Ashes to Ashes and Memories to Memories
by crazhetalia

Summary

Summary: Holmes and Watson have been in 221B Baker Street for quite some time and their lives has settled into a routine, until a beautiful girl walks into their lives. Tristyn Potter is more mysterious than Irene Adler who up till now has captured Sherlock’s attention. Tristyn Potter was the godmother of the child she now cares for and the aloof and handsome Sherlock Holmes has caught her attention, but the secrets she hides may just be too much for the detective to handle, but they may also be deadly.

Notes

Hey, this is Crazhetalia from Fanfiction! I thought I'd try posting my stories on here too, to see how it'd go. So if you've never read Ashes to Ashes and Memories to Memories, I'd tell you to go to Fanfic to read all 28 chaps I have so far there and the one shots that go with it. But if you don't want to that's fine. I'll try to get all of my stories updated onto here.

Disclaimer: I do not own the Harry Potter series or Sherlock either
Chapter 1

The phone rang twice and on the third ring it was answered, the first thing I asked was, "Hello, is this Mrs. Hudson?"

"Yes, it is, how can I help you?" the older women replied. She had a sweet voice full of excitement.

"My name is Tristyn Potter and I would like to rent 221C if that's possible?" I asked while putting Teddy's t-shirt on with a little struggle for the phone was in between my shoulder and ear. "That would be wonderful, Miss. Potter. I would love to have another female in the house!" Mrs. Hudson exclaimed happily.

"Great! Would it be alright if I come over this morning to fill out the papers and have the interview then?" I said while getting mine and Teddy's coats on, to head over to Baker Street.

"That would be lovely and you must meet the boys as well!" she told me. 'Boys?' I thought, 'they must be the other flat renters.' I picked up Teddy and placed him on my hip while telling Mione that we were leaving. We walked outside to the side of the street.

"Taxi!" I yelled lefting my hand into the air. In a few seconds a black taxi cab was pulling up. I set Teddy down in the seat and buckled him up then got into the cab myself.

"Where to, Miss?" the cabby asked looking at me through the rearview mirror.

"221B Baker Street, please." I replied, the cabby diver started to drive up off taking us to Baker Street.

"You do know, ma'am that this is a three hour drive right?" the cabby said to make small talk,

"Yes, I know." I replied

"Well, it be about £675.13 from Manchester to Baker Street d'you know that?" the cabby saying another obvious question.

"Yes, I know." with a roll of my eyes getting a bit irritated. It went quite after that for a bit, Teddy had fallen asleep within the first few minutes of the car ride and I was staring out the window till the cabby started talking again.

"Will you be able to pay?" he question,

"Yes!" I growled out my unusual green eyes flashing as I did.
I also have an deviantart account that has two pics of Eiric and one with both Eiric and Teddy that I share with one of my sisters the name is sadiebluebell. I am co-writing this with my other sister who I think has an account but I do not know the name of but this story was my idea shes just helping:) so keep reviewing and send me tips or some of your own ideas and maybe I can use them in the story. Oh! this starts in the beginning of The Blind Banker hope you enjoy! Ta, for now!

Thoughts: Thoughts  
Yelling: Yelling  
TPSH

I saw the cabby shallow in fear at seeing that, I just look back out the window for the rest of the car ride and watching Teddy sleep. I looked at the driver and smirked at what I saw, the man had beads of sweat rolling down form his temple. I chuckled under my breath and looked around the front to see what I could find. I saw picture of a pretty woman who looked to be in her late twenties to early thirties. 'Hmmm?' I ponder for a bit thinking. I looked to his left hand to see if he had a wedding band on, 'So the woman is either his girlfriend or fiancé’ I thought. I saw that his clothes were fairly new and he was freshly shaven as well, 'Ah! He's going to ask today, from the way he keeps looking at his watch I'd say about lunch time.' I thought excitedly.

"She'll say yes when you ask her at lunch today, sir." I blurted out to him, startling him. He looked to me from the mirror his eyebrows up to his hairline.

"How did you guess that, ma'am?" He said a little shaky

"You have a picture of a pretty woman, so that makes her either your girlfriend or fiancé but not your sister because she has no similar traits as you. You are also wearing fairly new clothes about a day or two old, so trying to impress someone which could possibly be the woman again. Also freshly shaven you wouldn't do that for your taxi customers, as well for looking at your watch you got some where to be around lunch time. So hints you are going to ask her to marry you, to which she will yes to. Oh, I don't guess, I know." I said fast and smooth with a wide smirk on my face as the man stared with a slacked jaw.

"That's right!" He said with shock

"Course it is." I said smugly

"You do the same trick as that Holmes fellow!" the cabby exclaimed. I frowned at hearing that. 'Holmes? Isn't that the detective that Lestrade consults with the cases, hmmm well that'll change when I started working for him.' I said rudely to myself then shook my head and deleted that thought.

"It's not a trick and I'm nothing like that man." I told the cabby quietly, the cab was silent after that was said. I went back to looking out the window and slipped into my mind castle for the rest of the
When we finally turn onto Baker Street it was eleven o'clock. I woke Teddy up and unbuckle him while paying the cabby as well. I turn to the door with Teddy in my arms and walked up the stairs, I knocked twice and waited for someone to answer it. The door swung open after a minute or so of waiting by a woman who was in her mid to late forties with brownish blonde hair and wearing a purple outfit. I knew this to be Mrs. Hudson the landlady of 221B Baker Street.

"Hello, ma'am, I'm Tristyn Potter, I called early this morning." I told her while sticking my hand out to her.

"Oh! Hello, Tristyn! It's wonderful to meet you. Who is this little boy?" she asked looking at Teddy while shaking my hand.

"This is Teddy, my son. I hope that it won't cause any problems that he's here?" I question her as we walked to her flat. She looks to me with a smile shaking her hand.

"Oh no! He's perfectly fine being here, it'll be nice having a little one run about here!" she said happily, I let out a sigh of relief at hearing this. Mrs. Hudson made a tea tray with a plentiful plate of biscuits and jam. Teddy had fully awaken from his nap by the time we got to Mrs. Hudson door and was now eating a strawberry biscuit and some sweeten milk that I made for him in a sippy cup. Mrs. Hudson and I talked about the apartment about paint and remodeling, as well as questions about myself.

"So, deary, what work do you do?" she asked taking a sip of her tea.

"I'll be working for the Scotland yard with Lestrade and part time at the morgue at St. Barts with Miss. Hooper." I replied with a smile

"Oh! The boys, mostly Sherlock go to the morgue for the lab, also do lots of Scotland yard cases too! It seems you three will be working together!" she exclaimed happily to me. I had to forcefully keep my smile up when I responded to her to keep myself from analyzing her.

"Yes, Lestrade told me about their little visits to the yard and of Sherlock unique talent as well." I replied restraining my anger.

"How old are you, Tris-"

"Please call me, Eiric, only Molly calls me by my first name. I guess it's a mother thing." I interrupt her,

"Eiric," she said smiling, "How old are you? You seem very young to be a mother?"

"Twenty-one, ma'am."

"Oh!"

"Teddy is not my biologic son, I was his Godmother but I adopted him after his parents died when he was three months old."

"I see. How old were you then?"

"Seventeen."
"Oh, you poor things. I'm here if you every need to talk, Eiric." she told me with a sad smile taking my hand and patting it a bit.

"Thank you, Mrs. H." I said with a grateful smile to her. She asked me some more questions about myself and such. I signed the papers to 221C and called Ron to bring Teddy's and my things to Baker Street. Mrs. Hudson was just about to say something about the boys when the front door was slammed open making Teddy and Mrs. Hudson jump in their seats. I look to Mrs. Hudson with a raised eyebrow, Mrs. Hudson looked so embarrassed that it made my anger flare a bit at the person who caused it. She got off the couch while picking Teddy up and placing him on her hip, I smiled at the action and followed her. We went into the hallway and stopped at the bottom of the stairs and she turned her head to me over her shoulder.

"Now, deary about the boys." She began
"What about them?" I asked while looking over her shoulder as a loud crash sounded out though the house. Mrs. Hudson jumped and rushed up the stairs as fast as possible shouting "Sherlock!" on her way up with Teddy in her arms. I followed her respectively up the stairs at a slower paced dreading that I was about to meet Holmes. 'Sherlock Holmes the egotistical git of 221B Barker Street get ready to meet your match. Be prepared for the adventure and danger I bring with me, Holmes.' I thought to myself with a tiny giggle. By the time I reached 221B, Mrs. Hudson was yelling at Holmes and Watson about decency when having a guest over. I watched from the hallway as Teddy looks at the "Boys" with interest as they were being yelled and looked properly chase, well Watson at least did, Holmes was mumbling to himself while pacing in front of his fire place. I was about to look away when I saw something on the mantle, I looked back and did a double take, 'Is that a skull?' I questioned myself, 'Where in the bloody hell did he get that?' I just shook my head and thought better then to ask. I moved to the doorway giving a light cough to let them know I was here.

"Oh my, Eiric. I'm terribly sorry about this, they are more behaved then this!" she fluttered. I went over to Mrs. Hudson and walked her to the couch, made her sit down with me and patted her hand in comfort.

"Its fine, Mrs. H. I've seen worst with my brothers and sisters. So don't worry about us." I said at her gently with a small smile. She smiled gratefully at me for my concern for her. She reminded me of my pseudo – mother, Molly with her mothering ways. I saw out the corner of my eye that Holmes and Watson were staring at me and Teddy. Teddy was staring at Mrs. Hudson in concern with his wide baby blue eyes, Mrs. Hudson reached up and ruffled his sandy blonde hair making a loud childish giggle come from him. I got up from the couch and stood in front of the "boys" putting my hand out to them.

"Ello, I'm Tristyn Potter but please call me Eiric. I'm the new tenant in 221C." I said with a dazzling smile. The smaller man of the two, who I knew to be Watson stepped forward with an overly friendly smile 'Great, a desperate man but probably Holmes fault.' and shook my hand.

"Hey, I'm John Watson and this," he pointed to Holmes who was taller then Watson by a lot, "Is Sherlock Holmes." He finished 'Wow, just wow and he was supposed to be a Doctor from the Army?' I thought sarcastically to myself, I saw Holmes walk towards me and took my hand from Watson but didn't shake it. He just stood there staring at me with his cold icy blue eyes that made me remember of my ex's eye color who happen to be Draco, so I return the stare sadly automatically getting information about Holmes while this was happen I did realize that was exactly what Holmes was trying to do with me.

"In mid to late twenty's, about 5'6 in height, around 10 stones. You are either married or divorce for you have a child. You obviously don't work with your hands but mostly likely don't work at all, making you a privilege child growing up and have plenty of money so you don't need to work, you also-"

"Wrong." Was all I said when I interrupted him, shocking him when I did making me smirk.

"Wrong? What was I wrong about?" he grounded out

"Everything!" I happily exclaimed. I watched as his eyes widen at this which was making Watson laugh. So I turn the table on them.
"Dr. Watson, which one is it Afghanistan or Iraq?" I questioned him. I heard Mrs. Hudson say a soft 'Oh, dear' making my lips twitch and looked to the "boys" and saw Watson with a gaping mouth and Holmes standing there with a smirk on his face, he put his hand back out this time for a proper handshake. I took his hand again and as we shook hand my eyes never left Holmes and his never left mine. Teddy had jumped from Mrs. Hudson lap to in between us and pushed Holmes as hard as his little body could. Holmes stumbled a little bit and his eyes went wide in shock.

"Teddy!" I said pulling the little boy away from Holmes.

"No, Mummy!" Teddy exclaimed in his simple four year old voice.

"No, No Mrs. Potter it's quite all right." Holmes said to me in an unemotional voice.

"It's Miss, actually." I said correcting him again. I picked up Teddy up and held him. He was glaring daggers at Holmes.

"Well this was wonderful to meet you, all of you." I announced as I walked towards the door and out the corner of my eye I saw Holmes lunge towards us.

"Dinner!" he almost shouted. I turned to him and blinked a few times. ‘What the bloody fuck did he just say?’ I thought in confusion.

"Excuse me?" I said

"Will you have dinner with me?" there was a shock silence all around us. I thought for a second.
"I'm afraid not Mr. Holmes." I said with a small smile curving my lips. I walked out the door all the while feeling Holmes eyes on my retreating form. I took Teddy back to our flat and let him run around while I began to unpack. I could hear Ron and Hermione arguing in the kitchen/dining room.

"You two going to keep bickering like an old married couple or are you going to help me unpack like you promise!" I lightly yelled at them from the living room, there was a silence and a unanimous "Sorry" and the sounds of unpacking resumed. It took a few hours to unpack and place the furniture to my liking even with magic for we had interruptions from Mrs. H and John either to give us tea and biscuits for breaks or to invite us out to eat for dinner later on at Anglo even after the awkward dinner date Holmes had blurted out. I had hurriedly agreed to John's invite on almost being caught and asked if Mione and Ron could come if they had time to, which I knew they did, with a charming smile that made sure I got my way and of course it worked. I frowned a little that the smile worked twice on him but not Holmes, I think?

"Ya, of course they can come. The more the merrier right!" John foolishly said while looking around the flat. I raised my eyebrow at him and looked to Hermione, who also had a raised eyebrow and shook her head. I knew that this meant she didn't approve of John, I rolled my eyes at her and was willing to give John another chance to redeem himself.

"I don't believe you've meet my brother or sister, John." I said taking a hold of his hand, walking him in the direction of Ron and Mione.

"Ah…um no, I haven't." he stutter, I turn to look at him and saw he had a light blush on his cheeks, I darkly smirk to myself 'Oh, John, you are a foolish man. What use are you to Holmes?' I stopped in the arch way to the kitchen.

"John, the red head is Ron Weasley, who is my youngest brother and the curly brunette is Hermione Granger, Ron's wife and one of my sisters too."

"It's nice to meet you both, I'm John Watson." John said shaking hands with Ron.

"Pleasure, mate." Ron said and turn to look at Hermione, who rolled her eyes and went back to unpacking. I saw John frowned a bit at this and I knew he would be upset. I was about to say something when Ron opened his mouth,

"Don't worry, mate. Mione just doesn't like the fact she gonna have to share Eiric now." He said putting an arm around Johns shoulder taking him to the livingroom. I smiled at this happy that Ron liked John already and was willing to become friends with him 'Though it's Holmes I'm worried about' thinking to myself. I walked over to Hermione, who was now looking at an empty box with a forlorn expression. I sat on the floor by her and put my head on her shoulder.

"You will always be my best and first friend, Hermione Jean Granger." I whispered to her softly. I hear her breath stutter for a bit.

"Tristyn Eiric Potter, you will always be my best and first friend too, even if you're a bit odd." Her voice breaking in the middle, I gave a soft laugh and sat up bring Mione into my arms to let her cry. When she stopped crying ten minutes later, she went and introduced herself to John. I went to my room to change and to wake Teddy for dinner. I hear John leave to get Holmes and that we were to meet by the front door to the building. We met up twenty minutes later and started walking to the restaurant. Mione and I were up front with Teddy swinging in between us talking while the
boys were behind us a few steps with John and Ron talking among the other and with Holmes sulking still from the rejection.

"So, how about Holmes? I think he be perfect for you and Teddy." Hermione said softly and glancing at said mention man.

"Hermione!" I shrieked at her a bit too loudly making the boys turn their heads towards me. I blushed lightly and looked away. 'Is it weird that I could imagine a spit take on that?' I thought to myself with slightly wide eyes. "Hermione!" this time I said it very quietly to her.

"What? It's true, he's very handsome-"

"Yeah and an egotistical jerk as well, who thinks he's god." I remarked rudely while interrupting her.

"Eiric, that's rude to say." She reprimanded me.

"But oh so true, Mione. You haven't even hear him speak yet." I reply with a shrug

"Oh, Eiric." She sighed

"What?" I raised an eyebrow at her

"You need to get back out there into the dating world, have a family!" she exclaimed to me. 'Dating world? Really the best she can come up with is Dating World! I was there and I left cause of ferret face, boy was that a mistake to do.' I gave Mione a look that said 'Crazy' and she gave me a 'Really' look.

"Not now, Mione, I've got time and all I need right now is Teddy." I said with a light smile to the little boy. She sighed again and looked back to the boys, who were whispering to each other even Holmes joined in.

"What do you think their talking about back there?" she asked me

"Probably about their past cases and Holmes is most likely showing off." I answered indifferently to her
We swung Teddy between us again making the little boy give out a loud happy laugh, which in turn made us both give lively giggles. We finally got to the restaurant, as we entered the host immediately sat us down at a table near the entrance and front window. I noticed that the table had a reserved card on it, I turned to Holmes with a raised eyebrow and a small smirk on my face making him look at me with a raised eyebrow as well,

"Come here often, Holmes?" I mocked him a bit, in turn he gave me a stony glare and scowl on his face while thanking the host. I notice the boys broken English or basically lack of response to Holmes.

"Grazie, Billy.*" I said to the boy in his language making Holmes spin around to me gawking. The boy looked at me with a big smile making me return the favor with a smile of my own to him as well.

"Benvenuto, Signorina!*" he happily replied to me and went back to his spot. We all sat down at the table with Teddy in a high chair by me and which sadly made my seat by Holmes, who was being childish, was giving me the silent treatment which made me laugh making Holmes glare at me again, in which making me gave an sweet innocent smile. I watched as he got thrown off a bit by it, which made me laugh even more at him 'It's been so long since I've laughed like this, maybe dad was right, I really did need to get away from the wizarding world.' from the corner of my eye I could see Mione shaking her head with a sighing, making me frown which I saw made Holmes frown for what I have no idea. A portly Italian man soon came over to our table exclaiming Holmes name rather loudly making me cringe which was seen by Mione and Holmes.

"Angelo." Holmes calmly stated Mione, Ron and I all perked up at hearing his name. I turned to look at the man better,

"Mi scusi, signore, è il tuo cognome Zabini?*" I asked quickly John and Holmes had snapped their heads towards me including the man, though Holmes was looking at me suspiciously,

"Si, è," he said slowly, then a look of realization came across his face, "Signorina Potter, nel mio negozio! Questa è una meravigliosa benedizione, tutto il menu èa casa sena aleun costo!*" he slapped me on the shoulder hard making me wince at the hit. I started to wave my hands back and forth in front of my face,

"No, Signore, che non e 'necessario." I said with a tight smile on my face. I could feel everyones eyes on the back of my head, Angelo just laughed and patted me on the head making me feel like a first year again 'This man is almost worst then Hagrid with his jolly mood.'

"Si, situtto per la ragazzia che ha vissuto e la sue amiche, anchase io sono un petardo to creduto si
sarebbe vincere la querra a differenza di mio figlio e la ex moglio e hai vintu. Abbiamo avuto grande festa qui per giorni e due notti, Sherlock non pia cevamollo. Holmes head had turned back to my direction when he heard his name. I looked to Ron and Mione meeting their stares, we all had dull and dimmed looks, I turn my eyes to the table surface,

"We may have won but we also, very much so lost too." was my response to Angelo. He patted me on the back lightly a couple of times. I finally look back up to Angelo and everyone else.

"Well, I'm ready to order, you all ready? Yeah? Great!" I said to get out of the awkward moment we were having,

"I'd like the Mushroom Risotto and a large Rum Coke on the rocks." I look to Teddy ignoring everybody's stare especially Hermione's,

"Teddy, what do you want to eat?" I asked him lightly already knowing what he wanted.

"Mac and Cheese! Mac and Cheese, mummy!" he squealed excitedly making all of us chuckle, hell I even saw Holmes lips twitch a bit. Angelo left after everyone order but soon came back with our drinks. I reached for my drink and was met with a disapproving stare from Hermione.

"What?" I asked after taking a large sip 'It's not like I could drown myself in alcohol again with him watching my every move.'

"You know you're not supposed to drink, Eiric especially with Teddy around and the medicine you take. You know he's going to know that you didn't take them today." She told me in her know-it-all voice 'God, I hate it when she does this.' I put my drink down and looked out the window feeling a slight warming feeling from the Rum.

"It's one drink Hermione not five," I heard her scoff at me making me snap my head to her with a glare, "Lay off! You're not my mother so stop trying to act like her and he won't know because I haven't seen his little spy yet so piss off!" I watch as she flinch after I was finish talking to her, out the corner of my eye I saw Ron shake his head at Mione 'Finally he's on my side for once.' I went back to sipping my drink until my phone goes off playing "Darth Vader's March" making my face go pale. I quickly stood up from the table,

"Excuse me, I have to take this call." I told everyone and walked out of the building.

Chapter End Notes

Italian:
Grazie – Thank you
Benvenuto – Welcome
Signorina – Miss or young lady
Mi scusi, signore, e il tuo cognomen Zabini? – Excuse me sir is your last name Zabini
Si, e,… Signorina Potter nel mio negozio! Questa e una meravigliosa benedizione, tutto il menu e a casa senza alevn costo! – Yes it is, lady potter in my shop! This is a wonderful blessing, everything on the menu is on the house no charge!
No, Signore, che non e 'necessario. – No sir that's not necessary.
Si, si tutto per la ragazza che ha vissuto e la sue amiche, anchase io sono un petardo to creduto si sarebbe vincere la querra a differenza di mio figlio e la ex moglio e hai vintu. Abbiamo avuto grande festa qui per giorni e due notti, Sherlock non pia
cevamollo. – Yes, yes anything for the girl – who – lived and her friends, through I'm a squib I believed you would win the war unlike my son or ex-wife and you won. We had big party here for two days and nights, Sherlock did not like that very much.
Inside the restaurant Sherlock pov

I watched as Eiric quickly walked out of the restaurant. Who could be calling to make her react like that? I took a quick glance to see John watching Eiric through the window which she seem to know and glance at him with a raise eyebrow as she turned away. John turned around to the table with a blush on his face. I narrowed my eyes at him feeling something pool at the bottom of my stomach. I shook my head to get rid of the thought and looked to the couple sitting by the window to see them whispering furiously to each other. There was so much information flowing into my mind all at once. For example Miss. Potter was hiding something and it had to do with the couple and the young boy whom was now obviously not hers biologically. John was fascinated by Miss. Potter but so was everyone else who had come into contact with her. She seemed to have a natural charm that pulled others to her. From outside came the resounding yell of "Severus!" causing John and me to turn to the window while Ron and Hermione jumped up and went to see the problem. Propelled by curiosity John and I followed. Outside Eiric was pacing angrily while yelling into the phone,

"Dammit, Severus! It was one drink, and stop spying on me! We are fine!" Eiric slammed the phone shut and shoved it into her back pocket. She let out a breath and shoved a hand angrily through her fiery red hair. She spun around and looked at Ron and Hermione who, at the time, was holding Teddy. The look the three of them shared spoke volumes and messages though John and I couldn't understand it. This was the first time in a long while that something had proved to be unsolvable for me. However as Eiric took Teddy from her friend I figure she would be the one mystery that I would enjoy solving. Eiric looked back to the restaurant with a blank look,

"We should go back and eat." After saying that she walked back in and tuck Teddy in to eat acting as if nothing was wrong. The couple followed her lead as if it was the norm which perplexed me to no end. After a while John and I walk back into the restaurant. We all started to eat our meals, I looked over to Eiric to see her already looking at me,

"You have questions." She told me as if it was obvious, which it probably was for her, as I felt shock run through me.

"Hundreds" "Just a few, Eiric." I murmured to her

"Alright then." She nodded with a small smile 'She looks beautiful when she smiles . . . 'No, no thoughts like that Holmes you're married to your work remember that. Love is not an advantage.'

"How old-" I began to ask before Eiric interrupted me

"I'm twenty-one, born July thirty-first in nineteen-ninety-two, I'm the only child of James and Lily Potter, I lived with my mother's only sister after my parents died in a car crash, Teddy is my adopted godson, I'm 5'8 in height and about 10 stones in weight. I work for Scotland Yard in Lestrade group and at St. Bart's with Molly Hooper. I believe that's all you wanted to know, Holmes?" she started to eat again and all I could do was nod. 'I could tell that her parents and relatives were a sensitive topic for her with how she spoke. Yes, miss. Potter will be the best case I've ever had in years to solve.' I had finished my food surprisingly, I looked to the couple again and back to Miss. Potter,

"Then how are they your siblings if you are an only child?" I asked her thinking that I got her this time. She looked up from her finished plate and stared straight into my eyes. 'Such an unnatural green but beautiful.'
"Sometimes Mister Holmes blood family is not always the best kind of family." She ended it there leaving the rest up for me to deduce on my own.

"So Sherlock, Eiric tells me you help the Yard on some cases by deduction?" I turn my head to the bushy hair brunette.

"Yes, she would be correct, Mrs. Weasley." I said bored already as she perked up from her seat,

"What can you deduce about me and Ron then?" she asked as she leaned forward slightly. I did a quick look over the couple.

"Newlyweds, been married for about a year. Ron's works for the police because of the gun powder residue that's under his nails and you are a teacher from the red pen marks on your hands. Red pens are usually only use when there is a mistake and mostly used in the teaching professing." I finished not really trying to deduce them. After we finished dinner, we walked back to the flat. Once we got there the couple left. The four of us walked into the flat but before we went our separate ways Eiric called out to us,

"John? Would you mind babysitting Teddy when I work? If you get a case you can drop him off at Mrs. Hudson?" she asked with a worried look, 'How does she act so normal so well?' John being the idiot he was, was taking too long to answer her so I spoke instead,

"We won't mind at all, Eiric, it sounds like a fine plan." I spoke evenly to her making her blink in surprise 'Well she not the only one.' But the smile she gave me made me feel a funny fluttering feeling in my stomach making me frown inwardly

"Thank you so much…. Sherlock." She turned away and went into her flat, I could faintly hear the young boy asking Eiric if she would read to him about Three Brothers, leaving me on the stairs frozen from the way she said my name. How she made it sound sent a shiver down my spine, 'How can this woman make me feel like this when The Woman couldn't?' the first time in my life I was stumped. I went to my bedroom and laid on the bed to think only to fall asleep with dreams that feature The Potter Woman.
Early morning of the next day
Eiric pov

Teddy was fast asleep with Moony, his wolf plushie in his arms under his sheets. He didn't hear me run from my room to his half an hour earlier. It was 3:43 now. I'm glad he didn't wake up. I would have never gotten him to fall back asleep. I was still shaken up from the nightmare I had at 3 after I had only gone to bed two hours earlier. I usually don't sleep, but when my eyes actually close, my demons tear through my mind. It used to be easier when I was younger because the only nightmare I had was my mother screaming my name and the flashes of green light that I now know as \textit{Avada Kadavra} curse but now they've intensify severely to were I only get an hour or two at the most.

I looked back over to Teddy, who was at least getting some sleep, and thought back to the dinner with Holmes and John. I was surprise and proud of Teddy's behavior so far in the muggle world. Though he didn't quite understand why he couldn't change his hair color or his eyes either, sometimes I can't quite take it not being able to use magic freely like I have the past three years living with Mione and Ron and at Hogwarts too, especially with our world being only a few blocks away from here. I've been worried about bring him into the muggle world for a long time. One temper tantrum and something could blow up. I'd hate to have to obliviate Mrs. Hudson and the boys if they saw it happen, I don't think I could do it to them. \textit{Sev was right they already dug a soft spot into my heart} I sighed softly to myself. I'm so glad that Holmes didn't do anything to set him off, Teddy has a good sense of character which I think he got from Tonks but I also didn't like Holmes either at first.

"But god, that vainglorious ass! Who does he think he is? Nosey good for nothing…"I grumbled quietly to myself. \textit{And Sev! UGH!} I'm not a child anymore! I can make my own decisions for Teddy and myself! I know I'm not perfect but it was one little drink! I didn't even finish it!" I whisper shouted to the air. I casted a quick Tempus to see the time and blinked in surprise when I saw 4:50 float in the air for a minute before it disappeared. I decided that it was time to get ready for work. I went back to my room to the closet to get my outfit ready before I get into the shower. I picked out a white peplum blouse, a pair of black high waist pants, my black Ollio high heels and a pair of black jewel earrings. I look to my alarm clock for the time and notice it only took thirty minutes to pick the outfit out. I walked to the bathroom and got into the shower.

After the twenty minute shower, I was drying my hair out and putting it up in a messy bun, before I left the bathroom I also lightly put on some mascara and eyeliner. I went back to my room and started to dress, by the time I was tucking my shirt into my pants it was close to 6:30 which was a perfect time to start making breakfast for myself and Teddy as well as waking him up to go to John's and Holmes's flat. I first made Teddy's sippy cup of juice that was laced with a potion to conceal his metamorphous then went on to make us some silver dollar pancakes and scramble eggs plus a cup of tea for myself. When I finish I put a heating charm on it and went to wake Teddy up.

"Teddy, sweetheart time to get up." I said softly while running my fingers through his baby soft hair. It took a minute or two before his eyes fluttered open and look in my direction. He raised his arms up in the universal sign of wanting to be picked up and did so.

"Mummy, juice?" he asked while tilting his head adorably to the side,

"Yes, Teddy I made your juice but first you have to get dress before you can have it." I told him and went to his closet. Ten minutes later, he was dress and we were both eating breakfast. When
we were both finish I cleaned the dishes and put them on the drying rack. I took Teddy to the bathroom so we could both brush our teeth so we could leave soon and get to the boys place. Once finally done with our morning routine, I put my short black trench coat on, picked up Teddy, and place the bag I had pre-packed last night for Teddy on my shoulder and walked out of the flat and locked the door. Soon we were at the door to the boys flat. Knocking on the door we waited till it was answered by John.

"Good morning, John." I said with a light smile

"Morning, Eiric, Teddy." He replied back as he let us into the flat. I notice Sherlock sitting in a chair by a corner 'Wait, when did he be come Sherlock?' I thought to myself 'When he agreed to watch Teddy.' My inner voice said to me to which I inwardly frowned at.

"Good morning, Sherlock." I said out of politeness

"Morning." Was the short replied I got back after a minute, I rolled my eyes to John which he smirked at as I handed Teddy's bag to him.

"Anything I need to know?" John asked me,
"Well, he loves juice and he takes a nap after lunch is done…. I actually never left Teddy alone before so I really don't know, John." I said to him with a worry look in my eyes

"That's fine, Eiric we'll be just fine, no need to worry." John said reassuringly

"Alright. Teddy, mummy has to go now so be good for John and Sherlock okay, sweetheart?" I kissed the top of his head and handed him over to John.

"Bye-bye, Mummy wuve you." I almost broke down right then and there but I stayed strong

"Love you too, sweetheart." I left the flat before anything else could happen and walked out of the building to the sidewalk and yelled for a taxi. Once the taxi stopped, I opened the door but before I got in there was a tapping sound so I looked up to the windows to see the boys waving at me, even Sherlock though he looked like he wanted to do any but that, I laughed a little with a bright smile on my face and waved back. I got into the taxi afterwards,

"Scotland Yard, please."

TPSH

Grocery store John pov

I decide to take Teddy to the store with me and not leave him with Sherlock. That would have been a disaster waiting to happen. I looked to the little boy in front of me, watching him stare wide eye at everything. I chuckled a bit at the look,

"So Teddy, where to first?" I asked him which probably not the best thing to do.

"Juice! I want juice, John!" he squealed in childish excitement, I let out a loud laugh and nodded.

"Okay Teddy, do you know what kind you want?" another question that I probably shouldn't of asked.

"Ummm, I want stwawbeway, bannie, and owangen!" it was cute as he tried to say the words.

"Alright, first let's get what we need and then we'll get your juice, buddy." I said pushing the cart
to what Sherlock and I needed. Forty minutes later we finished getting the items and head to the checkout. I went to the self-service scanner with the electronic voice taking me step-by-step through the whole process.

"Please place your items in the bag provided."

TPSH

221B Baker Street Sherlock pov
I was in the flat locked in hand to hand combat with a six foot Sikh Warrior in a turban and full traditional battle dress. The warrior lunges at me with his very lethal – looking saber. I jumped back to avoid the blow.

TPSH

Scotland Yard Eiric pov

Once I got to the Yard, I race to Lestrade office. When I got to Lestrade office ignoring the stares I knocked on his door.
"Come on in." was heard through the door. I open the door and walked in quickly shutting the door. Lestrade looked up from what he was doing to me with a raised eyebrow. I stood up straighter and stepped towards his desk.

"Who are you?" he asked

"Eiric Potter, sir. Your new detective." I replied. I watch as recognition passed over his face. He stood up from behind his desk over to me with a raised hand, I put my hand in his to shake.

"Yes, it's finally nice to meet you face to face, Detective Potter. I've heard many great things about you from Detective Inspector Shacklebolt. His praises of you are very high for someone so young in the police force." He said with a light smile shaking my hand a few times before letting go.

"Well, I don't know what he told you but I'm going to try my best to show you what I'm capable of doing." I said to him respectfully. Then there was another knock on the door and a young man about two or three years older than me walked into the room.

"Detective Potter, this is the new Detective Inspector Dimmock, since you are both new to here and on the field you will be working your first case together." Lestrade address us as he walked back to his desk. I looked to the new DI to see him looking at me creepily which made me lightly shudder.

"Inspector Lestrade with all due respect, sir I've been on field assignments many of times and it would just be a waste of-" I started to say to him before he interrupted me

"From what Shacklebolt told me you've been homebound for the last three years, Potter you are to be on a trail run to see if you are ready for my team's cases. Is that understood, Detective." I stared at him with a blank face before I answered him.

"Yes, sir."

TPSH

Grocery store John pov

Teddy and I were still at the grocery store cause of the stupid self – checkout.
"Item not scanned. Please try again." I scanned the item again, I'm about to put it in the bag. "Item not scanned." The voice seemed really loud to me and started to make me feel self-conscious.

"You think maybe you could keep your voice down?" great now I'm talking to machines. I heard Teddy giggling behind me. 'At least someone finding some fun at this.'

TPSH

221B Baker Street Sherlock pov

The Sikh Warrior kicks out at me, knocking me back on to the table. I roll away just in time before the saber lands on me but having it gash the table. Which if John notices will have him smarting for a while.

TPSH

Grocery Store John pov

I was sliding my card in and typing in the pin number.

"Card not authorized. Please seek alternative methods of payment." In the background I could hear the people waiting in the queue sigh. I start rummaging my pockets for change. "Card not authorized."

"Yeah. I've got it. Alright!" I yelled at the machine finally losing it. I picked up Teddy from the chart and walked out of the store. Teddy looked over my shoulder then back at me,

"John, juice?"

I sighed

TPSH

221B Baker Street Sherlock pov

The Sikh Warrior and I were both rolling around on the carpet both of us aiming bitter blows to the other. I dodged another thrust from the warrior. I get up from the floor, I decided to try the old 'Watch Out' routine. I pointed to the corner of the room and pull a face.

"Hey!" The warrior falls for it, turning round to look as he's turning back I bring up my fist and landed a punch that knocked out the warrior. I watch as the man collapse into my chair. 'Now what to do with the body?' I made sure the place was back to normal with no evidence of the fight happened here.

TPSH

John pov

Teddy and I enter the room after the very hassling shopping experience. Sherlock was sitting in his chair and reading his book like he was earlier this morning.

"You took your time." Sherlock said flipping the page not looking up. I put Teddy down watching him run around.

"Er… I didn't get the shopping." I said catching Teddy mid-run and tossing him up in the air. I put him back down.
"What? Why not?" Sherlock looked up then turn his glaze to Teddy watching him.

"I had a row in the shop. With the chip and pin machine." I said embarrassed to him

"You had a row with a machine?" He asked raising an eyebrow

"Well, sort of. It sat there and I shouted abuse. Have you got cash?" I replied to him shrugging my shoulders. We both turn our heads to Teddy's giggling sounds seeing him playing with a wolf plushie. I turned back to Sherlock seeing him nod to the table.

"Take my card." I walk to the table, picking up his wallet and dig through it to find his card. I look back to Sherlock to see Teddy was sat in front of him looking at him with wide eyes.

"You could always go yourself, you know. You've been sitting there all morning – you haven't moved since Teddy and I went out." I said turning back to the table still looking for the card. Sherlock of course ignored me. "What happened about that case you were offered? The Jaria diamond." I was still looking for the card if I had found it, I would have seen Teddy point to the floor under Sherlock's chair with Sherlock kicking his feet pushing something farther under the chair and bringing a finger to his lips to Teddy to be quite about it with Teddy nodding his head very seriously to Sherlock.

"Not interested. I sent them a messages." He replied to me. I finally found the card while putting the wallet back on the table, I spotted a long scratch on the table. I rub at while tutting to myself, I'm about to walk out the door when Sherlock clears his throat.

"Forgetting something, John?" he said point to Teddy who was still in front of him.

"No." was my reply back smirking to myself walking out the door back to the store.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I was stuck with the boy sitting in front just staring at me for five minutes when John came back laden with groceries which he dumps on the counter with a loud 'Bang' causing the boy to jump up and turn around to the sound in a flash almost as if waiting for something to happen. I turn back to John's computers while the boy walked to John very cautiously but when John pulls out a carton of juice the boy starts running and crashes into John's legs.

"Woah, buddy slow down." John said to the boy as he hops around John's legs.

"Juice, John juice!" the boy squealed quite loudly, John gave a hearty laugh at the boy actions.

"Yes, buddy juice." John chuckled while he made a sippy cup for the boy. After the boy was given his sippy cup he walked right back over to where I was sitting and sat right beside of my chair. 'What is this boy doing?' I was surfing the internet when John finally recognizes that I was using his computer.

"Is that my computer?" he asked

"Of course." I replied as if it wasn't obvious

"What?" John seemed to be taken aback at what I said,

"Mine is in the bedroom." I said while shrugging my shoulders
"And you couldn't be bothered to get up?" I didn't even bothered answering that and I wasn't going to leave the boy alone by himself in our living area.

"Its password protected." And it was right back to the computer

"In a manner of speaking. Took me less than a minute to guess yours. Not exactly Fort Knox." I said very smug to him

"You guessed my password!" he shouted from the kitchen

"There are forty-three." I replied

"What?" John replied walking back into the living room

"Types of password. That people like you commonly use." I said to him as he took a sit in the other armchair.

"What does that mean? 'People like me'." He turn to me to watch Teddy

"Ordinary." I stated

"Stupid. Better change it." I inwardly smiled at this.

"There's no point." I smirked into the computer screen.

"No. I suppose so." John agreed with me like usually, I clicked on to John's blog,

"I see you've started a blog." Quickly reading through it.

"You… you read it?" he sounded wary

"'Imperious'. Not a word I've ever been called before." Was my reply

"I said some nice stuff about you too… I said you knew some good restaurants." Was what I got back which was a stupid answer,

"Pompous' has a 'U' in it." I said in spite to him, I heard John get up from his seat and walked over to me.

"Right. Thank you." John said with the same amount of spite to me as he snatched the computer away and snaps it shut. I put my hands down on the table till I felt something pull on my pant leg. I looked down to see the boys blue eyes staring up at me, I raised an eyebrow at him and watched in interest as he copied me. He started too climbed up my legs and placed himself on my lap looking at the desk in wonder with the things on it.

"I need to get a job." I barely heard John talking as I watched the boy that was on my lap with curiosity.

"Oh. Dull!" I scoffed at him

"Yeah. But necessary. If we want to eat actual food this month." Which was a reasonable response for an ordinary person. I could hear John going through the bills on the end table.

"This is difficult to say, if you could see your way to lending me some…" I tune out and didn't give a response as I was in thought, "Sherlock? Did you hear what I said?" John asked I jumped up taking the boy into my arms so he wouldn't drop to the ground.
"I need to go to the bank."
Chapter 8

The bank Sherlock pov

“Sherlock! We were supposed to give Teddy to Mrs. Hudson, if we got a case!” John shouted as he followed me into the bank. I rolled my eyes at his yelling and looked down at the boy, who I was still holding.

“Teddy will be fine and who said we got a case?” I said looking towards him watching as he raised an eyebrow at me.

“Sherlock, you never leave the flat unless it’s for a case.” I nodded agreeing that it was true. When we finally got inside the very high-tech building with its glass lifts, internal windows, and multiple trading floors. All illuminated in bold red and blue colours. ‘I wonder if Eiric would agree with me that this bank looks more like a nightclub then a bank.’ I looked at the banks digital clocks as they chimed the new time in New York – 7 am, London – 12 pm, and Hong Kong – 8 pm simultaneously. I watched employees wave their badges at electronic eyes, the security doors swinging open. ‘So you can’t get to the lavatory here without a pass? What do you have to do? Pay for it? Stupid.’ John finally decide to speak since we entered the building. “So, when you said we were going to the bank…”

TPSH

Scotland Yard Eiric pov

I was getting settled into my private, personal office, when there was a knock on my door. I was about to call out to tell whoever it was to come in, when the door swung open, banging harshly on the wall behind it. I jerked back a little at the noise, I looked over to the person . . . well, persons with a raised eyebrow.

“Please do come in.” my voice dripping with sarcasm, I watched as the lanky, slimily, rat face man strut in, like he own the place. The women was on the pretty side, except for the fact she was an adulterer and was having an affair with the said married, rat face man. ‘Just like Parkinson.’ She walked like she was the best, better than everyone around, but then again, maybe she was . . . in the whoring department, that is. Crossing my arms, I gave them a tight smile and a slight wave.

“‘Ello, is there something I could help you with? Since you did barge into my office, quite rudely if I may say.” My tight smile still up, the man leaned closer to me; making me lean back in my chair trying to get more space between us. The woman frowned at the man. ‘Oh~ someone turning green!’ I light smirked to myself.

“Hello,” I grimaced at the tone in his voice, making me shudder, “I’m Sergeant Philip Anderson, and may I just say, you look like an fallen angel.” I felt my eyebrows shot to my hairline and I could feel the jealous coming off the women in waves. ‘A fallen angel? Well, never heard that one before.’

“Umm . . . Thank you, I think?” I had totally blank on how to answer that, making me a bit upset. I looked between the two, the sudden urge to get them the hell out of my office came to the forefront of my mind. ‘Let's show them what their messing with, old girl.’

“You’re most welcome . . . I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your name?” The urge grew bigger.

“I’m Detective Eiric Potter, Sergeant Anderson and Donavon,” I took in the glee I felt as I watched
their faces fall into shock looks. “Oh, yes, I know who you are . . . both of you. Now you’re probably asking yourself ‘How does she know?’ well, it’s quite easy actually. When you so rudely entered my office, I could tell you both came from a place away from wandering eyes. Why do I think this? Judging by the carpet fibers that have embedded into Sally dear legs, you both have come from the Supply closet. Also by the fact that Sally dear has a bit of come on the left side of her mouth still,” I had to hold in the laugh that threaten to escape when Anderson whipped his face towards Sally dear so fast, I could feel the whiplash. Sally dear was wiping at her mouth furiously, flushed a tomato red. “Now, Anderson I assume that I’m correct when I say your wife has no idea of the adultery that you’re commenting? I also assume you want to keep it that way as well?” I outright smirked at his face as it drain of the little color he had left, as he nodded. “Then, I’m going to make this as painless as possible then! If you ever try to ask me for sexual favors again, I will ruin you, understand?” He nodded again, swallowing loudly.

“Good.” I was about to escort them out when Sally dear decide to speak up.

“Your just like him!” I turned my head to spur her on. “Your just like the Freak!” once she had uttered that word, my body tensed up. I snapped my face to her, a deadly glare in my eyes that caused her to harshly flinch at.

“What did you just say?” my voice sickly sweet and innocently calm as I walked over to, moving to stand right in front of her; staring directly into her eyes.

“I-I said y-y-your just like h-him, the Freak.” She was a stuttering mess and I didn’t much appreciate the verbal vomit that was spuming from her mouth. I grabbed a chunk of the front of her shirt in my fist and lifted her up a good inch off the ground.

‘Oh, the advantages of being taller then most people.’ I moved my face to her ear,

“And who is ‘Freak’, Sally dear?” poison dripping profoundly with each word I spoke.

“Holmes!” she squeaked out when I bashed her into the wall, making the things on my desk to rattle. I gritted my teeth at hearing Sherlock’s name, breathing harshly and intensely, I dropped her.

“If I ever hear that word or you disrespecting Sherlock like that again, I will make you wish you were dead after I’m done with you! Now get the fuck out of my office!” I hissed out threw my clenched teeth, I watched as they ran out with their tail tuck between their legs. I turned my back towards the door trying to calm down before my magic goes haywire. There was another knock on my door. Letting out a long, quiet sigh, I turned back to the door. Once turned around, I saw Dimmock standing in the doorway.

“Yes, Detective Inspector Dimmock?” He looked a bit flustered when I addressed him. He shuffled a bit before looking at me.

“I was wondering if you’d like to go on a date with me, Detective Potter?”

‘Oh Merlin balls!’

TPSH

Seb’s Office Sherlock pov

I watched as Sebastian Wilkes, the Director of the Trading Floor walks in, his floppy hair bellowing ‘Eton’.

“Sherlock Holmes!”

“Sebastian.”
“How are you, Buddy? How long’s it been? Eight years since I last clapped eyes on you?” he said as he clapped me on the back a bit rough. ‘Not long enough.’ Getting a bit uncomfortable with the attention on me, I introduced John.

“How long’s it been? Eight years since I last clapped eyes on you?” he said as he clapped me on the back a bit rough. ‘Not long enough.’ Getting a bit uncomfortable with the attention on me, I introduced John.

“This is my friend, John Watson.” I saw Seb’s mouth twitch in the corner. “‘Friend?’ ” He question, reaching his hand out to John.

“This is my friend, John Watson.” I saw Seb’s mouth twitch in the corner. “‘Friend?’ ” He question, reaching his hand out to John.

“Colleague.” I frown at how fast, John had answered. I notice John grimace as he shook hands with Seb.

“Colleague.” I frown at how fast, John had answered. I notice John grimace as he shook hands with Seb.

“Grab a pew.” His PA appears at the door, “Need something? Coffee? Water? No?” we didn’t answer his question so he turns to his PA, “We’re all sorted here thanks.” Once she was gone, we all sat down. “So, who’s the tyke?” Sebastian asked before we could do anything.

“This is Teddy. We’re babysitting him, his mum and he live in the same flat building as us.” John chirped a reply, I kicked him lightly in the leg for his answer.

“This is Teddy. We’re babysitting him, his mum and he live in the same flat building as us.” John chirped a reply, I kicked him lightly in the leg for his answer.

“You’re doing well. Spending lots of time abroad.” I hurriedly said to distract Sebastian from asking any more question on Teddy and Eiric. Seb lent back some in his chair “Well, some . . .” I studied him carefully taking notice the time was right but the date was wrong. “Flying all the way round the world. Twice a month!” Seb was smiling like he was remembering something.

“You’re doing well. Spending lots of time abroad.” I hurriedly said to distract Sebastian from asking any more question on Teddy and Eiric. Seb lent back some in his chair “Well, some . . .” I studied him carefully taking notice the time was right but the date was wrong. “Flying all the way round the world. Twice a month!” Seb was smiling like he was remembering something.

“You’re doing that thing.” He turns to John, “We were at Uni together, and this guy here – he had this trick he used to do.” I got irritated at that word.

“You’re doing that thing.” He turns to John, “We were at Uni together, and this guy here – he had this trick he used to do.” I got irritated at that word.

“It’s not a trick.”

“It’s not a trick.”

“He could look at you and tell your whole life story.” John looked like he was uncomfortable with this conversation.

“He could look at you and tell your whole life story.” John looked like he was uncomfortable with this conversation.

“Yes, I’ve seen him do it.”

“Yes, I’ve seen him do it.”

“Put the wind up everyone. We hated him.” I felt a tugged in my chest when I looked over to John, who looked like he was quietly delighted with what Seb said. “You’d come to breakfast in the formal hall and this freak –” I felt Teddy flinch violently when Sebastian had said the word ‘Freak’. I felt a bit of concern at the reaction but filed it for later. “~ he would know who you’d been shagging the previous night.”

“I simply observed.”

“I simply observed.”

“Go on. Enlighten me. ‘Two Trips a month, flying around the world’. You’re quite right. But how could you tell. “He laughed. I was about to speak before Sebastian spoke again, “Gonna tell ‘em there’s a stain on my tie – from a type of ketchup you can only buy in Manhattan?”

“No, I . . .” I tried but was interrupted again,

“No, I . . .” I tried but was interrupted again,

“Or maybe it’s the mud on my shoes . . .” I had had enough,

“Or maybe it’s the mud on my shoes . . .” I had had enough,

“I was chatting to your Secretary outside. She told me.” I watched with pride as his arrogant smile fade.

“I was chatting to your Secretary outside. She told me.” I watched with pride as his arrogant smile fade.

“I’m glad you could make it over. We’ve had a break in.” He got up from his seat, motioning us to follow him. We left his office, as we walked across the busy trading floor; I was bombarded by the noise of the telephones buzzing and squawk boxes chattering. Each of the traders had a personalized name plate. There was metal signs suspending from the ceiling delineate the trading
groups – Sterling; Dollars; Yen. We finally stopped at a darkened corner office with a glass front. I raised an eyebrow unimpressed.

“Sir William’s Office. The bank’s former chairman. His room has been left here – like a sort of memorial . . .” I rolled my eyes at the latter part of his speech. There was an electronic key pad on the door, Seb opened it with a swipe if his card. “Someone broke in here late last night.”

“What did they steal?” John finally speaking up since we left Seb’s office.

“Nothing. They just left a little message.” That made me raise an eyebrow, Seb flicked the lights on; inside . . . the office held an air of sterility stating that no one comes in here anymore. There was an old leather-top desk – blotter, pen, and brass lamp. The man who sat here had passed away – but his office has been left alone, like a museum. Behind the desk was a gilt-framed oil painting, it was a portrait of the grim-faced banker, the former chairman. The plaque under the picture read: ‘SIR WILLIAM SHAD. 1944-2009. CHAIRMAN.’ The picture was vandalized now. Whoever broke in had drawn a thick line across Sir William’s eyes using bright yellow aerosol. The paint had dripped leaving a row of yellow tentacles. I saw on the wall below the artist has left his tad. An illegible scrawl.

Seb had taken us back to his office pulling up the CCTV footage. We all watched as the footage shows the office late last night, a still frame every 60 seconds. It lurches from one grainy shot to the next – the portrait just visible in the gloom. Then, miraculously, the paint appears. Seb freezes the picture: ‘11:34pm’. He then flicks back to the previous still: ’11:33pm’. No paint. Forward again. ’11:34pm’. Paint.

“Sixty seconds apart. So someone came up here in the middle of the night, splashed a bit of paint around – then left within a minute.” He said as he turned to us, his eyebrow raised when he notice I had yet to put Teddy down or to John.

“How many ways into that office?” I looked up when I heard him chuckle a bit.

“That’s where this gets really interesting.” We left his office again, heading to the reception desk. There was a map of the buildings on the computer screen.

“Every door opens in this bank – it gets logged right here. Every walk-in cupboard. Every toilet.” I studied the digital display – lines and lines of recorded times. “That door didn’t open last night?” I question. Seb shakes his head, “There’s a hole in our security. Find it and we’ll pay you. Five figures.” He reaches into his pocket, brandishes a cheque. John was clearly impressed by the amount, I was not. “This is only an advance. Tell me how he got in – there’s a bigger one on its way.”

“I don’t need incentives, Sebastian.” I not even looking at it, breezing off with Teddy in my arms to begin work. Sebastian was about to put the cheque away, before John stepped forward,

“He’s kidding you, obviously. Shall I look after that for him . . .?” John was handed the cheque, watching Sebastian walked off. I took a picture of vandalized portrait and of the tag that was adjacent to it. I explore what-his-names office, noticing that there is an access out onto a tiny private balcony; it was five floors up – it was a vertiginous drop. I moved out to the trading floor again, with Teddy still in my arms, I began to move around the floor, dodging and weaving in and out of the pillars. I could hear the boy light giggles as we did this, the people on the floor stopped working and stared. I was studying the graffiti from all of the different angles. I darted to the office next door to the chairman’s. The sign read: ‘Hong Kong Desk Head’, the walls were glass. I turned around – there in full, plain view was the painted graffiti from here. Teddy and I walked back over to John, who was in the lobby waiting for us. Teddy reached over to John, switching from me to him.
“John!” Teddy pulled on John’s coat collar, grabbing his attention.

“Yeah, buddy?” once John was looking at him, he started bouncing in his arms rambling on something that I couldn’t understand, till I heard my name escape his lips . . . well a version of my name.

“Lockey, dance funny! Mummy likes dance! Makes her happy and smile!” I snapped my head when I heard what he called me, John trying to hold in his laughter. ‘Eiric likes dancing?’ I was startled out of my thinking when John replied to the boy,

“Well, buddy, Lockey is funny in general.” I threw John a death glare, which he smirked at. We were now descending in the glass lift.

“Two trips around the world this month.’ You didn’t ask his Secretary. You said that just to irritate him.” We shared a smile. “How did you . . .?”

“Did you look at his watch?”

“His watch?” I rolled my eyes,

“The hands on his watch were correct but the date was wrong. It actually said the day before yesterday. He crossed the date line twice, and didn’t alter his watch.”

“Within a month? How’d you know that part?”

“New Rolex. Only came out in February.” The lift finally reaches the bottom and the doors open. We walked out of the building to the street.

“You think we should sniff around here a bit longer?”

“Got everything I need to know already, thanks.” I stride off up the street with John and Teddy scuttling after me. “That graffiti is a message, John. For someone at the bank – working on the trading floor. We find the intended recipient and . . .”

“He’ll lead us to the person who sent it.”

“Obvious.” I grumbled at being interrupted, which seemed to be happening a lot lately since Eiric and Teddy moved in.

“Three hundred people up there. Who was it meant for?” remembering that John was in the lobby when I found out.

“Pillars.” I told him.

“What?” I sighed at John’s idiotic question.

“The pillars. And the screen.” I thought back to the trading floor, admitting it would look like I was dancing between the pillars to the workers and Teddy. “Very few places where you could see the graffiti. That narrows the field considerably. And of course – the message was left at 11:34 last night. That tells us a lot.”

“Does it?” oh dull, John.

“Traders come to work at all hours. Some people trade with Hong Kong in the middle of the night. The message was intended for someone who came in at midnight.” I reached in to my coat pocket, pulling out the name sign I stole from off the desk with the name Van Coon on it. “Not many Van
“Coon’s in the phone book.” I hailed a cab and we all climb in.

TPSH

Eddie’s flat John pov

Once we were outside Eddie Van Coon’s apartment block, we walked over to the set of buzzers that was labelled with the names of the tenants. Apparently Eddie Van Coon lived on the sixth floor. Teddy and I stood there watching Sherlock ring the buzzer, then wait for it to be answered but not gaining one and repeat the process. “What are we gonna do now, then? Sit here and wait for him to come back?” I didn’t think it was a good idea since we had Teddy with us. Sherlock didn’t answer me, instead he checks the buzzers. There was one directly above Eddie’s on the seventh floor with the name Wintle on it.

“Just moved in.” I heard Sherlock say.

“What?” I could hear him roll his eyes at me at my question.

“Floor above. New label.” I observed the pristine label on the buzzer.

“Could have just replaced it.” I offered.

“No one ever does that.” Critical as ever Sherlock. He rings the buzzer and a woman voices answers. “Hello?”

“Hi. I live in the flat just below you. I don’t think we’ve met.” He spoke into the buzzer. “No. well – I’ve just moved in.” Sherlock throws me a victorious glance, making me roll my eyes.

“I’ve actually locked my keys in my flat.”

“You want me to buzz you in?”

“I want to use your balcony.” I snapped my head towards him looking at him as if he just grew another head, which he might as well do. “What?” the woman sounded like she was think the same thing.

TPSH

Balcony/ Eddie’s Flat Sherlock pov

I was on the woman’s balcony, I climbed over the edge so I could lower myself down on to Van Coon’s. I slipped and almost plummeted to my death, I heard the woman gasp but I carry on with an elegant smile and lowered myself. Van Coon’s patio door slides open when I pushed it. I go inside and walks across the very elegantly decorated living room. This is clearly the apartment of a wealthy man, with white leather furniture, shiny black tables and minimal clutter. I look at everything as I goes through the room, and glances at a pile of books on a table. I walk through the kitchen, looking at the work surface before opening the fridge to reveal that it’s full of nothing other than bottles of champagne. The front door to the flat buzzes. “Sherlock?” the door was bolted and chain pulled across, there was more knocking from John, “Sherlock? You ok?” I poke my head inside a tiny, pristine bathroom – a single toothbrush and a dispenser of liquid soap. “Any time you feel like letting us in. . .” I go the bedroom and try the handle – it’s locked. So I turned side-on and shoulder-charged the door and it bursts open. I walked inside and find a man in a suit and overcoat lying on his back on the bed, dead. There was a pistol on the floor, and the man has a small bullet hole in his right temple.
Later, the police have been called and a photographer is taking pictures of Van Coon’s body lying on the bed. A forensics officer is dusting for fingerprints on the nearby mirror, and distant voices suggest that other forensics officers are elsewhere in the flat. I had taken off my coat and in the bedroom putting on a pair of latex gloves. John stands beside him, after he gave Teddy to a female officer to watch him outside the flat.

“You think maybe he’d lost a lot of money? Suicide rate is pretty high amongst these city types.”

“We don’t know that it was a suicide.”

“Come on! His door was locked from the inside. You had to climb across the balcony. . .” I was observing Van Coon’s suitcase. It was stuffed full of underwear and socks but there was a hole in the middle – a large impression left in all the clothes. Something else hand been packed in there, a long cylindrical shape.

“Been away. Three days, judging by the laundry. Look – something was packed tightly inside the case.” I stood up, looking at John.

“Thanks – I’ll take your word for it.” He made a face, making me raise an eyebrow.

“Problem?”

“I’m not desperate to root around some bloke’s dirty underwear.” I studied the corpse.

“Those symbols at the bank – that graffiti. Why was it put there?” I asked him.

“You think it was some sort of code?”

“Obviously. But I’m saying why paint it. Why not use email if you want to make contact? Or the phone?” it took John a moment.

“Maybe he wasn’t answering.” I smirked lightly,

“Good. You follow.”

“No.” I threw him a look before moving on to examine Van Coon’s hands. “What sort of message would everyone try to avoid?” I notice that there was something in Van Coon’s mouth, I put my gloves on and delicately poke inside.

“What about this morning? Those letters you were looking at.”

“Bills?”

“Yes. He was being threatened.”

“Not by the gas board.” Inside Van Coon’s mouth was a small black origami flower from inside. Then a man walks into the bedroom. I turned and walked towards him.

“Ahh, Sergeant . . . We haven’t met.” I offered my hand but the man puts his hands on his hips.

“Yeah, I know who you are; and I’d prefer it if you didn’t tamper with any of the evidence.” I lowered my hand and gave the officer the evidence bag and turned on my best stroppy look on him. “I’ve phoned Lestrade. Is he on his way?”

“He’s busy. I’m in charge. And it’s not Sergeant; it’s Detective Inspector. Dimmock.” I looked at him in surprise then turned and shared my surprised look with John. Dimmock walks out of the room, John and I follow him into the living room to see that he was trying to hand the evidence bag
to a very familiar woman with bright, fiery-orange hair, that’s when it clicked... Eiric. She obviously refused to touch the bag, which was interesting, making Dimmock to hand it over to one of the forensics teams.

“We’re obviously looking at a suicide.”

“That does seem the only explanation of all the facts.” At hearing John’s voice, Eiric whips around and started walking over to us with a frown on her face. I was about to speak when Eiric starting talking,

“Wrong. It’s one possible explanation of some of the facts.” She turned into a spot that was in-between Dimmock and I. “You’ve got a solution that you like, but you’re choosing to ignore anything you see that doesn’t comply with it.” She had moved a bit closer to me while she was talking to Dimmock, I was looking at her in shock. She had rendered me speechless, saying the same thing I thought of, and it looked as John and Dimmock were shocked as well.

“Like?” Dimmock broke out of his shock and looked at Eiric like she was the last dinner, making me feel that pooling sensation again and narrowed my eyes.

“The wound was on the right side of his head.” I discreetly pulled Eiric closer to my person and decide to let her handle this, but just this one time.

“And?” the Dimmock was now leering at her, I felt her tense up a bit and then felt her hand slide into mine gripping onto it tightly. ‘Call Lestrade after this, and have Eiric work with me.’

“Van Coon was left-handed.” She let go of my head and goes into an elaborate mime as she demonstrates her point, pretending to try and point a gun to her right temple with her left hand. “Requires quite a bit of contortion.” She said after finishing, replacing her hand back into mine. I smirked at Dimmock on the outside but on the inside I was confused and shocked at her actions and her wonderful ability of deduction.

“Left-Handed?” this boy really did need to stop question Eiric’s deductions.

“Oh, I’m amazed you didn’t notice. All you have to do is look around this flat.” she was talking sarcastically now and points to the table beside the sofa. “Coffee table on the left-hand side; coffee mug handle pointing to the left. Power sockets: habitually used the ones on the left. . .” We all looked over to the double socket on the wall with a plug only in the left-hand socket. “Pen and paper on the left-hand side of the phone because he picked it up with his right and took down messages with his left. D’you want me to go on?”

“No, I think you’ve covered it.” John sounded tried and like he was talking to me.

“Oh, I might as well; I’m almost at the bottom of the list.” She looked to John, who nodded his head as if to say “Yeah, I thought you might.” She pointed to the kitchen.

“There’s a knife on the breadboard with butter on the right side of the blade because he used it with his left.” She turned a look of impatient towards Dimmock. “It’s highly unlikely that a left-handed man would shoot himself in the right side of his head.” What she didn’t know was that John was left-handed but shoots with his right hand.

“Conclusion: someone broke in here and murdered him. Only explanation of all the facts.” Eiric would have gone on if Teddy hadn’t decided to announce his presents, she whipped her head towards his direction. Once seeing him, she turned an icy look to John and I. I knew then that we were in deep shite now.
“But the gun: why…” I interrupted him taking my turn to speak,

“He was waiting for the killer. He’d been threatened.” I tugged Eiric over to Teddy so she could take him from the officer that was watching him, and pulled on my scarf, coat and gloves. Then taking Eiric’s hand again, which she seem surprised at, before returning to the icy look again.

“What?” this idiot really needed to shut up.

“Today at the bank. Sort of a warning.” John spoke up.

“And the bullet?” I was about to snap at him when I felt pressure on my hand, calming me down a bit.

“Went through the open window.”

“Oh, come on! What are the chances of that?!?”

“The same chance of you getting a date, Dimmock.” Eiric sneered at him making him flush a bright red. I felt a low growl in my chest, shocking myself to death, never feeling this before.

“Wait until you get the ballistics report. The bullet in his brain wasn’t fired from his gun. I guarantee it.”

“But his door was looked from the inside, how did the killer get in?” finally, the right questions.

“Good! You’re finally asking the right questions.” I said condescendingly, turning taking Eiric and Teddy with me and walked out of the flat. John following behind us. Once we got to the street, Eiric stops us.

“Why the bloody hell, did you bring my son to a crime scene!” and she was off, giving us a rather threatening lecture that I dare not repeat.
Restaurant Sherlock pov

“I still can’t believe you brought a four year old to a crime scene.” Eiric was still going on John’s and I mistake of bring Teddy with us.

“Eiric, John and I have apologizes . . .” Eiric snapped her bright, acid green eyes on me, burning with fury.

“No, John has apologize for you both, Sherlock Holmes! You brush this off, because it doesn’t affect you, well here’s some news for you, Mr. Holmes!” she stopped turning her body in front of me making me halt. “I trusted you! I trusted you to look after the one thing I hold dear, my son! He could of gotten hurt or worst, and don’t tell me he was fine ‘cos he wasn’t! Scotland Yard employs idiots, Sherlock.” She was shaking after she finish, her eyes shining even brighter with unshed tears of worry. I looked away with guilt pooling in the bottom of my stomach. I took a hold of her hand, giving it a gentle squeeze before looking back at her.

“I’m so sorry, Eiric.” I leaned forward and placed a kiss close to the corner of her luscious, red lips. I moved my fingers to her pulse to see if it elevated, only to find it calm and steady. I returned to my full height, taking a step back, and resume walking to the restaurant that Sebastian was eating lunch at. A mere seconds later, Eiric was in step with me with Teddy in her arms and John on my right.

“Thank you.” It was so quiet, that I almost missed it, I tilted my head in her direction as a welcome. I, then, felt her hand slid into mine again, making the tiniest and faintest smile appear on my lips.

“So, Eiric, how . . . when did you first start. . .” John rambled. That had quirked a spark of interest in me as well, she was so amazedly wonderful in the art of Deduction, right on par with me actually.

“Deducing things?” she asked looking over to John, who nodded. “Well, I started at the age of seven or so, actually, I learned all I could from this website I found one day when I was six. I didn’t actually deduce a person until I was ten, almost eleven. It was Dudley’s, my cousin, eleventh birthday, and we went to the zoo. We were at the gorilla exhibit, my relatives and Dudley’s friend Piers, who went with us, left going to another one but I stayed back with the gorilla. I was just watching the gorilla when a boy came to stand by me.” My eyes began to widen in shock as she continue, “I had to look up at him, ’cos he was few inches taller than me. Then I just started to deduce, really.” She finished with a shrug.

“What did you deduce about him?” John ask in awe.

“He had just turned fifteen, about 5’1 maybe 5’2, I wasn’t really sure at the time, he was skinny meaning he didn’t eat much but he was very athletic though, more likely running than anything else, and he had an older brother, one he just ran away from. I also deduce he was very smart as well. He had black curly hair and a very pale complexion. I remember telling him that ‘He’ll find you, you know’, his reply was ‘Who’ll find me?’ and I told him, ‘Your brother.’ Then walked off catching up with my relatives.” My mind stopped in shock, remembering that day, it was almost like it was yesterday that memory so fresh in my head. I never forgot that day, I had actually made a room for that memory. The small girl, though taller than most girls her age, with the very short unruly curly fiery-orange hair, wearing clothes too big for her and rounded glasses held together with tape; was now standing by me, holding my hand, with a son. I cleared my throat.
“And the website that helped you?” I asked her, really looking at her, memorizing every detail and naming the room that was all just for her.

“The Science of Deduction. This the restaurant?” she asked before walking in, leaving John and I to stare at her in shock for John and in awe for me. She had learned everything from my website, from me and retained it, practicing till she couldn’t anymore. We both shook out of our states and headed into the restaurant not wanting to anger Eiric again. We all walked over to the table that Sebastian was having lunch with some colleagues.

“. . . and he’s left trying to sort of cut his hair with a fork, which of course can never be done!” is what we heard once we were close enough.

“It was a threat. That’s what the graffiti meant.” I could hear Eiric’s questioned “Graffiti?” behind me and John explaining to her about this morning.

“I’m kind of in a meeting. Can you make an appointment with my secretary?” I heard Eiric and John scoff in disgust at what he said. I felt Eiric move in front of me, hands on her hips, ‘Must of giving Teddy to John.’

“I don’t think this can wait. Sorry, but one of your traders – someone who worked in your office – was killed.” She was unimpressed with him. He looked to her in shock, “What?”

“Van Coon. The police are at his flat.” John answered for him seeing that Eiric and I weren’t making any moves to do so. His look turned to John,

“Killed?” Eiric moved into his line of vision again,

“Sorry to interfere with everyone’s digestion. Still wanna make an appointment? Would, maybe, nine o’clock at Scotland Yard suit?” she said sarcastically flipping out her police badge showing him. Sebastian puts his glass of water down and nervously runs his finger inside his shirt collar at Eiric’s intense green eye glare. Sebastian got up motioning for us to follow him, going towards the men’s restrooms. We all went inside but Eiric who stopped at the door. I turned around to her with a raised eyebrow, in return I got a raised eyebrow and a negative shake of the head from her. I sighed and went into the restroom, leaving her outside the door. Sebastian was washing his hands when I entered.

“Harrow, Oxford. Very bright guy. Worked in Asia for a while, so . . .”

“. . . You gave him the Hong Kong accounts.” John finished for him. Sebastian drying his hands with a towel, “Lost five mill in a single morning; made it all back a week later. Nerves of steel, Eddie had.”

“Who’d wanna kill him?” John asked.

“We all make enemies.” Was Sebastian’s reply, I could hear Eiric scoff at him.

“You don’t all end with a bullet through your temple.” Sebastian’s phone beeps stating he gotten a text. “Not usually. ‘Scuse me.” He gets out his phone and looks at the message. “It’s my Chairman. The police have been on to him. Apparently they’re telling him it was a suicide.” Before I could even reply, Eiric burst into the restroom looking pissed off as hell.

“What! I told them it was a murder! I- I . . . what?” she sound so confused as if this was the first time this has ever happened to her. Sebastian looked at her, with a lustful look.

“And who are you?” he moved closer to her, I saw her take a small step back towards the door.
“Detective Eiric Potter, I’m on the Van Coon case. And they’ve got it wrong. He was murdered.”

“Well, I’m afraid they don’t see it like that.” He was patronizing her.

“Seb.” I said to him sternly moving to Eiric’s side putting a hand on her lower back. He looked towards me,

“. . . and never does my boss. I hired you to do a job. Don’t get side-tracked.” He walks away from us. John waited until he had left the room, before turning to Eiric and I,

“I thought bankers were all supposed to be heartless bastards!”

TPSH

No one’s pov

An overweight blad man in his early forties is running frantically down the street. A hard back book clasped in one hand, he looks back repeatedly behind him as he runs. Once reaching his front door, he whimpers as he fumbles with his door key and finally gets the door open. Running upstairs, he unlocks the door to his flat and hurries inside. He slams the door and pushing the bolt across, much help that will do for him anyway. He scurries up the flight of stairs leading to the main flat, throwing his book into a pile of other books strewn all the way up the stairs, and runs into his living room. He stops in the middle of the room and then turns around, his face covered with sweat and full of terror at the sight which greets him.

TPSH

No one’s pov

The museum’s Director walks across to Andy, who is sitting at a table cleaning an ancient pot.

“I need you to get over to Crisprians.” She shows him a catalogue. “Two Ming vases up for auction – Chenguha. Will you appraise them?”

“Er, er, Soo Lin should go. She’s the expert.”

“Soo Lin has resigned her job. I need you.” She walks away. Andy turns and looks sadly at Soo Lin’s table behind him. Later, he’s standing outside the front door to Soo Lin’s flat. Her doorbell had a handwritten name tag above it, showing her name with a flower drawn in the place of the dot over the ‘I’ and a couple of other flowers in the right hand corners. Andy presses the doorbell, then steps back and looks up to the first windows of the flat which is above a shop called The Lucky Cat. When nobody answers his ring, he rummages in his pockets, takes out an envelope and pen and scribbles a note on the envelope before bending down to the letterbox and pushing it through. He walks away.

TPSH

Meeting Sarah John pov

I was in a doctor’s surgery, watching as Doctor Sarah Sawyer reads my printed Curriculum Vitae. She looks up at me, as I was sitting opposite of her.

“Just locum work.” I smiled, knowing I was about to get the job.

“No, that’s fine.”
“You’re, um . . . well, you’re a bit overqualified.” I smiled again,

“Er, I could always do with the money.” She nodded,

“Well, we’ve got two on holiday this week, and one’s just left to have a baby. Might be a bit mundane for you.”

“Er, no; mundane is good sometimes. Mundane works.”

“It says here you were a soldier.” She said softly.

“And a doctor.” I smiled at her again and she looked down. “Anything else you can do?”

“I learned the clarinet at school.” Trying to be funny.

“Oh!” she laughs, “Well, I look forward to it!” I laugh.

TPSH

221B Eiric pov

Sherlock had printed out the photographs of the graffiti near and across Sir William’s portrait and had stuck them around the mirror above the fireplace. He was now sitting in one of the dining chairs with his back to the dining table, I was on the couch reading an astronomy book while Teddy was being watched by Mrs. H. He had his fingers steeple under his chin and was staring at the photos. I had a feeling that various symbols in different languages flash in front of his mind eyes. John had just walked in from the landing and drops his jacket onto his chair.

“I said, ‘Could you pass me a pen’?” Sherlock said without looking around. John looks around the living room till he landed on me, expecting that Sherlock was talking to me. I shook my head in the negative to him.


“‘Bout an hour ago.” John sighed,

“Didn’t notice I’d gone out, then. And Eiric is here too, you know.” John picks up a pen from the table beside his chair and, without even looking at Sherlock, tosses the pen in his direction. Sherlock lifts his left hand and catches it without looking away from the photographs on the wall. I blinked a couple of times at his seeker like reflexes in surprise. John walks over to the mirror to look closely at the photos.

“Yeah, I went to see about a job at that surgery.” I looked over to him.

“How was it?” Sherlock asked.

“It’s great. She’s great.” I stifled a giggle.

“Who?” Sherlock turned to him as John did the same.

“The job.”

“‘She’?”

“. . . It.” Sherlock looks at him suspiciously for a moment, with me hiding my face behind my book, then jerks his head to the right.
“Here, have a look.”

“Hmmm?” John walks over to the table and looks at the web page on the computer, that Sherlock has already shown me. The lead article on the ‘Online News’ page is headlined, “Ghostly killer leaves a mystery for police”. Next to it is a photograph of the bald man, and the article read: An intruder who can walk through walls murdered a man in his London apartment last night. Brian Lukis, 41, a freelance journalist from Earl’s Court was found shot in his fourth floor flat but all his doors and windows were locked and there were no apparent signs of a break in. A police spokesman said they are still uncertain how the assailant broke in.

“The intruder who can walk through walls.” John repeated the first sentence.

“Happened last night. Journalist shot dead in his flat; doors locked, windows bolted from the inside – exactly the same as Van Coon.” John straightened out and look to Sherlock and I.

“God. You think . . .”

“He’s killed another one.” I answered for him. We soon left for Scotland Yard. Once there, we went straight for Dimmock who was at his desk. He had his arms folded in exasperation as Sherlock stands on the other side of the desk and types into a laptop.

“Brain Lukis, freelance journalist. Murdered in his flat. . .” he turned the laptop around to show Dimmock the web page. “. . . doors locked from the inside.” I folded my arms and tapped my foot.

“You’ve gotta admit, it’s similar.” Dimmock scowled at the computer.

“Now don’t be angry with the poor laptop, Inspector, it only told you the truth, there isn’t any reason to make it break with your ugly mug.” I said sweetly with a dimpled smile making Sherlock smirk.

“Both men killed by someone who can. . .” John hesitates momentarily as if unable to believe what he was about to say, “. . . walk through solid walls.”

"Inspector, do you seriously believe that Eddie Van Coon was just another City suicide?” Sherlock asked him. Dimmock squirms in his seat not meeting Sherlock’s eyes. Sherlock looks up exasperated, and sighs pointedly. “You have seen the ballistics report, I suppose?” Dimmock nodded. “And the shot that killed him: was it fired from his own gun?”

“No.” Dimmock told him reluctantly.

“No. So this investigation might move a bit quicker if you were take Eiric and mine word as gospel.” Dimmock looks at us silently. Sherlock leans forward over the desk and speaks quietly but intensely into his face. ‘I’ve just handed you a murder enquiry.’ Now speaking louder, nodded towards the picture of Lukis on the computer. “Five minutes in his flat.”

TPSH

Once we were at Lukis’ flat, Sherlock and I duck under the police tape at the bottom of the stairs inside the door of the flat. We go upstairs, followed by Dimmock and John. Looking at everything as we go, we walk into the living room. Nearby on the carpet I found a black origami flower, similar, if I recall, to the one Sherlock pulled out of Van Coon’s mouth. There are books everywhere on the desk, on bookshelves, and scattered about on the floor. It was every Ravenclaw’s wet dream. There was several open newspapers also lying on the floor. Sherlock walks over to the kitchen area and looks through the window at the nearby rooftops of lower buildings. He pushed the net curtain back for a better look, he smirks. His smirk stirs up a feeling
"Four floors up. That’s why they think they’re safe. Put a chain across the door and bolt it shut; think they’re impregnable.” Sherlock walks into the middle of the room again. “They don’t reckon for one second that there’s another way in.” I turn back towards the stairs and see a skylight above the landing.

“I don’t understand.” Dimmock said.

"Of course you wouldn’t. You’re dealing with a killer who can climb.” I said going out onto the landing. I hop up on a box of books, to get closer to the skylight.

“What are you doing?”

“He clings to the walls like an insect.” I unhook the latch and pushed the window upward. “That’s how he got in.” I said softly.

“What?!”

“Climbed up the side of the walls, ran along the roof, dropped in through this skylight.” Sherlock told him as he helped me down, taking a hold of my hand.

“You’re not serious! Like Spiderman?!” I raised an eyebrow at him.

“He scaled six floors of a docklands apartment building, jumped the balcony to kill Van Coon.” Sherlock said.

“Oh, ho-hold on!” Dimmock laughed in disbelief.

“And of course that’s how he got into the bank. He ran along the window ledge and onto the terrace.” He looked towards me, “We have to find out what connects these two men.” My eyes fall on the pile of books scattered up the side of the staircase. I let go of his hand walked down a few stairs and pick up one particular book which has fallen open at its front page which shows that it has been borrowed from West Kensington Library. I slam the book shut, I take it with me as I head off down the stairs with the boys following me.

TPSH

After taking a taxi to the library, Sherlock, John and I are on an escalator inside the library. I find my way to the aisle where Lukis’ book came from.

“Date stamped on the book is the same day that he died.” I told them as I checked the reference number stuck to the book’s spine, I go to the corrected place along the shelves and started pulling out books and examining them. John and Sherlock, probably just for something to do, pulls out some books on two other nearby shelves on the side of the aisle and immediately gets lucky.

“Sherlock. Eiric.” We both turn and see John staring into the gap left by the books he removed. Stepping over to him, I, then reached to the self and pull out some books, handing them to Sherlock, then pulling out another set of books revealing that spray painted on the back of the shelf are the same two symbols that were in those photos of that Old Chairman office. We go back to 221B, Sherlock puts up the photographs of the shelf, adding to the earlier photos stuck around the mirror in the living room. We were all standing at the fireplace looking at the pictures.

“So, the killer goes to the bank, leaves a threatening cipher for Van Coon; Van Coon panics, locks himself in. Hours later, he dies.” Sherlock said.
“The killer finds Lukis at the library; he writes the cipher on the shelf where he knows it’ll be seen; Lukis goes home.” John doing the same thing as Sherlock.

“Late that night, he dies too.” I said joining in.

“Why did they die, Sherlock? Eiric?” Sherlock runs his fingers over the line painted across Sir William’s face, I took a hold of his hand.

“Only the cipher can tell us.” Sherlock thoughtfully taps his finger against the photo as his expression sharpens. ‘He has an idea.’

TPSH

We were walking through the center of the square, heading towards the National Gallery. Sherlock holding my hand as we walked up the stairs.

“The world’s run on codes and ciphers, John and Eiric. From the million pound security system at the bank, to the PIN machine you took exception to, cryptography inhabits our every waking moment.”

“Yes, okay, but . . .” John ignored my questioning look about the PIN machine.

“. . . but it’s all computer-generated: electronic codes, electronic ciphering methods. This is different. It’s an ancient device. Modern code-breaking methods won’t unravel it.” I nodded agreeing with him.

“Where are we headed?” John asked. Sherlock seem reluctance to say.

“I need to ask some advice.”

“What?! Sorry?!” Sherlock throws him a black look as John smiled in disbelief.

“You heard me perfectly. I’m not saying it again.” I gently squeezed his hand, getting a squeeze in return.

“You need advice?”

“On painting, yes. I need to talk to an expert.” He leads John and I towards the entrance to the National Gallery and straight around it to the rear of the building, where there was a young man had a spray-stenciled onto a solid grey metal door the image of a policeman holding a rifle in his hand. The image has a pig’s snout in the place of a human nose. A large canvas bag is at the man’s feet and he is holding sprayed cans in both hands. With one of the cans he sprayed his tag, “RAZ”, below the image and he is now adding the finishing touches to his ‘artwork’. He continues spraying unperturbed, as we approach.

“Part of a new exhibition.” He told us.

“Interesting.”

“Charming.” Sherlock and I said at the same time in disinterest.

“I call it Urban Bloodlust Frenzy.” He chuckles.

“Catchy!” John put in.

“I’ve got two minutes before a Community Support Officer comes round that corner.” Still
spraying, he looks round to Sherlock and I. “Can we do this while I’m working.” Sherlock takes out his phone from his coat, never once letting go of my hand, and holds it out towards Raz, who turns and tosses one of the spray cans at John. John instinctively catches it, and looks at Sherlock and Raz in bewilderment. Raz takes Sherlock’s phone and scrolls through the photographs of the yellow ciphers from Sir Williams’s office and the library.

“Know the author?” Sherlock asked after a minute.

“Recognize the paint. It’s like Michigan: hardcore propellant. I’d say zinc.” I was amazed at his knowledge on paint.

“What about the symbols; d’you recognize them?”

“Not even sure it’s a proper language.” He was squinting at the picture. He was right about it not being a language, its numbers.

“Two men have been murdered, Raz. Deciphering this is the key to finding out who killed them.”

“What, and this is all you’ve got to go on? It’s hardly much, now, is it?” I glared at the boy.

“Are you gonna help us or not?” I demand of him.

“I’ll ask around.” I nodded. “Somebody must know something.” I said to him.

“OI!” all four of us looked round and saw two Community Support Officers hurrying towards us. Sherlock instantly grabs his phone from Raz and runs off in the opposite direction taking me with him, giggling lively, while Raz drops his spray can, kicks his bag towards John and also scarpers. John, the blithering idiot, meekly turns towards the officers.

John pov

“What the hell do you think you’re doing? This gallery is listed public building.”

“No, no, wait, wait. It’s not me who painted that.” I hold up the spray can. “I was just holding this for...” I turned and realize I’ve been abandoned. I sighed quietly. The officer kicks open the bag to reveal more spray cans inside, then looks at me pointedly.

“Bit of an enthusiast, are we?” I look at him blankly then stare at the graffiti on the door, wondering how I’m going to explain my way out of this.

TPSH

No one’s pov

Andy is pestering the museum’s Director about Soo Lin’s abrupt departure.

“She was right in the middle of an important piece of restoration. Why would she suddenly resign?” he stated.

“Family problems. She said so in her letter.”

“But she doesn’t have a family. She came to this country on her own.”

“Andy...”
“Look, those teapots, those ceramics: they’ve become her obsession. She’s been working on restoring them for weeks. I-I can’t believe that she would just abandon them.” The director looks at him pointedly.

“Perhaps she was getting a bit of unwanted attention.” She walks away. Andy looks around awkwardly at the other colleagues in the room who have been listening in but who now abruptly turn away again.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

I was standing at the fireplace again. The mirror is now almost completely covered because I’ve added several sheets of paper with various ciphers and pictograms. I looked at Eiric through the mirror watching her read the book she had started reading this morning, her eyes still lit up in excitement from the run we just did, I faintly smile. I lowered my head looking at the book in my hand, when a slamming door announces John’s return to the flat.

“You’ve been a while.” I said without turning around or looking up. John walks a few more paces into the room, his shoulders rigid and his fists clenched. He stops, blinking as he fights to hold onto his anger, then turns towards me.

“Yeah, well, you know how it is. Custody sergeants don’t really like to be hurried, do they?” He starts pacing, an angry half-smile half-grimace on his face. “Just formalities: fingerprints, charge sheet; and I’ve gotta be in Magistrates Court on Tuesday.”

“What?” I said absently.

“Me, Sherlock, in court on Tuesday. They’re givin’ me an ASBO!” his voice putting on a rough London accent.

“Good. Fine.” I said still not paying attention.

“Sherlock.” I heard Eiric voice say softly but sharp. She got up and walked over to John, placing a hand on his arm. “Would you like me to call Mycroft, John?” I froze in shock, the air grew tense.

“How do you know Mycroft, Eiric?” John asked her. She looked in-between us.

“I . . . I helped the government a lot when I was younger, so they owe me a lot. I guess you could say they think I’m government property most my life, really. Mycroft was the only one to help me out of everyone there, so I owe him a lot. He was so nice to me, never asked for anything from me but to deduce people for him, saying I reminded him of his baby brother.” I told them bring out my phone and sending a text to Mycroft, getting a reply instantly back. “There all done, John, you don’t have to go to court now.” I just stayed in my place not really that Mycroft of all people, could be nice without asking for anything in return.

“This symbol I still can’t place it.” I said turning and putting the book down, I walked over to Eiric and John, who was just starting to take his jacket off and I pulled the jacket back onto his shoulders. “No, I need you to go to the police station. . . .” John looked indignant as I turned him around and steer him towards the door.

“Oi, oi, oi.”

“. . . ask about the journalist.”
“Oh, Jesus!” he said exasperated. I grabbed Eiric’s coat and helped her into before grabbing my own from the back of the door.

“His personal effects will have been impounded. Get hold of his diary, or something that will tell us his movements.” We go downstairs and out onto the street. “Gonna go and see Van Coon’s P.A. If we retrace their steps, somewhere they’ll coincide.” I grabbed Eiric’s hand and walked off down the street.

TPSH

John pov

I see a taxi coming around the corner and hail it. As it pulled over to the curb, I see an Oriental-looking woman with dark hair and wearing dark sunglasses standing on the other side of the road and taking a photograph. Her camera is aimed in my direction. I bend to the taxi driver’s window.

“Scotland Yard.”

“Right.” I get into the back of the taxi and glance around to the other side of the road as I sit down. There’s no sign of the woman.

TPSH

The Bank Sherlock pov

We were standing in Van Coon’s office by his personal assistant, Amanda, who was looking at an online calendar.

“Flew back from Dalian Friday. Looks like he had a back-to-back meeting with the sales team.”

“Can you print me up a copy?” I asked.

“Sure.” She nodded.

“What about the day he died? Can you tell us where he was?” she looked at the screen, “Sorry. Bit of a gap.” The calendar shows no entries for Monday 22nd. I looked away, frustrated.

“I have all his receipts.” She realized.

TPSH

Scotland Yard John pov

Dimmock was standing at a desk, rummaging through a box of Brian Lukis’ possessions. I stand on the other side.

“Your Friends . . .” he began.

“Listen, whatever you say, I’m behind you one hundred percent . . . well on Sherlock anyway.”

“. . . he’s an arrogant sod and she’s the same if not worst, truthfully.”

“Well, that was mild! People says a lot worse than that.” I said a bit shock. Dimmock hands me the diary.

“This is what you wanted, isn’t it? The journalist’s diary?” I take the diary and flick through it,
opening it at a page which had been bookmarked with a boarding pass to Dalian DLC to London LHR on Zhuang Airlines.

TPSH

The Bank Sherlock pov

Amanda had spread out Van Coon’s receipts on her desk.

“What kind of a boss was he, Amanda? Appreciative?” I asked her.

“Um, no, that’s not a word I’d use. The only things Eddie appreciated had a big price tag.” I knelted down on the floor to give myself an easier access to the receipts.

“Did you know your bank looks more like a nightclub then an actually bank, Amanda?” I heard Eiric say from where she was standing in the corner by the door. Amanda gave her a dirty look, Eiric shrugged making me chuckle a bit realizing that she agreed with my earlier thought of the bank. I was taking off my gloves when I see a pump-action bottle of luxury hand lotion at the back of the desk.

“Like that hand cream. He bought that for you, didn’t he?” she fiddled nervously with a pin in her hair, she looked at me in surprise. I shuffled through the paperwork and picked up a receipt from a licensed taxi. It was dated 22 march 2013 and timed at 10:35, the receipt is for 18.50. I hand it up to Amanda.

“Look at this one. Got a taxi from home on the day he died. Eighteen pounds fifty.”

“That would get him to the office.”

“Not rush hour; check the time. Mid-morning. Eighteen would get him as far as . . .”

“The West End. I remember him saying” She said. I found a London unground ticket with the same date on it and issued at “Piccadilly” I hand it to Amanda.

“Underground. Printed at one in Piccadilly.”

“So he got a tube back to the office. Why would he get a taxi into town and then the tube back?” I was still going through the receipts,

“Because he was delivering something heavy. Didn’t want to lug a package up the escalator.”

“Delivering?”

“To somewhere near Piccadilly Station. Dropped the package, delivered it and then. . .” I found another receipt and stand up as I looked at it. It’s from the Piazza Espresso Bar Italiano. I looked over to Eiric, “. . . stopped on his way. He got puckish.”
Chapter 10

London streets Eiric pov

Sometime later Sherlock and I have found the espresso bar. Sherlock is talking to himself out loud as we pass it.

“So you bought your lunch from here en route to the station, but where were you headed from? Where did the taxi drop you . . .?” Sherlock was spinning around as he was walking and bumps into someone approaching from behind who was distracted and not looking where they were going. I notice it was John, who was engross with Lukis’ diary. Sherlock grunts as they collided. John looks up surprised to see us here.

“Right.”

“Eddie Van Coon brought a package here the day he died – whatever was hidden inside that case. I’ve managed to piece together a picture using scraps of information. . .”

“Sherlock . . .”

“. . . credit card bills, receipts. He flew back from China, then he came here.”

“Sherlock . . .”

“Somewhere in this street; somewhere near. I don’t know where, but . . .” John pointed to the other side of the road,

“That shop over there.” Sherlock looks over at the shop, then looking back to John, frowning,

“How can you tell?”

“Lukis’ diary. He was here too. He wrote down the address.” He turns and heads towards the shop.

“Oh.” I grabbed Sherlock’s hand, with a silent giggle; I followed after John, with Sherlock trailing behind me, pouting.

We walk into the touristy shop which consists largely of decorative cats which are sitting up on their hind legs with one front paw. Some of the paws are waving back and forth. The shop reminded me of Umbridge office that was full of cat things, I gave a violent shudder making Sherlock look at me with a hint of worry in his eyes. I gently squeezed his hand signaling I was fine. John had greeted the female Chinese shop keeper politely.

“You want lucky cat?”

“Ten pound. Ten pound!”

“No.” John smiled awkwardly.

“I think your wife, she will like!”

“No, thank you.” He walked over to one of the tables which has small ceramic painted handle-less
cups on it. Sherlock was examining a rack displaying clay statues, and I just looking around disinterestedly. John had picked up one of the cups and turns it over to look at the price tag. I could see his hand start to tremble at what he saw on it. “Sherlock. Eiric.” Sherlock had picked up one of the statues, puts it back on the self and taking us over to John. “The label there.” John told us.

“Yes, I see it.” Sherlock stated to him.

“It’s exactly the same as the cipher.” I said staring at it. John clears his throat awkwardly as he puts the cup back. Sherlock lifts his head as it all starts to make sense to him. Shortly afterwards we left the shop and were walking down the street.

“It’s an ancient number system! Hangzhou. These days only street traders use it. Those were numbers written on the wall at the bank and at the library.” He drags us over to a greengrocer’s which has some of its ware on display outside the shop. The various boxes have handwritten signs on them giving the names of the vegetables in both Chinese and English, and underneath is the cost of that particular item in both Hangzhou and English. He picks up various signs, checking the symbols.

“Numbers written in an ancient Chinese dialect.” John had spotted a sign with the upside down eight and slash above it and its English equivalent beneath it.

“It’s a fifteen! What we thought was the artist’s tag – it’s a number fifteen.”

