him more.

Finally, with a final thrust, Sherlock reached his first orgasm of the night. He came almost immediately afterwards, his seed spilling and filling Jim’s mouth. And Jim didn’t waste a single drop, swallowing him, all of him, the saltiness of his taste lingering on his tongue in the most perfect way. Sherlock’s orgasms were gorgeous, but seeing him do so in the throes of passion was one he certainly would be treasuring. Sherlock was shivering as he removed Sherlock’s half hard cock from his mouth. Jim was definitely not finished with him yet.

“J-James…. I need you… please…” begged Sherlock, that shaky tone so close to making Jim fall over the edge.

“Such a desperate detective you are, Sherlock… it’s utterly precious…” purred Jim in that rich, Irish brogue. “...we are far from done, my love…”

Sherlock’s heart thumped in his chest at those teasing words, his cock twitching in anticipation. Whatever Jim had planned, he awaited it with bated breath, wanting to learn all he could about the measures of pleasure and how he could please Jim in any way possible. Jim gestured for his lover to roll over. Sherlock was rather curious as to what Jim would be doing next, but didn’t question it for a moment. The detective simply laid on his stomach, legs spread out for Jim to have room, permitting the criminal to do what was needed.

Jim was always left in awe. He admired Sherlock’s long back, with those muscles, and the curves of his waist that formed his backside down below. A perfect heart shape, round and white, Jim’s mouth almost watered at the thought of taking Sherlock then and there, marking it with every kiss and bite. His hands reached up and glided over his skin, Sherlock instantly sighing at his sensual touches. His fingers worked over every muscle, every bone, memorizing such a mesmerizing form that would always and forever be in Jim’s memory. How smooth, so very smooth, he could melt right in that moment. He stopped when his hands fell to Sherlock’s behind, his hands working over the two perky muscles, massaging it, gripping and squeezing at it, feeling him completely. At this point, Sherlock felt his erection twitch back to life again, twitching against the bed. He wondered what Jim was doing, thinking back on if this was something he forgot he had seen in a porn he’s
ever watched.

Before the thought could even be reached however, Jim kissed at the suppleness of the right muscle, then sucked more red-purple lovebites, making Sherlock gasp out, moaning as one hand gripped the left, and the right was being desecrated with hickeys. His legs only spread out further for him, visibly ready for Jim to take him. His body was shaky and his face flushed with innocent desire. In a way, he hated Jim making him wait, but in another, he was glad that he took his time and didn’t rush. Everything felt wonderful and he wasn’t going to complain for a moment about it. Once Jim was satisfied with how Sherlock’s right cheek looked, he gripped at his hips, making Sherlock nearly jump out of skin. What came next was rather unexpected, though very invited.

Jim had parted the two muscles slightly, moving his face forward, and letting his tongue lap over Sherlock’s pink entrance in the most erotic fashion Sherlock whimpered, the feeling of his slick tongue making him throb. God, it was torture. But he still invited it, raising his backside more as a way to encourage his lover to proceed with what he was doing. Jim noted this and once more cupped the two muscles with his hands, squeezing them as Jim’s tongue darted into Sherlock’s entrance, thrusting, his lips moving against the hole, sucking and licking as though it were a treat that wouldn’t go to waste. Sherlock softly cried out in ecstacy, whining as he gripped at the sheets so tightly that his knuckles were turning white. Jim moaning didn’t help either, those vibrations making him tremble. Sherlock prayed that Jim wouldn’t make him cum too early.

Jim soon parted from him when he realized how close he was, backing off for a moment to let Sherlock relax, brushing his hand warmly over the right muscle, biting his lip as he watched Sherlock glance over his shoulder with an unsatisfied pout.

“Please, just fuck me…” pleaded the Englishman, his baby blue eyes wide with innocence, even when the words were nothing but vulgar. Never in a million years did he think he would one day hear them from Sherlock. It was truly refreshing to hear.

“I will, you impatient, little minx,” Jim leaned over, pressing a soft kiss to his lips as he cupped his chiseled cheek, thumb brushing over the shape of his face, “I need to prepare you before I take you completely. Since it’ll be your first time, it will hurt a bit at first.”

Despite Jim warning him about it hurting a little at first, Sherlock relaxed more at the sound of Jim’s reassuring voice, and the kiss that was a gentle as grass quivering against one’s skin in the midst of a summer’s breeze; he just wanted Jim to feel him, he just wanted to feel Jim, and seal the night with passion after a perfect night out. He hummed quietly in acknowledgment and let Jim continue.

The Irishman moved away and reached over to his nightstand, digging through the top drawer and finding his bottle of lube within only a few seconds, past the few other unopened bottles he set aside. He pulled it over to him and flipped open the cap, squeezing some onto three fingers, slicking them up thoroughly so he could enter Sherlock with little discomfort. Once he finished, he positioned his fingers at his entrance, inserting a single one inside and rather slowly, observing Sherlock closely, just to see what he did and did not fancy.