“And the blindfold – the horizontal line? That was a number as well.” Sherlock showed John and me a price tag which has the almost-horizontal line at the top, and “1” written under it. Sherlock was grinning triumphantly, ‘He should smile more, and it makes him look even handsomer.’ “The Chinese number one, John and Eiric.”

“We’ve found it!” Sherlock turns and walks away. I stayed with John for a minute looking at the numbers, frowning before walking away and catching up with Sherlock and intertwine our fingers together. John smiles and turns to follow us, without us knowing, he sees the same woman who was taking a photograph outside 221 standing nearby. Still wearing her dark sunglasses, she again has her camera raised and pointed towards him as she takes a picture. Someone walks across her, obscuring his view of her for a moment, and by the time the person passed, she had vanished. John frowns, then follows after his friends.

Shortly after that, we were staking out the tourist shop, which we now saw is called The Lucky Cat, sitting at a table in the window of the restaurant that was opposite of the shop. Sherlock was writing the two Hangzhou numbers and their English equivalents onto a paper napkin. I sat right by Sherlock, as John sat opposite of us, also writing notes.

“Two men travel back from China. Both head straight for the Lucky Cat emporium. What did they see?” he asked us.

“It’s not what they saw; it’s what they brought back in those suitcases.” I explain to him. He looks to me,

“And you don’t mean duty free.” A waitress brings over a plate of food and puts it down in front of John. “Thank you.”

“Think about what Sebastian told us; about Van Coon – about how he stayed afloat in the market.” Sherlock told John.

“Lost five million . . .”
“. . . made it back in a week.” I looked towards Sherlock with a light frown.

“Mmm.” Was John reply.

“That’s how he made such easy money.”

“He was a smuggler. Mmm.” He took a mouthful of his food.

“A guy like him – it would have been perfect. Business man . . .”

“Mmm-hmm.” I sighed at John.

“. . . making frequent trips to Asia. And Lukis was the same, a journalist writing about China.”

“Mmm.” I slammed a hand down on the table startling both of them, making them turn their attention towards me. I was glaring at the wall in the back of the restaurant, then stood up making my chair violently crash into the wall and walked out of the building. I walked over to the other side of the street and just stood there staring at the shop. I was suddenly bumped into, falling to the ground before an arm caught me around the waist.

“Sorry, Eiric.” I froze at the voice and snapped my head in it direction, my Avada Kedavra green eyes connecting with melted mercury eyes and snowy white hair.

“Draco!” I gasped, pushing myself away from him, stumbling a bit. He smirked, I swallowed harshly looking back in Sherlock and John direction seeing them stare at me but still talking. “You’re supposed to be in Azkaban.” I said to him taking a step away from him when he moved closer to me. He chuckled darkly,

“Yes, supposed being the key word. I had some . . . help from a dear friend of ours, love.” He grabbed my face lightening fast with his hand, pulling me close to him then wrapping his arms around me in a vice grip. “Eiric, love, watch your back, because danger is coming to you and your little family, my love.” He whispered in my ear.

“Why are you doing this?” I yelled at him as I struggled to get out of his arms.

“Cause I like to see you dance, my heart.” He let go of me, and walked off just as Sherlock and John came over to me. Sherlock was the first to reach me and took me into his arms.

“Eiric, who was he?” I just shook my head at him, not wanting to believe that Draco was back and after me again. Sherlock sighed, I looked up at him and suddenly instincts took over, I threw my arms around his waist, hugging him tightly. I felt him tense for a second before returning the gesture. I let go after a minute, and went back to normal.

“What are you guys doing?” I asked them. Sherlock just walked over to a flat door and bend down to look at a Yellow Pages. He ran a finger over the wet pages,

“It’s been here since Monday.” He straightens up and presses a doorbell. He only waited couple of seconds, before he looks to his right and heads off in that direction. There’s an alleyway beside the flat and we walked down the alley.

“No one’s been in that flat for at least three days.”

“Could’ve gone on holiday.”

“D’you leave your windows open when you go on holiday?” Sherlock had reached the rear of the building and looks up to see a cantilevered metal fire escape above his head. Taking a short run at
it, he jumps up and grabs the end, pulling it down towards him until it touches the ground, then runs up the steps towards the open window of the flat. As he reaches the top, the ladder swings back to the horizontal position behind him.

“Sherlock!”

TPSH

Inside the flat Sherlock pov

I climbed in through the window into the kitchen, then cried out in muffled alarm as I almost knocked a vase of flowers off the table beside the window. Catching it before it hits the floor, I look down and see a wet patch on the rug in the precise place where the vase would have hit if it had reached the floor. Straightening up, I call out of the open window, unaware that John and Eiric are no longer there.

“Someone else had been here.” Putting the vase back onto the table, talking too quietly for John or Eiric to hear even if they were still by. “Somebody else broke into the flat and knocked over the vase just like I did.” I look around the kitchen, the bend down to the washing machine and open it. I took out an item of Soo Lin’s unmentionables, I sniffed it and grimace. I could hear the doorbell go off. I put the item back into the washing machine and pushed the door closed, then reached for a tea towel hanging up nearby.

“D’you think maybe you could let us in this time?” I heard John say from outside. I put the tea towel back after finding it was still dry. “Can you not keep doing this, please?” I take out a pint of milk out of the fridge and sniff the contents, putting the bottle back into the fridge, I call out,

“I’m not the first.”

“What?”

“Somebody’s been in here before me!” I said a bit louder. I took out my pocket magnifier from my coat and look down to where a foot has rucked up the rug, leaving an impression of the intruder’s shoe. “Size eight feet.” I pushed through the beaded curtain between the kitchen and the bedroom/living room, still examining the rug, “Small, but . . . athletic.”

I straightened up looking thoughtful.

TPSH

John pov

“I’m wasting my breath.” I walked a couple paces away from the door, glaring around in annoyance, then turns back and rings the doorbell again.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I picked up a framed photograph of two young Chinese children – a boy and a girl. A fresh handprint is on the glass where someone has pressed their fingers against the image of the girl. I’m holding my magnifier over the fingerprints as I gently run my gloved fingers along them to gauge the size.

“Small, strong hands.” Closing the magnifier, I put the photograph down again. “Our acrobat.” I
frown, looking around. “But why didn’t he close the window when he left . . .?” I stop as I realized the truth and roll my eyes at myself. “Oh, stupid. Stupid. Obvious. He’s still here.” I look around the room and see an ornately decorated free-standing folding screen shielding the bed. Putting my magnifier into my pocket, I walk carefully towards it and then grabs the edge of the screen and pulls it back. Two stuffed toys stare back at me in startled terror from the bedside table. Someone quickly wraps a long white silk scarf around my neck from behind and bundles me to the floor on my back, strangling me. I grab at the scarf, trying to relieve the pressure on my neck but the assailant – dressed all in black – continues to throttle me.

TPSH

John pov

“Any time you want to include us.”

TPSH

Sherlock pov

“John! Eiric!” I said faintly as I struggle against my attacker.

“Sherlock?” I could hear Eiric ask, her voice very faint.

TPSH

John pov

I straightened up again and shake my head in frustration. “No, I’m Sherlock Holmes and I always work alone because no one else can compete with . . .” pacing around in irritation before storming back to the letterbox, flipping it open and shouting through it. “. . . my MASSIVE INTELLECT!” I dropped the letterbox again.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I’m starting to lose consciousness. As my struggles become weaker and my hands fall clear of the scarf, the attacker releases his grip. I lie still on the floor, my eyes half closed, the assailant shoves something into my coat pocket, then gets up and runs off. I start to choke and cough, tugging the scarf from around my neck and rolling onto my front before getting up onto my hands and knees. As the attacker disappears through the beaded curtain into the kitchen, I groan and pull my own scarf loose, gasping as I get my breath back. After breathing a little better, I sit up on my heels, rummage in my coat pocket and pull out a black origami paper flower. I look at it for a moment, then stumble to my feet, wobbling for a moment before pulling myself together and heading for the stairs. A few moments later I open the front door downstairs. John makes an exasperated sound and glares at me and Eiric looks at me worried. When I speak, my voice is croaky.

“The, uh, milk’s gone off and the washing’s starting to smell. Somebody left here in a hurry three days ago.” Eiric moved to my side once I started to speak the worry in her eyes intensifying.

“Somebody?”

“Soo Lin Yao. We have to find her.” I nodded, my voice still rough. I look down and bend to pick something off the floor.
“But how, exactly?” John asked.

“Maybe we could start with this.” Holding out the envelope. I walk out, closing the door behind me, grab Eiric’s hand and head off down the road, John following us.

“You’ve gone all croaky. Are you getting a cold?”

“I’m fine.” I said coughing.

TPSH

National Antiquities Museum Eiric pov

Sherlock was pacing around a display area as he interviewed Andy.

“When was the last time that you saw her?” Sherlock asked him.

“Three days ago, um, here at the museum.” Sherlock focuses briefly on a glass case showing some clay teapots. Most of them are dull but one is shiny. “This morning they told me she’d resigned just like that.” Sherlock looks at another case containing some jade figurines, and then at a piece of artwork. “Just left her work unfinished.” Sherlock turned to him,

“What was the last thing that she did on her final afternoon?” Andy brought us to the basement archive, and turns the lights on as he leads us in.

“She does this demonstration for the tourist – a-a tea ceremony. So she would have packed up her things and just put them in here.” He leads us to the open stack and starts turning a handle at the end to widen the gap. John goes to stand behind him and looks into the stack but Sherlock and I have noticed something more interesting in the shadows further along the room. We walk closer to it. On a stand is a life-sized sculpture of a nude woman and yellow paint has been spray painted across the front of it. An almost horizontal straight line goes across the eyes, and over the body has been sprayed the open upside down eight with the almost horizontal line above it. Andy and John turn and see what we’ve have found.

Outside the museum, the night has fallen as we come out.

“We have to get to Soo Lin Yao.” Sherlock told us.

“If she’s still alive.” John said being pessimistic.

“Sherlock!” we turn as Raz runs over to join us.

“Oh, look who it is.” I rolled my eyes at John.

“Found something you’ll like.” Raz said to Sherlock. He trots off, Sherlock and I immediately follow and John heads off after us a little more slowly. The four of us are now walking across Hungerford Bridge, heading towards the south side of the river. We continued onwards, unaware that the Chinese woman with the dark sunglasses was watching us. Raz leads us across the undercroft.

“If you wanna hide a tree in the middle of a forest, this is the best place to do it, wouldn’t you say? People would just walk straight past, not knowing, unable to decipher the message.” Raz points to a particular area on the heavily graffiti walls. “There. I spotted it earlier.” Amongst all the other paint there are slashes of the yellow paint forming Chinese symbols. Some of them are already partially painted over by other artists’ tags and pictures.

“They have been in here. And that’s the exact same paint?”
“Yeah.”

“John, Eiric, if we’re going to decipher this code, we’re gonna need to look for more evidence.” We split up, John going by himself and me going with Sherlock, and began searching. Sherlock and I walk along the end of a rail way line and find an abandoned spray can on the tracks. Soon John is running back to us.

“Answer your phones! I’ve been calling you! I’ve found it.” He turns around again and the three of us run off into the night. We’re at a wall, as John leads Sherlock and I towards it, his mouth drops open in surprise. “It’s been painted over!” Sherlock shines his flashlight around the area as John continues to stare at the wall.

“I don’t understand. It-it was here . . .” he stumbled backwards, “. . . ten minutes ago. I saw it. A whole load of graffiti!”

“Somebody doesn’t want me to see it.” Sherlock turns and grabs the side of John’s head in both hands, ‘This is why people think they’re a couple.’

“Hey, Sherlock, what are you doing . . .?”

“Shhh, John, concentrate. I need you to concentrate. Close your eyes.”


“What are you doing?!” Sherlock starts to slowly spin them around on the spot, staring intently into John’s eyes.

“I need you to maximize your visual memory. Try to picture what you saw. Can you picture it?”

“Yeah.”

“Can you remember it?” their turning was starting to make me dizzy.

“Yes, definitely.”

“Can you remember the pattern?”

“Yes!”

“How much can you remember it?”

“Well, don’t worry . . .” Sherlock was still spinning them,

“Because the average human memory on visual matters is only sixty-two percent accurate.”

“Yeah, well, don’t worry – I remember all of it.”

“Really?” Sherlock asked in disbelief.

“Yeah, well at least I would . . .” John pulls himself free, “. . . if I can get to my phone!” he rummages in his pocket, “I took a photograph.” He takes out his phone and pulls up a flash photo he has taken of the wall which shows all the symbols clearly. He gives the phone to Sherlock, who takes it and looks embarrassed as John sighs and turns away, I was laughing into my hand as I followed John.

The photograph was blown up into smaller sections and then printed out and were stuck around the
mirror once we got back to 221B. The numerical value of each symbol had been written against it. Sherlock, was once again, standing by the fireplace looking at the pictures closely, spotting a patter.

“Always in pairs, John, Eiric.” John was sitting at the dining table his back to the fireplace and his head propped in his hand. I was sitting on the couch fishing my book from this morning. Sherlock’s voice had woke him up. John blinks and turns his head, squinting at Sherlock.

“Hmmm?”

“Numbers come with partners.” John gazed around the flat blankly,

“God, I need to sleep.”

“Why did he paint it so near the tracks?” I asked Sherlock getting up from the couch.

“No idea.” John answered tiredly.

“Thousands of people pass by there every day.” I said to them, confused.

“Just twenty minutes.” John propped his head in his hand again.

“Of course.” Sherlock looked at a photo of the full wall, and now smiles triumphantly. “Of course! He wants information. He’s trying to communicate with his people in the underworld. Whatever was stolen, he wants it back.” He runs his finger over the symbols. “Somewhere here in the code.”

He pulls three pictures off the wall and turns towards the door. “We can’t crack this without Soo Lin Yao.”

“Oh, good.” John, tiredly gets up to follow us.

TPSH

Museum Sherlock pov

We were back with Andy in the same display room we had met him in earlier.

“Two men who travelled back from China were murdered, and their killer left them messages in the Hangzhou numerals.”

“Soo Lin Yao’s in danger. Now, that cipher – it was just the same pattern as the others. He means to kill her as well.”

“Look, I’ve tried everywhere: um, friends, colleagues. I-I don’t know where she gone. I mean, she could be thousand miles away.” I saw Eiric had turned her head away in exasperation, but now her gaze focuses on the nearby glass case displaying the teapots.

“Eiric, what are you looking at?” John asked her. She points at the case as she walks towards it, “Tell me more about those teapots.” She asked Andy.

“Th-the pots were her obsession. Um, they need urgent work. If-if they dry out, then the clay can start to crumble. Apparently you have to just keep making tea in them.” Eiric bends down to look more closely at the self,

“Yesterday, only one of those pots was shining. Now there are two.”

TPSH
Later, elsewhere in the museum, fingers reach through the gaps in a large grating at the bottom of a wall and carefully push the grating outwards. Moments after that, a shadow moves across the dimly lit display room, and a hand reaches into the glass case to take out one of the not-shiny teapots. The shadow moves away again. Not long afterwards, Soo Lin is in an almost-dark restoration room, pouring tea into the teapot on the desk in front of her. She picks up the lid and carefully strokes it around the rim as, behind her, a very recognizable curly-headed silhouette appears on the other side of a window in the door. Unaware of this, she picks up the teapot and pours some of the liquid into a pair of cups. Pouring more of the tea into the tray on which the cups are standing, she swills the teapot around to cover the outside with the drips. A figure steps up beside her.

Eiric pov.

“Fancy a biscuit with that?” before Sherlock could finish his sentence, she gasps in fright and turns towards him, the teapot dropping from her terrified fingers. Sherlock reacted instantly and bends his knees to reach down and catch the teapot before it hits the floor. He looks up at her. “Centuries old. Don’t wanna break that.” He slowly straightens up and hands the teapot back to her. As she takes it, he reaches out and flicks a switch on the desk, turning on the light underneath the surface. Showing John and I behind him, he smiles slightly at her. “Hello.” John and Soo Lin sat on stools on opposite sides of the table. Sherlock and I were standing at the end of the table.

“You saw the cipher. Then you know he is coming for me.” She spoke while staring at the desk.

“You’ve been clever to avoid him so far.” I said to her, laying a hand on one of hers. She looks up at me,

“I had to finish . . . to finish this work. It’s only a matter of time. I know he will find me.” I nodded to her,

“Who is he? Have you met him before?” she nodded. “When I was a girl, living back in China. I recognize his . . . ‘signature’.”

“The cipher?” I asked her.

“Only he would do this. Zhi Zhu.” I stared at her starting to understand what she was saying.

“Zhi Zhu?” John questioned.

“The Spider.” Sherlock translated. Putting her right foot up on her opposite knee, Soo Lin unlaces her shoe and takes it off. On the underside of her heel is a black tattoo of a lotus flower inside a circle.

“You know this mark?” I nodded quietly.

“Yes. It’s the mark of a Tong.” Sherlock answered her.

“Hmmm?” I sighed at John,

“Ancient crime syndicate based in China.” I told him. He nods his head understanding and turns back to Soo Lin.

“Every foot soldier bears the mark; everyone who hauls for them.”

“Hauls?” She looks up at John, his eyes widen. “Y-you mean you were a smuggler?” Soo Lin lowers her gaze again and puts her shoe back on.
“I was fifteen. My parents were dead. I had no livelihood; no way of surviving day to day expect to work for the bosses.”

“Who are they?” Sherlock asked her.

“They are called the Black Lotus. By the time I was sixteen, I was taking thousands of pounds’ worth of drugs across the border into Hong Kong. But I managed to leave that life behind me. I came to England.” She smiles a little, “They gave me a job here. Everything was good; a new life.”

“Then he came looking for you.” I stated.

“Yes.” She swallows before continuing tearfully. “I had hoped after five years maybe they would have forgotten me, but they never really let you leave. A small community like ours – they are never very far away.” She wipes tears from her face. “He came to my flat. He asked me to help him to track down something that was stolen.”

“And you’ve no idea what it was.” John asked her.

“I refused to help.” John leans forward,

“So you knew him well when you were living back in China?” she nodded.

“Oh yes.” She looks up at Sherlock and me, “He’s my brother. Two orphans. We had no choice. We could work for the Black Lotus, or starve on the streets like beggars. My brother has become their puppet, in the power of the one the call Shan – the Black Lotus general. I turned my brother away. He said I had betrayed him. Next day I came to work and the cipher was waiting.” Sherlock lays the photographs on the table,

“Can you decipher these?” Soo Lin leans forward and points to the mark beside Sir William’s portrait.

“These are numbers.”

“Yes, I know.” Soo Lin points to another photograph. “Here, the line across the man’s eyes – it’s the Chinese number one.” Sherlock points to the first photo, “And this one is fifteen. But what’s the code?”

“All the smugglers know it. It’s based upon a book . . .” just then almost all the lights go out. Soo Lin looks up in dread, I squeezed her hand tightly in mine. Sherlock straightens up and looks around sharply. “He’s here. Zhi Zhu. He has found me.” She said softly, face full of terror. Sherlock takes off, racing across the room. John calls to him softly but urgently.

“Sh-Sherlock. Sherlock wait!” Sherlock charges out of the room. John turns to Soo Lin and me, grabbing her hand. “Come here.” He pulls us across the room towards another room, “Get in. get in!”

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I race across a large open foyer with a staircase at each end and a balcony surrounding the floor above. I stop in the middle of the foyer and look around. From my right, a figure runs across the balcony and fires a pistol at me. I turn and run in the opposite direction, flinging myself to the floor and sliding along it to take shelter behind a statue on a low plinth. The figure fires a couple more times as I scramble behind the plinth.
TPSH

Eiric pov

In the restoration room, John looks up at the sound of gunfire, then turns to Soo Lin and me.

“I have to go and help. Bolt the door after me.” He hurries off. Soo Lin’s and my face fill with dread.

TPSH

John pov

I make my way cautiously out into the foyer, then duck and run for cover as more gunshots ring out. The figure runs back across the balcony and disappears from view. Sherlock comes out from behind the plinth and hares across the foyer and up the stairs. I peer out from behind a column at the other end of the foyer as Sherlock reaches the top of the stairs and tears around the corner.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I pelt into another display room and the gunman runs out of cover behind me and fires towards me again. I duck behind a display cabinet displaying some ancient skulls as the figure fires again.

“Careful!” the gunman fires again. “Some of those skulls are over two hundred thousand years old! Have a bit of respect!” I paused for a couple of seconds, breathing heavily. There are no more gunshots. “Thank you!” there’s no more sounds from the gunman. After a moment I frowned, then carefully peer through the glass case.

TPSH

Eiric pov

I saw Soo Lin look up anxiously, then there’s a drum beat sounding through the room and then it stops. Soo Lin takes a shaky breath and was about to slowly crawl out of our hiding spot when I stopped her.

“Let me check it out first, okay?” I whispered to her, and slowly stood up from my spot. I took my gun out of my inner coat pocket, holding it in front of me. I slowly walked around the room for a few minutes, I put my gun down, and about to call out to Soo Lin that it was okay to come out. I was attacked from behind, the person tried to choke me with a scarf but I spun out of reach. I threw a fist at the man, hitting him in the nose. He groans in pain but lands a punch to my eye and then stomach. I doubled over in slight pain before he kicks me in the side of the head, making me hit a corner of a desk and blacking out.

TPSH

No one pov

Soo Lin crawls to the edge of the table and peers over the top of it before slowly standing up. Behind her, a Chinese man a little older than her silently walks up and stops just behind her, staring at her intently. As if sensing him, she turns slowly around, and then gazes at him with affection as she recognizes him. She softly greets him by name.
“Liang.” She hesitates for a moment. “Big brother.” She reaches out and cups his face with her hand. “Please ...”

TPSH

John pov

I continue to search for Sherlock, a single gunshot rings out in the distance. I turn towards the sound, my face filling with appalled horror as I realize where the shot has come from.

“Oh my God.” I race back to the stairs and run down them, across the foyer and back to the restoration room. Entering the room, I slow down and looked around cautiously for any sign of the gunman. Carefully making my way across the room, I stop and then groan in despair and guilt at the sight which greets me. Soo Lin lies dead on the table, her outstretched arm revealing a black origami lotus flower in her upturned hand. I, soon, realized that Eiric wasn’t anywhere in sight. I looked all around, till my eyes caught a flash of fiery- orange hair.

“EIRIC!” I yelled as I ran over to her. She was laying on her back, her face laying to the left with her left hand close to her face, her right laying across her stomach. Her right leg laying over left one tilted to the left. I kneeled beside her, looking over the damages she had gotten.

“John! Eiric!” I heard Sherlock calling out our names, till he finally found us. I turned to look up at him when I heard his footsteps stop. What I saw will forever be burned into my eyes. Sherlock stood a foot away from us, eyes wide, mouth gaping open, emotions clashing violently with one another but the one emotion that stuck out the most was Fear. He, then, ran the rest of the foot and slide to his knees, pushing me to the side. He picked up Eiric upper half of her body cradling her to his chest and shoulder with his left arm and placing his right hand to her face, caressing her cheek in the most gentleness way possible, that I never knew he was capable of doing.

“Eiric?” he tilted her head up a bit, “Eiric, please, wake up.” He spoke softly to her, choking up a bit. I could see the tears he was holding back, that’s when it really hit me. Sherlock cared about Eiric and Teddy after knowing them only a few months, he may of even be falling for Eiric. I saw her fingers start to twitch a bit, soon her eyes were fluttering open, her green eyes slightly glazed over.

“Sherlock?” he looked down at her, a beaming smile gracing his lips, a tear falling from one of his eyes. Eiric raised a hand to his cheek resting it there, wiping the tear away with her thumb. She smiled at him. Sherlock placed a kiss to her forehead, holding her close.

“Eiric, what happened?” I asked her, she looked at me,

“Zhi Zhu attacked me, when I went to see if it was okay for us to come out. I landed a hit to his nose, but he hit me in the eye, stomach, and then kicked me in the side of the head, making me hit that desk and blacking out. Is Soo Lin?” she told us, when she asked about Soo Lin, I shook my head. I heard her gasp sharply, she turned her head into Sherlock chest, and we could tell she was crying from her shaking shoulders.

“We need to get you to the Hospital, Eiric.” I said to her getting up. Sherlock followed picking her up bridle style.

“No! No, hospitals, please, I just wanna go home. I have things we could use.” She looked at us pleadingly.

“Okay.”
Once we got to the flat, she told us to take her into her flat, to her bedroom. When we got to her bedroom, Sherlock sat her on the bed.

“Sherlock, over there on the vanity, is a dark cherry wood box with roses on it. Could you bring it over here to me, please?” Sherlock did as she asked, but held it out in front of her not letting her take a hold of it. She gave us a weak smile.

“Open it, Sherlock.” And he did. I heard him gasp in shock and moved over to see what was inside it. What I saw was a multitude of colourful bottles of liquid. She took out three different bottles and chugged them down. We watch as her wounds and bruises healed in moments, like magic. She looked at us with a scared, uncertain look.

“Sherlock, John, I’m a witch.”
Chapter 11

221B Eiric pov

“Sherlock, John, I’m a witch.” After I said this out loud, I watched their faces closely; John’s expression was stupefied and shock and Sherlock’s... was that curiosity or suspiciousness? I took it as a good sign so far, at least they weren’t calling me ‘Freak’... yet.

“A what?” John was making a wonderful fish impression, I looked away; my face falling just a bit. I heaved a big sigh, before I started to explain, everything.

“A witch, John. I should probably start from the beginning, yes?” I got up from my bed, walking pass the kitchen but flicking my wrist to start a pot of tea and make a tray for it, with condiments. The boys followed, John gasping in surprise at the kitchen.

“Impressive, Eiric.” I came to an abrupt halt when Sherlock spoke.

“I-I... Thank you, Sherlock.” I was actually stuttering, I haven’t stuttered in years.

“You’re very much welcome, Eiric.” I watched as he sat on the royal blue couch, John, soon coming to join him. I was startled out of my trance, when the tea pot whistled. With another flick of my wrist, the tea and tray floated into the living room; onto the coffee table. The tea already made into cups for them. I handed them each a cup and took my own, sitting in the bronze colored armchair. I took a sip of tea, burning my tongue; I sat it back on to the tray and cleared my throat.

“Well... I guess I should start with the day my parents were murdered.” Both of their eyes widen after I said that, I sat up a bit straighter. “It was on October 31 in 1993, I was 15 months old at the time. At the time, I thought my parents were playing a game. There was a prophecy made before I was born, ‘The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... Born to those who have thrice defied him, Born as the seventh month dies... And the Dark Lord will mark her as his equal, But she will have power the Dark Lord knows not... And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies...’ though two babies were born that month, only one was a girl. My parents took me into hiding until that day. My father was the first one to see the man, he turned to my mother told her to take me and run. My father was the first to die, in the foyer. The man came up the stairs to my nursery, where mum was hiding me. She was telling me how sorry she was that she and dad weren’t going to be there for me, that they love me so much and that I was bound to do great things,” I was staring off into the distance, with tears silently rolling down my face. “The man blew the door open, mum stood in front of me, blocking him away from me. He told her to move out of the way, she didn’t. She beg for mercy, told him to take her, not me, not Tristyn, not her baby. He got annoyed and killed her; right in front of me, he then turned on me and tried to kill me but it didn’t work. It back fired on him, turning him into dusk but not dead... Would you like to see a picture of them?” they both nodded, I got up and went to my room. I, first, changed in to my black sport bra and grey sweat pants and grabbed the photo album that held photos of my parents. I went back to the boys, ignoring their shocked looks and sat in the middle of them. I flipped to the page with my parents hugging, spinning in circles. I showed them, gently running my fingers over them, “Everyone says I look exactly like mum with her smarts and temper but my dad’s act of getting in trouble, playing pranks, and my loyalty to my friends and family.” I put the album on the table. “Anyway, I survived the attack only getting a scar on my forehead. I became famous that night, The-Girl-Who-Lived, is what they called me ‘cos nobody has ever survived the killing curse.”
“Killing curse?” I looked over to Sherlock, nodding my head,

“It’s a curse that kills your opponents instantly and painlessly. It’s one of the three unforgivable curses. I was taken to my relatives, the Dursleys, and lived with them until I was seventeen. Petunia, my aunt, was my mums sister, and Aunt Petunia hate mum. She hated anything to do with magic, anything that wasn’t perfect or normal, really. They abuse me, physically, emotionally, and mentally though I never showed it, they also starved me sometimes. Hell, my first bedroom was a cupboard underneath their stairs until I got my Hogwarts letter. That was my salvation but also my damnation.” I chuckle darkly at myself. “Every year there was a crime to solve so to say. I solved them every time with the help of Mione and Ron. Until our seventh year, we became fugitives in our community. The war had started, good vs. bad, light vs. dark, and I was the leader of the light; only seventeen. I lost so many people I cared about in that war, Teddy lost his parents, innocent blood was shed and I was drowning in it. I killed the man in the end, just as the prophecy said, I was never the same after that. The Ministry turned on me again, and Mycroft came in, swooped down and negotiated with them. The Ministry was afraid that I would turn into the next Dark Lady, so Mycroft proposed that I should be put under house arrest with heavy security at all times with Ron and Hermione for three years. I was to see a therapist and take whatever they gave me. So I hired my father-figure, Severus Snape as my therapist. I develop a drinking problem. . . . Well, any kind of substance problem for the first two years, until I scared Teddy, he was about to turn three when it happened. I had overdose and mixed alcohol with it, he found me face down in my room and fire-called Severus. I was hospitalize for a few months before being released. I have never touched the stuff again but I have a drink here and there but always one drink. So, there’s my story, the door is over there if you want to leave and pretend that this has never happen.” I got up from the couch and took the tray back into the kitchen. I started to clean the dishes the Muggle way.

“If you have magic, why are you hand cleaning the dishes?” I turned my head, looking over my shoulder to see John and Sherlock in the archway. I smiled a bit, ‘Their accepting us.’

“I was raised a Muggle before I learned I was a witch.” I said looking back to the dishes.

“Muggle?” that was Sherlock, ‘So curious.’

“Non-magic people that be you, John, and Mrs. H.” I said.

“What about those liquids that you drank?” Sherlock asked.

“Potions. I took a healing draught, blood replenisher, and a pepper up potion.” I turn to them, leaning my hips against the counter with arms cross. Sherlock was studying me, looking for something.

“You said you got a scar but I see none on you?” I closed my eyes,

“Glamour, I wear a glamour.”

“I would like to see.” My eyes snapped open in shock, I stared at him.

“Sherlock!” John yelled at him. I just stared at him then slowly nodded my head. I dropped my glamour and closed my eyes as I heard them gasp in horror. My body was littered in scars. I could feel the tautness of my skin with every little move, the scars pulling my skin. I could feel the burning sensation from the Deathly Hallow mark on my right shoulder blade. I could remember each scar I’ve gotten and the story of how I got it. I open my eyes, only to meet Sherlock’s icy blues in an intense stare.

“What about that one?” Sherlock asked out the blue. I furrowed my eyebrows,
“Which one?” he pointed to his left collarbone, “The one that covers your heart.” Suddenly, I was back in the Forbidden Forest. Standing in front of Voldemort. ‘The-Girl-Who-Lived, comes to die.’ His hissing voice echoed in my head, words dripping down my back, like ice cold water.

“Eiric?” I snapped back into reality.

“Oh that one? I got injured in a game of Quidditch. Dangerous, that game is.” I outright lied to them, so hoping that Sherlock would buy it. And for once luck was on my side tonight. I put my glamour back on starting to feel a bit self-conscious about my scar covered body. I rocked on my feet a bit, feeling awkward and antsy with the silence.

“Please, say something.” I whispered, looking down. I heard steps coming towards me, seeing a shadow of a hand coming towards my face; making me flinch on instinct. The hand hovered for a second before placing a finger under my chin with the thumb on top of it; lifting my chin gently until my eyes met those beautiful blues of the consulting detective.

“Get some sleep, Eiric. It’s been a long day for all of us. Take tomorrow off, spend the day with Ted and Mrs. Hudson. Come John.” I stared wide eye at him. He let go of my chin, following John out of the kitchen before pausing for a minute. “And Eiric, this doesn’t change what we think of you or Ted. I know you’re hiding things from us, but take your time to tell us. Sleep well, Miss. Potter.” I watched him walk out, but before he left my flat, I rushed after him.

“Sherlock! Wait!” he stopped in the front door archway, the door halfway closed behind him, “Yes?” I stood there looking at him, searching to see if what he had said was true, not seeing any falseness; I smiled softly at him.

“Thank you, Sherlock, it means a lot to me.” I leaned up and kissed him on the corner of his mouth, “Sweet dreams, Mr. Holmes.”

TPSH

Scotland Yard Sherlock pov

I could still feel the ghost of Eiric’s lips on mine from the kiss she gave me before I left the flat with John. We were standing a short distance away from Dimmock, who has his back to them and is rummaging through paperwork on his desk trying to ignore us.

“How many murders it is gonna take before you state believing that this maniac’s out there?” Dimmock turns and walks in between us, heading to another desk. John turns around and follows him. “A young girl was gunned down tonight. That’s three victims in a few months. You’re supposed to be finding him.” I walk across in front of John to get nearer to Dimmock. John steps back and walks a few paces away in exasperation.

“Brain Lukis and Eddie Van Coon were working for a gang of international smugglers – a gang called the Black Lotus operating here in London right under your nose.” I leaned closer to Dimmock emphasizing my point. Dimmock finally looks to me.

“Can you prove that?” I straighten up thoughtfully.

TPSH

St. Barts

“What are you thinking: pork or the pasta?” Molly turns in surprise at my voice beside her.

“Oh, it’s you!”
“This place is never going to trouble Egon Ronay, is it?” I fake smiled at her, then nodded to the display. “I’d stick with the pasta. Don’t wanna be doing roast pork – not if you’re slicing up cadavers.” Another fake smile to her. She grins nervously.

“What are you having?”

“Don’t eat when I’m working. Digesting slows me down.”

“So you’re working here tonight? Where’s Eiric? She usually here with you.” She looked around me with a frown on her face. I raised an eyebrow at the tone she used when speaking of her co-worker,

“Need to examine some bodies and Eiric is spending time relaxing with her son and Mrs. Hudson.”

“Some?” I nodded,

“Eddie Van Coon and Brain Lukis.” Molly looks down at her clipboard that she’s holding.

“They’re on my list.” I turned puppy-dog eyes on her.

“Could you wheel them out again for me?”

“Well . . . the paperwork’s already gone through.” She said apologetically. I raised my eyes, frowned noticing something, I pointed to her hair.

“You’ve . . . changed your hair.”

“What?” she asked nervously.

“Th-the style: it’s usually parted in the middle.”

“Yes, well. . .”

“Mmm, it’s good; it, um, suits you better this way.” Once again I wheel out the smile. She returns it, looking both flattered and flustered, then turns away to the display. Instantly my smile drops and I look impatiently at my watch.

TPSH

Morgue

Later, two body bags are lying on adjacent tables. Molly, wearing latex gloves, unzips one of the bags and pulls the sides apart to reveal the face of Brian Lukis. I lead Dimmock into the room.

“We’re just interested in the feet.”

“The feet?” Molly said, frowning.

“Yes. D’you mind if we have a look at them?” smiling at her, I lead Dimmock to the other end of the body bag. Molly follows me and unzips the bag at that end, pulling the sides back to reveal the bottom of Lukis’ feet. On the bottom of the right heel is the Black Lotus tattoo. I straightened up, a smug expression on my face, and walked over to the other table.

“Now Van Coon.” Molly and Dimmock followed me to the second table and she unzips the other body bag. Van Coon has an identical tattoo on his right heel. Dimmock sighs silently. “Oh!” I said sarcastically
“So…” Dimmock started awkwardly.

“So either these two men just happened to visit the same Chinese tattoo parlor or I’m telling the truth.” Dimmock sighed in resignation,

“What do you want?”

“I want every book from Lukis’ apartment and Van Coon’s.”

“Their books?”

TPSH

221B

Once we got back to the Flat, I went straight pass the stairs that went up to our flat.

“Sherlock, where are you going?” John asked me following behind.

“We’re checking on Eiric.” I said to him. John raised an eyebrow,

“Why? She’s a strong independent woman. And I’m sure she wouldn’t want an annoying bloke like you snooping into her business.” I looked straight ahead, giving John the silent treatment and knocked on her door, waiting for her to answer it.

“You like her don’t you, Sherlock?” John asked me. I turned my head slightly to him with a raised eyebrow.

“No, of course not, John, don’t be stupid. Feelings are not an advantage.” I turned back to Eiric’s door knocking again.

“Uh huh. You like her, Sherlock. When you saw her knocked out on the floor last night, you actually cried. Sherlock, you were worried about her, begging her to wake up and when she did you kissed her on the forehead. Kissed, Sherlock, and it wasn’t a platonic kiss either.” I didn’t answer him opting for the silent treatment again. “And you just don’t like her, you like her, like her, Sherlock.” I rolled my eyes at John’s teasing, I knocked again. “Alright, Mr. Cool. I know you like her but I’ll just tease you from my head.” I scoffed at him.

“No! You can’t do this! I won’t let you!” Eiric screamed resounded threw the whole building causing John and I to look at each other. John, then, took a few steps back and ran into the door breaking it open with skills only a military person would have. We ran down the stairs open the other door, only to come to a halt at the scene we saw. There was a man, at least as tall as myself, with greasy black shoulder length hair, a hooked nose, pale shallow complexion, and black eyes. The man was wearing black clothing and a cloak that made him look like an overgrown bat. Eiric looked as if she had been crying, I narrowed my eyes at the man and walked over to Eiric; wrapping an arm around her waist.

“Eiric, are you alright?” I said pulling her close to me and looked her over. I noticed she changed out of her sleepwear, she was now wearing a lavender Kaftan top, black skinny jeans, a pair of light brown Valentin boots, gold hoop earrings, and black frame Hipster glasses. ‘She didn’t tell me she wore glasses. She looks breathtaking. Oh god. John’s right. I do like her, well more than like, I think I’m in love with Eiric.’ She nodded at me with a tight smile.

“I’m fine, Sherlock.” She looked back over to the man, “Sherlock, John, this is my father, Severus Snape. Dad, this is the Consulting Detective Sherlock Holmes and Doctor John Watson.” The man
sneered at us, I gripped my free hand into a fist, *This man is like Mycroft.*

“Pleasure. Eiric, it is the rule of our society.” He narrowed his eyes at John and me, but I had the feeling it was mostly at me.

“Rules are made to be broken, Sev.” Her voice turning vicious, her acid green eyes flashing. He started to pull out a stick from his sleeve, pointing it at John and me. I felt Eiric freeze for a moment before rushing in front of us, stopping Snape in his tracks.

“I trusted them enough to tell them!” she yelled at him.

“Well, I don’t.” Snape huffed and raised the stick again, “I’m only doing this to protect you.” She walked over to him, grabbing his wrist and looked him in the eye.

“Trust me then.” John and I looked watched them for a minute before Snape nodded his head at her, putting the stick up. I walked over to Eiric and Snape, sticking my hand out to the man.

“Sherlock Holmes.” Snape grabbed my hand, giving it a rough shake.

“Severus Snape,” he responded but didn’t let go of my hand. He pulled his arm to him, jerking me closer to him so he could whisper into my ear. “Hurt my daughter or grandson, Mr. Holmes, you’ll have a lot more to worry about than missing memories.” I looked him in the eye, nodding. He released me from his grip and turned to Eiric.

“I’ll be taking my leave, Eiric.” He kissed her on the cheek and started walking to the door.

“Dad, stay please. Teddy would love it if you stayed and visited for a while and I could catch you up on the case that I’m doing? Please.” She was walking behind him, Snape looked over his shoulder to her.

“Very well then.” She gave him a bright smile. She looked over to us,

“Your flat, then, Boys?” I nodded to her, confirming her answer. “Alright then. I’ll go get Teddy from Mrs. H and be up there in a jiff.” She was about to walk up the stairs before she paused, turning to look at the three of us, pointing a finger. “Behave the lot of you.” Then carried on her way to Mrs. Hudson’s flat. The three of us looked to the other before going to John and mine’s flat.

TPSH

We walked into the living room, taking our coats off. John went and sat in his chair, Snape to the couch, and I remained standing. Eiric soon returned with Teddy in tow.

“PAPA!” Teddy let go of his mother’s hand, running into the room and launching himself onto Snapes lap. Said man chuckled lowly and shakes his head.

“Hello, Teddy.” Eiric came to stand by me, her hand slipping into mine.

“Not just a criminal organization; it’s a cult. Her brother was corrupted by one of its leader.”

“Soo Lin said the name.” Eiric said to me. I nodded,

“Yes, Shan; General Shan.”

“We’re still no closer to finding them.” John said from his chair, Eiric turned her head to him,

“Wrong. We’ve got almost all we need to know. She gave us most of the missing pieces.” She waited for him to agree, when he says nothing, she impatiently explains. “Why did he need to visit
his sister? Why did he need her expertise?”

“She worked at the museum.” John replied.

“Exactly.” I said.

“An expert in antiquities. Mmm, of course. I see.” John said finally catching up.


“And the Black Lotus is selling them.” I tilt my head as I get an idea. I’m sitting at the dining table surfing the Crispian’s website for recent auctions, focusing on the auctions of Chinese and other Asian works of art. John and Eiric are leaning over my shoulders to look at the screen.

“Check for the dates,” I said to myself as I skim through the list. I point to a particular auction lot – two Chinese Ming vases. “Here, Eiric. John.”

“Mmm.” Was both their reply.

“Arrived from China a few months ago.” I run my finger down the details and look at the Sale Information at the bottom which includes the statement “Source – Anonymous”. “Anonymous. Vendor doesn’t give his name. Two undiscovered treasures from the East.” I muttered.

“One in Luks’ suitcase and one in Van Coon’s.” Eiric whispered. I move to the Quest search site and type into the search bar. “. . . antiquities sold at auction.” The results list comes up. “Look, here’s another one.” Eiric pointed to it.

“Mmm.” John said to her. “Arrived from China a month before the vases did: Chinese ceramic statue, sold four hundred thousand.” John consults to Luks’ diary as he spotted another entry on the screen.

“Ah, look: a month before that – a Chinese painting, half a million.”

“All of them from an anonymous source. They’re stealing them back in China and one by one they’re feeding them into Britain.” I said.

“Huh.” Was John reply. He looks at Luks’ diary again and then at the printout of Van Coon’s calendar. “And every single auction coincides with Luks or Van Coon travelling to China.”

“So what if one of them got greedy when they were in China. What if one of them stole something?” I asked.

“That’s why Zhi Zhu’s come.” Eiric answered with a slight shudder. Mrs. Hudson knocks on the open door of the living room.

“Yoo-hoo!” we turned to her. “Sorry. Are we collecting for charity, Sherlock?” I looked at her in confusion,

“What?”

“A young man’s outside with crates of books.” Two uniformed police officers are carrying in yet another of the many plastic crates, dumping them in the living room.

“So, the numbers are references.” I stated.
“To books?”

“To specific pages and specific words on those pages.”

“Right, so . . . fifteen and one: that means . . .”

“Turn to page fifteen and it’s the first word you read.”

“Okay. So what’s the message?”

“Depends on the book. That’s the cunning of the book code. Has to be one that they both owned.” I said snarkily to him.

“Sherlock,” I turned my head towards Eiric, she was sitting on the couch with her father and son, reading a book from one of the crates, looking sharply at me. “Behave.” I sighed but nodded in acceptance to her wish. John looks around despairingly at the many, many crates in the room, each either labelled “Van Coon” or “Lukis”.

“Okay, right. Well this shouldn’t take too long, should it?” he goes over to the nearest crate and flips open the lid, sighing tiredly as he sees the amount of books inside. I open another crate and start taking books out, looking over the cover of each one. John takes a handful from his crate and carries them over to the dining table and sits down. Dimmock walks in and holds up an evidence bag to me.

“We found these, at the museum.” He shows the bag to John. It contains the photographs of the cipher which I had been showing to Soo Lin. “Is this your writing?” John takes the bag, “Uh, we hoped Soo Lin could decipher it for us. Ta.” Dimmock nods and turns back to me, stilling unloading my crate.

“Anything else I can do? To assist you, I mean?” without looking up, “Some silence right now would be marvelous.” Eiric let out a giggle as Dimmock stared at me, then looks across to John, who shakes his head apologetically. Dimmock turns and leaves the room, shooting a scowl at Eiric. I take out a book from a crate and realize that I already have one like it from another crate. I put them side by side – hard backed copies of Iain Banks’ “Transition”. Opening one of them to page fifteen, I look at the first word on the page.

“Cigarette.” I slammed the book closed, I put both versions on top of the pile on the desk.

“Ah.” I go back to rummaging through crates as John puts his pile onto the floor and goes back to get more from a crate. Eiric is on her second book, Teddy snuggled into her side as she leans on her father who was writing in a journal. Time moves on and later I find two more identical books, “Freakonomics”, from the two men’s collections. I flick to page fifteen, which is the beginning of a chapter headed “What do Schoolteachers and Sumo Wrestlers have in Common?” moving down to the first word of the chapter, I read it and then look up in frustration. “Imagine.” Again I dump the two books on John’s pile. Time moves on again and now it’s day time. Snape had gone home, promising a sleepy Teddy that he would visit soon after Eiric had taken him to bed. I had removed my jacket, Eiric was on her twentieth book of the day, and John had taken his cardigan off but we were still in the same position since we started. Again time moves on and now the day light is even brighter outside. Books are scattered everywhere over the table and the floor and some of the crates have been shifted about. I was running my fingers through my hair and then look around at the crates and sigh. John’s watch alarm goes off, he looks at it and then out the window as if to confirm that it really is the morning. He sighs tiredly and buries his head in his hands.
The receptionist looks up apologetically at the first person in a queue of patients waiting to speak to her. “I’m sorry to keep you waiting.” Someone in the queue sighs pointedly. “But we haven’t got anything now ‘til next Thursday.” The woman at the front of the queue turns aside with an exasperated look on her face.

“This is taking ages.”

“Er. Sorry.” Sarah had been walking through the waiting room but now turns back and comes over to the reception.

“What’s the point of making an appointment if they can’t even stick to it?”

“Um, what’s going on?” Sarah said to the receptionist.

“That new doctor you hired – he hasn’t buzzed the intercom for ages.” She said quietly to Sarah.

“Let me go and have a word.”

“Yeah, thanks.”

“’Scuse me.” Sarah said to the queue as she walks away.

“Sorry.” The receptionist said to the queue.

“What did she just say?” Sarah goes to John’s consulting room and knocks on the door.

“John?” she waits a few seconds but gets no reply. “John?” when there’s still no reply, she opens the door and looks inside. John is behind the desk, his head propped up on one fist, and is fast asleep and snoring gently.

I come out of my consulting room putting my coat on and walk over to Sarah who is standing behind the reception desk. I clear my throat awkwardly.

“Um, looks like I’m done. I thought I had some more to see.” I said to her.

“Oh, I did one or two of yours.” I looked at her questionably.

“One or two?”

“Well, maybe five or six.” I sigh at myself and looked down.

“I’m sorry. That’s not very professional.”

“No. No, not really.”

“I had, um, a bit of a late one.” I said clenching my hands.

“Oh, right.”
“Anyway, see you.” I turn to walk away.

“So, um, what were you doing to keep you up so late?” I turned back to her.

“Uh, I was, er, attending a sort of book event.”

“Oh. Oh, she likes books does she, your . . . your girlfriend?” she looked down nonchalantly.

“Mmm? No, it wasn’t a date.”

“Good. I mean, um . . . .”

“And I don’t have one tonight.” We smile at each other.

TPSH

221B Eiric pov

Sherlock was still working on the crates but was now trying a different tack. I was now reading my thirtieth book give or take, since we started.

“A book that everyone would own.” Sherlock said out loud but to himself. He turns to his bookcase and pulls down the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, the Holly Bible and a third book I could catch the title of. Putting them on top of the nearest crate, he opens the dictionary to the correct page. “Fifteen. Entry one.” He moves on to the book he took down, turning to page 15 then putting that aside and flicking to page 15 in the Bible. As he closes the book, and John’s bedroom door slams shut, he props his elbows on the crate and runs his fingers through his hair, ruffling it up. ‘I wonder if his hair is as soft as it looks.’ I felt my face lightly blush at that thought.

“I need to get some air. We’re going out tonight.” I looked up from my book to him.

“Actually, I’ve, er, got a date.” John smiles smugly.

“With that Doctor you work with John?” I asked getting up, he nods at me.


“It’s were two people who like each other go out and have fun, Sherlock.” I told him putting books back into crates nice and neat, the mess had started to get to me. Sherlock, looking me, “That’s what I was suggesting.” I looked to him in shock my heart skipping a beat.

“No it wasn’t . . . at least I hope not.” John said awkwardly to Sherlock thinking he was talking to him. I looked away with a light frown on face, ‘Of course.’

“Where are you taking her?” Sherlock sounded rather sulky.

“Er, cinema.” I scoff at that idea.

“Oh, dull, boring, predictable.” I nodded my head agreeing with Sherlock. He takes out a piece of paper from his trouser pocket as he walks across to John, and lowers his head to hide a smug smile before handing it to him. “Why don’t you try this?” John takes it and looks at the paper. “In London for one night only.” John chuckles, then offers the paper back to Sherlock.

“Thanks, but I don’t come to you for dating advice.”
Sherlock and I were following John and Sarah up the slope towards a building. Sherlock had called back the Box Office after John had left and made me go change for a “Date”. So I changed into a Slytherin green high neck tank top, a silver high waist skirt that stopped mid-thigh, panty hose, and black strap on stilettos. I put on a darker shade of red lipstick, smoky eye shadow, and let my hair hang down in nice, smooth curls. Sherlock’s jaw dropping and eyes widening made all the better. We were walking hand and hand close enough to hear them talking.

“Its years since anyone took me to the circus.” I rolled my eyes at the woman.

“Right, yes! Well, it’s . . . a friend recommended it to me. He phoned up.” John was chuckling nervously.

“Ah. What are they, a touring company or something?” they pause and look at a number of large red Chinese lanterns strung outside the hall. “I think they’re probably from China!”

“Yes, I think . . . I think so, yes.” Quietly to himself but still loud enough for Sherlock and I, “There’s a coincidence!” they go inside to the Box Office where the manger is giving a customer her tickets.

“That’s wonderful. Thank you very much.”

“Okay.” The customer turns and walks up the nearby stairs, ‘Rude much.’ John goes over to the office.

“Hi. I have, er, two tickets reserved for tonight.”

“And what’s the name?” John getting his wallet from his jacket, “Er, Holmes.” The manger rifles through the reservations, the turns back to him with an envelope. “Actually, I have four in that name.”

“No, I don’t think so. We only booked two.” John looked at him in shock.

“And then I phoned back and got one for Eiric and myself as well.” John looks up in disbelief and turns to us as we walk over to them, Sherlock looking at Sarah as he offers her his hand.

“I’m Sherlock.” I watch Sarah glance at John momentarily, then turns back to Sherlock and shakes his hand a little nervously. John turns to me in exasperation, I shrugged my shoulders at him.

“Er, hi.”

“Hello.” Sherlock gives her a fake smile, then instantly turns and walks away. I watch him walk off before turning to Sarah and put my hand out to her.

“Ello, I’m Eiric, Sherlock’s date.” I said with a fake happy smile on my face. Sarah shakes my hand.

“Hi, I’m Sarah.” I nodded my head and walk after Sherlock after she let goes of my hand. John, Sherlock and I were standing a few steps up the stairs as people make their way past us. Sarah had gone to the loo. The boys were keeping their voices down as they talked.

“You couldn’t let me have just one night off?”

“Yellow Dragon Circus, in London for one day. It fits. The Tong sent an assassin to England. . .”
“. . . dressed as a tightrope walker. Come on, Sherlock, behave!”

“We’re looking for a killer who can climb, who can shin up a rope. Where else would you find that level of dexterity? Exit visas are scarce in Chins. They need a pretty good reason to get out of that country. Now, all I need to do is have a quick look around the place . . .”

“Fine. You do that; I’m gonna take Sarah for a pint.”

“I need your help.” Sherlock said sternly, I rolled my eyes at their little domestic.

“I do have a couple of other things on my mind this evening!”

“Like what?” John and I blink, staring at him in disbelief.

“You are kidding.”

“What’s so important?”

“Sherlock, I’m right in the middle of a date. D’you want me to chase some killer while I’m trying to . . .” he broke off.

“What?” John losing his patience and talking much louder

“. . . while I’m trying to get off with Sarah!” I closed my eyes,

“Oh, Merlin fuck.” I muttered, Sherlock snapped his head to me being the only to hear it, to see me leaning on the wall, arms crossed with a light frown on my face. Inevitably Sarah comes around the corner at that moment. John turns to her and smiles awkwardly.

“Heyyy.” Rolling his eyes, Sherlock turns and heads up the stairs, grabbing my hand, dragging me after him.

“Ready?”

“Yeah!” they followed us up the stairs. In the performance area there’s a stage on one side of the large hall and the curtains are closed. However, it seems that the stage is not going to be used: a circle of candles has been laid out in the middle of the floor, about thirty feet in diameter. The room is dimly lit. The patrons are gathering around the circle but there are no seats. Apparently the number of tickets has been limited and there’s room for everyone to stand around the circle with a clear view. Sarah and John stand side by side while Sherlock stands behind them with his back to them, looking all around the room and peering up to the ceiling with me standing facing forward beside him. John talks quietly over his shoulder to his flat mate, turning his head away from Sarah so that she can’t hear.

“You said circus. This is not a circus. Look at the size of this crowd. Sherlock, this is . . . art.” John grimaces with distaste.

“This is not their day job.” Sherlock said quietly over his shoulder.

“And what’s wrong with art, John?” I whispered to him.

“No, sorry, I forgot. They’re not a circus; they’re a gang of international smugglers. Nothing wrong with art, Eiric. Do you like art?”

“Yes, but mostly music to dance to. I love violin music the most, it’s beautiful music.” I said to him with a nod, missing Sherlock slight blush on his cheeks.
The performance begins with someone tapping out a rhythm on a tiny hand drum. Sherlock finally turns to face the same way as us and John looks over his shoulder at him and me. Sherlock quirks an eyebrow at him and I lightly smirk at him. An ornately costumed Chinese woman with a heavily painted face – traditionally known as the Opera Singer – walks into the center of the circle and looks imperiously out at the audience before raising a hand in the air. The drummer finishes his riff. The Opera Singer walks across the circle to a large object covered with a cloth which she now pulls back to reveal an antique-looking crossbow on a stand. She picks up a long thick wooden arrow with white feathers at one end and a vicious metal point at the other and shows it to the audience before fitting it into place in the crossbow. Straightening up, she pulls a single small white feather from her headdress and again shows it to the audience. On the rear of the crossbow is a small metal cup and she gently drops the feather into it. Instantly the arrow is released and whizzes across the room. Sherlock’s and I heads whip around to follow its flight while John and Sarah are still gasping at the sound of the arrow’s release. By the time they look round a moment later, the arrow is embedded in a large painted board on the other side of the circle. Sarah turns to John and laughs, dramatically putting her hand over her heart, I scoffed at her. John sends me a light-hearted glare while Sherlock puts his arm around my waist, smiling at me. Instrumental music begins, and the audience applauds as a new character enters the circle, wearing chainmail and an ornate head mask. He holds his arms out to the sides and two men come over and start to attach heavy chains and straps to him, strapping his now-folded arms in front of him and then backing him up against the board and starting to chain him to it.

“Classic Chinese escapology act.” I said softly. John and Sarah turned to me.

“Hmm?” John said.

“The crossbow’s on a delicate string. The warrior has to escape his bonds before it fires.” Sherlock told them. The Opera Singer loads another arrow into the crossbow. The men attach more padlocks and chains and one of them pulls a chain tight, yanking the warrior’s head back against the board. The warrior cries out. The men loop the chains through solid rings attached to the board and secure the warrior, who cries out again. Once they’ve finished, they step away. The music begins building in intensity and cymbals crash unexpectedly. Sarah jumps, clutching at John’s arm. I rolled my eyes at her patheticness.

“Oh, God! I’m sorry!” She laughs in embarrassment, taking his arm with her other hand as well. John laughs with her, then smiles delightedly as she lets go with her more distant hand but continues to hold onto his arm with the other. The Opera Singer picks up a small knife and displays it to the audience.

“She splits the sandbag; the sand pours out; gradually the weight lowers into the bowl.” Sherlock and I spoke softly to them in unison. We looked at each in shock and then smiled at each other, quietly laughing. The Opera Singer does just what Sherlock and I predicted – she reaches up to a small sandbag hanging on a long cable and stabs the knife into the bottom of the sack. Sand begins to pour out, and the warrior repeatedly cries out with effort as he tugs at his chains. The sandbag’s cable is looped over a pulley and a metal ball is attached to the other end. As the sand continues to pour out of the bag the weight lowers towards the bowl at the back of the crossbow. The warrior gets one hand free. John is watching the weight lower, and Sarah now looks nervously at it as it crosses paths with the sandbag on its way up. They turn to look at the warrior as he gets his other hand free and starts tugging at the chains around his neck. The weight is now only a few feet above the bowl and Sarah clings tightly to John’s arm, grimacing. The warrior cries out again as he pulls at his chains and the weight gets ever closer. As it almost reaches the lip of the bowl the warrior loosens the chains around his neck and struggles to free himself. The weight touches the bowl and the arrow streaks across the room. With a split second to spare, the warrior pulls free of the chains and ducks down and the arrow thuds into the board. The warrior cries out triumphantly as the
audience begins to applaud. Sarah gasps in relief.

“Thank God.”

“My God.” The warrior stands up and takes the applause. Still clapping, John looks over his shoulder, but Sherlock and I have vanished. John looks around the hall but can’t see us anywhere.

Sherlock and I have made our way onto the stage, which is being used as the performers’ dressing room. There’s a dressing table with mirrors, free-standing clothes rails and many other items all around. He looks at everything and notices that it’s almost as if another warrior is standing nearby – except that the chainmail and mask are hanging on a stand.

“You know, Sherlock, next time you take me on a fake date, don’t.”

In the performance area, the Opera Singer raises a hand to halt the audience’s applause.

“Ladies and gentlemen, from the distant moonlight shores of the Yangtze River, we present for your pleasure the deadly Chinese bird-spider.” As she walks away, a masked acrobat descends from the ceiling, rolling through the air as the broad red band wrapped around his waist unravels. The audience applauds and he stops a couple of feet above the ground, holding his body parallel to the floor.

“Did you see that?!” John said to Sarah. Descending to the floor, the acrobat removes the band from around his waist and splits it, revealing that it’s made up of two strips of material which he now wraps around his arms and then runs around the circle before taking his weight on the bands, lifting into the air and flying around in a circle several feet above the ground, the red bands soaring out behind him. Sarah and John – and presumably the rest of the audience – stare up open-mouthed.

On the stage, Sherlock goes over to the curtains and parts them slightly to look out at the performance. He looks with interest at the acrobat as he floats around. I stand by the vanity.

“Well, well.” To the right of the stage, a door opens. Sherlock and I run to take cover, pushing through the middle of the clothes on the clothes rail and then quickly spreading the items out again as the Opera Singer comes onto the stage. She goes over to the dressing table and picks up a mobile phone, checking it, but looks round sharply as one of the hangars on the rail falls to the floor. Sherlock and I duck down, I glare at Sherlock for making the noise. The Opera Singer heads towards the rail and Sherlock and I have to crouch even lower but she continues on and leaves the stage. Sherlock looks down and sees a bag on the floor near his feet. Flipping it open, he finds several spray cans inside. He picks up one of them and sees that it is labelled “Michigan”. A yellow band is across the bottom of the can denoting the colour of the paint.

“Found you.” He said in a sing-song voice. I raised an eyebrow at him.

“You did not just sing-song over a can.” He sent a light glare at me as he stood up and pushes through the clothes on the rail and walks over to the mirrors on the dressing table. I followed him, snickering a bit. He bends down and sprays a single almost-horizontal yellow line across one of the mirrors. As we look at it, the warrior’s costume behind us starts to move. Frowning, we turns around and realizes that the costume is no longer on a stand and now has a man inside it. The man charges forward, lashing out at Sherlock repeatedly with a large knife. Sherlock ducks backwards to avoid the blows as the warrior presses forward. I had jumped out of the way looking for something to use. Outside, John and Sarah are still watching the acrobat. On the other side of the circle, the closed curtains on the stage begin to billow in one particular place. John frowns at the curtains for a moment but is then distracted back to the acrobat.
On the stage, Sherlock uses the can he’s holding as a bit of a weapon, using it to block a blow from the warrior, ducking below the next swing of the man’s knife, then clouting the can across the man’s elbow. The warrior responds by kicking him hard in the stomach. I come up behind the warrior and side kick him in the head away from Sherlock, grabbing the warrior’s attention. Outside, the acrobat does a dramatic roll down the bands. The audience applauds. Unnoticed, the curtains billow even more.

The warrior grab me by the throat but drops his knife in the process. I lash the man’s hand away from my neck and then grab the spray paint can off the floor, and sprays the can directly into his masked face before bundling into him and shoving him away firmly. The warrior falls onto his back but uses his momentum to raise his legs and then roll forward and flip to his feet again. He takes a flying leap at me, spinning as he goes and his feet hit me in the chest. I’m propelled backwards through the curtains, straight over the edge of the stage and onto the floor a few feet below. Crashing onto my back, I struggles to get upright again but I’m too winded and can’t move much as the warrior comes flying out of the curtains and onto the floor in front of me. John is on the move straightaway, running towards the warrior as he raises a knife and prepares to plunge it downwards. John charges straight into him, pushing him back against the edge of the stage but the warrior lashes out with one foot, sending John stumbling across the room.

Nearby, as the audience flees, the acrobat takes off his mask, takes one look at the fight and decides he wants no part of it, running off. Only one person is heading towards the fight and that’s Sarah, who has found a sturdy broom from somewhere and comes charging across the hall while John is still stumbling across the floor trying to catch his balance and the warrior heads towards me, as I’m still lying on the floor winded – and the warrior now has a wide-bladed sword in one hand. As he raises the sword above his head, his concentration focused on delivering the killing blow to me, Sarah races across the floor and slams the handle end of the broom over the top of the warrior’s head. He cries out in pain and before he can react or retaliate she swings the broom sideways and smashes it across his ribs. She instantly delivers a second blow to the same area and he falls to the ground, grunting and almost unconscious.

As Sarah straightens up, breathless, I finally sit up and lean forward to the warrior’s right foot, pulling off his shoe to reveal a Tong tattoo on his heel. John has finally managed to turn around, though he’s almost doubled over in pain and is still trying to catch his breath. As I scramble to my feet John grabs Sarah’s hand and starts to pull her towards the exit, Sherlock soon joins us and helps me up; starts pulling me to the exit as well.

“Come on.” John said almost voicelessly. Sherlock and I race off ahead of them. “Come on! Let’s go!”

TPSH

Dimmock storms into the office, followed by the boys, then me and then a rather bewildered Sarah. Dimmock is not in a good mood.

“I sent a couple of cars. The old hall is totally deserted.” I winced as I sat down in a chair.

“Look, I saw the mark at the circus – that tattoo that Soo Lin showed us: the mark of the Tong.” Not realizing that they found the same mark on the dead men. Dimmock had reached his desk and turned to face us.

“Lukis and Van Coon were part of a-a smuggling operation. Now, one of them stole something when they were in China; something valuable.” John said to him.

“These circus performers were gang members sent here to get it back.” Sherlock stated.
“Get what back?” Sherlock bites his lip, looking away angrily.

“We don’t know.” John said hesitantly.

“You don’t know.” Sherlock still won’t meet his eyes. “Mr. Holmes.” He sits down, “I’ve done everything you asked. Lestrade, he seems to think your and Eiric’s advice is worth something.” Sherlock lifts his head and gives a faint but proud smile. I sent a dark glare at him, making him lean back a little. “I gave the order for a raid. Please tell me I’ll have something to show for it – other than a massive bill for overtime.” That’s when I got up from my seat and punched him right in the eye.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

221B Eiric

Sherlock lead us into the living room and immediately stares at the pictures over the fireplace as he took his coat off.

“They’ll be back in China by tomorrow.” John said as he took his coat off, I went to the couch, laid down and curled up into the fetal position; lowly moaning in pain at the movement.

“No, they won’t leave without what they came for. We need to find their hide-out; the rendezvous.” Sherlock walks closer to the photos, staring at them intently. John also gazed at the pictures while Sarah hovered over to me, forgotten by the pair of them.

“Are you alright, Eiric?” she whispered to me, I nodded my head once, not daring to speak and just watched the Boys from my spot. Sherlock runs his fingers over the painted brick wall.

“Somewhere in this message it must tell us.” He and John fall silent. Sarah looks at them and then to me for a moment, then, finally, realizing that she was a surplus to the requirements.

“Well, I think perhaps I should leave you to it.” She got up from her spot and started to walk backwards away from us a few steps. John turns around to her,

“No, no, you don’t have to go . . .” he looks to Sherlock and then to me, “. . . does she?” he turns back to Sarah, “You can stay.”

“Yes, it would be better to study if you left now.” Sherlock looks around pointedly at Sarah, while John throws a dark look at him before turning back to her.

“He’s kidding. Please stay if you like.” Sarah looked nervously towards Sherlock, who has already turned back to the photographs. She smiles awkwardly and tries what she thinks was a friendly approach.

“Is it just me, or is anyone else starving?”

“Ooh, God.” Sherlock and I sighed, closing our eyes in exasperation. Shortly afterwards, John opens the fridge to find it almost empty apart from a couple of bottles, a can, and what might have be an eyeball lying on a shelf but I wasn’t sure from this distance, ‘Need to get the Boys some shopping.’ Back in the living room, Sherlock has sat down at the dining table which is covered with photos, notes and drawings of various pictograms, but not before giving me an amused look at my demise, so being the proper Lady I am, I flipped him the bird which he chuckled at. As he rummages through them, Sarah stands nearby, looking at all the pictures stuck to the mirror.

“So this is what you do, you and John. You solve puzzles for a living.” Sherlock tetchily not looking around, “Consulting Detective.”

“Oh.” Was all Sarah said. I huffed, finally able to sit up without being in pain, “I’m a Consulting Detective as well, for Scotland Yard but I mostly do Detective work for them, like their cold cases. Those are the most fun.” I picked up a random book off the floor and flipped it open, missing Sherlock’s and Sarah’s shocked looks.
In the kitchen, John was searching through cupboards. He twists the lid off a jar of pickled onions, sniffs the contents and recoils at the smell, “Oh!” He puts the lid back on and continues his search though he’s not going to find anything.

Sarah walked over to Sherlock and is looking over his shoulder, I could see him tense up. She points to the paper he’s looking at.

“What are these squiggles?” Sherlock looks up, his face set as if he’s trying very hard not to kill her. ‘Oh~ if looks could kill!’

“They’re numbers. An ancient Chinese dialect.” Still not looking around to her but to me, his eyes pleading for help. I shook my head at him and went back to my book, ‘That’s for the fake date.’

“Oh, right! Yeah, well, of course I should have known that!” I silently scoffed to myself at her answer. I looked over to John, who was still searching the kitchen, has at least manage to find a small bag of Wotsits and was emptying them into a bowl. Mrs. H comes to the door and speaks quietly, though to me it sounded as though she was right by me with my hearing.

“Yoo-hoo!” John looks up and his face fills with grateful delight as she comes in carrying a tray covered with a tea towel. “I’ve done punch, and a bowl of nibbles.” She whispered. She puts the tray on the table and takes off the tea towel to reveal a jug of punch with slices of fruit floating on top, four glasses, a bowl of crisps and another bowl, I think containing some dip.

“Mrs. Hudson, you’re a saint!” John said softly

“If it was Monday, I’d have been to the supermarket!” Mrs. H whispered to him, I smiled softly into the book at the woman’s kind heart.

“No; thank you! Thank you!” Back in the living room, I think Sherlock is just about to commit murder as Sarah picks up the photograph of the brick wall which Dimmock had brought back sealed in an evidence bag. He glares at her in utter fury and turns his head away, his teeth bared. That was my queue to intervene before it got ugly. I put the book down already finished with it and went to stand behind Sherlock, placing my arms around his shoulders and plopped my chin on top of his head. I felt him relax a bit but not much.

“So these numbers – it’s a cipher.” She asked, oblivious to Sherlock rage.

“Exactly.” Was the tight reply.

“And each pair of numbers is a word.” Sherlock’s head lifts up slowly, making me move until only my hands are on his shoulders.

“How did you know that?” for the first time tonight, he turns and meets her eyes.

“Well, two words have already been translated, here.” She puts the picture down on the desk and points. Sherlock takes the photo from her and we both stared at it.

“John.”

“Mmm?” he looks around from the kitchen table. Sherlock starts to stand up, forcing me to move out of the way,

“John, look at this.” He takes the photo out of the evidence bag as John comes out of the kitchen “Soo Lin at the museum – she started to translate the code for us. We didn’t see it!” written in fine pen, a word had been written across each of the first two sets of symbols on the photograph. Sherlock reads them out, “Nine, Mill.” John squinting at the photo,
“Does that mean ‘millions’?”

“Nine million quid. For what?” I asked thoughtfully as I watch Sherlock turn going to the spot he dumped his coat and scarf.

“We need to know the end of this sentence.” Sherlock said to us.

“Where are you going?” I asked him as he put his coat on,

“To the museum; to the restoration room.” He grimaces in exasperation at himself. “Oh, we must have been staring right at it!”

“At-at what?” John asked sounding confused.

“The book, John. The book – the key to cracking the cipher!” He brandishes the photo at John. “Soo Lin used it to do this! Whilst we were running around the gallery, she started to translate the code. It must be on her desk.” I frowned at that, remembering Soo Lin and I hiding the whole time, I turned around to tell Sherlock to find he was gone, hurrying out the door.

TPSH

Outside on Baker Street Sherlock pov

Out on Baker Street, a man and woman are walking along the road. Obviously tourists, they are consulting the London A-Z and looking around. I burst out of the door of 221B, running towards the curb to hail a passing black cab.

“Taxi!” as I sweep past the tourists, I brushed past hard enough to break the man’s hold on the book, which falls to the ground. The man yells at me indignantly in German.

“Hey, du! Siehst du nicht wo du hingehst?*” I turn back and pick up the book, handing it back to the man.

“Entschuldigen Sie, bitte.*”

“Ja, danke!*” the man said snarkily, snatching the book back, he turns away, putting his arm around his wife and still bitching. “Und dann sagen die, dass die Engländer höflich sind!*”

I turn and raise my arm to the cab again but it has already driven past. I grunt in exasperation and walk down the road, looking over my shoulder to check traffic coming from behind me. After a few yards, I stop and turn back again, grunting angrily a second time as no cabs magically materialize for me. Looking up and down the road, I sees a Chinese couple, possibly father and daughter, standing at the corner over the road and consulting an A-Z as they too try to work out their route. I eyes narrow, and I flash back in my mind to walking across Lukis’ living room and looking at a pile of books and papers on a table. The London A-Z was the top book on the pile. I flashed back further into the past and remembers seeing a pile of books in Van Coon’s living room. The third book down on the pile was the London A-Z. Then I remember turning around from the crates in my own living room and staring at my bookcase.

“A book that everybody would own.” My memories move on to me smiling at Soo Lin after I handed her the teapot in the restoration room. On the table was a London A-Z. Coming back to the present, my mouth opens in startled realization and I break into a run, racing back towards the German couple.

“Please, wait! Bitte!*” I shouted. The tourists turn back and frown in confusion as I hurry towards...
“Was wollt er? Was will er?*” I run up to them and snatch the A-Z from the man’s hands and turn away, looking down at the book. “Hey, du! Was macht du?*” I turned back to him momentarily, “Minute!*”

“Gib mir doch mein Buch zurück!*” Ignoring him, I turn my back on the couple again and open the book. Waving his hand in exasperation at the crazy Englander, the man puts his arm around his wife and they walk away.

TPSH

221B John pov

Sarah and I have relocated to the kitchen. I’m sitting at the side table and Sarah is standing nearby. Eiric had gone back to laying on the couch, reading another book.

“I mean, well, a quiet night in’s just-just what the doctor ordered.” I could hear Eiric’s quiet scoff as Sarah finished talking. I laughed softly. “Er, I mean, I’d love to go out of an evening and wrestle a few Chinese gangsters, you know, generally, but a girl can get too much.” Eiric snorted at this, I was about to say something to her, when I remember what she told me and Sherlock. She was use to these kind of things happening to her. I nodded in agreement with Sarah,

“No, okay.” We smiled at each other, then she looks away, laughing in embarrassment.

“Hmm. Um, shall we get a takeaway?”

“Yeah!” I nod and get up to find a menu. I look out into the living room about to ask Eiric if she wanted anything,

“The usual, John. Thank you.” She look over to me with a half-hearted smile, I nod, returning one as well.

TPSH

On the street Sherlock pov

On the street, I’m flicking through the pages of the A-Z.

“Page fifteen, entry one. Page fifteen, entry one . . .” I turned to the correct page and looks at the first entry on that index page. It reads “Deadmans Lane NW9”. I lift my head. “Dead man. You were threatening to kill them.” I flash back to the message sprayed across Sir William’s office, across the library shelf and the statue in the library.

“It’s the first cipher.” I take the photograph of the message sprayed on the brick wall out of my coat pocket and unfold it. With the first two words already translated, I look at the third pair of symbols and then start flicking to the correct page in the book.

“Thirty-seven, nine; thirty-seven, nine. . .” The appropriate entry on that page reads “Fore St EC2”. I get out a pen and write “FOR” over the relevant symbols on the photo. “Nine mill . . . for . . .”

TPSH

221B Eiric pov

In the kitchen, Sarah has sat down on the seat that John vacated and is taking her jacket off. John
has picked up the jug of punch and is filling the glasses. Someone knocks on the front door downstairs. I sat up at lightning speed and frowned, the delivery takes longer than that.

“Ooh, blimey, that was quick. I’ll just pop down.” He hands her one of the glasses as he walks towards the kitchen door. “Do you want me to lay the table?” John looks round at the kitchen table which is covered with Sherlock’s paperwork and experiments. ‘I wouldn’t touch that if you want to live another day.’

“Um, eat off trays?”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah!” I rolled my eyes at them. I waited till John was gone and got up and walked over to Sarah. I got right behind her and silently stupefy her. I, then, dragged her into Sherlock’s room, laying her on the bed, and shutting and locking the door behind me.

TPSH

On the street Sherlock pov

I’m still translating the symbols. “Sixty, Thirty-five.” On the relevant page, the appropriate entry reads “Jade Cl. E16”. “Jade.” I write on the photograph as I say the word again. “Jade.”

TPSH

221B John pov

I open the front door and smile at the man standing on the doorstep, who is wearing a jacket with the hood pulled up.

“Sorry to keep you.” I start rummaging in my trouser pocket, “How much d’you want?”

“Do you have it?” I look around blankly, “What?”

“Do you have the treasure?”

“I don’t understand.” The man clonks me around the left side of my head with a pistol. I fall to the floor.

TPSH

On the street Sherlock pov

I turn to the page for the final word. Finding the correct entry, I write “TRAMWAY” onto the photograph and then read the whole message aloud. “Nine mill for Jade pin Dragon den Black. . .” I raised my head and stare ahead of myself, “. . . Tramway.”

TPSH

In the kitchen of the flat there’s no sign of Sarah or Eiric. The overhead suspended neon light is swaying gently back and forth. Two trays are on the table, each containing a clean plate, cutlery and a glass of punch. A book lays open, face down, on the couch. Downstairs, the front door slams and Sherlock’s voice can be heard.

TPSH
221B Sherlock pov

“Eiric! John! I’ve got it!” I run in through the kitchen door, see nobody there and run into the living room, brandishing the A-Z. “The cipher! The book! It’s the London A to Z that they’re using . . .” I trail off before I can finish the last word, staring in shock as I see that yellow paint has been sprayed across the living room windows. On the left-hand window is the sort-of upside down eight with an almost horizontal line across it. On the right-hand window is the single almost horizontal slash. Together they spell out “DEAD MAN”. There is no sign of Eiric, John, or Sarah. I stare at the paint in horror.

TPSH

Tramway Eiric pov

I watched as John regains consciousness sitting on a chair beside me, somewhere dark. A fire is burning in a dustbin behind us. He slowly raises his head. I notice there is a bleeding cut on his left temple. As he grimaces in pain, the voice of the Opera Singer comes out of the dim tunnel in front of us.

“A book is like a magic garden carried in your pocket.” I looked quizzily at her, ‘That made no sense.’ Wincing, John turns his head to the left and to see me sitting on another chair with a gag in my mouth. I look around to him, calm. Ahead of us is the Chinese woman who he saw photographing him and who was watching us on Hungerford Bridge. Despite the darkness she is still wearing her dark sunglasses. She walks towards him and I now see that we are in an abandoned tunnel. There are two Chinese men standing behind the approaching woman, and a couple of other fires are burning to illuminate the area. A few feet ahead of where John and I are tied to our chairs by our hands and feet is a large object covered with cloth. The woman raises her sunglasses to the top of her head and looks down at John.

“Chinese proverb, Mr. Holmes.” John and I look at her, startled.

“I . . . I’m not Sherlock Holmes.” I looked at John out the corner of my eye, watching him.

“Forgive me if I do not take your word for it.” She smiled humorlessly at him. She reaches down and pulls his jacket open, rummaging in the inside pockets.

“Ow. Ow.” She takes out his wallet, opens it and takes something out of it.

“Debit card, name of S. Holmes.” I looked to John confused.

“Yes; that’s not actually mine. He lent that to me.” I nodded then, that making more sense. She looked into the wallet again.

“A cheque for five thousand pounds made out in the name of Mr. Sherlock Holmes.” I let my head drop, ‘We’re doomed.’

“Yeah, he gave me that to look after.” The woman found something else in the wallet,

“Tickets from the theatre, collected by you, name of Holmes.” I groan to myself ‘Note to self: Kill Sherlock after this.’

“Yes, okay . . . I realize what this looks like, but I’m not him.”

“We heard it from your own mouth.” I lifted my head up remember that day. “I am Sherlock Holmes and I always work alone. . .” John stares ahead of himself in disbelief.
“Did I really say that?” he chuckles weakly, then lowers his head in pain. “I s’ppose there’s no use me trying to persuade you I was doing an impression.” Before he can finish the sentence, the woman raises a small pistol and points it at his head. John cringes away from it, blowing out a panicked breath. I start pulling at my restraints, trying to help John. The woman grins. ‘Bitch! How dare you threaten one of my Boys!’

“I am Shan.” John and I stare up at her. “You’re . . . you’re Shan.”

“Three times we tried to kill you and your companions, Mr. Holmes. What does it tell you when an assassin cannot shoot straight?” She lifts her other hand and cocks the pistol. John cringes back, turning his head away and whispering,

“Don’t, don’t,” as he struggles against his bonds. I started pulling harder at the rope. Shan looks down at him and her expression becomes ominous. John breathes out heavily as her finger tightens on the trigger. John stares into the barrel of the gun, his face full of terror as she pulls the trigger all the way. The gun clicks. John grunts in shock, and Shan smiles smugly. I glared at the bitch for that dirty trick.

“It tells you that they’re not really trying.” John breathes heavily, trying to get control of himself. I looked back up to the ceiling, ‘Sherlock, where are you?’

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

I hurry over to the bookcase.

“Tramway.” As if I had lost control of my usual razor-sharp brain in my fear for my friend and the woman I’ve come to deeply care for, I stare at the books on the shelf for a few moments as I try to find what I want, faintly, under my breath, “Oh, Christ.” Finally I find and pull out a folding map of London. Turning back to the dining table, I unfold the map and spread it out, running my finger over it until I stab it down. “There.” I turn and head out the door.

TPSH

Tramway Tunnel Eiric pov

Shan slides a clip into the pistol and then cocks it again before pointing it at John’s head a second time. John cringes away from it. My glare intensifies by ten at the woman.

“Not blank bullets now.” Was she stupid, the gun was empty the first time.

“Okay.” John said breathily, making me start to worry.

“If we wanted to kill you, Mr. Holmes, we would have done it by now. We just wanted to make you inquisitive.” She looks at John sternly. “Do you have it?”

“Do I have what?”

“The treasure.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” She turned away,

“I would prefer to make certain.” She looks at her men, one of whom now pulls the cover off the large object to reveal the crossbow which was used at the circus. An arrow is already loaded in it.
John and I stare at it and we both sigh deeply. Shan turns back to him. “Everything in the West has its price; and the price for her life. . .” John turns and stares at me. “. . . information.” The two men walk over and pick up my chair. I started to yell out curses repeatedly through my gag as they carry me toward the crossbow.

In anguished, under his breath I could hear John say,

“Sorry, I’m sorry.” The men set the chair down on the other side of the crossbow, putting me facing the arrow tip and directly in line with it. I stare at it, and stopped tugging at the ropes tying me to the chair. Shan glares down at John.

“Where’s the hairpin?”

“What?” John was tugging at his own bonds in spite of the pistol aimed at him. “The Empress pin valued at nine million sterling. We already had a buyer in the West; and then one of our people was greedy. He took it, brought it back to London and you, Mr. Holmes, have been searching.”

“Please. Please, listen to me. I’m not. . . I’m not Sherlock Holmes. You have to believe me. I haven’t found whatever it is you’re looking for.”

“I need a volunteer from the audience!” Shan said loudly.

“No, please. Please.” John was getting desperate now.

“Ah, thank you, lady. Yes, you’ll do very nicely.” She said walking towards me. I started swearing at her again, through my gag, tugging at my ropes. Shan smiles, takes out a knife and reaches up to the sandbag suspended over a pulley hanging from the ceiling. She stabs the knife into the bag and sand begins to pour out. I continue to curse, as John sighs out an appalled breath and stares up at the bag in horror.

TPSH

Sherlock is in the back of a taxi, looking around anxiously as the cab progresses through the streets.

TPSH

Shan smiles and looks around at her audience.

“Ladies and gentlemen. From the distant moonlit shores of NW1, we present for your pleasure Sherlock Holmes’ pretty companion in a death-defying act.” I stopped all movement and sound, just staring at the machine.

“Please!” Shan walks over to me and places a black origami lotus flower on my lap.

“You’ve seen the act before. How dull for you. You know how it ends.”

“I’m not Sherlock Holmes!” John said frantically at her.

“I don’t believe you.”

“You should, you know.” I let out the breath I was holding in a relieved sigh, ‘Sherlock.’ Shan spins around as a familiar silhouette appears at the far end of the tunnel. “Sherlock Holmes is nothing at all like him.” Shan raises her pistol, cocks it (again) and aims it towards him. He immediately dodges to the side of the tunnel, disappearing into the shadows. One of Shan’s thugs
starts to hurry towards the end of the tunnel. John sighs out a half-relieved, half-exasperated breath. “How would you describe me, John? Eiric? Resourceful? Dynamic? Enigmatic?” I would have laughed if my life wasn’t on the line right now.

“Late?” John said tetchily. ‘Late.’ I thought tetchily.

“That’s a semi-automatic. If you fire it, the bullet will travel at over a thousand meters per second.”

“Well?” Shan said still aiming her pistol towards the shadows.

“Well...” The thug has reached a large storage container standing at the side of the tunnel. Sherlock runs out from behind it and thwacks the man across the stomach with a metal pipe. The man grunts and collapses to the ground. Sherlock immediately ducks back into the shadows. “... the radius curvature of these walls is nearly four meters. If you miss, the bullet will ricochet. Could hit anyone. Might even bounce off the tunnel and hit you.”

I could hear Sherlock burst out of the darkness and run to the nearby burning dustbin, kicking it over. John flinches at the loud crash and Shan’s eyes widen as she realizes that it’s now even more impossible to see that area of the tunnel. John peers into the darkness, trying to see how close his friend is. Sherlock reappears just behind me and squats down behind me, starting to untie my bonds. However, the other man – who turns out to be Liang, Soo Lin’s brother – runs over to him and loops a long red scarf around his throat a couple of times. ‘Sherlock!’ Sherlock cries out and stands up, tugging at the part of the scarf around his neck as Liang pulls it tight. As they struggle, I look at them for a moment and then turn back to stare at the arrowhead pointed directly at me. I lift my gaze to the sandbag, which is just passing the counterbalanced weight on its way down towards the metal cup on the crossbow. As the men continue to struggle, John realizes that Sherlock isn’t going to get free in time.

He struggles to stand, which is almost impossible with his hands tied in front of him and attached tightly to the underside of the chair, and his ankles tied to the legs of the chair. Nevertheless he manages to stumble forward a couple of paces, half-carrying and half-dragging the chair with him, before he loses his balance and falls onto his side. Liang swings yet another loop of the scarf around Sherlock’s neck. I gaze up at the descending metal ball as the men behind me continue to struggle and John thrashes on the floor. My eyes drop to the arrowhead again as the ball continues relentlessly downwards. My eyes start to fill with tears, my gaze locks onto my imminent death and all hope begins to fade from my expression. Flailing and groaning with the effort, John manages to squirm around on the floor and finally gets one foot free enough to kick it upwards and connect with a part of the crossbow.

The crossbow shifts position, twisting slightly to the left just as the ball connects with the cup. I watch as the arrow is fired and soars across the tunnel, my eyes widen in horror as it buries itself in Liang’s stomach. He grunts, then straightens up, his face full of shock. He groans breathily for a moment, then slowly topples to the floor. Gasping for breath, Sherlock stands up and looks around. Distant running footsteps can be heard – General Shan got away. He looks in the direction of the sound as if considering following, but my anguished muffled curses distract him and he unloops the red scarf from around his neck and then drops to his knees beside me. I looked at him as he started to help me.

“It’s all right, Eiric.” He said soothingly to me, I felt the tears start to fall down my cheeks shaking my head at him. On the floor, John groans as he struggles to get up onto his elbows. Sherlock unties my gag and takes it from my mouth.
“Sher. . . lock.” My voice breaking with a new wave of tears.

“You’re gonna be all right, Eiric. It’s over now. It’s over.” His voice and eyes soft as he stroked his hands comfortingly down my arms. He bends down to untie the rope. I just cover my eyes as silent tears kept coming. I felt myself being pulled into a warm, comforting hug. I remove my hands and wrapped them around the person tightly, figuring out who it is,

“Sherlock, I-I . . .” my tears had intensified to were my shoulders were violently shaking.

“Shhh, Eiric. You’re safe now. I’m here, I got you.” I snuggled my face into his neck, feeling him tighten his hold. ‘Don’t let go, Sherlock.’

TPSH

Later, the police have arrived to clear up the mess. Dimmock is waiting beside a police car just outside the tunnel as John puts his arm around my shoulders and walks me away. Sherlock is just behind us and stops to talk to the inspector.

“We’ll just slip off. No need to mention us in your report.”

“Mr. Holmes. . .”

“I have high hopes for you, Inspector. A glittering career.”

“I go where you point me.”

“Exactly.” Sherlock started walking away. Dimmock turns and watches him leave. He smiles ruefully. Sherlock catches up with us and takes me into his arms.

“Eiric?” I looked over to John, “Where’s Sarah.”

“In Sherlock’s bedroom.” I said with a triumph smirk. I looked up at Sherlock, “It was the closest place with the limited time I had. She just stun is all. John take her home and she be fine in the morning.” They both nodded their heads and gave me a smile.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

In the kitchen, John is sitting at the table, Eiric sitting in the chair next to mine reading a book, drinking her tea, while I stand next to John and pour him a mug of tea from a teapot.


“Million, yes; Nine million for jade pin. Dragon den, black Tramway.”

“An instruction to all their London operatives.”

“Hmmm.” Eiric hummed, I looked at her in concern. She was being a bit too quiet than normal.

“A message; what they were trying to reclaim.”

“What, a jade pin?” I sighed, “Worth nine million pounds. Bring it to the tramway, their London hideout.”
“Hang on: a hairpin worth nine million pounds?” this time it was Eiric who sighed,

“Apparently, John.”

“Why so much?” Eiric shrugged her shoulders,

“Depends who owned it.” She told him.

**TPSH**

**Bank**

John, Eiric and I were walking towards the entrance to the bank.

“Two operatives based in London. They travel over to Dalian to smuggle those vases. One of them helps himself to something: a little hairpin.” Eiric moved closer to me, slipping her hand into mine.

“Worth nine million pounds.”

“Eddie Van Coon was the thief. He stole the treasure when he was in China.” Eiric stated.

“How d’you know it was Van Coon, not Lukis? Even the killer didn’t know that.” Eiric and I went through the revolving doors saying at the same time, “Because of the soap.” We look around smugly at John, who stops and stares back at us blankly for a moment before following us into the bank.

Upstairs, Van Coon’s P.A. Amanda is sitting at her desk. She squirts a bit of hand lotion from the pump-action bottle on the desk and rubs it into her hands. Her phone rings and she picks it up and answers it.

[Amanda.]

[He bought you a present.]

[Oh. Hello.]

[A little gift when he came back from china.]

[How do you know that?]

“You weren’t just his P.A., were you?” I said from behind her. She turns in surprise as I walk around to the side of the desk, switching off my phone and putting it back into my pocket.

“Someone’s been gossiping.” She said as she switched off her own phone.

“No.”

“Then I don’t understand. Why . . .?”

“Scented hand soap in his apartment. Three hundred milliliters of it. Bottle almost finished.”

“Sorry?” she said frowning in confusion.

“I don’t think Eddie Van Coon was the type of chap to buy himself hand soap – not unless he had a lady coming over. And it’s the same brand as that hand cream there on your desk.” Amanda momentarily looks down awkwardly.
“Look, it wasn’t serious between us. It was over in a flash. It couldn’t last – he was my boss.”

“What happened? Why did you end it?”

“I thought he didn’t appreciate me. Took me for granted. Stood me up once too often – we’d plan to go away for the weekend and then he’d just leave; fly off to China at a moment’s notice.”

“And he brought you a present from abroad to say sorry.” My gaze is focused on a small green jade hairpin in her hair. “Can I . . . just have a look at it?” I hold my hand out.

TPSH

In Sebastian’s office, Seb is signing a cheque for £20,000. He looks up at John and Eiric who are standing on the other side of the desk.

“He really climbed up onto the balcony?” He puts the cheque into an envelope.

“Nail a plank across the window and all your problems are over.” Looking peeved, Sebastian holds the envelope out to John. “Thanks.”

TPSH

Outside, Amanda is holding her hair in place with one hand while she takes out the pin with the other.

“Said he bought it in a street market.” She puts the pin into my outstretched hand.

“Oh, I don’t think that’s true. I think he pinched it.”

“Yeah, that’s Eddie.” She said chuckling ruefully.

“Didn’t know its value; just thought it would suit you.”


“Oh my God!” She stumbles to her feet and staggers backwards as Sherlock grins. “Oh my G...”

“Nine-million!” She said in a high pitch voice, hysterical. In Sebastian’s office, John and Eiric turn their head at the sound of her voice, then turns back and nods to Sebastian before leaving the room.

TPSH

I was wearing a dressing gown over my shirt and trousers, sitting at the dining table while John sits opposite me and Eiric right by me. I was looking at the front page of the Sunday Express, where the headline reads, “Who wants to be a million-hair”. I fold the paper in half, put it down and pick up another newspaper.

“Over a thousand years old and it’s sitting on her bedside table every night.” John said.

“He didn’t know its value; didn’t know why they were chasing him.” Eiric told him.

“Hmm. Should’ve just got her a lucky cat.” Eiric let out a soft giggle and I smiled at him briefly, then looked away.

“Hmm.” My gaze becomes distant. John looks at Eiric and I closely.
“You mind, don’t you?” I looked at him, “What?”

“That she escaped – General Shan. It’s not enough that we got her two henchmen.” Eiric looked down at her lap, she was bothered that Shan escaped.

“It must be a vast network, John; thousands of operatives. The three of us, we barely scratched the surface.”

“You cracked the code, though, Sherlock; and maybe Dimmock can track down all of them now that he knows it.”

“No. No. He cracked this code; all the smugglers have to do is pick up another book.” Eiric spoke up looking up at John before turning her green gaze to me.

“That was the worst fake date I’ve ever been on, Sherlock.” I looked at her startled, “I want a refund. Is that dinner date still being offered?” I smiled at her.

“Yes, it is. How does Anglo’s at 8, sound?” I asked.

“Perfect.” She leaned over and pressed a light kiss to my lips. She got up and left our flat going to hers.

I open my newspaper and lift it, to hide my burning cheeks, began to read. John’s eyes drift over to the window, smirking, and he frowns and looks closely as a young man in a hooded jacket and wearing a cap walks over to a tall black box on the other side of the road which dispenses parking permits. Putting a bag on the ground, the young man looks around in all directions to make sure he’s not being watched, then lifts a spray can in his right hand and sprays his tag on the back of the box. John watches as the ‘artist’ finishes the tag, picks up his bag and hurries away. As I, oblivious to this, continues to read my paper, John looks thoughtful, and a police car sirens its way down the road.

TPSH

In a room somewhere, Shan is sitting at a desk and talking to someone over a computer. Her live image is being transmitted to the other person but the space on the screen which should be showing the face of whoever she’s talking to is marked “No image available.” There is also a text box on the screen which shows that the person to whom she’s talking is indicated simply as “DMJM”. Shan sounds very humble as she speaks.

“Without you – without your assistance – we would not have found passage into London. You have my thanks.”

DMJM: GRATITUDE IS MEANINGLESS

DMJM: IT IS ONLY THE EXPECTATION OF FURTHER FAVOURS

“We did not anticipate ... we did not know this man would come – this Sherlock Holmes.” Her face fills with concern. “And now your safety is compromised.”

DMJM: THEY CANNOT TRACE THIS BACK TO US

“I will not reveal your identity.”

DMJM: WE ARE CERTAIN.
Unseen by Shan, the red light of a rifle’s laser sight appears in the center of her forehead. A single gunshot rings out as a bullet smashes through the window opposite en route to its target.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, du! Siehst du nicht wo du hingehest? - Hey, you! Why don’t you look where you’re going?
Entschuldigen Sie, bitte. - Forgive me, please.
Ja, danke! - Yeah, thanks!
Und dann sagen die, dass die Engländer höflich sind! - And they say the English are polite!
Bitte! – Please!
Was wollt er? Was will er? - What does he want?
Hey, du! Was macht du? - Hey, you! What are you doing?
Minute! - Wait a minute!
Gib mir doch mein Buch zurück! - Give me my book back!
Minsk, Belarus  
Sherlock pov

I’m in a prison visitors room, wearing my coat or what Eiric likes to call The Coat, with a fur collar attached to it, sitting at one of the many tables in the room. Sitting on the other side of the table is Barry ‘Bezza’ Berwick, a young Englishman who’s wearing an orange jumpsuit and is obviously a prisoner. With the exception of a uniformed guard who was standing some distance away, we’re the only people in the room. It’s very cold in the room, as signified by the steam coming from our breath as we spoke. I was bored and made sure to sound like it.

“Just tell me what happened, from the beginning.”

“We’d been to a bar – a nice place – and, er, I got chattin’ with one of the waitresses, and Karen weren’t ‘appy with that, so . . . when we get back to the ‘otel, we end up havin’ a bit of a ding-dong, don’t we?” I sigh out a deliberate and noisy breath. “She was always getting’ at me, sayin’ I weren’t a real man.”

“Wasn’t a real man.” I corrected getting a bit annoyed.

“What?”

“It’s not “weren’t”; it’s “wasn’t”.”

“Oh.” He nodded slowly.

“Go on.” I nodded my head once.

“Well, then I dunno how it happened, but suddenly there’s a knife in my hands. And, you know, me old man was a butcher, so I know how to handle knives.” My gaze lowers to look at his hands which are resting on the table. “He learned us how to cut up a beast.”

“Taught.”

“What?” he was starting to get angry. Good.

“Taught you how to cut up a beast.” I said simply to him, though a bit smug.

“Yeah, well, then-then I done it.” God. “Did it.” He finally lost his temper.

“Did it! Stabbed her . . .” he repeatedly slams his hand down on the table, “. . . over and over and over, and I looked down and she weren’t . . .” sighing out a loud breath through my nose, I turn my head away. Getting control of his temper, Barry immediately corrects himself. “. . . wasn’t movin’ no more.” I had just turned my head back towards Barry, turn away again with an annoyed look. “. . . any more.” He let out a shaky breath and lowers his head. “You’ve gotta help me. I dunno how it happened, but it was an accident. I swear.” He said softly. I get to my feet and start to walk away. Barry calls after me frantically. “You’ve gotta help me, Mr. Holmes.” I stop. “Everyone says you’re the best. Without you, I’ll get hung for this.” I look over my shoulder at the young man.

“No, no, no, Mr. Berwick, not at all.” I look away thoughtfully for a second, “Hanged, yes.” I quirk a smile at the man, then turn and walk away.

TPSH
Two gunshots ring out through the living room. I’m lying slumped in my armchair with my head resting on the low back of the chair. I close my eyes briefly, then open them and gaze towards the ceiling. Downstairs, I hear the front door open. I turn my head to look towards the sofa. I’m wearing my sleepwear and blue dressing gown and my feet, bare. Above the sofa, a smiley face been spray-painted on the wallpaper using the can I found during the last case. The can is standing on the coffee table in front of the sofa. As the downstairs door closes again I sigh, turn my head to the front again and then raise my left hand which is holding one of Eiric’s pistols. I point the pistol towards the smiley face and – without even looking in that direction – fire twice at it. I turn my head to look at the face and fire a third shot. As I was firing for a fourth time, John and Eiric come running up the stairs, John with his fingers in his ears and Eiric staring at me blankly with her hands on her hips. I decide that I didn’t like that look on her, not one bit, especially when directed at me. They stopped on the landing, John lowering his hands, yells at me.

“What the hell are you doing?”

“Bored.” I said sulkily.

“What?” John said more quietly, squinting at me in disbelief.

“Bored!” I said loudly this time. I spring up out of my chair. John immediately recoils and covers his ears with his hands, while Eiric goes through the other door that’s connected to the kitchen looking unimpressed.

“No . . .” I switched the pistol to my right hand and turn towards the smiley face, firing at it again. I, then swing my arm around my back, twist slightly to my right and fire at the wall again from behind my back.

“Bored! Bored!” I stated angrily, as I bring my arm back around, John hurries into the room and I continue to glare at the smiley face but allowed John to snatch the pistol from my hand. John quickly slides the clips out of the gun as I walk towards the sofa. “Don’t know what’s got into the criminal classes. Good job I’m not one of them.” John locks the pistol away in a small safe on the dining table, and now straightens up.

“So you take it out on the wall? You’re acting like Teddy when he doesn’t get his way, Sherlock.” I heard Eiric, who was now standing in the kitchen door way.

“Ah, the wall had it coming.” I said as I run my fingers along the painted smile, ignoring her quip. I turn sideways and dramatically flop down onto the sofa on my back, my head landing on a cushion at one end and my feet digging into the arm of the sofa at the end nearest the windows.

“What about that Russian case?” John asked as he took his coat off. I push with my feet to shove myself further along the sofa and into a slightly more upright position, and then I started kneading the arm of the sofa with my toes.

“Belarus. Open and shut domestic murder. Not worth my time.” I saw Eiric shudder as I mention those two words, I couldn’t help but feel a little bit of sorrow for her.

“Ah, shame!” John said sarcastically. He walks into the kitchen and throws his arms up in despair at the mess on the table which greets him. He heads towards the fridge. “Anything in? I’m starving.”

“No! John, don’t . . .” Eiric began but stopped upon the sound of John opening the fridge door.
“Oh, f . . .” John immediately slams it shut again, unable to believe what he just saw inside. He slumps against the door for a moment, his head lowered, then he straightens up and opens the door again. On the shelf inside is a man’s head, cut off at his neck. He stares at it for a couple of seconds, then quietly closes the door. “It’s a head.” John turned to us, calling out. “A severed head!”

“Just tea for me, thanks.” I felt someone swat at my head, I tilted my head back to see Eiric standing there, giving me a disapproving look. John walks back into the living room.

“No, there’s a head in the fridge.” Eiric shook her head and sat in my armchair, sitting this argument out.

“Yes.” I said calmly.

“A bloody head!” John stressed.

“Well, where else was I supposed to put it?” I asked stroppily. I look around to John, “You don’t mind, do you?” John holds his hands out despairingly and looks back towards the fridge and then to Eiric. “I got it from Bart’s morgue.” John buries his head in one head when he received no help from Eiric. “I’m measuring the coagulation of saliva after death.” I wave my hand vaguely in the direction of a nearby laptop. “I see you’ve written up the taxi driver case.”

“You mean your first case together?” Eiric asked looking over to the laptop in curiosity, John handed it to her and pulled up his blog, “Thank you, John.” She gave him a smile, I made a huffing sound, gaining both of their attention.

“Uh, yes.” He walks over to his chair and sits down.

“‘A Study in Pink.’ Nice!” I said with an undertone of sarcasm.

“Well, you know, pink lady, pink case, pink phone – there was a lot of pink. Did you like it?” as John was speaking, I picked up a magazine from the coffee table and I flip it open and address my answer to the pages.

“Erm, no.”

“Why not? I thought you’d be flattered.” I lowered the magazine and glared at him.

“Flattered?” I raised my index finger and narrated a section of the blog. “Sherlock sees through everything and everyone in seconds. What’s incredible, though, is how spectacularly ignorant he is about some things.”

“Now hang on a minute. I didn’t mean that in a . . .” I interrupted him.

“Oh, you meant ‘spectacularly ignorant’ in a nice way! Look, it doesn’t matter to me who’s Prime Minister . . .”

“I know . . .” John said quietly.

“I don’t know who the Muggle Prime Minister is, John. I don’t see what’s wrong with that.” I heard Eiric, John shook his head at her.

“. . . or who’s sleeping with who . . .” I saw Eiric make a face.

“Why would you want to?” she asked.
“Whether the Earth goes round the Sun . . .” John said softly, Eiric snapped her head away from the computer screen.

“You don’t know the Earth goes round the Sun?” she asked me, I sighed loudly.

“Not that again. It’s not important.”

“Not important?” Eiric quirked an eyebrow. John shifts his position in his chair to face me.

“It’s primary school stuff. How can you not know that?” I pressed the heels of my palms to my eyes.

“Well, if I ever did, I’ve deleted it.”

“Deleted it?” John questioned. I swung my legs around to the floor and sit up to face John and Eiric, who’s gone back to the laptop.

“Listen.” I point to my head with one finger, “This is my hard drive, and it only makes sense to put things in there that are useful . . . really useful.” I grimaced. “Ordinary people fill their heads with all kinds of rubbish, and that makes it hard to get at the stuff that matters. Do you see?” John looks at me for a moment, trying to bite his lip but he couldn’t contain himself.

“But it’s the solar system!” I briefly bury my head in my hands.

“Oh, hell! What does that matter?!” I look at John in frustration, “So we go around the Sun! If we went round the Moon, or round and round the garden like a teddy bear, it wouldn’t make a difference. All that matters to me is the work. Without that, my brain rots.” I ruffle my hair with both hands, then glare at John, “Put that in your blog. Or better still, stop inflicting your opinions on the world.”

“Sherlock!” Eiric said at me astounded. Petulantly shoving the magazine across the coffee table, I lie down on the sofa again, turning over with my back to John and Eiric and pulling my dressing gown around me while curling up into a ball. John looked away and pursed his lips. The front door downstairs opens and closes. John stands up and walks towards the living room door. I looked over my shoulder,

“Where are you going?”

“Out. I need some air.” He said tightly, putting his jacket on. He heads for the stairs, which Mrs. Hudson was just coming up. “’Scuse me, Mrs. . . .”

“Oh, sorry, love!”

“Sorry.” Angrily, I turn my face away again, pulling the cushion under my head nearer to the back of the sofa and curling up even tighter. Mrs. Hudson chuckles at John as he passes her but then turns and looks at him in concern as he hurries down the stairs. She comes to the living room door and knocks.

“Yoo-hoo.” I stretched out my legs straight and turn my head enough to acknowledge her existence, but then look away again.

“Mrs. H let me help you with those.” Eiric got up and took a few of the shopping bags from her and carries them into the kitchen with Mrs. Hudson following behind her.

“Thank you, love. Have you two had a little domestic?” Mrs. Hudson asked.
“Oh, I wouldn’t say little, Mrs. H.” Eiric looked over to the couch. Flailing to get myself upright, I stand up off the sofa and take the shortest route to my destination, walking over the coffee table and going to the left-hand window just as the downstairs door opened and closed.

“Ooh, it’s a bit nippy out there. He should have wrapped himself up a bit more.”

“I’m sure he’s fine, Mrs. H.” I watched as John crosses the street and heads in the general direction of away.

“Look at that, Mrs. Hudson.” I scan the street. “Quiet, calm, peaceful.” I grimaced and drag in a long breath. “Isn’t it hateful?” Mrs. Hudson and Eiric unloaded some of the items from her shopping bags and gave Eiric the receipt.

“Oh, I’m sure something’ll turn up, Sherlock. A nice murder – that’ll cheer you up.” She chuckles slightly as she carried her bags towards the living room door.

“Can’t come too soon.” I said wistfully.

“Hey. What’ve you done to my bloody wall?!” Mrs. Hudson said stopping as she spots the damaged wall. I quirk a smile and turn around to admire my handiwork. “I’m putting this on your rent, young man!” she said angrily.

“Mrs. H, I’ll fix it, though it does give the wall a bit more character.” Eiric tilted her head as she looked at the wall. Mrs. Hudson nodded and then stormed off down the stairs. I moved to stand in the middle of the room standing just in front of the dining table, Eiric walks over and stands beside me. I grin over-dramatically at the bullet-riddled smiley face, then sighed. I turned my head to Eiric when a massive explosion goes off in the streets behind us. The windows blow in and the blast hurls us forward onto the floor. We both groan. I saw Eiric moving around from the corner of my eye.

“Eiric, are you okay?” I groan again, as I moved to sit up.

“Yea,” she turns to look at the windows and then back over to me, “But I just got back into my pajamas.” I chuckled a bit at that, she’d be called into work again liked she was earlier today to write up the banker case. I stood up fully and then turn to help her up. Once she was standing she began to brush herself off.

“Damn it, I won’t be able to fix the windows till this blows over.” She pouts at the mess covering the ground of the flat. The doorbell ringed suddenly. Eiric and I shared a look and then went down the stairs to the front door together. Eiric opened the door and the person behind it, was the last person I ever wanted to see.

“Mycroft?” Eiric asked. He smiled to her.

“Tristyn, my dear girl, how have you been?” He asked, taking her hand and kissed her knuckles. I griped my hands into fist, my lips thinning into a line.

“What are you doing here, Mycroft?” I demand him. He looked up to me, slight smirk on his face.

“Well, to see if my dear little brother was fine.” I heard Eiric gasp. I turned to her to explain but the words halted on my lips at the sight of the fallen look on her face.

“He’s your brother? Why didn’t you tell me? All of this time, I’ve been talking . . . saying this and that and he was your brother!” I just stood there, having no idea what to do. “You knew all this time, I just . . . why?”
“Eiric.” I reached out to her but to have her flinch away. I dropped my hand.

“I have to get ready for work.” She turned around, walked to her flat and ran down the stairs; the flat door slamming shut after her.

TPSH

Sarah’s place John pov

I woke up the next morning, groaning. I sat up on the sofa my shirt unbutton, I grimaced in pain trying to un-crick my neck. Sarah walks in wearing a dressing gown.

“Morning!”

“Oh, mor. . . .” I turn to look at her but grimaced again and grabbed at my neck in pain. “Morning.”

“See? Told you, you should’ve gone with the lilo.” She said.

“No, no, no, it’s fine. I-I slept fine. It’s very kind of you.” I said still rubbing my neck. Sarah had been scanning the sofa as I spoke and spotted what she was looking for. She reaches behind my back to pick up the remote control for the TV, then sits on the arm of the sofa and turns the telly on.

“Well, maybe next time I’ll let you kip at the end of my bed, you know.” She looks at me suggestively, then turns her head towards the TV screen.

“What about the time after that?” I asked, also looking at the screen. She looks at him and grins briefly. I tune my head towards her but don’t meet her eyes.

“Experts are hailing it as the artistic find of the century.” The news item was showing a photo of the Hickman Art Gallery, with a headline at the bottom of the screen saying “The Lost Vermeer”. “The last time . . .”

“So, d’you want some breakfast?” she puts the remote down.

“Love some.” I looked to her.

“Yeah, well you’d better make it yourself, ‘cause I’m gonna have a shower!”

“. . . it fetched over twenty million pounds.” I watched as she smiled at me sassily before leaving the room. I chuckled silently and start doing up the buttons on my shirt. “This one is anticipated to do even better. Back to our main story. There’s been a massive explosion in central London.” I look at the TV screen and my face fills with shock as the picture changes to show live footage of a road where brickwork is scattered all over the pavement, and police cordons have been set up to keep people out. The headline at the bottom of the screen reads “House destroyed on Baker St.” “As yet, there are no reports of any casualties, and the police are unable to say if there is any suspicion of terrorist involvement.” I was already on my feet. I hurried around the sofa to grab my jacket before turning towards the door, calling out.

“Sarah!” I stop and look at the TV screen briefly.

“Police have issued an emergency number for friends and relatives . . .”

“Sarah!” I head toward the front door, not even waiting for her to reply to me. “Sorry – I’ve got to run.”
I came around the corner of the street almost opposite of the flat, then stopped briefly and stared. Continuing onwards, I head toward the police cordon and make my way through the small crowd of gawking onlookers.

“‘Scuse me, can I get through? ‘Scuse me.” I approached on of the police officers who was stopping the crowd from getting closer. “Can I go through?” I point towards 221 and the police officer lets me through. I walk into the main scene of the devastation where bricks and dust are scattered all over the road and pavement. A fire engine is still on the scene and fire hoses are lying in the road waiting to be reeled back in. The windows and shop fronts of the buildings either side of Speedy’s have been boarded up; Speedy’s itself was protected by its metal roll-down screen. I stopped and stared at the building directly opposite the café. The front of the ground and first floor had been completely blown out by the explosion and the rooms inside were exposed to the air. I turned and hurried towards 221, where the first floor windows had also been boarded up. A police officer standing outside 221, where the first floor windows had also been boarded up. A police officer standing outside Speedy’s moves to intercepts me.

“I live over here.” I explain. The officer steps aside and I unlock the door and go inside. I race up the stairs. “Sherlock! Eiric!” I hurry into the living room, my eyes are drawn to the boarded-up windows, then to my chair, but my gaze quickly turns to Sherlock’s chair where he’s seating now dressed and wearing the purple shirt he wore on his date with Eiric, under his jacket. He’s apparently uninjured and is intermittently plucking the strings of his violin, which he’s holding on his chest while he glares petulantly towards my chair.

“John.” He looked up at me. The reason for Sherlock’s annoyance, was his brother, Mycroft, who was sitting in my chair; glances round at me.


“Hmm? What?” he looks around at the mess of broken glass and scattered paperwork as if he’s forgotten it, which he probably had. “Oh, yeah. Fine. Gas leak, apparently. She’s at work.” He turned his attention back to his brother, who stares at him pointedly as he plucks his violin strings again. “I can’t.”

“Can’t?” Mycroft repeated.

“The stuff I’ve got on is just too big. I can’t spare the time.” I looked across to him in disbelief.

“Never mind your usual trivia. This is of national importance.”

“How’s the diet?” Sherlock sulkily flicks his fingers across the strings.

“Fine. Perhaps you can get through to him, John. I’m afraid that Tristyn is in no mood to speak to him at this moment.” Mycroft said refusing to rise to the implied insult.

“What?” I had walked nearer to the windows to investigate the damage.

“I’m afraid my brother can be very intransigent.” He said.

“If you’re so keen, why don’t you investigate it?” Sherlock snide.

“No-no-no-no-no. I can’t possibly be away from the office for any length of time – not with the Korean elections so . . .” he tails off as I turn towards him in surprise and Sherlock raised his head
from looking at his violin. “Well, you don’t need to know about that, do you?” he smiled humourlessly in a clear message to forget what he just said. “Besides, a case like this – it requires . . .” he grimaced in distaste, “. . . legwork.” Sherlock mis-plucked one of strings, an irritated look on his face. He turns to me, as I absently rubbed the back of my neck with one hand.

“How’s Sarah, John? How was the lilo?” Sherlock asked.

“Sofa, Sherlock. It was the sofa.” Mycroft said consulting his pocket watch and not even looking at me. Sherlock briefly looks me up and down.

“Oh yes, of course.”


“Sherlock’s business seems to be booming since you, Tristyn, and he became . . . pals” Sherlock throws him a dark look.

“What’s he like to live with? Hellish, I imagine.” He asked me.

“I’m never bored and I don’t think Eiric is either.” I said.

“Good! That’s good, isn’t it?” he smiled condescendingly. Again, Sherlock glares at him. Mycroft stands up as Sherlock picks up his bow and whips one end through the air in front of him. Picking up a folder which he had put on the table beside him, Mycroft steps forward and offers the folder to his brother but Sherlock just looks back at him stubbornly. Grimacing and poking his tongue into the corner of his mouth, Mycroft turns and offers the folder to me instead.

“Andrew West, known as Westie to his friends.” Startled, I take the folder. “A civil servant, found dead on the tracks at Battersea Station this morning with his head smashed in.”

“Jumped in front of a train?” I asked.

“Seems the logical assumption.”

“But . . .?” I quirked a brief smile.

“But?”

“Well, you wouldn’t be here if it was just an accident.” Sherlock, who was now applying rosin to the bow with a small cloth, smirks noisily.

“The M.O.D. is working on a new missile defense system – the Bruce-Partington Programme, it’s called.” He looks at Sherlock as I start flicking through the folder. “The plans for it were on a memory stick.” I snigger quietly.

“That wasn’t very clever.” Sherlock smiles in agreement.

“It’s not the only copy.” Mycroft said to me.

“Oh.” Was all I said.

“But it is secret. And missing.”

“Top secret?” I asked.
“Very. We think West must have taken the memory stick. We can’t possibly risk it falling into the wrong hands.” He turns back to his brother, “You’ve got to find those plans, Sherlock. Don’t make me order you.” Breathing in sharply through his nose, Sherlock raised his violin to his shoulder, ready to play. He looks calmly at his brother.

“I’d like to see you try.” Mycroft leaned down to him a little in an attempt to look more threatening.

“Think it over.” Sherlock stared back at him, unimpressed. Mycroft turns and walks over to me, offering me his hand to shake, “Goodbye, John. Tell Tristyn I’d like to talk to her next time, I worry for her.” Politely, I stand as I shake his hand. Mycroft smiles at me creepily. “See you very soon.” I try not to look nervous. As Mycroft heads back towards the chair to pick up his coat, Sherlock begins to repeatedly play a short irritating sequence of notes. I frown at him but Sherlock continues to play until Mycroft has left the room and is on the stairs. Grimacing in the direction of his brother’s back, Sherlock finished his playing and lowers the violin, still looking annoyed. I sit back down on the coffee table and wait until Mycroft has reached the ground floor and is out of earshot before I speak.

“Why’s you lie?” Sherlock looks across to me at the front door bangs shut. “You’ve got nothing on – not a single case. That’s why the wall took a pounding. Why did you tell your brother you were busy?”

“Why shouldn’t I?” he shrugged.

“Oh!” I nod. “Oh, I see.” Sherlock’s eyes drift in my direction but he doesn’t actually look at me. “Sibling rivalry. Now we’re getting somewhere.” Sherlock turns and opens his mouth but before he can deny everything his phone starts to ring. He irritably whips his bow down again, puts it on the seat beside him and fishes his phone out of his jacket pocket.

[Sherlock Holmes.] He listens for a moment, then his expression intensifies. [Of course. How could I refuse?] standing up and switching off the phone as he puts his violin onto the seat, he heads for the door. “Lestrade. I’ve been summoned. Coming?”

“If you want me to.” I said.

“Of course.” He picks up his coat, he turns back to me. “I’d be lost without my blogger.”

TPSH

Scotland Yard Eiric pov

The boys had just arrived at the Yard and we were following Lestrade across the general office as he led us to his office.

“You like the funny cases, don’t you? The surprising ones.” Lestrade said to Sherlock, who I’ve been giving the silent treatment to, for now.

“Obviously.”

“You’ve love this. That explosion . . .” Sherlock and I briefly exchanged glares with Sally dear as we walk past her desk.

“Gas leak, yes?” he asked.

“No.” Lestrade told him.
“No?” he looked at us with a raised eyebrow.

“No. It was made to look like one.” I spoke up.

“What?” John questioned. We were now in Lestrade office and Sherlock stops and stares down at a white envelope lying on the desk.

“Hardly anything left of the place except a strong box – a very strong box and inside it was this.” He points to what Sherlock’s looking at.

“You haven’t opened it?” he asked.

“It’s addressed to you, isn’t it?” I said coolly. Sherlock reaches towards the envelope.

“We’ve X-rayed it. It’s not booby-trapped.” I sniggered quietly at Lestrade quip. Sherlock hesitated slightly.

“How reassuring!” he picks up the envelope and takes it across the room to another table which had an angle poised lamp on it. Holding the envelope up close to the bulb he examines both sides carefully. On the front in elegant handwriting are the words “Sherlock Holmes”. “Nice stationery. Bohemian.”

“What?” Lestrade asked.

“From the Czech Republic. No fingerprints?”

“No.”

“She used a fountain pen. A Parker Duofold – iridium nib.” He looks closely at the writing.

“She?” John repeated.

“Obviously. I’ve already told them that, Holmes.” I replied to them. Sherlock looks at me for a few seconds before he picks up a letter opener from the desk and carefully slits the envelope open. He looks inside and his mouth opens a little in surprise as he reaches in and takes out a pink iPhone.

“But that’s – that’s the phone, the pink phone.” John said in shock, but I could tell it was a brand new phone.

“What, from the Study in Pink?” Lestrade asked him.

“Well, obviously it’s not the same phone but it’s supposed to look like . . .” Sherlock stopped as he realized what Lestrade just said. He turns to face him. Sally dear comes into the room to put some files down on desk near the door. “The Study in Pink? You read his blog?”

“Course I read his blog! We all do. D’you really not know that the Earth goes the Sun?” Sally sniggers loudly. Sherlock, who was taking off his gloves, glared at her as John purses his lips in embarrassment.

“Oh, for the love . . . Sally go suck on Anderson dick in the supply closet!” I growled at her. She shot me a nasty look as she left the room. The boys stare at me, “What?! It’s better to take my anger out on her then one of you lot right now.” I huffed. Sherlock turns his concentration back to the phone.

“It isn’t the same phone. This one’s brand new.” He looks at the connection sockets, none of which have scratches around them. “Someone’s gone to a lot of trouble to make it look like the same
phone, which means your blog has a far wider readership.” He throws an accusatory look at John, who does his best to ignore it. Sherlock switches the phone and immediately gets a voice alert.

[You have one new message.] The message plays but there’s no voice, just the sound of four short Greenwich pips and one longer tone.

“Is that it?” John asked.

“No. that’s not it.” A photograph has also been uploaded to the phone. He opens it as Lestrade and I come across to look over his shoulder. What I see was something I never wanted to see again. The picture was of my bedroom at the Dursley’s house. There sitting on the small mattress was a pair of trainers. The whole room was covered from floor to ceiling in dust. I felt sick.

“What the hell are we supposed to make of that? An estate agent’s photo and the bloody Greenwich pips!”

“It’s a warning.” I croaked. The boys turned to me, I just stared at the phone.

“A warning?” John had a worry look in his eyes.

“Some secret societies used to send dried melon seeds, orange pips, things like that. Five pips. They’re warning us it’s gonna happen again.” Sherlock looks down at the photo again, then turns to me. “Eiric, have you seen this place before?” I nodded and left the room, to my office to get my coat. All three of them follow me.

“We have to take one of the cars. Lestrade, the key please.” I held out my hand after I shrugged my coat on. He hands me the keys and he shrugged his own coat on. Sherlock and I began to walk to the car lot.

“H-hang on. What’s gonna happen again?” John asked as he followed us. Sherlock turned back and raised his hands dramatically. “Boom!” he takes a hold of my hand and I let him, with John and Lestrade behind us.

TPSH

In the car

“So are you going to tell us where we’re going?” Sherlock asked from the back of the car. I just shook my head.

“Potter, where are you taking us?” Lestrade demand me. I looked over to him, then back to the road still not answering.

“Eiric?” I looked into the review mirror to John. “What’s wrong?” I sighed looking back to the road.

“Everything, John just everything.” I could feel a tear streak down my cheek. The car ride was silent after that all the way to Little Whining. Once we were in town, I drove us to Privet Drive and to the Fourth house. I pulled into the driveway.

“Welcome to Number 4, Privet Drive, Little Whining, Surrey.” I stared at the cookie cutter house in front of us. It hadn’t change in years.

“Eiric, how did you know this was the place?” My breath stuttered.
“This was my home, where I lived as a child.” I got out of the car, slowly. I looked up and down the street, everything was the same and it made me ill. I shut the door, softly. I walked up the walkway to the front door and knocked twice. The boys right behind me. The door was open soon, and by my Aunt.

“Hello, how can . . .” she paused as her gaze connected with mine. She narrowed her eyes at me, “You! I thought we told you to never come back here! You freakish girl!” I flinched away just a bit, then glared at her.

“I’m not here on a visit, Aunt Petunia. I’m here on Detective business, now move!” I hissed at her. I pushed past her, I walked into the front hallway a bit looking around. The boys came in after me.

“You can’t do this! I’m calling the police!” I rolled my eyes at her.

“I am the police, you horse face hag.” I scoffed at her.

“Tristyn?” I spin around to see Dudley standing in the living room archway.

“Dudley.” I nodded to him, he steps forward to which I take a step back making him pause.

“Right, sorry. Um . . . this is my wife, Elsa and our daughter she’s holding.” I turn to look at the woman holding the child. I nodded to her as well, but I look closely at the little girl. She turns to look at me, and when she does, I’m shock to see my eyes staring right back at me.

“She’s got . . .” I pointed to my eye. Dudley nodded proudly at me.

“She’s got yours and Aunt Lily’s eyes. She’s also got both of yours gift and names.” I stared at him in shock. I took a step forward.

“Can I hold her?” I asked his wife, she nodded with a happy smile on her face. That’s when Petunia decide to speak up again.

“Get away from my granddaughter, you Freak!” she squawk. I violently jerk back as a hand came into my line of vision.

“Mum!” Dudley yelled at her.

“No, it’s fine. I understand.” I looked around and realized Vernon was missing, “I’m sorry about you’re . . .”

“No, you’re not.” I looked over to Dudley. “You’re not sorry he’s dead but you’re sorry that I lost my father.” I cleared my throat and turned away from all the looks I was getting.

“Right, we just need to visit my old room.” I motion for the boys to follow me. I led them to my old room, I stared at the door. All of the lockets were still there and locked. I began to unlock them and open the door. I turned on the light and there on the bed where the shoes. I walked over to the windows, I reached my hands out towards the lock and paused. I took in a breath and open the windows, I gave a humourless chuckle at what I saw. The bars that Vernon put on them when I was twelve were still there looking rusty.

“Shoes.” John stated the obvious. I started to walk towards the bed, but John holds out a cautionary hand towards me.

“He’s a bomber, remember.” I stopped for a moment, then continued slowly towards the trainers. I lightly sat down on the bed, then put my hands on the mattress and leaned forward. I lowered my
body down as I moved closer to the shoes, and just as my nose is almost touching them, a phone rings. I jumped, and closed my eyes momentarily and let out a breath. I open my eyes and looked over to the boys. I saw Sherlock pull off his glove and take the pink iPhone from his coat pocket and look at the caller ID. He paused for a second, then answers the phone.

[Hello?] He said softly. I stood up from the bed and pulled down my black pencil skirt, brushing off the dust as well.

[H-hello . . . sexy.] A female voice spoke tearfully after taking in a shaky breath. John, Lestrade and I all exchanged puzzled looks as the woman sobs.

[Who’s this?]

[I’ve . . . sent you . . . a little puzzle . . . just to say hi.] She said tearfully. I moved over to Sherlock to listen better.

[Who’s talking? Why are you crying?] He turns to me, a questioning look on his face.

[I-I’m not . . . crying . . . I’m typing . . .] Her voice going shaky and full of tears, [. . . and this . . . stupid . . . bitch . . . is reading it out.] She sobbed again. Sherlock gazed thoughtfully at me.

“The curtain rises.” He said softly. I gave him a look.

“What?” John asked.

“Nothing.” He told John.

“No, what did you mean?” I demanded. Sherlock looked to me and then halfway turned his head towards John.

“I’ve been expecting this for some time.”

[Twelve hours to solve my puzzle, Sherlock . . . or I’m going . . . to be . . . so naughty.] The phone goes dead after that. I looked to the shoes, then to the group that was hanging outside the room.

“Dudley?” I called for him, he stepped forward. “Could you bring me a plastic bag, one that’s big enough for those?” I pointed to the trainers. He gave me a small smile and went off to get the bag. I walked back over to the bed and kicked it out of the way.

“Eiric, what are you doing?” Sherlock asked me. I didn’t answer. I kneed on the floor, then began to knock on the wood listening for the lose floorboard. When I found it, I put some pressure on one side and stuck my hand under the other side. I shimmied it out and placed it to the side. I looked onto the hole it left. I found a letter there laying face up with my name on it. I picked it up and stood up from the ground. I flipped the letter over in my hands looking at both sides, the handwriting looked familiar but it couldn’t be; he was dead. Dudley came back and put the shoes into the bag for us and handed it to Sherlock.

“Dudley, has anyone came here recently?” I asked looking over to him.

“No, Tristyn.” I looked back at the letter confused.

“What about strange activities around Privet Drive?” I walked over to the window and looked outside at the street.

“There’s been nothing weird happening here, not since we were seventeen, Tristyn.” I looked over
to him.

“Then how?” I asked no one.

“How what, Eiric?” John asked. I looked back out the window. “Eiric, how did the bomber know this was your room?”

“I-I . . . The only people who know about this place is my family, so it’s not them. But this letter, the handwriting . . . Dudley, look at it.” I handed him the letter. He stared at it for a second and then snapped his eyes back to me.

“No, that’s not possible. Tristyn, he’s dead. I went to the funeral, I saw the body. He can’t be alive.” Dudley gave me the letter back, a look of sorrow on his face.

“Who’s dead?” Lestrade asked us. I looked to them.

“I had . . . well, at the time I didn’t know, but I had an older half-brother. His name was Richard Brooks. He was killed when I was seventeen and he would be Sherlock and John’s age right now. This is his handwriting.” I showed them the letter. “It’s probably a goodbye letter and been in here for years. It’s probably nothing to get my hopes up on. I’ll trash it when we get home.” I stuck it into my pocket. I walked out of the room with everyone following me down the stairs.

“We’ll be leaving now. I’ll try to visit more, Dudley. If that’s alright with you? I could help you and Elsa with your little girl.” I turned to the couple.

“Of course, we would love to have you over, and your son as well, Tristyn.” He stuck his hand out to me. I looked at it for a moment, then I shocked everyone in the room. I went up to Dudley and hugged him, then Elsa and Tristyn.

“We’re family, we don’t handshake, we hug.” I said with a smirk. He gave a loud chuckle. I nodded and waved, walking out the front door to the car. I started the car and waited for everyone to get settled. Once they were done I pulled out of the driveway and started driving down the street.

“Well, that was a wonderful family reunion. You could just feel the love in the air, like when Sherlock and Mycroft are in the same room; you just feel so giddy!” I laughed at John’s sarcasm.

“Shut up, John.” I giggled to him. He winked at me through the mirror. I shook my head, something out the corner of my eye caught my attention. I looked to it and did a double take, I stomped on the brakes and parked the car. I hurriedly unbuckled myself and exited the car, looking around the street.

“Richard.” I whispered.
Chapter 14

St. Barts Eiric pov

I brought the boys to the lab after dropping Lestrade off at the Yard. I had seated at a desk across from Sherlock and John, holding a cup of coffee that John brought me. Sherlock was putting on a pair of latex gloves, closely looking at the trainers. I watch him pick one of the trainers, examining the laces carefully and peering at the shoe from all direction, he then digs out some mud from the treads in the sole and puts it into a dish. He put the shoe down again, looking at them thoughtfully. John had left a few minutes ago to get something to eat, leaving Sherlock and I alone with each other. So far, Sherlock had been ignoring my presence, but then again I was doing the same. I took a sip of the coffee in my hands, only to spit it back into the cup. I hadn’t realize that it went cold, I push it away carefully not to spill on the desk; Molly would probably have my head if I messed something up. I looked back over to Sherlock only to connect gazes. We stared at the other for a good solid two minutes before he looked away. I sighed, this couldn’t continue if we wanted to solve this case or anything else really.

“Sherlock?” I asked quietly, getting up and walked over to him. I stood in front of him on the other side of the table. He didn’t look up from the shoe, nor answer. “Sherlock, I’m sorry for how I acted earlier this morning and everything else that followed. I acted like a bitch to you when I shouldn’t have. I was embarrassed about the whole Mycroft thing, I should have realize earlier. . . . I’m rambling now,” I looked away, “I’ll just go back to the flat, I know when I’m not wanted.” I turned and walked back to my desk, picking up my grey Vivienne Westwood Anglomania cardigan. I slipped it back over my black tank top and button the two buttons. I picked up my coat and began to head out. I was a foot or two away from the doors when Sherlock took a hold of my wrist.

“Sherlock?” I asked as I turn to look at him, my eyebrows furrowed.

“I was in the wrong as well, Eiric. You asked about him and I didn’t say anything, for that I’m sorry. I will always wanted you around, Eiric. You understand what I’m saying, what I’m thinking, how I work and it’s like a breath of fresh air to have that same intelligence around, that also knows emotion. So please, stay. I may need your help.” He gave me a crooked smile. I nodded my head and gave a smile of my own. Sherlock took my coat from me and hung it over his and led me to a new lad station. John came back from eating about three minutes afterwards. Sherlock and I were sitting at a bench, he was looking into a microscope while I was working a computer screen that was scanning our tests. John wandered up and down on the other side of the bench that was closest to me and it was getting annoying.

“So, who d’you suppose it was?” John asked us. A phone text alert sounded off.

“Hmm?” Sherlock said absently, he didn’t reacted to the alert.

“The woman on the phone – the crying woman.” I told him. I watch the screen pop up with ‘NO MATCH’ as a result again and hit the retest button again.

“Oh, she doesn’t matter. She’s just a hostage. No lead there.” I elbowed Sherlock in the ribs wince.

“For God’s sake, I wasn’t thinking about leads.” John said exasperated.

“You’re not going to be much use to her.” Sherlock glanced across to me, I shook my head as the scanner continues to put up ‘NO MATCH’ results. He nods and looks back into the microscope.
“Are they trying to trace it, trace the call?” John asked.

“The bomber’s too smart for that.” I said as the same phone from before trills another text alert.

“Pass me my phone.” Both John and I look around the room.

“Where is it?” I asked him.

“Jacket.” I saw John straighten up slowly, his entire body going rigid in disbelief and his eyes broadcasting the message ‘I’m going to kill him.’ I mouthed ‘I got it.’ to him and received a tight smile and nod. I moved my left leg to the other side of the bench, allowing myself to straddle it. I moved closer to Sherlock, knowing that he was watching me from the corner of his eye. I took the side of the jacket closer to me and felt around in the inside pockets till I find the phone and pull it out.

“Text from your brother.” I said as I looked at it.

“Delete it.” He murmured.

“Delete it?” I asked confused.

“Missile plans are out of country now. Nothing we can do about.” I looked at the message again.

[Re: Bruce-Partington Plans
Any progress on Andrew West’s death? - Mycroft]

“Well, Mycroft thinks there is. He’s texted you eight times. Must be important.” John said as he read over my shoulder. Sherlock raised his head in exasperation.

“Then why didn’t he cancel his dental appointment?”

“His what?” John sighed tiredly.

“Where Sherlock likes to text, Mycroft likes to talk. He just likes hearing his own voice.” I took pity on him.

“She right, Mycroft never texts if he can talk. Look, Andrew West stole the missile plans, tried to sell them, got his head smashed in for his pains. End of story. The only mystery is this: why is my brother so determined to bore me when somebody else is being so delightfully interesting?” Sherlock looks back into the microscope again. I looked at Sherlock, hoping that he seriously didn’t just say that.

“Try and remember there’s a woman here who might die.” I turned off his phone.

“What for?” he looks to me. “This hospital’s full of people dying, Eiric. Why don’t you go and cry by their bedside and see what good it does them?” I jerked back as if he just slapped me, John looked away in disbelief. Unmoved but I could tell by his eyes that he regretted saying that to me instantly after seeing my reaction. He looked back into the microscope but the computer finally beeps a result. I get off the bench and move to the other side of the table, to get a bit of space from Sherlock. “Ah!” he said delighted. He looked across the screen which was flashing ‘SEARCH COMPLETE’. Then Molly shows up, coming through the door.

“Any luck?” she asked.

“Oh, yes!” he said triumphantly. As Molly comes over to look at the screen, a man in his twenties,
wearing slacks and a T-shirt, comes through the door and then stops apologetically.

“Oh, sorry. I didn’t . . .”

“Jim! Hi!” Jim makes to leave the room, which he should, but Molly stops him. “Come in! Come in!” I saw Sherlock look over Molly briefly, running his eyes down her body and he apparently makes an instant deduction, then looked back into that damn microscope. Molly starts making introductions as Jim closes the door and walks over to her. “Jim, this is Sherlock Holmes.”

“Ah!” John and I turn towards them, Molly gives me a slight glare but a blank look to John. “The red head is Eiric Potter, she also works down here. And, uh . . . sorry.” She said apologetically to John. I turned back to Sherlock and ignored them, missing Jim’s eyes widening in shock as he looked at me.

“John Watson. Hi.”

“Hi.” His eyes were locked on Sherlock’s back, glazing at him admiringly. ‘Molly, has a gay boyfriend!’ I sang-sung in my head. “So you’re Sherlock Holmes. Molly’s told me all about you. You on one of your cases?” he walked closer to Sherlock, who tensed a bit, forcing John to step out of his way.

“Jim works in I.T. upstairs. That’s how we met. Office romance.” She and Jim giggled.

“Ugh, gag me.” I muttered loud enough for them to hear.

“Shut up, Eiric.” Molly snapped at me. I smirked at her. Sherlock glanced briefly round at Jim before returning to look into the ‘scope, but not before he gave me nod. He came to the same deduction I did.

“Gay.” We muttered in union. Molly’s smile fades.

“Sorry, what?” Sherlock raised his head as he realized what we just done. I could care less, really. She needed to know the truth and the truth hurt sometimes.

“Nothing.” He smiles falsely at Jim. “Um, hey.”

“Hey.” Jim smiled admiringly at him. He lowered his hand knocking a metal dish off the edge of the table and scrambled to pick it up. “Sorry! Sorry!” he giggled nervously. John turned away, face-palming, I crossed my arms, rolling my eyes, as Sherlock looks on in irritation while Jim puts the dish back on the table and then scratches his arm as he wanders back towards Molly. I moved back to Sherlock and stood behind him. I wrapped my arms around his shoulders and plopped my chin on top of his head. He relaxed instantly, not as tense as last time I did this. I looked over to Jim and looked at him properly, I froze in shock once I did. “Well, I’d better be off. I’ll see you at the Fox, ‘bout six-ish?”

“Yeah!” he stops beside Molly, putting a hand on her back, and looked back towards Sherlock and me. I saw his eyes narrow just a bit.

“Bye.”

“Bye.” Molly said softly.

“It was nice to meet you.” Jim said to Sherlock, who ignored him as Jim gazed at him wistfully. I was still frozen at see a look-a-like of Richard. John brook the embarrassing silence.
“You too.” Jim blinks at him, looking awkward, then turns and leaves the room. Molly waits until the door closed then turned to Sherlock and I.

“What’d you mean, gay? We’re together.” She gestures back to the door. I’ll let Sherlock handle this. Sherlock looked across to her, moving his head under my chin.

“And domestic bliss must suit you, Molly. You’ve put on three pounds since I last saw you.” He said.

“Two and a half.”

“Nuh, three.”

“Sherlock . . .” John chided.

“He’s not gay. Why d’you have to spoil . . .? He’s not.” She said angrily.

“With that level of personal grooming?” I snorted.

“Because he puts a bit of product in his hair? I put product in my hair.” John said.

“You wash your hair. There’s a difference. No-no – tinted eyelashes; clear signs of taurine cream around the frown lines; those tired clubber’s eyes. Then there’s his underwear.” Sherlock listed off.

“His underwear?” Molly repeated.

“Visible above the waistline – very visible; very particular brand.” I said as I reached for the metal dish as Sherlock reached for the paper slip under it.

“That, plus the extremely suggestive fact that he just left his number under this dish here . . .” he shows her the card that Jim left under the dish. “. . . and I’d say you’d better break it off now and save yourself the pain.” Molly stares at him for a moment, then turns and runs out of the room. Sherlock looked surprised at her reaction.

“Charming, you two. Well done.” John scolded us.

“Just saving her time. Isn’t that kinder?” Sherlock asked.

“Kinder? No, no, Sherlock. That wasn’t kind.” Looking fed up with the conversation, Sherlock puts Jim’s card down and then reaches over and moves one of the trainers on the desk closer to John. I smirked into Sherlock’s hair, having not to let go or move yet.

“Go on, then.” He motion to the shoe.

“Mmm?” John hummed.

“You know what I do. What Eiric does. Off you go.” He sits back, leaning against me and folds his arms expectantly. John makes incoherent negative noises and looks at his watch.

“No.”

“Go on.”

“I’m not gonna stand here so you two can humiliate me while I try and disseminate . . .” I interrupted him, “An outside eye, a second opinion. It’s very useful to us.”
“Yeah, right!” John scoffed.

“Really.” Sherlock stressed. John turned back to us and nods unhappily.

“Fine.” He cleared his throat and picks up a shoe, looking at it and its partner lying on the table. “I dunno – they’re just a pair of shoes.” He immediately corrects himself. “Trainers.”

“Good.” Sherlock looks away and picks up his phone as John continues looking at the trainers. “Umm . . . they’re in good nick. I’d say they were pretty new . . . except the sole has been well-worn, so the owner must have had them for a while.” Sherlock had started to look frustrated when John said they were new, breathes out a silent sigh of relief that his friend isn’t that stupid. I silently giggled into his massive set of curls. “Uh, they’re very nineties – probably one of those retro designs.”


“Well, they’re quite big, so a man’s.” he sounded uncertain.

“But . . .?” Sherlock asked looking up from his phone. John looks at the insides of both shoes and the blue smudges at the sides.

“But there’s traces of a name inside in felt-tip. Adults don’t write their names inside their shoes, so these belonged to a kid.”

“Excellent. What else?” Sherlock and I look at him proudly at that little deduction.

“Uh . . .” he looks at the shoe again, then puts it down. “. . . that’s it.”

“That’s it?” Sherlock asked, John nods.

“How did I do?” John asked us.

“Well, John; really well.” Sherlock paused momentarily, “I mean, you missed almost everything of importance, but, um, you know . . .” he lifts his hand and slowly rotates his wrist to turn his palm up, his expression full of sarcasm. With a look of frustration, John picks up the trainer and gives it to him. Sherlock looks at it closely but then stops before he goes into deduction mode. He turns his chair around, making me let go of him unless I wanted to end up in his lap. He stares hard at me and then held out the shoe to me. I blinked a few times. I took a hold of the shoe, bringing it to my person. “Well? Make a deduction, Eiric.” I stood ridged for a few seconds at how he sounded like Mycroft when he spoke just then.

“The owner loved these. Scrubbed them clean, whitened them where they got discoloured. Changed the laces three . . .” I looked at the laces again, “No, four times.” John puts his hands on the desk and lowers his head in despair. Sherlock kept staring at me. “Even so, there are traces of his flaky skin where his fingers have come into contact with them, so he suffered from eczema. Shoes are well-worn, more so inside, which means the owner had weak arches. British-made, fifteen years old.” I slapped the shoe onto the desk and crossed my arms, looking expectedly at Sherlock.

“Fifteen years?” John straightens up.


“But there’s still mud on them. They look new.”
“Someone’s kept them that way. Quite a bit of mud caked on the soles. Analysis shows it’s from Sussex, with London mud overlaying it.” Sherlock looked at the trainer thoughtfully.

“How do you know?” John asked.

“Pollen. Clear as a map reference to us.” I nodded towards the computer screen. Two dots were flashing on a map of Britain, one around the borders of East and West Sussex and the other to the south-east of London. “South of the river, too. So, the kid who owned these trainers came to London from Sussex fifteen years ago and left them behind.” I shrugged my shoulders to them, “That’s all I can really help with, fifteen years ago I was six. I don’t remember much from that time, most likely because I deleted it or locked it away in my mind castle.” John and Sherlock just stared at me. I shrugged again and moved back to the desk I was sitting at earlier and checked my phone for calls or text.

“So what happened to him?” John asked.

“Something bad.” Sherlock looked up at John, taking his attention away from me. “He loved those shoes, remember. He’d never leave them filthy. Wouldn’t leave them go unless he had to. So: a child with big feet gets . . .” he trailed off, staring ahead of himself. “Oh.” Sherlock said softly. John looks across the lab, trying to see what his friend is looking at, I stared at Sherlock.

“What?” I asked him just as softly.

“Carl Powers.” He replied softly again. I froze at the name, it sounded so familiar. I turned away and stared at my mobile in thought.

“Sorry, Who?” John asked.

“Carl Powers, John.” Sherlock was still staring into the distance.

“What is it?” John asked again.

“It’s where I began.” John and I stared at Sherlock in wonder.

TPSH

We were back in the car on our way to Baker Street. I was driving with Sherlock in the passenger seat and John in the back.

“Nineteen ninety-eight, a young kid – champion swimmer – came up from Brighton for a school sports tournament; drowned in the pool. Tragic accident.” Sherlock turned around in his seat and showed John the front page of a newspaper on his phone. “You wouldn’t remember it. Why should you?”

“But you remember.” John stated.

“Yes.”

“Something fishy about it?” John asked.

“Nobody thought so – nobody except me. I was only a kid myself. I read about it in the papers.” Sherlock told us.

“Started young, didn’t you?”

“The boy, Carl Powers, had some kind of fit in the water, but by the time they got him out it was
too late. But there was something wrong; something I couldn’t get out of my head.” Sherlock
turned back to the front.

“What?” I asked, listening to their conversation.

“His shoes.” He looked at me.

“What about them?” I glanced at him.

“They weren’t there. I made a fuss; I tried to get the police interested, but nobody seemed to think
it was important. He’d left all the rest of his clothes in his locker, but there was no sign of his shoes
. . .” he leans down and picks up the bag containing the trainers “. . . until now.”

TPSH

221 B Sherlock pov

I had shut myself in the kitchen after Eiric dropped us off before heading back to work. I was
sitting at the table with the trainers nearby – still in the bag – while I looked through photographs
and printouts of the newspaper report of Carl Powers’ death from 1998. In the living room on the
other side of the closed doors, John was pacing back and forth before he finally stops and slides
one of the doors open.

“Can I help?” I don’t react to him at all. “There’s only five hours left.” His phone sounds off a text
alert. He gets it out from his trouser pocket and looks at the message.

[Any developments? - Mycroft Holmes]

“It’s your brother. He’s texting me now.” He frowns. “How does he know my number?”

“Must be a root canal.” I said thoughtfully. Putting his phone away, John comes into the kitchen.

“Look, he did say ‘national importance’.” I snort, not looking up from my research.

“How quaint.”

“What is?” he asked.

“You are. Queen and country.”

“You can’t just ignore it.” He said sternly.

“I’m not ignoring it. Putting my best man onto it right now.” I replied.

“Right. Good.” He folds his arms and nods in satisfaction, then looks at me in puzzlement. “Who’s
that?”

TPSH

After I sent John to Mycroft, my phone when off; playing a peculiar song. I picked my phone up
off the table and looked at the caller ID, it showed me a picture of Eiric and Teddy making
ridiculous faces with their names under it. I snorted, but I had to give it to her for being able to
snitch my phone.

[Eiric.] I said after I answered it.
[Sherlock, your brother is texting me nonstop about those stupid plans. If you don’t send John to him right now, I swear to Merlin you’ll regret it.] I wince at the hidden threat.

[Well, you’re in luck then, I just sent him not even a minute ago.] I looked back to the papers on the table.

[Good . . .] I could hear a door open and close from the other line. [Why, yes please do come in, Anderson since you so nicely knocked.] I chuckled at her sarcasm. [What do you want, Anderson.] I couldn’t hear his reply to her. [Sherlock can flirt better then you and he’s a highly functional sociopath, what’s your excuse.] I smiled proudly at myself and at Eiric.

[Get the fucking hell out of my office, you slimy rat!] I heard a resounding smack and a light gasp that was too feminine to come from Anderson. [Lestrade!] I heard running footsteps,

[Potter, what?! What is . . . Anderson, what the hell did you do?!] Well, that was obviously Lestrade. [Eiric, go home for the rest of the day and for tomorrow. Anderson, get your bloody arse to my office now!] I heard a flurry of movement and soon the sound of the streets.

[Sherlock, I’ll talk to you when I get home.] She hung up. I brought the phone away from my ear and looked at it in confusion and anger. People think I don’t know emotions or feel them, they would be dead wrong. I put my phone back on the table and tried to concentrate on my research again for the next twenty minutes till Eiric arrived.

Twenty minutes later, I was still staring at the same spot on the table. I jerked my head up when I heard the front door of the building open and close. I heard Eiric’s heels as she ran up the stairs to my flat. I got up from my seat and walked into the living room, meeting her as she walked in. She looked up to me, her eyes little bit wider than normal and bit brighter. Her left cheek was swelling and already turning into a bruise, she’ll have a bit of a black eye in the morning. I was frozen to my spot in the living room, anger and rage swirling through me, my hands curled into fist at the thought of Anderson hitting my . . . ‘What are we now? Are we a couple?’

“Sherlock?” I snapped out of my brooding at the sound of her voice, it sounded so uncertain. I moved over to her and cupped her face in my hands. I turned her head to the right to look at her cheek better. “Sherlock?” I snapped my eyes to hers as she placed a hand over my right one. “So what’s the verdict, Doctor? Am I going to live another day?” she smile lightly. I chuckled lightly and shook my head.

“It’d be bruise for a while and you’ll have a black eye for a day or two. You’ll have to let it heal the Muggle way.” she pouted at me. I looked back at her cheek, my gaze darkening as I did so. I was coming up with a hundred ways to get back at Anderson.

“Sherlock, it’s okay. I’m fine, everything’s fine.” My gaze darken further.

“It’s not okay, Eiric. You shouldn’t be fine with being smacked.” I watched as her chartreuse eyes darken to an evergreen tree colour.

“And you shouldn’t be fine with being called a freak.” We glared at the other for a while before I gave in and pressed my forehead against hers.

“What are you doing to me?” I asked her, her gaze soften.

“Nothing that you aren’t doing to me.” She looked over to the kitchen, then back to me. “Let’s get back to the case, there’s only a few hours left.” She took my hands off her face and slipped her coat
off, throwing it over my armchair. She took my hand and led me back into the kitchen.

Mycroft office John pov

I was wearing a jacket and tie, sitting in a chair opposite of a desk in a large, rather intimidating office. I look anxiously at my watch as I’ve be waiting here for some time. The door opens and Mycroft walks in, reading a report.

“John. How nice. I was hoping you wouldn’t be long.” I politely stand up as Mycroft walks across to the desk, still looking at the report. “How can I help you?” he walked straight pass me and outs the report down on the desk, waving a hand in my direction to signify that I could sit down again.

“Thank you.” I sit. “Um, well, I was wanting to . . . um, your brother sent me to collect more facts about the stolen plans, the missile plans.” Mycroft looks over his shoulder and smiles at me.

“Did he?”

“Yes.” I smile back a little nervously as Mycroft turns and leans back against the desk. “He’s investigating now.” Mycroft puts his hand to the right side of his mouth as if he’s in pain. “He’s, er, investigating away.” Lowering his hand again, Mycroft smiles as if he doesn’t believe a word of it, and he shouldn’t. “Um, I just wondered what else you can tell me about the dead man.”

“Uh, twenty-seven; a clerk at Vauxhall Cross – er, MI6. He was involved in the Bruce-Partington Programme in a minor capacity. Security checks A-OK; no known terrorist affiliations or sympathies . . . Last seen by his fiancée at ten thirty yesterday evening.”

“Right. He was found at Battersea, yes? So he got on the train.”

“No.”

“What?” I questioned.

“He had an Oyster card . . .” Grimacing, he raised his hand to his mouth again. I frown as I begin to realize that Sherlock may have been right about Mycroft having a root canal filling to one of his teeth. “. . . but it hadn’t been used.”

“Must have bought a ticket.” I said.

“There was no ticket on the body.” Mycroft lowered his hand.

“Then . . .” I trailed off.

“Then how did he end up with a bashed-in brain on the tracks at Battersea? That is the question – the one I was rather hoping Sherlock would provide an answer to. How’s he getting on?”

“He-he’s fine, yes. Oh, and-and it is going . . . very well. It’s, um, you know – he’s completely focused on it.” I grin at Mycroft unconvincingly.

TPSH

221 B Eiric pov

Sherlock had moved to the side table in the kitchen, looking into his microscope. I was staring out into space, bored out of my mind. Mrs. H comes in through the kitchen door with a tray containing
a couple of mugs. As she puts them on the kitchen table, Sherlock looks up.

“Poison.”

“What you going on about?” Mrs. H asked. Sherlock slams his hands down on the side table.

“Clostridium botulinum!” Mrs. H cringes and flees the kitchen. I shot a glare to Sherlock, which he ignores. He looks round at John as he comes in from the living room. “It’s one of the deadliest poisons on the planet!” John looks at him blankly. “Carl Powers!” I snapped my head to Sherlock, “What?”

“Oh, wait, are you saying he was murdered?” John asked. I looked down at the table, ‘No, Richard said it was an accident, he simply had a fit in the water and drowned. He wasn’t murdered, Richard told me so. He wouldn’t lie to me . . . right?’ Sherlock stands up and walks over to where he had hung the laces from the trainers.

“Remember the shoelaces?” he asked us.

“Mmm.” John nodded.

“The boy suffered from eczema. It’d be the easiest thing in the world to introduce the poison into his medication. Two hours later he comes up to London, the poison takes effect, paralyses the muscles and he drowns.” I felt my air flow fasten, ‘Richard wouldn’t do something like this, old girl. Just calm down.’

“What – how-how come the autopsy didn’t pick that up?” John asked.

“It’s virtually undetectable. Nobody would have been looking for it.” Sherlock walked around the table to where his computer notebook is lying. The page is open at the Forum of his own website, The Science of Deduction and he begins to type into the message box.

[FOUND. Pair of trainers belonging to Carl Powers. (1985-1998)] Sherlock straightens up to point to the laces. “But there were still tiny traces of it left inside the trainers from where he put the cream on his feet.” He bends down and continues to type. [Botulinum toxin still present. Apply 221b Baker St.] He sends the message and straightens up again. “That’s why they had to go.” My hands began to shake, ‘Oh Merlin, he lied to me, my brother lied to me.’

“So how do we let the bomber know . . .” John sat at the table.

“Get his attention . . .” Sherlock stuffed his hands into his pockets.

“Mmm-hmm.” Sherlock looked at his watch.

“. . . stop the clock.”

“The killer kept the shoes all these years.” John stated.


“He’s our bomber.” I closed my eyes in absolute dread, ‘My brother is a murderer . . . and he’s still alive.’ The pink phone rings on the side table. Sherlock hurries over to it and switches it on.

[Well done, you. Come and get me.]

[Where are you? Tell us where you are.] Sherlock said loud and clear.
Chapter 15

221B Eiric pov

I was making myself some tea when my phone went off. I reached into my pocket and took my phone out, answering it.

[Potter.] I went to the cabinet holding my cups.

[Eiric, it’s Andy.] I took a cup and closed the cabinet.

[Morning, Andy. How can I help you?] I asked her, I poured the tea into the cup, adding a splash of milk and three sugars in it.

[I’ll be bring Teddy home earlier then plan. Mungos just called need my help with a patient.] I leant back on the counter taking a sip of my tea.

[That’s fine, I was given today off anyway, so you can come over now if you want.] I looked at the clock on the oven, [I’ll make you breakfast?]

[I can do that and that would be lovely, but why do you have today off?] I sighed at the question.

[A co-worker didn’t agree with me and threw a fit . . . sort of.] I finished my tea and went into my room to change into my clothes.

[Hmmm. Well, we’ll be there in about fifteen minutes. See you in a bit.]

[See you.] I hung up and threw my phone onto my bed. I went into my closet and pulled down a pair of white skinny jean and slipped them on. Next, I changed into a black bra and pulled on my Robert Rodriguez leather trim racer back black lace tank. I took my black GUESS over-the-knee boots off the shelve and sat on the bed, putting and zipping them on. I went to my armoire, looking through my earrings as I put my hair in a sideways fish tail braid. I picked out a pair of black and white hanging ears and put those on. I went back to my closet and took out a gray scarf and leather jacket. I took those into the living room and threw them over my couch and went to the bathroom. I brushed my teeth and put on some dark red lipstick and walked out, turning the lights off. I was getting ingredients out when the doorbell rang. I wiped my hands on a dish towel and walked up the stairs. I unlocked my door, walked out and shut it behind me.

“Uh, Hello? Could I help you?” I heard John answer the door.

“Uncle John!” Teddy squealed and launched himself at John’s legs.

“Hey, buddy.” He picks Teddy up. John turns his head just a bit and catches me out the corner of his eyes. “Eiric, do you know her?” he nods his head towards Andy.

“Yes, John, this is Andromeda Tonks, Teddy’s grandmother. Andy, this is John Watson.” I introduce them to each other while taking Teddy out of his arms.

“So you’re the John I’ve been hearing about the last two days. What about Lockey? Was it?” Andy shook hands with John.

“Sherlock? He’s up stairs still.” John said. Andy turned to face me, her eyes widen in shock when
she saw the bruise on my face.

“Eiric!” she rushed over to me and cupped my face. “What happen to you?” she tilted my face to look at it better.

“I told you on the phone. My co-worker didn’t agree with what I said and had a fit... basically.” I shrugged my shoulders.

“Does Severus know?” I shook my head. “I won’t tell him, cause he’ll go bat crazy.” I laughed at that as she smirked. I pulled my face out of her hands and turned to John.

“Would you like to join us for breakfast, John?” I looked to the stairs, “You’re invited to Sherlock.” Sherlock came down the rest of the steps.

“When did you notice?” he asked. Teddy reached out to him.

“Lockey!” Sherlock took Teddy out of my arms.

“Sherlock, your six feet tall and as quiet as you can be; the stairs here aren’t the best to be sneaky on.” I grinned at him. He chuckled and turned to Andy, right hand extended to her.

“Sherlock Holmes, pleasure to meet you Mrs. Tonks.” They shook hands.

“Please call me Andy.” He nodded.

“So, breakfast?” Sherlock asked as he walked towards my flat with Teddy. I shook my head and followed.

“Could you be anymore sociable?” I said sarcastically as we went down the stairs, the door closing behind us.

“I have to say, I’ve never seen her so alive and happy.” Andy spoke to John as they made their way to my flat.

“What do you mean?” John stopped walking.

“I met Eiric when she was seventeen. She was on her way of becoming a harden soldier at the time. She was very tense and wary of me when we first met. I look like my older sister, Bellatrix. She killed our cousin Sirius, who was Eiric’s godfather when she was fifteen, so you could see why. But after the war, she... she changed. Her and my nephew did and it wasn’t for the better.” Andy looked at him.

“She told us that she turned to drugs and alcohol.” He said.

“Yes, she did but she shut everyone out; that’s why Hermione and Ron had to go live with her after the scare.” John looked at her confused.

“She said that they were living with her in the beginning.”

“That’s what she thinks, what we made her think. She didn’t remember the first two years of her house arrest. The person to live with her in the beginning was my nephew and that almost ended in her death.” Andy walked down the stairs into my living room, John right behind her. She looked around the room. “Trying to turn my grandson into a Ravenclaw, are we?” she asked with a smile.

“But of course, Andy.” I smirked at her from the kitchen. She took her coat off and walked over to the sink to wash her hands. “Andy, I said I’d make breakfast, go sit down.” She smiled and took
“Go work on the eggs and bacon, Eiric. I got the pancakes.” I nodded and began to crack some eggs into a frying pan.

“Eiric, Andy was telling me that you lived with her nephew the first two years of your house arrest.” I froze at what John said. I snapped my eyes over to Andy.

“Did she now?” I asked with a bit of steel in my voice.

“Yes, said it almost ended in your death. What did she mean by that?” I glared strongly at her, my knuckles turning white from my grip on the spatula and pan handle.

“I told you and Sherlock that I OD.” I went back to stirring the eggs jerkily.

“I don’t think that’s what really happened though, now.” John stated.

“No, Sherlock. We deserved to know.” I gritted my teeth and took a deep breath in.

“I was engaged to her nephew. He asked me a few weeks after the war was over. I said yes, of course. I’d loved him, and I wanted some happiness for once in my life. I just didn’t realize that he went crazy during the war.” I magicled the eggs to cook themselves and the bacon too. I walked over to the table and sat down in the chair by Sherlock. “He wasn’t the man that I had fallen in love with, at the time I thought it was just the war doings cause that what war does, it changes you. He . . . he started to get angry at the smallest things, we fought almost every day and I just couldn’t handle it. I was an eighteen year old mother with a fiancé that had mental problems. So I turned to drugs and alcohol, I thought it was the only way out.” I ruffled Teddy’s hair as a sad look came into my eyes.

“But it wasn’t an OD that almost took my life, it was him trying to murder me.” I looked over to John and Sherlock with a haunted look. “Draco had an ex that still loved him. So she came to him whenever she could to pressure him into leaving me, it never worked until one day he just broke. He took her into our house, to our bedroom and had sex with her in our bed. I was out with Mycroft that day, we had tea dates or whatever once every week together. I came home and caught them in the act. Draco jumped away from her and rushed over to me, trying to explain but I had enough. The way I was living wasn’t right and it wasn’t right for Teddy either. So I broke the engagement off and kicked them both out of the house. What I did expect was that Draco would take Pansy to his manor and murder her. He came back to my home and broke in.” I shudder at the memory, as Andy placed a plate in front of me.

“He was covered in her blood, he looked so insane. It wasn’t normal, I panicked. I picked Teddy up off the floor and ran to his nursery and call the Aurors. They came immediately and stunted him. He was taken to Azkaban without trial and sentenced to life.” I finished. I helped cut up some of Teddy’s pancakes when I felt a hand rest on my leg. I looked over to Sherlock, he sent me an understanding look and gave my leg a light squeeze. He went back to eating his breakfast. I smiled lightly to myself and started to eat my own breakfast. It was silent expect for the clinking of utensils on the plates.

“You’re a very strong and brave woman, Eiric.” I looked up to John. “I’m very proud to call you a friend and Sherlock should be very lucky of having you for a girlfriend.” I blushed a bright red and looked back down at my plate.
“Thank you, John that means the world to me.” I stole a glance at Sherlock to find he had a blush of his own. I cleared my throat, “I finished reading The Study in Pink.”

“What’d you think?” John asked leaning forward.

“I found it very interesting actually, but I found it odd that you did realize it was the cabby before you two went to Angelo’s.” I looked over to Sherlock, “It was quite obvious that it would have been a taxi driver, they make the best murderer because no one would suspect them. I also found it quite stupid that Sherlock tried to take the pill, which both happen to be poison.” They both snapped their heads towards me. “It’s why I stayed at work a bit later than normal yesterday. I looked into the case and the two pills. I tested them both, there was no good pill. The driver obviously took an antidote before he picked the victim.” I picked up my plate and put it in the sink. I looked over to the clock again. “You boys going to the Yard soon?” I asked them as I took both of their empty plates.

“Yes, we should be going now.” I nodded as I washed the dishes. I felt someone walk up behind me and put their hands on my shoulders. I turn my head, looking over my shoulder. “Be careful, Eiric. The bomber is still out there.” I turn to Sherlock.

“You as well, don’t go getting a big head about this, Sherlock. What this person is doing isn’t a game, people lives are at stake.” I circled my arms around his waist, his hands still holding my shoulders.

“Of course.” He kissed me on the cheek, “See you later tonight.”

“See you soon, don’t go having too much fun without me, now.” I gave him a kiss on the cheek as well. He nodded to John, walked over to Andy and shook her hand again.

“Again it’s a pleasure to meet you, Andy.” She gave him a smile. He ruffled Teddy’s hair, “Be good for your mum, Teddy. Come, John.” John waved to us and they both left to go to the Yard. I looked over to Andy with my arms crossed.

“I need to get going as well.” She gets up from the table and puts on her coat. “Eiric, I’m sorry for telling John about him.” I waved a hand to her.

“No problem, call me if you need anything.” I nodded and she apparated out. I turned to Teddy.

“So what to do now, Teddy?” I asked him.

“Park!” I laughed and nodded in agreement.

TPSH

Yard Sherlock pov

We were in Lestrade’s office now after having breakfast at Eiric’s. I was standing at the window with my hands raised in front of my mouth, my fingers tapping together. John was sitting opposite of Lestrade at his desk.

“She lives in Cornwall. Two men broke in wearing masks, forced her to drive to the car park and decked her out in enough explosives to take down a house.” He looks up to me as I walk over to the desk. “Told her to phone you. She had to read out from this pager.” Lestrade puts the pager onto
the desk in front of John, who picks it up to look at it.

“And if she deviated by one word, the sniper would set her off.” I said.

“Oh. Elegant.” John raised his head and sighs in exasperation.

“But what was the point? Why would anyone do this?” Lestrade asked.

“Elegant?”

“Or if you hadn’t solved the case.” John spoke. I walk back to the window, speaking softly.

“Oh – I can’t be the only person in the world that gets bored.” The pink phone beeps a message alert. John turns round to me as I activated the phone.

[You have one new message.] As I walk towards Lestrade’s desk, the phone sounds the Greenwich pips again, but this time there are three short pips and one long one.

“Four pips.” John pointed out.

“First test passed, it would seem. Here’s the second.” I show them a new photograph. It’s a close-up of a car with its driver’s door open and number plate clearly visible. John and Lestrade get up to take a closer look, and outside in the main office phone rings. “It’s abandoned, wouldn’t you say?”

“I’ll see if it’s been reported.” As Lestrade picks up his phone, Donovan comes to the office holding another phone.

“Freak, it’s for you.” I walked over to the door and take it from her. ‘She lucky Eiric’s not here.’ John sits down again and I walk out into the general office and raised the phone to my ear.

[Hello?] The frightened voice of a young man comes over the phone.

[It’s okay that you’ve gone to the police.] [Who is this? Is this you again?]

[But don’t rely on them, or her.] I snapped my head up at that, horror flashed cross my face. In Lestrade’s office, John looks round and sits up as he sees the look on my face. [Clever you, guessing about Carl Powers. I never liked him.] I look round sharply at this. [Carl laughed at me, so I stopped him laughing.] John comes out of the office and walked closer to me, looking at me in concern.

[And you’ve stolen another voice, I presume.] I said into the phone.

[This is about you and me.] I heard a bus noisily drive by.

[Who are you?] I heard more traffic sounds. [What’s that noise?]

[The sounds of life, Sherlock. But don’t worry . . . I can soon fix that. You solved my last puzzle in nine hours. This time you have eight.] In the office, Lestrade is talking into the phone.

“Okay . . . Great.” Putting the phone down, he heads towards the door. “We’ve found it.” The phone had gone dead. I turned and followed Lestrade.
Close to the river, the police have arrived at a large open space where the car was found. Forensics officers in protective clothing are working on the car as Lestrade leads me towards it. John and Donovan were walking along behind us.

“The car was hired yesterday morning by an Ian Monkford. Banker of some kind; City boy. Paid in cash.” Lestrade consulted some notes. I look closely as we passed a woman talking with a female police officer. “Told his wife he was going away on a business trip, but he never arrived.” As Lestrade and I reached the passenger door of the car, Donovan turns to John.

“You’re still hanging round him.” She stated.

“Yeah, well . . .”

“Opposites attract, I suppose.” She said.

“No, we’re not . . . he’s with Eiric.”

“You should get yourself a hobby – stamps, maybe. Model trains. Safer.” She goes to stand beside Lestrade as I lean into the car to look at the large amount of blood smeared over the island between the two front seats. I open the glove box.

“Before you ask, yes, it’s Monkford’s blood. The DNA checks out.” I find a business card in the glove box and take it out. Closing the lid as I straighten up.

“No body.” I said.

“No yet.” Donovan spoke up.

“Get a sample sent to the lab.” I said to Lestrade. He nods and I walk away. Lestrade turns to Donovan and looks at her pointedly. She stares back at him indignantly but he holds the look and she grunts in exasperation and stomps away. I walk over to the woman who was talking with the police officer. “Mrs. Monkford?” She turns to me tearfully.

“Yes.” She looks at John and me, and sighs. “Sorry, but I’ve already spoken with two policemen.”

“No, we’re not from the police; we’re . . .” I hold a hand out to her, my voice tearful and tremulous. “Sherlock Holmes. Very old friend of your husband’s we, um . . .” as she shakes my hand, I look down as if I was fighting back my tears. “. . . we grew up together.”

“I’m sorry, who? I don’t think he ever mentioned you.”

“Oh, he must have done. This is . . . this is horrible, isn’t it?” I said still tearful. John looks away, trying somewhat unsuccessfully to keep his face neutral. “I mean, I just can’t believe it. I only saw him the other day. Same old Ian – not a care in the world.” I smiled tearfully at her.

“Sorry, but my husband has been depressed for months. Who are you?”

“Really strange that he hired a car. Why would he do that? It’s a bit suspicious, isn’t it?” by now I had tears running down my cheeks.

“No, it isn’t. He forgot to renew the tax on the car, that’s all.”
“Oh, well, that was Ian! That was Ian all over!”

“No it wasn’t.” instantly my fake persona drops and I look at her intensely.

“Wasn’t it? Interesting.” I turn and walked away. She glares after me as I head for the police tape with John following. The female police officer goes over to her.

“Who was I talking to?”

“Why did you lie to her?” John asked me at we ducked under the tape.

“People don’t like telling you things, but they love to contradict you. Past tense, did you notice?” I said taking my gloves off to wipe the tears from under my eyes.

“Sorry, what?”

“I referred to her husband in the past tense. She joined in. Bit premature – they’ve only just found the car.” I said.

“You think she murdered her husband?” he asked.

“Definitely not. That’s not a mistake a murderer would make.”

“I see. No, I don’t. What am I seeing?” as we past Donovan, she turns and calls out to John.

“Fishing! Try fishing!” John turns around and gives her an exasperated nod before following me again.

“Where now?” John asked.

“Janus Cars.” I hand the business card to John. “Just found this in the glove compartment.”

TPSH

Janus Cars

John and I were in the office of the car hire company. John sits on the other side of the desk to the owner, taking notes while I look out into the forecourt.

“Can’t see how I can help you gentlemen.” Ewert said.

“Mr. Monkford hired the car from you yesterday.” John said.

“Yeah. Lovely motor. Mazda RX-8. Wouldn’t mind one of them myself!” I walked over to the other side of the desk so that I was standing beside Ewert, then points into the forecourt.

“Is that one?” Ewert turns his head to look and I immediately look closely at the side of the man’s neck.

“No, they’re all Jags. Yeah, I can see you’re not a car man, eh?” I straighten up as Ewert looks round and smiles at John.

“But, er, surely you can afford one – a Mazda, I mean?” I asked.

“Yeah, it’s a fair point. But you know how it is: it’s like working in a sweetshop. Once you start
picking at the liquorice allsorts, when does it all stop, eh?” he starts scratching near the top of his left arm with his right hand. I look at him for a moment, then turns away and head around the room towards the other side of the desk.

“But you didn’t know Mr. Monkford?” John asked.

“No, he was just a client. Came in here and hired one of my cars. No idea what happened to him. Poor sod.” I reached the other side of the desk and stopped.

“Nice holiday, Mr. Ewert?” I asked.

“Eh?”

“You’ve been away, haven’t you?” I asked again.

“Oh, the – the . . .” he gestures towards his tanned face. “No, it’s, er, sunbeds, I’m afraid, yeah. Too busy to get away. My wife would love it, though – bit of sun.”

“Have you got any change for the cigarette machine?”

“What?”

“Well, I noticed one on the way in and I haven’t got any change.” I offer Ewert a bank note. “I’m gasping.”

“Um, well . . .” he reaches into his trouser pocket and takes out his wallet. “Hmm.” He opens the wallet and looks inside.

“No, sorry.”

“Oh well. Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Ewert.” I turn and head for the door. “You’ve been very helpful. Come on, John.” We leave the office and head back across the forecourt.

“I-I’ve got change if you still want to, uh . . .”

“Nicotine patches, remember? I’m doing well.” I patted my upper left arm.

“So what was that all about?” he asked me.

“I needed to look inside his wallet.”

“Why?”

“Mr. Ewert’s a liar.” I stated.

TPSH

St. Bart’s

I had a large drop of blood in a shallow glass dish. Putting it on the desk, I reach into a small bag of equipment, opens a bottle and siphons out some liquid with a small dropper. Bending down to the dish, I squeezed out a drop of the liquid onto the blood, which starts to fizz. As I straighten up, the pink phone rings. The Caller ID reads “BLOCKED”. I pick up the phone and answer it.
[Hello?]

[The clue’s in the name. Janus Cars.]  

[Why would you be giving me a clue?]  

[Why does anyone do anything? Because I’m bored. We were made for each other, Sherlock. Not you and my little raven.]  

[Then talk to me in your voice.] I said softly but tensely at the comment on Eiric.  

[Patience.] The young man said tearfully. The line goes dead. I lower the phone and look thoughtfully into the distance for a while. Finally I look down at the fizzing liquid in the dish, then pick up the dish and look at it more closely. I begin to smile.  

TPSH

Police car pound

John, Lestrade, and I were standing around Monkford’s car.  

“How much blood was on that seat, would you say?” I asked Lestrade.  

“How much? About a pint.”  

“Not ‘about’. Exactly a pint. That was their first mistake. The blood’s definitely Ian Monkford’s but it’s been frozen,” I said.  

“Frozen?” Lestrade asked.  

“There are clear signs. I think Ian Monkford gave a pint of his blood some time ago and that’s what they spread on the seats.”  

“Who did?” John asked.  

“Janus Cars. The clue’s in the name.”  

“The god with two faces.”  

“Exactly.”  

“Mmm.”  

“They provide a very special service. If you’ve got any kind of a problem – money troubles, bad marriage, whatever – Janus Cars will help you disappear. Ian Monkford was up to his eyes in some kind of trouble – financial, at a guess; he’s a banker. Couldn’t see a way out. But if he were to vanish, if the car he hired all over was found with his blood all over the driver’s seat . . .” I said to Lestrade.  

“So where is he?” John asked.  

“Columbia.” I closed the car door.  

“Columbia?!” Lestrade exclaimed.  

“Mr. Ewert of Janus Cars had a twenty thousand Columbian peso note in his wallet. Quite a bit of
change, too. He told us he hadn’t been abroad recently, but when I asked him about the cars, I could see his tan line clearly. No one wears a shirt on a sunbed. That, plus his arm.” I explained.

“His arm?” Lestrade asked.

“Kept scratching it. Obviously irritating him, and bleeding. Why? Because he’d recently had a booster jab. Hep-B, probably. Difficult to tell at that distance. Conclusion: he’d just come back from settling Ian Monkford into his new life in Columbia. Mrs. Monkford cashes in the life insurance and she splits it with Janus Cars.”

“M-Mrs. Monkford?” John asked.

“Oh yes. She’s in on it too.” Lestrade lowers his head with a look of amazement on his face. “Now go ans arrest them, Inspector. That’s what you do best.” I turn to John. “We need to let our friendly bomber know that the case is solved.” I turn and lead John away. Lestrade watches us, still reeling at all of the information that he was just been given. I clenched my fists triumphantly at my sides as I go. “I am on fire!”

TPSH

221B

Sitting at the living room table in our coats, Eiric and Teddy had joined us when we came back. I typed a new message into my website.

[Congratulations to Ian Monkford on his relocation to Columbia.] I send the message. A few seconds later another ‘blocked’ phone call comes in on the pink phone lying on the table beside the computer. I switched the phone on.

[He says you can come and fetch me. Help. Help me, please.] The young man spoke tearfully into the speaker. I look up at Eiric and John and smile at them.
Café Eiric pov

We sitting at a table in a café. John was tucking into a cooked breakfast and had a mug of tea in front of him while Sherlock was drumming his fingers impatiently on the table waiting for the pink phone – which was lying on the table in front of me – to ring and it was getting annoying fast.

“Feeling better?” I asked John.

“Mmm. You realize we’ve hardly stopped for breath since this thing started, except when we had breakfast at your place.” He eats another forkful of food, then looks thoughtfully at Sherlock, “Has it occurred to you . . .?”

“Probably.” Sherlock was staring intently at the phone.

“No – has it occurred to you that the bomber’s playing a game with you? The envelope; breaking into Eiric’s childhood home; the dead kid’s shoes – it’s all meant for you.”

“Yes, I know.” Sherlock smiled slightly, I whacked him on the arm and gave him a look.

“Is it him, then? Moriarty?” John smirked.

“Perhaps.” Sherlock sent him a glare. The pink phone beeps a message alert. Sherlock switches it on and it sounds two short Greenwich pips followed by the longer tone, and a photograph of a smiling middle-aged woman appears on the screen. “That could be anybody.”

“Well, it could be, yeah. Lucky for you, I’ve been more than a little unemployed.” John said to us, I grinned at him.

“How d’you mean?” Sherlock asked.

“Lucky for you, Mrs. Hudson and I watch far too much telly.” He stands up and walks over to the counter.

“It probably doesn’t help that there’s a four year old in the house either.” I giggled to Sherlock. He chuckled lightly at that. Smiling at the woman behind the counter, John picks up a remote control and switches on the small television hung on the wall. He switches channels a couple of times until he finds the right channel. The woman from the photograph is on the screen, partway through her make-over show. She was gesturing to someone just offscreen.

“Thank you, Tyra! Doesn’t she look lovely, everybody, now?” the pink phone rings. “Anyway, speaking of silk purses and sows’ ears . . .” Sherlock picks up the phone and answers it. I listen in.

[Hello?]

[This one . . . is a bit . . . defective. Sorry.] An old woman speaks tremulously in a Yorkshire accent. [She’s blind. This is . . . a funny one.] I make an appalled face. John walks back over to the table. [I’ll give you . . . twelve hours.] Sherlock looks at John as he sits down again.

[Why are you doing this?] Sherlock said into the phone.

[I like . . . to watch you . . . dance.] I flinched away from Sherlock and covered my mouth with my right hand. I could hear her gasp and sob in terror as she finished speaking. Sherlock lowers the
phone and shakes his head at John, then drops the phone onto the table as he turns to look at the TV. He put his arm over my shoulders as we all watched the TV.

“. . . and I see you’re back to your bad habits.” As the footage continues, a voiceover replaces her voice and a news headline at the bottom of the screen reads: Make-over Queen Connie Prince dead at 48. “. . . continuing onto the sudden death of the popular TV personality, Connie Prince. Miss. Prince, famous for her make-over programmes, was found dead two days ago by her brother in the house they shared in Hampstead . . .”

TPSH

St. Bart’s

Connie Prince’s body has been laid out on a table in the morgue, with a sheet covering her and leaving only her arms and upper chest bare. Lestrade leads us into the room, reading from a file as he goes.

“Connie Prince, fifty-four. She had one of those make-over shows on the telly. Did you see it?” He asked Sherlock.

“No.”

“Very popular. She was going places.” Lestrade said.

“Not any more. So: dead two days. According to one of her staff, Raoul de Santos, she cut her hand on a rusty nail in the garden. Nasty wound.” We look at the deep cut in the webbing between her right thumb and index finger. “Tetanus bacteria enters the bloodstream – good night Vienna.”

“I suppose.” John shrugged. I looked at the wound again.

“Something’s wrong with this picture.” I spoke up from my bent over position holding the wound close to my eyes, looking at it in all directions. “Can’t be as simple as it seems, otherwise the bomber wouldn’t be directing us towards it. Something’s wrong.” I said again straightening up. Sherlock narrows his eyes as he looks down at the body, then bends closer to look along Connie’s right arm as he takes his magnifier from his pocket. There are several scratches on her upper arm which look like claw marks. He moves up to her face and notices some tiny pinpricks on her forehead just above her nose. He looks at them through the magnifier. “John?” I asked.

“Mmm.” He looks to me.

“The cut on her hand: it’s deep; would have bled a lot, right?” I pointed to it.

“Yeah.” He nodded.

“But the wound’s clean – very clean, and fresh.” I stated. Sherlock looks up, his eyes flickering as he thinks it through, then he straightens up and clicks the magnifier closed.

“How long would the bacteria have been incubating inside her?” He asked John.

“Eight, ten days.” Sherlock quirks a one-sided grin and we turn to John, waiting for him to put it all together. It doesn’t take him long. “The cut was made later.”

“After she was dead?” Lestrade asked.

“Must have been. The only question is, how did the tetanus enter the dead woman’s system?” I
asked. John looks along the body thoughtfully.

“You want to help, right?” Sherlock asked John.

“Of course.” He said.

“Connie Prince’s background – family history, everything. Give me data.” Sherlock told him.

“Right.” John turns and leaves the room. Sherlock and I look down at Connie’s body one more time, before we turn and head towards the door.

“There’s something else that we haven’t thought of.” Lestrade spoke up. I halted and turned to him, waiting for him to say more.

“Is there?” Sherlock said casually. I shot a glare at him.

“Yes. Why is he doing this, the bomber?” Sherlock stops, keeping his back to Lestrade and looked a little anxious. “If this woman’s death was suspicious, why point it out?” I looked back over the body with a frown.

“Good Samaritan.” Sherlock said nonchalantly, over his shoulder. He tries to move away but Lestrade persisted.

“. . . who press-gangs suicide bombers?”

“Bad Samaritan.”

“Sherlock!” they both snapped their heads towards me, I leveled a glare at Sherlock. “He’s serious, Sherlock. I’m being serious as well, Sherlock. This isn’t a game, innocent lives are on the line.”

“She right. Listen: I’m cutting you slack here; I’m trusting you – but out there somewhere, some poor bastard’s covered in Semtex and is just waiting for you to solve the puzzle. So just tell me: what are we dealing with?” Sherlock looks away thoughtfully, then smiles with delight.

“Something new.” My eyes widen and mouth drops open in absolute shock at what he said.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

The wall behind the sofa is covered with paperwork: maps, photographs of Connie Prince – both when she was alive and pictures taken in the morgue – photos of Carl Powers, press cuttings and various sheets of paper with notes scribbled on them. Pieces of string are pinned between some of the exhibits, linking them together. I was pacing back and forth in front of the sofa as Lestrade stands nearby. Eiric was sitting in John’s armchair, glaring silently at the fireplace.

“Connection, connection, connection. There must be a connection.” I muttered under my breath. I stop and gesture towards various spots on the display on the wall as I speak.

“Carl Powers, killed fifteen years ago. The bomber knew him; admitted that he knew him. The bomber’s iPhone was in stationery from the Czech Republic. First hostage Cornwall; the second from London; the third from Yorkshire, judging by her accent. What’s he doing – working his way round the world? Showing off?”

“Remind you of anyone, Sherlock.” I looked over my shoulder to Eiric, her glare now on me. The pink phone rings. I take it from my pocket and see that the Caller ID again reads
“NUMBER BLOCKED”. I answer it.

[You’re enjoying this, aren’t you? Joining the . . . dots.] She sobs. [Three hours: boom . . . boom.] She cries in terror, then the phone goes dead. I look at Lestrade for a moment, then switched the phone off. I put it back in my pocket and raise my hands to my mouth in the prayer position, concentrating on the wall in front of me.

TPSH

Prince’s house John pov

In a beautifully and elegantly decorated house, a hairless cat meows as it wanders about on a sofa. Kenny Prince, a man in his late fifties who is wearing a very fancy purple shirt which will never rival Sherlock’s which Eiric would say if she saw it, comes into the room. Behind him the much younger ‘houseboy’ Raoul stops at the doorway and gestures to me to go in.

“We’re devastated. Of course we are.” As I walk into the living room, Kenny reaches the other side of the room and turns back, propping his arm on the mantelpiece. Looking a little uncomfortable, I sit down on the sofa beside the cat.

“Can I get you anything, sir?” Raoul asked me.

“Er, no. No, thanks.” Raoul looks across the room to Kenny, who smiles at him. Raoul returns the smile, then turns and leaves the room.

“Raoul is my rock. I don’t think I could have managed.” He looks down sadly. “We didn’t always see eye to eye, but my sister was very dear to me.” The cat has climbed onto my lap and meows loudly in protest as I pick it up and put it down beside me.

“And-and to the public, Mr. Prince.” I said.

“Oh, she was adored. I’ve seen her take girls who looked like the back end of Routemasters and turn them into princesses.” I look down in frustration as the cat climbs onto my lap again. “Still, it’s a relief in a way to know that she’s beyond this veil of tears.” I’m nervously holding the cat as it purrs contentedly on my lap.

“Absolutely.” I said awkwardly.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

Mrs. Hudson had joined us and was standing between Lestrade and me as we face the paper-covered wall. I was talking into my phone.

[Great . . . Thank you. Thanks again.] I turn and walk towards the fireplace, Eiric still sitting in John’s chair but her eyes close as if she’s sleeping; still talking into the phone. Mrs. Hudson looks sadly at a photo of Connie Prince on the wall.

“It was a real shame. I liked her. She taught you how to do your colours.” Lestrade – who had turned and was watching me on the other side of the room – now turns back to Mrs. Hudson.