Sherlock tensed as he felt the slick finger enter him. It was a bit uncomfortable, though not as painful as he initially imagined. Jim used his free hand to rub up and down his back to soothe his muscles, listening to the detective breathe in and breathe out deeply. Carefully, Jim moved his finger in small, gradual thrusts. For at least thirty seconds, Sherlock was becoming accustomed to the new feeling inside of him. For the next thirty seconds, Sherlock was softly moaning, as the discomfort then became pleasure. This prompted Jim to insert a second finger, now feeling a slight change as his walls clenched and expanded. He was extremely tight, much to the enjoyment of Jim.
His thrusts were faster and Sherlock arched his back, and a third finger was added. All that could be heard were the wet squelching sounds and Sherlock moaning like a whore beneath him, aching for the Irishman. What an alluring sight it was to witness.

“H-hurry up and stop teasing me,” hissed out Sherlock, though it came out as more of a whine than demand, though quickly followed with a wanton beg, “James, please …”

This time, Jim took his warning and removed his fingers knowing he was more than ready for him now. He slicked up his own cock with lubricant, moaning at his own touch, and recognizing how difficult it was to focus on anything else but having Sherlock in this moment.

He turned Sherlock around and placed his tip at the entrance, very slowly sliding himself inside of the man beneath him, caressing his cheek with one hand, whilst the other securely gripped at his hip. Sherlock felt that discomforting feeling come again and it made him bite his lip, trying to get used to the new size, an arm wrapped around Jim’s neck. The Englishman grunted, shifting his body slightly and breathing intensely as he expanded, making Jim place a kiss to his lips sweetly.

“It’ll pass, Sherlock, just try not to tense too much.” He reassured, running his fingers through those messy, disheveled curls.

Sherlock licked his lips, as they felt dry, trying to get himself to ease into the feeling. After a minute, he sent a small nod Jim’s way, giving him the okay to continue. Jim gently thrust in slow, making Jim emit a dragged moan. Sherlock was starting to feel it as well, that addictive feeling, that hot wave in his belly that sent out tremors of great rapture, spreading through him, like wildfires of arousal taking him again and again. Feeling Jim inside him was a feeling he wouldn’t ever forget, taking him in such a small, tight heat, where walls contracted and expanded around Jim’s pulsating, slicked cock. It slipped in smoothly like butter, but took its time to really adjust. Each one turned faster and Jim was trembling with want, watching Sherlock writhe beneath him, back arching, legs spread as wide as possible— nothing could be more gratifying.

“Christ, Sherlock… you’re so unbelievably tight…” sighed Jim, his thrusts so deep and slow, hips moving against Sherlock’s in the most salacious fashion. “…god, you feel amazing…”

Sherlock was moaning loudly, a whimper escaping him when Jim uttered those obscene words. He gripped at Jim’s back, his fingers starting to dig into the skin. No longer in a place of pain, but absolute euphoria, Sherlock knew how far now his limits of pleasure were. He rolled his hips against Jim, causing the Irishman to moan some explicit phrases in Gaelic, rolling his hips back like a wave. Sherlock pulled Jim into a deep kiss as their bodies pressed together, shifting and brushing up against one another, so close that they seemed to morph into one. Like lock and key, how they fit so well! Like puzzle pieces forming the end of a game. It was truly a match made in Hell with two fallen angels that found their own Heaven within each other.

Jim’s thrusts became eminently faster as he lifted Sherlock’s hips. The sound of skin slapping and their moans swallowed by their wet, hot kisses permeated the atmosphere. Sherlock was in paradise, his fingernails digging into Jim’s back, causing the man to shudder as scratches formed on his tanned flesh. He loved it, however. He couldn’t get enough of Sherlock’s needy behavior. It only showed him that what he did for Sherlock was enough and Jim would be damned if he didn’t yield to Sherlock’s every desire that was also his own. Jim sighed shakily when Sherlock brushed his tongue over his bottom lip and started to move into him with a quicker speed, the sound of slapping intensified.

How Sherlock could feel the change. He broke the kiss as he felt Jim’s thrusts turn harder and quicker, clinging to Jim like glue. Sherlock didn’t know how much more his back could take arching before it would completely snap, but he bet it wouldn’t be much further. The detective
cried out, his voice reaching lengths so far that he hoped to the stars in the sky that no one heard him at this time of night, doing and saying such lewd things. Jim was practically slamming his hips into Sherlock’s hips, each cry of Sherlock’s aroused him more and more. Balls deep and already so close, hitting that prostate and making Jim cry out as well. Sherlock cradled his face into the crook of Jim’s neck as his fingers proceeded to scratch at his back, not at all getting the leverage he hoped. He was building much more quickly now. Dear god, there came that second wave.

“James!” cried Sherlock, on the brink of his limits, shaking as his cock once more leaked precum against his abdomen.