“Colours?” he asked.

“You know . . .” She gestured down at her clothes. “. . . what goes best with what. I should never
wear cerise, apparently. Drains me.” I just finished my conversation and walked back to join the others.

“Who was that?” Lestrade asked.

“Home Office.” I stare at the wall.

“Home Office?” Lestrade asked surprised.

“Well, Home Secretary, actually. Owes me a favour.” Looking at a photo on the wall of Connie holding an award which presumably she won for her show.

“She was a pretty girl but she messed about herself too much. They all do these days.” Mrs. Hudson looks round at Lestrade. “People can hardly move their faces. It’s silly, isn’t it?!” she giggles as Lestrade smiles politely. She turns to me. “Did you ever see her show?”

“Not until now.” I turn and pick up my computer notebook. I notice Eiric was watching us, silently from her seat. A video starts to play, showing footage of an episode of Connie’s make-over show. She was talking to her brother in the TV studio.

“You look pasty, love!” Connie said to Kenny.

“Ah.” Kenny looks at the audience, “Rained every day but one!”

“That’s the brother. No love lost there, if you can believe the papers.” Mrs. Hudson said.

“Obviously.” Mrs. Hudson and Lestrade jumped at the sound of Eiric voice coming right behind us. I turn to see her looking over my shoulder at the computer, watching the video with sharp eyes.

“So I gather. I’ve just been having a very fruitful chat with people who loved this show. Fan sites – indispensable for gossip.” I said to them.

Connie gestured to the clothes which her brother is wearing. “There’s really only one thing we can do with that ensemble, don’t you think, girls?” she stands up and claps her hands rhythmically as she begins to chant. “Off! Off! Off! Off!” the audience takes up the chant and the clapping. By the third, “Off!” Connie is rhythmically beating her hands quite hard onto Kenny’s back as he drops his jacket to the floor and starts to unbutton his shirt. He grimaces in pain but then turns a false smile towards the audience.

“How ironic. Two bullies dead.” I snapped my head to Eiric, she was looking at the wall, mostly at the Carl Power section.

TPSH

Prince’s House John pov

Kenny was still standing by the fireplace, looking thoughtfully at a framed photograph of Connie holding her TV award. I was sitting on the sofa looking down at my notebook as I talked.

“It’s more common than people think. The tetanus is in the soil, people cut themselves on rose bushes, garden forks, that sort of thing. It left un . . .” I looked up in surprise as Kenny – who has walked across the room unnoticed – now plonks heavily down onto the sofa beside him and stares at me intensely. “. . . treated . . .”

“I don’t know what I’m going to do now.”
“Right.” I said a little nervously.

“I mean, she’s left me this place, which is lovely . . .” I look around the living room with my eyes narrowed, not agreeing with how ‘lovely’ the place might be. “. . . but it’s not the same without her.”

“That’s why my paper wanted to get the, um, the full story straight from the horse’s mouth. You sure it’s not too soon?” I asked as I fidgeted to move further away from Kenny, but unable to do so,

“No.” he said.

“Right.”

“You fire away.” He was still staring intensely at me. The cat meows and trots across the carpet. I watched it as I reached up to rub the side of my nose. I pull my hand away again when I suddenly realized something and quickly raised my hand to my nose once more, pretending to rub it as I quietly sniff at my fingers and look towards the cat again. I smile round nervously at Kenny.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

Mrs. Hudson had left the room but Eiric, Lestrade and I were still standing in front of the wall display. My phone rings and I fish it out of my jacket pocket, looked quickly at the Caller ID and then hold the phone to my ear.

[John.]

[Hi. Look, get over here quickly. I think I’m onto something. You’ll need to pick up some stuff first. You got a pen?]

[I’ll remember.]

TPSH

Prince’s House John pov

Kenny was primping in front of the mirror near the fireplace when the entrance door shuts. I put down my teacup.

“That’ll be them.” I said.

“What?” Raoul showed Sherlock and Eiric into the room. Sherlock had a large bag over his should and Eiric was carrying a long narrow case which was designed to hold a photographic tripod. They walked over to Kenny.

“Ah, Mr. Prince, isn’t it?” Sherlock asked.

“Yes.”

“Very good to meet you.” Sherlock said.

“Yes; thank you.” They shake hands, Sherlock looking closely at Kenny’s hand as he does so.

“So sorry to hear about . . .” Sherlock released his hand.
“Yes, yes, very kind.” Kenny said flippantly. He looked over to Eiric, his eyes widening a bit. “Aren’t you a beauty.” Eiric gave him a small smile and stepped forward and shook hands with him, as well. “My sister would have loved you, Miss?”

“Holmes.” Sherlock and I snapped our heads towards them, “Lily Holmes, I help my husband with his photo shoots.” She pointed to Sherlock when Kenny released her hand.

“She’s a very lucky man to have caught you.” She looked at Sherlock with a bright smile.

“I think I’m the lucky one.” She giggled girlishly. I realized what she was doing.

“Shall we, er . . .” Sherlock walked over to the sofa, puts the case down and starts rummaging in his bag. Eiric moves to the sofa as well. Kenny turns back to the mirror and fiddles with his hair again. “You were right. The bacteria got into her another way.” I said quietly.

“Oh yes?” they both smirked at me. Sherlock turned to Eiric, “Good acting skills back there.” She winked at him and began to help him with the camera.

“Yes.”

“Right. We all set?” Kenny turned towards us.

“Um, yes.” I looked at Sherlock and Eiric, who had taken a camera and flashgun out of the bag, and jerk my head towards Kenny. “Can you . . .?” as Kenny leans one arm on the mantelpiece and poses, Eiric gave Sherlock the camera. He walks over to Kenny and starts taking photographs of him.

“Not too close. I’m raw from crying.” The cat meows at Eiric’s feet. She looks down and picks it up.

“Oh, who’s this?” she coos at the cat. Sherlock looks over to her with a slight grin formed on his lips.

“Sekhmet. Named after the Egyptian goddess.” Kenny said with a smile of his own to Eiric.

“How nice! Was she Connie’s?” Eiric puts the cat down.

“Yes.” I reach down towards the cat but Kenny beats me to it, picking the cat up. “Little present from yours truly.” Frustrated, I straighten up, then look at my flatmate.

“Sherlock? Uh, light reading?” I asked.

“Oh, um . . .” he lifts a second flashgun which he was holding in his other hand and holds it towards Kenny, firing it straight into his face. “Two point eight.” Kenny squinches his eyes shut against the light.

“Bloody hell. What do you think you’re playing at?!” I immediately reached out and rub my fingers over one of the cat’s paws. Sherlock keeps firing the flashgun to keep Kenny’s eyes closed. Eiric was covering her mouth so her laughter wouldn’t be heard.

“Sorry.” I lift my fingers away and sniff them as Sherlock continues to fire the flashgun.

“You’re like Laurel and bloody Hardy, you two. What’s going on?” Kenny asked.

“Actually, I think we’ve got what we came for. Excuse us.” I said.
“What?” Kenny questioned.

“Sherlock . . . Lily.”

“What?” they both asked in unison. I grabbed the case from the sofa and headed for the door.

“We’ve got deadlines.” They followed after me.

“But you’ve not taken anything!” ignoring Kenny, we hurry out of the living room and let ourselves out the door. I chuckled delightedly as we walked down the drive and head towards the main road.

“Yes! Ooh, yes!” I chuckled again.

“You think it was the cat.” Sherlock said smiling.

“It wasn’t the cat.” Eiric finished smiling as well.

“What? No, yes. Yeah, it is. It must be. It’s how they got the tetanus into her system. Its paws stink of disinfectant.” I said.

“Lovely idea.” Sherlock said still smiling.

“No, he coated it onto the paws of her cat. It’s a new pet – bound to be a bit jumpy around her. A scratch is almost inevitable. She wouldn’t have . . .”

“I thought of it the minute I saw the scratches on her arm, but it’s too random and too clever for the brother.” Sherlock interrupted me. I chuckled again.

“He murdered his sister for her money.” I said.

“Did he?” Eiric asked.

“Didn’t he?” I looked at her.

“No. It was revenge.” She said.

“Revenge? Who wanted revenge?” I asked.

“Raoul, the houseboy. Kenny Prince was the butt of his sister’s jokes, week in, week out, a virtual bullying campaign. Finally he had enough; fell out with her badly. It’s all on the website. She threatened to disinherit Kenny. Raoul had grown accustomed to a certain lifestyle, so . . .” Sherlock said. I stopped and turned to them.

“No, wait, wait. Wait a second.” They stopped as well. “What about the disinfectant, then, on the cat’s claws?”

“Raoul keeps a very clean house. You came through the kitchen door, saw the state of that floor, scrubbed to within an inch of its life. You smell of disinfectant now. No, the cat doesn’t come into it.” Eiric told me. I pull my jacket up to sniff at it as Sherlock looks towards the main road.

“Raoul’s internet records do, though. Hope we can get a cab from here.” Sherlock said as he walks off with Eiric by his side. I sighed in exasperation and a touch of disappointment that I hadn’t solved the case for once. I glare at my friends’ backs and then follow them.

TPSH
Sherlock walked into the main office brandishing a folder at Lestrade, with John and me behind him.

“Raoul de Santos is your killer. Kenny Prince’s houseboy. Second autopsy shows it wasn’t tetanus that poisoned Connie Prince – it was botulinum toxin.” He puts the folder on the desk. Lestrade reaches for it, Sherlock leans closer to him. “We’ve been here before. Carl Powers? Tut-tut. Our bomber’s repeated himself.” Lestrade walks towards his office, Sherlock following. John and I stare at them in surprise.

“So how’d he do it?” Lestrade asked.

“Botox injection.”

“Botox?” Lestrade turned back to Sherlock.

“Botox is a diluted form of botulinum. Among other things, Raoul de Santos was employed to give Connie her regular facial injections. My contact at the Home Office gave me the complete records of Raoul’s internet purchases.” He pointed to the folder. “He’s been bulk ordering Botox for months.” Nearby, John and I have been continuing to stare at Sherlock, our expressions becoming angrier. “Bided his time, then upped the strength to a fatal dose.”

“You sure about this?” Lestrade asked.

“I’m sure.” Sherlock said.

“All right – my office.” Lestrade turns and walks towards his office. Sherlock starts to follow but I stopped him.

“Sherlock, how long?” I asked trying to keep my anger down.

“What?” he asked.

“How long have you known?” John asked from beside me.

“Well, this one was quite simple, actually, and like I said, the bomber repeated himself. That was a mistake.” He tries to walk towards Lestrade’s office but John stops him this time.

“No, but Sherl . . . The hostage . . . the old woman. She’s been there all this time.” John said.

“I knew I could save her. I also knew that the bomber had given us twelve hours. I solved the case quickly; that gave me time to get on with other things. Don’t you see? We’re one up on him!” he leaned closer and looked at John intensely. Sherlock heads into Lestrade’s office. John pursed his lips in frustration, then follows. I soon follow.

Sherlock was sitting at Lestrade’s desk where his laptop open to his website. John and Lestrade were standing on either side of him. I was leaning on the wall next to the door. Sherlock types into the message box.

[Raoul de Santos, the house-boy, botox.] He sends the message. My eyes widen in realization as the pink phone rings. Before Sherlock could answer it, I snatched it off the desk. The boys looked at me in shock.

“She’s blind, remember? The bomber picked a blind woman. How would he be able to tell her what to say?” I answered the phone. [Hello?]
[Help me.] The old woman said in an anguished voice.

[Tell us where you are. Addresses.] I had my back to the desk.

[He was so . . . His voice . . .]

[No, no, no, no. Tell me nothing about him. Nothing.] I whispered urgently.

[He sounded so . . . soft.] A single shot fires and the phone instantly goes dead.

[Hello?] I said into the phone. After a minute I brought it away from my ear and looked at it.

“Eiric?” I heard Lestrade asked. I clenched my hand around the phone and then turn to the left and chucked it at the wall.

“God damn it!” I yelled, tears felled from my eyes. I turned around to them. Sherlock bites his lip, Lestrade straightens up and sighs, and John braces his hand on the back of Sherlock’s chair.
Chapter 17

221B Sherlock pov

John and I were sitting in our armchairs, while Eiric was sitting on the couch, watching the news on the TV. I had the pink phone on the left arm of my chair. The windows were still broken and boarded up and the traffic was loud outside. On the TV, the picture shows a high-rise block of flats and the headline at the bottom of the screen reads, “12 dead in gas explosion”. The picture moves to a close-up of the building many floors up which have been torn open and exposed to the air.

“The explosion, which ripped through several floors, killing twelve people . . .”

“Old block of flats.” John briefly glances over his shoulder to me.

“ . . . is said to have been caused by a faulty gas main. A spokesman from the utilities company . . .”

“He certainly gets about.” I heard Eiric mutter from behind us.

“Well, obviously I lost that round – although technically I did solve the case.” I pick up the remote control and mute the volume. Lowering my hand again I look thoughtfully into the distance. “He killed the old lady because she started to describe him.” I raised a finger on my other hand. “Just once, he put himself in the firing line.”

“What d’you mean?” John asked.

“Well, usually, he must stay above it all. He organizes these things but no-one ever has direct contact.” I said to him.

“What . . . like the Connie Prince murder – he-he arranged that? So people come to him wanting their crimes fixed up, like booking a holiday?” John asked me.

“Novel.” I said softly, my face full of admiration. John looks at me in disbelief, then turns and looks at the TV screen again, which has moved on to a new story.

“Huh.” John jerks a finger towards the screen, I look up to see Raoul de Santos being bundled out of Kenny’s house by police officers. The press were there and were shoving each other as they struggle to get close to Raoul and take photographs while interviewers shout questions. The headline on the screen reads: “Connie Prince: man arrested”. Raoul is shoved into the back of a police car. John looks round at me, I was looking down at the pink phone.

“Taking his time this time.” John looks away, clearing his throat uncomfortably. On the TV, the camera is focusing on Kenny who is standing at the window of his house, holding Sekhmet in his arms and watching the chaos outside.

“Anything on the Carl Powers case?” John asked.

“Nothing. All the living classmate check out spotless. No connection.” I told him.

“Maybe the killer was older than Carl?” Eiric said with a bit of hesitation.

“The thought had occurred.” I turn to look at her but she looked to the side.

“So why’s he doing this, then – playing this game with you? D’you think he wants to be caught?” I pressed my fingertips together in front of my mouth and smile slightly.
“I think he wants to be distracted.” John laughs humorlessly, gets out of his chair and heads towards the kitchen.

“I hope you’ll be very happy together.” He said.

“Sorry, what?” I asked with a confused face. John turns back, furious, and leans his hands on the back of his chair. My vision is soon block by a pair of white jean cladded legs. I looked up to Eiric’s face.

“There are lives at stake, Sherlock – actual human lives. Just so I know, do you care about that at all?” she asked, her hands clenched into fist on her hips.

“Will caring about them help save them?” I asked irritably.

“No.” she shook her head.

“Then I’ll continue not to make that mistake.” I looked away from her.

“And you find that easy, do you?” she asked her voice breaking just a bit.

“Yes, very. Is that news to you?” I asked, shooting her a narrow glance.

“No.” she smiled bitterly. “No.” we locked eyes for a moment.

“I’ve disappointed you.”

“That’s good – that’s a good deduction you’ve made about me.” She was smiling angrily now.

“Don’t make people into heroes, Eiric. Heroes don’t exist, and if they did, I wouldn’t be one of them.” We stared at each other.

“If heroes don’t exist, Holmes then what are John and I? What we did? If that’s not being a hero, then what is it?!?” she jabbed a finger in front of my face, I jerked back in my chair. “If there no heroes, then what John and I did is the same as what the people you chase and put behind bars do.” She walked over to the door, “Thank you for showing me the real you . . . I thought you were different but apparently I was wrong. You’re just a darker coloured version of Draco, thank you for stopping me from making the same mistake again.” the door bang closed behind her, a second later the pink phone sounds a message alert.

“Excellent!” I pick up the phone and activate it. The phone sounds one short pip and the long tone, and a photograph appears showing a river bank. “View of the Thames. South Bank – somewhere between Southwark Bridge and Waterloo.” I reach into my jacket for my own phone. “You check the papers; I’ll look online . . .” I look up and see that John is standing with his hands braced on the back of his chair and his head lowered. “Oh, you’re angry with me, so you won’t help.” John raised his head and shrugs. ‘I don’t see why when it’s Eiric who’s angry.’ “Not much cop, this caring lark.” I loudly click the ‘k’ on the last word. ‘How dare she compare me to that murdering psychopath ex-fiancé of hers.’ I dismissed John and Eiric from my mind as I begin a search on my phone.

[Search:
Thames
+ High Tide
+ Riverside]

John stared at me for a moment, then straightens up. I continue my online search, totally focused
on my work, oblivious to the emotional trauma that my flatmate and semi-girlfriend is going through. After a while John sniffs, then walks across the room towards the sofa. I switched to a search for

**Local News**

Greenwich
Waterloo
Battersea

I select Waterloo as John tiredly sits down on the sofa and starts going through the pile of newspapers on the coffee table. My phone shows timed reports from the Waterloo area, giving tide times, police reports, and other information.

“Archway suicide.” John read from a newspaper.

“Ten a penny.” I snapped irritably. John throws me a look as I go back to the Local News option and select Battersea. The page shows “**NO** new reports”. I try “Thames Police Reports” and start scrolling through the duty log.

“Two kids stabbed in Stoke Newington.” John puts that paper aside and looks at another one. “Ah. Man found on the train line – Andrew West.” I looked exasperated as I found no helpful information in the reports.

“Nothing!” I hit a speed dial and the phone begins to ring out. As soon as it’s answered I start talking.

*[It’s me. Have you found anything on the South Bank between Waterloo Bridge and Southwark Bridge?]*

**TPSH**

River Thames

I was pulling on a pair of latex gloves, Lestrade was waiting beside the body.

“D’you reckon this is connected, then? The bomber?” he asked, Eiric stood beside him, giving me the cold shoulder.

“Must be. Odd, though . . .” I hold up the pink phone, “. . . he hasn’t been in touch.”

“But we must assume that some poor bugger’s primed to explode, yeah?” Lestrade asked, Eiric flinched.

“Yes.” I stepped back and take a long look at the man’s body which is now lying on its back on a plastic sheet.

“Any ideas?”

“Seven . . . so far.” I said.

“Seven?!” I walked closer to the body and squats down to examine the man’s closely with my magnifier. I then look at the ripped pocket on the shirt before working my way downwards until I reached the man’s feet. I pulled off one of the socks and examines the sole of the foot with my magnifier. Standing up and closing the magnifier, I looked across to John and jerk my head down towards the body in a mute order to examine it. John looked enquiringly at Lestrade for
permission; the inspector holds his hand out in a ‘be my guest’ gesture. John squats down beside the body and reaches out to take hold of the man’s wrist as I walk a few paces away and gets my phone out.

“He’s dead about twenty-four hours – maybe a bit longer.” He looks up at Lestrade and Eiric. “Did he drown?” I have pulled up on my phone.

[Interpol
Most Wanted
Criminal Organizations
Regional Activities]


“Yes. I agree.” I looked up thoughtfully, then selects the latter option and the screen changes to:

[Czech Republic
Gangs
Information
Most Wanted
Contact]

“There’s quite a bit of bruising around the nose and mouth. More bruises here and here.” Eiric pointed to the bruises to John. I selected the “Most Wanted” option, then looked up as I mentally flashed back to looking at the small round red marks beside the man’s mouth and near his hairline.

“Fingertips.” I said thoughtfully. As John stands up, I shifts to a new search:

[Missing Persons] I scrolled through the options:

[Last 36 hrs
Age
Location
Local Search]

“In his late thirties, I’d say. Not in the best condition.” John said.

“He’s been in the river a long while. The water’s destroyed most of the data.” I quirk a grin. “But I’ll tell you one thing: that lost Vermeer painting’s a fake.”

“What?” I was surprise that it was Eiric that said that, she had a very confused look on her face.

“We need to identify the corpse. Find out about his friends and associates . . .”


“It’s all over the place. Haven’t you seen the posters? Dutch Old Master, supposed to have been destroyed centuries ago; now it’s turned up. Worth thirty million pounds.” I told them.

“Oh.” We all turned to Eiric, she blinked at us.

“What do you mean “oh”?” John asked.

“I was confused when Holmes mention a painting but after he explained I realized I must have
delete the thought of the painting because I’ve been so busy, it wasn’t important for me to remember at the time.” She explained to us. I smirked while the other two just nodded.

“Okay. So what has that got to do with the stiff?” Lestrade asked.

“Everything. Have you ever heard of the Golem?” I said grinning briefly.

“Golem?” Lestrade asked.

“It’s a horror story, isn’t it? What are you saying?” John asked.

“Jewish folk story. A gigantic man made of clay. It’s also the name of an assassin – real name Oskar Dzundza – one of the deadliest assassins in the world.” Eiric said with wide childlike eyes as she looked at the body again. I point down to the body.

“That is his trademark style.” I said.

“So this is a hit?” Lestrade asked me.

“Definitely. The Golem squeezes the life out of his victims with his bare hands.” I explained.

“But what has this gotta do with that painting? I don’t see . . .”

“You do see – you just don’t observe.” I said exasperated.

“All right, all right, girls, calm down. Sherlock? Eiric? D’you wanna take us through it?” John asked, Eiric punches John in the shoulder with a shout of “Oi!” at the girl quip with a light smile on her face. Taking a moment before I respond, I eventually step back and point to the body.

“What do we know about this corpse? The killer’s not left us with much – just the shirt and the trousers. They’re pretty formal – maybe he was going out for the night, but the trouser are heavy-duty, polyester, nasty, same as the shirt – cheap. They’re both too big for him, so some kind of standard-issue uniform. Dressed for work, then. There’s a hook on his belt for a walkie-talkie.” I explained.

“Tube driver?” Lestrade asked. I throw him a look that blatantly says ‘idiot’.

“Security guard?” John put out.

“More likely. That’ll be borne out by his backside.” I said.

“Backside?!” Lestrade exclaimed.

“Flabby. You’d think that he’d led a sedentary life, yet the soles of his feet and the nascent varicose veins in his legs show otherwise. So, a lot of walking and a lot of sitting around. Security guard’s looking good. And the watch helps, too. The alarm shows he did regular night shifts.” Eiric said to Lestrade.

“Why regular? Maybe he just set his alarm like that the night before he died.”

“No-no-no, the buttons are stiff, hardly touched. He set his alarm like that a long time ago. His routine never varied. But there’s something else. The killer must have been interrupted, otherwise he would have stripped the corpse completely. There was some kind of badge or insignia on the shirt front that he tore off, suggesting the dead man worked somewhere recognizable, some kind of institution.” I take something from my pocket. “Found this inside his trouser pockets.” I was holding a small scrunched-up ball of paper. “Sodden by the river but still recognizably . . .”
“Tickets?” John asked peering at the ball of paper.

“Ticket stubs. He worked in a museum or gallery. Did a quick check – the Hickman Gallery has reported one of its attendants as missing.” I pointed down to the body. “Alex Woodbridge. Tonight they unveil the re-discovered masterpiece. Now why would anyone want to pay the Golem to suffocate a perfectly ordinary gallery attendant? Inference: the dead man knew something about it – something that would stop the owner getting paid thirty million pounds. The picture’s a fake.”

“Fantastic.” John said admiringly. I shrugged, still peeved about our earlier argument.

“Meretricious.”

“And a Happy New Year!” Eiric throws Lestrade a ‘seriously?!’ look. Lestrade grins sheepishly at her, John looks down at the body again.

“Poor sod.”

“I’d better get my feelers out for this Golem character.” Lestrade looked over to me.

“Pointless. You’ll never find him. But I know a man who can.” I told him.

“Who?”

“Me.” I said grinning. Eiric let out a light laugh.

“Show off.” She said walking towards me, with a smile.

“Would you have me any other way?” I asked her holding out a hand to her.

“No, I wouldn’t.” she took my hand and together we turned and walked away. John sighs, following us.

TPSH

Taxi

As we sat in the back of the cab, I was looking at the pink phone in frustration.

“Why hasn’t he phoned? He’s broken his pattern. Why?” a thought strikes me and I lean forward to the taxi driver.

“Waterloo Bridge.”


“In a bit.” I said.

“The Hickman’s contemporary art, isn’t it? Why have they got hold of an Old Master?” he asked.

“Dunno. Dangerous to jump to conclusions. Need data.” I have taken my notebook from my pocket and write on the page before tearing it out and folding a bank note inside it. I put the paper into my pocket, then a few seconds later I call out to the driver. “Stop!” the cab pulls over to the side of the road. “You two wait here. I won’t be a moment.” I get out, and go to the railings at the edge of the pavement and easily vaults over them. John also gets out of the cab.

“Sherlock . . .” as I walk off, John shakes his head in exasperation, then scrambles over the railings
“Men.” Eiric sighs out. I trot up some steps to where a young homeless woman is sitting on a bench under Waterloo Bridge. She has a large bag beside her with a handwritten cardboard sign poking out on top.

“Change? Any change?” she asked.

“What for?” I asked.

“Cup of tea, of course.” I hand her the piece of paper from my pocket.

“Here you go – fifty.”

“Thanks.” She smiled. I immediately turn and walk away again. John looks at me in bewilderment before turning and following, pointing back towards the girl.

“What are you doing?” he asked.

“Investing.” John looks back to where the girl is unfolding the note and reading it. I go to the railings and easily leaps over them again. I open the door of the cab. “Now we go to the Gallery.” I stop and look back to John. “Have you got any cash?” Eiric melodic laugh reached our ears as we get back.

TPSH

Hickman Gallery

The taxi pulls up and Eiric and I step out. John was about to get out as well but I stopped him.

“No. I need you to find out all you can about the gallery attendant. Lestrade will give you the address.” I told him.

“Okay.” He closed the cab door and gives a new instruction to the driver as Eiric and I walked away towards the gallery.

TPSH

Alex Woodbridge's home John pov

A woman led me into Alex’s tiny attic bedroom. It’s messy with clothes scattered everywhere, and near the window which looks up into the sky is a large object covered with a sheet.

“We’d been sharing about a year.” Julie said.

“Mmm.” Julie stops and gestures around the room. I walked in and looked around, not touching anything. I look at the sheet-covered object and point to it. “May I?”

“Yeah.” I try to lift just the top of the sheet but it slipped from my fingers and falls to the floor.

“Sorry.” I look at the telescope on a tripod which was revealed. “Stargazer, was he?”

“God, yeah. Mad about it. It’s all he ever did in his spare time.” She looked away sadly. “He was a nice guy, Alex. I liked him.” She looks around the room. “He was, er, never much of a one for hovering.” She laughs nervously. I smile at her, then pull a face as she looks away.
“What about art? Did he know anything about that?” I asked.

“It was just a job, you know?” she shook her head.

“Hmm.” I bend down and peer at the items on the bedside table. “Has anyone else been round asking about Alex?”

“No. We had a break-in, though.” She said.

“Hmm? When?” I straightened up.

“Last night. There was nothing taken. Oh – there was a message left for Alex on the landline.” She told me.

“Who was it from?” I asked.

“Well, I can play it for you if you like. I’ll get the phone.”

“Please.” She goes out of the room briefly and comes back with the phone and plays the message.

[Oh, should I speak now? Alex? Love, it’s Professor Cairns. Listen, you were right. You were bloody right! Give us a call when . . .] the message ends.

“Professor Cairns?” I asked.

“No, no idea, sorry.”

“Mmm. Can I try and ring back?”

“Well, no good. I mean, I’ve had other calls since – sympathy ones, you know.” I nod and Julie leaves the room again just as my phone trills a text alert. I get the phone out and looks at the message.

[Re: Bruce-Partington Plans
Have you spoken to West’s fiancée yet? – Mycroft Holmes] I grimace and put the phone away again.

TPSH

Hickman Gallery Eiric pov

I watched from the security camera room as an elegantly dressed woman walks into the large white-painted room which is displaying the Vermeer painting. There was no other artwork or furniture of any kind in the room, but free-standing posts are roped together to form a path to the picture. The woman stops at the sight of Sherlock dressed as a security man in a black jacket and black cap standing in front of the painting with his back to her.

“Don’t you have something to do?” she asked in an Eastern European accent.

“Just admiring the view.”

“Yes. Lovely. Now get back to work. We open tonight.” Sherlock looks over his shoulder and then turns and walks to her.

“ Doesn’t it bother you?” he asked.
“What?” she asked angrily.

“It’s a fake. It has to be. It’s the only possible explanation.” Getting closer to her, he looks at her ID badge. “You’re in charge, aren’t you, Miss. Wenceslas?” my eyes widen a bit as smile slips onto my face, ‘Aw, Sherlock has a lisp. That’s adorable!’

“Who are you?” she asked.

“Alex Woodbridge knew that the painting was a fake, so somebody sent the Golem to take care of him. Was it you?” he got into her face and stared into her eyes.

“Golem? What the hell are you talking about?”

“Or are you working for someone else? Did you fake it for them?” he asked.

“It’s not a fake.” She insisted.

“It is a fake. Don’t know why, but there’s something wrong with it. There has to be.” Sherlock persisted.

“What the hell are you on about? You know, I could have you sacked on the spot.” She said.

“Not a problem.” He stated.

“No?” she raised an eyebrow.

“No. I don’t work here, you see. Just popped in to give you a bit of friendly advice.” I smirked to myself as I watched.

“How did you get in?” she asked.

“Please.” Sherlock said scornfully.

“I want to know.”

“The art of a disguise is knowing how to hide in plain sight.” He turns and begins to walk away, taking off his cap. ‘Pity, I rather liked this disguise.’

“Who are you?”

“Sherlock Holmes.” He drops the cap onto the top of one of the railing posts and continues onwards.

“Am I supposed to be impressed?” she asked, ‘You should be.’

“You should be.” Taking off the jacket, he looks round at her as he deliberately drops it on to the floor. Reaching the doors, he flamboyantly shoves one open, almost dancing out of the room.

“Have a nice day!” Miss. Wenceslas walked closer to the painting and looks at it as the door slowly and squeakily swings closed. A few minutes later, Sherlock shows up in the doorway of the security room. “Ready, Eiric?” he asked a hand raised to me. I nodded and took a hold of his hand. As we walked out of the Gallery, I looked at him from the corner of my eye.

“You have a lisp.” He snapped his eyes to me, I smirked. “It’s adorable.” I watched as his cheeks flushed a light red.

“Shut up.” He grumbled. I laughed into his arm.
Westie’s Flat John pov

I was sitting on the sofa beside Andrew West’s fiancée. I had been here long enough for her to have made us mugs of coffee, which were on the coffee table in front of us. Lucy was upset throughout the ensuing conversation.

“He wouldn’t. He just wouldn’t.” she said.

“Well, stranger things have happened.” I said gently.

“Westie wasn’t a traitor. It’s a horrible thing to say!” she cried.

“I’m sorry, but you must understand that’s . . .”

“That’s what they think, isn’t it, his bosses?” she asked. I nodded.

“He was a young man, about to get married. He had debts . . .”

“Everyone’s got debts; and Westie wouldn’t wanna clear them by selling out his country.” She grounded out.

“Can you, um, can you tell me exactly what happened that night?” I asked.

“We were having a night in, just watching a DVD.” She smiles at the memory. “He normally falls asleep, you know, but he sat through this one. He was quiet.” She becomes tearful. “Out of the blue, he said he just had to go and see someone.”

“And you’ve no idea who?” I asked. Shaking her head, Lucy begins to cry. Later, she opens the front door and shows me out. A cycle courier walks along the pavement towards the house, wheeling his pushbike.

“Oh, hi, Luce. You okay, love?” he asked.

“Yeah.”

“Who’s this?” he turned to me.

“John Watson. Hi.”

“This is my brother, Joe.” She said to me. She turned to her brother. “John’s trying to find out what happened to Westie, Joe.”

“You with the police?” he looked me up and down.

“Uh, sort of, yeah.” I mumbled.

“Well, tell ‘em to get off their arses, will you? It’s bloody ridiculous.” He said.

“I’ll do my best.” Nodding, Joe turns and puts a comforting hand on his sister’s shoulder for a moment before wheeling his bike inside the house. I clear my throat and step closer to Lucy. “Well, er, thanks very much for your help; and again, I’m very, very sorry.” I turn to leave but Lucy calls after me.

“He didn’t steal those things, Mr. Watson.” I turn back to her. “I knew Westie. He was a good
“He was my good man.” She turns and goes back indoors. I walk away.

Taxi

I was in the back of a taxi heading along Backer Street. Further along the road, a homeless girl is standing by the railings on the other side of Speedy’s, shaking a paper cup at people as they pass by.

“Spare change? Any spare change?” Sherlock and Eiric come out of 221 and stops, Sherlock looking down the road towards her. The taxi pulls up and I get out. They walk over to me.

“Alex Woodbridge didn’t know anything special about art.” I told them.

“And?” Eiric asked.

“And . . .” Sherlock looks towards the girl again and starts to head towards her while still talking to me.

“Is that it? No habits, hobbies, personality?” he asked.

“No, give us a chance! He was an amateur astronomer.” Sherlock stops dead, turns and points towards the taxi.

“Hold that cab.” I trot back to the taxi waiting with Eiric, while Sherlock goes over to the girl.

“Spare change, sir?” she asked.

“Don’t mind if I do.”

“Can you wait here?” I asked the cab driver. The girl hands Sherlock a piece of paper. Unfolding it, he sees that she has written “Vauxhall Arches” on it. Smiling briefly, he turns and walks back to John.

“Fortunately, I haven’t been idle.” He opens the cab door, letting Eiric get in first then gets in himself. “Come on.” I climb in and the taxi heads off.

Vauxhall Sherlock pov

We had gotten out of the cab and were walking along, I was buttoning my coat as I gazed up at the sky before looking back down towards Eiric, watching her as she gazed at the sky looking relax and at peace.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?” I asked still looking at Eiric. John looks up to the sky, having no idea that I was talking about Eiric.

“I thought you didn’t care about that.” John said.

“Doesn’t mean I can’t appreciate it.” We walked into the Arches.

Listen: Alex Woodbridge had a message on the answerphone at his flat – a Professor Cairns?”

“This way.” I said ignoring him.
“Nice! Nice part of town. Er, any time you wanna explain.”

“Homeless network – really is indispensable.” John got a small flashlight from his pocket and switched it on.

“Homeless network?” he asked.

“My eyes and ears all over the city.” I said.

“Oh, that’s clever. So you scratch their backs and . . .”

“Yes, then I disinfect myself.” Eiric turn to me with a grimace on her face.

“That’s disgusting, useful but disgusting.” She shuddered then turn back, a light sprung from her hand lighten up the way for her. I took out a flashlight and shine it around as we continue into the darkness of the Arches. Our beams picked out homeless people all around the place, most of them settling down for the night. Suddenly, in the distance, the shadow of a man shows on a wall as he begins to stand up. The man was incredibly tall.

“Sherlock!” John yelled.

“Come on!” we ducked to the side of a wall as the man continues straightening up for ages until he’s over seven feet tall.

“What’s he doing sleeping rough?” John whispered.

“Well, he has a very distinctive look. He has to hide somewhere tongues won’t wag – much.” I peered around the corner. John looks down as he realizes that he came without his gun.

“Oh shi . . .” taking John’s pistol from my coat pocket.

“What?” Eiric took her own pistol out.

“I wish I’d . . .” handing him the gun.

“Don’t mention it.” The man breaks into a run and hurries away down another tunnel. We chased across towards where he was and reached the tunnel just in time to see him climbing into a waiting car which immediately speeds off. I punched the air in frustration. “No, no, no, no! It’ll take us weeks to find him again.”

“Or not. I have an idea where he might be going.” John said.

“What?” Eiric asked.

“I told you: someone left Alex Woodbridge a message. There can’t be that many Professor Cairns in the book. Come on.”

TPSH

Planetarium Eiric pov (Expect for the first part.)

Professor Cairns is alone in the planetarium’s theatre. As Gustav Holst’s “Mars” plays over the sound system, she is standing at the mixing desk and watching footage of the film which is played to visitors. Other than the light coming from the projector, the room is in darkness.

“Jupiter, the fifth planet in our solar system and the largest. Jupiter is a gas giant. Planet Earth
would fit into it eleven times.”

“Yes, we know that.” Cairns said bored. She stops the recording and fast-forwards it for a moment before starting the playback again.

“Titan is the largest moon.” She fast-forwards again.

“Come on, Neptune, where’re you hiding?” behind her, a hand pushes open the door to the theatre. A moment later, just as Cairns starts the playback again, the door bangs shut. She looks round.

“Many are actually long dead . . .” Cairns pears up to the projection room.

“Tom? Is that you?”

“. . . exploded into supernovas.” She turns back to the desk. Behind her a long arm reaches out towards her.

“. . . discovered by Urbain Le Verrier in eighteen forty-six.” A tall figure steps up behind Cairns and clamps on hand over her mouth and nose, pulling her backwards.

“Oh my God!” her yelled muffled by the hand. As she claws at the hand, crying out in muffled panic, her other hand flails out and drags several of the sliders down the mixing desk. The footage begins to jump randomly as Cairns’ attacker continues to suffocate her.

“. . . composed mainly of hydrogen. Their light takes so long to reach us . . .” Sherlock, John and I raced into the theatre through another door. As John and I stop and aim our pistols towards the attacker, Sherlock yells at the top of his voice.

“Golem!”

“. . . many are actually long-dead, exploded into supernovas.” The Golem looks up, grunts in surprise, then snaps Cairns’ neck and drops her to the floor. Her fingers drag along the mixing desk and the footage goes into fast-forward again, plunging the theatre into darkness. The Golem ducks down out of sight.

“Eiric! John!” Sherlock yelled. I looked around for him in the darkness.

“Sherlock!” I yelled back.

“I can’t see him. I’ll go round. I’ll go!” As the footage continues spooling and then stopping and playing before spooling again, light comes and goes in the room. Sherlock finally found me and took a hold of my hand as he stared around as John hurries off.

“Who are you working for this time, Dzundza?” Sherlock said loudly. Behind us, the Golem steps out of the fluctuating darkness and clamps one hand around Sherlock’s mouth and nose while the gripping his neck with the other. The Golem swung out a leg, kicking me in the side causing me to fall to the ground and making my gun skid away from reach.

“No!” I whispered yelled as I watched it slide away. I look back over to Sherlock and the Golem. Sherlock grabbed at the hand on his face, struggling to pull it free as he slowly suffocated. John races over to us and stops in front of me, as I was getting up. He held his pistol in both hands.

“Golem!” he cocks the gun and points it at the Golem’s face, his hand and voice steady. “Let him go, or I will kill you.” Sherlock, whimpering in his efforts, continues trying to pull the man’s hand from his face. The Golem swings him around to the left and lashes out with his long right leg.
during a moment of darkness, kicking the pistol from John’s hands. Dropping Sherlock to the
ground, he surges forward and wrestles with John. I’m trying to find my pistol or John’s so I can
shoot the damn thing. As Sherlock gets to his feet, the Golem shoves John into him, sending both
of the boys tumbling to the floor. The Golem then turn and went after me.

“Shite!” I yelled as I felt a hand wrap around my next and then another one over my mouth and
nose. I started struggling, I put my hands on both of his arms and cast a silent Expelliarmus. The
Golem shot back a foot away from me. The blast made him let go of me instantly, dropping me
onto the hard floor. Sherlock scrambled up again and takes up a boxing stance in front of the
Golem, holding his fists up. He swings a punch at the man but he grabs his hand and swings his
other arm down heavily onto Sherlock shoulder, dropping him to the floor yet again. I looked over
to my right and smile as I see my gun.

The Golem follows him down and clamps onto his face, leaning his weight onto them. I got up
from the floor and took a hold of my gun. Behind him, John throws himself onto his back. I took a
stance waiting for the right moment. The Golem roars, releasing Sherlock as he claws at the hobbit
on his back. I took aim. He stands up with John still cling to his back and spins around several
time before finally managing to shake John off and onto the floor, with his front towards me, I fire
off a shot. The Golem let out an ear piercing scream as the bullet hit him in the shoulder. As John
groggily tries to get up, the Golem turns, picks up Sherlock and skims him across the floor towards
John. As Sherlock slides he grabs at John’s pistol and manages to pick it up. The Golem runs for
the doors. Sherlock rolls over onto his back and fires twice towards him but the Golem makes it to
the doors and disappears through them.

“. . . long dead, exploded into supernovas.” As the image of a supernova dramatically explodes on
the screen behind him, Sherlock angrily slams his hand down on the floor in front of him.

TPSH

Hickman Gallery Sherlock pov

I was standing in front of the Vermeer painting, looking up information on my phone. I pull up
subjects such as “Vermeer brush strokes”, “Pigment analysis”, “Canvas degradation”, “UV Light
damage”, “Delft Skyline, 1600”, and “Vermeer influences”. Eiric, John, Lestrade, and Miss.
Wenceslas were standing behind me.

“It’s a fake. It has to be.” I said.

“That painting has been subjected to every test known to science.” Miss. Wenceslas said.

“It’s a very good fake, then.” I spin around and glare at her. “You know about this, don’t you? This
is you, isn’t it?” Miss. Wenceslas turns to Lestrade looking exasperated.

“Inspector, my time is being wasted. Would you mind showing yourself and your friends out?” the
pink phone rings. I snatch it from my pocket and switched on the speaker.

“The painting is a fake.” There’s a faint sound of breathing over the speaker but otherwise there is
no response. “It’s a fake. That’s why Woodbridge and Cairns were killed.” Still there’s nothing
more than breathing. “Oh, come on. Proving it’s just the detail. The painting is a fake. I’ve solved
it. I’ve figured it out. It’s a fake! That’s the answer. That’s why they were killed.” When the phone
remains silent, I take a deep breath to calm myself. “Okay, I’ll prove it. Give me time. Will you
give me time?” After a moment, the tremulous voice of a very young boy comes over the phone’s
speaker, the voice sounded very familiar.
[Ten . . .] Instantly I spin and look closely at the painting and trying to figure out why the voice sounded familiar.

“It’s a kid. Oh, God, it’s a kid!” Lestrade said shocked.

“What did he say?” John asked.

“Ten.” I replied.

[Nine . . .]

“It’s a countdown. He’s giving me time.” I narrowed my eyes as I scan every inch of the painting.

“Jesus!”

“The painting is a fake, but how can I prove it? How? How?” I asked.

[Eight . . .] I turned and glared at Miss. Wenceslas. I caught a flash of orange out the corner of my eye sink to the floor.

“This kid will die. Tell me why the painting is a fake. Tell me!” Miss. Wenceslas flinches and opens her mouth, but I immediately hold up my hand to stop her.

[Seven . . .]

“No, shut up. Don’t say anything. It only works if I figure it out.” I turn back to the painting again. Unable to stand the tension, John turns and walks away a few paces, but stops when he sees Eiric leaning against a column, silently crying.

“Eiric?” He whispers as he crouches down in front of her. She looks up at him, not able to speak cause of the tears. John stares at her intently and then over to the pink phone in Sherlock’s hand, then his eyes widen in realization and horror.

“Oh, God. It’s Teddy.” Lestrade turns to watch them.

“Must be possible. Must be staring me in the face.” I said to myself, as I continue to scan the painting.

[Six . . .]

“Come on.” John said urgently under his breath as he stood back up, comforting holding Eiric in his arms as she cries into his shoulder.

“Woodbridge knew, but how?”

[Five . . .]

“It’s speeding up!” Lestrade yelled, Eiric began to cry harder.

“Sherlock.” John urged, tightening his hold on Eiric. My gaze falls on three tiny dots of paint in the night sky. My mouth falls open as the penny finally drops.

“Oh!” I shouted.

[Four . . .]
“In the planetarium! You both heard it too. Oh, that is brilliant! That is gorgeous!” turning and shoving the pink phone into John’s hands, missing the fact that he was holding my girlfriend in his arms and was crying. I walk away from the painting, grinning as I pull out my own phone from my pocket.

[Three . . .]

“What’s brilliant? What is?” I rapidly type “Astronomer” and “Supernovas” into my phone, then turn back and walked towards the other, laughing in delight.

“This is beautiful. I love this!”

[Two . . .]

“Sherlock!” Lestrade yells furiously. I grab the pink phone from John and yell into it.

“The Van Buren Supernova!” there’s a short pause, then the boy’s familiar plaintive voice comes from the speaker.

[Please. I want my mummy!] I sigh out a relieved breath. There was a loud thump from behind me, I turn around to find Eiric on the ground in John’s arms crying, that’s when it click why I thought the voice was familiar, it was Teddy, it was Eiric’s son strapped to a bomb on the other side of this phone. I handed the phone to Lestrade.

“There you go. Go find out where he is and pick him up. Bring him to the Yard, quickly.” I moved over to John and Eiric, kneeling onto the ground. “Eiric?” I asked reaching out to her. I saw her tense up and then she slapped my hand away from her.

“You . . . totally . . . bastard!” she cried. I stared at her in shock. “Is it . . . still fun . . . Sherlock! Do . . . you still think . . . it’s a game!” she moved herself out of John’s arm and stood up. “I almost lost my son because of you!” I stood up, angry now.

“What about you! Could you not let your emotions run all over the place? Feeling are not an advantage, I told you that before.” She looked at me with widen eyes. She raised a hand and slapped me across the face, making my head turn to the left from the force of her slap.

“You heartless bastard!” she ran out the door of the Gallery. I turned my head back to John and gave him a long look, then turn and point to one of the dots in the sky of the painting.

“The Van Buren Supernova, so-called.” I hold up my phone over my shoulder so that Miss. Wenceslas can see the screen.

“Exploding star, only appeared in the sky in eighteen fifty-eight.” I turn and throw her a triumphant look, then walked away. John drags in a relieved breath, then walks closer to look at the painting.

“So how could it have been painted in the sixteen forties?” he grins over his shoulder at Miss. Wenceslas, then looks back to the picture again. His phone trills a text alert. “Oh.” He digs out his phone, still breathing heavily, and looks at the message.

[My patience is wearing thin. – Mycroft Holmes] he growls slightly, then looks up at the painting one last time.

“Oh Sherl . . .” he switched off the phone and walks away. Miss. Wenceslas stares at the painting in shock.
TPSH

Yard waiting room Eiric pov

I was pacing back and forth waiting for Lestrade to bring Teddy to the Yard so I could take him home. I looked to the clock on the wall reading the time and went back to pacing. The boys were sitting in the chairs on the right side of the wall, watching me. ‘How did he get Teddy, when did he get Teddy.’ The doors to the waiting room open and I paused looking towards them, the boys stood up from their seats. Lestrade walked in with Teddy in his arms. I took a step forward and paused again.

“Teddy?” my voice wavered. Teddy left his head and turned to me, we stared at each other for a minute before he started crying out.

“Mummy! Mummy!” he reached his arms out to me. I let out a sob and ran to Teddy taking him out of Lestrade’s arms and held him close.

“Shush, baby boy. Mummy’s got you, your safe.” I cried into his hair. “Oh, sweetheart, I’m so sorry. Mummy’s sorry.” I looked up to the others with tears running fast down my cheeks.

“Thank you, for saving him. We’re going back home, he needs to calm down and get some sleep. Be safe.” I walked out of the Yard and to the street and got a taxi back to Baker Street. Once we got there I paid the driver and walked into the building. Teddy had clonked out in the cab ride home. I open our door to the flat and walked down the stairs. I went straight to Teddy’s room and laid him down on the bed and began to undress him. I put him into some fade red footie pajamas and tuck him into bed. I kissed him on his forehead, wiping away his tears. I walked towards the door and looked back over to him over my shoulder. ‘I’m so sorry Teddy. At least he’ll stay asleep all night.’ I shut the door behind me and went to the living room and sat on the couch with my face in my hands.

“Hello, my little Raven.” I gasped as darkness took over.
Chapter 18

Yard Sherlock pov

Miss. Wenceslas and I were sitting side by side in front of Lestrade’s desk while the inspector sits in a chair to the side of the desk. I had my hands in the prayer position under my chin.

“You know, it’s interesting. Bohemian stationery, an assassin named after a Prague legend, and you, Miss. Wenceslas. This whole case has a distinctly Czech feeling about it. Is that where this leads?” she looks down and doesn’t answer.

“What are we looking at, Inspector?”

“Well, um, criminal conspiracy, fraud, accessory after the fact at the very least. The murder of the old woman, all the people in the flats . . .” he starts thoughtfully.

“I didn’t know anything about that! All those things! Please believe me.” She panicked. As she continues to stare at Lestrade, I give him a tiny nod to confirm that she’s telling the truth. “I just wanted my share – the thirty million.” She looks across to me then sighs and lowers her head again. “I found a little old man in Argentina. Genius. I mean, really: brushwork immaculate, could fool anyone.”

“Hmm!” I scoffed sarcastically. She looked at me briefly.

“Well, nearly anyone.” She turns back to Lestrade. “But I didn’t know how to go about convincing the world the picture was genuine. It was just an idea – a spark which he blew into a flame.”

“Who?” I asked sharply. She shook her head.

“I don’t know.” Lestrade gives a disbelieving laugh. “It’s true! I mean, it took a long time, but eventually I was put in touch with people . . . his people.” I slowly begin to sit up in my chair, my expression becoming more concentrated. “Well, there was never any real contact; just messages . . . whispers.” I lean closer to her, my face intense.

“And did those whispers have a name?” she gazes ahead of herself for a moment, then looks across to Lestrade before nodding. She turns her head to me.

“Moriarty.” Slowly I sink back into my chair. As Miss. Wenceslas looks anxiously at Lestrade again, I gaze into the distance, my eyes full of thought. Eventually I raise my hands into the prayer position in front of my mouth, then grin.

TPSH

Battersea John pov

Wearing a high-vis jacket over my coat, I walked along the railway lines with the Tube guard who found Andrew West’s body.

“So this is where West was found?” I asked.

“Yeah.”

“Uh-huh.”
“You gonna be long?” he asked.

“I might be.”

“You with the police, then?”

“Sort of.” I shrugged.

“I hate ‘em.” I looked over to him.

“The police?” I asked.


“Well, that’s one way of looking at it.” I squat down to look more closely at the railway track.

“I mean it. It’s all right for them. It’s over in a split second – strawberry jam all over the lines. What about the drivers, hmm? They’ve gotta live with it, haven’t they?” I ran my fingers along the track, the lift them to look at it.

“Yeah, speaking of strawberry jam, there’s no blood on the line.” I stand up again. “Has it been cleaned off?”

“No, there wasn’t that much.” He told me.

“You said his head was smashed in.” I said raising an eyebrow.

“Well, it was, but there wasn’t much blood.”

“Okay.” I turn and look along the line thoughtfully.

“Well, I’ll leave you to it then.” I walk a few yards further down the line and then squat down again. “Just give us a shot when you’re off.” The guard walked away. I stand up again and talk to myself.

“Right: so, uh, Andrew West got on the train somewhere – or did he? There’s no ticket on the body. Then how did he end up here?” beside me, the points change and one of the tracks slides sideways into a new layout. I squat down again and looked at the tracks thoughtfully.

“Points.” I heard from behind me.

“Yes!” I spring to my feet and turn around to see my flatmate standing nearby.

“Knew you’d get there eventually. West wasn’t killed here; that’s why there was so little blood.” He said.

“How long have you been following me?” I asked him.

“Since the start. You don’t think I’d give up on a case like this just to spite my brother, do you?” he turns and starts walking away. “Come on. Got a bit of burglary to do.”

TPSH

Shortly afterwards we were walking down a street.

“The missile defense plans haven’t left the country, otherwise Mycroft’s people would have heard
about it. Despite what people think, we do still have a Secret Service.” Sherlock said.

“Yeah, I know. I’ve met them.” I said.

“Which means whoever stole the memory stick can’t sell it or doesn’t know what to do with it. My money’s on the latter. We’re here.”

“Where?” I asked. Sherlock turned into the drive of a maisonette and trots up the steps at the side of the building which lead to the front door of flat 21A on the first floor. As he rummages in his pocket, I whisper to him urgently. “Sherlock! What if there’s someone in?”

“There isn’t.” he picks the lock and goes inside.

“Jesus!” I said softly. I hurry inside and shut the door. Sherlock trots up the short flight of stairs ahead of him and walks into the living room. “Where are we?”

“Oh, sorry, didn’t I say? Joe Harrison’s flat.”

“Joe . . .?” Sherlock goes straight over to the window and pulls back the net curtain. He grins in satisfaction at the sight which greets him outside.

“Brother of West’s fiancée.” Outside the window is a one-storey extension, the roof of which can be easily climbed onto from the window. The extension spreads all the way to the bottom of the garden which ends in a wall, and directly on the side of the wall is the railway line. “He stole the memory stick; killed his prospective brother-in-law.” Dropping to his knees, he gets out his magnifier and runs it slowly along the edge of the window sill. I walk across to him and peer over his shoulder as Sherlock finds some tiny blood-red spots on the paint.

“Then why’d he do it?” I asked. I straighten up and turn as someone unlocks the front door. Sherlock also stands.

“Let’s ask him.” Reaching round to the back of my jeans, I walk quietly to the door of the living room as the front door slams. I step out into the landing just as Joe, wearing his courier gear, is leaning his bicycle against the wall. When he sees me, he picks up the bike as if he intends to use it as a weapon or simply throw it at me. I instantly raise my right hand and point my pistol at him.

“Don’t.” I said sternly. Joe keeps coming but I shake my head. “Don’t.” Joe stops and lowers the bike, sighing in a mixture of frustration and fear. Shortly afterwards he’s sitting on the sofa as we stand and look at him. He’s very distressed.

“It wasn’t meant to . . .” Sherlock looks away, exasperated. “God.” He rubs his hand over his face. “What’s Lucy gonna say? Jesus.” He sinks back on the sofa.

“Why did you kill him?” I asked.

“It was an accident.” Sherlock snorts. “I swear it was.”

“But stealing the plans for the missile defense programme wasn’t an accident, was it?” Sherlock said sternly.

“I started dealing drugs. I mean, the bike thing’s a great cover, right? I dunno – I dunno how it started; I just got out of my depth. I owed people thousands – serious people. Then at Westie’s engagement do, he starts talking about his job. I mean, usually he’s so careful; but that night after a few pints he really opened up. He told me about these missile plans – beyond top secret. He showed me the memory stick; he waved it in front of me. You hear about these things getting lost,
ending up on rubbish tips and what-not. And there it was, and I thought . . . well, I thought it could be worth a fortune. It was pretty easy to get the thing off him, he was so plastered. Next time I saw him, I could tell by the look on his face that he knew.” Joe looks up guiltily at me.

“What happened?” I asked.

“I was gonna call an ambulance, but it was too late. I just didn’t have a clue what to do, so I dragged him in ‘ere, and I just sat in the dark, thinking.” He said.

“When a neat little idea popped into your head.” Sherlock pushed the net curtain aside and looked out of the window.

“Carrying Andrew West way away from here. His body would have gone on for ages if the train hadn’t met a stretch of track that curved.”

“And points.” I said.

“Exactly.” Sherlock replied.

“D’you still have it, then? The memory stick?” Joe nods.

“Fetch it for me – if you wouldn’t mind.” Sighing unhappily, Joe stands up and walks into another room. Sherlock walks closer to me. “Distraction over, the game continues.” He said quietly.

“Well, maybe that’s over, too. We’ve heard nothing from the bomber.” I said.

“Four pips, remember, John? It’s a countdown. We’ve only had four.”

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

Both John and I are still in our coats because the windows still haven’t been replaced. I’m sitting in my armchair with my feet up on the seat and my arms folded tightly around me, trying to conserve heat. The pink phone is on the arm of the chair. John was sitting at the dining table, typing on his laptop. The TV was on and a Jerry Springer/Jeremy Kyle-type show was playing. As the audience boos noisily, I yell indignantly at the telly.

“No, no, no! Of course he’s not the boy’s father!” I gestured at the screen. “Look at the turn-ups on his jeans!” sighing, I fold my arms again. John, who looked over to see what I was protesting about, goes back to his typing.

“I told her it was dangerous.” He said.

“Hmm?” I asked.

“Letting Eiric get you into crap telly.” He replied.

“Hmm. Not a patch on Connie Prince.”

“Have you given Mycroft the memory stick yet?” he asked.

“Yep. He was over the moon. Threatened me with a knighthood – again.”

“You know, I’m still waiting.”
“Hmm?” I questioned.

“For you to admit that a little knowledge of the solar system and you’d have cleared up the fake painting a lot quicker.” He said.

“Didn’t do you any good, did it?” I said.

“No, but I’m not the world’s only male consulting detective that’s for hire.” He muttered. I smiled.

“True.” John closed the lid of his laptop and stands up.

“I won’t be in for tea. I’m going to Sarah’s. There’s still some of that risotto Eiric made left in the fridge.” He told me.

“Mmm!” my eyes still fixed on the TV. John stops at the door.

“Uh, milk. We need milk.”

“I’ll get some.” He turned back with a look of disbelief on his face.

“Really!?”

“Really.” I repeated.

“And some beans, then? Oh, and apologize to Eiric too.” Still not looking away from the TV.

“Mmm.” John hesitates, still surprised, but then nods and walks away. I continue to gaze at the TV until I hear the downstairs door open and close, then I pick up my computer notebook from where it was tucked down beside me. Putting it on my lap and opening the lid, I stare at the message box on The Science of Deduction website before starting to type.

[Found. The Bruce-Partington plans. Please collect.] I lift my eyes in thought for a moment, then quirk a small smile before returning to my typing. [The Pool. Midnight.] I send the message, then close the lid, gazing thoughtfully into the distance.

TPSH

Swimming Pool

I open the door leading into the area surrounding an indoor swimming pool. The lights are on but there’s nobody else around. ‘Or so I think.’ I walk slowly towards the shallow end of the pool, very aware that the upper gallery where people sit and watch the swimmers is still in darkness. I stop at the edge of the pool and turn, trying to see into the area of the gallery above my head. Finally, I turn towards the pool again, raising one hand and holding up the memory stick.

“Brought you a little getting-to-know-you present. Oh, that’s what it’s all been for, hasn’t it? All your little puzzles; making me dance – all to distract me from this.” I said loudly. I gesture with the memory stick, then begin to turn in a slow circle as I wait for a response. When my back is turned to the pool, a door opens halfway down the room. I look over my shoulder, still holding the memory stick aloft. And Eiric walks through the door and into the pool area, wrapped snugly in her coat with her hands tucked into the pockets. She turns and looks at me as I stare back at her in absolute shock. ‘Was everything she did a plan?’

“Evening.” She voice soft but strong. My raised hand begins to lower slowly but otherwise I don’t move, still staring over my shoulder in utter disbelief. “This is a turn-up, isn’t it, Sherlock?” she
purred out my name, playfully.

“Eiric. What the hell . . .?” I asked softly, shocked still.

“Bet you never saw this coming.” She sneer sarcastically at me. Finally I manage to move, and start to walk slowly towards the woman I had believed to care about me until now. The shock and bewilderment on my face makes me look about twelve years old. Then, with a look of despair that matches mine, Eiric takes her hands from her pockets and pulls open her coat to reveal the bomb strapped to her chest. A sniper’s laser immediately begins to dance around over the bomb.

“What . . . would you like me . . . to make her say . . . next?” I continue to step towards her but now I was looking everywhere but at Eiric as I try to see who else is in the area. She starts narrating words spoken into an earpiece. “Gottle o’geer . . . gottle o’ geer . . . gottle o’ geer.” Her voice almost breaks on the last phase.

“Stop it.”

“Nice touch, this: the pool where little Carl died. I stopped him.” She narrates. Eiric tries not to cringe as she listens to the next words. “I can stop my little Raven too.” She looks down at the laser on her chest. “Stop her heart.” I turned on the spot as I tried to look in all directions.

“Who are you?” I asked trying to keep the panic down. A door opens at the far end of the pool and a soft male voice with an Irish accent speaks from that direction.

“I gave you my number.” The voice said. “I thought you might call.” It said plaintively. I turn towards the new arrival, who now slowly walks out into the open. It’s Jim, Molly’s boyfriend. But this isn’t the fumble-fingered casually-dressed Londoner who did indeed leave his number for me in the lab at Bart’s; this a sharply-dressed man with immaculate hair and a murderous look on his face. With his hands in his pockets, he casually begins to stroll alongside the deep end of the pool, heading towards Eiric and I. All hint of plaintiveness has now gone from his voice. “Is that a British Army Browning L9A1 in your pocket . . .” I reached down to my trouser pocket and remove the pistol from it. “. . . or are you just pleased to see us?” I raised the pistol and aimed it towards Jim.

“Both.” Jim stops and looks at me, unafraid.

“Jim Moriarty. Hi!” I tilt my head as I look more closely at the man. Jim acts as if he needs to remind me who he is. “Jim? Jim from the hospital?” he begins to walk around the deep end again. I bring up my other hand to support the one aiming the gun. Jim bites his lips as if disappointed. “Oh. Did I really make such a fleeting impression? But then, I suppose that was rather the point.” He turns to face me just as the sniper’s laser flickers over Eiric’s upper chest. I briefly turn my head towards Eiric, a questioning look on my face. Jim starts to walk again. “Don’t be silly. Someone else is holding the rifle. I don’t like getting my hands dirty.” He reaches the corner of the pool and stops. “I’ve given you a glimpse, Sherlock, just a teensy glimpse of what I’ve got going on out there in the big bad world. I’m a specialist you see . . .” He looks surprised, as if he has only just realized the connection. “. . . like you!”

“Dear Jim. Please will you fix it for me to get rid of my lover’s nasty sister?” Starting to walk forward again, Jim grins as he recognizes the TV show and catchphrase that I was quoting. “Dear Jim. Please will you fix it for me to disappear to South America?”

“Just so.” Jim stops again.

“Consulting criminal.” I said softly, “Brilliant.”
“Isn’t it? No-one ever gets to me – and no-one ever will.” He said.

“I did.” I cocked the pistol.

“You’ve come the closet. Now you’re in my way.”

“Thank you.”

“Didn’t mean it as a compliment.”

“Yes you did.” He shrugs.

“Yeah, okay, I did. But the flirting’s over, Sherlock . . .” his voice becomes high-pitched and sing-song. “Daddy’s had enough now!” he again starts to stroll closer. “I’ve shown you what I can do. I cut loose all those people, all those little problems, even thirty million quid just to get you to come out and play.” His voice back to normal. Eiric is starting to feel the strain and closes her eyes briefly. My eyes can’t help but flicker across to her a couple of times as I try to keep my focus on the man approaching us. “So take this as a friendly warning, my dear. Back off.” He smiles. “Although I have loved this – this little game of ours.” He puts on his London accent for a moment. “Playing Jim from I.T.” he switches back to his Irish accent. “Playing gay. Did you like the little touch with the underwear?”

“People have died.” I stated.

“That’s what people DO!” he screamed the last word furiously, his personality changing in an instant. Eiric flinches violently at the sound.

“I will stop you.” I said softly.

“No you won’t.” he calmed instantly at seeing Eiric flinch. I looked across to her.

“You all right?” I asked. Eiric deliberately keeps her gaze away from me, presumably having been given instructions earlier about not talking to me. Jim walks forward again and reaches her side.

“You can talk, sister-dear. Go ahead.” Refusing to specifically obey Jim’s orders, Eiric meets my shocked eyes and nods once, answering both the voiced question and the silent question I had. I take one hand off the pistol and hold out the memory towards Jim.

“Take it.”

“Huh? Oh! That!” he strolls past Eiric and reaches out for the stick, grinning. “The missile plans!” he takes the stick from my fingers and brings it to his mouth, kissing it. Behind him, Eiric is silently murmuring to herself, perhaps trying to keep herself focused, perhaps winding herself up to take action. Jim lowers the memory stick and looks at it. “Boring!” he sing-songs again. “I could have got them anywhere.” He nonchalantly tosses the stick into the pool. Seeing her opportunity, Eiric races forward and slams herself up against Jim’s back, wrapping one arm around his neck and the other around his chest. I backed up a step in surprise but keep the pistol raised and aimed at Jim.

“Sherlock, run!” she yells, her eyes filled with desperation and sorrow. Jim laughs in delight.

“Good! Very Good.” I don’t move, still aiming my gun at Jim’s head but now starting to look up a little anxiously, wondering what action the hidden sniper might take.

“If your sniper pulls that trigger, Richard, then we both go up.” Eiric hissed out. Jim looks calmly
“Isn’t she sweet? I can see why you fallen for her but I knew that along. She’s easily loveable, isn’t she? Especially with that sob story of hers.” Grimacing angrily, Eiric pulls him even closer onto the bomb that’s now sandwiched between them. Jim scowls round at her. “She’s so touchingly loyal. But. Oops!” he grins briefly at Eiric, then looks towards me.

“You’ve rather shown your hand there, my Raven.” He chuckles as a new laser point appears in the middle of my forehead.

“You think I can’t protect him from a simple muggle weapon, Richard?” she asked. He smirks darkly at her.

“Who said it was a muggle weapon, Tristyn?” Eiric stares in horror as Jim looks at her expectantly now. I shake my head slightly. “Gotcha!” Jim sing-song. He chuckles as Eiric releases her grip on him and steps back, holding her hands up to signal to the sniper that she won’t be trying anything else. Jim glances round at her, then turns back towards me while brushing his hand down his suit to straighten it. He gestures to it indignantly. “Westwood!” he lowers his hands and stands calmly in front of me, still aiming the pistol at his head. “D’you know what happens if you don’t leave me alone, Sherlock, to you?”

“Oh, let me guess: I get killed.” I said sounding bored.

“Kill you?” he grimaces. “N-no, don’t be obvious. I mean, I’m gonna kill you anyway someday. I don’t wanna rush it, though. I’m saving it up for something special. No-no-no-no-no. If you don’t stop prying, I’ll burn you.” He runs his eyes briefly down my body, then meets my eyes again and his voice becomes vicious. “I’ll burn the heart out of you.” His face becomes a snarl as he says the word ‘heart’ but at the end of the sentence he looks almost regretful.

“I have been reliably informed that I don’t have one.” I said softly, I looked to Eiric briefly, she turns her eyes away in shame.

“But we both know that’s not quite true.” I blink involuntarily. Jim looks down, smiling, then shrugs. “Well, I’d better be off.” He nonchalantly looks around perhaps checking his exit route, before turning back to me. “Well, so nice to have had a proper chat.” I raised the pistol higher and extend it closer to Jim’s head.

“What if I was to shoot you now – right now?” he looked at me completely unperturbed. ‘How is he and Eiric related?’

“Then you could cherish the look of surprise on my face.” He opens his eyes and mouth wide, mimicking surprise, then grins at me. ‘Cause I’d be surprised, Sherlock; really I would.” He screws up his nose, ‘Well, that’s a shared trait between them and the height as well.’ ‘And just a teensy bit disappointed. And of course you wouldn’t be able to cherish it for long.” Slowly he begins to turn away. ‘Ciao, Sherlock Holmes.” Looking back to me with some distaste, he walks calmly towards the side door Eiric came through earlier. He stopped in front of her and kissed her on the forehead, which she cringed away from in disgust. “Good-bye, my little Raven.” I slowly step forward to keep him in my sight.

“Catch . . . you . . . later.” The door open and Jim’s voice can be heard, high-pitched and sing-sung.

“No you won’t!” the door closes. I don’t move for a few seconds, my gun still aimed towards the door, then my gaze drifts across to Eiric and I instantly bend, putting the pistol on the floor, then drop to my knees in front of Eiric as I start unfastening the vest to which the bomb is attached.
“All right?” Eiric tilts her head back, breathing heavily. “Are you all aright?” I asked urgently.

“Yeah-yeah, I’m fine.” Having unfastened the vest, I jump up and hurry round behind Eiric, starting to pull the coat and bomb vest off in one go. “I’m fine.” I, also breathing too fast, continue trying to tug the coat and vest off. “Sherlock.” Finally I manage to roughly strip the jacket and vest off Eiric’s arms. “Sh-Sherlock!” I bend and skim the items as far away along the floor as I can, while Eiric staggers at the vehemence I just ripped them off her. “Merlin.” She said softly. She reached up and pulled the earpiece from her ear, breathing heavily as delayed shock begins to hit her. I turn and stare at her for a moment, then hurry back to pick up the pistol before racing towards the door that Moriarty left through. Eiric leans against the edge of one of the changing cubicles. “Oh, Merlin.” She leaned her head back and stares up at the ceiling as she blows out a long breath and tries to calm herself down. I come back in, having seen no sign of Moriarty outside. I start to pace up and down near Eiric, so hyper and distracted that I didn’t even realize that I was scratching my head with the business end of a loaded and cocked pistol. “Are you okay?” Eiric asked breathlessly, putting a hand on my arm.

“Me? Yeah, I’m fine, I’m fine. Fine.” I quick fire, still scratching my head with the gun. She let out a humorless laugh and lowered the gun away from my head. I turn to her, wide-eyed and breathless. “That, er . . . thing that you, er, that you did; that, um . . .” I cleared my throat, “. . . you offered to do. That was, um . . . good.” She stared blankly ahead of herself.

“H’m glad no-one saw that.” I had temporarily lowered my hand again, long enough to not be risking accidentally shooting myself in the head – although I had terrible jitters as I held the gun down by my side. Now I lift the gun again as I raised my hand to rub my chin while looking at Eiric in confusion.

“Hmm?” she still wasn’t meeting my eyes.

“You, ripping my clothes off in a darkened swimming pool. People might talk.” I shrug.

“People do little else.” I look to her, then grin. Eiric snorts out in laughter, then moves to me a few steps but stops as the beam from a sniper’s laser begins to dance over her chest. Eiric looks down at it and her face fills with horror.

“Oh . . .” she said in anguish. A door near the deep ends of the pool opens and Jim comes through, clapping his hands together and turning to face us.

“Sorry, lovely’s! I’m soooooo changeable!” he said cheerfully. Eiric grimaces in disbelief. I keep my back to Jim, looking up into the gallery to try and judge how many snipers there might be up there. It’s becoming clear that there are quite a few because there are at least two laser points hovering over Eiric, and at least three more travelling over my body. Jim laughs and spread his arms wide. “It is a weakness with me but, to be fair to myself, it is my only weakness.” He lowers his hands and puts them in his pockets. I turn my head and look at Eiric, who lifts her head and meets my gaze. “You can’t be allowed to continue. You just can’t. I would try to convince you but . . .” he laughs and his voice becomes sing-song again. “. . . everything I have to say had already crossed your mind!” I had looked away for a moment, now turn and look at Eiric again, my face showing no emotion but my eyes screaming a silent request. Eiric responds instantly with a tiny nod and moved into my arms. Her eyes giving me full permission to do whatever I deem necessary. I wrapped an arm around her waist as I felt her arms wrap around mine and turned to face Jim.

“Probably my answer has crossed yours.” I raise the pistol and aim it at him. Jim smiles confidently, with no fear in his expression. Slowly I lower the pistol downwards until it’s pointing directly at the bomb coat. All three sets of eyes lock onto the coat, Eiric breathing heavily, me calm. Jim tilts his head, looking a little anxious for the first time. As I hold my hand steady,
continuing to aim towards the coat, Jim lifts his head and locks eyes with me. I gaze back at him and Jim begins to smile. My eyes narrow slightly. As Jim Moriarty and I stare at each other, the introduction to The Bee Gee’s song

“Stayin’ Alive” begins to play tinnily. Eiric and I looked around, confused. Jim briefly closes his eyes and sighs in exasperation.

“D’you mind if I get that?” he asked.

“No, no, please. You’ve got the rest of your life.” I said nonchalantly. Jim takes his phone from his pocket and answers it.

[Hello? . . . Yes, of course it is. What do you want?] He mouths ‘Sorry’ at me, I sarcastically mouth ‘Oh, it’s fine’ back to him. Jim rolls his eyes as he listens to the phone, turning away from me for a moment, then he spins back around, his face full of fury. [SAY THAT AGAIN!] He yelled into the phone. Eiric flinched violently again in my arms at his raised voice. She tucked her head into my neck and I tighten my hold on her. I frown. [Say that again, and know that if you’re lying to me, I will find you and I will skin you.] He said venomously. [Wait.] Lowering the phone, he begins to walk forward. I look at the bomb coat fretfully and adjusts the grip on my pistol as Jim approaches. Jim stops at the coat and gazes down at the ground thoughtfully before lifting his eyes to me. “Sorry. Wrong day to die.”

“Oh. Did you get a better offer?” I asked casually. Jim looks down at the phone, then turns and slowly starts to walk away.

“You’ll be hearing from me, Sherlock.” He strolls back around the pool towards the door through which he originally came, lifting the phone to his ear again. [So if you have what you say you have, I will make you rich. If you don’t, I’ll make you into shoes.” Reaching the door, he raises his free hand and clicks his fingers. Instantly all the lasers focused on Eiric and I disappear. As Jim walks through the door and vanishes from sight, I look around the pool but can’t see any signs of the retreating snipers. Eiric sighs out a relieved breath.

“What happened there?” she asked moving her head to look me in the eyes.

“Someone changed his mind. The question is: who?” I said looking in her in the eyes. A strange but welcomed emotion washed over me.

“Sher-” I pressed my lips to hers cutting her off. She gasped in surprised but returned the kiss back. Our lips moved in sync, the kiss was heated and passionate. Soon we pulled apart for air, I pressed my forehead to hers our eyes still closed. I opened my eyes and kissed her on the forehead, moving back just a step.

“Come on, I told John I’d get milk and beans.” I said. She opened her eyes and let out a melodic laugh.

“Well, we best be off then, shouldn’t we?” she gave me a bright smile and took my hand as we walked out of the pool and to the nearest Tesco’s before returning home, but not without a few more kisses on the way there.
John and I were sitting at the table in the living room, him updating his blog on his laptop and I was writing a letter for Hedwig to take to Severus about Richard and what happened at the pool. Sherlock, was wearing a red dressing gown over his shirt and trousers, is standing beside me at the other side of the table drinking from a mug while leafing through a newspaper.

“What are you typing?” he asked John.

“Blog.”

“About?” Sherlock inquired.

“Us.”

“You mean me.” I rolled my eyes at the smug tone in his voice.

“Why?” John asked.

“Well, you’re typing a lot.” I raised an eyebrow at him.

“Sherlock, he could be typing about me, or our last case. Don’t assume that’s it’s just you, love.” I took a sip of my tea as the doorbell rings.

“Right then.” Sherlock walks towards the door. “So, what have we got?”

Over a period of many weeks, people are coming to 22B to consult with Sherlock. He made me stay with him, instead of letting me go to work but it was fun to listen to what the people came to consult about.

“My wife seems to be spending a very long time at the office.”

“Boring.” I rolled my eyes at Sherlock.

“Thank you.” I whispered to him, still getting the heeby-jeeby’s from creepy dude.

“We are prepared to offer any sum of money you care to mention for the recovery of these files.”
“Boring.” Me too.

TPSH

“We have this website. It explains the true meaning of comic books, ‘cause people miss a lot of the themes.” Sherlock was already walking away, disinterested but I was interested on what they had.

“Yes, what else, sweetheart?” I asked the young man. He blushed a bit.

“But then all of the comic books started coming true.” He told me. My eyes light up as Sherlock comes back.

“Oh. Interesting.”

TPSH

Later, John is sitting in his chair and updating his blog again. I was laying on the couch. He had entitled the entry “The Geek Interpreter”. Sherlock leans over his shoulder.

“Geek interpreter. What’s that?” he asked.

“It’s the title.”

“What’s does it need a title for?” John just smiles and I started laughing as Sherlock straightens up and walks away.

TPSH

Later, we’re at the morgue at Bart’s. Sherlock was using his magnifier to look at a woman’s body lying on the table. John was standing at the other side of the table and Lestrade was nearby, who I was standing by.

“Do people actually read your blog?” Sherlock asked John.

“Where d’you think our clients come from?” Then John looks over to me, “Your girlfriend reads my blog.”

“I have a website.” Sherlock looks to me as well, “She reads mine too.” I rolled my eyes at their childish banter.

“In which you enumerate two hundred and forty different types of tobacco ash. Nobody but Eiric is reading your website.” Sherlock straightens up and glares at him, then pouts adorably to me momentarily as John continues to look at the body.

“Right then: dyed blonde hair; no obvious cause of death except for these speckles, whatever they are.” He points at the tiny red marks on the woman’s body but Sherlock and I have already turned and walked (flounced for Sherlock) out of the room.

TPSH

Later, back at the flat, John is updating his blog again. Sherlock walks past eating a piece of toast. He stops and looks at the title for the entry.

“Oh, for God’s sakes!” he exclaimed with his mouth full. I whacked him on the shoulder at I passed him to refill my mug of tea.
“What?” John asked.

“The Speckled Blonde?!” John purses his lips as Sherlock walks away again.

TPSH

Two little girls were sitting together on one of the dining chairs in the flat as Sherlock paces.

“They wouldn’t let us see Granddad when he was dead. Is that ‘cause he’d gone to heaven?” the little girl asked. I was about to say something when Sherlock open his mouth.

“People don’t really go to heaven when they die. They’re taken to a special room and burned.” The two girls looked at each other in distress. I punched Sherlock in the shoulder and took the girls to my flat to speak to them.

“Sherlock . . .” John said reprovingly.

TPSH

Lestrade and I were leading Sherlock and John across some open ground.

“There was a plane crash in Dusseldorf yesterday. Everyone dead.” Lestrade told them. ‘Yes, they were dead but not because of the plane crash . . . it’s as if they were already dead.’

“Suspected terrorist bomb. We do watch the news.” Sherlock said. I snorted out a laugh.

“You said, “Boring,” and turned over.” I said with a smirk to him. He scowled at me but had a playful look in his eyes. We lead them to a car which has its boot opened. There’s a body inside the boot. I continue to speak as Sherlock looks all around the rear of the car. Lestrade looks at the bag of evidence. “Well, according to the flight details, this man was checked in on board. Inside his coat he’s got a stub from his boarding pass, napkins from the flight, even one of those special biscuits. Here’s his passport stamped in Berlin Airport. So this man should have died in a plane crash in Germany yesterday but instead he’s in a car boot in Southwark.”

“Lucky escape!” John said.

“Any ideas?” Lestrade asked Sherlock. ‘Yes, one. His name begins with “my” and ends with “croft”.’ Sherlock examines the man’s hand with his magnifier.

“Eight, so far.” He straightens up and looks at the body again, then frowns momentarily. “Okay, four ideas.” He turns to Lestrade and looks down at the passport and the ticket stub of the passenger, John Coniston, who was meant to be traveling on Flyaway Airways. Standing up, he gazes up into the sky. “Maybe two ideas.” The shadow of a passenger jet passes overhead.

TPSH

Back at the flat, Sherlock – wearing heavy protective gloves and safety glasses and carrying a blowtorch in one hand and a glass container of green liquid in the other – has come to the living room table to look at John’s latest blog entry which is entitled “Sherlock Holmes baffled”.

“No, no, no, don’t mention the unsolved ones.” He said indignantly.

“People want to know you’re human.” John said.

“Why?” Sherlock asked.
“Cause they’re interested.” I said from my spot on the couch reading the new Astronomy book that Sherlock had bought me.

“No they’re not. Why are they?” he asked. John smiles at his laptop.

“Look at that.” He looks at the hit counter on the front page of his blog. “One thousand, eight hundred and ninety-five.”

“Sorry, what?”

“I re-set that counter last night. This blog has had nearly two thousand hits in the last eight hours. This is your living, Sherlock – not two hundred and forty different types of tobacco ash.” John said.

“Two hundred and forty-three.” Sherlock said sulkily. Firing up the blowtorch, he puts his safety glasses back on and heads back towards the kitchen. I sighed and looked over to John.

“Now I’ll have to deal with him pouting all night again, John.” He smiled at me sheepishly, I shook my head and went back to my book.

TPSH

Theatre Sherlock pov

Eiric, John, and I were walking across the stage of a theatre while police officers mill around nearby.

“So, what’s this one? Belly Button Murders?” Eiric screws up her nose in disgust.

“The Navel Treatment?” that made me screw up my nose.

“Eurgh!” we walked backstage and met up with Lestrade as we head for the exit.

“There’s a lot of press outside, guys.” He told us.

“Well, they won’t be interested in us.” I said.

“Yeah, that was before you were an internet phenomenon. A couple of them specifically wanted photographs of you three.” Exasperated, I glare round at John.

“For God’s sake!” John quirks a smile as we walked on, then I spotted some costumes on a rack just inside a nearby dressing room. I walk in and grab a couple of items off the rack. “John.” I toss a cap at him. I walked over to Eiric and gave her a pair of round sunglasses and a green scarf. She puts on the glasses and wraps the scarf around her head, covering some of her hair and face. “Cover your face and walk fast.”

“Still, it’s good for the public image, a big case like this.” Lestrade said.

“I’m a private detective. The last thing I need is a public image.” I put on the other hat that I had picked up and head out the exit door pulling the hat low as possible over my eyes and tugging the collar of my coat up. I put an arm around Eiric’s waist and pulled her towards me, hiding her some more. Outside, photographers start taking pictures of us. Later, some of the pictures have been used in various newspapers, together with headlines such as “Hat-man, Mysterious beauty, and Robin: The web detectives”, “Sherlock Net ‘Tec”, “Sherlock, Tristyn, & John: Blogger Detectives”, and “Sherlock Holmes: net phenomenon”.

TPSH
Mrs. Hudson picked up a mug and an almost empty bottle of milk from the mantelpiece and walks into the kitchen, tutting in exasperation at the mess in there. Putting the mug onto the table she takes the milk across to the fridge door and opens it, recoiling from the smell emanating from inside. Putting the milk into the fridge door she picks up the offending smelly item and drops it into the bin, then pulls open the salad crisper at the bottom and takes out a clear plastic bag from it. Peering at the contents, she cringes as she realized what’s inside. “Ooh dear! Thumbs!” she drops the bag back into the salad crisper, then turns as an overweight man stumbles into the kitchen through the side door and stares at her wide-eyed and confused.

“The door was . . . the door was . . .” he breathes heavily, then drops to the floor in a faint. Mrs. Hudson stares at him in terror for a moment, then calls out.

“Dearie’s! You’ve got another one!” she bends down to the unconscious man. “Ooh!”

TPSH

Many hours later a crime scene has been set up at the riverside. A young police officer brings a mobile phone over to Detective Inspector Carter.

“Sir. A phone call for you.”

[Carter.] Lestrade is at the other end of the line, sitting in his car in Baker Street.

[Have you heard of Sherlock Holmes?]

[Who?]

[Well, you’re about to him now. This is your case. It’s entirely up to you. This is just friendly advice, but give Sherlock five minutes on your crime scene and listen to everything that he has to say. And as far as possible, try not to punch him.] as Lestrade had been speaking, a car has driven up and stopped near the crime scene. Carter looks down in bewilderment at the phone as Lestrade ends the call. The young police officer has been leaning into the car speaking to the person in the back seat.

“Ohay.” He turns to Carter as he approaches. “Sir, this gentlemen says he needs to speak to you.”

“Yes, I know.” He walks closer to the car. “Sherlock Holmes.”

“John Watson. Are you set up for Wi-Fi?” I asked getting out of the car and shaking Carter’s hand.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

Yawning, I wander out from my bedroom behind the kitchen and stroll into the kitchen wearing only a sheet wrapped around me. Eiric still asleep with the comforter back in my room. I frown thinking back to last night hearing her cries and screams from the couch. I had picked her up from it and took her to my room and tucked her into bed, she started to calm down until she just had silent tears rolling down her face.

“You realize this is a tiny bit humiliating?” John said. Still yawning as I pick up a mug of tea from the side table.
“It’s okay, I’m fine.” I walk over to an open laptop on the work surface, pick it up and look into the screen as I carry the laptop into the living room. “Now, show me to the stream.”

“I didn’t really mean for you.” He said.

“Look, this is a six.” I sit down at the table in the living room and put the laptop onto the table. Just then the doorbell rings but I ignore it. Adjusting the screen so that my face can be seen by the laptop’s camera. “There’s no point in my leaving the flat for anything less than a seven. We agreed. Now, go back. Show me the grass.” John had walked down to the stream and Skypeing with me. He points the camera on his laptop towards the grass at the stream’s edge and squats down.

“When did we agree that?”

“We agreed it yesterday. Stop!” I lean closer to the screen and look at the mud on the ground. “Closer.” Instead of following my instructions, John swings the laptop around so he can look into the camera.

“I wasn’t even at home yesterday. I was in Dublin. Eiric took Teddy to his Grandmother and Grandfather’s house for the week, so she wasn’t home till last night.” I looked back to my room, ‘I know.’

“Well, it’s hardly my fault you weren’t listening.” The doorbell rings more insistently. I briefly look round in the direction of the stairs. “SHUT UP!” I yelled angrily. I heard my door to my bedroom open. Eiric walked out looking around confused then looks to me with a raised eyebrow. I shrugged to her.

“D’you just carry on talking when I’m away?” John asked.

“I don’t know. How often are you away? Now, show me the car that backfired.” I shrugged. Sighing, John stands up and turns the laptop and it’s camera towards the road to show Phil’s car.

“It’s there.”

“That’s the one that made the noise, yes?” I asked. John swings the camera back around to look into it.

“Yeah. And if you’re thinking gunshot, there wasn’t one. He wasn’t shot; he was killed by a single blow to the back of the head from a blunt instrument which then magically disappeared along with the killer. That’s gotta be an eight at least.” I had leaned back in my chair and was running my finger back and forth over my top lip as I think.

“It’s not even a one.” I heard Eiric mutter from the couch. As John walks back towards the road, Carter was following along behind him.

“You’ve got two more minutes, then I want to know more about the driver.” He demanded, waving my hand dismissively.

“Oh, forget him. He’s an idiot. Why else would he think himself a suspect?” Carter catches up to John and leans over to look into the camera.

“I think he’s a suspect!” I leaned forward angrily.

“Pass me over.”
“All right, but there’s a Mute button and I will use it.” He tilts the laptop at an angle that I’m not happy with.

“Up a bit! I’m not talking from down ‘ere!” I said irritated. John had enough and offers the laptop to Carter.

“Okay, just take it, take it.” Carter takes the laptop as I start talking at double the usual speed.

“Having driven to an isolated location and successfully committed a crime without a single witness, why would he then call the police and consult a detective? Fair play!!”

“He’s trying to be clever. It’s over-confidence.” I sighed in exasperation.

“Did you see him? Morbidly obese, the undisguised halitosis of a single man living on his own, the right sleeve of an internet porn addict and the breathing pattern of an untreated heart condition. Low self-esteem, tiny IQ and a limited life expectancy – and you think he’s an audacious criminal mastermind?!” I turn around to John’s chair where Phil has been sitting all the time. “Don’t worry – this is just stupid.

“What did you say? Heart what?” he asked anxiously. Ignoring him, I turn back to the camera.

“Go to the stream.” I said.

“What’s in the stream?”

“Go and see.” As Carter hands the laptop back to John, Mrs. Hudson comes up the stairs and into the living room followed by two men wearing suits.

“Sherlock! You weren’t answering your doorbell!” one of the men looks at his colleague while pointing with his thumb in the direction of the kitchen.

“His room’s through the back. Get him some clothes.”

“Who the hell are you?” I demanded. Eiric sighed and got up from the couch.

“I can get dress myself, thank you Plummer.” I turn to her as she left the flat looking worn down.

“Thank you, Miss. Potter. Sorry, Mr. Holmes. You’re coming with us.” He reaches forward to close down the lid of the laptop as John calls out in alarm.

TPSH

“Sherlock, what’s going on? What’s happening?” as my screen goes black, I poke at the keyboard frantically. “I’ve lost him. I don’t know what . . .” the young police officer hurries over to me with a phone pressed to his ear.

“Doctor Watson?” he asked.

“Yeah.”

“It’s for you.”

“Okay, thanks.” Still looking at the screen, I hold out my hand for the phone.

“Uh, no, sir. The helicopter.” We both turn and look at the helicopter which is just coming in to land at the edge of the river.
221B Sherlock pov.

Plummer’s colleague had collected a pile of clothes and a pair of shoes and put them down onto the table in front of me, I raised an eyebrow and shrug disinterestedly.

“Please, Mr. Holmes. Where you’re going, you’ll want to be dressed.” I turn my head, gaze at the man and begin to deduce the hell out of him.

Looking at his clothes: Suit £ 700
Glancing at his breast pocket and the area where a pistol would be if Plummer was carrying one: Unarmed
Thumbnail: Manicured
Forehead: Office worker
The way his hands are folded in front of him: Right handed
Looking down to his shoes: Indoor worker
Seeing some wiry hairs on the cuff of his trouser leg: Small dog
Seeing a mark higher up the same trouser leg: Two smack dogs
Seeing more hairs on the other trouser leg: Three small dogs
And the fact that Eiric knew him: she’s done this before

I smile smugly and look up into Plummer’s face.

“Oh, I know exactly where I’m going.”

TPSH

Palace Eiric pov

Not long after Sherlock and I were taken to the Palace, John was being shown to the room that we were being held in by his escort. On the small round table in the middle of the room was Sherlock’s pile of clothes and shoes. There is a sofa on either side of the table. Sherlock and I were sitting on the left-handed one, Sherlock was still in his sheet. He looks across to John calmly. I gave him a slight smile. John holds out his hands in a “What the hell?!” gesture. Both Sherlock and I shrug disinterestedly and look away again. John walks slowly into the room then sits down on the sofa on my left side. He gazes in front of himself for a moment, chewing back a giggle, looks around the room again and then looks at Sherlock, peering closely at his sheet and particularly the section wrapped around his backside. He turns his head away again.

“Are you wearing any pants?” John asked.

“No.”

“Okay.” John sighs quietly. A moment later Sherlock turns and looks at me and John just as John also turns to look. Our eyes meet and we promptly burst out laughing. John gestured around the building. “At Buckingham Palace, fine.” He tries to get himself under control. “Oh, I’m seriously fighting an impulse to steal an ashtray.” Sherlock and I chuckle again.

“What are we doing here, Sherlock? Seriously, what?

“I don’t know.” Sherlock said still smiling.

“Here to see the Queen?” John asked. As that moment Mycroft walks in from the next room.
“Oh, apparently yes.” John and I crack up again and Sherlock promptly joins in. The three of us continue to giggle as Mycroft looks at us in exasperation.

“Just once, can you three behave like grown-ups?” Mycroft questioned.

“We solve crimes, I blog about, she’s a witch, and he forgets his pants, so I wouldn’t hold out too much hope.” Sherlock looked up at his brother as he walks into the room, all humour gone from his face.

“I was in the middle of a case, Mycroft.”

“What, the hiker and the backfire? I glanced at the police report. Bit obvious, surely?” he asked.

“Transparent.” I spoke up from my spot. John looked at me startled.

“Time to move on, then.” Mycroft bends down and picks up the clothes and shoes from the table, turning to offer them to Sherlock. Sherlock gazes at them uninterestedly. Mycroft sighs. “We are in Buckingham Palace, the very heart of the British nation. Sherlock Holmes, put your trousers on.” Mycroft said sternly.

“What for?” Sherlock shrugged.

“Your client.”

“And my client is?” Sherlock asked standing up.

“Illustrious . . .” Sherlock turned to look at the man who had just walked into the room. I had to lean around him to see. “. . . in the extreme.” John stands up respectfully. I stayed sitting down. “And remaining – I have to inform you – entirely anonymous.” He looks across to Mycroft. “Mycroft!”

“Harry.” Smiling, Mycroft walks over and shakes the equerry’s hand. ‘Stop it, Mycroft, stop smiling. Merlin sake that is horror pure horror to see.’ “May I just apologise for the state of my little brother?”

“Full-time occupation, I imagine.” Sherlock scowls. ‘Yeah, if he lived with him.’ “And this must be Doctor John Watson, formerly of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.”

“Hello, yes.” They shake hands.

“My employer is a tremendous fan of your blog.”

“Your employer?” John asked looking startled.

“Particularly enjoyed the one about the aluminium crutch.”

“Thank you!” he looks round at Sherlock, clearing his throat smugly. I nudged him in the leg catching his attention.

“Now, John don’t go getting a big head,” I said with a smirk as I stood up, I laid a hand on Sherlock shoulder, “That’s Sherlock’s department.” My smirk grew at Sherlock’s indignant and insulted look. I stuck my hand out to Harry. “Ello, Harry. Eiric Potter.” I said brightly to him as we shook hands.

“Miss. Potter, it’s an honour to meet. My employer loves you greatly for what you have done for your nation.” My smile became tight, fake, and fixed on my face at this.
“Yes, well, I didn’t do it for her or this nation, I did it for my world, people, and home.” His eyes widen in shock, “And she is none of those things.” My stare harden. He gave me a tight nod. Harry walks closer to Sherlock.

“And Mr. Holmes the younger. You look taller in your photographs.” He said.

“I take the precaution of a good coat and two short friends.” Looking momentarily at John and me, smirking at my insulted look before he walked abruptly past us, forcing us to step back, and approached his brother. “Mycroft, I don’t do anonymous clients. I’m used to mystery at one end of my cases. Both ends is too much work.” He looks around to the equerry. “Good morning.” He starts to walk out of the room but Mycroft steps onto the trailing edge of the sheet behind him. Sherlock’s impetus carries him forward while pulling the sheet off his body. Sherlock stops and grabs at it before he’s completely naked and tries to tug it back around himself. I felt my cheeks flare hotly and turned my head away.

“This is a matter of national importance. Grow up.” ‘And what you just did is grown up?’ with his back still to us, Sherlock speaks through gritted teeth.

“Get off my sheet!” ‘Please, don’t.’

“Or what?” Mycroft asked.

“Or I’ll just walk away.” ‘Oh dear Merlin.’

“I’ll let you.” ‘So childish.’

“Boys, please. Not here.” ‘Yes, listen to John.’


“Take a look at where you’re standing and make a deduction. You are to be engaged by the highest in the land. Now for God’s sake . . .” Mycroft breaks off and glances at the equerry briefly, trying to get his anger under control before he turns back to his brother again. “. . . put your clothes on!” he said exasperated. I let out a breath getting my blush under control before picking up Sherlock’s pile of clothes and walked to him. I stepped in front of him as he opens his eyes.

“Sherlock, as sexy as you look right now; I think you look even sexier in your tight suit.” I held them out to him. “Please, for my sanity put your clothes on.” He stared at me for a moment before snatching my wrist and put his fingers on my pulse point.

“Most women pulse race and eyes dialect at anything I do, but for you it’s simply the sight of me in just a sheet.” He looked confuse but smug at the same time. I moved my wrist away from him.

“Well, I’m not most women; am I?” I asked with a smile.

“No, you’re not and for that I am grateful.” He took the clothes and pressed a light and quick kiss to my lips and went to get dress. Sometime later, Sherlock had returned dressed and was sitting by me again. Mycroft and the equerry sit on the opposite sofa. Mycroft was pouring tea.

“I’ll be mother.” He smiled at the equerry.

“And there is a whole childhood in a nutshell.” Sherlock said pointedly. I took a sip a tea to hide my smile as Mycroft glowers at him, then puts the teapot down. The equerry looks at Sherlock.

“My employer has a problem.” I raised an eyebrow as I brought my cup down, ‘No, really? I had
“A matter has come to light of an extremely delicate and potentially criminal nature, and in this hour of need, dear brother, your name has arisen.” Mycroft said, ‘Lay it on thick, why don’t ya.’

“Why? You have a police force of sorts, even a marginally Secret Service. Why come to me?” Sherlock asked.

“People do come to you for help, don’t they, Mr. Holmes?” Harry inquired.

“Not, to date, anyone with a Navy.”

“This a matter of the highest security, and therefore of trust.” Mycroft told him.

“You don’t trust your own Secret Service?” John asked.

“Of course they don’t, John.” I sneered into my tea.

“Naturally not. They all spy on people for money.” John bites back a smile.

“I do think we have a timetable.” Harry spoked.

“Yes, of course. Um . . .” Mycroft opens his briefcase takes out a glossy photograph and hands it to Sherlock who looks at the picture of a dark haired woman. “What do you know about this woman?”

“Nothing whatsoever.” Sherlock replied. I looked at the picture furrowing my eyebrows.

“Then you should be paying more attention. She’s been at the centre of two political scandals in the last year, and recently ended the marriage of a prominent novelist by having an affair with both participants separately.” Mycroft told us, I wrinkled my nose in disgust.

“You know I don’t concern myself with trivia. Who is she?” Sherlock asked.

“Irene Adler, professionally known as The Woman.” Sherlock’s eyes widen a bit before going back to normal.

“Professionally?” John asked.

“There are many names for what she does. She prefers ‘dominatrix’.”

“Dominatrix.” Sherlock said thoughtfully, I leaned back away from him a bit staring at him with a confused look.

“Don’t be alarmed. It’s to do with sex.” Mycroft said, I turned to look at him. He caught my stare, giving me a hidden smile.

“Sex doesn’t alarm me.” Sherlock argued.

“How would you know?” Mycroft smiled snidely at him. Sherlock raised his head and stares at his brother. “She provides – shall we say – recreational scolding for those who enjoy that sort of thing and are prepared to pay for it.” He takes more photographs from his briefcase and hands them to Sherlock. “These are all from her website.” Sherlock takes the photographs and leafs through them. They were professional-looking publicity shots for her ‘services’ and show Irene at her glamorous and sexy best. I looked away and stared at my tea. ‘I’m not jealous, I’m not.’
“And I assume this Adler woman has some compromising photographs.” Sherlock said.

“You’re very quick, Mr. Holmes.”

“Hardly a difficult deduction. Photographs of whom?” Sherlock asked.

“A person of significance to my employer. We’d prefer not to say any more at this time.” Glaring at him angrily, Sherlock puts the photographs down on the table.

“You can’t tell us anything?” John asked. Mycroft looked to me and give me a nod to answer John’s question.

“It’s a young person.” I turn to John as he drinks from his teacup. “A young female person.” I finished with a smirk as his eyes widen. Sherlock smirks.

“How many photographs?” Sherlock asked.

“A considerable number, apparently.” Mycroft said.

“Do Miss. Adler and this young female person appear in these photographs together?”

“Yes, they do.”

“And I assume in a number of compromising scenarios.” I looked at Sherlock out the corner of my eye and huffed slightly.

“An imaginative range, we are assured.” Without looking at him, Sherlock realizes that John is staring blankly at me with his teacup still half raised.

“John, you might want to out that cup back in your saucer now.” John quickly does as advised.

“Can you help us, Mr. Holmes?” Harry asked.

“How?” Sherlock and I both asked at the same time.

“Will you take the case?” he asked.

“What case? Pay her, now and in full. As Miss. Adler remarks in her masthead, “Know when you are beaten”.” He turns and reaches for his overcoat which is draped on the back of the sofa.

“She doesn’t want anything.” Sherlock turns back towards Mycroft. “She got in touch, she informed us that the photographs existed, she indicated that she had no intention to use them to extort either money or favour.”

“Oh, a power play. A power play with the most powerful family in Britain. Now that is a dominatrix. Ooh, this is getting rather fun, isn’t it?” Sherlock said, finally interested for the first time.

“Sherlock . . .” I said hesitantly.

“Hmm.” He turned around and reached for his coat again. “Where is she?”

“Uh, in London currently. She’s staying . . .” not waiting for him to finish, Sherlock picks up his coat, takes my hand, stands and starts to walk away taking me with him.

“Text me the details. I’ll be in touch by the end of the day.” The other three men get to their feet.
“Do you really think you’ll have news by then?” Harry asked.

“No, I think I’ll have the photographs.” Sherlock said turning back to him.

“One can only hope you’re as good as you seem to think.” Sherlock and I look at him sharply, indignant that he should doubt us. Both Sherlock and I glance down his body.

Dog lover
Public School
Horse Rider
Early Riser
Left Side Of Bed
My eyes begin to rise up the man’s body again as my deduction continues.
Non-Smoker
Father Half Welsh
Keen Reader
Tea Drinker.

I look across to Mycroft.

“We’ll need some equipment, of course.” I said smoothly.

“Anything you require. I’ll have it sent to . . .” I interrupted him.

“Can I have a box of matches?” I asked looking at the equerry as I speak.

“I’m sorry?” He asked startled.

“Or your cigarette lighter. Either will do.” I hold out my hand expectantly.

“I don’t smoke.”

“No, I know you don’t, but your employer does.” After a pause during which John puzzlement, the equerry reaches into his pocket and takes out a lighter which he hands to me.

“We have kept a lot of people successfully in the dark about this little fact, Miss. Potter.” I smirk at him.

“We’re not the Commonwealth.” Taking the lighter and handing it to Sherlock, who put it into his trouser pocket, then we turned away.

“And that’s as modest as they get. Pleasure to meet you.” John said to the equerry. He follows after us as we stroll out of the room.

“Laters!” Sherlock said in an Estuary English accent, not pronouncing the ‘t’. I let out a laugh gaining a smile from Sherlock. John throws an apologetic glance over his shoulder as we leave.
Chapter 20

Taxi John pov

Not long after the meeting at the Palace, we were in a taxi back to Baker Street.

“Okay, the smoking. How did you know?” I asked them. Eiric let out a small giggle and Sherlock smiled briefly, then shakes his head.

“The evidence was right under your nose, John. As ever, you see but do not observe.” Sherlock said.

“Observe what?” I asked. Sherlock reaches into his coat.

“The ashtray.” He pulls out a glass ashtray. Eiric and I laugh with delight as Sherlock tosses the ashtray into the air, catches it and tucks it back into his coat, chuckling. Eiric and Sherlock shared a look, that I would almost say was loving but this is Sherlock I’m talking about, but they have been behaving differently since the Pool incident. They’re acting almost like a normal, boring, mundane couple and quite frankly it’s weird but a good weird.

TPSH

221B

Eiric had gone to her flat to change out of her dress and into something more comfortable. I sat in the living room as – on the other side of the kitchen – Sherlock hurls clothes around his bedroom. With the door open, the noise is distracting and finally I look up from what I’m reading.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“Going into battle, John. I need the right armour.” He walks into view, wearing a large yellow hi-vis jacket. At that moment Eiric walks in and does a double take at seeing Sherlock. Her mouth opens a bit in shock and confusion. She looks over to me and then back to Sherlock, she shakes her head and went to the couch and sat down picking up her book she was reading earlier. I looked at her new outfit which consisted of a pair of black leggings, a rose peplum top, and black stilettos.

“How do you run in those things?” I asked pointing to her heels. She looks down at them and then back up at me.

“Lots of practice, John.” She shrugs and goes back to her book.

TPSH

Taxi

We were on the move. Sherlock was wearing what he had on this morning, with his usual coat and scarf.

“So, what’s the plan?” Eiric asked, looking out the window.

“We know her address.” Sherlock answered her, also staring out the window.

“What, just ring her doorbell?” I asked, confused.
“Exactly.” He calls out to the cab driver. “Just here, please.”

“You didn’t even change your clothes.” I said.

“Then it’s time to add a splash of colour.” We got out of the taxi and Sherlock leads Eiric and I down a narrow street, pulling his scarf off as he goes. Eventually he stops and turns around to face me and Eiric.

“Are we here?”

“Two streets away, but this’ll do.”

“For what?” I asked.

“Punch me in the face.” He gestured to his own left cheek.

“Punch you?” I repeated.

“Yes. Punch me, in the face.” Sherlock gestures to his left cheek again. “Didn’t you hear me?”

“We always hear ‘punch me in the face’ when you’re speaking, but it’s usually sub-text.” Eiric said a bit smug, letting out a few honey sweet chuckles.

“Oh, for God’s sakes.” Sherlock said exasperated. He punches me in the face. As I grunt in pain and reel from the blow, Sherlock shakes out his hand and then blows out a breath, bracing himself. I straighten up and immediately punch Sherlock. However, despite my anger and my left-handedness, I punched him right-handed and therefore strike him on the left cheek just as Sherlock had indicated.

“Ow!” turning away as Sherlock picks himself up, I flex my hand painfully and examine my knuckles. Sherlock finally straightens up, holding his fingers to the cut on his cheek.

“Thank you. That was – that was . . .” still fighting right-handed, I punched him in the stomach, sending him crashing to the ground. I looked over to Eiric, who’s leaning on the wall arms crossed, she raised an eyebrow and made a ‘go at it’ hand gesture to me. Sherlock is doubled over with me on his back half-strangling him. My face is contorted with pent-up anger and frustration, and Sherlock was struggling to pull my hands off him. “Okay! I think we’re done now, John.” He said half-choking.

“You wanna remember, Sherlock: I was a soldier. I killed people.” I said savagely.

“You were a doctor!” Sherlock exclaimed.

“I had bad days!” I shouted. After a few more minutes of struggling, Sherlock finally got me off his back and was sucking in air.

“You boys done now?” we both turned to Eiric to see her trying not to laugh as she magicked a white handkerchief and walked over to Sherlock, pressing the cloth to his cheek. “Well, thank Merlin he missed your nose and teeth, Sherlock.” I looked away from the scene feeling a bit of jealousy for my two best friend’s relationship.

TPSH

Adler’s house Sherlock pov

I ranged the buzzer on the intercom. It’s answered by a woman with orange hair, ‘Eiric’s colour is
“Hello?” came from the intercom. I stare into the camera wide-eyed and flustered. I talk in an anxious, tearful voice and keep looking around behind me as I speak.

“Ooh! Um, sorry to disturb you. Um, I’ve just been attacked, um, and, um, I think they . . . they took my wallet and, um, and my phone. Umm, please could you help me?” I asked.

“I can phone the police if you want.” She said.

“Thank you, thank you! Could you, please?” I said tearfully. I take a step back. “Oh, would you . . . would you mind if I just waited here, just until they come? Thank you. Thank you so much.”

Holding the handkerchief Eiric had made to my cheek, I start to grizzle pathetically. The woman buzzes us in. I go in, followed by Eiric and John. Still in character, “Thank you.” I briefly look around the large entrance hall. “Er, ooh!”

“I- I saw it all happen. It’s okay, I’m a doctor.” John said as he closed the door. The woman nods and then turns to Eiric, who simply raised an eyebrow at her causing the woman to leave her alone.

“Now, have you got a first aid kit?”

“In the kitchen.” She gestured for Eiric and I to go into the front room. “Please.”

“Oh! Thank you!” I said.

“Thank you.” John told her as he followed her to the kitchen. Shortly afterwards Eiric and I have taken off our coats and take our seats, Eiric in the armchair with her back facing the door and me on the couch. I looked to her and gestured to my cheek.

“What?” she asked. I sighed and hold out the handkerchief to her, so she could blot it while we wait for Adler to show up. Eiric lets out a musical laugh and shakes her head. “No, Sherlock, you asked for it; I’ll take care of it when we go home after this, okay?” she sends me a sweet smile.

“Fine.” And no, I didn’t whine as I said that. We both hear footsteps approaching, I sit up a little and hold the handkerchief to my cheek.

“Hello. Sorry to hear that you’ve been hurt. I don’t think Kate caught your name.”

“Oh, it’s always hard to remember an alias when you’ve had a fright, isn’t it?” ’I most defiantly had a fright at seeing your body.’ She walks into the room, ignoring Eiric, and stands directly in front of me, straddling my legs and half-kneeling on the sofa, then reaches forward and pulls the white plastic dog collar from my shirt collar. “There now – we’re both defrocked . . .” she smiles down at me. “. . . Mr. Sherlock Holmes.”

“Miss. Adler, I presume.” I said in my normal voice. She gazed down at my face.

“Look at those cheekbones. I could cut myself slapping that face. Would you like me to try?” narrowing her eyes, she lifts the white plastic to her mouth and bites down on it. As I stare up at her in confusion, John walks into the room carrying a bowl of water and a fabric napkin. His eyes are lowered to the bowl to avoid spilling its contents.
“Right, this should do it.” He stops dead in the doorway as he lifts his eyes and sees the scene in front of him. Adler looks round to him, the plastic still in her teeth. John looks at her awkwardly, then down at the bowl before looking up again. “I’ve missed something, haven’t I?” Adler takes the plastic from her teeth.

“Please, sit down.” She steps back from me, I fidget uncomfortably on the sofa as she walks away. “Oh, if you’d like some tea I can call the maid.”

“I had some at the Palace.” I retorted.

“I know.” She sits down in the other armchair and crosses her legs, folding her arms gracefully to obscure the view of her chest.

“Clearly.” We stare silently at the other for several seconds, weighing the other up. John looks at them awkwardly and then to Eiric, who’s been rather silent to find her staring hard at Adler, frown on her lips.

“I had tea, too, at the Palace, if anyone’s interested.” My eyes are still fixed on Adler as I attempt to make as many deductions as I can about her. My final analysis is: ??????? Bewildered, I turn and look at John and start to analyze him.

Looking to his neckline: Two day shirt
Lower face: Electric not blade
Jeans and shoes: Date tonight
John frowns as I continue to gaze at him.
Right eyebrow: Hasn’t phoned sister
Lower lip: New toothbrush
Underneath his eyes: Night out with Stamford

Relieved that I haven’t had a brain embolism, I slowly turn my head and look at Adler again. Narrowing my eyes slightly, I apply all my deductive reasoning as she smiles confidently back at me, and I quickly come to the following conclusion: ??????? I frown and turn to Eiric, I saw her hard emerald stare focused on Adler and knew she deduce Adler within seconds of her stepping into the room and that she wasn’t going to say what she found. As usually Eiric came up blank as I tried to deduce her, I turn back to Adler.

“D’you know the big problem with a disguise, Mr. Holmes?” I quirk an eyebrow at her. “However hard you try, it’s always a self-portrait.”

“You think he’s a vicar with a bleeding face?” Eiric asked, her voice low and with a hint of venom in it. Adler turned to her with a smirk on her face.

“No, I think he’s damaged, delusional and believes in a higher power. In his case, it’s himself.” Eiric grinds her teeth. Finally fed up with the tightness of my shirt, I start unbuttoning the top two buttons. Adler leans forward. “Oh, and somebody loves you. Why, if I had to punch that face, I’d avoid your nose and teeth too.” She glances across to John momentarily. John forces a laugh.

“Could you put something on, please? Er, anything at all.” He looks down at what he’s holding.
“A napkin.” Eiric let out a single chuckle.

“Why? Are you feeling exposed?” Adler asked. ‘If John shown a signal sign of uncomfortableness when Eiric only had her sports bra and sweats on, she instantly puts on her baggy sweatshirt.’ I stood up to help John out.
“I don’t think John knows where to look.” I pick up my coat, shake it out and hold it out to Adler. Ignoring me for a moment, she stands up and walks closer to John, who rolls his head on his neck uncomfortably and forces himself to maintain eye contact with her and not to let his eyes wander lower.

“No, I think he knows exactly where.” She turns to me, I’m still holding out the coat while steadfastly keeping my gaze averted. “I’m not sure about you.” She takes the coat from me.

“If I wanted to see a naked woman, I’d asked Eiric or borrow John’s laptop.” I said, Eiric looked at me from the corner of her eye and winked.

“You do borrow my laptop.” John says.

“I confiscate it.” I walk over to the fireplace opposite of the sofa.

“And you’ve seen me in just my undies before, Sherlock.” Eiric’s said leaning her chin on her hand, her voice carrying an undertone of playful seduction.

“Oh, I know and I won’t forget it.” I said with the same amount of seduction in my voice. She let out a few giggles. I chuckle a bit as well.


“Oh?” she asked calmly. “What did this ‘little birdy’ have to say?”

“Lots of things.” Adler spoke as if she has already won the battle. “The fact that you’re broken goods for one.” Eiric sat up straighter, her gaze sharpening. Adler walked closer to her, staring down at her. “Oh, sweetheart, has anyone told you that your carrot top is hideously ugly?” Eiric’s eyes looked like emerald shards.

“Sherlock, will have to burn this coat before we leave.” Eiric spoke to Adler.

“Why?” Adler asked looking confused.

“Well, I simply don’t want my boyfriend to catch anything you may have in that Grand Canyon wide vagina.” Eiric looks as if she remember something, “Oh, you don’t mind do you?” she asked Adler in a honey sweet voice.

“Of course not, but why would Sherlock want to date you, a little slip of a girl when he could have a woman of regal beauty not a horribly scarred riff-raff?” Adler asked scornfully.

“Say’s the woman who has to take her clothes off her skinny, white, trashy, arse to get any attention.” We all look at her in shock, I smirk as I realize that what they say about red heads having a fiery temper is true. Adler finally puts the coat on and wraps it around her.

“Well, never mind. We’ve got better things to talk about. Now tell me – I need to know.” She walks over to the sofa and sits down, realizing she was beaten this round. “How was it done?”

“What?” I asked her.

“The hiker with the bashed-in head. How was he killed?” she asked taking her shoes off. ‘Eiric runs in shoe like that and never complains about them, how can she stand it? That would make an interesting experiment.’ We looked at her confused.
“That’s not why I’m here.” I said.

“No, no, no, you’re here for the photographs but that’s never gonna happen, and since we’re here just chatting anyway . . .” Adler stated.

“That story’s not been on the news yet. How do you know about it?” John asked her. Eiric just glowered at her.

“I know one of the policemen. Well, I know what he likes.” She said playfully.

“Oh.” John sits down beside her. “And you like policemen?”

“I like detective stories – and detectives. Brainy’s the new sexy.”

“Position of the car . . .” I said incoherently. John and Eiric turn their heads and stare at me as I pull myself together. “Er, the position of the car relative to the hiker at the time of the backfire. That and the fact that the death blow was to the back of the head. That’s all you need to know.” I started to pace slowly, catching Eiric’s dark frown. I frowned inwardly at it.

“Okay, tell me: how was he murdered?” Adler asked.

“He wasn’t.” I said, looking around the room.

“You don’t think it was murder?” I heard Eiric scoff.

“We know it wasn’t.” she sneered to Alder.

“How?” Adler looked over to her in shock and wonder.

“The same way that I know the victim was an excellent sportsman recently returned from foreign travel and that the photographs I’m looking for are in this room.” I said slyly.

“Okay, but how?” Adler asked.

“So they are in this room. Thank you. John, Eiric, man the door. Let no-one in.” Eiric immediately shoots out of her seat and leaves the room without a backward glance to the rest of us. John and I exchanged a significant look, then John gets up and puts the bowl and napkin on a table before following after Eiric and closing the door behind him. Adler sits up straighter, looking suspiciously at the closed door.

TPSH

Out in the hallway

“John are you going to be able to reach anywhere close to the smoke alarm?” Eiric asked John, as she watched him pick up a magazine from nearby table and rolls it up.

“Yes, I’ll be able to reach it. Not everyone can be as flippin’ tall as you and Sherlock!” John stated pointing an accusing finger at Eiric jokingly. She let out a hearty laugh and raised her hands in the universal surrender sign.

TPSH

Living room

“Two men alone in the countryside several yards apart, and one car.” I started to pace again.
“Oh. I – I thought you were looking for the photos now.” ‘Dull, boring, stupid. Nothing like Eiric.’

“No, no. looking takes ages. I’m just going to find them but you’re moderately clever and we’ve got a moment, so let’s pass the time.” I stop and turn to her.

TPSH

Hallway

If the two occupants in the living room had stepped out they would have found a young vibrant red head laughing as she watch her hobbit size friend try to set off the smoke alarm.

“Are you sure you don’t need any help, Mr. Baggins?” Eiric choked out as she wiped a tear from her eye. She started to snicker at the glare she got from John. He huffed out a breath and held out the magazine to her. Eiric took it and switched spots with John and lift the magazine up to the alarm. The magazine as a few inches too short but was still close enough to do the job.

“Who’d Sherlock be from The Lord of the Rings?” John asked a few seconds later. Eiric looked up in thought and then turned back to John.

“He’d be Smaug.” She and John burst out into giggles.

TPSH

Living room

“Two men, a car, and nobody else. The driver’s trying to fix his engine. Getting nowhere. And the hiker’s taking a moment looking at the sky. Watching the birds?” I looked doubtful. “Any moment now, something’s gonna happen. What?”

“The hiker’s going to die.” Adler said.

“No, that’s the result. What’s going to happen?” I asked again, ‘Eiric would have figured it out by now.’

“I don’t understand.” She said.

“Oh, well, try to.” I snide to her.

“Why?”

“Because you cater to the whims of the pathetic and take your clothes off to make an impression. Stop boring me and think. It’s the new sexy.” I sneered.

“The car’s going to backfire.”

“There’s going to be a loud noise.” I said.

“So, what?” She asked.

“Oh, noises are important. Noises can tell you everything. For instance . . .” I paused dramatically and a moment later a smoke alarm starts to beep insistently from the hall.

TPSH

Hallway
Eiric was now waving her hand over the magazine and then decide to use her magic to put it out completely, leaving John to stare at her in awe.

TPSH

Living room

Adler turns and looks at the large mirror over the fireplace. I turn my head and follow her gaze.

“Thank you. On hearing a smoke alarm, a mother would look towards her child. Amazing how fire exposes our priorities.” ‘Like Eiric with Teddy or me with Eiric.’ I walk over to the fireplace and begin running my fingers underneath the mantelpiece. Finding a switch under there, I press it and the mirror slides upwards, revealing a small wall safe behind it. I turn and look at Adler as she stands up. “Really hope you don’t have a baby in here.”

“All right, John, Eiric, you can turn it off now.” I call out. The sound keeps going. “I said you can turn it off now.” I said loudly.

TPSH

Hallway

“Give us a minute.” John tried to fan away the left over smoke as Eiric tosses the magazine to the side. They both look round as three men run down the stairs. The first one raises an enormous pistol – the silencer of which is so long that he must be compensating for some other shortcoming – and fires it up at the smoke alarm, shattering it. The beeping stops. One of the other men hurries towards John, aiming his pistol at him and John instantly raises his hands. The first man goes after Eiric who tried to get back to the living room. He caught her by her pony tail and yanked her backwards. She jerked as her head hit the corner of a table that was next to her as she fell. The man yanked her to his chest, wrapped one arm around her neck and pointed his gun to her bleeding temple. John looked to him as he Eiric walk over and stops in front of him. “Thank you.”

TPSH

Living room

I was looking closely at the number pad on the front of the safe.

“Hmm. Should always use gloves with these things, you know. Heaviest oil deposit’s always on the first key used – that’s quite clearly the three – but after that the sequence is almost impossible to read. I’d say from the make that it’s a six digit code. Can’t be your birthday – no disrespect but clearly you were born in the eighties; the eight’s barely used, so . . .”

“I’d tell you the code right now but you know what? I already have.” I frown at her. “Think.” The door bursts open and the leader of the group, Neilson, comes in still aiming his pistol at Eiric’s temple. She struggles to get his arm off her. My eyes widen slightly at the fact that Eiric was once again put in harm’s way because of me again. I noticed the blood running down her temple.

“Hands behind your head.” Neilson said to Adler. “On the floor. Keep it still.” A second man goes over to Adler and walks her nearer to John who was being bundled in by a third man.

“Sorry, Sherlock.” As I raise my hands, Neilson looks round to Adler.

“Ms. Adler, on the floor.” His colleague shoves her to her knees beside John who was also been pushed to his knees and is doubled over with his hands behind his head and a pistol pointed to the
“Don’t you want me on the floor too?” I asked, keeping an eye on Eiric.

“No, sir, I want you to open the safe.”

“American. Interesting. Why would you care?” I glance across at Adler as she puts her hands behind her head.

“Sir, the safe, now, please.” He tightened his grip on Eiric.

“I don’t know the code.” I said my lightly panicked gaze on Eiric.

“We’ve been listening. She said she told you.” Neilson said.

“Well, if you’d been listening, you’d know she didn’t.” my panic was starting to turn into frustration.

“I’m assuming I missed something. From your reputation, I’m assuming you didn’t, Mr. Holmes.” Eiric bucked a bit.

“For God’s sake. She’s the one who knows the code. Ask her.” John exclaimed.

“Yes, sir. She also knows the code that automatically calls the police and sets off the burglar alarm. I’ve learned not to trust this woman.” Neilson said.

“Sherlock doesn’t . . .” Eiric started but was cut off by Neilson’s arm tightening around her neck.

“Shut up. One more word out of you – just one – and I will decorate that wall with the insides of your head. That, for me, will not be a hardship.” I glare at him ferociously. “Mr. Archer. At the count of three, shoot Doctor Watson.”

“What?” John called out.

“I don’t have the code.” I stated looking back and forth at John and Eiric. John cowers down as Archer presses the muzzle of his pistol into the back of his neck and cocks the gun.

“One.”

“I don’t know the code.” I repeated emphatically.

“Two.”

“She didn’t tell me.” I raised my voice, “I don’t know it!”

“I’m prepared to believe you any second now.” I look across to Adler who lowers her gaze pointedly downwards. “Three.”

“No, stop!” Neilson holds up his free hand that was holding the gun to stop Archer. John closes his eyes. My gaze becomes distant as my mind works frantically, then I slowly turn towards the safe and lower my hands. As Neilson watches me closely, I slowly reach out a finger towards the keypad and punch the ‘3’ and then the ‘2’. Hesitating for a moment, I then punch ‘2’ and ‘4’. Pausing again, I hit ‘3’ and ‘4’. The safe beeps and noisily unlocks. Adler smiles in satisfaction as I sigh and close my eyes briefly. John sags lower on his knees and shuts his own eyes. Eiric glares in the direction of Adler as best as she could.
“Thank you, Mr. Holmes. Open it, please.” Twisting the button that will open the door, I look across to Adler again who lowers her gaze to the floor and makes a tiny jerk with her head. I turn back to the safe.

“Vatican cameos.” I called urgently. Instantly John throws himself to the floor. At the same moment I pull open the door of the safe while ducking down below the fireplace. Inside the safe, a tripwire attached to the door tugs on the trigger of a pistol with an equally long and over-compensatory silencer which is aimed straight out of the safe. The guns fires and Archer is shot in the chest. I watched in pride and awe as Eiric grabs for Neilson’s pistol, pulling the pistol from Neilson’s grip she takes his other wrist and twisted it until there was a loud crack. Neilson lets her go, she twirls around with the grace of a dancer; flipping the silencer end into her palm and smashes the butt across his face. Neilson drops to the floor unconscious. Eiric moves over Adler guard and slams her gun across his face knocking him unconscious as well.

“Knock them out the minute you have the upper hand, Adler. Don’t prance around like a slutty fairy.” Eiric sneered at her. Adler gaped at her making a great impression of a fish. While Adler was distracted by Eiric, I reach into the safe and take something out of it. Nearby, John was checking Archer over and now stands up.

“He’s dead.” John said.

“Thank you. You were very observant.” Adler said to me as she continues aiming her pistol down at her guard.

“Observant?” John asked confused.

“I’m flattered.” Eiric walked over to me and handed me the gun roughly.

“Don’t be.” I grunted.

“Flattered?” Eiric asked in a cold, harsh voice. That wasn’t right, that tone wasn’t right to come from Eiric it was dark like the moon which Adler could represent with her paleness and dark hair where Eiric represented the sun, it was bright, warm, never changing and fiery like her hair.

“There’ll be more of them. They’ll be keeping an eye on the building.” Still holding Neilson’s pistol but having removed the silencer, I hurry out of the room as John tucks Archer’s gun into the back of his jeans and follows me. Eiric follows after sending one more deadly glare to Adler. Adler goes over to the safe and stares into it wide-eyed. I trot out onto the street with John and Eiric behind me.

“We should call the police.” John said.

“Yes.” Pointing the pistol into the air, I fire it five times. Nearby, tyres screech. “On their way.” I turn and trot back into the house.

“For God’s sake!” John exclaimed.

“Oh shut up. It’s quick.” I turn to Eiric and looked over her cut. “Are you all right?” I asked cupping her face and tilting it a bit into the light to see it better.

“Fine, Doctor Holmes just fine. Will I be able to heal it the wizarding way this time?” the light started to come back into her eyes.

“Yes, this time it can be the wizarding way.” I chuckled a bit. I caressed a thumb over her cheek bone before letting her go. I go back into the living room as Adler turns around from the safe.
“Check the rest of the house. See how they got in.” I said to John, Eiric stood by the doorway. As he heads off, I take the item which I just stole from the safe out of my pocket and tosses it nonchalantly into the air. “Well, that’s the knighthood in the bag.”

“Ah. And that’s mine.” She holds out her hand. Ignoring her, I switch on the security lock on the phone I’m holding. It requires four letters or numbers to activate it and it has “I AM” above the four spaces and “LOCKED” below them.

“All the photographs are on here, I presume.” Eiric moved from the doorway and stood beside me looking at the phone screen.

“I have copies, of course.” Adler said.

“No you don’t. You’ll have permanently disabled any kind of uplink or connection. Unless the contents of this phone are provably unique, you wouldn’t be able to sell them.” Eiric said still staring at the phone.

“Who said I’m selling?” She lowered her hand.

“Well, why would they be interested? Whatever’s on the phone, it’s clearly not just photographs.” I looked at the dead and unconscious bodies lying on the floor.

“That camera phone is my life, Mr. Holmes. I’d die before I let you take it.” Adler walked closer and holds her hand out again. “It’s my protection.”

“Sherlock! Eiric!” We heard John call out. Pulling the phone back and looking at Adler pointedly. “It was.” Eiric and I turn and leave the room. She chases after us. Upstairs in the bedroom, John was kneeling over the silent figure of Kate lying on the floor. Putting his ear to her mouth to check her breathing, he straightens up and takes her pulse. Standing up, he goes into the en suite bathroom and looks at the open window in there. Eiric and I come into the bedroom followed by Adler.

“Must have come in this way.” he told us.

“Clearly.” I felt Eiric bump into my shoulder with hers lightly. I go into the bathroom to look out of the window as Adler walks anxiously towards Kate.

“It’s all right. She’s just out cold.” John told her.

“Well, God knows she’s used to that. There’s a back door. Better check it, Doctor Watson, Tristyn.” I had come out of the bathroom and nod to them.

“It’s all right. She’s just out cold.” John told her.

“Well, God knows she’s used to that. There’s a back door. Better check it, Doctor Watson, Tristyn.” I had come out of the bathroom and nod to them.

“Sure.” John said leaving the room, Eiric hesitates before following him. Adler goes over to her dressing table and opens a drawer. I was looking at the camera phone.

“You’re very calm.” She looks round at me blankly. “Well, your booby trap did just kill a man.”

“He would have killed me. It was self-defense in advance.” Walking across to me, she strokes her hand down my left arm. ‘That feels wrong. But why does it feel wrong?’ As I look down at her hand she steps around behind me and stabs a syringe into my right arm. I gasp and spin around, trying to grab at it. “What? What is that? What . . .?” as my face turn towards her again, she slaps me hard. I stumble and fall to the floor. She holds out her hand to me.

“Give it to me. Now. Give it to me.” My vision is going fuzzy. Grunting, I try to get back to my
feet.

“No.”

“Give it to me.” Starting to lose control of my muscles, I slump to my hands and knees, still holding onto the phone.

“No.”

“Oh, for goodness’ sake.” Adler picks up her riding crop from the dressing table and wields it at me. “Drop it.” I continue trying to struggle to my feet. “I . . .” she thrashes me, “. . . said . . .” she thrashes me again, “. . . drop it.” She strikes me a third time and I fall to the floor, unintentionally dropping the phone. “Ah. Thank you, dear.” As I lie on my back unable to move, she picks up the phone and types on it, standing over me and looking down at me smugly. “Now tell that sweet little posh thing the pictures are safe with me. They’re not for blackmail, just for insurance.” She puts the phone into the pocket of my coat which she’s still wearing. “Besides, I might want to see her again.” grunting, I try to get up. Adler presses me back down to the floor with the end of her crop. “Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. it’s been a pleasure. Don’t spoil it.” She gently strokes the end of the crop against my face. “This is how I want you to remember me. The woman who beat you.” ‘You’re not the woman who beat me, Eiric is.’ My vision becomes fuzzier. “Goodnight, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.” She heads for the bathroom just as John and Eiric walk back into the bedroom.

“Sherlock!” I heard Eiric gasp. Soon she comes into my vision. She cradles my head and upper body to her, gently running her hand through my hair. I looked up at her, my sight going super fuzzy, her hair looked like fire with the light shining on it.

“Beautiful . . .” I mumbled out, she smiled lovingly at me. ‘She feels right, so right.’

“Jesus. What are you doing?” John asked Adler.

“He’ll sleep for a few hours. Make sure he doesn’t choke on his own vomit. It makes for a very unattractive corpse.” She sits on the windowsill in the bathroom, puts her feet up on the edge of the bath and takes hold of a cord hanging from the ledge.

“What’s this? What have you given him? Sherlock!” John picked up the syringe lying on the floor.

“He’ll be fine. I’ve used it on loads of my friends.” Adler said.

“How do you know? What if he was allergic to what you gave him? Hmm?” Eiric snapped at her. Adler’s eyes widen in shock, never having of thought of that outcome.

“Smart and beautiful . . . ‘m lucky . . .” I felt Eiric kiss me on the forehead but having no idea why.

“Sherlock, can you hear me?” John asked kneeling and looking down at me.

“You know, I was wrong about him. He did know where to look.” John stood up and turned to her.

“For what? What are you talking about?” John asked.

“The key code to my safe.” She replied.

“What was it?” John asked again. She looks down at me, I was gazing at Eiric barely conscious but still trying in vain to get up with her help.

“Shall I tell them?” John looks down at me for a moment then turns back to Adler just as sirens
announce the arrival of the police. Adler smiles at us. “My measurements.” And with that she pushes her feet against the edge of the bath and topples backwards out of the window, still holding the rope. John hurries over to the window and looks out while Eiric helps me still but soon I lapse into unconsciousness.

TPSH

Sherlock’s bedroom

I jerked back into consciousness and find myself alone and in bed in my own bedroom, fully clothed and covered with a sheet. I lift my head.

“Eiric?” I shake my head trying to clear it. “Eiric!” I throw the sheet off and kneel up on the bed, then promptly lose my balance, fall forward and roll over the foot of the bed and onto the floor. Eiric opens the bedroom door and comes in as I sit up, John following her.

“You okay?” John asked.

“How did I get here?” I questioned confused.

“Well, I don’t suppose you remember much. You weren’t making a lot of sense. Oh, I should warn you: I think Lestrade filmed you on his phone.” John said.

“Where is she?” I asked getting to my feet.

“Where’s who, Sherlock?” Eiric asked her voice soft.

“The woman. That woman.” I rambled.

“What woman?” I saw Eiric start to frown, her light dimensioning slowly.

‘No, that’s wrong.’

“The woman. The woman woman!” I stumbled around the room aimlessly.

“What, Irene Adler? She got away. No-one saw her.” I stumble over to the open window and look through it. “She wasn’t here, Sherlock.” Turning around, I fall down again and start to drag myself across the floor. “What are you . . .? What . . .? No, no, no, no.” John hauls me up and drops me face-down onto the bed.

“Back to bed.” I heard Eiric. She walked over to the side I was facing and covers me with the sheet again. She leans down, smoothing hair and kissed me on my temple. “You’ll be fine in the morning. Just sleep.” Her voice sounded angelic.

“Of course I’ll be fine. I am fine. I’m absolutely fine.” I said blurrily.

“Yes, you’re great. Now we’ll be next door if you need us.” I heard John said.

“Why would I need you?” I asked fuzzily.

“No reason at all.” They walked out of the room shutting the door behind them. A few moments later an orgasmic female sigh comes from a speaker. I open my eyes and sit up, looking blearily across to my coat. Frowning at it as I realize that it could only have been returned by Adler, I get out of bed and wobble across the floor towards it, losing my balance a couple of times en route but managing to stay on my feet. Finally I get to the door and take the phone out of the pocket. Bracing myself against the wall I activate the phone. A new text was there.

[Till the next time, Mr. Holmes.]
I peer at it for a long moment and then look around suspiciously, totally oblivious to the fact that the most suspicious thing in the room was the red kiss-shaped lipstick mark just to the left of my mouth.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Warning: There is a sex scene in this chapter. You have been warn.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

221B Eiric pov

We were sitting at the table in the living room. John and Teddy were eating breakfast while I pick and poke at mine, Sherlock was reading the newspaper. Mycroft was standing nearby which was part of the reason I lost my appetite, the other part was the nightmares I’ve been getting since Richard kidnapped me or would it be adultnapped?

“The photographs are perfectly safe.” Sherlock said to Mycroft. I rolled my eyes at my plate as I violently spear a piece of sausage, ‘Yeah, in the hands of a slut.’

“In the hands of a fugitive sex worker.” Mycroft retorted thinking on the same wave link as me.

“She’s not interested in blackmail. She wants . . . protection for some reason. I take it you’ve stood down the police investigation into the shooting at her house?” I furrowed my brow, ‘It almost sounds like he cares for her. Why?’

“How can we do anything while she has the photographs? Our hands are tied.” I smirked lightly at my plate at his wording.

“She’d applaud your choice of words. You see how this works: that camera phone is her “Get out of jail free” card. You have to leave her alone. Treat her like royalty, Mycroft.” Sherlock said.

“Though not the way she treats royalty.” John smiles round at Mycroft sarcastically, who returns the smile humourlessly. Just then an orgasmic female sigh fills the room. John and Mycroft frown, I glower at the table. “What was that?” John asked.

“Text.” Sherlock said trying to look nonchalant.

“But what was that noise?” John asked again. Sherlock gets up and goes over to pick up his phone from nearby. He looks at the message.

“Did you know there were other people after her too, Mycroft, before you sent us in there? CIA-trained killers, at an excellent guess.” He comes back to the table and sits down again as John looks round at Mycroft.

“Yeah, thanks for that, Mycroft.” Mrs. H brings in a plate of breakfast from the kitchen and puts it down in front of Sherlock.

“It’s a disgrace, sending your little brother into danger like that. Family if all we have in the end, Mycroft Holmes.” I sent a smile to her and received one back.

“Oh, shut up, Mrs. Hudson.”
“MYCROFT!” the three of us yelled furiously at the same time. Mycroft looks at our angry faces glaring at him, then cringes and looks contritely at Mrs. H.

“Apologies.” Mycroft bowed a bit as he said it.

“Thank you.” Mrs. H accepted as she went back to the kitchen.

“Though do, in fact, shut up.” I swat at Sherlock’s shoulder playfully. His phone sighs orgasmically again. Mrs. H turned back.

“Ooh. It's a bit rude, that noise, isn’t it?” Sherlock looks at the latest message.

“There’s nothing you can do and nothing she will do as far as I can see.” Sherlock looks back to Mycroft.

“I can put maximum surveillance on her.” Mycroft said.

“Why bother?” I asked turning to look at him, “You can follow her on Twitter. I believe her user name is “TheWhipHand”.”

“Yes. Most amusing.” He sneered at me, I sneered right back as his phone rings and he takes it from his pocket. “Scuse me.” As he walks out into the hall, I take a spoon and scoop up some jam then lob it at the back of his head; hitting it. He turns his head over his shoulder and glares at me, I smirk triumphantly at him. [Hello.] He said into the phone. Sherlock watched him leave, frowning suspiciously. John looks at me fighting back a smile.

“Eiric that was childish.” Sherlock turn back to us. I shrugged my shoulders.

“That’s what he gets for holding back information. He should be happy I didn’t set his umbrella on fire again.” I went back to picking at my plate. They both let out a few chuckles. John turns his attention to Sherlock.

“Why does your phone make that noise?” he asked.

“What noise?” Sherlock asked.

“That noise – the one it just made.”

“It’s a text alert. It means I’ve got a text.”

“Hmm. Your texts don’t usually make that noise.” John pointed out. I helped Teddy down when he was done with his food. He went over to the coffee table and began colouring with the crayons and paper I left on it for him.

“Well, somebody got hold of the phone and apparently, as a joke, personalized their text alert noise.” Sherlock said.

“Hmm. So every time they text you . . .” Right on cue, the phone sighs orgasmically again.

“It would seem so.” He picks up his phone.

“Could you turn that phone down a bit? At my time of life.” Mrs. H began. Sherlock puts the phone down again and goes back to reading the paper which is showing the headline “Refit for Historical Hospital”.

“I’m wondering who could have got hold of your phone, because it would have been in your coat,
wouldn’t it?” Sherlock raises his newspaper so that it’s obscuring his face.

“I’ll leave you to your deductions.” John smiles.

“I’m not stupid, you know.” I smiled at that.

“Where do you get that idea?” Mycroft comes back into the room, still talking on his phone.

[Bond Air is go, that’s decided. Check with the Coventry lot. Talk later.] He hangs up. Sherlock and I look at him.

“What else does she have?” Mycroft looks at him enquiringly. “Irene Adler. The Americans wouldn’t be interested in her for a couple of compromising photographs. There’s more.” Sherlock stands up and faces his brother. ‘Sherlock most defiantly got the good looks of the family.’ “Much more.” Mycroft looks at him stony-faced. Sherlock walks closer to him.

“Something big’s coming, isn’t it?”

“Irene Adler is no longer any concern of yours. From now on you will stay out of this.” They locked eyes.

“Oh, will I?” he asked.

“Yes, Sherlock, you will.” Sherlock shrugs and turns away.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a long and arduous apology to make to a very old friend.” Sherlock picked up his violin. Teddy looks up and then runs over to Mycroft, hugging his leg.

“Bye, uncle Croftie!” he smiles up at Mycroft. Mycroft chuckles and pats Teddy’s head.

“Goodbye, Theodore.” Teddy wrinkles up his nose at his full name.

“Do give her my love.” Sherlock begins to play “God Save The Queen”. Mycroft rolls his eyes, turns and leaves the room, Sherlock following along behind him as John and I grin. Teddy starts twirling around and laughing. As Mycroft hurries down the stairs, Sherlock turns back and walks over to the window, still playing.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

Time passes and it’s now Christmas. Fairy lights were strung up around the window frame of the flat and it’s snowing outside. Inside, the living room is festooned with Christmas decorations and cards. I was walking around playing “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” on my violin. Mrs. Hudson was sitting in my chair with a glass in her hand, watching me happily. Lestrade was standing at the entrance to the kitchen holding a wine glass talking to Eiric and Teddy, and John walks across the room with a cup and saucer in one hand and a bottle of beer in the other. As I finish the tune with a fancy flourish, Lestrade whistles in appreciation. Eiric sends me a loving smile.

“Lovely! Sherlock, that was lovely!” Mrs. Hudson cheered.

“Marvelous!” Mrs. Hudson, apparently a little bit squiffy, giggles up at me.

“I wish you could have worn the antlers!” Eiric let out a giggle of her own.
“Some things are best left to the imagination, Mrs. Hudson.” I said and sent a smile over to Eiric.

“Oh, don’t worry Mrs. H, I’ll make sure to get a picture with him wearing them.” She started laughing as I glowered at her. John hands Mrs. Hudson a cup of tea, perhaps an attempt to sober her up.

“Mrs. H.” a woman brings over a tray containing mince pies and slices of cake and offers it to me.

“No thank you, Sarah.” I said politely. Her face falls. John hurries over to her and puts his arm around her as she turns away.

“Oh, no, no, no, no. He’s not good with names.” John told her quickly.

“No-no-no, I can get this.” The woman puts the tray down and straightens up, folding her arms and looking at me as I start. “No, Sarah was the doctor; and then there was the one with the spots; and then the one with the nose; and then . . . who was after the boring teacher?”

“Nobody.”

“Jeanette!” I grin falsely at her. “Ah, process of elimination.” John awkwardly shepherds Jeanette away. I looked down as I felt a tugging at my leg. Teddy raised his arms up to me, I sighed and picked him up. “You’re getting way too old to be held, Teddy.” Eiric walked over and placed a light kiss on my lips.

“Then you shouldn’t give in to him, Sherlock.” She whispered, I smirked to her. We both look across to the door as a new arrival comes in.

“Oh, dear Lord.” Eiric swats me on the side. Molly Hooper walks in, smiling shyly and carrying two bags which appear to be full of presents.

“Hello, everyone. Sorry, hello.” John walks over to greet her, smiling. “Er, it said on the door just to come up.” Everyone greeted her cheerfully, even Eiric. I rolled my eyes.

“Oh, everybody’s saying hullo to each other. How wonderful!” Eiric sent me a look which I ignored. Smiling at me nervously, Molly starts to take her coat and scarf off. John was standing ready to take her coat.

“Oh, holy Mary!” Lestrade gawps in similar appreciation as Molly reveals that she’s wearing a very attractive black dress.

“Wow!”

“Having a Christmas drinkies, then?” She asked. I sat down at the table, placing Teddy in my lap.

“No stopping them, apparently.” I looked up at Eiric as she placed a hand on my shoulder.

“Sherlock, please.” I slightly nodded at her silent request.

“It’s the one day of the year where the boys have to be nice to me, so it’s almost worth it!” Mrs. Hudson said to Molly, I frown and looked to Eiric.

“Why is it just me and John who has to be nice to her?” I asked her.

“Because I’m nice to her everyday whenever I can, love.” She leans down and kisses me on the cheek, then takes Teddy off my lap. She places him on the floor. “Go and colour something for Mrs. H, Teddy.” He nods and wanders over to the coffee table. “I’m never going to break him of
his habit of wanting to be held all the time if you and everyone else keeps doing it, Sherlock.” I smirked at her in triumph, she sighs and shakes her head, smiling. I start to type on John’s laptop. John brings a chair over for Molly.

“Have a seat.” John patted it.

“John?” I called to him.

“Mmm?” as John comes over to see what I’m looking at, Lestrade touches Molly’s arm to get her attention.

“Molly?” she turns to him. “Want a drink?” as she accepts his offer, John leans over my shoulder to look at the screen.

“The counter on your blog: still says one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five.” I pointed out. John pulls a mock-angry face.

“Ooh, no! Christmas is cancelled!” I point to the side bar which has one of the press pictures of me in the hat.

“And you’ve got a photograph of me wearing that hat!” I exclaimed. Eiric leans over my other shoulder to look at it.

“People like the hat.” John said.

“No they don’t. What people?” I asked.

“I love the hat, Sherlock.” I looked over to Eiric. Her face was inches away from mine.

“Why?” I whispered to her feeling her breath on my cheek showing how close she is to me.

“It makes you look very handsome.” She whispered back and straighten up but still stood behind me. I smiled lightly.

“How’s the hip?” Molly asked Mrs. Hudson.

“Ooh, it’s atrocious, but thanks for asking.” She replied.


“Don’t make jokes, Molly.” I snide.

“No. Sorry.” Lestrade hands her a glass of red wine. “Thank you. I wasn’t expecting to see you. I thought you were gonna be in Dorest for Christmas.”

“That’s first thing in the morning. Me and the wife – we’re back together. It’s all sorted.” He grins at her.

“No, she’s sleeping with a P.E. teacher.” I said without looking up from the computer. I heard Eiric groan. Lestrade’s smile becomes rather fixed. Molly turns to John who was sitting on the arm of his armchair. Jeanette was sitting in the chair itself.

“And John. I hear you’re off to your sister’s is that right?” Molly asked.

“Yeah.”
“Sherlock was complaining” I raise my eyebrows indignantly. Molly corrects herself. “. . . Saying.”

“First time ever, she’s cleaned up her act. She’s off the booze.” John said.

“Nope.” I muttered.

“Shut up, Sherlock.”

“I see you’ve got a new boyfriend, Molly, and you’re serious about him.” I said suddenly, I felt Eiric tense up behind me.

“Sorry, what?” she asked.

“In fact, you’re seeing him this very night and giving him a gift.” I spoke again.

“Take a day off.” John said quietly, exasperated.

“Sherlock, please.” Eiric said just as exasperated, I turned to look at her but I notice her gaze was on Molly looking concern and worried. I look back to the others.

“Shut up and have a drink.” Lestrade said taking a glass across to the table and putting it down near me.

“Oh, come on. Surely you’ve all seen the present at the top of the bag – perfectly wrapped with a bow. All the others are slapdash at best.” I stand up and walk towards Molly, looking at the other presents which aren’t as carefully wrapped.

“It’s for someone special, then.” I pick up the well-wrapped present. “The shade of red echoes her lipstick – either an unconscious association or one that she’s deliberately trying to encourage. Either way, Miss. Hooper has lurrrve on her mind. The fact that she’s serious about him is clear from the fact she’s giving him a gift at all.” John and Eiric look at Molly anxiously as she squirms in front of me. “That would suggest long-term hopes, however forlorn; and that she’s seeing him tonight is evident from her make-up and what she’s wearing.” Smiling smugly across to Eiric and John, I start to turn over the gift tag attached to the present. “Obviously trying to compensate for the size of her mouth and breasts . . .” I trail off as I look down at the writing on the tag. Written in red ink, “Dearest Sherlock, Love Molly xxx” I gaze at the words in shock as I realize the terrible thing that I had just done. Molly gasps quietly. I turned back to Eiric a little to see her disappointed look.

“You always say such horrible things. Every time. Always. Always.” As she fights back tears, I turn to walk away . . . but stop when Eiric sends me a look. I sighed and turn back to Molly.


“No! That wasn’t . . . I – I didn’t . . .” she stuttered.

“No, it was me.” I said.

“My God, really?!”

“My phone.” I glared at Lestrade. I reached onto my jacket pocket to get the phone. John narrows his eyes.
“Fifty-seven?”

“Sorry, what?” I question.

“Fifty-seven of those texts – the ones I’ve heard.” John said. I look at the message.

[Mantelpiece.] I walked over to the mantelpiece.

“Thrilling that you’ve been counting.” I said sarcastically. I pick up a small box wrapped in blood-red paper and tied with black rope-like string. Instantly I flash back to the colour of Adler’s lipstick, which was identical to this paper. “‘Scuse me.” I walk towards the kitchen.


“I said excuse me.” I continue walking.

“D’you ever reply?” John called after me. Ignoring him, I walk into my bedroom, sit on the bed and open the box. Inside is Adler’s camera phone. I take it out of the box and look at it closely, then gaze off into the distance thoughtfully. I called Mycroft.

[Oh dear Lord. We’re not going to have Christmas phone calls now, are we? Have they passed a new law?]

[I think you’re going to fine Irene Adler tonight.] John and Eiric came to the door of the bedroom and stand there listening to the conversation.

[We already know where she is. As you were kind enough to point out, it hardly matters.]

[No, I mean you’re going to find her dead.] Hanging up the phone, I stand up and walk towards the bedroom door.

“You okay?” John asked. Eiric looked at me with blank, dull eyes. She closed them and turned, walking away. It almost felt like she was walking away from me, forever.

“Yes.” I pushed the door closed, shutting John and the image of Eiric leaving out.

TPSH

St. Barts Mycroft pov

Sherlock and I walk to the morgue and go inside. Molly was waiting inside wearing her lab coat, and a body was lying on the table covered with a sheet.

“The only one that fitted the description. Had her brought here – your home from home.” I said to Sherlock.

“You didn’t need to come in, Molly.” Sherlock said.

“That’s okay. Everyone else was busy with . . . Christmas.” Looking awkward, she gestured to the body. “The face is a bit, sort of, bashed up, so it might be a bit difficult.” She pulls the sheet down to reveal the body.

“That’s her, isn’t it?” I asked.

“Show me the rest of her.” Sherlock said to Molly. Grimacing, Molly walks along the side of the table, pulling the sheet back as she goes. Sherlock looks along the length of the body once, then
turns and starts to walk away. “That’s her.”

“Thank you, Miss. Hooper.” I said.

“Who is she? How did Sherlock recognize her from . . . not her face?” I smile at her politely, then turn and follow my brother. I find him standing in the corridor outside, looking out of window. Walking up behind him, I hold a cigarette over his shoulder.

“Just the one.” I told him, remembering a time I did this for Tristyn and that it was the beginning of her downfall into a life of drugs and alcohol.

“Why?” Sherlock asked me.

“Merry Christmas.” Sherlock takes the cigarette and I dig into my coat pocket to find a lighter.

“Smoking indoors – isn’t there one of those . . . one of those law things?” I light the cigarette for him.

“We’re in a morgue. There’s only so much damage you can do.” I looked out the window, Tristyn had told me that when she would smoke in the morgue during her job before she moved to Baker Street. Sherlock inhales deeply and then blows the smoke out again. “How did you know she was dead?”

“She had an item in her possession, one she said her life depended on. She chose to give it up.” He takes another inhale on his cigarette.

“Where is this item now?” Sherlock looks round at the sound of sobbing. A family of three people were standing on the other side of the doors at the end of the corridor, cuddled together and clearly grieving the death of someone close to them. “Look at them. They all care so much. Do you ever wonder if there’s something wrong with us?”

“All lives end. All hearts are broken.” Another line from Tristyn. I look to my brother. “Caring is not an advantage, Sherlock.” ‘But, maybe it is.’ Sherlock blows out another lungful of smoke, then looks down at the cigarette in disgust.

“This is low tar.”

“Well, you barely knew her.” I said.

“Huh!” he walks away down the corridor. “Merry Christmas, Mycroft.”

“And a happy New Year.” as my brother walked through the door at the end of the corridor, I get out my phone and hit the speed dial for John’s number.

TPSH

221B Eiric pov

[Mycroft. M . . . ] I looked at John as he chewed on the inside of his mouth, he walks across to where Jeanette was sitting on the sofa and sits down beside her.

“John, I’ll stay. You go out and have fun, we’ll be fine.” I told him, he looks up at me in concern.

“Are you sure, Eiric? Cause I can stay . . .” I shook my head.

“No, go. I’m fine with watching him.” His concern look became angry.
“How can you be fine with him mourning or whatever about another woman?” he demanded. I smiled at him contently.

“Because I know that I’m The Woman for him, like he knows he’s The Man for me.” I walked over to him and placed a calming hand on his shoulder. “We both had feelings for another before we got together, John but our feelings for each other are much stronger than for them.” John nodded his head in acceptance and left with Jeanette. I went to the couch and picked up a random book, flipping through the pages not really reading them till Sherlock came back home. Ten minutes later Sherlock came up the stairs and stops in the doorway of the living room. I look up to him and got up from the couch.

“Hey, welcome back. John’s out and Mrs. H and Teddy went to bed. I’ll leave you alone to yourself but if you need me, I’ll be in my flat. Night, Sherlock.” I made to move out of the flat but Sherlock caught my arm.

“I want to give you your Christmas gifts.” I looked up to him in shock.

“Sherlock, you didn’t have to buy me . . .” he silenced me with a gentle kiss.

“I know.” He whispered on my lips. Our eyes still close, foreheads against the other. After a few moments Sherlock moves away and takes off his coat and scarf, throwing them on the couch. He turns to the CD player that I brought up to the flat so I could listen to music as I cleaned. Soon Claire–De–Lune sounded through the flat. I looked at Sherlock questioningly as he walks back to me. He bows slightly and holds out a hand. “May I have this dance, Eiric?” His face was soft and relax, everything about him was relaxed.

“You may, Sherlock.” I smiled at him brightly and lovingly, earning one back from him. I took his hand with one hand and place the other on his shoulder. He brought me closer to him with the hand on my lower back. We stared into each other eyes as we waltz around the room, both of us with silly, happy smiles on our lips. I hadn’t even notice that the song had ended and changed to a new one. One that sounded like the one I recorded and placed as my ringtone on Sherlock phone. “Sherlock, this song?” I asked him.

“It’s your song, Eiric. It’s not bought, I created it for you. I . . . it’s just like you . . . or rather how I think of you . . .” I giggled softly and kissed him slowly. He return in kind. I moved my hands from his and up into his hair, bringing him down just a bit. One of his hands wrapped around my waist as the other one moved to hold the back of my head. He tilted my head back making the kiss deeper. I felt him swipe his tongue on my bottom lip asking for entrance, which I granted. Our tongues dance as the kiss became heated, hungry, and lustful. I gasped in surprise as I felt the hand that was on my lower back slipped under my shirt. Sherlock took advantage of my gasp to deepen the kiss further. I let out a soft moan as Sherlock’s hand glides over my skin. I was the one to break the kiss, panting slightly. I open my eyes and looked at Sherlock. His eyes had darken to a deep blue and his pupil had dilated. We stared at the other for a moment before smashing our mouths together again. Our lips moved in sync hastily as we moved against each other, feeling the other’s excitement and desire. I began to unbutton Sherlock’s jacket as he took my hair out of its pony tail. We dropped the objects on the floor and started moving to Sherlock’s bedroom.

We broke away from the other for Sherlock to take my sweater and undershirt off, leaving me in my bra and jeans. We came back together as he toed off his shoes and socks in the kitchen. He opened the door to his room and dragged me in, closing the door behind himself with his foot. He picked me up and dropped me on his bed, before crawling over me. We were now both panting harshly than earlier. He moved a hand and caressed my face, his fingertips running over my swollen kissed lips. I started to unbutton his shirt with steady hands. I felt him brush my hair away
from my neck, before he began to press light kisses on my neck until he reached were neck met
shoulder. He began to suck and kiss that area where I knew I’d have a mark in the morning there, I
was fine until he bit the connecting area making me moan sharply and a bit louder than before.

“Sherlock.” I gasped, my hands shaking slightly. I felt him smirk against my neck. I finished with
his shirt, Sherlock sat up and began to shrug it off, his stare filled with lust, pleasure, want, and
happiness. I sat up and unbuckled his belt, then unbutton his trousers. Sherlock stood up and took
off his trousers and pants in one swoop. I drank in the sight of him standing there, I felt my
glamour flicker from the over amount of pleasurable sensation I was feeling at the moment. I
looked up to Sherlock. He walked over and kneeled down in front of me, he unbutton my jeans and
slid them down my legs. Once they were off the tossed them away, he began to place kisses up my
legs and into my inner thighs. I purred when he kissed my womanhood as it appeared as he took
my underwear off. I unclasped my bra and flung it across the room. I started to gasp for breath as
he continues to kiss and lick at my inner folds. ‘Virgin my arse!’ I gasped sharply as he began to
thrust his tongue in and out of my folds.

“Sherlock!” I moan loudly, I moved my hands into his hair as I felt the pressure build in my lower
stomach. I began to squirm and twitch.

“Sherlock, please!” I begged when he stopped. He chuckled at me as he moved over me again.
Sherlock took one of my nipples into his mouth and began to suck, lick, and lightly bite. His hand
went to the other and rolled it between his fingers. I was now a moaning, gasping mess until he
stopped. I stare up at him confused, eyes glazed over with pleasure and lust. “Sherlock? Why’d you
stop?” I asked, my voice husky with arousal. His eyes dilate further till they were black with a slim
rim of colour.

“Drop the glamour.” I froze for a moment before nodding slowly. As I drop the glamour, Sherlock
swooped down and began to kiss every scar or flaw on me. I felt a few tears slide down my face as
he lavished them with care and love. “This is the you I want Eiric. You’re beautiful.” He
whispered into my ear. I flipped us over so he was under me this time. I gave him a cheshire grin as
I lean in to his ear.

“Your turn.” I whispered huskily. He moan with pleasure as I took his ear lobe between my teeth
and worried it. I moved down placing kisses on his neck as my hands found his nipples and played
with them. Soon, I moved my lips down to his chest and moved my hands to run up and down his
abs. I smirked at his moans and gasps as my hands came close to his manhood. I moved down until
I my lips were in line with the head of his hard on. I looked up to him and locked gazes with him as
I wrapped my lips around the tip, giving a flick of my tongue. I then began to bob my head up and
down, sucking at the right moments. My hands pushed down on his hips so he wouldn’t buck. I
smirked around his prick at the sounds leaving his lips as I gave him his first blow job, probably. I
soon felt myself be ripped off him and back on my back with Sherlock shuddering and breathing
hard. He moved one of his hands back to my folds and slipped in two fingers, starting to stretch me.
After a few moments of this, I was a withering mess begging him to take me. He place my legs
around his waist and lined up to my entrance. He place his hands beside my head.

“Ha . . . ready?” he stared at me, giving me a chance to change my mind.

“Ready.” I said strongly. He nodded and began to slowly push in. I tensed a bit but slowly began to
relax as he pushed all the way till the hilt. He paused until I gave him the okay to move. He started
to thrust slowly before picking up the pace a bit. I threw my head back with a moan. “Sher . . . ah!
There!” he began to aim for that area.

“Eiric . . . God . . .” he moan into my ear.
“Sherlock, faster! Harder!” I begged and he delivered. I started to meet his thrust with my own. Soon the bed was moving and creaking from our fast, hurried pace. I felt the pressure in my lower stomach intensify, I was close to my release. “Ha . . . ah! Sher . . . so close, I’m so close!” I clutched to his shoulders.

“Me . . . too!” he grunts as he buries his head between my breast. I run my nails down his back, leaving marks. I thread my hands through his curly hair and give it a soft tug. He moans and with one more hard thrust we released together, shouting each other’s names at the top of our lungs. Sherlock collapsed on top of me, leaving his face buried in my breast as we rode out release. I sucked in deep breathes of air as I calm down and settle with the after-glow. I smoothed a hand threw his hair.

“That was amazing, Sherlock.” I whispered to him, looking up to the ceiling.

“I never knew what all the fuss was about but now I completely understand.” He lift up his face and place his chin on my chest. I smiled at him softly, running a caring hand over his cheek.

“I’m glad I could be the one to show you, love.” He sat up and moved to the side of the bed and laid on his back beside me. I turned on my side and snuggled into his side, placing my head on his chest. Sherlock wrapped an arm around my shoulder dragging me in closer. I giggled at him as he pressed his face into my hair. “You’re a cuddler.”

“Do you not like it?” he mumer.

“No, I love it and I love that only I get see this side of you.” I place a hand on his chest over his heart. He placed his other hand over mine and held it. We laid in silence for a few minutes.

“Eiric?” Sherlock asked.

“Hmm?”

“Where do you see us going, our relationship?”

“I can see this as being a forever thing. I can see us getting married one day and maybe down the road, kids.” I said softly to him. “What about you?” I felt him move and reach for something out of his nightstand.

“I know this is a forever thing. And I know that we will get married, if that is you agree.” I looked up to him as we sat up in bed.

“What do you mean?” I asked. Sherlock lifts a black box and opens it, I gasp in surprise at what I see. I cover my mouth with my hands.

“I know we’ve only been together for about a year but I like to think that we’ve been together for longer. I remember the first time we met at the zoo, watching that stupid gorilla and out of the blue you started to deduce me. I was shock that there was someone out there like my brother and I. I looked for you everywhere to find out who you were but there was no trace of you.” I gave him a water smile. “I really hope those are happy tears.” I laughed at that. “I think subconsciously I had fallen for you then but then you showed up out of the blue again, and you brought me life and love, you taught me that it’s okay to be who I am but there was a time and a place for it. What I’m trying to say is . . . is . . . Eiric, will you do me the honour of becoming Mrs. Sherlock Holmes?” I simply launched myself into his arms.

“Yes! Merlin yes!” I kissed him lightly, he chuckled as we pulled away wiping my tears away. He took the ring out of the box and slipped it onto my ring finger. It was a simple gold band with a
nice size emerald in the middle with two small sapphires on each side. “It’s beautiful, Sherlock.” I looked to him with love.

“Like its wearer.” He kissed the tip of my nose.

“You are quite the romantic when we’re alone.” I told him, he simply gave me that crooked smile. We went back to laying down like before. “Sherlock, what are we going to do about Adler?” I asked.

“I was planning as if I was mourning for her and what not. You would act out in jealousy by staying at the office longer than normal. I need you to find any information on her, Eiric.” He let out a yawn, making me yawn.

“I was going to do that anyway there’s something not right about this at all.” I snuggled into him deeper.

“I agree. Goodnight, Eiric.” His arms curled around me tight as he fell asleep.

“Goodnight, Sherlock.” I went to sleep as well and for once I didn’t have a nightmare.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: Eiric’s song is basically the Harry Potter theme song cause I like how it sounds and it sounds magical and whatnot.
Chapter 22

221B Sherlock pov

I was awoken by something tugging my hair. I groan quietly as I raised a hand to rub my face
removing the sleep. I glance to the direction the tugging was coming from, to come face to face
with Teddy. The boy was still in his sleepwear and strangling a wolf plushie by its neck in his arm.
I look to the alarm clock that was on my nightstand, it was 6:30 in the morning.

“Teddy, do you need something?” I asked him, my voice deeper from sleep.

“I’m hungry, Lockie.” I sighed at the horrid nickname. I glanced over to Eiric, who was still sound
asleep. She was now sleeping on her stomach on the right side of the bed.

“Alright, go to the table and I’ll make us some breakfast.” Teddy nodded and raced out of the
room. I turned on to my side and watched Eiric’s back raise and fall. I ran a hand down her back
before leaning over and kissed her on the cheek. I got out of bed and put my pajamas and blue
dressing robe on. I ruffled my hair as I left the room, shutting the door behind me. I walked into the
kitchen and turned to the five year old boy sitting at the table.

“So, what d’you want, Teddy?” I asked him with a light smile as I watched him swing his feet. I
chuckled as he made a face showing that he was thinking hard about what he wanted.

“I want pancakes, Lockie.” I nodded as I got the ingredients out and cookware.

“You and mummy seem to have pancakes a lot.” I said, trying to make conversation with him. I
needed him to know that I cared for him and his mother, especially now that I’m going to be his
step-father. I glanced over my shoulder to him in thought, ‘Maybe be his actual father, adopt him
as my son. I’ll have to look into it.’

“Mmhmm! I love mummy’s pancakes! She the best cook and mummy ever!” he looked round
trying to see if anyone was around. “But don’t tell Grandma Molly I said that.” He whispered.

“Oh, of course. Mums the word.” I whispered back to him as I flipped a pancake. It was quite for a
bit before Teddy broke it.

“Lockie?” he asked as I set a plate in front of him.

“Yes, Teddy?” I sat down with my own plate across from him.

“Do you love mummy?” I looked up from my plate and met his curious look.

“Yes, Teddy.” I started to nod my head slowly, “I love and care for her so very much.” He looked
down to his syrup drenched pancakes.

“What about me?” my gaze soften as he looked back up to me with teary eyes.

“I care and love you very much as well, Teddy. You and mummy mean everything to me, I
wouldn’t know what to do if I ever lost you both.” The smile I earned from him melted the last of
the ice around my heart and finalized my decision on adopting him. ‘I finally beat Mycroft at
something. I gave Mummy her first grandchild.’ I smiled brightly at him. We both looked over to
my bedroom door as it opened. Eiric walked out wearing my button-up and just her underwear. I
got up to get her plate as she walked over to us.
“I had no idea you could cook, Sherlock.” She stated as she sat down next to Teddy.

“Of course I can cook. Cooking is a science, Eiric.” I set her plate and cup of tea in front of her, pressing a kiss to her temple.

“I’m guess not to except this very often then?” she asked playfully.

“Only on special occasions.” I teased back. She giggled before taking a bite. We ate in a comfortable silence. When we were done Eiric took the dishes and told Teddy and I to get dress to go out.

“Where are we going?” I asked as I came back freshly showered and dress. I notice that she showered and got dress as well, she was putting Teddy’s coat, scarf, mittens, and hat on him.

“I was thinking about going to the park?” she puts on her outerwear. I nodded as I put my coat and scarf on. We walked out of the flat and to the park. Eiric and I both were holding one of Teddy’s hands as we swung him between us, laughing joyfully. I felt happy, wanted, loved and understood for once in my life and it was because of these two. Once we reached the park that was filled with other families, Teddy let go of our hands and raced over to the playground.

“Be careful, Teddy!” Eiric called after him before I looped her arm with mine as we walked over to a park bench, keeping an eye on Teddy.

“Eiric?” she looked to me.

“Yes, Sherlock?” she asked.

“How would you feel if I told you I wanted to adopt Teddy as my son?” I asked her. I watched as her emotions washed over her face.

“Sherlock, I would absolutely love that and Teddy would be so excited.” She leaned in and gave me a sweet kiss then put her head on my shoulder. I place a kiss on her crown. “It’d be the perfect birthday present for him.”

“Would it? Would he want me as his father?” I asked insecurely. Eiric lifted her head and placed a hand on my cheek. She turned me to look at her, I leaned into her hand.

“Sherlock, Teddy adores you. You’re all he talks about at school. I used to read him wizard story tales for bed, now he just wants to hear about the amazing Sherlock Holmes and his cases. You’re his hero, his idol, Sherlock. He’d would love to have you as his father. Don’t ever doubt yourself, love.” She kissed me again and pressed her forehead to mine.

“Thank you.” She just smiles at me. We both snap our heads towards the playground when we hear a child scream. We ran over to the playground to the group of kids.

“What happen? Who’s hurt?” Eiric asked them when we reached them, other parents were asking the same question.

“Mummy! Lockie!” we heard Teddy cry. We looked everywhere around us then to the middle of the circle.

“Teddy!” Eiric called out in panic as she moved her way through the other children, I was close behind. Once we reached Teddy, we found him sitting on the snowy ground holding his right arm to his chest. We kneeled next to him. “Sweetheart, what happen? Where are you hurting?” Eiric cooed to him as she pulled him into her lap, lightly rocking him. I reached out and gently took a
“Teddy, can you wiggle your fingers for me?” I asked him softly. He started crying more and harder but I knew he was trying to do what I asked. “Shhh, Teddy. It’s okay, you’re going to be okay.” I soothed to him. “Eiric, we need to take him to Bart’s. He’s broken his arm.” She nodded and gently stood up with Teddy in her arms. I hailed a taxi for us. I shut the door and turn to the driver, “St. Bart’s.” It took about twenty minutes for us to get there and another twenty minutes sitting in the E.R. waiting room. When it was our turn we taken to the X-ray room that took a few more minutes before that Teddy had indeed broken his arm. ‘Idiots, they’re all idiots. God, we should’ve just called John.’ When we finally left, Teddy had a full red and yellow arm cast. I carried him as Eiric got us a taxi.

“Lockie, will you sign my cast when we get home?” Teddy asked me excitedly. I couldn’t help but grin.

“Of course, Teddy. I would be honoured to be your first signer.” I told him as we climbed in. On the way back to Baker Street Eiric’s phone went off.

[Potter.] She answered. She nodded her head as she listen to the caller. [Okay, yeah. I’ll be there in a bit. Bye.]

“Eiric?” I asked her as she hung up.

“I have a client at the Yard. Let’s get you two home, first.” It took us about ten minutes to get back home. “I’ll be home soon, be careful.” We kissed.

“Yuck!” Teddy cried out playfully. I grinned at Eiric before turning to him.

“Oh, think that’s gross do you?” I picked him up and flipped him in my arms, hanging him upside down. Teddy was laughing like a madman. “Tell mummy bye, Teddy.” As I flipped him upright again.

“Bye, mummy!” he waved as the taxi drove off, Eiric waved back. I walked to the front door and let us in.

“What do you want to do now, Teddy?” I asked him.

“Tell me a case!” I smiled widely at him.

TPSH

Scotland Yard Eiric pov

I walked into my office and shut the door behind me. I walk to my desk chair and sat down, crossing my arms.

“What do you want, Richard.” I glared at the man in the seat in front of my desk. He simply grinned at me.

“What? I can’t come and see my baby sister?” he asked pulling a wounded look. “I’m hurt, Tristyn, truly am.” I just glared, waiting. He rolled his chocolate brown eyes, ‘Dad’s eyes’ and sighed.

“Malfoy’s gone rogue, Tristyn. He’s been seen talking to Irene Adler.” He takes a thick folder out of his briefcase and hands it to me. “This information on Ms. Adler, information you won’t find the muggle way.” I open up the folder and began reading it. We sat in silence as I went through the
folder, when I finished I looked to Richard.

“She’s half dark Veela, Richard. She’s been using her magic on muggles, she should have been arrested years ago.” I closed the folder and laid it on my desk. I looked to the folder and then back to him. “What’s the price for the folder, Richard.” His look became very solemn.

“You know I wouldn’t ask you to do this if there was another way, Trist.” I looked at him sharply. “Draco needs to be stop, permanently.” I paled.

“You want me to kill him?” I whispered.

“Trist, I can’t trust anyone else to do this but you.” He took a hold of my left hand. “He asked you to marry him?”

“Yes, Rich. I love him, please just leave us alone.” He looked away.

“I will, for now.” I nodded knowing that’s the best I’ll get. “Do we have a deal?” I look to the folder and then to him.

“Yes.” I agreed. He let go of my hand and sat back in the chair.

“You two look like them, Dad and Lily.” I looked to the picture of our dad and my mum that was sitting on my desk.

“Yeah, we kind of do, don’t we.”

“Are you happy?” I looked at him, confused.


“Malfoy told me about your guy’s house arrest. I about beat the shite out of the little ferret.” I stared at him in shock.

“You pretend to be dead, it’s the past now.” I told him.

“I was trying to protect you.” He sighed warily.

“From what?” I asked perplexed.

“Me.” he looked so broken. I swallowed and looked away. “And look how well that turned out.” I was about to respond when Lestrade rushed in.

“Inspector?” I asked in alarm.

“There’s been a break in at Baker Street.” My eyes widen in shock before I reached out to get my coat and the folder. I turned to Richard.

“I’ll be in touch.” I told him as a good-bye. He nodded and left. Lestrade and I raced to Baker Street. We got there as a person is put into an ambulance. Sherlock was standing outside of Baker Street, looking very pissed off. Lestrade looked at the ambulance then back to Sherlock.

“And exactly how many times did he fall out the window?” Lestrade asked. I reared back in shock.

“Someone fell out a window?!” I looked to Sherlock as he wrapped an arm around my waist.

“It’s all a bit of a blur, Detective Inspector. I lost count.” Not bothering to comment, Lestrade
walks away.

“What the bloody hell is going on?!” Sherlock didn’t answer me as he led us to Mrs. H kitchen door, we wipe our feet on the doormat carefully. “Does anyone want to share with the class?” I asked sarcastically getting fed up with being ignored. I turned to John, Teddy and Mrs. H, who were at the kitchen table. Mrs. H looked shaken. “Mrs. H?” I moved to her and kneeled a bit. I looked her over, I noticed the bruise on her arm, the cut on her cardigan, and the scratch on her cheek. “What happened?”

“Those CIA agents broke into the flat and attacked her, Eiric.” John told me, I looked at him wide eyes then back to Mrs. H. I just stared at her for a bit, not even realizing that I zoned out.

“Eiric, love, are you all right?” she placed a hand on my cheek, startling me. I looked round and noticed everyone staring at me. I jerked out of the touch and stood up.

“I have a case, I’ll be gone for a few days. Teddy be good while I’m gone.” I walked out of the flat and into mine. I picked up my pre-packed bag that was for out of town cases. I paused for a minute and pulled out the folder again. I stared at it before opening it up to look at the place where I’d find Malfoy at. ‘Paris, France. You know you’re going to die.’ I closed the folder and stuff it into the bag. I closed my eyes and turned on the spot.

TPSH

France

I was getting tired of being here. I wanted to go home to my boys, but this bastard was playing hide-n-seek with me. I sighed as I took a sip of my café un crème, when Sherlock’s personal ring tone went off. I fished my phone out.

[Happy New Years – SH] I smiled.

[Happy New Years, love] I texted back to him. I put the phone down and looked out my apartment window, listening to the people walking around and talking to one another. My phone went off again, this time it was John’s ring tone. I slide my phone on and was greeted with a picture of all three of my boys in silly New Year’s hats. I laughed as I made it my background. My phone started ringing, Sherlock’s name on the caller ID. I answered it and put it on speaker.

[Hello, boys.] I took another sip.

[Hi, mummy!]

[Hey, Eiric.]

[Eiric.] Well, Sherlock was in a mood.

[Thank you, John for the wonderful picture.]

[You sent her that picture!] I heard Sherlock yell at John, Teddy laughed.

[Your welcome, Eiric. Couldn’t really give you your Christmas gifts since you left on Christmas day. How’s the case going?]

[Well, it’s going well. I’m close to getting the killer but I’ll be a bit longer, sneaky bloke this one. I miss you guys, it’s not the same without the two of you.] I ran a hand over my face.
[You should’ve told us about the case, instead of running off by your own then.] Sherlock muttered. I smiled tiredly.

[I miss you, too, love.] I heard a knock at my door, I turned to it and eyed it suspiciously. [I have to go. I’ll be home soon. Bye.] I hung up the phone and stood up from my seat. I watched the door as something banged against it. I took a calming breath and stood my ground as the door flew open. “You owe me a new door, Draco.” He came into the light, smirking.

“And you owe me your life, Eiric.” Was the last thing I heard before he stupefied me.

TPSH

221 B Sherlock pov

It’s been four months since that call with Eiric. She always made sure to call us, to let us know how she was and that she was coming home soon. It was always that word “soon” never told us a date or a number of days left, always “soon”! After three weeks of no contact from her, we sent a search party. John and I leading the party, we went to France and to the apartment she owns. What we found was absolutely less heartening to me. I could picture what happened, felt like I was there. Her door was blown in, hanging on by a thread.

Her apartment was a mess as if someone was searching for something but couldn’t find it. She knew her attacker, let him take her, didn’t put up a fight, she knew it would be worthless to fight. But what truly broke me was the little pool of blood that had her engagement ring floating in it, I’d bent down and plucked it from the blood. After that it was all a blur, but I think for once I let my walls come down and cried in front of the others. John took us home after that. I kept Teddy with me at all times, I never took a case. I just spent my time with Teddy. He would come into my room at night after a nightmare seeking comfort and protecting, which I gladly gave him. John had mention once that I should let one of Teddy’s relatives take care of him, I threw a glass at him which ended that argument fast.

He’s my son and he was going to stay with me until Eiric returned home. The months flew by fast, as well as, everyone’s doubts that Eiric was ever returning home alive. I refused anyone to go into her apartment to collect her things, she wasn’t dead she simply couldn’t be. I was in a blurry state when Adler showed up, I don’t even remember most of her visit. I just thought of Eiric and how I wanted her back.

TPSH

Malfoy Manor – England Eiric pov

I was blinking in and out of consciousness. I’ve been in the cell for almost five months, I think. Everyone probably thinks I’m dead now but I couldn’t blame them really, I wish I was really. I could barely think straight, let alone hold my head up on my own. I was waiting for the perfect opening, I only had one chance or else I really will be dead soon. Malfoy has been trying to get me to join him but I refuse, I mock and belittle him into torturing me. I wondered sometimes if Sherlock forgotten about me and moved on to Adler but that wouldn’t be him. He wanted to be Teddy’s dad, he wanted to be my husband, that’s all he wants; a family that loves him for who he is. Teddy, Merlin, he’s probably scared out of his mind. John, he would be one of the people who’d thinks I’m dead but I know he wants to believe I’ll walk through the door of 221B alive and well. The door to the cell opens.

“Dead yet, Potter?” Malfoy sneers. I open my unswollen eye and smirk at him.
“It takes a lot more than some beatings and starvation to kill me, Malfoy. You know that.” I spat some bloody spit at his shoe. He threw a punch, hitting me on the left side of the face then a kick to the stomach. As he swings his foot again his phone sounds a text alert. He put his foot down and took his phone out. He smirks as he reads the text before turning around and starts typing a text. I had my opening. I slowly stood up and pulled my gun out of my untraceable holster. I limped behind him and pressed my gun to the back of his head. He froze. “Never turn your back on the enemy.” I pulled the trigger, his body dropped to the ground. The phone skidded away a bit, I put two more rounds into him before going to the phone and picked it up. I went to his text messages.

[747 Tomorrow 6:30 PM Heathrow.] It was from Adler. I sighed quietly as I realized she played Sherlock when he was at his weakest. I looked at the text he sent.

[Jumbo Jet. Dear me Mr. Holmes, dear me.] I looked at that confused. I looked up as I flashed back to the dead man in the truck, the two little girls, and the creepy dude.

“Shite.” I whispered. I looked at the phone again and called Richard.

[It’s done.] I lightly tapped the body with my foot. ‘I’m sorry. She did this to you, I’ll get her back. I promise.’

[Thank you, little Raven. Is there anything I could do?] He asked.

[Leave us alone for a while, that’s all I can ask and never ask me to do anything for you again. Goodbye, Mr. Moriarty.] I sneered his new last name.

[Very well . . . I never meant to hurt you and I did, for that I am truly sorry. Goodbye, Miss. Potter.] He hung up the phone. I looked to the body before tossing the phone at it and left the house. I hit the drive way, walking a few feet away before the house blew up sending me to the ground. I spat out the rocks and dirt from my mouth as I stood back up. I turned and watched as the fire consumed the Manor before appariting to Mycroft’s.

Mycroft’s office

I threw on my invisibility cloak and walked behind Sherlock, who looked awful, as Mycroft led them into his office/residence. The older Holmes sat at the dining table with Adler seated opposite of him. Sherlock went to the armchair near the fireplace a few years away, half turned away from the pair of them. I had never seen him so broken in my life, it broke my heart to see him like this. I wanted to go over to him and comfort him but I need to find out what happen while I was gone. His fingers of his right hand clenches repeatedly around something that’s hanging around his neck, as he listens to the other two speak. Mycroft points down to that blasted camera phone that was lying on the table in front of him. There was no aggression or threat in his voice as he spoke.

“We have people who can get into this.”

“I tested that theory for you. I let Sherlock Holmes try it for four months.” I saw Sherlock close his eyes briefly in pain, his fingers clenching tightly around the thing in his hand. “Sherlock, dear, tell him what you found when you X-rayed my camera phone.”

“There are four additional units wired inside the casing, I suspect containing acid or a small amount of explosive.” He replied flatly. I flinched at the tone. Mycroft lowers his head into his hand in despair. “Any attempt to open the casing will burn the hard drive.”

“Explosive.” Adler looks at Mycroft. “It’s more me.” Mycroft lifted his head and looked at her
“Some data is always recoverable.”

“Take that risk?”

“You have a passcode to open this. I deeply regret to say we have people who can extract it from you.”

“Sherlock?” she calmly command him. I bristled at that. ‘He’s not a damn dog . . . well, he’s not your damn dog.’ I thought back to the case where he’d sniffed around like a dog.

“There will be two passcodes: one to open the phone, one to burn the drive. Even under duress you can’t know which one she’s given you and there will be no point in a second attempt.” I don’t even think he knows what he’s doing.

“He’s good, isn’t he? I should have him on a leash – in fact, I might.” She gazes at Sherlock intensely but he remains turned away from her, staring vacantly at the fireplace.

“We destroy this, then. No-one has the information.” Mycroft motions to the phone.

“Fine. Good idea . . . unless there are lives of British citizens depending on the information you’re about to burn.” Merlin, please do something stupid Adler so I can fuck you up.

“Are there?” Mycroft asked.

“Telling you would be playing fair. I’m not playing anymore.” She reaches into her handbag on the table in front of her and takes out an envelope which she pushes across the table to him. “A list of my requests; and some ideas about my protection once they’re granted.” Mycroft takes the sheet of paper from the envelope and starts to unfold it. “I’d say it wouldn’t blow much of a hole in the wealth of the nation – but then I’d be lying.” He raises his eyebrows in amazement as he reads through the demands she had listed. “I imagine you’d like to sleep on it.”

“Thank you, yes.” Mycroft said still reading it.

“Too bad.” He looks up at her. In the armchair, Sherlock snorts in almost silent amusement. “Off you pop and talk to people.” Sighing, Mycroft sinks back in his chair.

“You’ve been very . . . thorough. I wish our lot were half as good as you. Well, Tristyn is better than you but wishes to be a detective.” Adler scowls at the table at the mention of my name.

“I can’t take all the credit. Had a bit of help.” She looks across to Sherlock. “Oh, Draco Malfoy sends his love.” Sherlock raises his head.

“Yes, he’s been in touch. Seems desperate for my attention, including Jim Moriarty.” Mycroft’s voice becomes more ominous, “Which I’m sure can be arranged.” Unseen by the others but me, Sherlock’s gaze begins to sharpen as Adler stands up and walks around the table to sit on its edge nearer Mycroft. She was about to do something stupid, finally.

“I had all this stuff, never knew what to do with it. Thank M-God for the consultant criminal partner. Gave me a lot of advice about how to play the Holmes boys and Potter. D’you know what he calls you three?” I look at her curiously. “The Ice Man . . .” she said softly to Mycroft, then looks across to Sherlock. “The Virgin and it’s a shame little Eiric Potter couldn’t be here, she was called My Heart.” Sherlock’s eyes were on the move but I wasn’t sure if it was in reaction to what Adler said or that he was working something out. “Didn’t even ask for anything. I think he just
likes to cause trouble. Now that’s my kind of man.” Sherlock closed his eyes, sighing softly.

“And here you are, the dominatrix who brought a nation to its knees.” Sherlock’s eyes snap open again. He definitely worked something out. Mycroft stands and appears to bow slightly to Adler.

“Nicely played.” He turns away, about to go and begin meeting her demands. Smiling in satisfaction, she stands up, confident that she had won. I smirked, ‘Time to bring her down a few notches.’

“No.” I said loud enough for them to snap their heads to the corner I was standing at. I walked out of the corner and pulled the cloak off, showing myself to them. I placed the cloak gently on the other armchair.

“Sorry?” Adler asked in shock as she looks at my bloody, bruised, and broken body. The boys just looked at me in shock.

“I said no. Very very close, but no.” I started walking over to her, “You got carried away. The game was too elaborate. You were enjoying yourself too much.”

“No such thing as too much.” I walked closer and looked down at her.

“Oh, enjoying the thrill of the chase is fine, craving the distraction of the game – Sherlock and I can sympathize entirely – but sentiment? Sentiment is a chemical defect found in the losing side. Something dear Draco Lucius Malfoy found out the hard way.” I bare my teeth slightly as I finished the sentence.

“Sentiment? What are you talking about?” she swallowed harshly.

“You.” I said simply. She smiled calmly at me.

“Oh dear God. Look at the poor girl. You don’t actually think I was interested in him? Why? Because he’s the great Sherlock Holmes, the clever detective in the funny hat?” I outright laughed at her. I pulled out her folder and waved it in front of her face. I step even closer to her, our bodies almost touching.

“No.” I said softly. I lean forward and brought my mouth close to her ear. “I’ve read your file.” I lean past her and placed the folder on the table and picked up the camera phone. “Imagine the shock I had when I read it. The great dominatrix was part Dark Veela from a pureblood family was using her magic on muggles. You know some people think love’s a mystery to me because of my past but it’s not, I know it very, very well and it’s very destructive.” I turn and walk a few steps away from her. She follows behind me until I turn and face her again.