Jim only grunted as he hit his prostate and again and again, making his beloved detective sing his name in the most vulgar melodies. He was seeing stars, Jim fitting so perfectly well inside him, his body only reacted naturally to what it relished in. And it relished in the offerings of what Jim brought, each one to his great fancy. All those doubts and insecurities fled, of Sebastian, of himself, of the ones in his past, and made room for the praises and admiration he received by no other than the criminal himself, who he worshipped as much as Jim worshipped him. It was as though a spell was woven and cast and all of what held him down, held him back from reclaiming joy, suddenly crumbled away. And behold, what was left, a sacred place he met with Jim, that no other could enter or know of. Reserved just for them. And only just for them.

After a few minutes, their orgasms were finally reached as one, merging into one of the most powerful feelings Sherlock ever felt. It crashed over into them and flooded their minds, hearts, and bodies with an exhilarating and invigorating feeling that couldn’t compare to anything else in the world. What intensified their intimacy was the love they had for one another. It was very clear that they were made for each other, body, heart, and mind, that no other could truly match with. Anyone could have connections, but Jim and Sherlock’s was beyond compare. Not only was their chemistry a significant piece of their bond, how they so easily understood one another, but how compatible they were as well. They were two sides of the same coin, each reflecting one another in a likewise sense, unlike any ordinary person could experience. It was intellectual, passionate, eccentric. They did not fit societal molds and that was the true beauty of being James Moriarty and Sherlock Holmes. That was the true beauty of having their love.

Throughout their orgasm, Jim only thrust into him sloppily, and Sherlock dug into Jim’s back so deep that he drew blood. Jim was hardly aware of it until he felt cool air hit his back and suddenly felt that sweat intermix with those cuts— battle wounds of love Jim would wear with pride— and shivered. Within the next fifteen seconds, their moans synced, as the two men at long last, finally had cum. Sherlock’s pearl white seed coated his and Jim’s belly as the orgasm passed through him like a ghost. Jim filled Sherlock with his, that and the slickness of his cock inside of him too good to ignore. Their labored breaths now filled air and the two of them moaned for the final time as Jim pulled out of Sherlock’s entrance, shaking from the intensity of their sex.

However, Sherlock was trembling much more violently, who obviously never experienced such a great deal of ecstasy in his life— and twice in a row in one night. Jim noticed this and reached over to Sherlock’s cheek, pressing a lingering kiss to his lips as the feeling of lust subsided from them and was replaced with a wholesome warmth. The kiss soothed Sherlock a bit and he laid back, panting, trying to catch his breath as he still clung to Jim. Jim laid back against the pillows, pulling Sherlock with him so the Englishman’s head was laying on his chest. Sherlock could hear that criminal’s heartbeat, rapid and strong, beating loudly in his head. But as they were starting to relax, Sherlock picked up the pattern of his resting pulse, for some reason taking note of it as it felt deeply important to memorize. It was his favorite sound.

Jim cradled his head with his hand, fingers massaging Sherlock’s scalp as they tangled in his curls. Sherlock sighed blissfully and glanced up at Jim, pecking his prickly jaw with a need for his
“You won’t be leaving me tomorrow, will you?” inquired the taller man, looking into his dark brown eyes for any signs of an answer before Jim could speak.

Jim smiled and shook his head, pressing a warm kiss to Sherlock’s slightly sweaty forehead, threading his fingers through his curly bangs, pushing them away from Sherlock’s eyes.

“No,” he replied softly, that Irish drawl for once laced with weariness, mostly because he just exerted his energy into an hour and half long steamy session of lovemaking, “I’ll be with you, for the next week in fact. I’ve taken the week of to be with you, our flight is tomorrow.”

Sherlock’s eyes widened. “Our flight? With me? Where are we going?”

Jim smirked. “Greece. I’ve rented out a place there by the water, so we’ll be around the beach the entire time we’re there.”

“James, you didn’t have to do that, really,” Sherlock blushed at the thought of going on holiday with his lover— it was something he never thought he would ever have the luxury of doing, and in Greece of all places, “not saying I don’t want to go…”

To this, Jim could only laugh at Sherlock’s adorable behavior, placing an arm around his waist and holding him as close as humanly possible.

“Then we’ll be going. The flight is at 12PM, so we should be packed by 10:30AM, so we are a bit ahead of time when we arrive. I’ve been meaning to surprise you with it.” admitted Jim, unwinding more into his pillow with a yawn.

Sherlock couldn’t help but smash his lips against Jim’s and give him the most loving kiss he could muster, making Jim smile even more in delight at seeing Sherlock so happy.

“You’re so good to me.”

“Correction, I’m only good to you.” hummed Jim. “Everyone else can drop dead, you’re the only one who matters.”

Sherlock was now the one to smirk at his comment. “Drop like flies.”

Jim chuckled with amusement, softly rubbing Sherlock’s back in a circular motion.

“Mm, how I love you, Sherlock.”

“As I love you, James.”

And that’s how the night ended. The two of them holding one another as though they’d never see each other again. Like two peas in a pod, they simply couldn’t be apart for long. That’s what made their being so, so right.

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