“When we first met, you told Sherlock and I, that a disguise is always a self-portrait. How true of you: the combination to your safe – your measurement; but this . . .” I toss the phone into the air and catch it again. “. . . this is far more intimate.” I pull up the security lock. “This is your heart . . .” without breaking my gaze into her eyes, I punch in the first of the four characters with my thumb. “. . . and you should never let it rule your head.” She stares at me, trying to stay calm but the panic was beginning to show behind her eyes.

“You could have chosen any random number and walked out of here today with everything you’ve worked for . . .” I punched in the second character, my eyes still locked on hers. “. . . but you just couldn’t resist it, could you?” her breathing becomes heavier. I smile briefly and triumphantly. “I’ve always knew love was a dangerous disadvantage for some . . .” I hit the third character, still gazing at her. “Thank you for the final proof.” Before I can type in the fourth character, she seizes
my hand and gazes at me intensely.

“Everything I said: it’s not real.” She said softly. “I was just playing the game.” She whispered. I glared at her, harshly.

“If you wanted pity then you should’ve went after someone else, Adler. You corrupted him, you made him insane, and I had to kill him.” I felt a tear rolled down my cheek. Her eyes began to water. “This . . . this is losing.” I whispered. I slowly turn the phone towards her and show her the screen. She looks down at it, tears spilling from her eyes as she reads it.

[I AM SHER LOCKED]

She gazes down at the screen in despair for a few seconds, I lift the phone away and hold it out towards Mycroft as it unlocks and presents its menu. I looked to him.

“I hope the contents make up for any inconvenience. You can also have the folder and this one as well.” I reached into my bag and pulled out a thinner folder. “It’s the case I was on and what I had to do.”

“I’m certain they will.” Mycroft said in shock. He looked to the folder and then back to me. “This case, Tristyn?”

“It was a hit case on one Draco Malfoy and it’s been completed.” I stood up as straight as I could. His stare harden.

“You’d you like to explain, Miss. Potter?” I sighed.

“Mr. Moriarty came to me Christmas day with a case. That case was to get rid of his partner, Draco Malfoy who had gone rogue. Malfoy last location was Paris, France; he knew I was coming after him. He decide it was a game, so he played hide-n-seek with me. I had enough and waited for him to come to me. I wasn’t going to kill him in cold blood, I wanted a purpose and reason to kill him. So I let him take me, I think I hit my head when he stupefied me. He took me to Malfoy Manor and proceeded to beat me until I joined his side again, I was there for the whole four months. Then today he got a text from Ms. Adler here about the airplane and he texted you that was his mistake. He turned his back on me, I pulled the small handgun I had hid in an invisible, untouchable holster and shot him three times. One in the head, heart, and lung. I left and the house blew up, I guess that was a security thing or something and now I’m here.” I turned away and walked back to the armchair to pick up my cloak. Sherlock stood up and silently helped me. As we walked towards the door, he turned.

“If you’re feeling kind, lock her up; otherwise let her go. I doubt she’ll survive long without her protection.” Adler stares after us, her eyes wide with dread.

“Are you expecting me to beg?”

“Yes.” He said flatly and calmly. We stop near the door, he stares at me in anguish, happiness, pain, and sorrow. I just stare back with the same emotions.

“Please.” We don’t move. “You’re right.” He turns to look at her, giving her a death glare. “I won’t even last six months.”

“Sorry about dinner.” He turns us to the door, he opens it for me letting me through first and follows behind me, closing it behind him. We walked out of the house and Sherlock hailed a taxi. We got in and went to Baker Street. The ride was spent in silence.
She was back. She took a case from Moriarty but did it honourably. I am upset that she did something for him but she needed to get rid of her demon. That man caused her endless pain and horror and she wanted it gone. I understood that. I looked at her from the corner of my eye as we entered the flat. She was a bloody mess, I gently took her hand and pulled her to my bathroom. I took off our coats and began undressing her. After that was over, I started the tub and filled it up. I moved out of the way so she could get in. I rolled up my selves and kneeled next to the tub. I took my bar of soap and a washcloth and began to gently wash the blood off her. She flinched when I wiped a sore spot or when the soap stung but never made a sound.

“Sherlock?” I paused when she said my name, four months without hear her say it in that loving tone. I took a deep breath.

“Yes, Eiric?” she looked over her shoulder to me.

“Do you hate me, now? Cause I killed him?” her voice wavered.

“No, I could never hate you, never. Yes, I am a bit upset but I don’t hate you. Eiric, these past for months have been pure torture without you.” She turns around to look at me better. “Everyone thought you were dead.” My voice broke at that. She placed a hand on my cheek.

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.” She began to sob, I pulled her to my chest and held her letting her cry it out; all the pain, hate, loneliness, the killing of her ex. I pressed my face into her hair, a few of my own tears falling into her hair. She pulled back and placed a light kiss on my cheek. She moved away to wash her hair. I left the bathroom and sat on my bed with my head in my hands. I heard the tub drain and she walked into the room. I looked up at her and just stared at one another. I got up and walked over to her, took her left hand. I slipped the string around my neck off. I showed her the ring.

“This belongs on your finger.” I slid it back on to her ring finger. I brought her hand up and kissed it before cupping her face in my hands. I brought my face close to hers. “I love you, Eiric Potter.” I pressed my lips to her in a light, sweet kiss. I pulled back and pressed our foreheads together.

“I love you, too, Sherlock Holmes.” I smiled brightly and kissed her again. We broke apart at the sound of the front door opening. She looked to me and smiled. “Let’s go greet them.” I nodded and walked out first and met John and Teddy as they walked through the door.

“Sherlock, what happen? I got a call from Mycroft but he didn’t t–” John broke off and stared in shock at Eiric. Teddy let go of John’s hand and ran to her.

“Mummy!” he cried. She picked him up and held him close, crying into his hair. She sniffed and looked to John.

“I’m home.” she gave him a watery smiled. He walked over to her and pulled her into a tight hug.

“Never do something like this again.” John choked out. She gave a broken chuckle.

“Promise.” That night Eiric and Teddy stayed with me, sharing the bed. Teddy was in the middle of us, cuddled into his mother’s chest and stomach. I held them both close to me as we slept, never once releasing my hold. That was the first time in four months that everyone actually got rest.
Chapter 23

Flashbacks = \textit{Flashbacks}

TPSH

221B Eiric pov

It’s been a month since the Adler case and everything been a bit tense but it’s totally understandable. I mean, really I get adult-snatched for four months and everyone thinks you’re dead within the first two but hey, it was my own fault so I get why their all a bit upset with me. But I don’t think they understand why I took the case in the first place. Sherlock thinks it was to get ready of my demons, which is partly right. John thinks I’m a bloody idiot and makes sure I know it every once in a while but that just shows how much he cares for me, trying to show me which I did wasn’t the right thing to do. Everyone else is just upset I even took the damn case and simply don’t understand or want to.

The reason why I took the case was to quiet monster in me, which was hungry with bloodlust. It wanted to kill Malfoy and Richard . . . no, Moriarty knew that and handed me the case on a silver plate. I hate that I gave in so fast, just for information on Adler. Hell, it could have been a six pack of Butter beer and I would have still taken the case. The first week of being back I isolated myself from everyone, I locked myself in my room and didn’t come out until Mrs. H manhandle me out. Let me just say that woman is scary strong for her age. I gave everyone the cold shoulder after that for a couple of days. John had to actually call Hermione to ask what to do, she basically told him to just leave me be until I felt like being nice again. I barely ate during those two weeks or slept cause of the nightmares, just did cases. I was acting like Sherlock and Sherlock was, weirdly acting like me during that time.

After that everything went back to normal and I think everyone was relieved for that. Sherlock was being very romantic recently, he brought me my favorite flowers: white Camilla’s, took me on little dates like for lunch or to the park, and most recently being very fatherly to Teddy which warmed my heart. He’s slowly starting to calm down but he doesn’t really let me out of his sight but he’s starting to stop that as well. I apologise every day for what I put them through and I try my best to make it up to them too.

I was laying in Sherlock’s bed, just relaxing staring up at the ceiling, but that stops when I hear my phone make a dodgy sound like Sherlock’s did. I rolled over to the nightstand and take my phone. I stare at it before opening the text.

[I’ve been taken hostage by a terrorist cell in Karachi, beheading ensued. Please help me. – Adler]

I stare at this for an hour. I sighed as I flop back on the bed, mind racing on what to do. I mean on one hand the little whore deserved it but on the other hand we should save her. I put my hands on my face and groan, loudly. This was the choice be a hero or be a monster, be who you truly are which is a person who helps save people or be like your brother who helps kill people. ‘You’d think this would be so easy.’ I looked back at the message.

“God dammit!” I got up and went into the living room where Sherlock was playing the violin. I watched him from the doorway of the kitchen. “Sherlock.” He stops playing and turns around to face me. I gave him a faint smile and hold my phone out to him. He takes it and reads the message. His relaxed look turns tensed and angry. He looks to me with narrow eyes.

“No.” he hands me the phone back and turns away.
“Sherlock, please. She practically begging.” I walk over to him. “We need to help her.” That makes Sherlock spin around to me.

“Tell me why I should help a fucking whore!” he bellowed. I froze in shock, he never raised his voice at me before. “The very same whore that mocked and belittled you when you were gone?! Who made us think that you were dead?! Who used my weakness and exploited it, Eiric! Tell. Me. Why.”

“Because we are better.” I stared at him. “Because we are above that and it’s the right thing to do. Because. We. Save. People.” He turned back to the window, bring his violin up.

“No.” he growled and started violently playing his violin.

“Sherlock, be –”

“I said no, Eiric!” he roared, I violently flinched back from him. I stared at him with wide, teary eyes. He pushed past me and to his room, were he slammed the door. I drop into John’s chair and put my head into my hands, tears started to fall from my eyes. I don’t know how long I sat there, silently crying. I lift my head when I heard his door creak open. He walked over and stood in front of me. I looked up to him, tears still running down from my eyes.

“You say we’re better? What about your case? What new demons did you create?” he asked after a few minutes of staring at each other.

“Eliminating him was the lesser of two evils. You didn’t know him like I did.” I told him, looking away.

“Well, why don’t you tell me then! You seem so merciful to her, where was that grace for him?!” he yelled, I stood up from John chair meeting him at eye level.

“I just told you that was different. He hurt me!” I gave him a nasty glare, which he returned.

“And you don’t think she hurt me?” he asked sarcastically.

“Irene may be a manipulative, heartless bitch, but Malfoy was a malicious psychopath. He killed innocents for sport and needed to be stopped.” I tried to calm down and be reasonable about this but Sherlock wasn’t having it.

“Why eliminate him when you could have arrested him and made him pay for what he did to you slowly?!” he closed into my personal space.

“Because this wasn’t only about me, Sherlock! This was about protecting everyone I love! You, Teddy, everyone! Bars, curses, none of that would of stopped him.” Sherlock eyes widen in shock and he took a deep breath calming down.

“You don’t need to do this on your own anymore. That’s what this ring means.” He took my left hand showing me my engagement ring. I sighed and put my head on his chest, he wrapped his arms around me pulling me closer.

“But me getting hurt is different than someone I love getting hurt.” I muttered into his chest.

“I’d rather go through it with you instead of you hiding away. I love you and this is what love does.” He kissed my crown. We stood like that for a few minutes before I pulled away.

“Sherlock.” I looked to him, he closed his eyes and sighed. He nodded and open his eyes.
“I’ll deliver your mercy. I don’t have to particularly enjoy it but you’re right. She deserves better.” I smiled faintly at him.

“Thank you, Sherlock. I know I’ve been, well, difficult these few weeks but thank you.” I walked over to book shelves and plucked a book from it. I waved my hand over it and turned it into a portkey. I walked back to Sherlock and held it out to him. He looked at it warily, I rolled my eyes playfully. “I turned it into a portkey. It’ll take you to where Adler is but hold on to it tight, don’t let it go.” He took a hold of it with both hands.

“How do you activate it?” he asked. I smiled at him.

“221B.” and with that he was taken away to Karachi.

TPSH

Baker Street John pov

It was pouring rain and I forgot to take an umbrella. I was about to go up the steps to 221B when I saw Mycroft standing outside Speedy’s café. I walk over to him.

“You don’t smoke.” I said.

“I also don’t frequent cafés.” He dropped the cigarette on the ground and tread it out, he closes his umbrella, picks up his briefcase and turns and walks into Speedy’s. I follow him. We sat opposite of each other at one of the tables. I pick up my mug and look at the plastic wallet which Mycroft put on the table in front of me. There was a sticker on the wallet saying “Restricted Access – Confidential”. That bloody damn camera phone was inside the wallet on top of various documents. Mycroft placed another “Restricted Access” wallet on the table but this one had a black, slim stick in it.

“This the file on Irene Adler and Draco Malfoy?” I asked.

“Closed forever. I am about to go and inform my brother and Tristyn – or, if you prefer, you are – that she somehow got herself into a witness protection scheme in America. New name, new identity. She will survive – and thrive – but they will never see her again. Malfoy on the other hand has been erased from the records. Eiric won’t be charged with murder.” he told me.

“Why would they care? They despised them at the end. Won’t even mention them by name – just “The Woman” or “The Man”. I looked up from the folder.

“Is that loathing, or a salute? One of a kind; the one woman and man who’d mattered.” he raised an eyebrow.

“They’re not like that.” I insisted.

“They have the brain of a scientist or a philosopher, yet they elect to be a detective. What might we deduce about their heart?” I stared at him.

“I don’t know.” I admitted. ‘Who would know when it comes to those two? They only know what their hearts want and that’s each other.’

“Neither do I . . . but initially Sherlock wanted to be a pirate and Tristyn a teacher.” He smiles briefly at me, then his gaze becomes distant and reflective.
“They’ll be okay with this, never seeing her again. They’ll be okay.”

“I agree.” He breathes in sharply. “That’s why I decided to tell them that.”

“Instead of what?” I question.

“She’s dead. She was captured by a terrorist cell in Karachi two months ago and beheaded.” I look at him silently for several seconds, then quietly clear my throat.

“It’s definitely her? She’s done this before.”

“I was thorough – this time. It would take Sherlock Holmes and Tristyn Potter to fool me, and I don’t think they were on hand, do you?” we looked at each other for a moment. “So . . .” he pushes the wallets across the table towards me, then puts his elbows on the table, clasps his hands in front of him and rests his chin on them. “What should we tell them?”

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

I was sitting at the table looking into my microscope, Eiric on the other side of the table reading a book.

“Clearly you’ve got news.” I said to John before he comes into view. He stops in the doorway with two wallets in his hand. I don’t lift my head. “If it’s about the Leeds triple murder, it was the gardener. Nobody noticed the earring.”

“Hi. Er, no, it’s, um . . .” John takes a couple of steps into the kitchen. “. . . it’s about Irene Adler and Draco Malfoy.” Eiric lifts her head and spies the wallets and snatched one from John’s grip.

“Eiric.” He says warily. She takes a black stick from the bag and snaps it in half, puts it back into the bag and gives it back to John. She picked up her book and went back to reading. I looked to him, my face unreadable.

“Oh? Something happened? Has she come back?” I demanded absolutely loathing the idea that she came back when we told her not to.

“No. She’s, er . . .” John gazed at the table for a long moment, then drags in a sharp breath and raises his eyes to mine as I step closer, frowning. “She’s in America.”

“America?” I asked in fake surprise though knowing he was lying.

“Mmm-hmm. Got herself on a witness protection scheme, apparently. Dunno how she swung it, but, er, well, you know.” He muttered.

“I know what?”

“Well, you won’t be able to see her again.”

“Why would we want to?” Eiric spoke up from behind her book. John smiled ruefully as I turned away and walked back around the table.

“Didn’t say you did.”

“Is that her file?” I asked.
“Yes. I was just gonna take it back to Mycroft.” He offers the wallet to me. “Do you want to . . .?” I sat down.

“No.” I look into the microscope again.

“Hmmm.” John looks at his friends for a long while, considering his options. Eventually he steps forward. “Listen, actually . . .”

“Oh, but I will have the camera phone, though.” I hold out my hand towards John, not lifting my gaze from my work.

“There’s nothing on it anymore. It’s been stripped.” John said.

“I know, but I’ll still have it.”

“I’ve gotta give this back to Mycroft. You can’t keep it.” I keep my hand extended and my eyes fixed on the microscope. “Sherlock, I have to give this to Mycroft. It’s the government’s now. I couldn’t even give. . .”

“John, just give him the phone.” Eiric said softly. John reached into the wallet, takes out the phone and lays it into my hand. I close my fingers around it, draw my hand back and put the phone into my trouser pocket before returning my hand to the microscope.

“Thank you.”

“Well, I’d better take these back.” John raised the wallets.

“Yes.” I agreed with him. John turns and walks out onto the landing, then pauses. After several seconds he turns round and comes back into the kitchen. Eiric and I still don’t lift our eyes to him.

“Did she ever text you again, after . . . all that?” he asked.

“Once, a few months ago.” I said.

“What did she say?”

“Goodbye, Mr. and Mrs. Holmes.” Eiric said, I looked over to her and saw her soft smile. I smiled to myself. John looks at her thoughtfully, not really comprehending what Eiric was saying.

“Huh.” He said softly. He heads off down the stairs after that. As soon as he’s out of sight Eiric and I raise our heads and gaze at each other for a moment. I stood up and held out a hand to her, she takes it and we walk into the living room. I led us to the window and moved Eiric to stand in front of me before wrapping my arms around her waist and laid my chin on top of her head. She placed her hands on mine, intertwining our fingers. I looked out the window in thought, thinking of when I brought Adler back to our flat so we could finger out what to do with her.

TPSH

I swung my sword at the last solider before dropping the sword and removing the cloth around my head and face. I stood there letting out a few breathes before looking over my shoulder towards Adler. She was looking at me in disbelief with a small smile on her face. I scowled at her, making her smile drop. I walked over to her and held out the book for her to take a hold over so we could return back to England. She stared at me in bewilderedness, I rolled my eyes in annoyance and told hold of her wrist. I gripped it tightly as I put in on the book.
“221B.” I whispered and we were sucked through what felt like a tube before landing in my flat’s living room. Eiric rushed out of the kitchen to me, helping me to stand back up from my sprawled position. I thanked her by kissing her on the forehead before locking myself in my room. I began to change into my pajamas and my new blue robe. I got rid of the other one after John told me that Adler had worn it and the bedding as well. Eiric had moved Adler to the kitchen, so I sat with my back to my door listening to Eiric negotiate with Adler.

“What do you need, Adler?” Eiric asked her.

“I need to disappear.”

“Tell me why should I help you, again, after what you did to my fiancé and me?” I grinned to myself smug at Eiric calling me her fiancé in front of Adler.

“I-I . . . don’t know.” I heard Eiric sit back in her seat, probably a bit shock at Adler admitting that she didn’t have a reason for us to help her.

“I see.” Eiric whispered. “I have a place in Alaska, it’s in a very rural area and no one would know you. I’m willing to give you this place and some money to help you until you get settle.” I jolted in shock at what Eiric was saying, she was willingly helping this . . . this whore to start a new. “But there will be requirements for you to follow for the rest of your life if you chose this option. If you don’t follow one or break one of them, I will know and I will send the Aruors to get you. Do you understand, Ms. Adler?” I smirked at Eiric’s underhanded trick. She had this planned from the beginning.

“Yes, I understand.” Adler whispered in defeat.

“I’m glad we’re on the same page then. This is a binding contract that I had drawn up for you. There’s two copies one for me and one for you. You can’t destroy it and you can’t get rid of it. Adler, I will be able to monitor your every move if you sign this, one wrong move and it’ll alert me. The requirements are here for you to read. Now all you need to sign and take the portkey to your new life.” Eiric said with a strong tone. I heard the scratching of a quill on paper and then the sound of the portkey leaving, taking Adler away for good. I sighed as I closed my eyes and let my head bang on the door. Eiric knocked on the door.

“Sherlock?” she asked. I didn’t answer her, I was angry with myself. I had made Eiric cry. I still could see her violent flinch when I yelled at her and her chartuse green eyes turning lime green as she held back her tears. I, for once in my life, felt like an idiot. I had made the woman I love cry, the woman I promised to protect and stand by for the rest of my life. Eiric knocked again.

“Sherlock?” she asked. I didn’t answer her, I was angry with myself. I had made Eiric cry. I still could see her violent flinch when I yelled at her and her chartuse green eyes turning lime green as she held back her tears. I, for once in my life, felt like an idiot. I had made the woman I love cry, the woman I promised to protect and stand by for the rest of my life. Eiric knocked again.

“Sherlock? I kind of feel like we’re those sisters from Frozen.” I smiled lightly to myself at that. I had taken Eiric and Teddy to the cinema to see a movie. We let Eiric pick since it was her first day being out of the house since she came back home and she chosen to see Frozen. I have to admit it was a really good movie, I think the best part of the movie for me was after it was over with Eiric singing the songs from it on the way home. She had a beautiful voice, she had a mezzo-soprano pitch. Suddenly there’s two knocks on my door.

“Sherlock? Do you wanna solve a case? Come on let’s go deduce! I never see you anymore, come out the door. It’s like you’ve gone away~!” Eiric sang, I started laughing as I stood up and open the door to her. She had a big, bright smile and I swept her into my arms, giving her a sweet kiss. I nuzzled my forehead against hers, letting out a chuckle every once in a while. “So, I take it that you liked my song?” she asked sweetly with a chuckle of her own. I open my eyes and gazed into hers.
I smiled at the memory, then chuckle to myself. Eiric turned and took Adler’s camera phone from my pocket before placing it in the top drawer of a nearby cabinet. She shuts it and wrapped her arms around me as I did her. We looked out the window, silently enjoying each other’s company. We turned to the door as John ran into the room, panting.

“Did you just say ‘Mr. and Mrs. Holmes’?!” he exclaimed breathlessly. We began to laugh. I nodded my head to John as Eiric showed him her ring. “When the bloody hell did this happen?” he asked with wide eyes.

“Christmas Eve, after I came back from the morgue.” I told him, omitting the fact that I asked her after we had coitus. I smirked remembering that night. I noticed Eiric raised an eyebrow at me.

“Uh huh, he asked me after I took his virginity.” Eiric turned to John with a wide smirk. John looked to me with a raised eyebrow and smirk.

“Oh, really?” he asked. I felt my face turn a dark red, I turned away with a pout. Eiric and John laughed. John patted me on the shoulder. “Congratulations, Sherlock.” He pulled Eiric into a hug.

“You too, Eiric.” She hugged him back with a smile.

“Thank you, John.” They let go of each other, Eiric moved to me with a smile. “I couldn’t be happier or luckier.” I took her hands in mine and brought them to my lips with a happy smile.

“Nor I.” I told her. She kissed me on the cheek. We turned to John, to see that he was smiling happily at us. “What?” I asked him perplexed. He chuckled and shook his head.

“Nothing, Sherlock, I’m just really happy for you.” I looked at him in shock before giving him a small smile.

“Thank you, John.” He nodded to me. Eiric lifted my left wrist to look at my watch. Her eyes widen in shock before tugging me towards the door. “Eiric, where are we going?” I asked her confused as I put my belstaff on. She helped me with my scarf before I helped her into her trench coat.

“We’re going to be late for tea with Molly and Arthur, Sherlock.” I groaned as she pushed me down to her flat. John following behind us, cracking up at the fact I was going to meet my future in-laws. I was just glad it wasn’t tea with Snape, again.

“Shut up, John.” I snapped at him.

“Sherlock, be nice. You’re not going to die from meeting my parents.” Eiric patted my hand. “If you behave at tea, I’ll get you a case. How about it?” she give me her big green puppy eyes and pout and I moaned in defeat at the dreaded look.

“Fine.” I sighed. She gave me a mischievous smile and a kissed on the cheek. I sighed again, ‘It’s going to be hell if we have a daughter together that looked exactly like her.’ My eyes widen in shock at that thought and looked to Eiric. I snapped my head to John as I heard his snickers.

“You are so whipped.” He wiped tears from his eyes. I glared at him.

“I am not.” He gave me a smirk.
“Sherlock!” Eiric yelled from her place by the fireplace.

“Coming, dear!” I called back hastily before making my way to her.

“Totally whipped.” I paused and turned to John, flipping him the finger before going to Eiric ignoring John’s laughter following me. I met Eiric at the fireplace and she flooed us to her parents’ home.
Chapter 24

221B Eiric pov

I was sitting in the living room with John reading a potion book, curled up on the couch with Sherlock’s blue robe. The front door slammed closed signaling that Sherlock finished the case I promised him if he behaved at my parents, he was quite the gentleman during the visit I think Molly may be planning to steal him from me. I looked up from my book with the living room door burst open and Sherlock charges in, stopping just inside the room and slamming the end of his harpoon onto the ground. I stared at him in absolute shock and bewilderedness. John looks round at the noise, his eyes widen at the sight of Sherlock. His arms, chest, and face were covered with blood, far too much blood for it to be his, but it was everywhere on him. He looked round at John and me, breathing heavily.

“Well, that was tedious.” He told us.

“You went on the Tube like that?!” I snapped my head to John, my mouth popping open with shock.

“None of the cabs would take me.” Sherlock whined irritated. I closed my mouth and turned to him, speechless. He moved over to me and pointed to his lips, if he expected me to kiss him when he was covered in someone’s or something’s blood he had another thing coming.

“Absolutely not, Sherlock. You go straight to the bathroom and wash that off, right now.” He raised an eyebrow before stepping closer, I moved back as much as I could. “I mean it, Sherlock, stay away from me until you’re clean.” He sent me a dangerous smirk and before I knew what happen, Sherlock picked me up, tossing me over his shoulder and walked us to his bathroom.

“Sherlock! Put me down!” I banged my hands on his back. He finally puts me down once we were in the bathroom, he turned and locked the door.

“So, want to help me get clean?” he wiggled his eyebrows as he smirked. I looked down at my now ruined clothes and Sherlock’s dressing gown.

“You’re going to have to buy a new one, again.” I said as I dropped the dressing gown to the floor. Sherlock’s icy blue eyes darken a shade.

“Seem to be doing that a lot.” he began to unbutton his shirt. I pulled my blue t-shirt off. He put his hands on my waist and lifted me onto the sink counter. Sherlock moved in between my legs and I wrapped them around his waist, bring his hips closer and grinded my hips on his arousal. He bent his head forward, pressing his forehead against my neck and moaned, loudly.

“Shhh, John’s out in the living room.” I whispered in his ear before moaning myself when he bit my neck. He pressed light kisses up my neck and jaw line before pressing our lips together in a searing kiss. Sherlock moved his hands to my waistband of my pants, tugging on them. I shimmied out of them with his help. I turned on the shower to warm the water up while Sherlock took his shoes and socks off. He lifted me up and carry me into the shower, my back to the wall and his to the water. I threaded my fingers into his hair bringing his lips to mine, smashing them together hungrily.

I tugged on his hair making him groan. Sherlock slipped two fingers into my womanhood,
beginning to stretch me out. I let out a breathless moan which Sherlock swallowed as we continued
to kiss. I sucked Sherlock’s tongue into my mouth making him growl. He pulled his fingers out
then thrust inside. We inhaled sharply when he bottomed out. Our pace was quick and hurried,
soon we came together each other’s name leaving our lips. I let my head thunk back on the shower
wall while Sherlock placed his on my shoulder. He tighten his hold on me for a minute before
slipping out and placing me in front of him under the shower head.

“It’s almost been six months since the last time we had sex together.” He whispered as he peppered
kissed my neck and shoulder.

“I know.” I took his shampoo down from the shelve and sniffed it. It smelled like the forest after it
rain, musky but subtle and crisp. “At least I won’t smell too manly like I thought I was going too.”
I teased him as I handed it to him. He let out a dark chuckle.

“I like the idea of you smelling like me, it makes you mine even more.” I rolled my eyes as he
shampooed my hair and washed it. I turned around to do his hair, I looked at him as I started to
laver the shampoo into his hair.

“What?” he asked bringing up a hand and wrapped it around my wrist, his thumb moving in circles
on my pulse point.

“Did you ever think this would happen to you, Sherlock? A relationship, love, marriage, any of
this? Did you think you’d have a domestic life?” I asked him, curious. He stared at me for a
moment before washing the shampoo out of his hair, then turned back to me.

“No, I have never in my twenty-five years of life ever thought I’d actually get what everyone else
had or talked about. I thought I didn’t deserve love or a family of my own.” He looked at me with
sad eyes before leaning in to give me a kiss. “But then I met you and everything seem possible.” I
smiled at him before we stepped out of the shower. I waved my hand casting a drying charm then
to the clothes and casted a cleaning spell on them, removing the blood. I put my clothes back on
and turned to Sherlock to hand him his robe but stopped at the awed look he was giving me.

“What?” I asked as he took his robe.

“Have I ever told you that magic is absolutely brilliant?” I laughed and shook my head. I pushed
him out of the bathroom and to his wardrobe. “Go get dress, idiot.” He chuckled and pecked me on
the cheek then went to do what I asked. I walked back into the living room and noticed John’s red
face. “John! Oh, Merlin I’m so sorry.” I began to crack up as his face went redder. I sat back down
on the couch, picked up my book and continued to read it.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I came out of my bedroom in a new pair of shirt and trousers with my blue dressing gown over it.
John’s face was still a little red from hearing Eiric’s and mine . . . shower time. I was still carrying
my harpoon around, pacing rapidly between the door and window, looking round repeatedly at
John and Eiric as they sat in their respected spots. John was flicking through the newspaper and
Eiric was reading a book.

“Nothing?” I asked impatiently.

“Military coup in Uganda.” He said.

“Hmm.” John chuckles in amusement at something he sees in one of the papers.
“Another photo of you with the, er . . .” he points to a photograph of me wearing the hat. Eiric pops up from the couch and takes the paper with the photo on it, looking it.

“I like this one. I’m going to frame it for my office.” She sends me a mischievous grin and wink as she magicked it to her flat. I make a disgusted nosie. John moves on to another newspaper.

“Oh, um, Cabinet reshuffle.”

“Nothing of importance?” I said furiously. I slam the end of the harpoon onto the ground. “Oh, God!” I roared with rage. I look round at Eiric intensely. “Eiric, I need some. Get me some.”

“No.” she replied calmly, waving her hand dismissively as she walked into the kitchen to make herself some Earl Grey. I followed behind her and stopped in the doorway.

“Get me some.” I said intensely, almost demandingly. She sharply turn around to me, her green eyes flashing the colour of acid. I involuntarily swallowed at the action, ‘Is that why most people are afraid of her, because of the colour of her eyes?’

“Excuse me?” she put her hands on her hips. “I said no, William Sherlock Scott Holmes.” I flinched at her saying my full name, knowing I was in deep trouble. “Cold turkey was the agreement. If I can’t have them and don’t need them then neither do you.” She nodded her head and turn back to making her tea, “And beside, you’ve paid everyone off, remember? No-one within a two mile radius’ll sell us any.”

“Stupid idea. Whose idea was that?” she looks at me over her shoulder and gives me a pointed look. I look towards the door. “Mrs. Hudson!” I shouted.

“Sherlock, leave her alone.” I heard Eiric call as I start hurling paperwork off the table as I search desperately for what I need.

“Look, Sherlock, you’re doing really well. Don’t give up now.” John said from his chair.

“Tell me where they are. Please. Tell me.” I said frantically as I continue my search. John and Eiric remains silent, I straighten up and then turn my most appealing puppy-dog eyes on them, hesitating before I speak and almost forming the word a couple of times before actually speaking it. “Please.”

“Can’t help, sorry.” He sent Eiric a wary look. I looked over to her, now knowing that she was behind this. I went to my knees, pulling her into my arms resting my head on her stomach and looked up at her with the puppy-dog eyes and pout that worked on Mummy.

“Please, darling?” I whispered to her. Her eyes grew soft and that beautiful, loving smile formed on her lips. She placed a hand in my hair and ran it through, I thought I had her.

“No.” she said sweetly before moving out of my arms and sat back on the couch, reading that damn book. I scowled at her as John began to laugh.

“Oh, it was worth a try.” I said exasperated as I got off the floor. I looked around the room, then I get inspired and hurled myself to the floor in front of the fireplace. Unearthing a slipper from the pile of papers in front of the unlit fire, I hold it up and scrabble about inside at Mrs. Hudson arrives at the door and comes in.

“Yoo-whoo.”

“My secret supply: what have you done with my secret supply?” I almost sing-sung as I rummaged about the fireplace.
“Eh?” she said confused.

“Cigarettes! What have you done with them? Where are they?” I asked frantically.

“You know you never let me touch your things!” she looked around at the mess. “Ooh, chance would be a fine thing.”

“I thought you weren’t my housekeeper.” I said standing up and facing her.

“I’m not.” Making a frustrated noise, I stomp back over to the harpoon and pick it up again.

“How about a nice cuppa, and perhaps you could put away your harpoon.” Mrs. Hudson said.

“I need something stronger than tea. Seven percent stronger.” I glare out of the window, then turn back towards Mrs. Hudson and aim the harpoon at her. She flinches back. “You’ve been to see Mr. Chatterjee again.”

“Pardon?” I point with the harpoon’s tip.

“Sandwich shop. That’s a new dress, but there’s flour on the sleeve. You wouldn’t dress like that for baking.”

“Sherlock . . .” John spoke up.

“Thumbnail: tiny traces of foil. Been at the scratch cards again. We all know where that leads don’t we?” I sniff deeply as I finally stop aiming the harpoon at her, missing Eiric’s look becoming more serious and deadly. “Mmm: Kasbah Nights. Pretty racy for a first th– . . .” I stopped, looking confused. I looked around at everyone, John and Mrs. Hudson were looking at me in confusion as well and Eiric was reading her book, looking calm. I open my mouth again to speak but nothing came out.

“I put a silencio on you, Sherlock. It won’t wear off until I cast it off.” I turned to Eiric in shock. She just stared at me calmly, “You were being incredibly rude to her, so it was either throw my book at you or put a silencing spell on you.” She got up from the couch and walked over to Mrs. Hudson, putting an arm around her shoulders. “Come on, Mrs. H, let’s go make you a cup of tea and have a nice chat.” Eiric walked out with Mrs. Hudson before glancing over her shoulder to me. “We’ll be having a talk, Sherlock.” I visibly winced at her displeased tone. They leave the flat and I looked towards John, he looks back at me.

“You’re in deep shite, mate.” I send him a glare, not know if Eiric lifted the spell or not and leap over the back of my chair, then perch on the seat, wrapping my arms around my knees. Eiric soon comes back in, slamming the door behind her. I narrow my eyes at her as she sets her own narrowed eyes on me.

“You look like a petulant child, Sherlock.” I turn my head away from her. I hear her scoff. “You can talk, you idiot.” I watched out the corner of my eye as she looks back towards the door then back to me. She places her hands on her hips. “What the bloody hell was all that about?”

“You don’t understand.” I said rocking back and forth.

“I don’t understand.” She turned to John, “Apparently John, I don’t understand what it’s like to be bored out of my mind, a mind that needs a distraction, anything! No, apparently I’m just like the rest of you, a bloody damn goldfish!” Eiric shouts and walks out, slamming the door again. I stare at the floor, letting out a sigh. John slams his newspaper down.
“Go after her and apologise.” He told me, sternly.

“Apologise?” I stare at him.

“Mmm-hmm.”

“Oh, John, I envy you so much.” I sighed, ‘He’s right but I should let her cool off.’

“You envy me?” he asked.

“Your mind: it’s so placid, straightforward, barely used. Eiric’s and mine are like an engine, racing out of control; a rocket tearing itself to pieces trapped on the launch pad. I need a case!” I said loudly and frantically.

“You’ve just solved one! By harpooning a dead pig, apparently!” John said equally loud. With an exasperated noise, I jump up in the air and then land in the seated position on the chair.

“That was this morning!” I start drumming my fingers on both hands on the arms of the chair while stomping my feet on the floor. “When’s the next one?”

“Nothing on the website?” I get up and walk over to the table, collect my laptop and hand it to John, who looks at the message while I stomp over to the window and narrate part of it.

“Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes. I can’t find Bluebell anywhere. Please please please can you help?”

“Bluebell?”

“A rabbit, John!” I exclaimed irritated.

“Oh.”

“Ah, but there’s more! Before Bluebell disappeared, it turned luminous ...” I said sarcastically before adopting a little girl’s voice for the next three words, “... like a fairy” according to little Kirsty; then the next morning, Bluebell was gone! Hutch still lock, no sign of a forced entry ...” I stop and my expression becomes more intense. “Ah! What am I saying? This is brilliant! Phone Lestrade. Tell him there’s an escaped rabbit.”

“Are you serious?” John asked.

“It’s this, or Cluedo.”

“Ah, no!” he closed the laptop and gets up to put it back on the table. “We are never playing that again.”

“Why not?” I asked. “Eiric and Teddy love playing that game.”

“No, they love watching you play it differently and it’s not possible for the victim to have done it, Sherlock, that’s why.”

“Well, it was the only possible solution.”

“It’s not in the rules.” John sat down again.

“Then the rules are wrong!” I yelled furiously. The doorbell rings. John holds up a finger thoughtfully as I look towards the living room door.
“Single ring.”

“Maximum pressure just under the half second.”

“Client.” We said simultaneously. We heard the door be answered and then two sets of footsteps walking up the stairs. The living room door opens and a young man enters with Eiric behind him. Eiric motions to the boy.

“Boys, this is Henry Knight.” She motions for the boy to speak but he just stutters. Eiric looks to us with worry about the new client. “Henry, why don’t you take a seat and calm down while Sherlock goes get dress?” she led him to the chair that our clients sit in. I go to my room and change into my jacket. I come back into the living room and sit in my seat, John puts in a documentary recording. Eiric sat on the arm of my seat watching it with us. The documentary footage shows scenes of Dartmoor. I’m bored instantly.

“Dartmoor. It’s always been a place of myth and legend, but is there something else lurking out here – something very real?” Footage of “Keep Out” signs comes up. The presenter walks along a narrow road. “Because Dartmoor’s also home to one of the government’s most secret of operations . . .” My eyes flick repeatedly between the screen and the man in John’s chair as the footage shows a large sign. Soon my eyes are permanently fixed on the newcomer as he watches the documentary anxiously. All of a sudden the footage switches off. We all look at the TV in confusion before Eiric clear her throat. We turned to her.

“Henry, what did you see?” she asked him in a tone she would use with Teddy.

“Oh.” He points to the television. “I . . . I was just about to come on and say.” She shook her head.

“We’d like to hear it from you then a TV interview, sweetheart.” She said, motherly.

“Oh, yes. Sorry, yes, of course. ‘Scuse me.” he reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out a paper napkin and wipes his nose on it.

“In your own time.” John said from behind us.

“But quite quickly.” My head went forward a little at the light smack Eiric gave me. Henry lowers the napkin.

“Do you know Dartmoor, Mr. Holmes?” Henry asked.

“No.”

“It’s an amazing place. It’s like nowhere else. It’s sort of . . . bleak but beautiful.”

“Mmm, not interested. Moving on.” Another smack.

“We used to go for walks, after my mum died, my dad and me. Every evening we’d go out onto the moor.”

“Yes, good. Skipping to the night your dad was violently killed. Where did that happen?” this time the smack was harder than the first two.

“There’s a place – it’s . . . it’s a sort of local landmark called Dewer’s Hollow.” He gazed at me, I tilt my head at him as if to say, “And . . .?”

“That’s an ancient name for the Devil.” He finished lamely.
“So?” I quirked an eyebrow, bracing myself for a slap but it didn’t come.

“Henry? Did you see the Devil that night?” Eiric asked softly. His face haunted with memories, Henry looks across to her and nods.

“Yes.” He whispered. “It was huge. Coal-black fur, with red eyes. It got him, tore at him, tore him apart.” He said tearfully. I watched him intensely. “I can’t remember anything else. They found me the next morning, just wandering on the moor. My dad’s body was never found.”

“Hmm.” John looks across to me. “Red eyes, coal-black fur, enormous: dog? Wolf?”

“Or a genetic experiment.” I look away biting back a smile.

“Are you laughing at me, Mr. Holmes?”

“Why, are you joking?”

“My dad was always going on about the things they were doing at Baskerville; about the type of monsters they were breeding there. People used to laugh at him. At least the TV people took me seriously.” Henry ranted.

“And, I assume, did wonders for Devon tourism.” I said sarcastically.

“Sherlock!” I quieted at Eiric’s tone. She took a deep breath then turned to Henry. “Henry, what happened last night?”

“Why, what happened last night?” John asked confused. Henry turned towards her.

“How... how did you know?” he stuttered.

“We didn’t know; we noticed.” I said. John shuffles in his chair. “You came up from Devon on the first available train this morning. You had a disappointing breakfast and a cup of black coffee. The girl in the seat across the aisle fancied you. Although you were initially keen, you’ve now changed your mind. You are, however, extremely anxious to have your first cigarette of the day. Sit down, Mr. Knight, and please smoke. I’d be delighted.” I said quick fire. Henry stared at me, then glances across to John and Eiric, who both sigh. Hesitantly, Henry walks back to the chair and sits down, fishing in his jacket pocket.

“How on earth did you notice all that?!”

“It’s not important...” John starts but I’m already off.

“Punched-out holes where your ticket’s been checked.” I looked at the two small round pieces of paper stuck to Henry’s coat.

“Sherlock, not now.” Eiric said.

“Oh please. I’ve been cooped up in here for ages.” I told her.

“You’re just showing off.” She retorted back.

“Of course. I am a show-off. That’s what we do.” I turn my attention back to Henry and the napkin that he’s still holding. “The train napkin that you used to mop up the spilled coffee: the strength of the stain shows that you didn’t take milk. There are traces of ketchup on it and round your lips and on your sleeve. Cooked breakfast – or the nearest thing those trains can manage. Probably a sandwich.”
“How did you know it was disappointing?” Henry half-sobs, over-awed. I was about to answer when a slim, feminine hand covered my mouth. I looked up at Eiric from under my fringe.

“Is there any other type of breakfast on a train? The girl – female handwriting’s quite distinctive. Wrote her phone number down on the napkin. I can tell from the angle she was sat across from you on the other side of the aisle. Later – after she got off, I imagine – you used the napkin to mop up your spilled coffee, accidentally smudging the numbers. You’ve been over the last four digits yourself with another pen, so you wanted to keep the number. Just now, though, you used the napkin to blow your nose. Maybe you’re not that into her after all. Then there’s the nicotine stains on your fingers . . . your shaking fingers. I know the signs.” I snatched her wrist and pulled her into my lap, covering her mouth with my hand this time figuring out what she was trying to do. My gaze becomes intense.

“No chance to smoke one on the train; no time to roll one before you got a cab here.” I glance at my watch. “It’s just after nine fifteen. You’re desperate. The first train from Exeter to London leaves at five forty-six a.m. you got the first one possible, so something important must have happened last night. Am I wrong?” Henry stares at us in amazement, then draws in a shaky breath.

“No.” I smile at Eiric smugly, she narrowed her eyes at me. John takes a drink from his mug.

“You’re right. You’re completely, exactly right. Bloody hell, I heard you two were quick.” Henry said awestruck.

“It’s our job.” I lean forward over Eiric and glare at Henry intensely.

“Now shut up and smoke.” John frowns towards me. Henry just stares at me warily then to Eiric. I looked towards her, confused. She removed my hand from her mouth showing a smug smirk.

“Miss. Potter said I’m not allowed to smoke in the house or in her presence.” Henry said. Eiric sent him a sweet smile to which made me glare at him, she only smiles like that to me. He swallowed nervously. I leant back in my seat, crossing my arms and pouted. Eiric got up and sat back on the arm rest facing Henry.

“Um, Henry, your parents both died and you were, what, seven years old? That must be quite a trauma. Have you ever thought that maybe you invented this story, this to account for it?” John asked him.


“Who?” John asked.

“His therapist.” Eiric and I said simultaneously.

“My therapist.” Henry said a second after us. He stared at us in shock.

“Obviously.” I continued.

“Louise Mortimer. She’s the reason I came back to Dartmoor. She thinks I have to face my demons.” Henry said. I stared at him intensely ‘He reminds me of Eiric with her demons.’

“And what happened when you went back to Dewer’s Hollow last night, Henry? You went there on the advice of your therapist and now you’re consulting a detective. What did you see that changed everything?” Eiric asked.

“It’s a strange place, the Hollow. Makes you feel so cold inside, so afraid.” I rolled my eyes.
“Yes, if I wanted poetry, I’d read John’s emails to his girlfriends. Much funnier.” John sighs hard.

“What did you see?” I asked Henry this time.

“Footprints – on the exact spot where I saw my father torn apart.” Looking exasperated, I lean back in my seat.

“Man’s or a woman’s?” John asked.

“Neither. They were . . .”


“Yes, but they were . . .”

“No, sorry, Doctor Mortimer wins. Childhood trauma masked by an invented memory. Boring! Goodbye, Mr. Knight.” I got up from my seat.

“No, but what about the footprints?” Henry looked towards Eiric.

“Oh, they’re probably paw prints; could be anything, therefore nothing.” I said before she could say anything. I flick my fingers at him, gesturing him towards the door. “Off to Devon with you; have a cream tea on me.” I walk into the kitchen, buttoning up my jacket.

“Sherlock, listen to him.” Eiric called.

“Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!” I stop dead in my tracks, then slowly turn and come back to the kitchen doorway, staring down at Henry.

“Say that again.”

“I found the footprints; they were . . .”

“No, no, no, your exact words. Repeat your exact words from a moment ago, exactly as you said them.” Henry thinks for a second, then slowly recites his words back to me.

“Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic . . . hound.” I raised my head.

“I’ll take the case.”

“Sorry, what?” John asked startled. I adopt the prayer position in front of my mouth and begin to pace slowly across the living room.

“Thank you for bringing this to my attention. It’s very promising.” I looked towards Eiric, seeing her stare at me with a raised eyebrow, unamused. I scowled inwardly that my acted wasn’t working on her again.

“No-no-no, sorry, what? A minute ago, footprints were boring; now they’re very promising?” John asked still startled and confused now. I stopped.

“It’s nothing to do with footprints. As ever, John, you weren’t listening. Baskerville: ever heard of it?” I asked.

“Vaguely. It’s very hush-hush.”

“Sounds like a good place to start.” Eiric said her voice lite with a mischievous tone.
“Ah! You’ll come down, then?” Henry asked.

“No, I can’t leave London at the moment. Far too busy. Don’t worry – putting my best man onto it.” I walk over to John and pat his shoulder. “Always rely on John to send me the relevant data, as he never understands a word of it himself.”

“What are you talking about, you’re busy? You don’t have a case! A minute ago you were complaining . . .”


“Oh, sorry, no, you’re not coming then?” putting on a regretful expression, I shake my head sadly.

“Okay.” John stands up as I smile smugly. Eiric quickly stands up.

“John, don’t.” she makes a move towards him but I stop her. John gives her an apologetic look. He walks over to the mantelpiece and picks up the skull, taking a packet of cigarettes from underneath it. Putting the skull down again, John turns and tosses the packet across to us, I reach my hand out to catch it but Eiric snatches it out of the air before it’s anywhere near me. We stare at her in shock. She looks at me and crosses her arms, tapping her foot. I sigh.

“I don’t need those any more. I’m going to Dartmoor.” I walk out of the living room. “You go on ahead, Henry. We’ll follow later.”

“Er, sorry, so you are coming?” he asked as he scrambled to his feet. I turn and walk back into the room.

“Twenty year old disappearance; a monstrous hound? I wouldn’t miss this for the world!” I pulled Eiric to my room to pack. She moved out of my hold and went to the kitchen sink, dropping the box of cigarettes in the food disposal. She turned to me and then flipped the switch, I winced as it chewed up the cigarettes. She turned it off after a minute and turned back to me.

“I deserved that.” I pointed to the sink, she just raised an eyebrow. I sighed. “I’m sorry for acting like an arsehole.” I muttered. She smiled and let out a giggle before walking into my arms and placed a kiss on my cheek.

“Your forgiven.” She walked into my room, I followed behind her like a loyal pup.

TPSH

John carried two large bags out onto the street, shuts the front door and walks over to Eiric and I, I was holding a taxi door open for Eiric to go in first. All of a sudden I heard Mrs. Hudson shouting angrily close by, Eiric turn towards her voice and I followed her direction.

“. . . cruise together. You had no intention of taking me on it . . .” she throws something at the closed door. As it bounces heavily off the glass, John recoils.

“What the hell is going on?!” he exclaimed as he puts his bags in the trunk.

“Seems that Mrs. H finally got to the wife in Doncaster. That was fast.” John look at Eiric in shock.

“Mmm. Wait ‘til she finds the one in Islamabad.” I said. Eiric sniggers and gets into the taxi. John and I follow her in. John sits on the other side of the cab. I wrap an arm around Eiric’s shoulders. “Paddington Station, please.” I told the driver.
Dartmoor Eiric pov

I found it quite scary that John and I aloud Sherlock to drive us across the moors in a large black Land Rover jeep. Sherlock drove us to an area with a large stone outcrop. He climbed up and stood dramatically on it while John and I stood at the foot of it consulting a map. John points ahead of himself at a large array of buildings in the distance.

“There’s Baskerville.” He turns and points behind us. Sherlock turns to look. “That’s Grimpen Village.” He turns and looks ahead of us again, checking the map for the name of the heavily wooded area to the left of the Baskerville complex. “So that must be . . . yeah, it’s Dewer’s Hollow.” Sherlock points to an area in between the complex and the Hollow.

“What’s that?” he asked.

“Hmm?” John lifts up his binoculars and looks more closely at the fencing and the warning signs.

“Minefield. Technically Baskerville’s an army base. They’ve always been keen to keep people out.” I told them.

“Clearly.” I rolled my eyes at him and turned, looking up at him.

“Get down!” I shouted up at him.

Sherlock drives us into Grimpen Village and pulls into the car park of the Cross Keys inn. We get out and walk towards the entrance of the pub, I looked towards the young man we pass by, he was talking to a group of people.

“. . . three times a day, tell your friends. Tell anyone!” the boys simply walk pass the group but I pause and watch as the boy moved showing a large sign, which has a black image of a wolf-like creature painted on it with the words “BEWARE THE HOUND!!” above it. “Don’t be strangers, and remember . . . stay away from the moor at night if you value your lives!” I tilted my head curiously before catching up with Sherlock and John. Sherlock had been pulling his overcoat around him as he walks towards the pub, and now he pops the collar. John and I look round at him pointedly.

“I’m cold.” He said trying and failing to look nonchalant. We walk into the pub. I watched as Sherlock prowled around the pub, as John and I were checking in. The manager and barman, Gary, hands John and I some keys.

“Single for the gorgeous Eiric and a double room for the men, separate beds.” He winked at me, I gave him a bright smile. I had called Gary on the train on our way here and had a lovely chat with him, got our rooms a bit cheaper as well.

“Thank you, Gary.” I give him the money for our rooms and for the glass wine I was having and John’s drink.

“Oh, ta. I’ll just get your change.” I stop him before he leaves. He looks at me.

“Keep the change, Gary.” He gave me a bright smile and went to the till. I glance down at a pile of receipts and invoices which have been punched onto a spike on the bar. I frown as I see that one is labelled “Undershaw Meat Supplies”. I nudge at John and motion my head towards it. He frowns
as well, then quickly reaches out and rips it from the spike, putting it into his pocket as Gary comes back.

“I could help noticing on the map of the moor: a skull and crossbones.” John said to Gary.

“Oh that, aye.” Gary said.

“Pirates?!” John exclaimed in shock, I covered my mouth as I laughed. John shot me a glare.

“Eh, no, no. The Great Grimpen Minefield, they call it.”

“Oh, right.”

“It’s not what you think. It’s the Baskerville testing site. It’s been going for eighty-odd years. I’m not sure anyone really knows what’s there anymore.” I turned a little to check up on Sherlock. He was still prowling around and seemed to find something of interest at one of the tables.

“Explosives?” I asked Gary.

“Oh, not just explosives. Break into that place and – if you’re lucky – you just get blown up, so they say . . . in case you’re planning on a nice wee stroll.” Sherlock loses interest in the table and wanders off again.

“I’ll remember.” I told Gary.

“Aye. No, it buggers up tourism a bit, so thank God for the demon hound!” Gary chuckles. “Did you see the show, that documentary?”

“Quite recently, yeah.” John answered him.

“Aye. God bless Henry Knight and his monster from hell.”

“Ever seen it – the hound?” John asked him.

“Me? No.” Gary points out the door past Sherlock, where the young man from earlier was just sitting outside the pub, talking to someone on his phone. “Fletcher has. He runs the walks – the Monster Walks for the tourists, you know? He’s seen it.”

“That’s handy for a trade.” Gary turns to a man who was clearly the inn’s cook who had just arrived behind the bar. Sherlock turns and follows Fletcher as he walks away from the doorway.

“I’m just saying we’ve been rushed off our feet, Billy.” I turn back to them fully.

“Yeah. Lots of monster-hunters. Doesn’t take much these days. One mention on Twitter and oomph.” He looks at Gary. “We’re out of WKD.”

“All right.” Gary walks behind the bar again. Billy turns to us.

“What with the monster and ruddy prison, I don’t know how we sleep at night. Do you, Gary?” Gary stops and puts a hand on Billy’s shoulder and looks at him affectionately.

“Like a baby.” I giggled earning myself a wink from both of them.

“That’s not true.” Billy looks at us. “He’s a snorer.”

“Hey, wheesht!” Gary said embarrassed, trying to shut Billy up.
“Is yours a snorer?” Billy asked John, motioning outside towards Sherlock. I snorted into my drink and burst out laughing, Gary joining me. John just stared at Billy while Gary and I try to get a hold of ourselves.

“. . . Got any crisps?” John asked after a few seconds. I left to go find what Sherlock was up to.

TPSH

I watched as Sherlock swipes a half-drunk pint of beer from a nearby empty table and walks over towards Fletcher. Fletcher was sitting at a table across from the inn and was finishing his phone call. I moved closer so I could hear them.

“Mind if I join you?” Fletcher shrugs and gestures to the table. Sherlock puts his pint down and sits on the bench on the other side of the table. “It’s not true, is it? You haven’t actually seen this . . . hound thing.” He grins in a friendly way. ‘Oh, Merlin. He’s acting normal, he’s has to stop that, really.’

“You from the papers?” Fletcher looks at him suspiciously.

“No, nothing like that. Just curious. Have you seen it?” Sherlock asked.

“Maybe.”

“Got any proof?”

“Why would I tell you it I did? ‘Scuse me.” he stands up to leave, I move over to them with my own drink. I sat down by Sherlock.

“Bet’s off, Eiric, sorry.” He looked to me.

“Oh? But I really wanted to see you get prove wrong by someone who wasn’t me.” I pouted and took a sip of my wine.

“Bet?” Fletcher asked. Sherlock looks at his watch.

“My plan needs darkness.” He looks up at the sky. “Reckon we’ve got half an hour of light . . .”

“Wait, wait. What bet?”

“Oh, I bet Eiric here fifty quid that you couldn’t prove you’d seen the hound.” I look over at Fletcher.

“The guys in the pub said you could.” Fletcher smiles and points to Sherlock.

“Well, you’re gonna lose your money, mate.”

“Yeah?” Sherlock asked sarcastically.

“Yeah. I’ve seen it. Only about a month ago, up at the Hollow. It was foggy, mind – couldn’t make much out.” He starts fiddling with his phone.

“I see. No witnesses, I suppose.” Sherlock tilted his head.

“No, but . . .”

“Never are.” Sherlock interrupted him.
“Wait . . .” he showed us a photograph on his smart phone. “There.” We look at the photograph which shows a dark-furred, four-legged something in the distance but, with no scale amongst the surrounding vegetation, it’s impossible to tell the size – or even the species – of the animal. Sherlock snorts.

“Is that it? It’s not exactly proof, is it?” Fletcher shows the photo to John, who just joined us.

“Sorry, Eiric. I win.” He picks up the stolen drink and makes as if to drink from it, which he doesn’t cause I sent him a soft kick to the leg.

“Wait, wait. That’s not all. People don’t like going up there, you know – to the Hollow. Gives them a . . . bad sort of feeling.” Fletcher said.

“Ooh! Is it haunted?! Is that supposed to convince me?” Sherlock puts the pint glass down again.

“Nah, don’t be stupid, nothing like that, but I reckon there is something out there – something from Baskerville, escaped.”

“A clone, a super-dog?!?” Sherlock said not really trying to hold back his skeptical snigger.

“Maybe. God knows what they’ve been spraying on us all these years, or putting in the water. I wouldn’t trust ‘em as far as I could spit.” I grimace at that. I nodded to the phone photograph.

“Is that the best you’ve got?” I asked. Fletcher hesitates for a long moment, but eventually he speaks reluctantly, lowering his voice.

“I had a mate once who worked for the MOD. One weekend we were meant to go fishin’ but he never showed up – well, not ‘til late. When he did, he was white as a sheet. I can see him now.

“I’ve seen things today, Fletch,” he said, “that I never wanna see again. Terrible things.” He’d been sent to some secret Army place – Porton Down, maybe, maybe Baskerville, or somewhere else.” He leans closer. “In the labs there – the really secret labs, he said he’d seen . . . terrible things. Rats as big as dogs, he said, and dogs.” He reaches into his big and pulls something out, showing it to us. “Dogs the size of horses.” He held a concrete cast of a dog’s paw print – but the print was at least six inches long from the tip of the claws to the back of the pad. Sherlock stared at it in surprise. I immediately pounce.

“We did say fifty.” As Fletcher smiles triumphantly, Sherlock gets out his wallet and hands me a fifty pound note. “Thank you, love.” I wink at him. Sulkily, Sherlock gets up and walks away. I wait for John to finish his drink and we follow after him, sniggering to each other.
Chapter 25

Baskerville Eiric pov

We take the car to Baskerville with Sherlock still driving. As we approach the complex, I lean towards the windshield and observed the many military personnel guarding the place, walking the perimeter. Sherlock drives up to the gates and a military security guard holding a rifle raised a hand. As Sherlock stops the jeep, the man walks around to the driver’s window.

“Pass, please.” Sherlock reaches into his coat pocket and hands him a pass. “Thank you.” He walks away with the pass. At the front of the vehicle, another security man encourages a sniffer dog to check the jeep, presumably for explosives.

“You’ve got ID for Baskerville. How?” John asked quietly from the back.

“It’s not specific to this place. It’s my brother’s. Access all areas. I, um...” Sherlock said quietly before clearing his throat as I look at him with a raised eyebrow. “... acquired it ages ago, just in case.” The security guard swipes Sherlock’s pass through a reader at the gate room.

“Brilliant!” John exclaimed quietly.

“What’s the matter?” I turned around and asked him.

“We’ll get caught.” I raised an eyebrow at him.

“No we won’t – well, not just yet.” Sherlock said.

“Caught in five minutes. “Oh, hi, we just thought we’d come and have a wander round your top secret weapons base.” “Really? Great! Come in – kettle’s just boiled.” That’s if we don’t get shot.” I stare at John in shock, both of my eyebrows raised. I shook my head and turn back to the front.

“Angry little hobbit.” I said loud enough that they could both hear. Sherlock sniggered while John lightly pushed my seat. The gate begin to slide open as the security guard comes back over to the car.

“Clear.” The security guard hands Sherlock his stolen pass. “Thank you very much, sir.”

“Thank you.” Sherlock puts the car in gear and eases the vehicle forward.

“Straight through, sir.”

“Mycroft’s name literally opens doors!” John said in shock.

“It’s Microsoft, John, of course his name opens doors.” I said to him.

“I’ve told you – he practically is the British government. I reckon we’ve got about twenty minutes before they realize something’s wrong.” I looked at Sherlock from the corner of my eye before looking forward again. What they didn’t know was that I was still seen as Government property at some facilities, all I have to do is say my name and I have full access. Sherlock drives up to the main complex at Baskerville, parks the car and we get out. Another soldier leads us through barriers and towards an entrance to the main building. As we walked, Sherlock and I look around at all the military men patrolling the area, many of them armed. Even the scientists in lab coats were being escorted. As we approach the entrance, a military jeep pulls up and a young corporal gets
“What is it? Are we in trouble?” he asked.

“Are we in trouble, sir.” Sherlock said sternly. I bit back a smile.

“Yes, sir, sorry, sir.” Nevertheless, he steps in front of them and holds out his hands to prevent us getting nearer to the entrance.

“You were expecting us?” Sherlock asked.

“Your ID showed up straight away, Mr. Holmes. Corporal Lyons, security. Is there something wrong, sir?” Lyons asked.

“Well, I hope not, Corporal, I hope not.” I rolled my eyes at Sherlock.

“It’s just we don’t get inspected here, you see, sir. It just doesn’t happen.”

“Ever heard of a spot check?” John takes his small wallet from his pocket and shows the ID inside to the corporal. “Captain John Watson, Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.” Even before he finishes speaking, the corporal comes to attention and salutes. John crisply returns the salute. I raise my eyebrows, give a little nod, impressed.

“Sir. Major Barrymore won’t be pleased, sir. He’ll want to see you three.”

“I’m afraid we won’t have time for that. We’ll need the full tour right away. Carry on.” Sherlock looked at me with raised eyebrows as well, in shock at John. The corporal hesitates. “That’s an order, Corporal.” John ordered instantly.

“Yes, sir.” He spins around and walks towards the entrance. Sherlock and I glance across to John with a proud smile on our faces as we follow. As the entrance, Lyons swipes his pass through a reader, then waits for Sherlock to walk over and do the same with his own pass. Lyons presses a button and the locks on the door disengage. Sherlock checks his watch. The door swings open and Lyons leads us inside, taking off his beret as he goes. As he leads us towards the next security door, the boys talk quietly behind me.

“Haven’t pulled rank in ages.” John told Sherlock.

“Enjoy it?” Sherlock asked.

“Oh, yeah.” Reaching the door, Lyons swipes his pass then steps aside for Sherlock to do likewise. The door slides open and revealed an elevator on the other side. Lyons led us inside and I look at the wall panel. The lift, now on the ground floor, only goes downwards to five floors marked -1, -2, -3, -4, and B. Lyons presses the -1 button and the doors close, opening shortly afterwards on the next floor down. Lyons led us out into a brightly lit and white tiled laboratory. As we walked forward, various scientific staff dressed either in white coveralls including full breathing masks, or lab coats and face masks walk around the lab. There were large cages to the right of the elevator and as Lyons lead the way past them, a monkey screams and hurls itself at the bars towards us. I jump and let out a gasp in shock bumping into Sherlock as he spins on his heel as he passes the cage, looking at the monkey and the chain around its neck. He took hold of my hand and gave it a gentle squeeze.

“How many animals do you keep down here?” he asked.

“Lots, sir.” At the far end of the lab, a scientist wearing coveralls and breathing mask comes out of
another room and takes his mask off. Another scientist walks across the lab with a beagle on a leash.

“Any ever escape?”

“They’d have to know how to use that lift, sir. We’re not breeding them that clever.” I stared at the corporal in disgust.

“Unless they have help.” I said. The man who just took his mask off comes over to us.

“Ah, and you are?” he asked.

“Sorry, Doctor Frankland. I’m just showing these gentlemen and lady around.” Frankland smiles at us.

“As, new faces, huh? Nice. Careful you don’t get stuck here, though. I only came to fix a tap!” John chuckles politely as Frankland walks towards the lift. John turns to Lyons.

“How far down does that lift go?”

“Quite a way, sir.”

“Mmm-hmm. And what’s down there?” John asked.

“Well, we have to keep the bins somewhere, sir. This way please.” Sherlock was watching Frankland as he reached the elevator. As Lyons leads John and I away, Sherlock walks backwards for a couple paces before turning to follow beside me.

“So what exactly is it that you do here?” John asked.

“I thought you’d know, sir, this being an inspection.” Sherlock and I look at the various scientists around the room, a couple looking at a rat in a glass cage, another one doing something to the leg of a monkey on a leash which was sitting on a metal table. Nearby, another scientist picks up what looks ominously like a glass container of serum.

“Well, I’m not an expert, am I?” John told Lyons.

“Everything from stem cell research to trying to cure the common cold, sir.”

“But mostly weaponry?”

“Of one sort or another, yes.” I silently scoffed at this. Lyons swipes his card through the reader of the door at the end of the lab and then Sherlock.

“Biological, chemical . . . ?” John listed off.

“One war ends, another begins, John. New enemies to fight. Have to be prepared for anything.” I said before Lyons could speak. John just gives me an incredulous look. As the door releases, Sherlock checks his watch again. Lyons lead us through the doors and into another lab where a monkey stands up on its back legs with one hand high in the air and shrieks, causing me to jump again, before sitting down again on a high metal table. A female scientist looks at it and then turns to her colleague.

“Okay, Michael, let’s try Harlow Three next time.” As she walks away from the table, Lyons approaches her.
“Doctor Stapleton.”

“Stapleton.” Sherlock said a bit thoughtfully.

“Yes?” she looks at us. “Who’s this?”

“Priority Ultra, ma’am. Orders from on high. An inspection.” I raised my eyebrow at the corporal, ‘It would have been easier to just say inspection, don’t ask questions.’

“Really?” Stapleton asked in surprise.

“We’re to be accorded every courtesy, Doctor Stapleton. What’s your role at Baskerville?” Stapleton looks at Sherlock and snorts with disbelieving laughter.

“Er, accorded every courtesy, isn’t that the idea?” John asked.

“I’m not free to say. Official secrets.” She replied. Sherlock gave her one of his fake smiles.

“Oh, you most certainly are free . . .” his smile fades and his voice becomes ominous, which I have to say is a bit sexy. “. . .and I suggest you remain that way.” Stapleton looks at him for a moment.

“I have a lot of fingers in a lot of pies. I like to mix things up – genes, mostly; now and again actual fingers.” Sherlock apparently has a lightbulb moment when she said ‘genes’ and reached into his pocket before she finished her sentence.

“Stapleton. I knew I knew your name.” Sherlock muttered.

“I doubt it.” Stapleton scoffed.

“People say there’s no such thing as coincidence. What dull lives they must lead.” I said as Sherlock holds up his notebook to her. She stares at it in amazement as Sherlock watches her face closely.

“Have you been talking to my daughter?” Sherlock puts his notebook away.

“Why did Bluebell have to die, Doctor Stapleton?” I looked at Sherlock, puzzled.

“Bluebell?” I question.

“The rabbit?” John said bewildered. I turned to him super confused now.

“Rabbit?” I question this time.

“Disappeared from inside a locked hutch, which was always suggestive.” Sherlock said to Stapleton, ignoring John and I, as she stares at him blankly.

“The rabbit?” John said again.

“Clearly an inside job.”

“Oh, you reckon?” I felt like a total idiot at the moment, having no clue what Sherlock and John were on about.

“Why? Because it glowed in the dark.” I looked towards Sherlock and mouthed ‘glow in the dark?’ but was still ignored.
“I have absolutely no idea what you’re talking about. Who are you?” Sherlock checks his watch again. He lowers his hand and turns to Lyons.

“Well, I think we’ve seen enough for now, Corporal. Thank you so much.”

“That’s it?” he said, surprised.

“That’s it.” Sherlock grabs my hand, turns us and heads briskly back towards the door, John following behind and Lyons trailing after us. “It’s this way, isn’t it?”

“Just a minute!” Stapleton called after us. John catches up to us and speaks quietly so that Lyons can’t overhear him.

“Did we just break into a military base to investigate a rabbit?” he said displeased. Sherlock and I reach the door and he swipes his card, then waits for Lyons to catch up to us, to do the same. Sherlock walks swiftly through the security door, pulling me quickly behind him, and heads for the lift as his phone trills a text alert. He takes out his phone and reads the message without stopping. He starts laughing sarcastically.

“Twenty-three minutes. Mycroft’s getting slow.” Reaching the lift doors, he swipes his card and Lyons does the same. The door open revealing Doctor Frankland standing inside as if he’s been waiting there for us ever since we met. He smiles at us.

“Hello . . . again.” Sherlock narrows his eyes suspiciously as he walks into the lift with the others behind us. He pulls me to him and away from the Doctor. Very shortly afterwards, one floor up, the doors open again and reveal a bearded man in military uniform waiting for us. He most certainly doesn’t look joyful at seeing us.

“Er, um, Major . . .” Lyons stuttered.

“This is bloody outrageous. Why wasn’t I told?” the man demanded.

“Major Barrymore, is it?” John steps out of the lift towards him. “Yes, well, good. Very good.” John offers Barrymore his hand to shake. “We’re very impressed, aren’t we, Mr. Holmes?” I mentally facepalmed. Barrymore refused to take John’s hand. Sherlock’s phone went off again, he reached into his pocket again.

“Deeply; hugely.” He walks past Barrymore, pulling me along behind him, as he look at his text message. The major follows behind us as we hurried towards the exit door.

“The whole point of Baskerville was to eliminate this kind of bureaucratic nonsense . . .” the major squawked.

“I’m so sorry, Major.” Sherlock replied, sarcastically.

“Inspections?!”

“New policy. Can’t remain unmonitored forever. Goodness knows what you’d get up to.” Urgently and quietly to John and I, “Keep walking.” I jerk on his arm to show him that I couldn’t really stop if I wanted to. I looked over my shoulder to see Lyons duck into a side room and hurries out again.

“Sir!” he slaps an alarm button on the wall. Alarms start to blare, red lights flash and the automated security door locks itself. We turn back to him. “ID unauthorized, sir.”

“What?” Barrymore questioned.
“I’ve just had the call.”

“Is that right?” he turns back to us. “Who are you?”

“Look, there’s obviously been some kind of mistake.” John began. I looked down the hallway to see Frankland slowly walking towards us, looking thoughtful. Barrymore holds out his hand for Sherlock’s ID card, he was about to give him the card when I placed a hand over his and stopped him.

“Major, Eiric Potter. Nice to meet you, lovely place you’ve got.” I hold out my hand to him, he looks at me a little stunned. “I can vouch for these gentlemen.” He shakes my hand.

“Miss. Potter, what the hell is going on?!” Barrymore exclaimed. I went to say something when Frankland arrived.

“It’s all right, Major. I know exactly who these gentlemen are.” He said.

“You do?” Barrymore and I asked, confused.

“Yeah. I’m getting a little slow on faces but Mr. Holmes here isn’t someone I expected to show up in this place.”

“Ah, well . . .” Sherlock muttered before Frankland offered his hand to shake.

“Good to see you again, Mycroft.” John tries to mask his surprise. I narrow my eyes at him. Smiling falsely, Sherlock shakes Frankland’s hand. “I had the honour of meeting Mr. Holmes at the W.H.O conference in . . . Brussels, was it?” he pretended to think.

“Well.”

“Vienna.”

“Vienna, that’s it” Frankland looks at Barrymore. “This is Mr. Mycroft Holmes, Major. There’s obviously been a mistake.” Barrymore turns and nods to Lyons, who goes back to the alarm switch and turns it off. The lights stop flashing and the alarm falls silent. A moment later the entrance door’s lock disengages noisily. Barrymore turns back to Frankland.

“On your head be it, Doctor Frankland.” He turns to me, “Pleasure to meet you, Miss. Potter.” I nod my head in return. Laughing, Frankland looks at the approaching Lyons.

“I’ll show them out, Corporal.”

“Very well, sir.” Sherlock spins on his heel and walks towards the now open entrance door. I follow beside him, willingly. John and Frankland follow us. We go outside, John grimacing anxiously. Frankland trots after us.

“Thank you.” Sherlock said to Frankland.

“This is about Henry Knight, isn’t it?” we don’t answer him.

“I thought so. I knew he wanted help but I didn’t realize he was going to contact Sherlock Holmes!” Sherlock grimaces. “Oh, don’t worry. I know who you really are. I’m never off your website. Thought you’d be wearing the hat, though.”

“That wasn’t my hat.”

“I hardly recognize him without the hat!” he said to John and me. We both try unsuccessfully to bite back a smile.
“It wasn’t my hat.” Sherlock said tetchily, sounding the ‘t’s loudly. I hooked my arm through his and give it a loving squeeze. He sent me a quick smile.

“I love the blog too, Doctor Watson.” Frankland said to John.

“Oh, cheers!”

“The, er, the pink thing . . .”

“Mmm-hmm.”

“. . . and that one about the aluminum crutch!”

“Yes.” Sherlock stopped and turned back to Frankland, turning me around with him.

“You know Henry Knight?” he asked.

“Well, I knew his dad better. He had all sorts of mad theories about this place. Still, he was a good friend.” He looks back the way we came, before turning back to Sherlock. “Listen, I can’t really talk now.” He takes a card from his coat pocket and hands it over. “Here’s my, er, cell number. If I could help with Henry, give me a call.”

“I never did ask, Doctor Frankland. What exactly is it that you do here?” Sherlock asked.

“Oh, Mr. Holmes, I would love to tell you – but then, of course, I’d have to kill you!” Frankland laughed cheerfully. I gave him an odd look.

“That would be tremendously ambitious of you.” Sherlock said, straight faced. Frankland’s smile fades and he shrugs in embarrassment. “Tell me about Doctor Stapleton.”

“Never speak ill of a colleague.”

“Yet you’d speak well of one, which you’re clearly omitting to do.” I said.

“I do seem to be, don’t I?” he shrugs.

“I’ll be in touch.” Sherlock raised the card that Frankland just gave him.

“Anytime.” We walk away from him and head towards our Land Rover.

“So?” I asked. Sherlock looked towards me with a raised eyebrow.

“So?”

“What was all this about a rabbit?” he smiles briefly, he pulls his coat tighter around him, flipping the collar up just as we reach the car. I let out a soft giggle. John rolls his eyes and turns to him

“Oh, please, can we not do this, this time?” he asked.

“Do what?” Sherlock asked, confused.

“You being all mysterious with your cheekbones and turning your coat collar up so you look cool.” John said as he turns to go to the car door, Sherlock opens his mouth to speak but was apparently so disconcerted that for a moment he couldn’t find the words.

“. . . I don’t do that.” He looked towards me with his wounded puppy look. I place a soft kiss on
his lips and pulled away.

“Yeah you do.” I said and got into the car.

TPSH

Henry’s house Sherlock pov

I ring the doorbell to Henry’s house and he opens the door.

“Hi.”

“Hi.”

“Come in, come in.” wiping my feet on the doormat, I walk in and head down the hallway with Eiric. John follows more slowly, stopping to look into a large high-ceiling sitting room before following Henry again.

“This is, uh . . . are you, um . . .” he searches for the right word, “. . . rich?”

“Yeah.”

“Right.” Henry leads off again. I throw a dark look at John before following him. He took us into the kitchen and made us tea. I put two sugar lumps into my mug and stir them in, while Eiric put three. I was sitting on a stool at the central island with John and Eiric standing on either side of me. Henry was standing on the other side of the island gazing down at the work surface.

“It’s-it’s a couple of words. It’s what I keep seeing. “Liberty” . . .” John reached into his pocket for his notebook.

“Liberty and in. It’s just that.” Henry looked up to John. He picks up the bottle of milk that’s on the island. “Are you finished?”

“Mmm.” Henry turned around to put the milk up into the fridge. John looks at me. “Mean anything to you?”

“Liberty in death – isn’t that the expression. The only true freedom.” I said softly. John nods in agreement as Henry turns back around, sighing. I take a drink from my mug.

“What now, then?” Henry asked.

“Sherlock’s got a plan.” Eiric looked at me as she took a sip of her tea.

“Yes.” I agreed.

“Right.” Henry nodded.

“We take you back out onto the moor . . .” I trailed off.

“Okay . . .” he said nervously.

“. . . and see if anything attacks you.” I finished.

“What?!?” John exclaimed while Eiric merely tilted her head.

“That should bring things to a head.”
“At night? You want me to go out there at night?” Henry asked.

“Mmm.”

“That’s your plan?” John snorted in laughter. “Brilliant!”

“Got any better ideas?” Eiric asked him.

“That’s not a plan.” He replied to her.

“Listen, if there is a monster out there, John, there’s only one thing to do: find out where it lives.” I look round to Henry and smile widely at him before taking another drink from my mug. Henry doesn’t look encouraged by it. As night begin to fall, Henry led us across the rocks towards Dewer’s Hollow. All four of us have flashlights to light the uneven ground below our feet. By the time we reach the woods it’s almost fully dark and it becomes even darker as we head into the trees. Henry and I keep walking not realizing that we lost John and Eiric.

TPSH

John pov

I brought up the rear when I heard rustling to my right and turn around to look. I walk cautiously towards the sound I heard. I shine my torch into the bushes as an owl shrieks overhead, but I see nothing. Raising my head I see a light repeatedly winking on and off at the top of a hillside a fair distance away. I look around to alert my friends.

“Sher...” it’s only then that I realize that the three of them have disappeared out of sight. I shine my flashlight in the direction they went but there’s no sign of them. I look back to the light on the hillside, which is still intermittently flashing and get my notebook out of my pocket because I instantly recognized that the flashes are Morse code. I start to write down the letters while speaking them aloud. “U . . . M . . . Q . . . R . . . A.” the light stops flashing. I look down at my notebook. “U, M, Q, R, A.” I whisper. I try it as a word. “Umqra?” shaking my head, I look up to the hillside but no more light comes from it. Shutting the notebook, I head off in the direction of the other three. “Sherlock . . . Eiric . . .” I called, whispering.

TPSH

Eiric pov

I decide to explore a different part of the woods by myself. So I headed off to the left, leaving the boys to do whatever they were going to do. I walked down the path for a while, totally calm and at peace in the woods. I had no idea what the tourist and locals were saying about it being creepy but then again I’ve been in the Forbidden Forest so I guess I don’t count when it comes to these kind of things. I stated to cough really hard as the light fog became denser and heavier. Soon it became so dense I couldn’t see an inch in front of me, my chest was starting to burn from the continuing cough. I looked around trying to find a way out, when I heard a voice behind me. I spun around to look and saw nothing, I furrowed my brows.

“Sherlock?” I whispered hoarsely. Then there was another but it sounded familiar. I looked in the direction it came from, “John? Henry?” I called out. Soon two more called out, this time clear as day, right in front of me. I looked up and gasped. Standing in front of me was my parents, I could see their bones in some places from where their flesh rotted off. I backed up a couple of steps, my eyes wide in fear.

“This is your fault!” my father shouted at me.
“I should of never of protected you!” my mother screamed.

“I’m dead because of you.” I screamed lightly at the voice behind me. I turned to look and found Sirius in the same condition as my parents. I started to shake my head back and forth, shaking lightly. This couldn’t be happening, it was my worst nightmare coming true.

“I’ll never get to raise my son because of you!” I looked to my right to see Tonks and Remus.

“It’s all your fault we’re dead!” That came from little Collin Creevey. Soon everyone I knew who died in the war and beforehand started to appear. I screamed before falling to my knees, covering my ears with my hands to try and block out their yells, sneers, insults, and harsh words. Tears dripped down my face as I sobbed. I don’t know how long I stayed like that but it felt like hours before it all stopped. I looked up, dazed before wobbly standing up. There was snapping sound that came from my left, I looked over and what I saw scared the absolute hell out of me. Voldemort’s red eyes stared right at me, my breath stuttered then I turned and ran blindly in the fog. I could hear him following behind me, I looked back to see if I could see how close he was behind me which was the worst thing I could of done. My foot caught on something, making me trip. I tried to catch myself but I had to trip by a hill. I tumbled and rolled down the hill before hitting my head on something, I finally reached the end of the hill. I stared up at the tree tops as I laid on back, blackness clouding my vision but before it took me over; I thought I hear a dog howl from the top of the hill.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

I finally decide to break the silence that had fallen between me and Henry.

“Met a friends of yours.”

“What?” Henry asked, looking confused.

“Doctor Frankland.” I stated.

“Oh, right. Bob, yeah.”

“Seems pretty concerned about you.” I said, trying to get information from him.

“He’s a worrier, bless him. He’s been very kind to me since I came back.” He stated.

“He knew your father.”

“Yeah.”

“But he works at Baskerville. Didn’t your dad have a problem with that?” I asked.

“Well, mates are mates, aren’t they? I mean, look at you and John.”

“What about us?” I asked, confused.

“Well, I mean, he’s a pretty straightforward bloke, and you ...” he glanced back at me, then decides not to finish. “They agreed never to talk about work, Uncle Bob and my dad.” He stops and turns to his left. I stop and look at him, Henry nods in the direction he’s looking. “Dewer’s Hollow.” Henry said, unhappily. I turn and look at the steep drop in the land that leads down into a misty dark valley.
John pov

I was still following their trail.

“Sherlock . . . Eiric . . .” I whispered. As I progressed onward, I hear an eerie metallic thrumming sound. I stop and aim my flashlight in the direction of the sound, then go to move onward just as the thrum sounds again. The sounds continues to repeat, now interspersed with a short metallic ping. I walk slowly toward the sound, then quietly chuckles as I see a rusty metal container, possibly an oil drum, which was lying in the underground. Water was dripping from the tree above it and causing the thrums and pings as it strikes the drum. As I look at it and sigh with relief, something massive flashes past behind him twice. I spin and look but their already gone, but a couple of seconds later an anguished howl sounds in the distance. I turn and begin to hurry to find the others.

Eiric pov

I started to come around, I slowly sat up wincing in pain. I look around trying to get my baring’s, I let out a breath. I started to stand, grimacing at all of the pain I was in. I slowly started to climb the hill. Once I got up top, I froze as I heard a howl. I bolted down the path to leave the woods, hoping that the boys were already at the car.

Sherlock pov

I was heading down into the Hollow, being careful to keep my balance on the steep slippery ground. Henry follows me down more slowly. I reach the bottom and shine my torch around, finding giant paw prints all around the ground. A long anguished howl rings out. Still halfway down the slope, Henry pauses. I shine my torch up in the direction of the sound and my face begins to fill with horror at the sight that greets me. It growls savagely from the top of the Hollow. As the beam from my flashlight flails along the Hollow’s rim, the dog has already retreated. I recoil, my face confused and bewildered as I try to take in what I just saw. From his position some distance away, Henry hurries down to join me.

“Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God. Did you see it?” I lower my head, still unable to get my mind to accept the evidence of my eyes. I stare around, shake my head, then shove Henry out of my way and hurry back up the hillside. Henry follows me. Suddenly John appears as we made our way back.

“Did you hear that?” he asked referring to the howling. I storm straight past him, not even realizing that Eiric is nowhere in sight.

“We saw it. We saw it.” Henry repeated.

“No. I didn’t see anything.”

“What? What are you talking about?” Henry chased after me.

“I didn’t. See. Anything.” I hurried onward with Henry and John trailing along behind me. We were half way to the entrance of the woods when I was ran into hard. I fell to the ground with whatever that ran into me on top. I had my eyes closed in pain and let out a groan. I open my eyes...
only to connect with Eiric’s wide chartreuse green eyes that were filled with fear, panic and pain. The rims of her eyes were an angry red and she had drying tear tracks on her cheeks. “Eiric?” I whispered. She shot off me and stumbled backwards before falling to the ground again, a muffled pain filled shout leaving her lips.

“Eiric!” John shouted before rushing over to her, she flinched away when he reached out to her. He paused for a moment before checking her for injuries. “How did you even get these?” he asked her.

“I tripped down a hill.” We all stared at her with wide shock eyes. She looked away from us.

“Something was chasing me.” she whispered. Her voice was hoarse and almost nonexistent at this point. I stood up and walked over to her, bending down and placing one of her arms over my shoulder. I helped her stand up and slowly walked her to the car. I open the passenger door and helped her in. John and Henry got in to the back as I got into the driver seat. I started the car and drove back to Henry’s place, dropping John and Henry off there before going back to the Inn.

“I’m sorry.” I heard Eiric whisper. I looked at her from the corner of my eye.

“For what?” I asked.

“For running into you.” She whispered again. I pulled into a parking space and turned off the car. I looked over to her, looking her over as she stare blankly out the window.

“Why were you running in the first place?” she turned to me, her eyes still filled with fear and pain. She let out a wet laugh.

“I . . . I was . . .” she let out a choked sob. “Oh Merlin!” she covered her face with her hands. I froze in my spot as I watched her break down. Her shoulders were shaking violently and tears were pouring out of her hands.

“Eiric!” I wrapped my hands gently around her wrist and pulled them away from her face before cupping her face. “Eiric, what’s wrong?!”

“I was so scared, Sherlock!” she tried to calm down. “I-I heard a howl and . . . I never felt so frighten in my life . . . and it doesn’t fucking help with what happen before that!” I looked at her confused.

“What happen before that?” she just started to shake her head.

“Please, don’t make me tell, please. I just want to forget about it for now, Sherlock, please.” She pleaded to me. I frowned lightly before agreeing.

“Tell me tomorrow, Eiric.” She nodded her in agreement. She lightly pulled her face out of my hands and opened her door, exiting the car. I follow and walk around the car to her.

“I’m going to bed, send John when he gets back from Henry so he can patch me up.” She looked up at me, then placed a light kiss on my lips. “I love you.” I looked at her with a crooked smile.

“I Love you, too.” I placed a kiss on her forehead, “Night, Eiric.”

“Goodnight, Sherlock.” She walked off towards her room and I entered the bar.
Chapter 26

Henry’s house  John pov

Sometime later, Henry and I hurry indoors. Sherlock had taking Eiric back to the Inn that we’re staying at.

“Look, he must have seen it. I saw it – he must have. He must have. I can’t . . . Why? Why?” Henry stops in the doorway of the sitting room, turning back to me in anguish. “Why would he say that? It-it-it-it it was there. It was.” Taking off my gloves, I usher him across to the sofa.

“Henry, Henry, I need you to sit down, try and relax, please.” He sits on the sofa.

“I’m okay, I’m okay.”

“Listen, I’m gonna give you something to help you sleep, all right?” I look around the room and see a bottle of water on a bureau nearby. As I go over to get it, Henry unwraps his scarf from his neck, smiling.

“This is good news, John. It’s-it’s-it’s good. I’m not crazy. There is a hound, there . . . there is. And Sherlock – he saw it too. No matter what he said, he saw it. Maybe even Miss. Potter too.”

TPSH

Inn  Sherlock pov

I was sitting in an armchair by a roaring open fire, my face is still full of shock and disbelief. Unaware of my distress, other patrons sit at tables nearby having their evening meal. John comes in and sits down in the armchair on the other side of the fire.

“Well, he is in a pretty bad way. He’s manic, totally convinced there’s some mutant super-dog roaming the moors.” With my hands in the prayer position in front of my mouth, I glance nervously at John for a moment, then continue to gaze in the direction of the fire, lost in thought. “And there isn’t though, is there? ‘Cause if people knew how to make a mutant super-dog, we’d know.” I clasp my fingers together, closing my eyes and breathing heavily trying to fend off a panic attack. “They’d be for sale. I mean, that’s how it works.” John remembers something and reaches into his pocket. “Er, listen: er, on the moor I saw someone signaling. Er, Morse – I guess it’s Morse.” I blink rapidly and repeatedly. John looks down at his notes. “Doesn’t seem to make much sense.” I pull in a shape breath through my nose and then blow the breath out again through my mouth. “Er, U, M, Q, R, A. Does that mean . . . anything . . .” John finally realize how distressed I’m looking and pauses for a moment, then obviously decides that he can’t be right. He puts his notebook away again and sits back in his chair.

“So, okay, what have we got? We know there’s footprints, ‘cause Henry found them; so did the tour guide bloke. We all heard something.” I blow out another shaky breath. John looks across to me and frowns momentarily. “Maybe we should just look for whoever’s got a big dog.”

“Henry’s right.” I mumbled.

“What?”

“I saw it too.” My voice was shaking.
“What?” John asked, shocked.

“I saw it too, John.”

“Just . . . just a minute.” John sits forward, “You saw what?” I finally meet John’s gaze but my face is twisted with self-loathing as I force myself to admit the truth.

“A hound, out in the Hollow.” I talk through gritted teeth. “A gigantic hound.” John almost laughs as I look away, trying unsuccessfully to blink back tears. John sits back in his chair again, not quite able to cope with this strange reaction from me.

“Um, look, Sherlock, we have to be rational about this, okay? Now you, of all people, can’t just . . .” I blow out another breath. “Let’s just stick to what we know, yes? Stick to the facts.” I look round to him.

“Once you’ve ruled out the impossible, whatever remains – however improbable – must be true.” I said softly.

“What does that even mean?” looking away again, I reach down and pick up a drink from a nearby table. Looking down at my trembling hand, I snigger.

“Look at me. I’m afraid, John. Afraid.” I take a drink and hold the glass up again, my hand still shaking.

“Sherlock?”

“Always been able to keep myself distant . . .” I take another drink from the glass, ‘That is, till Eiric came along.’ “. . . divorce myself from . . . feelings. But look, you see . . .” I hold up the glass and glare at my shaking hand. “. . . body’s betraying me. Interesting, yes? Emotions.” I slam the glass down onto the table. “The grit on the lens, the fly in the ointment.”

“Yeah, all right, Spock, just . . .” realizing that he was starting to raise his voice, he looks around at the other people in the restaurant behind him and then looks back at me. “. . . take it easy.” John said more softly. I was blowing out a few more breaths and was still failing to bring myself under control. I glanced panic-stricken at John. “You’ve been pretty wired lately, you know you have. I think you’ve just gone out there and got yourself a bit worked up.”

“Worked . . . up?”

“It was dark and scary . . .” I start to laugh sarcastically.

“Me?! There’s nothing wrong with me.” I look away, almost beginning to hyperventilate, then put my fingertips to my temple, groaning in anguish. John looks at me in concern.

“Sherlock . . .” I begin to blow out breaths again, my fingers trembling against my skin. “Sher . . .”

“THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH ME!” I yelled loudly and furiously. I glare round at John. “DO YOU UNDERSTAND?” I look round at the other patron, all of whom are now staring at me. I look away again, then look at John. “You want me to prove it, yes?” I pull in a deep breath, trying to get myself under control. “We’re looking for a dog, yes, a great big dog, that’s your brilliant theory. Cherchez le chien. Good, excellent, yes, where shall we start?” I look over my shoulder and point at a man and woman sitting opposite each at a table in the corner of the restaurant. My voice becomes relentless as I go into deduction mode. “How about them? The sentimental widow and her son, the unemployed fisherman. The answer’s yes.”
“Yes?” John asked.

“She’s got a West Highland terrier called Whisky. Not exactly what we’re looking for.”

“Oh, Sherlock, for God’s sake.” John said quietly. I look briefly across at the man and his knitted jumper with reindeer and holly leaves on it before turning away again.

“Look at the jumper he’s wearing. Hardly worn. Clearly he’s uncomfortable in it. Maybe it’s because of the material; more likely the hideous pattern, suggesting it’s a present, probably Christmas. So he wants into his mother’s good books. Why? Almost certainly money.” I quick fired. I take another quick glance at the man. “He’s treating her to a meal but his own portion is small. That means he wants to impress her, but he’s trying to economize on his own food.”

“Well, maybe he’s just not hungry.”

“No, small plate. Starter. He’s practically licked it clean. She’s nearly finished her pavlova. If she’d treated him, he’d have had as much as he wanted. He’s hungry all right, and not well off – you can tell that by the state of his cuffs and shoes.” My words almost becoming frenetic. I ask the question I’m expecting to come from John at any moment. “How d’you know she’s his mother?”

John, who until now has been looking at me with concern as my voice, while lower, has become increasingly intense, smiles briefly.

“Who else would give him a Christmas present like that? Well, it could be an aunt or an elder sister, but mother’s more likely. Now, he was a fisherman. Scarring pattern on his hands, very distinctive – fish hooks. They’re all quite old now, which suggests he’s been unemployed for some time. Not much industry in this part of the world, so he’s turned to his widowed mother for help. ‘Widowed?’ Yes, obviously. She’s got a man’s wedding ring on a chain round her neck – clearly her late husband’s and too big for her finger. She’s well-dressed but her jewelry’s cheap. She could afford better but she’s kept it – it’s sentimental. Now, the dog . . .” I look at the thick wiry hairs on the lower part of the woman’s black trousers.

“. . . tiny little hairs all over the leg from where it gets a little bit too friendly, but no hairs above the knees, suggesting it’s a small dog, probably a terrier. In fact it is – a West Highland terrier called Whisky. ‘How the hell do you know that, Sherlock?’ ‘Cause she was on the same train as us and I heard her calling its name and that’s not cheating, that’s listening, I use my senses, John, unlike some people, so you see, I am fine, in fact I’ve never been better, so just Leave. Me. Alone.” I glare at John, who stares back at me in shock.

“Yeah.” John clears his throat. “Okay. Okay.” Distressed by my venom, John tries to settle back in his chair as I stare towards the fire, breathing heavily. “And why would you listen to me? I’m just your friend.”

“I don’t have friends.” I said savagely.

“Naah. Wonder why?” He said softly. John gets up and walks away.

TPSH

Inn room Eiric pov

Once I reached my room, I quickly ran to my bathroom and vomited in the toilet. I gasped for breath after every heave. Tears were running down my cheeks in fast rivers, a sob would get lose every once in a while. After a while I start to dry heave, there was a knock on my door. I sucked in some deep breaths to calm down.
“It’s open!” I yelled, my voice hoarse from retching. The door opens and then shuts.

“Eiric?” I heard John call out. I flush the toilet and move to the sink. I looked into the mirror and paused. The person staring back at me had sickly pale, sweating skin, bags under her dull green eyes, and her hair was limp, greasy looking and a dull copper colour. Looking like I did when I was an addict and an alcoholic all those years ago. “Eiric?” I jolted at the sudden knock on the bathroom door.

“I’ll be out in a minute, John.” I called to him. I splash some water onto my face then pat it dry with a towel, looking in the mirror again I still looked sickly. I put the towel down and left the bathroom. Walking into the bedroom, I found John sitting on the bed with his face in his hands.

“John? Are you alright?” I placed a gentle hand on his shoulder. He looked up at me.

“I’m fine, Eiric.” He said tightly as he patted my hand. “It’s you that we need to worry about. Now take a seat and I’ll take a look at you.” He moved off the bed and I sat in his spot. I silently watched him as he checked over my cuts and bruises. He seem tense and frustrated, like he would get sometimes after getting into an argument with Sherlock.

“What did he do now?” I asked quietly. John paused for a second before finishing wrapping my ankle up. He just carried on patching me up in silence. “John.” I stopped him this time and looked him straight in the eyes. He sighed, dropping his head a bit.

“Sherlock thinks he saw a ‘gigantic hound’ out in the moors with Henry. He basically had a panic attack then verbally attack me when I told him that he was just worked up.” John vented. I narrowed my eyes as he went on, telling me detail to detail of the lashing Sherlock gave him. What really got me was the last sentence that Sherlock had told John.

“Wait, he told you he didn’t have ‘friends’?” I asked him. John just nodded as he cooled down. I bit my bottom lip. “John, he was telling you the truth.” He snapped his head towards me.

“What the hell are you talking about?!” he stood up and started to pace.

“John, he doesn’t have friends; he has you.” I stood up from my spot a bit wobbly. John stop pacing and stared at me in shock, his mouth dropping and closing a few times. “To Sherlock, John, you will always be his only and first true friend.” I gave him a small smile which he return.

“I’m gonna get going, I may of found a lead so I’m gonna go check it out.” As he walked to the door and placed his hand on the door handled, I finally decided to talk about my freak out in the woods.

“John?” he looked over his shoulder towards me.

“Yeah, Eiric?” I bit my lip again and fist my hands.

“Sherlock wasn’t the only one to see something in the woods.” I looked away from him. John frowned and left the door.

“What do you mean?” I sat back down on the bed and place my head in my hands.

“Maybe I’m just being stupid, it may have been nothing.” I muttered. I felt John sit down beside me.

“Eiric, you could never be stupid and it most certainly was not nothing. I saw your reaction when you ran over Sherlock, Eiric, you were terrified.” I let out weak chuckle.
“I . . . Merlin, John, I feel like I’m seventeen again and the war just finished. That first night after the war I was plagued with nightmares of all the people I knew that died before and after the war. They yelled, screamed, and threw threats at me.” I look to John. “That’s the true reason why I turn to drugs and alcohol, I could drink till I fell into a drunken sleep or get as high as a kite that I’d have hallucinogens that were so crazy that’d I forget why I need the hit so badly in the first place.” A tear fell from my eye. “My life after the war was awful, John, I barely slept or ate right. I just fed my body drugs and alcohol.” I whispered to him.

“What happen in the moors, Eiric.” He asked concern.

“My worst and darkest nightmare, they all suddenly showed up; all around me. I could see their bones in some places where the flesh had rotted away, maybe an organ or two here and there. They blamed me, for their death and they screamed and screamed. I just fell to the ground, crying like a scared little kid but I guess I was at that moment.” I looked back towards him, “I was frighten, John. In that moment I thought that they were really there and that scared me to death.”

“Its survivor guilt, a lot of soldiers get it when they lose comrades.” John whispered, “What day was the war?”

“May 2 of 2009.” John’s eyes widen in shock.

“Eiric, that was a few days ago.” I simply bit my lip and nodded. “Eiric, you have to grieve for this, don’t hold it all in like Sherlock does. One day it’ll just explode, like it did tonight and everything will come out into the open.” Tears slowly started to fall, “All heroes need to cry for their losses, every once in a while.” The dam broke at that, I burst out sobbing. John pulls my head to his shoulder and lets me cry all over his jumper. He rocks me slightly and whispers in my ear that everything will be okay. Tonight John was my rock while everything around me fell apart and now I know that I can count on him to be the shoulder I need to cry on when Sherlock’s not around. Soon John leaves to go investigate his theory, I laid on my bed facing the wall; silently crying now. After this trip is over I was so taking Teddy and myself on a family vacation.

TPSH

Moors John pov

Using my torch to illuminate the way, I was walking towards the flashing light on the hillside. As I reached the top of the hill I can hear a rhythmic squeaking noise, and then as I shine my light around I realize that there are several cars parked up there. The drivers sitting in each car flinch and hold their hands up to shield their faces from the beam from my torch, but they were also trying to avoid being identified and now I realize why as I turn my beam onto a car which has slightly steamed-up windows and was rocking from side to side. Its headlights were intermittently flashing on and off. A woman’s voice comes from inside the car.

“Oh! Mr. Selden! You've done it again!”

“Oh, I keep catching it with my belt.” As the inhabitants of the car groan and continue about their . . . business, I lower my torch.

“Oh, God.” I hesitate and squint at the car, almost tempted to take another look and half-raised my torch again, but then it fully hits me that the Morse message I wrote down tonight were nothing more than the random flashings of a car’s headlights during the sexual goings-on of a dogging site. I turn and head back towards the pub. “Sh . . .” as I walk away from the hillside my phone trills a text alert. I get the phone out and look at the message.
I write a brief reply, speaking it aloud as I type.

[So?] The reply comes almost instantly.

[Interview her?]

[Why should I?] I answer. After a moment I get another alert.

[Downloading image.] Shortly afterwards the image arrives and I open it. It’s a covertly-taken photograph of Louise Mortimer standing at the bar. She’s pretty and around my age. I look at the photo for a moment and then walk on.

“Ooh, you’re a bad man.”

Inn room Eiric pov

I was still laying on my side facing the wall that was away from the door, my shoulders heaving with breath, tears silently running down the bridge of my nose and cheekbone. There was a knock on my door and knowing who it was, I magicked it open not feeling like talking. The person stepped in and shut the door behind them.

“What if it wasn’t me who was at the door, Eiric?” Sherlock baritone voice sounded louder in the quiet room.

“I would have sensed it, Sherlock.” I muttered to him, my voice sounding nasally. I could hear him take his shoes and jacket off before he climbed onto the bed behind me. He pulled me back towards him until his chest was touching my back. He wrapped a hand around my stomach but I took it with my left hand and moved his hand up to my heart, holding it there. Sherlock pressed his face into my hair, I could hear him sniff it every once in a while making smile slightly.

“You’ve been crying.” he mumbled. I let out a shaky breath.

“Yes.”

“Why?” I shut my eyes tightly.

“The memorial day of the war was a few days ago, May 2.” Was my answer.

“And your crying for that now?” he sounded confused.

“No.”

“Then I don’t understand.” I let out a wet giggle.

“The great Sherlock Holmes is admitting that he doesn’t understand something? I am shock, truly am.” He let out a chuckle.

“Tonight, there’s a lot of things I don’t understand but right now those don’t matter, what does is why my fiancée is crying alone in her room.” That made me pause in actual shock. I turned around in his arms so that we were face to face. I looked him straight in the eyes.

“I’m more important than the case, right now?” I whispered. His sharp and ice like eyes soften to a
beautiful cloud blue with a little ring of yellow ochre around the pupil.

“Always.” A few tears escaped from my eyes.

“Who are you and what have you done with my Sherlock.” He gave a small smile and wiped my tears away with his thumbs.

“I’m still the same person.” I tucked my head under his chin. He lightly petted my hair, “Now what’s wrong?”

“I saw the people I cared about who died before and after the war in the Moors. I . . . I thought for a moment that they were actually there, that they were real and it scared me to death, Sherlock.” I lightly sob into his chest. He tighten his grip around me. “I’ve never felt so frighten in my life until tonight, Sherlock, never.”

“They weren’t real, Eiric. That will never happen, I won’t ever let it happen to you. As long as I’m here, nothing will ever hurt you.” I moved back to look at him.

“You swear?” I whispered. He took my chin between his fore finger and thumb, tilting my head back.

“I swear.” He whispered back and then lightly kissed my lips, before pressing our foreheads together.

“We are so going on a vacation after this case is over.” I muttered to him, he burst out laughing and I joined him a second later.
Chapter 27

Cross Keys Inn John pov

I was sitting with Louise Mortimer in the pub. We were chatting and laughing.

“That’s so mean!” she giggled. I pick up the half-empty wine bottle from the table.

“Um, more wine, Doctor?” I asked.

“Are you trying to get me drunk, Doctor?”

“The thought never occurred!” I refill her glass.

“Because a while ago I thought you were chatting me up.” I refilled my own glass.

“Ooh! Where did I go wrong?”

“When you started asking me about my patients.” She said.

“Well, you see, I am one of Henry’s old friends.” I told her.

“Yeah, and he’s one of my patients, so I can’t talk about him.”

“Mmm.”

“Although he has told me about all his oldest friends.” She looks at me thoughtfully. “Which one are you?”

“A new one?” I said hopefully. She scoffs. “Okay, what about his father? He wasn’t one of your patients. Wasn’t he some of conspiracy nutter . . .” I quickly correct myself, “. . . theorist?”

“You’re only a nutter if you’re wrong.” She said.

“Mmm. And was he wrong?” I asked.

“I should think so!” she exclaimed.

“But he got fixated on Baskerville, didn’t he? With what they were doing in there . . . Couldn’t Henry have gone the same way, started imagining a hound?” Louise looked at me pointedly.

“Why d’you think I’m going to talk about this?!” I laugh in acknowledgement of her seeing through me.

“Because I think you’re worried about him, and because I’m a doctor too . . .” I become more serious, “and because I have two other friends who might be having the same problem.” We lock eyes for a long moment and finally she sighs. She’s apparently decided to tell me more than she really ought to, but before she can even begin a hand claps down onto my shoulder. I look round and see Frankland grinning at me.

“Doctor Watson!”

“Hi.” I said unhappily.

“Hello.” He said to Louise, “How’s the investigation going?” he asked me.
“Hello.” I did everything but roll my eyes in dismay.


“Didn’t you know? Don’t you read the blog? Sherlock Holmes!” Frankland ranted.

“It’s . . .” I began.

“Sherlock who?”

“No, it’s . . .”

“Private detective!” Frankland claps me on the shoulder again. “This is his P.A!”

“P.A?” I asked.

“Well, live-in P.A” I glared at him.

“Perfect!”


“This is Doctor Mortimer, Henry’s therapist.” I gestured to her.

“Oh, hello.” He shakes hands with her, “Bob Frankland.” He turns back to me. As he speaks, Louise is already twisting on her chair to take her coat off the back. “Listen, tell Sherlock I’ve been keeping an eye on Stapleton. Any time he wants a little chat . . . right?”

“Mmm.” Frankland laughs heartily, claps me on the shoulder yet again and then walks away. I look at Louise and realize that she has her coat in her hands. “Oh.”

“Why don’t you buy him a drink? I think he likes you.” She stands up and leaves. I sigh.

TPSH

Inn/Moors Sherlock pov

I had woken up to the sunlight shining on my face from Eiric’s room window. I looked down at the sleeping red head. She had cried herself to sleep leaving her eyes slightly red and a small frown on her lips. I brush back her bangs, getting a glimpse of the lighten bolt scar on her forehead. I placed a kiss to her forehead before getting out of bed and going to John’s and mine room to change. After changing into fresh clothes I went back to the moors. I was back on the stony outcrop again, staring towards Baskerville. My eyes flick between the complex and Dewer’s Hollow as I try to make sense of what happened the previous night, then I turn and look back towards Grimpen Village.

TPSH

Henry’s house

As soon as Henry opens the door, I surge though, being loudly cheerful.

“Morning!” I’m about to head straight for the kitchen but suddenly turn around and clasp Henry by shoulders. “Oh, how are you feeling?” Henry looked terrible. I duck my head down to get a better look into his face.
“I’m . . . I didn’t sleep very well.” He said exhaustedly.

“That’s a shame. Shall I make you some coffee?” I look up at the ceiling above the door and point. “Oh look, you’ve got damp!” I grin falsely at him, which Eiric hated when I do that, until Henry turns his head to look, then drop the smile and turn and walk away towards the kitchen. Hurrying over to the cupboards, I start opening and closing each one rapidly. Finally I find the metal jar that I’m looking for and take it out, rummaging inside it as I elbow the cupboard door closed. I tuck a packet of sugar into my coat, I go over to the sink and pick up a couple of mugs, taking them over to the central island just as Henry tiredly wanders in.

“Listen . . . last night.” I give him that horrifying attempt at a friendly smile as I take the top off the coffee tin. “Why did you say you hadn’t see anything? I mean, I only saw the hound for a minute, but . . .” I had been dumping spoonful’s of coffee into the mugs without even looking, my eyes locked on Henry’s, and now I slam the coffee tin down onto the surface and step closer to him, my eyes back to their normal intensity.

“Hound.”

“What?” he asked, confused.

“Why do you call it a hound? Why a hound?” I asked.

“Why – what do you mean?”

“It’s odd, isn’t it? Strange choice of words – archaic. It’s why I took the case. “Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound.” Why say “hound”?”

“I don’t know! I . . .” he stuttered.

“Actually, I’d better skip the coffee.” I flare out of the kitchen. Later, I was walking back through the village but stop as I see John in the church graveyard, sitting on the steps of a war memorial and looking through the notes in his notebook. I go through the gate and walk along the path towards John, who looks up as he hears me approach. His expression becomes uncomfortable as he tucks his notebook into his pocket. I stop in front of him, also looking awkward.

“Did you, er, get anywhere with that Morse code?” I asked, as he stepped down.

“No.” he starts to walk away.

“U, M, Q, R, A, wasn’t it?” John keeps walking and I follow along behind him. I voice the initials as a word. “UMQRA.”

“Nothing.” In my mind, I put full stops in between the letters but still voice it as a word.

“U.M.Q . . .”

“Look, forget it. It’s . . . I thought I was on to something. I wasn’t.” John said.

“Sure?” I asked.

“Yeah.” He nods.

“How about Louise Mortimer? Did you get anywhere with her?”

“No.”
“Too bad. Did you get any information?” John smiles briefly and glances over his shoulder but still keeps walking.

“You being funny now?”

“Thought it might break the ice a bit.” I shrugged.

“Funny doesn’t suit you. I’d stick to ice.” I look at John’s retreating back, my face full of pain.

“John . . .”

“It’s fine.”

“No, wait. What happened last night . . . Something happened to me; something I’ve not really experienced before . . .”

“Yes, you said: fear. Sherlock Holmes got scared. You said.” I catch up to him, taking a hold of his arm and pull him round to face me.

“No-no-no, it was more than that, John. It was doubt. I felt doubt. I’ve always been able to trust my senses, the evidence of my own eyes, until last night.”

“You can’t actually believe that you saw some kind of monster.”

“No, I can’t believe that.” I grin bitterly for moment. “But I did see it, so the question is how? How?”

“Yes. Yeah, right, good. So you’ve got something to go on, then? Good luck with that.” He turns and starts to walk away again. I turn and call after him.

“Listen, what I said before, John. I meant it.” John stops and turns back to face me. “I don’t have friends.” I bit my lip briefly. “I’ve just got one.” John looks away as he takes that statement in for a moment, then he nods briefly and glances back at me.

“Right.” He turns and walks away again. I look down, then instantly raise my head again as my eyes begin to flicker in realization of something.

“John! John!” I start to chase after him. “You are amazing! You are fantastic!” John doesn’t stop.

“Yes, all right! You don’t have to overdo it.” Catching up and overtaking him, then walking backwards in front of him.

“You’ve never been the most luminous of people, but as a conductor of light you are unbeatable.”

“Cheers . . . what?” I turn around and walk beside him, taking out my own notebook and starting to write in it.

“Some people who aren’t geniuses have an amazing ability to stimulate it in others.” I said.

“Hang on – you were saying “Sorry” a minute ago. Don’t spoil it. Go on: what have I done that’s so bloody stimulating?” I stop just outside the pub door and turn back to John, showing what I had just written in my notebook: HOUND. “Yeah?” I pull the notebook back and write in it again.

“But what if it’s not a word? What if it is individual letters?” I show him the page of the notebook again, which now reads: H.O.U.N.D.
“You think it’s an acronym?” he asked. I put my notebook away.

“Absolutely no idea but . . .” I turn towards the pub door and trail off as I see Eiric leaning on the bar counter talking and laughing with a familiar figure. Wearing grey trousers and a grey shirt with a light jacket over the top, heavily suntanned and with sunglasses on, Detective Inspector Lestrade had his hand in his pockets, smiling and laughing at whatever Eiric had said. I storm into the pub, straight over to Eiric, wrapping an arm around her waist and pulling her tightly against me. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“Well, nice to see you too! I’m on holiday, would you believe?” he said sarcastically.

“No, I wouldn’t.” I grounded out. He takes his sunglasses off as John walks over to the bar.

“Hullo, John.”

“Greg!”

“I heard you were in the area. What are you up to? You after this Hound of Hell like on the telly?” he asked.

“I’m waiting for an explanation, Inspector. Why are you here?” I asked again.

“I’ve told you: I’m on holiday.”

“You’re brown as a nut. You’re clearly back from your ‘holidays’.” He tried to look nonchalant.

“Yeah, well I fancied another one.”

“Oh, this is Mycroft, isn’t it?” I asked.

“No, look . . .”

“Of course it is! One mention of Baskerville and he sends down my handler to . . . to spy on me incognito. Is that why you’re calling yourself Greg?” I said to him. Eiric groan and pushed away from me, standing in front of Lestrade.

“That’s his name, Sherlock and I called him down here.” I frown at her.

“That’s?” I asked.

“Yes – if you’d ever bothered to find out. Look, I’m not your handler . . .” he turns away to pick up his pint from the bar,

“. . . and Eiric called me down to ask for three months of vacation time for you three, is all.” I look at Eiric at that, she looked away.

“Actually, you could be just the man we want.” John said suddenly.

“It is?” I asked.

“Yes – if you’d ever bothered to find out. Look, I’m not your handler . . .” he turns away to pick up his pint from the bar,

“. . . and Eiric called me down to ask for three months of vacation time for you three, is all.” I look at Eiric at that, she looked away.

“Actually, you could be just the man we want.” John said suddenly.

“Why?” I asked.

“Well, Eiric and I haven’t been idle, Sherlock.” He rummages in his trouser pocket. “I think we might have found something.”

“The invoice.” Eiric said with a grin. John nods as he shows me the sale invoice from Undershaw Meat Supplies which he stole off the bar.
“Here. Didn’t know if it was relevant; starting to look like it might be. That is an awful lot of meat for a vegetarian restaurant.” He said.

“Excellent.” John looked at Lestrade and Eiric.

“Nice scary inspector and detective from Scotland Yard who can put in a few calls might come in very handy.” We shared a look as John slaps his hand down on the bell on top of the bar. “Shop!” later, in the small Snug next to the bar, Lestrade and Eiric are sitting at a table looking through paperwork of previous invoices from Undershaw, while Gary the manger and Billy the chef sit at the other side of the table looking at them anxiously. Nearby, I had pour a cup of coffee from a filter machine and was stirring it. I ostentatiously tap the drips off the spoon into the cup and then pick it up and carry it over to John, offering it to him.

“What’s this?” he asked me.

“Coffee. I made coffee.” Eiric shot a raise eyebrow at me.

“You never make coffee.” John stated.

“I just did. Don’t you want it?” I asked.

“You don’t have to keep apologizing.” He said.

“So, I was right, John?” we turn are heads to Eiric, who had a soft smile gracing her lips. John nodded. Her smile brighten and went back to her work. I look away with a hurt expression on my face. John relents and takes the cup and saucer.

“Thanks.” I smile happily. John takes a mouthful and grimaces. “Mm. I don’t take sugar . . .” the hurt expression comes back onto my face as I look away again. I’m like a puppy whose owner had just told me off for chewing on his slippers. John looks at my face and takes another drink.

“These records go back nearly two months.” Lestrade said. Grimacing at the taste, John puts the cup back onto the saucer and looks at me.

“That’s nice. That’s good.” He turns away to put the drink down as Lestrade and Eiric continue interrogating Gary and Billy.

“Is that when you had the idea, after the TV show went out?” Eiric asked them.

“It’s me. It was me.” Billy turns to his partner. “I’m sorry, Gary – I couldn’t help it. I had a bacon sandwich at Cal’s wedding and one thing just led to another.” I grin behind him. Eiric and Lestrade are equally disbelieving.

“Nice try.” Lestrade told them.

“Look, we were just trying to give things a bit of a boost, you know? A great big dog run wild up on the moor – it was heaven-sent. It was like us having our own Loch Ness Monster.” Gary told us.

“Where do you keep it?” Eiric asked in a serious tone.

“There’s an old mineshaft. It’s not too far. It was all right there.”

“Was?” I asked. Gary sighed.

“We couldn’t control the bloody thing. It was vicious.” He sighs again. “And then, a month ago,
Billy took him to the vet and, er . . . you know.”

“It’s dead?” John asked.

“Put down.” Gary corrected.

“Yeah. No choice. So it’s over.” Billy shrugged.

“It was just a joke, you know?”

“Yes, hilarious!” Eiric stands up and looks down at them angrily. “You’ve nearly driven a man out of his mind.” She walks out of the room. John and Lestrade following her. I watch them go, then peer into John’s coffee cup before following. John and Lestrade follow Eiric across the bar and out of the pub.

“You know he’s actually pleased you’re here?” Lestrade throws John a disbelieving look, “Secretly pleased. Eiric too.” Lestrade nods at that looking at the young angry red head back.

“Is he? That’s nice! I suppose he likes having all the same faces back together. Appeals to his . . . his . . .” he stops and searches for the right word. John and Eiric provides an appropriate suggestion.

“Asperger’s?” they said in unison. I come out of the pub and glower at them, having heard the last word.

“So, you believe him about having the dog destroyed?” Lestrade asked.

“No reason not to.” I said.

“Well, hopefully there’s no harm done. Not quite sure what we’d charge him with anyway. I’ll have a word with the local Force.” He nods to us before gesturing to Eiric to follow him. “Right, that’s that, then. Catch you later.” He smiles. “I’m enjoying this! It’s nice to get London out of your lungs!” we watch them walk away, then John turns to me.

“So that was their dog that people saw out on the moor?” he asked.

“Looks like it.”

“But that wasn’t what you saw. That wasn’t just an ordinary dog.”

“No.” my gaze becomes distant. “It was immense, had burning red eyes and it was glowing, John. Its whole body was glowing.” I shudder, shaking off the memory, then turn and walk towards the car park. “I’ve got a theory but I need to get back into Baskerville to test it.”

“How? Can’t pull of the ID trick again.” he said.

“Might not have to.” I had just got my phone out and hit a speed dial and now lift the phone to my ear.

[Hello, brother dear. How are you?] I said insincerely into the phone.

TPSH

BASKERVILLE

At the entrance gates, the Land Rover approaches and stops. A security man goes over to my side
as the dog handler and sniffer dog also approach.

“Afternoon, sir. If you could turn the engine off.” I hand over my ID pass and switches the car off. “Thank you.” As he goes over the gate room to swipe the card and other soldiers check the vehicle over from the outside, I speak quietly to John.

“I need to see Major Barrymore as soon as we get inside.”

“Right.”

“Which means you’ll have to start the search for the hound.” I told him

“Okay.” He nods.

“In the labs; Stapleton’s first.” The guard brings the ID card back and hands it over. I spoke quietly to John, “Could be dangerous.” John smiles momentarily. The gate slides open and I start the car and drives onto the base. The major was talking snarkily to me.

“Oh, you know I’d love to. I’d love to give you unlimited access to this place. Why not?!?”

“It’s a simple enough request, Major.” I said.

“I’ve never heard of anything so bizarre.” He gave me a weird look.

“You’re to give me twenty-four hours. It’s what I’ve . . .” I pauses momentarily “. . . negotiated.”

“Not a second more. I may have to comply with this order but I don’t have to like it.” He said sternly. He swings around to his computer on the desk behind him as I start to leave the office. “I don’t know what you expect to find here anyway.” turning back.

“Perhaps the truth.” Barrymore looks round again.

“About what? Oh, I see. The big coat should have told me.” I frown. “You’re one of the conspiracy lot, aren’t you?” He grins as I roll my eyes. “Well, then, go ahead, seek them out: the monsters, the death rays, the aliens.”

“Have you got any of those?” I asked nonchalantly. Now it’s Barrymore’s turn to roll his eyes. “Oh, just wondering.” Barrymore leans forward secretively.

“A couple. Crash landed here in the sixties. We call them Abbott and Costello.” He straightens up and turns back to his computer. “Good luck, Mr. Holmes.”

TPSH

Baskerville John pov

The lift doors open into the first lab that we visited but this time only I come out of the elevator. As I walk forward I see that there are only two scientists in the room and even they are leaving through a side door. The second one turns off the main overhead lights as he goes, which leaves the room lit far more dimly by a few arc lights on stands which are dotted around and the screens of some computers. I looks around a little anxiously as I realize how spooky and quiet it is, then walks towards doors at the far end of the lab, the doors which Doctor Frankland came out of on the first occasion that we met him. I have a security pass in my pocket and I take it out and swipes it through the reader. This must be an even more powerful card than the one which Sherlock used last time because it doesn’t require a second card to unlock the doors. I pull the door open and go
inside, and ignored the handwritten notice on the outside which reads: KEEP OUT UNLESS YOU WANT A COLD!

I walk through the decontamination zone to the door at the far end and tap a finger on the glass window in the door. When nobody replies I push the door open and go into a room which has a glass-walled section on the left hand side. There’s a glass cage inside the sealed section but there doesn’t appear to be anything inside. In front of me is a desk with equipment, folders, a phone and various other things on it, and above the desk are small plastic tubes coming out of the wall and dials that indicate that these tubes dispense various gases. I open the door of a small cupboard set into the desk but finds nothing of interest and so I continue looking around. On the right hand side of the room are large metal pipes which presumably also carry gases. One of them is leaking slightly. I peer around a little longer and then comes out of the room and goes back through the decontamination zone and into the lab. Just to my right is a large arc light on a stand. As I turn to my right to close the door behind me, the thing lights up and nine bright bulbs shine straight into my eyes. I squinted my eyes shut and turn my head away, grimacing at the pain.

“Oh, no! Jesus! Ow!”

Opening my eyes a little, I squint and try to see into the room. All the other lights in the room appear to have come on as well and with my own vision blanked out by the arc lights, there’s a wall of whiteness all around me. Just then a loud insistent alarm begins to blare into the room. I groan and cover my ears, completely overwhelmed by the bright light, lack of vision and the noise. Grimacing, I try to make my way across the lab to the lift, holding my hand up in front of my eyes as the after-image of the arc lights keeps blanking out my vision. Finally reaching the other end of the lab, I pull out the ID card and swipes it through the reader. It whines and tells me “ACCESS DENIED”. I stare in disbelief and swipes the card again but it whines and gives me the same message. Holding one hand to an ear as the alarm continues to blare, I try once more.

“Come on.” The same whine and message is repeated. I glare at it in exasperation and at that moment all the lights go out and the alarm drones into silence. The room is now under emergency lighting only, which is dark red and barely illuminates the area.

“What the f. . .?” I said under my breath. I scrabble in my pocket for my flashlight and switch it on, although its beam isn’t very helpful against the continued after-image of the arc lights which is still affecting my retinas. I calls out. “Hello?”

I screw my eyes shut for a moment in a failed attempt to clear the after-images. As I open my eyes again and peers through the bright dots, a shadow seems to flicker across the room some distance away. I blink and look around the room, the after-images still frustrating my ability to see anything clearly. I lower my head into my hand and rub my eyes for a few seconds, then raise my head again, realizing how ominously quiet it now is in the lab. But that doesn’t last long as something rattles to my right. I walk forward cautiously, looking a little anxiously at the row of large cages which I now realize are all covered with sheeting that obscures their contents. The rattle sounds again. I walk slowly to the first of the cages, turning once to check behind me, then grabs hold of the sheeting and pulls it back to show that the first cage is empty.

Pulling the sheet back down again, I walk to the next cage as something clinks near the lift doors. I swing around to look and shine my torch in that direction but can see nothing. I turn again and grab the sheet over the second cage, tossing that back. Again the cage is empty, and the door is open. I move on to the third cage and throws back the sheet. The monkey inside hurls itself at me, screaming as it grabs at the bars. I drops the sheet and stumbles back several paces, breathing heavily. I walk to the final cage and look at it, then slowly my gaze is pulled down to the bottom of the bars where the sheeting has been pushed back a little. The door of the cage is slightly ajar and
the bottom of it has been bent back by something that must be incredibly strong. As I stare at the bent bars in disbelief, a low savage growl sounds behind me. I spin around, my eyes going wide as I shine my flashlight around but I can see nothing. I see the nearby door to the Cold Lab and walk briskly over to it, taking out, my ID card and swiping it. The reader whines its ACCESS DENIED alert.

“No, come on, come on.” I swipe the card again. Again it refuses to open the door. I stare in anguish, then pull my mobile out of my pocket while shining my light around the room. I hit the speed dial and holds the phone to my ear as it begins to ring out and continues to ring.

“No, you . . . Don’t be ridiculous, pick up.” I muttered under my breath. Eventually I give up and switch the phone off again. “Oh, dammit!” I whisper. Putting the phone back in my pocket I look across the room determinedly.

“Right.” I said softly. Trying to shine my torch in all directions at once and making my way cautiously around all the workstations and islands, I hurry as quickly as I can towards the side door through which the scientists left earlier. As I go, the distinctive sound of claws on tiles skitters across the room.

“Oh sh. . .” I said under my breath. Ducking low, I hurry to the door and takes out my card again.

“Okay . . .” I whispered. As I reach towards the card reader, the claws trot across the floor to my right, and then something snarls. I turn and stare, breathing heavily, as there are more sounds nearby, claws on the floor tiles, equipment being pushed aside, and then a low ominous growl. I shove the card back into my pocket and then clap my hand over my mouth to dampen my own panicked breathing as the growl rumbles on. As the growl finally falls silent, I make a break for it and races across the room, running towards the cages and pulling open the door of one of the empty ones before scrambling inside, slamming the door shut and bolting it and then reaching through the bars and pulling the sheet down over the cage. Elsewhere in the lab, the whatever-it-is snarls as I retreat from the door and squat down against the side bars, wrapping my hand around my mouth again and trying not to sob as the creature growls again.

Suddenly my phone starts to ring. Gasping, I scramble in my pocket to retrieve it. I answer it on the second ring and hold it up towards my mouth. I keep my voice as soft as I possibly can but even at such a low volume my terror is evident.

[It’s here. It’s in here with me.] I said softly.

[Where are you?]

[Get me out, Sherlock. You have got to get me out. The big lab: the first lab that we saw.] I breathe heavily. Outside, the creature growls. I whine loudly in terror and clap my hand over my mouth again.

[John? John?]

[Now, Sherlock. Please.] Lowering his hand and keeping his voice no more than a whisper.

[All right, I’ll find you. Keep talking.]

[I can’t. It’ll hear me.]

[Keep talking. What are you seeing?] Throughout the conversation I had been peering through the small gap in the sheeting but the room is so dimly lit that I haven’t been able to see anything. [John?] The creature snarls again.
[Yes, I’m here.] 

[What can you see?] He asked insistently. Getting onto my knees, I crawl closer to the gap in the sheeting, trying to keep my terrified breathing under control.

[I don’t know. I don’t know, but I can hear it.] The creature growls loudly. [Did you hear that?] I asked him terrified.

[Stay calm, stay calm. Can you see it?] I peer into the gloom. [Can you see it?]

[No. I can . . .] I trail off, then slowly straightens up, retreats backwards and sits back against the side bars as my face fills with absolute horror. [I can see it.] I stare ahead of myself, my eyes full of dread as a shadow begins to move on the other side of the sheeting. [It’s here.] The shadow moves closer as the creature growls once more. [It’s here.] The shadow moves closer and then the sheeting is tugged upwards as the lights come on in the lab and Sherlock’s face appears on the other side of the cage, looking anxiously down at me as he pulls the door open and goes inside.

“Are you all right?” he asked worriedly. My eyes widen in utter bewilderment as Sherlock bends down to me and puts a hand onto my shoulder. “John . . .”

“Jesus Christ . . .” I grab the bars and pull myself to my feet, hurrying out of the cage and stuffing my phone away as I turn back to my friend. “It was the hound, Sherlock. It was here. I swear it, Sherlock. It must . . .” still breathless and panic-stricken. I look around the lab which now fully illuminated shows that there’s nowhere that a large monster can be hiding. “It must . . .” my voice becomes high-pitched. “Did . . . did . . . did you see it? You must have!” Sherlock holds out a placatory hand towards me.

“It’s all right. It’s okay now.”

“NO IT’S NOT! IT’S NOT OKAY! I saw it. I was wrong!” my voice high-pitched, frantic and hysterical. Sherlock shrugs as I breathe heavily.

“Well, let’s not jump to conclusions.”

“What?” I asked in confusion.

“What did you see?” he asked.

“I told you: I saw the hound.” I repeated.

“Huge; red eyes?” he listed.

“Yes.” I nodded.

“Glowing?”

“Yeah.” I agreed.

“No.” he said.

“What?”

“I made up the bit about glowing. You saw what you expected to see because I told you. You have been drugged. And what Eiric saw she was expecting that because of her mourning for the Memorial Day of her war. We have all been drugged.”
“Drugged?” I asked.

“Can you walk?” he asked.

“Course I can walk.” My voice shaky.

“Come on, then. It’s time to lay this ghost.” He turns and heads for the door. Still trying to catch my breath, I look around the lab again, then stumbles after Sherlock.

TPSH

Sherlock pov

In a small room full of cages, Doctor Stapleton is examine a fluffy white rabbit on a metal table. She looks up as I come through the door, followed by John.

“Oh. Back again? What’s on your mind this time?” she asked.

“Murder, Doctor Stapleton. Refined, cold-blooded murder.” I reach back and turn off the light switch by the door. The limited lighting coming from the window at the end of the room is just enough to show that the rabbit is brightly glowing green. I turn the lights back on again. “Will you tell little Kirsty what happened to Bluebell or shall I?” I smile unpleasantly at her. She sighs.

“Oh. Back again? What’s on your mind this time?” she asked.

“Can I borrow your microscope?” In a larger lab, I’m gazing into a microscope. Unhappy with what I’m seeing, I turn away from the ’scope and crushes something which look like crystalline into smaller pieces with a little hammer. Time passes and I vary between sitting with my back to the microscope, my hands folded in the prayer position in front of me as I think, or gazing into the ’scope, or scribbling chemical formulae onto the desk with different coloured marker pens. Nearby, John sits on a stool with his head propped on his hand, gazing blankly into space. Doctor Stapleton is standing near him.

“Are you sure you’re okay?” Stapleton asked John. John looks up at her, blinking. “You look very peaky.”

“No, I’m all right.” He said.

“It was the GFP gene from a jellyfish, in case you’re interested.” She told him.

“What?” he question.

“In the rabbits.”

“Mmm, right, yes.”

“Aequoria Victoria, if you really want to know.” She said proudly. John looks up at her.

“Why?”

“Why not? We don’t ask questions like that here. It isn’t done.” A short distance from them, I’m looking increasingly irritated as I pick up another slide and put it under the microscope. “There was a mix-up, anyway. My daughter ended up with one of the lab specimens, so poor Bluebell had to go.”

“Your compassion’s overwhelming.” John said cynically.
“I know. I hate myself sometimes.” She said mockingly.

“So, come on then. You can trust me, I’m a doctor. What else have you got hidden away up here?” Exasperated, I take the slide out again. Stapleton sighs.

“Listen: if you can imagine it, someone is probably doing it somewhere. Of course they are.” I’m staring intently at my latest slide but my eyes drift across towards John and Stapleton briefly.

“And cloning?” John asked.

“Yes, of course. Dolly the Sheep, remember?” she questioned him.

“Human cloning?”

“Why not?”

“What about animals? Not sheep . . . big animals.” John said.

“Size isn’t a problem, not at all. The only limits are ethics and the law, and both those things can be . . . very flexible. But not here – not at Baskerville.” Furious, I snatch the latest slide out from under the ’scope and hurls it against the nearest wall.

“It’s not there!” I yelled livid.

“Jesus!” John exclaimed.

“Nothing there! Doesn’t make any sense.” I ruffle my hair.

“What were you expecting to find?” Stapleton asked.

“A drug, of course. There has to be a drug – a hallucinogenic or a deliriant of some kind. There’s no trace of anything in the sugar.” I said pacing.

“Sugar?” John asked.

“The sugar, yes. It’s a simple process of elimination. I saw the hound – saw it as my imagination expected me to see it: a genetically engineered monster. But I knew I couldn’t believe the evidence of my own eyes, so there were seven possible reasons for it, the most possible being narcotics. Henry Knight – he saw it too but you didn’t, John. You didn’t see it. Now, we have eaten and drunk exactly the same things since we got to Grimpen apart from one thing: you don’t take sugar in your coffee. And Eiric, she had the sugar as well and saw the dead walking instead of a dog.” I ranted.

“I see. So . . .”

“I took it from Henry’s kitchen – his sugar.” I glare down at the microscope. “It’s perfectly all right.”

“But maybe it’s not a drug.” John reasoned.

“No, it has to be a drug.” I had sat on the stool with my head buried in my hands. Now I lower my hands a little but keep my head bowed and my eyes closed. ‘If only Eiric was here.’ “But how did it get into our systems. How?” Slowly I begin to raise my head, still keeping my eyes closed. “There has to be something . . .” The word ‘hound’ keeps drifting across my mind’s eye. I turn my head repeatedly as I try to follow the words inside I head. “. . . something . . . ah, something . . .” My eyes open. “. . . something buried deep.” Taking a sharp breath through my nose, I turn and point
imperiously at John and Stapleton. “Get out.”

“What?” Stapleton asked in shock.

“Get out. I need to go to my mind palace.” I told her. John sags on his seat with an “Oh, not again” look.

“You’re what?” I had already turned my head away again and was staring ahead of myself. John gets off his stool.

“He’s not gonna be doing much talking for a while. We may as well go.” I was breathing deeply, focusing his thoughts. Stapleton follows John as he heads for the door.

“His what?”

“Oh, his mind palace. It’s a memory technique – a sort of mental map. You plot a map with a location – it doesn’t have to be a real place – and then you deposit memories there that ... Theoretically, you can never forget anything; all you have to do is find your way back to it.” John explained to her.

“So this imaginary location can be anything – a house or a street.” She said.

“Yeah.” John nodded his head.

“But he said “palace”. He said it was a palace.” John looked back towards me for a moment

“Yeah, well, he would, wouldn’t he?” He leads her out of the room. I gaze ahead of myself, my mind turned inwards as I walk through my memories unearthing everything I can recall in connection with the word “Liberty”. As I access different examples of the word and finds them unsuitable, I physically flick them away with my hands and pull in new variations before brushing those aside. The word “hound” creeps into my mind and drifts across it as I temporarily gives up on “Liberty” and shifts to “In”, adding various letters onto the word to form new ones like “Inn”, “India”, “Ingolstadt” and “Indium atomic number = 49”. Flicking that line of thought away, I start calling up images of large dogs, running through various breeds and temporarily being distracted by the image of Elvis Presley starting to sing “Hound Dog”. Irritated, I brush that aside and tries to pull in all three words, Liberty, In, Hound, simultaneously and suddenly my eyes snap open and I jolt three times as if I’m being repeatedly struck by lightning as the words finally crash into place: Liberty, Indiana H.O.U.N.D.

I sink back on my seat for a moment, then stands up and heads out of the lab.
Chapter 28

Baskerville Sherlock pov

Stapleton lead us along a corridor and uses her card to swipe them into the area leading to Major Barrymore’s office. As we go into the room, I point back to the door we just came through.

“John.”

“Yeah, I’m on it.” He turns back to keep an eye on the door as Stapleton goes over to sit down at a computer.

“Project HOUND. Must have read about it and stored it away. An experiment in a CIA facility in Liberty, Indiana.” I stand behind Stapleton as she types her User ID onto the computer, then adds her password. A request to “Enter Search String” comes up and she looks up at me as I dictate the letters. “H, O, U, N, D.” She types in the letters and hits Enter. A message comes up saying “NO ACCESS. CIA Classified” and requesting an authorization code.

“That’s as far as my access goes, I’m afraid.” Stapleton told us.

“Well, there must be an override and password.” John said.

“I imagine so, but that’d be Major Barrymore’s.” I spin around and walk into Barrymore’s office.

“Password, password, password.” Switching on the lights in the room I sit down at the desk. “He sat here when he thought it up.” Folding my hands in front of my mouth, I slowly spin a full circle on the chair, looking around the office as I go. Stapleton comes to the doorway. “Describe him to me.”

“You’ve seen him.” She said.

“But describe him.” I repeated.

“Er, he’s a bloody martinet, a throw-back, the sort of man they’d have sent into Suez.”

“Good, excellent. Old-fashioned, traditionalist; not the sort that would use his children’s names as a password.” I gesture towards the drawings that Barrymore’s children have done for him and which he has pinned on the board above his desk, like Eiric with Teddy’s work. “He loves his job; proud of it and this is work-related, so what’s at eye level?” I rapidly scan around everything in the room without altering the angle of my eyes. Gesturing to the right, “Books.” Pointing to the left.

“Jane’s Defense Weekly – bound copies.” I look to the right again and at the subject matter of some of the books on the bookshelf. “Hannibal; Wellington; Rommel; Churchill’s “History of the English-Speaking Peoples” – all four volumes.” I stand up and look at a bronze bust on a shelf.

“Churchill – well, he’s fond of Churchill.” I look back to the bookcases again. “Copy of “The Downing Street Years”; one, two, three, four, five separate biographies of Thatcher.” I look down to a framed photograph on the desk of a man in uniform standing with his teenage son. “Mid nineteen eighties at a guess. Father and son: Barrymore senior.” Looking at the uniform of the older man.

“Medals: Distinguished Service Order.” I look around to John.
“That date? I’d say Falkland’s veteran.” He answered.

“Right. So Thatcher’s looking a more likely bet than Churchill.” I walk out of the office and head back towards the computer.

“So that’s the password?” Stapleton asked following me.

“No. With a man like Major Barrymore, only first name terms would do.” Leaning down to the keyboard, I start to type Margaret Thatcher’s first name into the “Author code” box but stop as I reach the penultimate letter, narrowing my eyes and delete everything back to the first letter, then retype it as “Maggie”. Looking into the screen and gritting my teeth ever so slightly, I hit Enter. The computer beeps happily and announces

“OVERRIDE 300/421 ACCEPTED. Loading ...” John comes over from the door to look at the screen. After a slight pause information begins to stream across the screen as everything related to Project H.O.U.N.D. becomes available. My concentration becomes intense as I take it all in and focus on certain phrases like “extreme suggestibility”, “fear and stimulus”, “conditioned terror”, “aerosol dispersal”. A photograph comes up of the project team posing happily together and he identifies the five project leaders amongst the larger group: Elaine Dyson, Mary Uslowski, Rick Nader, Jack O’Mara and Leonard Hansen. Clearing the photo from the screen I rearrange the names into another order:

Leonard Hansen
    Jack O’Mara
    Mary Uslowski
    Rick Nader
    Elaine Dyson

Standing beside me, Doctor Stapleton finally begins to understand.

“HOUND.” She stares in growing horror at the screen as more information from the project appears and words and phrases are highlighted such as “Paranoia”, “Severe frontal lobe damage”, “Blood-brain” “Gross cranial trauma”, “Dangerous acceleration”, “Multiple homicide”, accompanied by photographs of some of the subjects of the project screaming insanely.

“Jesus.” John said softly. I was still scanning the information as it flows across the screen

“Project HOUND: a new deliriant drug which rendered its users incredibly suggestible. They wanted to use it as an anti-personnel weapon to totally disorientate the enemy using fear and stimulus; but they shut it down and hid it away in nineteen eighty-six.” I told them.

“Because of what it did to the subjects they tested it on.” She said.

“And what they did to others. Prolonged exposure drove them insane – made them almost uncontrollably aggressive.” I said agreeing with her.

“So someone’s been doing it again – carrying on the experiments?” John asked.

“Attempting to refine it, perhaps, for the last twenty years.” I answered him.
“Who?” Stapleton asked. John nods at the screen, indicating the names of the project leaders.

“Those names mean anything to you?” he asked her.

“No, not a thing.” She said. I sighed.

“Five principal scientists, twenty years ago.” I pull up the photograph of the team and begin zooming in on individuals within it. The closer footage shows that they are all wearing identical sweatshirts. Looming out of a diamond pattern in the centre of the sweatshirts is a large snarling wolf’s head and the legend “H.O.U.N.D.” is printed underneath. There is some smaller text underneath but it’s not yet clear what it says. I continue to zoom in and out of the photo to look more closely at the faces. “Maybe our friend’s somewhere in the back of the picture – someone who was old enough to be there at the time of the experiments in 1986 ...” I stop as I see a face I recognize, and rolls my eyes a little as I realize the truth. “Maybe somebody who says “cell phone” because of time spent in America. You remember, John?”

“Mmm-hmm.” John nodded in agreement.

“He gave us his number in case we needed him.” I said.

“Oh my God. Bob Frankland. But Bob doesn’t even work on ... I mean, he’s a virologist. This was chemical warfare.” Stapleton said still staring at the photo on the screen.

“It’s where he started, though ... and he’s never lost the certainty, the obsession that that drug really could work. Nice of him to give us his number.” I reach into my pocket and takes out Bob’s card. “Let’s arrange a little meeting.” I walk away from the computer. John walks closer to it and looks at the last image – a very tight close-up of one of the sweatshirts. Stitched below the “H.O.U.N.D.” legend is the name of the American town and state where the project was based: “Liberty, In”. Just then John’s phone begins to ring. He digs it out of his pocket and frowns at the number on the screen, apparently not recognizing it. He answers.

[Hello?] Initially the only sound he can hear is a woman crying. [Who’s this?]
[You’ve got to find Henry.] John looks round to me.
[It’s Louise Mortimer.] He told me. [Louise, what’s wrong?] He asked her.
[Henry was ... was remembering; then ... he tried ...] She gasps. [He’s got a gun. He went for the gun and tried to ...]
[What?] She breaks down in tears again.
[He’s gone. You’ve got to stop him. I don’t know what he might do.]
[Where-where are you?] John asked.
[His house. I’m okay, I’m okay.] 
[Right: stay there. We’ll get someone to you, okay?] Lowering his phone, he begins to text.

“Henry?” I asked.

“He’s attacked her.”

“Gone?” I asked him.
“Mmm.” hitting a speed dial on my own phone.

“There’s only one place he’ll go to: back to where it all started.” I told him. [Eiric. Get to the Hollow with Lestrade, now. And bring a gun.]

TPSH

We race across the terrain in the Land Rover. Not long afterwards I pull up presumably where the woods begin and John and I get out and continue on foot. We found Henry squatting down, with the pistol in his mouth as he aims the muzzle towards it.

“No, Henry, no! No!” John and I scramble down the slope, shining our torches at him. Henry stands up and stumbles backwards, waving the pistol vaguely in their direction. His voice is high-pitched and hysterical.

“Get back. Get – get away from me!”


“I know what I am. I know what I tried to do!” Henry yelled.

“Just put the gun down. It’s okay.” John tried again.

“No, no, I know what I am!” Henry said his voice hoarse with anguish.

“Yes, I’m sure you do, Henry. It’s all been explained to you, hasn’t it – explained very carefully.” I said as reassuring as I’ll ever sound.

“What?” he asked confused.

“Someone needed to keep you quiet; needed to keep you as a child to reassert the dream that you’d both clung on to, because you had started to remember.” I begin to step closer to the young man. “Remember now, Henry. You’ve got to remember what happened here when you were a little boy.” Henry’s gun hand begins to droop momentarily but then he raises it again, his face full of his struggle to understand.

“I thought it had got my dad – the hound. I thought . . .” He loses control and begins to scream in anguish. “Oh Je... oh Jesus, I don’t – I don’t know any more!” Sobbing, he bends forward and aims the muzzle into his mouth again.

“No, Henry! Henry, for God’s sake!” Eiric appeared from the woods and stumbled down the slope to the boy.

“Henry, remember. “Liberty In.” Two words; two words a frightened little boy saw here twenty years ago.” I said urgently. Eiric was getting closer to him putting me a bit on edge. Henry begins to calm a little but still remains hunched over with the gun’s muzzle against his mouth. “You’d started to piece things together, remember what really happened here that night. It wasn’t an animal, was it, Henry?” Henry starts to straighten up, blinking. “Not a monster.” Henry turns to look at me. “A man.” He gapes at me as the truth reasserts itself in his mind.

“You couldn’t cope. You were just a child, so you rationalized it into something very different. But then you started to remember, so you had to be stopped; driven out of your mind so that no-one would believe a word that you said.” Quietly Eiric steps forward, holding out her hand encouragingly towards Henry as Lestrade arrives and calls out as he trots down the slope towards them.
“Sherlock!” he panted out.

“Okay, its okay, Henry.” She said gently to Henry. She carefully takes the pistol from Henry’s fingers. Henry speaks tearfully to me.

“But we saw it: the hound, last night. We s... we, we, we did, we saw ...”

“Yeah, but there was a dog, Henry, leaving footprints, scaring witnesses, but it was nothing more than an ordinary dog. We both saw it – saw it as our drugged minds wanted us to see it. Fear and stimulus; that’s how it works.” Henry stares at me in confusion. I return his look sympathetically.

“But there never was any monster.” The hound has different ideas, however, and now its anguished howl rings out in the woods above us. Everyone’s head snaps up and John and Lestrade aim their flashlights upwards to the top of the Hollow where a low shape can be seen slowly stalking along the rim and snarling.

“Sherlock . . .” I stare up in disbelief as Henry turns to me, horrified.

“No.” He begins to wail in panic. “No, no, no, no!” He backs away as I try simultaneously to hold out a calming hand towards him while keeping my own torch shining up towards the creature above them.

“Henry, Henry . . .”

“Sherlock . . .” The creature continues to slink along the rim of the Hollow as Henry begins to scream in abject terror. He crumples to his knees, continually screaming, “No!”

“Henry!” Eiric whispered yelled. The hound turns towards the Hollow and looks down at all of us, snarling viciously. Its eyes glow in the torchlight as Henry continues to wail.

“Shit!” Lestrade said staring up at the rim. John turns and shines his torch into his face and Eiric’s.

“Greg, Eiric, are you seeing this?” he asked him. Lestrade glances at him momentarily and his expression answers the question but Eiric is paying more attention to the panicking young man. I take a quick look around to the inspector and Eiric to see their faces before turning back to stare up at the hound.

“Right: they’re not drugged, Sherlock, so what’s that? What is it?!?” As Henry continues to wail behind us, I screw my eyes shut for a brief moment, trying to handle the overload in my mind. I stare upwards again.

“All right! It’s still here . . .” I pant heavily for a moment before pulling myself together, “. . . but it’s just a dog. Henry! It’s nothing more than an ordinary dog!” The hound doesn’t think so as it raises its head and let out a long terrifying howl.

“Oh my God.” Lestrade said stumbling backwards. And now the hound turns and leaps a short way down the slope, its eyes flashing red in the torchlight. “Oh, Christ!” John and Eiric stare at it as it stops again, its red glowing eyes now clearly visible as it opens its mouth and reveals a mouthful of long pointed teeth that you would never see on any dog. Its snarl is completely terrifying. Henry has fallen silent, gazing up at it as if he knows that it is going to kill him shortly. I’m still trying to believe what my own eyes are telling me and now there’s movement behind us. Eiric and I look over our shoulder and see a tall human figure through the mist. The new arrival is wearing a breathing mask with a clear visor over his face. I turn and rush towards him, grabbing at the mask and ripping it upwards to fully reveal the man’s face and Jim Moriarty grins manically back at him.

“No!” I yelled staring at him in appalled horror. Eiric turned fully and started walking towards me,
concern and worry written on her face. Behind me the hound growls ominously again. Jim’s expression becomes intense and murderous but then his head begins to distort and flail about, morphing between Jim’s face and someone else’s so quickly that it’s impossible to keep up with the changes. I grimace, groaning at the insanity going on in front of me as Jim’s face keeps reasserting itself. “It’s not you! You’re not here!” I exclaimed frantically.

“Sherlock!” I could hear Eiric call in worry, not that far from me. Grabbing at the figure, I spin him around and then head-butt him in the face. The figure crumples slightly and raises his hand to his face as he straightens up ... and now the man in front of me is Bob Frankland. I cling onto his jacket, my breathing panicked and frantic but then I turn my head to one side and look at the mist surrounding us as suddenly it all begins to make sense to me.

“The fog.” I muttered.

“What?” John asked still aiming his torch up at the hound.

“It’s the fog! The drug: it’s in the fog! Aerosol dispersal – that’s what it said in those records. Project HOUND – it’s the fog! A chemical minefield!” Lestrade instantly throws his arm across his face, trying to stop himself from breathing too much of the mist. The hound stalks closer to the group, snarling.

“For God’s sake, kill it! Kill it!” Frankland yelled in fear. The hound’s movements become jitterier as if it’s winding itself up to attack. Lestrade aims his pistol and fires three times at it. His bullets fly past it and it flinches momentarily but then rises up and leaps towards them. John’s aim is truer and his bullets strike the hound accurately and throw it backwards as it squeals in pain and crashes to the ground, unmoving. As John and Lestrade watch it anxiously for any signs of movement, I run over to Henry and pushes him towards the hound, leaving Eiric by Frankland.

“Look at it, Henry.” I told him.

“No, no, no!” he cried digging his heels in.

“Come on, look at it!” I said shoving him forward determinedly. I bully the young man forward until we can both clearly see it lying on the ground. In my torchlight it is clearly nothing more than a huge dog. Henry stares at it for a moment and then turns back to where Eiric and Frankland are, Frankland still holding his injured face while Lestrade has his hands over his mouth as he tries to draw breath and come to terms with what he just experienced. Henry looks at Frankland.

“It’s just ... you bastard.” Hurling himself at the older man, he screams with rage. “You bastard!” Bundling him to the ground, he screams into his face as John and Lestrade run over and try to pull him off. Eiric just steps to the side and stares out into the distance, her eyes glassy looking.

“Twenty years! Twenty years of my life making no sense! Why didn’t you just kill me?!” Finally the others manage to pull him up off.

“Because dead men get listened to. He needed to do more than kill you. He had to discredit every word you ever said about your father, and he had the means right at his feet – a chemical minefield, pressure pads in the ground dosing you up every time that you came back here.” I hold my arms out wide and spin slowly in a circle as I gesture around the Hollow. “Murder weapon and scene of the crime all at once.” I laugh with delight. “Oh, this case, Henry! Thank you. It’s been brilliant.”

“Sherlock . . .” I turn to him.
“What?” John glares at me pointedly.

“Timing.”

“No, no, it’s – it’s okay. It’s fine, because this means . . . ” Henry starts to step towards Frankland. John moves with him, ready to intervene if he should try to attack him again. “ . . . this means that my dad was right. Frankland gets up onto his knees as Henry still tries to move towards him. John and Greg both put a gentle hand onto his shoulders to keep him back. “He found something out, didn’t he, and that’s why you’d killed him – because he was right, and he’d found you right in the middle of an experiment.” He said tearfully. Frankland gets to his feet but before he can say anything there’s a savage snarl from behind the group. Everybody but Eiric, she stood watching Frankland, spins towards the dog as it whines in pain but gets up off the ground. John aims and fires towards it twice and it goes down again. Frankland takes the opportunity of the distraction to turn and run off in the opposite direction with Eiric right behind him. Like the single-minded idiot that I am, I run right across John’s line of fire, forcing him to lower his pistol, and chase off after the scientist and my fiancée. John turns and follows us up the slope.

“Frankland!” we could hear Eiric yell, angrily.

“Eiric!” I yelled to her. Frankland run through the woods with Eiric behind him in hot pursuit, John and I in pursuit after her, Lestrade and Henry a little behind us.

“Frankland!” Eiric’s voice sounded farther away. “It’s no use, Frankland!” we heard her scream. Reaching the barbed wire fence surrounding the minefield, Frankland doesn’t hesitate and jumps over, Eiric stops a few inches away from the fence watching him with a murderous look. His feet tangle in the wire and he falls to the ground on the other side. He jumps up and runs on a few yards but then stops abruptly as his foot thumps down onto a mine, which makes a distinctive clink indicating that he has activated its pressure pad. He stares down at his foot, shining his torch onto the mine underneath and realizing that unless he remains completely still and doesn’t lift any pressure off it, the mine will blow. He looked towards Eiric, her eyes widen a little in shock and begins to back away. As we hurry towards the barbed wire, he raises his head, sighs in resignation and deliberately lifts his foot. We skid to a halt and duck down as a massive explosion rips into the air. Eiric is blasted back a few feet and forced to the ground.

“Eiric!” I yelled in panic as I ran to her. She groan in pain as she sat up. I kneeled on the ground, checking her for any injuries.

“I’m okay, Sherlock.” She whispered, I stared at her. My breathing a bit heavy before pulling her into my arms, holding her tight. As the blast dies down, Henry sinks back against a nearby tree.

TPSH

Cross Keys inn Eiric pov

John was sitting at one of the outdoor tables. Billy brings out a plate containing whatever is the vegetarian equivalent of a full English breakfast and puts it on the table in front of him.

“Mmm. Thanks, Billy.” As Billy walks away, Sherlock and I bring over three mugs and put one down on the table for John. I sat down beside John and took a sip of my tea.

“So they didn’t have it put down, then – the dog.” Sherlock said. John tuck into his breakfast as Sherlock stands next to me and drinks his coffee.
“Obviously. Suppose they just couldn’t bring themselves to do it.” I said to him, looking up at him. “I see.” He nodded to me, I smiled and taking his hand, placing a kiss on it. “No you don’t.” John said smiling. “No, I don’t. Sentiment?” Sherlock asked as I move my hand away, he caught it and kept my hand locked in his. “Sentiment!” I giggled at John. Sherlock rolled his eyes. “Oh.” He sits down on the bench next to me, letting my hand go and wrapping an arm around my shoulders. “Listen: what happened to me in the lab?” John asked Sherlock. I looked at them confused. Sherlock looks at him for a moment, then turns around and reaches for a box of sauce sachets, looking worried about how he’s ever going to explain all this. “D’you want some sauce with that?” he asked him. “I mean, I hadn’t been to the Hollow, so how come I heard those things in there? Fear and stimulus, you said.” Sherlock was still rummaging through the box of sachets. “You must have been dosed with it elsewhere, when you went to the lab, maybe. You saw those pipes – pretty ancient, leaky as a sieve; and they were carrying the gas, so . . . Um, ketchup, was it, or brown . . .?” I raised an eyebrow at Sherlock, smirking at him as he failed to change the subject. “Hang on: you thought it was in the sugar.” John said, that made me pay attention. Sherlock stares at him while trying to maintain a neutral expression. “You were convinced it was in the sugar.” Sherlock looks away again. I stared at Sherlock for a moment, starting to realize where this was probably going and why. “Better get going, actually.” He looks at his watch. “There’s a train that leaves in half an hour, so if you want . . .” John turns his head away as he begins to realize the horrible truth. “Oh God. It was you. You locked me in that bloody lab.” I stared at John in shock then to Sherlock, he looked away. “I had to. It was an experiment.” He shrugged, my eyes soften at that. “It wasn’t just about the dog, he was worried about what happen to me in the woods.” “An experiment?!” John yelled furiously. “Shhh.” Sherlock whispered looking at people sitting nearby. “I was terrified, Sherlock. I was scared to death.” John said quieter, but still furious. “I thought that the drug was in the sugar, so I put the sugar in your coffee, and then I arranged everything with Major Barrymore.” John sighs in exasperation. “It was all totally scientific, laboratory conditions – well, literally.” Sherlock turn to me and stared at me, I smiled softly at him. He gave me a crooked grin. “Well, I knew what effect it had had on a superior mind, so I needed to try it on an average one.” I blushed at the hidden compliment. John looks up from his plate. “You know what I mean.” John gets back to eating. “But it wasn’t in the sugar.” I said to him. “No, well, I wasn’t to know he’d already been exposed to the gas.” He turned to me. I took a sip of
“So you got it wrong.” I told him.

“No.” he disagreed, I smiled at him teasingly.

“You were wrong. It wasn’t in the sugar. You got it wrong.” He grinned at me and chuckled, shaking his head.

“A bit. It won’t happen again.” Sighing at our flirting, John continues eating, then looks round.

“Any long-term effects?” he asked.

“None at all. You’ll be fine once you’ve excreted it. We all will.”

“Think I might have taken care of that already.” Sherlock snorts laughter, then looks across to a nearby table where Gary is pouring coffee for two other customers. He smiles apologetically across to Sherlock, who puts his mug on the table and stands up, I get up with him.

“Where’re you going?” he asked us.

“Won’t be a minute. Gotta see a man about a dog.” Smiling down at John, he wraps an arm around my waist, we turn and walk away.

TPSH

Jim Moriarty sits silently and calmly in a small windowless concrete-lined cell with his eyes closed. In an adjoining room, Mycroft walks towards the other side of the one-way mirror which Jim is facing, and narrows his eyes as he looks closely at the other man. Sometime afterwards, the door to the cell is unlocked and Jim opens his eyes but does not turn around as Mycroft walks in. Later, Mycroft has left the cell again. A man in a suit has opened the cell door and has walked inside.

“All right. Let him go.” Jim turns and casually strolls out of the cell. Behind him, the man turns and looks around the room. On almost every plain concrete panel of the walls, Jim has somehow carved a single word into the cement. In different sizes and at different angles, the word repeats all around the cell – and the word is SHERLOCK. And with the dust which was loosened by the carving, he has scratched Sherlock’s name backwards on the mirror so that whoever is watching him from the other side of the mirror will see the name the right way round. The man in the suit turns and walks away, closing the cell door behind him.
Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

To understand this, you have to read A Magical Vacation: a mini story first then The Bun on Baker Street.

October

TPSH

Eiric pov

I was sitting next to Lestrade as he addressed the press conference. Sherlock and John were standing nearby, while Donovan and Anderson are at the back of the room.

“Peter Ricoletti: number one on Interpol’s Most Wanted lit since 1982. But we got him; and there’s one person we have to thank for giving us the decisive leads . . . with all his customary diplomacy and tact!” Lestrade said sarcastically causing me to smirk a little. Sherlock sends Lestrade a insincerely smile while John leans closer to Sherlock. As the press applaud, Lestrade walks over to Sherlock and gives him a gift-wrapped package, smiling cheerfully.

“We all chipped in.” As Sherlock tears open the wrapping paper, Donovan and Anderson grin expectantly. Sherlock pulls out a deerstalker hat.

“Oh!” He says trying to smile.

“Put the hat on!” The press chants.

“Yeah, Sherlock, put it on!” Sherlock looks at the reporters as if he’d like to kill them. John clears his throat uncomfortably. Glowering at John, Sherlock shoves the wrapping paper into his hands, then unhappily puts the hat on his head. Flashbulbs go mad and everyone applauds. At the back of the room, Donovan claps with sarcastic delight while Anderson, grins smugly. Sherlock smiles at the press through gritted teeth and glances at Lestrade as if promising him a world of pain later.

TPSH

221B

I was sitting in John’s chair while John sat on the sofa reading the papers while Sherlock, wearing his blue dressing gown over his shirt and trousers, stomps across the room and throws the Daily Star onto the pile of newspapers on the coffee table.


“Everybody gets one.” John told him. I sighed cause it true, I have few of my own.

“One what?” Sherlock asked.

“Tabloid nickname: ‘SuBo’; ‘Nasty Nick’. Shouldn't worry - I’ll probably get one soon.” John said
as he flips through the newspaper.

“Page five, column six, first sentence.” I told him as I place a hand on my rounded stomach. John turns to the relevant page. Sherlock goes over to the fireplace, picks up the deerstalker, holds it up and punches it angrily.

“Why is it always the hat photograph?” He asked.

“Bachelor John Watson?” John stated as he looks at the newspaper article.

“What sort of hat is it anyway?” I smile as I watch Sherlock with amusement.

“Bachelor? What the hell are they implying?” John questioned. Sherlock was still holding up the hat and twisting it back and forth rapidly.

“Is it a cap? Why has it got two fronts?” John glances up briefly.

“It’s a deerstalker.” He reads more of the article. “Frequently seen in the company of bachelor John Watson . . .”

“You stalk a deer with a hat? What are you gonna do - throw it?” I turn towards Teddy who gave a slight giggle from the floor. John was looking at another part of the article.

“. . . confirmed bachelor John Watson!”

“Some sort of death frisbee?” Sherlock unties the flaps.

“Okay, this is too much. We need to be more careful.” John looked over to us.

“It’s got flaps . . . ear flaps. It’s an ear hat, John.” He accurately skims the hat across the room to John, who doesn’t have to do more than bend his wrist to catch it. “What do you mean, “more careful”?”

“I mean this isn’t a deerstalker now; it’s a Sherlock Holmes hat. I mean that you’re not exactly a private detective any more.” John holds his thumb and forefinger an inch apart. “You’re this far from famous.”

“Oh, it’ll pass.” Sherlock slumps down into his armchair and folds his hands in the prayer position in front of his mouth.

“The press will turn, Sherlock. They always turn, and they’ll turn on you.” I spoke to him. Sherlock lowers his hands, staring closely at John and I.

“It really bothers you.” He said.

“What?” John asked.

“What people say.” I nodded but stay quiet.

“Yes.” John said.

“About me? I don’t understand - why would it upset you?” I sigh and turn away, paying attention to Teddy.

“Just try to keep a low profile. Find yourself a little case this week. Stay out of the news.” I heard John say. John heads to his room to take a shower and Sherlock went to the kitchen to work on his
experiments. Teddy and I stayed in the living room colouring pictures for the baby. Sherlock’s phone trills alerting us that he just got a text. The three of us ignore it until John comes back from the shower with his hair wet, wearing a bathrobe and towelling the back of his neck dry.

“It’s your phone.” He said.

“Mm. Keeps doing that.” Sherlock said, disinterestedly. John walks into the living room, sits down in his chair and picks up a newspaper. “So, did you talk to him for a really long time?” Sherlock looks up and glances across to the hanging dummy.

“Oh. Henry Fishgard never committed suicide.” He picks up an old hardback book from the table and slams it shut in a flurry of dust before going back to his microscope. “Bow Street Runners: missed everything.”

“Pressing case, is it?” John sassed.

“They’re all pressing ’til they’re solved.” Sherlock replied. Sherlock’s phone trills another text alert. John lowers his newspaper.

“I’ll get it, shall I?” He asked, tetchy. He gets up and walks over to the phone, picking it up and checking the message while Sherlock continues to look into his microscope. John’s face slowly fills with shock.

“John?” I asked. He shows me the text and I feel the blood drain from my face. “No.” I whispered. John turns and takes the phone to the kitchen, holding it out to Sherlock.

“Here.”

“Not now, I’m busy.” He said, not looking up.

“Sherlock . . .” I called.

“Not now.” He repeated.

“He’s back.” John breathes heavily. Sherlock lifts his head and takes the phone.

[Come and play.
Tower Hill.
Jim Moriarty x.]

Sherlock’s eyes widen and he sinks back on his chair and gazes into space. Sherlock turns to me and gets out of his chair, places a kiss to my head and leaves the flat with John.

TPSH

Tower Hill Sherlock pov

When John and I arrive at the Tower, we watch the recorded security footage taken from behind Jim as he ticks the gum onto the glass. From a distance it’s not clear what he then pushes into the gum.

“That glass is tougher than anything.” Lestrade said.

“Not tougher than crystallized carbon. He used a diamond.” Lestrade adjust the footage, which shifts to a recording taken from the other side of the glass. The footage also goes into reverse, showing the glass rising back up into place before it shattered. As Jim pulls the fire extinguisher
back again and the glass becomes whole, the message which he scrawled onto it becomes clear. He deliberately wrote the words backwards on the glass so that they would be seen from the camera on the other side of the case. With the smiley face inside the “O”.

GET SHERLOCK

John turns and stares at me but my eyes are fixed on the screen.

TPSH

221B Eiric pov

We all got ready for the trial, I stood in the living room with Teddy while we waited for the boys to be ready. Sherlock walks towards me and helps me down the stairs. We stop and move towards the side to let John pass us and open the door.

“Ready?” He asked us. “Yes.” Bracing himself, John opens the door. Police officers are trying to hold back the large crowd of journalists who immediately start photographing the four of us and calling out questions as the police clear the way and allow us through to the waiting police car. We get into the back and the car pulls away and races off with its sirens wailing. The police car is just going around Trafalgar Square.

“Remember . . .” John started.

“Yes.” Sherlock replied, instantly.

“Remember . . .” John tried, insistently.

“Yes.” Sherlock said even more quickly. John looks away in frustration, then goes for broke and speaks quickly.

“Remember what they told you: don’t try to be clever . . .”

“No.” Sherlock talks over him.

“. . . and please, just keep it simple and brief.” John ended.

“God forbid one of the star witness at the trial should come across as intelligent.” Sherlock grumbled.

“Intelligent, fine; let’s give ‘smart-arse’ a wide berth.” John said. There’s a slight pause.

“I’ll just be myself.” Sherlock stated.

“Are you listening to me?!” John exclaimed, irritated. I sighed with relief as we pull in front of the court house. Sherlock gets out and turns to help me out of the car. We walk into the court house and into court ten for the trial to start. Sherlock was called to give his evidence and stood in the witness box. Jim was in the dock opposite him. John, Teddy, and I were sitting in the public gallery upstairs.

“A “consulting criminal”.” The prosecuting barrister said.

“Yes.” Sherlock replied.

“You’re clever. Can you expand on that answer?” She asked.
“James Moriarty is for hire.” He told her.

“A tradesman?” She questioned. I let out a quiet scoff at that.

“Yes.”

“But not the sort who’d fix your heating.”

“No, the sort who’d plant a bomb or stage an assassination, but I’m sure he’d make a pretty decent job of your boiler.” There’s muffled laughter from some of the people in the court, including myself.

“Would you describe him as . . .”

“Leading.” Sherlock interrupted.

“What?”

“Can’t do that. You’re leading the witness.” Sherlock looks towards the defending barrister. “he’ll object and the judge will uphold.” The judge looks exasperated.

“Mr. Holmes.” He said.

“Ask me how. How would I describe him? What opinion have I formed of him? Do they not teach you this?” Sherlock asked.

“Mr. Holmes, we’re fine without your help.” The judge told him.

“How would you describe this man - his character?” She asked, again.

“First mistake.” He raises his eyes and locks his gaze onto Jim. “James Moriarty isn’t a man at all - he’s a spider; a spider at the centre of a web - a criminal web with a thousand threads and he knows precisely how each and every single one of them dances.” I look over the balcony to see Jim almost imperceptibly nod his head in approval of the description. The prosecuting barrister clears her throat awkwardly.

“And how long . . .” Sherlock closes his eyes in exasperation.

“No, no, don’t-don’t do that. That’s really not a good question.” He said.

“Mr. Holmes.” The judge snaps, angrily.

“How long have I known him? Not really your best line of enquiry. We met twice, five minutes in total. I pulled a gun; he tried to blow me up.” He looks towards Jim. “I felt we had a special something.” He said, sarcastically.

“Miss. Sorrel, are you seriously claiming this man is an expert, after knowing the accused for just five minutes?” The judge asked.

“Two minutes would have made me an expert. Five was ample.” Sherlock said.

“Mr. Holmes, that’s a matter for the jury.

“Oh, really?” His eyes turn towards the jury box. I closed my eyes and let out a soft groan, rubbing soothing circles on my stomach. Sherlock turns the full force of his gaze onto the twelve people sitting in the jury box and has them all deduced in a couple of seconds. “One librarian; two
teachers; two high-pressured jobs, probably the City.” He focuses on the woman at the far left of
the front row. She has a notebook resting on the ledge in front of her. “The foreman’s a medical
secretary, trained abroad judging by her shorthand.”

“Mr. Holmes!” The judge exclaimed.

“Seven are married and two are having an affair - with each other, it would seem! Oh, and they’ve
just had tea and biscuits.” He turns to the judge. “Would you like to know who ate the wafer?”

“Mr. Holmes. You’ve been called here to answer Miss. Sorrel’s questions, not to give us a display
of your intellectual prowess.” Sherlock takes a breath but can’t help looking up towards us and
smiled a little at the acknowledgement of his ‘intellectual prowess’. I give him a stern stare and his
smile slips of his face. “Keep your answers brief and to the point. Anything else will be treated as
contempt. Do you think you could survive for just a few minutes without showing off?” Sherlock
pauses while he gives the question some thought. I roll my eyes when he opens his mouth and
draws in a breath. I shake my head at him when he looks up towards the balcony as the officers
take him to one of the cells under the court.
Chapter 30

Court house

When Sherlock was gone, I was called down to the stand. John helped me down to the stand and made sure I had a chair to seat down in.

“Thank you, John.” I whispered to him before he left to go back to the balcony to watch Teddy. He gave me a smile and nod.

“So, Miss. Potter. How would describe this man?” She asked. I turn to look at Jim for a moment, we stared at each other for a few seconds before I turn back to Miss. Sorel.

“Sherlock called him a spider, I think of him more like a snake.” I told her. “He could talk you into anything and you wouldn't realize until it’s too late.”

“How long did you know this man?” She asked next.

“Half a day. He kidnapped me from my apartment after he kidnapped my son earlier that day, who he had strapped to a bomb. He strapped me to a bomb as well and had me meet Sherlock when he confronted him.” I replied.

“And how old was your son at the time of the kidnapping, Miss. Potter?”

“He was five.” I answered. I pointed towards Jim. “That man is a monster.” Jim glares at me as I’m helped off the stand and went back to John and Teddy. John meet me in the hallway with Teddy.

“Let’s go pick up our idiot.” John and Teddy let out a few chuckles as we walked down to the jail. I sat down a bench and waited while John got Sherlock. I stand up when they walk into the hallway, Sherlock walks over to me and wraps an arm around my waist as we walk out of the building.

“How are you doing?” He asked me as John hailed a taxi.

“Just fine, Sherlock. Just want this to be over.” I answered as climb inside the taxi. When we finally reached Baker Street, I took Teddy down to our flat to change out of our clothes and take a nap. Teddy and I were going to Mione’s baby shower tomorrow morning and I was exhausted after today’s trial.

TPSH

221B

Teddy skipped gleefully in front of me.

“Are you excited to see your cousins?” I asked, already knowing the answer.

“Yep!” He chirped, spinning on his heel. We were standing in front of the fire place getting ready to go to Mione and Ron’s baby shower. The gender of their baby would be revealed today and I’d bet George a whole months supply of snickering jaw breakers that it was a girl. In a flash, Teddy and I were standing in the streamer covered Weasley living room.

“Eiric!!” Mione cheered, rushing towards me and pulling me into a rather awkward hug.

“Baby bumps.” I chuckled as she released her grip. Ron beamed as he pulled me into a side huge.
“Just you two tonight?” He asked, looking at the fireplace.

“It’s the second day of Jim’s trial.” I said. Mione’s face fell into worry. “But let’s not talk about that now. This is your day. Who else is here?” I asked. Ron lead us into the other room which looked like a sea of ginger with the exception of Mione’s parents and Fleur.

“IT’S GONNA BE A BOY, SIS!” George yelled from the kitchen.

“I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU BUT I’M NEVER WRONG!” I retorted. Mione suppressed a giggle.

“Ron would you please get the cake?” Ron smiled and practically skipped to the kitchen.

“What’s with the cake? Not that I’m upset, the baby loves anything with sugar.” I asked, setting a hand on my stomach.

“We coloured the cake, blue means boy and pink means a girl. I thought it was clever.” Mione answered, sitting down in an adjacent chair.

“Oh, it is clever.” I told her as I sat down across from her. Molly and Jean followed Ron with the cake and presents from the kitchen and placed them all in front of Mione. One by one Mione open her gifts and made sure to thank everyone for their thoughtful gift. Then with Ron’s help, Mione stood up and walked over to the cake. Ron handed her a knife, we all watch her cut the cake in anticipation. She slowly takes the piece and puts it on a plate then shows it to the rest of us. On the plate was a slice of pink coloured cake. Those who betted on the baby being a girl let out a cheer while the ones who thought it was a boy groaned. I turned to George with a giant smirk gracing my lips.

“You owe me a month of snickering jaw breakers, Feorge.” George let out another groan and plopped his head on the table with a thump. I let out a few chuckles as Teddy cheers excitedly about the candy. I look towards the clock to check the time. I grunted as I stood up from the chair. “It’s time for us to head back home.” Ron helps Mione up from her chair and we give each other another awkward hug before Teddy and I leave in a flash of light. As we walked out of the fireplace and into the living room at Baker Street, I brushed Teddy off then myself.

“Eiric.” I turn to the kitchen with a smile on my lips but if fades when I spot Sherlock’s blank expression but worried eyes.

“Sherlock?” I asked, worried and confused. I walked over to him and placed a hand on his cheek. “What’s wrong?” He sighed and closed his eyes for a moment before opening them again.

“Not guilty.” My eyes widen and my mouth open in a silent gasp. I looked towards Teddy then back to Sherlock. Sherlock pulled me into his arms and placed a kiss to my head as we stood there in silence, wondering what Jim was planning.

TPSH

Two Months Later

TPSH

I glanced up from my seat on the couch as Lestrade and Donovan walked into the living room with a file in their hand.

“Sherlock!” I called and went back to my book. Sherlock rushed into the room but let out a soft
groan when he spotted Donovan and Lestrade.

“What, Inspector?” He asked as he sat down in his chair. Lestrade handed him the case.

“Kidnapping. Rufus Bruhl kids, Max and Claudette.” Lestrade told him. Sherlock hopped up from his seat and began to read the file. I wave to John as he walks into the living room.

“Sherlock, Eiric, something weird . . .” He stops when he sees Lestrade and Donovan. “What’s going on?”

“Kidnapping.” Sherlock answered as he goes over to the table and sits down, starting to type on his laptop.

“Rufus Bruhl, the ambassador to the U.S.” Lestrade told John.

“He’s in Washington, isn't he?” John asked.

“Not him - his children, Max and Claudette, age seven and nine.” Lestrade answered. Donovan shows photographs of the two children to John. “They’re at St. Aldate’s.”

“Posh boarding place down in Surrey.” I let out a shudder at the mention of my childhood home town. Lestrade turns back to Sherlock.

“The school broke up; all the other boarders went home - just a few kids remained, including those two.” He said.

“The kids have vanished.” Donovan stated.

“The ambassador’s asked for you personally.” Sherlock is already on his feet and heading out of the door with his coat over his arm.

“The Reichenbach Hero.” Donovan called, sarcastically. Sherlock hesitates momentarily but then continues on. After a second Lestrade follows him out.

“Isn’t it great to be working with a celebrity!” John gestures for Donovan to leave before him before he turns to me.

“You going to be okay while we’re out?” He asked.

“I wish you’d let me go, John. I’m so bored here.” I told him with a small smile. He let out a few chuckles.

“You’re nine months pregnant, Eiric. You could go into labour at any time, it’s better if you go into labour here then at a crime scene.” I sighed but agreed.

“Go on, John. I’ll be fine.” He gave me a smile and wave then headed out of the room. I look down to my huge stomach.

“They never let us have any fun do they?” I asked the baby then went back to my book. I soon fell asleep on the couch as I waited for the boys to return home. I was startled awake when the front door slams open. I struggle to sit up as I try to figure out what’s going on. “Sherlock?” I asked as he walks into the living room, pulling his scarf and then his coat off as he goes across to the laptop on the table. John rushes over to me and helps me sit up.

“Four assassins living right on our doorstep. They didn't come here to kill me; they have to keep
me alive.” Sherlock sits down at the table while John goes over to the window near him and looks out.

“Assassins?” I repeated, confused.

“I’ve got something that all of them want, but if one of them approaches me . . .”

“. . . the others kill them before they can get it.” Sherlock grunts in agreement and types rapidly on the laptop.

“All of the attention is focussed on me. There’s a surveillance web closing in on us right now.” Sherlock said.

“So what have you got that’s so important?” John asked. Sherlock gazes into the distance and thinks for a moment, then runs his finger along the table beside the computer before lifting it and looking at his fingertip.

“We need to ask about the dusting.” He gets up and races downstairs.

“Sherlock! Leave her alone, it’s late!” I called after him. I look towards the kitchen when our bedroom door opens and Teddy walks into the living room, rubbing his eyes. “Come here, baby boy.” I open my arms to him and he cuddled up against my side.

“What’s going on, mummy?” He asked with a small yawn. I kissed the top of his head.

“No idea, Teddy-bear.” I answered. We watch Sherlock drag Mrs. Hudson upstairs in her nightdress and dressing gown. Sherlock hurries around the room checking for dust on all the furniture.

“Precise details: in the last week, what’s been cleaned?” Sherlock asked her.

“Well, Tuesday I did your lino . . .”

“No, in here, this room. This is where we’ll find it - any break in the dust line. You can put back anything but dust.” He lifts his hand from the latest piece of furniture that he has been running his finger along, and twirls his finger dramatically in the air. “Dust is eloquent.” Mrs. Hudson looks over her shoulder to John and I.

“What’s he on about?” She asked, quietly. I shrugged while John shakes his head and mumbles. By now Sherlock is climbing on the furniture to look more closely at the top shelves of the bookcase to the left of the fireplace.

“Cameras. We’re being watched.” Sherlock stated.

“What? Cameras?” Mrs. Hudson cringes. “Here? I’m in my nightie!” The doorbell rings and she hurries out of the room, John following her. Sherlock climbs down and was checking the eye sockets of the skull on the mantelpiece before climbing onto small tables on the other side of the fireplace to look at the bookshelves there. Checking the books on the top shelf, he moves a book around then reaches up to remove something from the bookshelves. Lestrade comes into the room followed by John.

“No, Inspector.” Sherlock said without turning around, still concentrating on removing whatever it was.

“What?” Lestrade asked, shocked. I frown and slowly move off the couch with Teddy coming to
stand by my side.

“The answer’s no.” Sherlock steps down with something in his hand.

“But you haven’t heard the question!” Lestrade exclaimed.

“You want to take me to the station. Just saving you the trouble of asking.” He walks closer to us. I stared at Sherlock in shock.

“Why would he need to bring you to the station, Sherlock?” I asked him but he ignored me.

“Sherlock . . .”

“The scream?” Sherlock asked, interrupting. I turn to John, hoping he would answer me.

“Scream?” I questioned him, he just shakes his head.

“Yeah.” Lestrade replied.

“Who was it? Donovan? I bet it was Donovan. Am I somehow responsible for the kidnapping? Ah, Moriarty is smart. He planted that doubt in her head; that little nagging sensation. You’re going to have to be strong to resist. You can’t kill an idea, can you? Not once it’s made a home . . .” Sherlock reaches forward and briefly places his index fingertip on Lestrade’s forehead between his eyes. “. . . there.”

“Will you come?” He asked. Sherlock turns away, sitting down at his laptop and beginnings to type.

“One photograph - that’s his next move. Moriarty’s game: first the scream, then a photograph of me being taken in for questioning. He wants to destroy me inch by inch. Sherlock picks up the camera again, he looks at it for a moment, then raises his eyes to Lestrade’s. “It is a age, Lestrade, and not one I’m willing to play.” Sherlock looks away again.

“Given my regards to Sergeant Donovan.” Sighing and exchanging a brief look with John, Lestrade turns and heads off down the stairs. John and I watch him go then turns back towards Sherlock. John goes over to the right-hand window and looks out. Sherlock briefly looks at us. “They’ll be deciding.”

“Deciding?” John asked. I closed my eyes in despair.

“Whether to come back with a warrant and arrest me.” He told him.

“You think?” John questioned.

“Standard procedure.” I told him.

“Should have gone with him. People’ll think . . .” John started.

“I don’t care what people think.” Sherlock interrupted.

“You’d care if they thought you were stupid, or wrong.” John retorted.

“No, that would just make them stupid or wrong.” Angrily, John turns towards him.

“Sherlock, I don’t want the world believing you’re . . .” He breaks off as Sherlock lifts his head to look at him. They lock eyes for a long moment.
“That I am what?” Sherlock bite out.

“A fraud.” Sherlock rolls his eyes and sits back in the seat.

“You’re worried they’re right.” He said.

“What?” John asked.

“You’re worried they’re right about me.” He said, again.

“No.” John shook his head.

“That’s why you’re so upset. You can’t even entertain the possibility that they might be right. You’re afraid that you’ve been taken in as well.” John turns away and looks out of the window again.

“No, I’m not.” Sherlock leans forward.

“Moriarty is playing with your mind too.” Furious, he slams his hand onto the table, causing Teddy to jump slightly.

“Can’t you see what’s going on?” John looks at him for a few seconds, then looks out of the window again.

“No, I know you’re for real.” John told him.


“Well, nobody could fake being such an annoying dick all the time.” Sherlock locks eyes with him again, then his mouth twitches with the trace of a smile. John looks away once more. I waddled over to Sherlock and slowly sat down in the chair beside him.

“Sherlock, what is going on?” I asked him. Sherlock took my hand and brought it to his lips, placing a kiss to it.

“Everything will be fine, I promise.” He whispered.

“Don’t make promises you can’t keep.” I whispered back with tears in my eyes and tried to get out of the chair, but broke down into tears. Sherlock brought me into his arms, Teddy crawled onto our lap and joined our little hug.
Teddy and I moved to the couch while we waited in silence for Lestrade to returned. I turned to John when his mobile went off and watched him as he talked quietly to the other person before hanging up. He turned to Sherlock, who was now sitting in his chair.

“So, still got some friends on the Force. It’s Lestrade. Says they’re all coming over here right now, queuing up to slap on the handcuffs: every single officer you ever made feel like a tit, which is a lot of people.” He said. We all look up when Mrs. H knocks at the door. She looks at us as though she feels the tension in the room.

“Oh, sorry, am I interrupting?” She asked. I shook my head in a silent negative and she turns to John. “Some chap delivered a parcel. I forgot. Marked ‘Perishable’ - I had to sign for it.” John takes the Jiffy bag from her. I lock eyes on the wax seal and get up from my seat, waddling over to John for a closer look. “Funny name. German, like the fairytales.” Sherlock rises to his feet and walks forward, his gaze intense and locked on the Jiffy bag as John opens it and pulls out the contents. I take the bag from him to get a better look of the seal. Outside, the sirens of several different vehicles are approaching. In John’s hand is a large gingerbread man but it’s an unusual colour. He tilts it so that Sherlock and I can see it better.

“Burnt to a crisp.” Sherlock muttered. I turn to the window at the sound of car doors being slammed. The lights of the vehicles flashing through the room.

“What does it mean?” John asked him. The doorbell rings and at the same time someone pounds on the front door knocker.

“Police!” Someone yelled.

“I’ll go.” Mrs. H turns and hurries down the stairs as someone continues to knock on the door. As soon as she opens the door we could hear Donovan and Lestrade. John hands me the gingerbread man and heads downstairs. I put the burnt biscuit and envelope down on the coffee table and move over to Sherlock as he puts on his scarf. I pick up his coat watching him loop his scarf around his neck as he stares at me with an intense gaze. I help him put on his coat and button just the way he liked it while we listen to everyone arguing downstairs. I put a hand on his cheek and stare into his diamond blue eyes.

“I love you.” I whispered to him. He covered my hand with his and bent down to place a soft kiss on my lips. As he straightens up, Lestrade and Donovan enter the room. I move away as Lestrade walks to Sherlock while two other armed officers attach handcuffs to Sherlock’s left wrist. I hold Teddy to me as we all watch from the sideline.

“Sherlock Holmes, I’m arresting you on suspicion of abduction and kidnapping.” John gestures towards Sherlock while looking at Lestrade as the officer pulls Sherlock’s left hand behind his back in order to cuff his other wrist.

“He’s not resisting.” John snapped.

“John.” I whispered, placing a comforting hand on his shoulder.

“It’s all right, John.” Sherlock told him. I bit my lip as my eyes being to water. John shakes my hand off and turns to Sherlock.
“He’s not resisting. No, it’s not all right. This is ridiculous.” Lestrade turns to the officer who handcuffed Sherlock.

“Get him downstairs now.” The officer spins Sherlock around and marches him out the door. Teddy rips himself out of my grip and races after Sherlock. I quickly rush after him, though a bit slowly when I got to the stairs. Just as I got to the bottom of the stairs and out the front door, I watch as Teddy latches onto Sherlock with tears streaming down his face.

“Teddy, you have to let go.” Sherlock told him, gently. Teddy shook his head as a soft sob slipped out. I walked over to them and gently pry Teddy off of Sherlock. But Teddy refuse to release Sherlock.

“You can’t go, daddy!” He cried as I finally got him off of Sherlock. I held Teddy close to my chest as the officer push Sherlock against the police car. I turn to head to the door but freeze in shock as the Chief Superintendent walks out holding a handkerchief to his bleeding nose. Soon John is being dragged out of the flat and to the police car.

“John, what did you do?” I hissed at him as he passed me as Teddy and I join Mrs. H, standing in the front door archway. Suddenly, all of the police officers are bending over in pain and Sherlock pulls out a gun from one of the officers closet to him. He raises the gun up in the air with John’s left hand hanging in the air next to it.

“Ladies and gentlemen, expect for Eiric,” I raised an eyebrow at that. “will you all please get on your knees?” My mouth drops open in shock at Sherlock’s request, is he trying to make this worst? When nobody reacts very quickly, Sherlock raises the gun skywards and fires it twice. “NOW would be good!” He lowers it and points it at a police man. I slowly move Teddy and Mrs. H back inside but still making sure to watch everything.

“Do as he says!” Lestrade gestures everybody downwards and all of the police start to kneel. The boys start to back away.

“Just-just so you’re aware, the gun is his idea. I’m just a . . . you know . . .” Sherlock transfers the pistol to his right hand and promptly aims it at John’s head.

“My hostage.” Sherlock said, loudly as they continue to back away. Sherlock gaze meets mine for a moment then they were gone, running away from the police. I shut the front door and turn to Teddy and Mrs. H, who both are still standing in the hallway.

“Mrs. H, could you take care of Teddy while I try to fix this?” I asked her.

“Of course, Eiric.” She nodded and turned to Teddy. “Come on, sweetie.” I watch them enter Mrs. H flat and then made my way upstairs.

“Hello, sister.” I snapped my head to the couch as I pause in the doorway of our flat.

“Richard.” I whispered as he smirks at me. I walk into the room and stand in front of him from the other side of the coffee table.

“Tristyn.” He replied as we stared at one another.

“What are you doing here?” I asked him with fury lacing my tone. He smirks again and shrugs.

“Came to visit you, of course. It’s a bit hard to see you when you have your dogs guarding you twenty-four/seven.” I glanced at him as he stood up from the couch and walked towards me. He looked down at my swollen stomach then back to my face. “I guess congratulations are in order for
you two. My baby sister is having her first baby with my enemy. Well, at least it’ll be smart and
good looking, right?” I took a few steps back when he got to close.

“Why are you doing this, Richard? Why can’t you let me be happy?” I asked him, almost begged.
“Please, just stop all of this. Please.” He stared at me for a moment with a blank expression.

“I can’t stop, Tristyn. Not now. Sherlock, owes me a fall.” I stared at him, confused as he walks to
the door. “And what a fall it’ll be. Now I must be going, it’s show time.” He said and walked out of
the room, leaving the flat.

“A fall?” I asked out loud to the empty room. I wince as a shot of pain ripples across my stomach.
“Oooh, that hurt.” I moved over to the couch and sat down to relax for a bit. I’m startled awake
when my mobile goes off. I look out the window and notice it’s light outside, I curse silently to
myself for falling asleep then look for my phone. When I finally found it, a text popped up on the
screen.
[Barts - SH]

I let out a sigh and grab my coat, heading downstairs. Mrs. H was standing in front of the door
letting in the repair guy in as I walk out.

“I’ll be back in a bit, Mrs. H.” I called back to her and hailed a taxi to take me to St. Barts. The cab
ride was silent as I stared blankly out the window, lost in thought until the taxi pulled up to the
hospital. I paid the driver and got out, making my way to the lab. I enter the lab and look around
for John and Sherlock.

“Sherlock? John?” I called out.

“Back here, Eiric.” I heard John call from the back of the lab. I quickly walk to the back and let out
a sigh of relief when I see them. I pulled John into a hug then Sherlock.

“You’re both okay.” I whispered as I held onto Sherlock for a moment longer.

“Are you alright?” I heard Sherlock whisper.

“I’m fine.” I told him and released him from my hold and moved to John to make sure he was
alright. When I was positive that they were both perfectly fine, I sat down in one of the chairs and
gave another wince as the pain rippled across my stomach once again. Sherlock pulls out a rubber
ball and starts rolling it side to side on the table while John and I talk to each other quietly to let
Sherlock think in peace. Suddenly, someone’s mobile rings. We all check our phones and John
answers his.

[Yeah, speaking.] He listens for a moment. [Er, what?] He asked, shocked and gets up to his feet.
[What happened? Is she okay?] I gave him a worried look as he listens to the other person. [Oh my
God. Right, yes, we’re coming.] He switches the phone off.

“What is it?” I asked him.

“Paramedics. Mrs Hudson - she’s been shot.” He told me. My eyes widen in shock.

“Oh Merlin.” I said in horror as I got up from my seat.

“What? How?” Sherlock asked. I turned to him, confused. He had said that a bit too calmly.

“Well, probably one of the killers you managed to attract . . . Jesus. Jesus. She’s dying, Sherlock.
Let’s go.” John said, frantically and turns towards the door.

“You go. I’m busy.” Sherlock answered, disinterestedly. I watch Sherlock with wide eyes, it was like I was see a whole different person. John turns back towards him, appalled.

“Busy?” John questioned.

“Thinking. I need to think.” Sherlock replied. Something wasn't right, Sherlock wouldn't act like this if Mrs. H was in danger.

“You need to . . .? Doesn't she mean anything to you? You once half killed a man because he laid a finger on her.” John stated.

“She’s my landlady.” Sherlock shrugged.

“She’s dying . . .” John started, furiously as he flails a hand in front of himself in utter disbelief at Sherlock’s attitude.

“You machine.” He looks down, shaking his head. “Sod this. Sod this.” He heads towards the door, again. “You stay here if you want, on your own.”

“Alone is what I have. Alone protects me.” I stare at Sherlock with watery eyes. John opens the door.

“No. Friends protect people. Let’s go, Eiric.” Sherlock finally turns to look at me, his eyes unnaturally bright. I turn to John for a moment.

“I’ll be right there, John.” He gives me a short nod and storms out of the room. I turn back to Sherlock, who was still staring at me. I return the stare for a moment as I felt the tears finally roll down my cheeks. Sherlock shoots out of his seat and pulls me into a tight embrace. “Sherlock, you’re scaring me.” His grip became tighter. I pulled away slightly to see his face better. “Sherlock, please tell me what’s going on. Please.” I whispered the last part, brokenly. He gives me a bitter smile as he cups my face in-between his hands and places a sweet kiss to my lips.

“I love you.” I stare up at him for a moment before slowly pulling myself out of his hold. I turn to the door but pause in my step then turn back to Sherlock. I pulled off my engagement ring and transformed one of the test tubes into a metal chain. I slid the ring onto the chain and then place the necklace around Sherlock’s neck. I put my hands on his chest after I’m done. “Eiric.” Sherlock whispered.

“It’s to remind you that you have people who love you waiting for you to come back.” I told him then gave him a quick kiss then walk out the door to catch up with John.

TPSH

Bart’s Lab Sherlock Pov

I stare on as I watch Eiric walk out of the room while a single tear rolled down my cheek. A moment later my phone trills a text alert. I reach into my pocket and look at the message.

[I’m waiting . . . JM]

I take in a deep breath then walk across the lab buttoning my jacket. I pick up my coat, open the door and leave the room, heading for the roof. I walk up the stairs and open the door to the roof, I take a minute as I stand on the roof before walking towards Moriarty.
“Ah. Here we are at last - you and me, Sherlock, and our problem - the final problem.” He holds his phone up higher. “Stayin’ alive! It’s so boring, isn't it?” Angrily, he switches the phone off. “It’s just . . .” He holds his hand out flat with the palm down and skims it slowly through the air level to the roof. “. . . staying.” He pulls his hand back and briefly sinks his head into it while I pace around the roof.

“All my life I’ve been searching for distractions. First, Tristyn but then she got too smart for me to trick easily. She was a quick learner.” I shot him a curious look. “She used my own tricks against me for awhile. Then there was you. You were the best distraction and now I don’t even have you. Because I’ve beaten you.” I turn my head sharply towards him as I continue to pace.

“And you know what? In the end it was easy.” I stop and fold my hands behind my back. “It was easy. Now I’ve got to go back to playing with the ordinary people. And it turns out you’re ordinary just like all of them. I don’t understand how Tristyn can stand it, really.” He said quietly, disappointed. He lowers his head again and rubs his face before looking up at me.

“Ah well.” He stands up and walks closer, then starts to pace slowly around me. “Did you almost start to wonder if I was real? Did I nearly get you?”

“Richard Brook.” I stated, simply.

“Nobody seems to get the joke, but you do.” Moriarty said.

“Of course.” I replied.

“Attaboy.” I stop myself from rolling my eyes.

“Rich Brook in German is Reichen Bach - the case that made my name.” I answered, calmly.

“Just tryin’ to have some fun.” He returned in a fake American accent. He continues to pace around me. I begin to tap out a rhythm with my fingers. “Good. You got that too.”

“Beats like digits. Every beat is a one; every rest is a zero. Binary code. That’s why all those assassins tried to save my life. It was hidden on me; hidden inside my head - a few simple lines of computer code that can break into any system.” I said.

“I told all my clients: last one to Sherlock is a sissy.” I gesture to my head.

“Yes, but now that it’s up here, I can use it to alter all the records. I can kill Rich Brook and Bring back Jim Moriarty.” Moriarty gazes at me for a moment, then turns away with a disappointed look on his face.

“No, no, no, no, no, this is too easy.” He buries his head in his hands. “This is too easy.” Lowering his hands, he turns back to me. “There is no key, DOOFUS!” He screams the last word into my face.

“Those digits are meaningless. They’re utterly meaningless.” I can’t hide the confusion on my face as he goes on. “You don’t really think a couple of lines of computer code are gonna crash the world around our ears? I’m disappointed.” He turns away and lumbers across the roof, making his voice sound moronic as he continues to speak.

“I’m disappointed in you, ordinary Sherlock.” I blink a few times.

“But the rhythm . . .” I trailed off.

“‘Partita number one.’ Thank you, Johann Sebastian Bach.” Moriarty raises his arms.
“But then how did . . .”

“Then how did I break into the Bank, to the Tower, to the Prison?” He speaks over me. He turns and spreads his arms wide. “Daylight robbery. All it takes is some willing participants. I knew you’d fall for it. That’s your weakness - you always want everything to be clever. Now, shall we finish the game? One final act. Glad you chose a tall building - nice way to do it.” I had been staring blankly into the distance.

“Do it? Do - do what?” I asked bewildered then blink as it becomes clearer to me and turn towards Jim. “Yes, of course. My suicide.”

“Genius detective proved to be a fraud”. I read it in the paper, so it must be true. I love newspapers. Fairytales.” I walk to the edge of the roof and lean forward, looking over the side to the ground below. Moriarty walks over, standing beside me and looks over the side as well. “And pretty Grimm ones too.”

TPSH

221B John Pov

As the taxi pulls up outside the flat, Eiric and I jump out and hurry towards the door. I scrabble for my keys when I unlock the door, we hurry inside. We see the tattooed workman standing at the top of his stepladder just in front of the stairs, drilling a hole into the wall. Mrs. Hudson was standing nearby watching him. We run towards her causing her to jump in startlement.

“Oh, God, John! Eiric! You made me jump!” She exclaimed. Eiric stares at her for a moment before cursing loudly and raced out of the house. I stared at her in confusion. “Is everything okay now with the police? Has, um Sherlock sorted it all out?” I stare for a moment longer then it suddenly sinks in.

“Oh my God.” I said softly, my voice full of horror. I quickly rush after Eiric and find her struggling to get a taxi. “Taxi!” A cab begins to pull over on the other side of the road. We chase across the road towards it. “Taxi!” We see a man lean inside the taxi as we run around the cab and open the rear door.

“No, Police!” Eiric yells as we scramble inside. The man walks away, angrily.

TPSH

Bart’s Rooftop Sherlock Pov

We turn towards each other, still at the edge of the roof.

“I can still prove that you created an entirely false identity.” I told him.

“Oh, just kill yourself. It’s a lot less effort.” He said, wearily exasperated. I turn away, pacing distractedly. “Go on. For me.” He makes his voice into a high-pitched squeal for the next word. “Pleeeeeease?” In a sudden movement, I grab him by the collar of his coat with both hands and spin him around so that his back is to the drop. I stare into his face and then shove him back one step nearer the edge. Moriarty looks at me with interest as my breathing becomes shorter.

“You’re insane.” He blinks.

“You’re just getting that now?” I shove him further back, now holding him over the edge. He whoops almost triumphantly and gazes back at me with no fear in his eyes, holding his hands out
wide and committing himself to my grasp. “Okay, let me give you a little extra incentive.” I frown.

“Your friends will die if you don’t.” Moriarty’s voice becomes more savage. Fear begins to creep into me.

“John.”

“Not just John. Everyone.” He said in a whisper.

“Mrs. Hudson.”

“Everyone.” He whispered with a delighted smile.

“Lestrade.”

“Everyone.” He hissed out with glee.

“Teddy and Eiric.” His smile grows.

“Three bullets; three gunmen; three victims. Teddy, Tristyn, and your unborn child will become mine and we’ll be that big happy family Tristyn deserves. Your brat will be my new toy to mold into the perfect psychopath with me as it’s mentor.” I gave him a death glare, furious as I pull him back to safety. He stares into my face. “Unless my people see you jump.” I gaze past him, breathing heavily lost in horror. Moriarty shakes himself free of my grasp.

“You can have me arrested; you can torture me; you can do anything you like with me; but nothing’s gonna prevent them from pulling the trigger. Your only three friends in the world will die and your family turn into slaves . . . unless . . .” He smiles, triumphantly.

“. . . unless I kill myself - complete your story.” Moriarty nods and smiles ecstatically.

“You’ve gotta admit that’s sexier.” My gaze becomes distant and lost.

“And I die in disgrace.”

“OF course. That’s the point of this.” He said in a matter-of-fact tone. He looks over the side. “Oh, you’ve got an audience now. Off you pop.” He rolls his head from side to side on his neck. “Go on.” I slowly step past him and up onto the ledge. “I told you how this ends.” My breathing becomes more shaky as I look down.

“Your death is the only thing that’s gonna call off the killers. I’m certainly not gonna do it.” I blink anxiously.

“Would you give me . . . one moment, please; one moment of privacy?” I glance down at the man who would of became my brother-in-law if Eiric and I had married. “Please?” He looks disappointed.

“Of course.” He moves away. I take several shallow anxious breaths, then I stop breathing for a moment as my brain kicks into gear again. I lift my gaze as my expression becomes more like me. Slowly, a smile spreads across my face and I start to chuckle. I began to laugh in delight.

“What?” I hear him ask, furiously. I continue to laugh. “What it is?” I half turn on the ledge, smiling towards him as he glares back. “What did I miss?” He hissed out. I hop down off the ledge and walk closer to him.

“You’re not going to do it.” So the killers can be called off, then - there’s a recall code or a word or
a number.” Now I’m the one circling my prey. “I don’t have to die . . .” I change my voice to become sing-song. “. . . if I’ve got you.”

“Oh!” Moriarty laughs in relieved delight. “You think you can make me stop the order? You think you can me do that?”

“No. But I know who can.” I said as I circle him still. He gave me a confused look.

“Oh? And who’s that?” I sent him a smirk.

“Your sister. Eiric. She asked you once to stop and you did. I’m sure if she asked again, you would. You would do anything for your Raven, wouldn't you?” He sent me a glare before smiling.

“Oh, Sherlock. She already has.” I pause in my steps and stare at him, he leans in close. “And I refused.” I sent him a deadly glare as I got into his face.

“I am you - prepared to do anything; prepared to burn; prepared to do what ordinary people won’t do. You want me to shake hands with you in hell? I shall not disappoint you.” Moriarty shakes his hand slowly.


“Oh, I may be on the side of the angels, but don’t think for one second that I am one of them.” I said in an ominous voice. We lock eyes for a long moment.

“No, you’re not.” He blinks, then closes his eyes briefly. I do likewise. “I see. You’re not ordinary. No. You’re me.” He said softly, insanely. He hisses out a delighted laugh and his voice becomes more high-pitched. “You’re me! Thank you!” He lifts his right hand, offering it to me to shake it. “Sherlock Holmes.” We both look down at the offered hand, then I slowly raise my own hand and take it. Moriarty is nodding his head, almost frenetically.

“Thank you. Bless you.” He blinks and lowers his gaze. “As long as I’m alive, you can save your friends and family; you’ve got a way out.” He continues to look at the ground. “Well, good luck with that.” In rapid succession, he raises his eyes to mine, grins manically, opens his mouth wide and pulls me closer as he pulls out a pistol and raises it towards his own mouth. As I instinctively pull back, crying out in alarm, Moriarty sticks the muzzle into his mouth and pulls the trigger, dropping to the roof instantly. I stare in horror as blood begins to trickle across the roof underneath Moriarty’s head. His eyes are fixed and open and there’s a smile of victory on his face. I spin away from him, my breathing noisy and frantic as I raise my hands to my head in horror. I breath shallowly and rapidly, holding my sleeve up over my mouth in horror as I turn to look at Moriarty’s fixed grin. I think frantically for a while, then slowly turn toward the edge of the building.

My breathing begins to slow as I step up onto the ledge, blowing out another breath I look down towards the ground. A taxi stops in the street below, I watch as John and Eiric get out of the taxi and start walking towards the hospital. Eiric was holding onto her stomach as if she was in pain. My eyes widen in shocked horror as I realized that she’s going into labour. I take my phone out and hit John’s speed dial.

[Hello?]
[John.] I answered, watching him motion to Eiric.
[Hey, Sherlock, you okay?] They walk closer to the hospital.
[Turn around and walk back the way you came now]
[No, we’re coming in.]
[Just do as I ask. Please.] I told him, frantically. I saw John gently grab Eiric’s arm and turn back around.
[Where?] He asked. I pause for a moment while John and Eiric walk back along the road.
[Stop there.] I said, urgently.
[Sherlock?] I hear Eiric ask when then they stopped.
[Okay, look up. I’m on the rooftop.] John spins around then said something to Eiric to cause her to turn and look up. I bit my lip as I watch her cover her mouth in horror, her breathtaking green eyes widen to the size of tea saucers.
[Oh God.] John said in horror.
[I . . . I . . . I can’t come down, so we’ll . . . we’ll just have to do it like this.] I told him.
[What’s going on?] He asked, anxiously.
[An apology. It’s all true.]
[Wh-what?]
[Everything they said about me. I invented Moriarty.] I look around briefly at my enemy’s grinning body lying behind me.
[Why are you saying this?] John asked in disbelief. I turn back to look down at them.
[I’m a fake.] My voice breaks.
[Sherlock . . .]
[The newspapers were right all along. I want you to tell Lestrade; I want you to tell Mrs Hudson, and Molly . . . in fact, tell anyone who will listen to you that I created Moriarty for my own purposes.] My voice starts to become tearful.
[Okay, shut up, Sherlock, shut up. The first time we met . . . the first time we met, you knew all about my sister, right?]
[Nobody could be that clever.]
[You could.] I laugh and gaze down at my friend and fiancee, a tear dripping from my chin.
[I researched you. Before we met I discovered everything that I could to impress you.] I sniffed quietly. [I’d like to talk to Eiric, John. Please.] I watch as he hands the phone over to her.
[Sherlock, stop this, please. Just stop this right now.] I closed eyes at the sound of Eiric’s despair.
[I can’t, Eiric.]
[Whatever he told you, whatever he’s done. We can fix it, together. So please come down.] I shook
my head with a bitter chuckle.

[Not this time, darling.] I told her, she let out a sob.

[We’re having a baby, Sherlock. We were going to get married, be a family.]

[I know.] I took in a deep breath. [When you go home, I want you to go to my dresser and open my sock drawer. In it you’ll find my ring, I’d like you to wear it as a reminder of me.] She starts to shake her head.

[Please don’t talk like that, Sherlock.] She starts to walk towards the hospital entrance.

[No, stay exactly where you are. Don’t move.] I told her, urgently. She stops and moves back to John.

[Sherlock.] Breathing rapidly, I raise my hand out to her.

[Keep your eyes fixed on me.] My voice becomes frantic. [Please, will you do this for me?]

[Do what?] she asked confused.

[This phone call - it’s er . . . it’s my note. It’s what people do, don’t they - leave a note?] She shakes her head.

[Sherlock, stop it.] Her voice was shaky.

[I’m sorry.] I gaze down at my only friend and pregnant fiancee for several seconds, then I lower my arm and drop my phone onto the roof, gazing ahead of my myself. I spread out my arms to either side and fall forward, plummeting towards the ground.

“SHERLOCK!”
Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

Author Note: Wow! Well, guys this is the last chapter for Reichenbach Fall. Next chapter will be the beginning of The Empty Hearse. Be on the look out for Three years later oneshot which will explain what’s been going on in Eiric’s, Teddy’s and Korra’s life after Sherlock’s death. I know this is a short chapter but the next one will make up for it. So I hope you’ve enjoy the story so far! Ta for now!

Bart’s Eiric Pov

“Sherlock!” I screamed again before bending over in pain. “Ow!” I cried, my eyes widening in horrid shock as I felt my water break. I look around for John and found him on the ground in the middle of the street. “John.” I called but it came out soft as a contraction hit. I sat down on the sidewalk trying to control my breathing as the contractions got worst.

“Eiric?!” I looked up at the call and saw John running towards me. He crouched down around me. “Eiric, what’s wrong?” He asked before wincing when I gave him a pained glare.

“Baby.” I whispered out before whimpering as another contraction hit. “The baby’s coming.” John was quick to get me staying again and moved inside the hospital.

“Help! We need help.” Nurse ran towards us with a wheelchair. They helped me into the chair and rushed me to the delivery ward. I held on tightly to John’s hand as the pain got worst as the minutes went by. They quickly got me into a room and settled. The doctor and nurses rush around the room, setting up monitors and seeing how far along I was. The doctor suddenly looks to John with an anxious look.

“She dilating to fast, it’s causing the baby to go into fetal distress.” He said. I tighten my hold on John’s hand.

“What’s going to happen then?” John asked him. I let out a light scream as the pain increased.

“She’ll be ready to push very soon.” He told us. I began to sob and shake my head.

“Sherlock.” John made a shushing sound to soothe me. I turned my head to him. “He’s supposed to be here, John. He promised.” John brush some of my hair off my sweaty forehead.

“I know, Eiric. I know.” He whispered before I let out another cry of pain.

“Okay, Ms. Potter. It’s time to push.” I nodded then started pushing when the doctor told me. The next few hours were filled with me screaming, crying, and calling for Sherlock until finally, our baby was born. “Congratulations, Ms. Potter. It’s a girl.” The doctor said before he handed her off to a nurse to check her over.

“You hear that, Eiric?” I looked at John, tiredly. “It’s a girl.”

“A girl?” I asked in a soft, hoarse voice. John nodded with a small smile. A tall male nurse brought the baby over to me and placed her in my heavy arms. “Thank you.” I told him as I stared in awe at
my daughter. She had a mop of red-orange hair on her head that was already beginning to curl.

“What’s her name, Eiric?” John asked.

“Korra.” I gave a small, broken smile as I run a finger over her cheek. “Korra Edelweiss Jonquil Holmes.”

Four days later

Cemetery

I held Korra in my arms while I walked us through the graveyard going to Sherlock’s grave. John and Mrs. H had his ceremony two days ago while I was still in the hospital. Then John moved out of Baker Street once I was given permission to go home. I understood why he left but it was just the wrong time to leave the three of us behind. When I finally find Sherlock’s black tombstone, I stare at it for a few moments in silence.

“I have no idea where to start, Sherlock.” I told the stone. “I still can’t believe your gone. Teddy is so heartbroken and Korra . . . Merlin, Korra will never know who her father really is. She’ll hear the truth from John and I but from the rest of the World, she’ll hear the lies they believe are true.” I look down at my sleeping daughter. “She’s so beautiful, Sherlock. An almost carbon copy of me but she has your diamond blues.” I let out a soft sob. “I miss you so much, Sherlock.” I look at the stone.

“I wish I knew what Richard said to you to make you . . . make you commit suicide.” I let out a deep breath. “John moved out, he couldn't stand living in Baker Street without you. I quit my jobs at the Yard and at Bart’s, too many memories of you there in both places. I’m actually thinking about going to stay at Molly’s and Arthur’s for a bit, try to get use to the idea that I’ll be raising Korra on my own now.” I look around the cemetery to make sure I’m alone then walk closer to the headstone.

“You told me once that you weren't a hero, but Sherlock, to Teddy, John, and I; you were. I wish you could of seen that yourself. I did what you asked, by the way.” I pulled the metal chain out from underneath my shirt, his wedding ring hanging from it. I let out a sigh as I glance at the stone again. I kissed my fingers and pressed them against the stone. I start to turn around but stop and turn back to the headstone.

“I have just one wish, Sherlock.” I told the stone. “One miracle, for all of us. Don’t be dead, come back home.” My voice breaks and fills with tears. “Just stop all of this and come back to me.” I lower my head for a moment, broken. I hold Korra closer to my chest as I weep for a bit. After a while, I wipe my eyes, sniff quietly and raise my head. “Goodbye, Sherlock.” I whispered and gave his stone one more and final kiss before turning my attention to my now awake daughter.

“Let’s go home, princess. It’s a bit to cold for you to stay out any longer.” I told her and pressed a kiss to her forehead, earning a coo from her. I gave the headstone one more glance then turn on my heel and walk away. As I walk across the ground, I saw something out the corner of my eye. I look towards the direction and only found trees. I glanced around the area for a moment then carry on my way to the car waiting for us. I get inside the car and quickly buckle Korra into her carseat then turn to the man in front of me.
“Where to, Eiric?” He asked me.

“To the Burrow, please Mycroft.” I answer then stared out the window of the car, watching the cemetery fade out of view.

“It will get better, trust me.” I heard him say, softly. I turn back to him with a glare.

“Trusting you got Sherlock killed. After this, I want nothing to do with you, Mr. Holmes.” He flinched before nodding.

“As you wish, Ms. Potter.” I placed a hand on Korra’s stomach, watching her sleep before falling asleep myself.

TPSH

Sherlock Pov

I watched from a distance under some trees as Eiric talked to my empty grave. What she’ll never know is that I got to hold my daughter, even if it was for a short moment and hear Eiric name her. One of the happiest moments in my life but also the saddest. Eiric turns around and begins to walk across the graveyard, I quickly jump behind a tree when Eiric looks in my direction before carrying on walking. I wait until she’s out of view before stepping out of from the trees. I give a reflective look for a long moment, then turn and walk away. I place a hand around Eiric’s ring and bring it to my lips, placing a kiss to it.

“I will return, darling. Please wait for me.” I whispered to the air as I leave the lonely graveyard.
Chapter 33

Three years later . . .

TPSH

St. Petersburg Sherlock Pov

I raked my hand through my fresh cut hair, it still smelled like that pretentious salon that Mycroft insisted on taking me. I was currently sitting in an armchair in the corner of the hotel room with a folder balanced on my leg. *Three years . . .* I thought, rubbing the thick file with my thumb. *Three years that were taken from us.* The deadbolt of the door clicked and Mycroft came in with a rather heavy dusting of white on his shoulders.

"Flight's been postponed until the storm clears out." He told me as he rolled his wool coat off of himself. He glanced at the manilla colored folder in my lap before throwing his maroon scarf over the coat rack.

"So how many times have you read it?" I tapped the folder and looked out at St. Petersburg through the window.

"Two, three times?" he guessed, reaching for a glass from the wet bar.

"None." I growled. To be perfectly honest, I was a little scared to see what I had missed from Eiric's life, and Korra's. . . I wasn't even sure if she knew I existed. Of course there would be stories from her mother and Teddy, but stories aren't a person, aren't a father.

"Sherlock," I heard him set his presumably full glass onto the counter, "You can't go back until you've read it. You can't just waltz back into their lives without so much as an—"

"I know!" I yelled, scattering the contents of the file in front of me. "I know." I sighed, gathering the white pages that held the contents of my loved ones lives. I heard Mycroft's footsteps and heard his left knee pop as he knelt down.

"Sherlock, you died for them, I know you can come back from oblivion for them." He assured softly, handing me a group of papers with a picture of Teddy's birthday attached to a paperclip. I pulled the picture from it's papers and touched their lithograph faces. Why couldn't this be one of those charmed ones that moved, that laughed. I felt a sharp pain in my throat as I thought of Eiric's silver bell laugh and Teddy's boyish snicker.

"I wonder if Korra's laugh sounds anything like her mothers. . ." I whispered. Mycroft sighed and shuffled the file back into order.

"Read the file and you can find out when we get you home." He said in a, dare I say, soft voice. I chuckled half-heartedly and took the contents from his hand.

"You're getting sentimental." I stated. Mycroft rolled his eyes and walked into his room with his glass of bourbon. I stared apprehensively at the black letters in front of me and sank back into the cushioned chair. It was going to be a long night.

TPSH

221B Eiric pov
"Korra! What have I told you about running on the stairs?" I quipped, putting a black pump on. She whipped her head around and stared at me with her frosty eyes, her fathers eye, before giving me a great big "NO!" and trotted down the hallway to Mrs. H flat.

"Just like her father." I huffed, pushing a curl from my face. I walk over to the stairs going down to my old flat. I had the door removed about a year ago after Teddy was finally comfortable being by himself again. "Teddy, it's time to go!" I called down to him.

"Coming, mum!" I heard him yell. I turned to the front door with a raised eyebrow when I heard it open. My eyes widen in shock as I watch John walk into the entrance way. He pauses and stares up at the stairs as if he heard something. Mrs. H opens her door and also pauses in shock at seeing John. He finally looks to us, raising a hand in greeting. I gave him a faint smile in greeting then turn to Mrs. H.

"Thank you for watching Korra again, Mrs. H." She waves her hand at me, flippantly and picks Korra up.

"It's no problem, Eiric. I absolutely adore her." I gave a bright smile and place a kiss to Korra's cheek.

"Mummy and bubby are leaving now, princess. Be good for Nana Emma. Love you." I gave her another kiss then walked pass John to grab my coat. "It's nice to see you again, John. It's been too long." I told him as I put my coat on.

"Yes, it has been, hasn't it?" He nods with a tight smile. I bite my lip and start to reach out to him, but change my mind and let my hand drop back to my side. We stood there in awkward silence for a moment.

"How's Mary?" I asked, quietly. His face lights up with a beaming smile at the mention of her. I shake away the envy that crawls into my mind at his happiness.

"Wonderful! I'm going to ask her to marry me tonight, actually." I place on a fake smile for him. "Congratulations, John. I'm happy for you." He gives me a goofy smile and Teddy appears in the hallway. "Teddy, you're going to be late for school if we don't leave now." I told him and helped him into his school coat, pushing him out the door. "See you later, John." I called over my shoulder and hailed a taxi for Teddy and I.

TPSH

Scotland Yard

I sighed as I walk into the building, hands shoved into my coat pockets. I walk to the lifts and push the up button, waiting for a lift to appear.

"Eiric! Eiric!" I let out another sigh and look over my shoulder.

"Hello, Anderson." I said to the bearded man. He came to a stop at my side and handed me a cup. I take it with a faint smile. "Thank you." He grins then goes into another one of his 'Sherlock-is-alive-and-this-is-how-he-did-it' rants. The lift pings and opens it doors and we entered, I pushed the fifth floor button still listening to Anderson's rant. I watch the lights at the top of the door light up as the lift took us pass the floors until it stop at the fifth floor. The lift pings again and the doors open, we walk out into the office.

"Don't you see, Eiric?! It's genius!" I close my eyes and turn to Anderson.
"Anderson, you need to stop . . ." I waved at him, ". . . all this. He's dead and he's staying dead. I know you feel guilty but these ideas, they aren't healthy. So please, do this not just for yourself but for me," I told him, softly then walked away. I knocked on Lestrade door and walked in. I toss a folder onto his desk and sat down in one of the chairs in front of his desk.

"Good morning to you too." Lestrade stated, dryly. I simply stared at him with a blank face as he rolls his eyes and opens the folder. He reads the contents then gives a nod when he finishes it. "Perfect, thank you Eiric." I shrugged and looked out the window.

"Elementary." I replied. Lestrade let out a sigh and opens his mouth to say something when his door opens and Donavan walks in with some paperwork in her hands. I give her a death glare as she walks over to his desk to set the papers down on it. My lips twitch into a faint smirk of pleasure as she gives a shudder of fear and quickly walks out of the room, shutting the door behind her.

"Must you do that every time?" Lestrade asked with a faint smirk on his lips as well.

"Yes." I told him with a nod. He lets out a chuckle and takes a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket. He nods his towards his small balcony. I nodded and stood up from my seat, following him outside. He takes a fag out then holds the carton out to me. "Thank you." I took one and used the lighter in my coat pocket. I take a deep puff then slowly let it out.

"How you've been, kid." I shrugged.

"Not relapsing if that's what you're asking." I said, taking another puff. Lestrade turn towards me with a concern fatherly look.

"Eiric." I bit my lip and look away, feeling my eyes sting with tears.

"It's so hard. The only reasons I get up every morning is Korra and Teddy. But even that is slowly fading." I croaked out. I tensed when Lestrade wrapped an arm around my shoulder before breaking down into heartbreaking sobs.

"It'll get better, kid. I promise." He whispered.

TPSH

221B

I stand under the water of the shower head, letting it rain down on me for a few moments washing away the pain and sorrow little by little. I sigh and turn the water off. Stepping out to the tub, I grab a towel and dry off. I cast a drying charm on my hair then put up into a neat bun. I walked into my bedroom and slipped into fresh underwear then put my black dress and heels. I put in my pearl and diamond studs then some red lipstick. I grabbed my matching handbag and coat, walking out of the room. I blew kisses to Teddy and Korra and waved goodbye to Mrs. H as I leave the flat. I hailed a taxi and gave the driver the address to Alexandra's.

TPSH

Alexandra's

I pay the driver and step out of the cab. I look up at the restaurant then walk into the lobby.

"How can I help you madam?" The host asked.

"I have a reservation." I told him. He nods then looks down at the list of names he has.
"Name please?" He asked.

"Charles Magnussen." I let out a gasp of shock at the male voice from behind me. I turned around and was greeted by a man with glasses, a tame beard and light brown hair that was graying. He gave me a charming smile and slight bow of his head. "You must be Ms. Potter." He said with a light german accent.

"Yes, I am." I held my hand out with a small smile. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Magnussen." He takes my hand in his and brings it to his lips, placing a soft kiss to the back of it.

"Please, call me Charles." He replied.

"Of course. Call me Eiric then." I told him.

"Mr. Magnussen? Your table is ready." The host spoke to us in a timid voice. Charles turned towards him and gave a nod.

"Shall we, Eiric?" He holds out his arm to me. I nodded and wrapped my arm around his. The host lead us to a table in near the windows and placed the menus on the table. Charles lead me over to one of the chairs and helped me out of my coat, handing it to the host. He pulled out my chair for me then push it a bit as I sat down in it.

"Your quite the gentleman, Charles. I can't remember the last time a man treated me so well." I told him as he sat down after giving his coat to the host as well.

"To act anything less then a gentleman in your present would be disrespectful for one as beautiful as yourself, Eiric." He replied. I looked down feeling my checks flush slightly.

"Hello, my name is William and I'll be your waiter tonight. Our wine tonight is a Blackberry Merlot." I looked to Charles.

"What would you like to drink, Eiric?" He asked.

"The Blackberry Merlot sounds interesting." I said. He nod with a smile then turn to William.

"A bottle of your Blackberry Merlot and a bottle of your best white wine." He order. William nods.

"Very good, sir. I'll get it right away." With that he walks off to get our drinks. I look at the menu, going over all of the choices.

"So many things to choose from." I stated. Charles let out a light chuckle.

"So it seems. Let me order for you, you won't be disappointed." I look up at him and let out a small giggle.

"All right, but if it's gross then I get the best dessert they have." Charles smiles and laughs.

"Very well then." I smile at him. William returns with our bottles of wine and pours us each a glass to taste it. I swirl the wine in the glass for a moment then take a sip.

"Delicious." I told him and he fills it half way, then walks away. I take a bigger sip of my wine then look to Charles. "So tell me about yourself."

"Oh, where to start." He said. "There's so much to say, really." I smile gently after another drink of my wine.
"Then start from the beginning." I said. He went to open his mouth when a different waiter showed up.

"I am terribly sorry, but I will be replacing William." He said in a high french accent. "Are you ready to order?" Charles turned to me with a raised eyebrow.

"Well, I still have no idea and it looks like Charles doesn't either. It seems I'll be getting that dessert, Mr. Magnussen." I said, slyly. Charles chuckles and nods in agreement.

"So it seems, Ms. Potter." The waiter picks up the menu and holds it in front of my face.

"Well, you can't go wrong but the bottom choice is a personal favorite of mine." I wrinkle my nose at the menu being so close and from the annoying waiter. "You could say it holds the element of surprise." I let out a huff and push the menu out of my face. I look up at our annoying waiter to give him a piece of my mind but pause when I saw pale cheekbones and deep set blue eyes. Those eyes . . .

"Sh-Sherlock?" I whispered, my heart stopping.

"Hello, dear." he answered softly. He was here, in front of me, breathing.

"Eiric?" I heard Charles call. I rose from the table.

"I buried you, we buried you." I said. Shock quickly bubbled into scarlet colored rage.

"Eiric, let me explain —" He offered, reaching to touch me. I grabbed my wine glass and threw it in his face.

"YOU ARSEHOLE!" I shouted.

"Eiric!" I turned and walked out of the dead silent restaurant, shaking. It was too much.
Chapter 34

2221B Eiric pov

I huffed out a sigh as I shut the front door behind me, kicking off my heels next to the stairs. I went to remove my coat but realized I left it at the restaurant when I stormed out. I glare at the wall, *The nerve of him. Who the hell does he think he is?* I thought to myself as I walk down the hallway to Mrs. H place. *Pretending to be dead for three years then popping back up like everything is normal.* I open the door and step in.

"Mummy!" Teddy and Korra fling themselves at my legs and waist. I smile down at them, slowly forgetting about a certain man.

"Hi, sweeties." I said while picking Korra up into my arms. I place a kiss to her and Teddy's cheek. "Did you enjoy your time with nana?" I asked them. They both start speaking out at once while Mrs. H walks over to us.

"Eiric, you're back early." She said.

"Oh, it wasn't going really well so I snuck out the bathroom windows." I lied. She let out a laugh at that and I just smirk. I turn back to my kids. "Did you all have dinner yet?" They all nodded. "Then it's bath time." Korra and Teddy groan but raced out of the room and up the stairs. I quickly followed after them.

"What have I told you two about running on the stairs!" I yelled after them, only to hear their giggling replies. I helped Korra into the bath and quickly wash her then wrap her up in a forest green towel. "Teddy, bathroom's free." I told him as I carried Korra to her room. I put her in a fresh pull-up and a Ariel nightie. I pulled back her pink sheets and comforter waiting for her to crawl into bed. "All right, princess. Which song tonight?" I asked as I tuck her in. Then set up the iPod dock to play one of Sherlock's recorded violin songs.

"Mummy's song!" She squealed. I gave a soft chuckle and selected the song. I plant a kiss to her forehead and stand up from the bed.

"Night, princess." I whispered to her from the doorway of her room.

"Night, mummy." was her soft response before tiny snores came from her. I gave another soft chuckle and turn off the lights then head downstairs to the living room. As I walked into the room, Teddy walked out of the bathroom with a towel on his head. I raised an eyebrow at him.

"New fashion statement, Teddy?" I asked him as we sat down on the couch together.

"You do it too, mum." My ten year old sassed back. I chuckled and turned the tell on. We watch the new episode of Doctor Who together, soon my eyelids are fluttering then close. I felt Teddy lean against me while I took a short catnap while he watched the show. "Mum?"

"Hmmm?" I hummed in answer.

"Do you have to work tomorrow?" He asked. I wrapped an arm around him bringing him closer to my side.

"Yeah. Lestrade has some crime scene he wants me to take a look at." I told him.
"Could we have lunch together after that then?" I open my eyes and looked at him.

"Absolutely, Teddy bear." I kissed him on the crown and got a beaming smile in return. We both snap our heads up when Mrs. H hysterical scream went through the whole flat building. I shot off the couch to grab my gun then flew down the stairs with Teddy a few steps behind me. I stop at the bottom step when I saw Sherlock standing in front of the entrance. I slowly lower my gun while I glare at the bruised and battered man.

"Eiric." He whispered. I took a deep breath and turn to Mrs. H.

"Mrs. H, why don't you return to your place? I got this under control." I told her gently. She nodded shakily and went back to her place.

"MUMMY!" I snap my head to the ceiling at hearing Korra's cry.

"Teddy, could you go comfort Korra?" I asked him.

"Daddy." He whispered. Sherlock sent him a small smile.

"Hello, Teddy. You've grown so much." He said in a soft voice.

"Teddy, please go take care of Korra." Teddy looks up at me.

"But —"

"Theodore!" I snapped causing him to flinch. I sighed and gave him a weary look. "Please, Teddy bear." He nods and trots up the stairs to Korra. I turn back to Sherlock and we stare at each other in silence. "Who used you as a punching bag?" I asked him. He wince at the harsh tone of my voice.

"Uh, John." I snorted then sighed. I look back upstairs then to him.

"Come on, I'll fix you up." I told him then walked back upstairs to the living room. I pointed to the couch. "Sit and don't move." I ordered then went to the bathroom for the first-aid kit. I open the cabinet under the sink and grab the kit. I walk back into the living room and sit on the coffee table in front of Sherlock. I open the kit and take out some cotton and rubbing alcohol. I put some of the alcohol on the cotton then gently start to wipe away the dried blood on Sherlock's face.

"He really did a number on you." I muttered while he winced at the sting of the alcohol.

"Deserved it, really." I raised an eyebrow in question. "I ruined his proposal to Mary." My hand freezes in place as I stare at him.

"Not only did you ruin my date that was going pretty well, you ruined your best friend's proposal to the woman he loves." His eyes darken slightly at the mention of my date but nods in agreement. I rolled my eyes at him. "I'm surprise he didn't kill you."

"Oh, he tried but Mary and some others stopped him." I let out another snort and start to bandage his cuts.

"You're an idiot." I told him as I packed up the kit and stood up from the coffee table. I went into the kitchen to start some water for tea and Sherlock followed me.

"I missed you, Eiric." I tensed up as I reached for some cups.

"Don't." I said. He took a few steps towards me and stood behind me.
"Eiric —" I spun around to him.

"Just don't." I repeated. Suddenly, Korra was scampering to my leg and grabbed the hem of my dress.

"Mum-mummy!" She sniffed. I picked her up and started rocking back and forth, shushing her. Sherlock's eyes were wide and his mouth was slightly agape. Shock, Sherlock Holmes was in shock.

"Korra?" He said, scarcely above a whisper. She turned and I saw his breathing catch. I knew what he was thinking - she had his eyes. Korra squeaked and buried her face into my neck.

"No Korra sweetie, it's all ok. He's not a bad guy." I told her, *Though not a good guy either.* I thought. I look over to the door to find Teddy standing there, quietly. "Come on, Teddy. I think it's bedtime now. You can come sleep with Korra and I." I held out a hand for him. He quickly rushed over, ignoring Sherlock and started to pull me towards my bedroom. I look over my shoulder at Sherlock.

"Your things are all downstairs in one of the extra bedrooms. You can sleep in Teddy's room if you like or the couch, it's up to you." I told him then shut the door behind me, shutting him out of view. Teddy and Korra crawled into the bed waiting for me to change into my baggy t-shirt and shorts. I jumped on the bed causing them to lift into the air a little which made them burst into giggles.

"All right you two, it's time to go to sleep. We have a big day tomorrow." I told them as they snuggle up on either side of me. Korra fell asleep instantly and Teddy stared at the wall for a moment.

"Mummy?" He whispered.

"Yes, baby boy?" I asked. I heard him sniff, I ran a hand through his brown hair.

"Why did daddy do what he did?" I bit my lip and blinked up at the ceiling for a second.

"Oh, sweetie. I think in his big stupid brain he thought he was protecting us from Uncle Jim. He did it because he loves us so much, so don't be too angry at him. Okay, Teddy?" I kissed his head. He nodded his head.

"Are you angry at him, mum?" He asked. I sighed.

"A little bit but I'm happy he's home though." Teddy looked up at me.

"Are you gonna tell him that?" I smirked and shook my head.

"I'll let him sweat for a bit." Teddy giggled.

"Do you love dad still?" I stared at Teddy, my smirk fading.

"I don't know, Teddy. I don't know." Teddy frowned slightly but nodded anyway, settling back down by my side.

"Night, mum. Love you." I kissed his head again.

"Night, Teddy. Love you too." After that, he went to sleep and I followed him a few moments later.
I slowly wake up to my mobile ringing, carefully turning over Korra I grab the phone and answer it.

[Hello?] I yawn into it.

[Hurry up and get dress. We are having a talk.] I sighed and rubbed the bridge of my nose.

[Mary, I got the kids and now Sherlock to deal with.] I told her but got up and got dress in some yoga pants, not even bothering to changing out of the shirt I wore to sleep. [How about you come here and we'll talk in my room?]

[Fine, that'll a do.] She sighed. [I'll be there in thirty.] We said our goodbyes and hung up. I put the phone on my nightstand and walk into the living room. I pause slightly when I see Sherlock asleep on the couch, still in his suit with a red robe on. I shrug not even bothered by the odd sight and went to the kitchen to make tea.

"Yoo hoo!" I heard Mrs. H call softly. I turn around and she walks into the kitchen with a bright smile on her face. "I'll be making breakfast for everyone today. So don't worry about making anything."

"Mrs. H, I can't let you do that." I told her with a soft smile.

"Oh hush, it's a happy day for all of us. Sherlock's back, let me do this one thing." I sighed and nodded.

"All right, all right, I know when I'm beaten." She let out a soft giggle and shooed me out of the kitchen. I returned to the room to wake Teddy and Korra up. I furrowed my brow when I couldn't find Teddy. I looked around the room then headed back into the living room. I tiptoed over to the couch and found Teddy laying on a pile of blankets next to Sherlock.

"Isn't that the most adorable thing you've ever seen." I heard Mrs. H say.

"Teddy, Sherlock. Time to wake up." I yelled lightly. They both gasped awake and stared at me. "Good morning, sleeping beauties. Go tell the cook what you want for breakfast." And with that I walked back to my room to wake my daughter up. "Korra, time to get up sweetie." I whispered, softly as I sat down on the bed next to her. She covered her head with the comfort.

"No." was her muffled reply. I brought a finger to my chin and began to tap it against my chin.

"Hmmm?" I hummed in thought while I pretend I didn't see Korra's blue eyes peer out from under the comfort. "Now what should I do? Maybe the . . . " I turn to Korra with my hands raised as claws. "Tickle monster can help!" Korra let out a squeal as I began to tickle her.

"No one can escape the tickle monster!" I told her as she tried to wiggle away.

"Bubby! Bubby, help!" She giggled out. I heard Teddy's footsteps race to the room then he's on my back, tickling me.

"Ack!" I shouted as I faceplant into the bed.

"C'mon Korra! Help me defeat the tickle monster!" Teddy laughed as I squirmed around trying to get away from them. After awhile, I laid still not making a sound. "Mum?" I stayed silent.

"Mummy?" I heard Korra call. "Is mummy dead, bubb?" She asked. I snapped my eyes open and grabbed them both in one arm. I ran into the kitchen with the two squealing and laughing.
"The tickle monster is victorious, my queen." I bow my head to Mrs. H, who chuckles. "Do you accept my offerings, milady?" Mrs. H crosses her arms as she inspects Teddy and Korra.

"They're a bit thin but they'd make a lovely stew for lunch." Teddy and Korra laughed harder.

"Nana! Nana, it's Korra and bubby!" Mrs. H pretends to be shock.

"My darling granddaughter and grandson! Oh, you bad monster, these children are off limits! You'll have to find some others." I gave a dramatic pout and released the kids. Teddy jumped onto my back, sending me to the ground. I let out a soft groan from the landing and from Korra jumping onto my back.

"I give up! You win this round, tiny mortals." I grumbled out. They jumped off my back and cheered.

"The mighty monster has fallen!" Teddy exclaimed before going dead quiet. I looked towards him concern then followed his line of view. I glared at the man standing in front of me.

"Hello, Tristyn." I sneered.

"Mikey." I spat and he flinched but held a hand out to help me up like a gentleman. I slap the hand away and stood up from the floor. "What are you doing here. You aren't welcome here."

"I'm here for Sherlock." I gave him a death glare and stormed into my bedroom, slamming the door behind me. I sit on the window seal for awhile until there's a knock on my door.

"Eiric, Mary's here." I heard Mrs. H call from the other side of the door. I ignore her and pick up the full needle that's laying beside me. I picked it up and stared at it at eye level, I jolted in shock when the door banged open. The needle fell from my hand and onto the floor rolling on the floor towards the person at the door. I watch Mary pick the needle up with wide eyes. She stares at the needle then to me, slowly closing the door behind her.

"Eiric?" She asked, concern and confusing laced her voice.

"I wasn't going to use it, I swear." I replied automatically. Mary's eyes started to glimmer with unshed tears.

"Yes, you were. If I had been a minute later, you would of shot up." I sighed and closed my eyes turning my head back out towards the window. "It's gotten worst hasn't it?" I don't answer. "Hasn't it Eiric?!" I flinch before slowly nodded.

"It's just been a downhill slope since I got clean again. Little things would make me ache but then this. . . Sherlock playing dead was the last straw, Mary." I told her. She walked over to me and stared out the window with me for a bit.

"Give me your stash, Eiric. All of it." I look up at her. "I'm here for you, I'll help you through this." I broke into soft sobs for awhile as I gave her my stash. She put it all in a pile in the middle of the floor then motion to it. "Send it to hell, Eiric." I grin and casted an inferno spell on the pile and we watched it burn to a pile of ash.

"I have a problem and I need help." I finally said. The one line everyone that cared about me wanted to hear for the past two years or so. I turn to look at Mary. "That's the first step, right? Admitting you have a problem?"

"Yes, it is Eiric." She said with tears in her eyes. I smiled and pulled her into a hug.
"Thank you." She gave me a tight squeeze.

"Your welcome." She let go of me and plopped down on the bed, she patted a spot next to her. I sit down beside her. "So what are you going to be about Sherlock?" I shrugged.

"No idea." She crossed her arms and raised an eyebrow at me. I sighed. "I sorta want to punch him in that prefect face of his." She chuckled. I scratch the back of my head. "I guess I could let him get to know Korra and hang with Teddy." Mary sighed and patted my knee.

"It's a start." She stood up and held a hand out to me. "C'mon, you need to eat." I rolled my eyes but took her hand to help me up. We walk out of my room and into the kitchen. Mary pushed me towards the table and grabbed two plates of food. I sat down in a chair as she place a plate in front of me. "Eat." I huffed at her and stuffed a piece of toast into my mouth. Mary rolled her eyes while I smirk around mouth full of food. I smiled towards Teddy and Korra, who were giggling.

"Very mature, Tristyn." I swallowed my food and narrowed my eyes at Mycroft.

"Stuff it, Mycroft. At least I'm not playing little kid games." He sneers at me. Mrs. H lightly taps me on the back of the head.

"Language, Eiric." I scratch the back of neck.

"Sorry, Emma." She smiles and nods.

"It's quite all right." Mary looks at her phone for the time and stands up.

"It's time for me to get to work." I stood up and walked her to the door.

"I'll see you later, then." She nods and places a hand on my arm.

"Be safe and if you need someone to talk to, just give me a call." I nodded and she left. I walk back up the stairs and into the kitchen to finish my meal. I eat the rest of my food and helped Mrs. H clean the dishes. I turn to the kids, who were watching Mycroft and Sherlock playing some game. I smiled slightly then walk to my room to change into some clothes. Once I was dress, I step out of the bedroom and over to Teddy and Korra. I kneeled down in front of them, catching their attention.

"You're leaving?" Teddy asked with a slight pout.

"Yes, I'll be at Scotland Yard with Uncle Greg. He needs my help for a bit but I'll talk to him about the four of us having lunch together. Okay?" Teddy and Korra cheered and kissed me on the cheek. I stood up and turn to the brothers watching us. "Can I trust you to watch my children while I'm gone?" Sherlock stood up from his seat as I walk to the door to grab my extra coat.

"You can trust me with anything, Eiric." He told me. I paused as I was putting my coat on.

"I trusted you with my heart and you broke that." I whispered harshly, pricing him with my green eyes. He flinches while taking a few steps back. I finished putting my coat on and started to button it while I stared at a remorseful Sherlock. I sighed and crossed my arms.

"What you did Sherlock I don't know if I could ever forgive you." He just stared at me with sad eyes. "But I understand why you did it . . . and I'm willing to try and forgive you." His face started to brighten. "I just need time to come to terms with everything, okay?" Sherlock nodded with a small smile on his face. I gave a nod and left the flat.
Scotland Yard

I flung myself into one of the chairs in front of Lestrade's desk. Tossing my legs over the arm of the chair and crossed my arms while I started up at the ceiling. Lestrade watched me warily from his desk.

"So, Sherlock's alive." He said, cautiously.

"Mary made me get rid of my stash." I told him. "She's helping me come completely clean."

"That's great, Eiric. Did you hit him?" He asked me, leaning forward.

"No, I threw wine at his face. John had the pleasure of using him as a punching bag." I said, looking over to him.

"Damn." He hit his desk with a fist. I raised an eyebrow at him. "I wanted a good story of you knocking him out." I laughed and shook my head.

"No, not this round. Wait a few days and you'll probably get a call to arrest me." Lestrade chuckles and hands me a file. I took it and flipped through it. I quickly glanced back up at him. "Oh, Teddy and Korra want to have lunch with us today."

"All right, it's been awhile since I've seen them anyway." He said as he took a sip of his coffee. I went back to looking through the file. I snorted and raised an eyebrow at Lestrade.

"Really? 'How I got away with it by Jack The Ripper'?" Lestrade smirked while crossing his arms.

"Three guesses on who made the crime scene." I toss the file back onto his desk.

"It's Anderson." I told him. "He's totally obsessed with Sherlock." Lestrade lifted his wrist and checked his watch. "After lunch with the kids, you should take Sherlock to the scene."

"Okay. How about we go pick them up and have an early lunch? We don't have any cases, right now." I nodded and we stood up. We chatted quietly to one another on our way to Lestrade's car.

"Thank you." I said as he opened the car door for me and shut it behind me. We drove to Baker Street in silence. Lestrade parked the car once we got to the flat. We got out of the car and walked into the flat to get the kids. "Sherlock? Kids?" I called upstairs. I look to Mrs. H's place when the door open and the kids raced out towards us.

"Mummy!" I smiled at them.

"You guys hungry?" I asked them. They nodded excitedly, I picked up Korra while Teddy took Lestrade's hand. I had made sure to stop by my car to get Korra's car seat before Lestrade and I had left the car garage. I buckle Korra up then got into the passenger seat. Then we headed to a café that was close to the Yard.
Chapter 35

Sherlock pov

“Are you sure we should be spying on them, Sherlock?” Molly asked me while I kept an eye on my family and Lestrade.

“It’s perfectly fine, Molly.” I replied, my eyes narrowing as Eiric laughs brightly at something Lestrade said. Molly fidgeted her hands around nervously.

“Maybe you should just talk to Eiric and you know, explain everything?” She questioned. I shook my head and turned to her.

“Eiric already knows everything. She wouldn't give me the chance to explain after I broke my promises to her, broke her trust.” I muttered then turned back to stare at Eiric. She was much skinner then I remembered although the last time I saw her she had just given birth to Korra. Her eyes though still bright in colour lack the shine of love and life, even her hair was a duller shade of orange then the vibrant red-orange it use to be. And I knew it was my fault for the stark differences. I idly wondered if anyone else had notice the changes.

“Sherlock?” I snap my head towards the voice that broke me out of my thoughts.

“What?” Molly flinched slightly at the snap. She just pointed back to the table where Eiric and the kids were.

“They left.” My eyes widen a fraction and I whip my head in the direction of my family was supposed to be. I stare at the now empty table before closing my eyes and let out a soft sigh. I lift my hand and signal our waitress over for the check. I paid the check and stood up from from seat.

“Come, Dr. Hooper. We have to meet Lestrade.” I told her and walked out of the restaurant.

TPSH

Scotland Yard Eiric pov

I sighed as I sat in Lestrade’s office waiting for him to return from the fake crime scene. After a few moments my phone begins to ring. I dig it out of my pocket and swipe it open.

[Hello?] I asked not even bothering to check the caller ID.

[Is this Eiric Potter?]

[This is she.] I returned with a roll of my eyes.

[Good evening Ms. Potter. This is Charles.] I sat up quickly.

[Oh! Charles! Oh my God, Charles. I am so sorry about last night.] I exclaimed bringing a hand to forehead.

[It’s quite all right, Eiric. Did you personally know that waiter?] I rolled my eyes.

[That man isn't a waiter. His name is Sherlock Holmes and he’s the world’s only consulting detective. Also my suppose to be dead finance.] I told him then made a face for rambling about my messed up life. [Sorry, you probably don't what to hear about that.] I look to the clock hanging on
the wall. Lestrade should of been back by now.

[It’s quite all right. You left in such a rush you forgot your coat. I have it in my car right now if you’d like to get it.] I smiled at the thoughtful act.

[How about I buy you coffee or something? To make up for cutting our date short.] I asked him.

[I would be honored, Eiric.] I stand up from my seat and head out of the building.

[All right, there’s this café on Sixth street that makes the most amazing coffee drinks ever.] I told as I walk towards my car.

[I meet you there in twenty then.] he replied.

[Okay, see you twenty.] We both hang up and I’m about to unlock my car when I heard a slight noise behind me. I pause and look over my shoulder to find the source of the sound. “Hello?” I called walking away from the car slightly. “Someone there?” The sound grew louder as I neared it. In the middle of a empty parking space was a clapping monkey. “What the hell?” I wondered to myself as I stared at it. I bend down and picked the toy up. As I stood up something sharp pierced my neck. I gasp as something cold is pushed into my veins.

“Hello, Eiric.” My head slowly turns, my movements sluggish.

“Charles?” I whispered before my world went black.

TPSH

221B Sherlock pov

I sighed as I walked back into the flat. I could hear the children laughing from Mrs. Hudson place. I walked down the hallway and knocked on her door.

“Oh! Hello, Sherlock. I thought you were Eiric.” Mrs. Hudson said after she answered the door. I frown slightly.

“She isn’t back yet?” I asked her. Mrs. Hudson shook her head.

“Not even a call. Which is very odd, she’s always texting or calling Teddy to check up on them.” She twittered, flapping her hands a bit. Suddenly Teddy’s racing towards me with a panic expression.

“Dad! Dad!” He shouted and grabbed onto my coat.

“What is it, Teddy?” I gently pulled his hands of my coat and held onto them.

“Someone has mum.” He said hurriedly as he takes his hands back and shoves his phone at me showing me a text.

[I wonder how fast a witch will burn? Would you like to find out Mr. Holmes?] My eyes widen in horror.

“Teddy stay with your sister and Mrs. Hudson.” I shouted as I raced out the apartment. I pulled out my phone it began to ping.

[Is she a Saint or Sinner? Which man would she want to save her, Mr. Holmes? James or John The More or Less?] I stared at the new text. ‘What is going on?’ I thought as I decipher the code.
“Saint James The Less.” I muttered to myself then looked up when a car door shut loudly. “John?” I questioned as the man raced over to me.

“What the hell is going on, Sherlock! I’m getting texts about Eiric.” I shook my head.

“There’s no time to explain, John. We have to get to St James the Less now. It’s twenty minutes by car.” I walked into the street then looked at his car then shook my head again.

“It’s too slow. It’s too slow!” Suddenly a car swerves around me blaring his horn.

“Jesus, Sherlock! What the hell are you doing?” John shouted from the curb, frantically. I turn towards a single oncoming headlight.

“This.” I step directly into the path of the approaching motorcycle and hold up an hand. The driver slams n the brakes and the bike skids to a halt. “Hello, mind if we borrow this for a sec?” I asked then took the helmets and tossed one to John. “Thank you.” And pushed the driver off the bike and hopped on, John getting on behind me.

“People are going to talk.” I heard him mutter. I smirked to myself.

“People do little else.” I replied and start the bike, racing down the streets. As I’m driving I start to calculate how long it will take to get to the church, about ten minutes. Someone phones goes off and John’s cell is in my face.

[Getting warmer Mr Holmes. You have about ten minutes] I grit my teeth together and press on.

“What does that mean, Sherlock?” I heard John ask.

“I don’t know.” I replied. John gets another text.

[8 minutes and counting . . .] I turn my attention back to the road and accelerate before coming to a roadblock.

“Damn!” I shouted as I slam on the brakes and halting the bike. I look to my left and rapidly work out an alternative route which I overlay onto the original route. The original time was eight minutes but the new one five. I turn the bike and head up onto the pavement and into a walkway between two buildings. One of the police officers uselessly tries to chase after us. On the other side of the buildings, the path descends down a long flight of steps and we head straight down them.

[Better hurry things are hotting up here . . .] We continue onwards but our speed was impeded when we cross a bridge and blacked by a slow-moving lorry. [Stay of execution. You’ve got two more minutes.] I check my mental map. If I continue by road it’d take three minutes but if I went in a straight line it’d take only one minute. I swerve the bike off the road and head straight down into a pedestrian underpass. I force the bike up a steep flight of steps and out onto the street again. [What a shame Mr Holmes. Eric is quite a Guy!] I furrow my brow at the misspelling of Eiric’s name.

“What’s it mean?” John asked. My head whips round as a bonfire begins to blaze and the onlookers cheer.

“Oh my God.” I accelerate around the square towards the only gap in the fence surrounding the park. The onlookers continue to celebrate the ignition of the fire.

“HELP!” Is shouted. Suddenly people are screaming in horror. I race the bike into the park and hurls myself off.
“Jump off!” I call to John. I drop the bike to the side as he hopes off. The fire takes hold now and Eiric’s voice as well. Throwing my helmet off, I run towards the fire, shoving people out of my way. “Move! Move! Move! Move! Move!” I reach the front of the crowd and race on towards the bonfire.

“Eiric!” I shouted.

“Eiric! Get out, Eiric!” I heard John yelling behind me. I crouch down, peering through the flames trying to see where she was while throwing some of the wood aside. John and I continue to cry Eiric’s name.

“Help!” We heard a faint shout. Now that I have a location, I plunge my arms into the inferno throwing pieces aside and creating a path into it. At last I’m able to reach in. I grab Eiric’s arms and haul her out, pulling her across the ground to safety before rolling her over onto her back. She lies there, looking extremely dazed as I loom over her.

“Eiric? Eiric!” I gently pat her face. John kneels down beside me checking her over.

“Eiric, can you hear us?” He asked her as he took her pulse. She gazes up at us blankly, blinking.

“I feel like I went ten rounds with the Salem Witch Trials.” She whispered finally. I let out a choked laugh and gathered her into my arms. I tensed when I felt her slump against me.

“Eiric!” I called to her in panic.

“Sherlock, it’s all right!” I turned to John. “She just needs to rest.” John stands up and pulls out his phone.

“Who are you calling?” I asked him while I shift Eiric into a more comfortable position.

“Ambulance.” He muttered then spoke to the person on the phone. “They’ll be here in twenty.” He told me as he hung up. “Eiric, can you hear me?” John asked as he knelt back down. Eiric stirred slightly, her head rolling towards him and her eyes fluttered open. “Do you remember how this happened?” She slowly shook her head no.

“Someone call for an ambulance?” Asked an EMT walking towards us. John waved him over and told him what he needed to know.

“Hello, Ms. Potter.” Eiric hummed at him as he shined at light into her eyes. “Took quite the hit to the head.” He muttered as he looked over the cut on her head. “Well, she’s gonna need stitches for the wound but other then that she’s fine. Just needs some oxygen and rest.” He told us as they loaded Eiric into the ambulance.

“Sherlock!” I snapped my head to the raspy yell. Eiric was struggling against the EMT. “Sherlock!” I hurried into the back and grabbed a hold of her hand. She instantly calmed at the touch and gripped my hand tightly. Her slightly glazed eyes stared at me with tears gathering at the corners and her mouth covered by an oxygen mask. “Please, don’t go.” I inhaled sharply at the broken pled.

“Never, darling.” I whispered and placed a kiss to her forehead.

TPSH

Next day
I’m jolted awakened at the banging coming from downstairs. I gently detangle myself from Eiric and walk out of our room. I trot down the stairs and open the front door were I’m suddenly engulfed to a crushing hug. Groaning, I look down to see who was on me.

“Mother?” I questioned, shocked. I quickly looked up to the doorway. “Father?”

“Hello there, son.” He greeted cheerily. I closed my eyes and let out a groan of despair.

“Aren’t you going to invite us in, Sherlock?” Mother asked once she released me. I sighed through my nose and let them in, showing them into the living room. They sat down on the couch and I sat in my seat staring at them. Mother looked around the room searching for something.

“Where are my grandchildren?” She asked me. “I’ve only seen them in the pictures Mikey gets from Eiric.”

“You know about Eiric and the kids?” I asked them, confused.

“Of course! Mikey talks about them all the time. Eiric is a very beautiful young woman, Sherlock.” Mother said with a bright smile. I huffed slightly, ‘Like I didn't know that.’

“Sherlock?” I jerk my head towards the kitchen. Standing in the archway was Eiric dressed in one of my robes. She was staring at my parents with wide eyes then towards me. I stood up and walked over to her, gently placing a hand on her shoulders.

“Eiric, these are my parents.” I told her as we walk over towards them. She wraps her arms around herself slightly.

“Hello.” Her voice is soft as she greets them, almost shy. Mother stands up and brings Eiric into a tight hug.

“Oh! It’s so wonderful to finally meet you Eiric!” Eiric stares at me shock before relaxing and returning the hug with gusto.

“You as well, Mrs. Holmes.” Mother let’s go of Eiric and father is pulling her into a hug. “Mr. Holmes.” Father releases her and Eiric is smiling at us. “Would you two like a cup of tea or anything?” She points towards the kitchen.

“I would love a cup of tea.” Mother told her before sniffing the air. “Do you smell smoke?” Eiric and I glanced at each other before looking at mother.

“Sherlock and I went to a bonfire last night for some us time.” Eiric said as she walked towards the kitchen. “We sort of just got home not too long ago and we just went to bed with our clothes on.”

“Oh, did you two have fun?” Eiric gave mother a secretive smile.

“A blast.” She replied before entering the kitchen and starting the kettle. “The kids should be getting up soon, Mrs. Holmes.” As if called, Teddy rushes into the kitchen and tackles Eiric into a fierce hug. “Hey, baby boy.” Eiric kissed the top of his head then brought him over to us. “Teddy, these are your father parents.”

“Hello.” Teddy waved to my parents timidly.

“Hello, Teddy. It’s so good to finally meet you. Uncle Mikey has told us so much about you.” Teddy giggled and smiled at mother. “I bet your hungry and your mummy still has to wake your sister, so how about we start breakfast while she goes and does that?” Teddy looked up at Eiric,
who smiled down at him.

“All right.” He said grabbing mother’s hand and dragging her to the kitchen. “We can make pancakes!” Eiric and I laughed shaking our heads.

“I better go wake Korra or she’ll be awake all night.” Eiric told us then headed up stairs. She soon returned with a semi-awake Korra in her arms. “Come on, Korra. There some people who want to meet you.” Eiric told her.

“No!” Eiric rolls her eyes and gives me a pointed look.


“She’s just like you when you were her age, Sherlock.” She told me. Korra looked up at her with her piercing blue eyes, my eyes, then to me.

“Daddy.” She made grabby motions towards me. I look at Eiric for permission, she nods and I take Korra out of her arms. “Who that?” She asked me while pointing at my mother.

“That is my mother, Korra. Your grandmother.” Korra stares at her for a few more seconds before nodding then held her arms out to mother. Mother smiled and took her into her arms.

“Just like your father, sweetheart but you’ll defiantly be just as beautiful as your mother when your older.” Eiric blushed lightly at the comment and pushes a curl behind her ear.

“Korra, what do you say?” Eiric questioned her.

“Thank you!” Korra exclaimed before turning to her breakfast. “Pancakes! Double thank you, Grammy Holmes!” Eiric shook her head exasperated before heading to our room. She quickly returned in fresh clothes then sat down at the table next to mother while father and I stayed in the living room.

“Sherlock wanted to be a pirate?” I snapped my head towards the kitchen to catch the sight of Eiric throwing her head back in a full body laugh. “Oh gosh that makes perfect sense about why Korra wants to be a mermaid.” She covers her mouth with a hand to muffle her giggles. “I always thought it was because I looked like Ariel from the Little Mermaid.”

“Well, you both do look like her.” Mother replied. Eiric smiled sweetly as she ran her fingers through Korra’s hair.

“I guess so.” She said softly. Korra gave a bright smile to her.

“That makes daddy Prince Erik mummy!” She squealed jubilantly. Everyone chuckled while Teddy made a face. Eiric stood up and collected their plates then placed them in the sink to wash later.

“Well, it’s time to take this two to school and Mrs. H now. I’ll be back in twenty.” She told us. The three of them said goodbye and left the flat.

“She’s such a lovely woman, Sherlock. I’m so glad you found each other. Simply perfect for each other, don’t you think, dear?” Father nodded his head.

“Perfect.” He replied.
“I better be hearing wedding bells in the near future, Sherlock.” I grimace inwardly. Eiric would probably never accept the idea of being married to me now, even if she does forgive me. “And more grandchildren.” I just sigh and close my eyes letting mother ramble on. “. . . Which wasn't the way I’d put it at all. Silly woman. Anyway, it was then that I first noticed it was missing. I said, “Have you checked down the back of the sofa?” I screw up my face, my head tilting forward a little almost nodding off to sleep before my head jerks back up. I steeple my fingers in front of my face. “He’s always losing things down the back of the sofa, aren’t you, dear?”

“’Fraid so.” I glare towards the kitchen. ‘Where the hell is Eiric? It’s been more then twenty minutes.’

“Keys, small changes, sweeties. Especially his glasses.” Mother continues.

“Glasses.” Father repeats after her.

“Blooming things. I said, “Why don’t you get a chain - wear ‘em round your neck?” And he says, “What - like Larry Grayson?” They both said almost simultaneously. I rise quickly to my feet, buttoning my jacket as I walk towards my parents.

“So did you find it eventually, your lottery ticket?” I asked as I step onto the coffee table then onto the sofa, standing between them. Mother leans to the side to get out of my war while father stares up at me as I idly flick through the paperwork stuck on the wall.

“Well, yes, thank goodness. We caught the coach on time after all. We managed to see, er, St Paul’s, the Tower . . . but they weren't letting anyone in to Parliament.” I frown and look down at her. “Some big debate going on.” The living room door opens and Eiric walks in with John behind her. I look at him in surprise.

“John!” I exclaimed.

“Sorry - you’re busy.” He sends Eiric a look which she ignores. I step off the sofa and reach down to pull mother to her feet.

“Er, no-no-no, they were just leaving.” I told him.

“Oh, were we?” She asked.

“Yes.” I said affirmably.

“No, no, if you’ve got a chase. . .” He trailed off walking back towards the door.

“No, not a case, no-no-no.” I turn to mother. “Go. ‘Bye.”

“Yeah, well, we’re here ’til Saturday, remember.” She tells me.

“Yes, great, wonderful. Just get out.” I herd them towards the door. Mother turned to Eiric.

“It was wonderful to finally meet you and the kids, sweetheart.” Eiric smiled and hugged her.

“You as well. I’ll make sure he calls.” I rolled my eyes.

“Very nice, yes, good. Get out.” Bundling them onto the landing, I try to close the door but mother turns and sticks her heavy shoe into the doorway to stop it from shutting. I pull it open a little, staring at her foot.

“I can’t tell you how glad we are, Sherlock. All that time people thinking the worst of you.” I
glances round at John and Eiric, their back to us having a whisper argument. “We’re just so pleased it’s all over.” I grimace and try to slam the door on her foot to make her remove it. She doesn’t.

“Ring up more often, won’t you?” Father asked.

“Mh-hm.” I agreed hurriedly.

“She worries.” He said.

“Promise?” I glance back at John and Eiric again, they were still arguing before leaning close to mother.

“Promise.” I said, quietly. She smiles, reaching to stroke my cheek. “Oh, for God…” I shove the door closed and let out a deep sigh before turning to John and Eiric, apparently they were done fighting. “Sorry about that.”

“No, it’s fine. Clients?” John asked. I hesitated briefly.

“His parents.” Eiric told him, her unnatural green eyes glaring at me. Her look telling me she knew that my parents knew I was alive this whole time.

“Your parents?” He questioned.

“In town for a few days.” I shrugged, glancing everywhere but at Eiric.

“Your parents?” John said again.

“Mycroft promised to take them to a matinee of “Les Mis.” Tried to talk me into doing it.” I told them.

“Those were your parents?” He goes to the window to look out.

“Yes.”

“Well…” He chuckles briefly. “That is not what I…” He turns to look at me, then out the window again.

“What?” I questioned.

“I-I mean they’re just…so…” He looks at me and I direct a hard gaze at him, narrowing my eyes. “…ordinary.” He smiles. I tut disparagingly.

“It’s a cross I have to bear.” John chuckles.

“I thought they were lovely but most parents I meet usually are.” Eiric said softly. “And yes, John. They knew.”

“So that’s why they weren’t at the funeral.” John muttered.

“Sorry. Sorry again.” I snapped at them, defensively. Eiric rolls her eyes and John slowly steps towards the door. I watch them for a moment then lower my head. “Sorry.” I said softly. After drawing in a deep breath John meets my eye for a second. “See you’ve shaved it off, then.”

“Yeah. Wasn’t working for me.” Eiric scoffed as she sat down on the couch.

“Wasn’t working for anyone.” She muttered. John sends her a hard glance then looks away.
“I’m glad.” I told him.

“What, you didn't like it?” He asked.

“No. I prefer my doctors clean-shaven.” I smiled.

“That’s not a sentence you hear every day!” John walks around for a bit before sitting in his old chair. He glances at Eiric from the corner of his eye. “How are you feeling?” Eiric stares at the fireplace and shrugs.

“A little sore. Bit smoked really.” She replied. John looked to me.

“Who did that? And why did they target her?” I looked towards Eiric. She glanced towards me before looking away.

“I don’t know.” I told him.

“Is it someone trying to get to you through her? Is it something to do with this terrorist thing you talked about?” Eiric turned back confused.

“Terrorist?” She questioned.

“I don’t know. I can’t see the pattern. It’s too nebulous.” I walk towards my wall of information. “Why would an agent give his life to tell us something incredibly insignificant? That’s what’s strange.”

“Give his life?” John repeated.

“According to Mycroft. There’s an underground network planning an attack on London - that’s all we know.” I replied. I look down and frown as the random memory of the dust trickling down from the ceiling in the ‘Jack the Ripper’ room. I turn and gesture to the paperwork on the wall. “These are my rats, John and Eiric.”

“Rats?” John asked while Eiric looks at the pictures on the wall.

“My markers: agents, low-lifes, people who might find themselves arrested or their diplomatic immunity suddenly rescinded. If one of them starts acting suspiciously, we know something’s up. Five of them are behaving perfectly, but the sixth . . .” I point to the relevant photograph.

“I know him, don’t I?” John points to the photo.

“Lord Moran, peer of the realm, Minister for Overseas Development. Pillar of the establishment.” I said.

“Yes!” John exclaimed.

“He’s been working for North Korea since 1996.” Both Eiric and John snap their head towards me.


“He’s the Big Rat. Rat Number One. And he’s just done something very suspicious indeed.” I went to get my laptop and brought up Howard’s footage of the mysterious Tube train disappearance to John and Eiric.

“Yeah, that’s . . . odd. There’s nowhere he could have got off?” John admitted.
“Not according to the maps.” Eiric mumbled as she watch the footage again.

“There’s something - something, something I’m missing, something staring me in the face.” I turn to the wall again when my phone beeps. I take it out of my pocket.

“Any idea who they are - this underground network?” John ask as he sat down in front of the computer. I look at a sequence of photos taken of Lord Moran walking along the road next to the Houses of Parliament. The sequence seems to indicate that he had just come from Westminster Tube station. “Intelligence must have a-a list of the most obvious ones.”

“Our rat’s just come out of his den.” I muttered.

“Al-Qaeda; the IRA have been getting restless again - maybe they’re gonna make an appearance . . .”

“Yes, yes, yes, yes, YES! I’ve been an idiot - a blind idiot!” I exclaimed triumphantly.

“I could of told you that.” Eiric said off handily.

“Oh, that’s good. That could be brilliant.” I paced across the room.

“What are you on about?” John asked.

“Mycroft’s intelligence - it’s not nebulous at all. It’s specific - incredibly specific.” I stated.

“What do you mean?” He asked, firmly.

“Not an underground network, John. It’s an Underground network.” Eiric raised an eyebrow at us. “Sometimes a deception is so audacious, so outrageous that you can’t see it even when it’s staring you in the face.” I lean over John’s shoulder to replay the Tube footage of the lone passenger.

“Look - seven carriages leave Westminster . . .” The footage switches to show the next station. “. . . but only six carriages arrive at St James’s Park.” I feel Eiric move in behind me to look at the screen.

“But that’s . . . I . . . it’s-it’s impossible.” John stuttered.

“Moran didn’t disappear - the entire Tube compartment did.” Eiric said in awe. “The driver must of diverted the train then detached the last carriage.”

“Detached it where?! Sherlock said there was nothing between those stations.” John pointed to the screen.

“Not on the maps, but once you eliminate all the other factors, the only thing remaining must be the truth.” I point to the screen. “That carriage vanished, so it must be somewhere.”

“But why detach it in the first place?” Eiric wondered aloud.

“It vanishes between St James’s Park and Westminster. Lord Moran vanishes. Eiric’s kidnapped and nearly burned to death at a firework par. . .” I stop. I got it. “What’s the date, Eiric - today’s date?” Eiric furrows her brow.

“It’s November . . .” She freezes, her eyes going wide, as well as, John’s. “Oh Merlin.” I look at the information wall and walk slowly towards it.

“Lord Moran - he’s a peer of the realm. Normally he’d sit in the House. Tonight there’s an all-night sitting to vote on the new anti-terrorism bill.” I stop in front of the sofa and smile. “But he won’t be
there. Not tonight.” I turn to look at John and Eiric. “Not the fifth of November.”

“Remember, remember.” John muttered.

“Gunpowder, reason, and plot.” I replied. We all look back at the video watching it play over and over again.
Chapter 36

221B Eiric Pov

Shortly after figuring that out, Sherlock Skyped the train fellow to help us out while we frantically searched through maps and papers on the kitchen table.

“There’s nothing down there, Mr Holmes, I told you. No sidings, no ghost stations.” Howard told us. Sherlock turns the laptop around so John and I can see the screen.

“There has to be. Check again.” Howard leans out of the laptop screen and I look through an old map with John looking over my shoulder.

“Look - this whole area is a big mess of old and new stuff. Charing Cross is made of bits of older stations like Trafalgar Square, Strand. . .” John starts.

“No, it’s none of those. We’ve accounted for those.” Sherlock looks closer to the map. “St Margaret’s Street, Bridge Street, Sumatra Road, Parliament Street. . .” I tilted my head.

“Sumatra Road?” I questioned out loud to them. Howard suddenly takes the pom pom from his mouth and sits forward.

“Hang on, hang on. I think she’s on to something.” We all turn to him. “Sumatra Road.” He leans offscreen again. “There is something. I knew it rang a bell.” he muttered. “Where is it?” He comes back into view. “There was a station down there.”

“Why isn’t it on the maps then?” I asked him.

“Cause it was closed before it ever opened.” He told us.

“What?” John questioned. Howard holds up a book to the camera to show the relevant page.

“They built the platforms, even the staircases, but it all got tied up in legal disputes, so they never built the station on the surface.” Grinning, he points to the appropriate spot on the page. Sherlock slowly straightening up while Howard spoke.

“It’s right underneath the Palace of Westminster.” Sherlock said. I snapped my head up.

“Oh my Merlin!” I exclaimed rushing to put my coat on.

“And so what’s down there? A bomb?” John asked but Sherlock and I raced out of the room. “Oh. . .” He quickly hurries after us. We briskly walk along the road near the House of Parliament and head to the stairs leading down into Westminster station. We walk across the concourse, through the ticket barriers and along the corridors. “So it’s a bomb, then? A Tube carriage is carrying a bomb.”

“Must be.” Sherlock answered John.

“Right.” Taking off his glove, John gets his phone from his pocket.

“What are you doing?” Sherlock asked him. I turn to look at them both.

“Calling the police.” John told him. I slapped my forehead and pulled out my phone too. ‘Why hadn’t I thought of that? I am part of the police.’

“Sherlock, this isn't a game. We have to evacuate Parliament.” I told him, my phone ringing in my ear.

“They’ll get in the way. They always do. This is cleaner, more efficient.” He replied while taking my phone and ending the call. He puts it into his pocket.

“Sherlock!” He stops at a locked maintenance entrance and reaches into his coat. He pulls out a crowbar and starts to force the gate open.

“And illegal.” John offers as he looks around over his shoulder to make sure no one is watching.

“A bit.” The gate opens and the boys go inside. “Come on, Eiric.” I hesitate for a moment before quickly following after them. Sherlock pulls the gate closed behind me and we take out flashlights as we walk down into the maintenance tunnels. Sherlock takes the lead with John behind him and in front of me. I watch as John checks his phone while Sherlock raises his head as if sensing what John is doing. “What are you going?” He asked without looking around.

“Coming.” John sighed. I give a soft laugh as he puts his phone away. We continued onwards for a pond time, walking along narrow tunnels, walkways, and climbing down steep metal ladders. Finally, we walk onto the platform of Sumatra Road Station. Sherlock shines his torch along the length of the track but there’s no sign of a train.

“I don’t understand.” He said.

“Well, that’s a first.” John scoffs. I furrow my brow as I look around the tunnel.

“There’s nowhere else it could be.” I heard Sherlock say. I walk down to the end of the platform and jump off onto the tracks, carefully. I shine my torch down the tunnel. “Eiric!” I turn around to see the boys jumping off the platform as well. I move down the tunnel with them following after me.


“What?” He asked.

“That’s . . . Isn't it live?” Both Sherlock and I look at the tracks then to John.

“It’s perfectly safe as long as we avoid touching the rails.” I told him continuing to walk down the tunnel.

“Course, yeah!” I heard John muttered sarcastically. “Avoid the rails. Great!”

“This way.” Sherlock tells us.

“You sure?” John asked him.

“Sure.” We don’t have far to walk before the missing carriage is revealed partway round a gently bend.

“Ah. Look at that.” We continued on walking under a large open vent.

“Eiric. John.” I paused and look back to Sherlock. He shining his flashlight into the vent. I walk back over and shine mine upwards, revealing several small explosive devices attached to the sides of the went.
“Demolition charges.” John whispered. We start walking back to the carriage. John ducks down and shins his light underneath and around the carriage as we approached it while Sherlock looks along the side. I open the door to the driver’s cab and climbed in, the boys soon following in after me. We carefully walk through the opposite door into the carriage itself. Slowly, we worked out way along it, looking at every seat, every corner, shining our torches along the ceiling and the floor.

“It’s empty. There’s nothing.” John said once he got to the end of the carriage.

“Isn’t there?” Sherlock questioned as he gently lift a cushion, bending low to shin his light underneath. Sherlock lifts his head and looks around the carriage. “This is the bomb.”

“What?” John repeated confused. I look around in slight shock and horror. Sherlock stands up and lifts the cushion all the way up. The cavity underneath is full of wired-up explosives.

“It’s not carrying explosives. The whole compartment is the bomb.” We work along the carriage, lifting other cushions at random, each one has an identical explosive device under it. While John continues lifting seat cushions, Sherlock and I look around the carriage. I take a few steps along the aisle before one of my steps made a hollow sound. I step on it again and it makes the sound again.

“Sherlock.” I called to him softly. He turns to me and I point to the floor. “Listen.” I lift my foot and step on the spot again causing the noise to sound once again. Sherlock moves over to me while taking his gloves off and bends to the panel. I take a few steps back as his fingers into the gap and lifting it up. Underneath was the ‘mother bomb’, I take a deep breath at the sight of the behemoth bomb. Sherlock props the panel up against the wall of the train. We all stare at down at the bomb when John looks up at Sherlock.

“We need bomb disposal.” He told him.

“There may not be time for that now.” Sherlock replied lowly.

“So what do we do?” John asked us both. I just shake my head. I wasn't of any use now, if I tried anything it could set the bomb off prematurely.

“I have no idea.” Sherlock said after a brief pause.

“Well, think of something.” John said sternly.

“Why d’you think I know what to do?” Sherlock asked him.

“Because you’re Sherlock Holmes. You’re as clever as it gets.” John told him.

“Doesn’t mean I know how to defuse a giant bomb. What about you?” Sherlock argued.

“I wasn’t in bomb disposal. I’m a bloody doctor.” John huffed back. Sherlock angrily points his torch at him.

“And a soldier, as you keep reminding us all.” I rolled my eyes at their childish fight.

“Can’t we rip the timer off, or something?” John asked us.

“That would set it off.” Sherlock told him.

“You see? You know things.” Sherlock turns away and I sigh at them both while moving away from the bomb. Suddenly, all the lights come on and the clock on the bomb begins to count down.
“Oh Merlin.” I whispered in dread.

“Er. . .” Sherlock stutters out.

“My God!” John begins to breath fast as Sherlock paces away from John and I.

“Er. . .” He repeated.

“Why didn't you call the police?” John asked him.

“Please just. . .” I look over to Sherlock at the sound of his panic tone.

“Why do you never call the police?” John asked, furious now.

“Well, it's no use now.” Sherlock bit back waving his hand around the carriage. The clock now read 2:12.

“So you can’t switch the bomb off. You can’t switch the bomb off and you didn't call the police.” John growled out angrily turning away from Sherlock.

“The kids.” I gasped out, my eyes going wide. Sherlock spins around to me.

“Eiric, go.” He points towards the driver’s cab. “Both you and John, go now.” I shake my head.

“No, I’m not leaving without you, Sherlock.” He stares at me in shock. “It wouldn’t matter anyway. There’s not enough time to get to a safe distance to use magic. It could cause the bombs to go off and kill everyone like planned.”

“Mind Palace.” Sherlock and I turn to look at John.

“Hmmm?” Sherlock raised an eyebrow at him.

“Use your Mind Palace.” John repeated.

“How will that help?” Sherlock asked him.

“You’ve salted away every fact under the sun!” John stated. I tilted my head, it could work.

“Oh, and you think I’ve just got “How To Defuse A Bomb” tucked away in there somewhere?” Both John and I nodded.

“Yes!” He stressed. Sherlock thinks about it for a second.

“Maybe.” He brings his fingers up to the sides of his face and screws his eyes hut.


“Badgering him to think, isn’t going to help John.” I told him softly. Sherlocks’s hands come away from his face and flails, his eyes remain closed and he continues to make groaning noises. The noises continue to get louder until Sherlock lets out a cry and opens his eyes. He breathes heavily for a moment as he lowers his hands and looks at John and I with a blank but apologetic look on his face. I stare at him in disbelief.

“No.” My voice is hoarse at I slowly sit down on the bomb covered seats. “Merlin no.” I cover my face with my hands. John was softly muttering while Sherlock flails over the bomb making
incoherent noises. I slowly lift my head from my hands and turn to look at John. His back was
turned away. “You left.” Both John and Sherlock looked at me but my sight was locked on John.
“You left us.” I stood up and stalked over to him. “You left me alone with an infant and a scared
little boy.”

“You had Mrs. Hudson, Eiric and your family.” He replied back. I shook my head furiously.

“I needed you, John! And you abandon us!” I yelled. “You left while I was still in the hospital.”
John looked away in shame. “I thought you’d come back after awhile but you never did. Then I
introduced you to Mary and she made you so happy.” Tears begin to pool in my eyes. “Everywhere
I looked everyone had someone to love but I didn’t because the man I loved was gone.”

“Eiric, I’m so sorry.” John whispered out.

“You left an mourning addicted on her own with two kids.” It was my turn to look away from
them. “I tried everything, John. I asked Lestrade for my job back and took case after case but it
didn’t help.” I looked back to him, a tear rolling down my cheek.

“You got hooked again.” He said. His face contorted in sorrow.

“A little over a year after Sherlock passed away.” I told him. I shrugged while wiping at my face.
“Greg and Andy have been helping me now. I got clean and didn't touch the stuff until he came
back from the dead.” I nodded over to the silent man staring at us. “I know you lost your best
friend that day, John but I lost more but I gained some too.”

“Eiric . . .” He trailed off. I gave him small smile.

“I know, John. Your forgiven and I’m sorry too.” He returns the smile and we turn to Sherlock.

“I’m sorry.” He said softly.

“What?” John and I asked in unison.

“I can’t . . . I can’t do it. I don’t know how.” His voice is soft as his eyes start to fill with tears.
Sherlock straightens up on his knees. “Forgive me?”

“What?” We both said tightly and furiously.

“Please, John . . . Eiric, forgive me . . . for all the hurt that I caused you both.” Sherlock brings his
hands up into a praying position. I raised an eyebrow at him, this so wasn't like him.

“No, no, no, no, no. This is a trick.” John waved a finger at him.

“No.” Sherlock shook his head.

“Another one of your bloody tricks.” John repeated.

“No.” Sherlock looked towards me. I crossed my arms and looked away.

“You’re just trying to make me say something nice.” Both Sherlock and I chuckle briefly.

“Not this time.” I looked back at Sherlock. He stands up and moves away from the bomb coming
to stand in front of me. I bite my lip as I hold my tears back.

“I wanted you not to be dead.” I choked out. Sherlock looked at me softly while slowly bringing a
hand up to my face and cupping my cheek.
“Be careful what you wish for.” He whispered while swiping the few tears that leaked out away with his thumb. I just sighed. “If I hadn't come back, you wouldn't be standing here and . . .” I shut my eyes in despair. “. . . you’d still have a future . . . with the kids.” I sucked in a big breath.

“I know but at least Korra got to meet you and Teddy got to see you again.” I told him then opened my eyes. “And I got you back, even if it was for a short time.” My voice is tight as we stare into each other’s eyes. “I’ve been finding this difficult lately, this sort of stuff.”

“I know.” He places his forehead against mine.

“Of course you do.” I gave a watery chuckle. “I am so honored to have been the mother of your child and the holder of your heart, Sherlock Holmes.” Sherlock looks at me with wide eyes and tear-filled. “I forgive you.” I wrap my arms around his waist and hold onto him tight while squeezing my eyes shut as we brace for death.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!