Dirty Little Secret

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Summary

John discovers that he's been married to Mycroft for several months.

Notes

Written for this video prompt on the BBC Sherlock kinkmeme.

John tucked the file folder under his arm and was headed out the door for his 11:15 appointment with the tax attorney when he saw a very familiar dark sedan pull up to the curb. He pressed his lips shut as the door opened up. A hand beckoned him in.

John sighed and leaned forward. "What did I ask you about calling ahead?" He admonished. "And don't say 'Sherlock mustn't know' this time. He's watching us right now through the sitting room window."

Mycroft leaned to the side so he could meet John's eyes. "Hello, John. Forgive the abruptness, but it's really quite important that we talk immediately."

"Ordinarily, I'd say 'fine,' but I have an appointment today." John had occasionally been able to nip things in the bud if he was forthright enough. It was one of those defensive things one learned when dealing with Holmeses.

But it didn't always work.

"With your tax attorney," confirmed Mycroft, with a dismissive nod. "I know. That is what I need to see you about. There are some... complications... to your taxes that you might not be aware of."
"Ah," John said. "Complications. Please don't tell me you been using my identity to launder money to third-world dictators."

"Nothing of the sort. In, in," Mycroft patted the leather seat next to him. "I took the liberty of canceling your appointment, in any case."

So that was how it was going to be. John sighed and shook his head, then climbed into the back of the car next to Mycroft. Sometimes one just had to go with the flow.

"John, please don't be angry," said Mycroft, in a hesitant voice. "I have a dirty little secret I need to confess."

"That doesn't sound good," said John, putting on a brave smile. "Is this one of those things that I want to know about? Or one of those things I will really regret knowing? Because I've learned that sometimes it's just best not to know."

"I'm afraid it's necessary. Well overdue, in fact. I've put it off far too long," Mycroft reached into a red leather briefcase and handed him a crisp, legal looking document. "It's time you've become aware of this."

John scanned it. It was a certificate of Civil Partnership. The first name on the document was Mycroft Holmes. The second was…

"Oh, you have got to be –" He glared at Mycroft. "This is not okay, Mycroft. Really, truly it's not. We are not married."

"Technically speaking, no we aren't. We are in a civil partnership, though I hope to change the laws on that soon. But in the eyes of the government it's much the same."

"How long have we been… faux-partnered? Dare I ask?" The date on the bottom of the certificate was four months prior, but that didn't necessarily mean anything, since the entire thing was a fake.

"Since that awful altercation with Moriarty. You and Sherlock were so very badly injured. The hospital wouldn't let me make medical decisions on your behalf without paperwork to prove that I was your next of kin."

"Medical decisions?" John's brows rose.

"You were in a coma for three days. Naturally, there were decisions!"

"What was wrong with my sister making them?"

Mycroft turned his head in a way that was withering. "Not to disparage Harry, but she is not one I could trust to make the right choices, especially in the state she was in at the hospital."

Drunk, though John sighing. Harry didn't take stress well. Of course, she'd been drunk.

"I had to move you to a better hospital," said Mycroft, soothingly. "Your doctor was simply not up to the task at hand. But they absolutely refused to release you to me until I produced a legally recognized connection between us. So I had the papers drawn up, and then proceeded."

The mad part of it was, it made perfect sense. John sighed. "I know you had the best intentions, Mycroft, but … marriage? A bit much."

Mycroft shrugged. "Neither of us were in committed relationships. It seemed quite logical to me."
Of course, it seemed logical to him, he was a Holmes.

"Okay, so the crisis passed, I came through, why is it that this paperwork still exists?"

"Because, the way you and Sherlock traipe about, I honestly am not sure when I'll need to pull it out again. Believe me, it is better to simply allow the paperwork to stand. There is no harm in it."

John decided against banging his head against the window glass. He had enough of a headache without giving himself a real one.

"Well, if I was someone like Sherlock or yourself, I'd agree," he said, pragmatically, "But as I'm the sort who actually has ambitions of romantic companionship, it is a wee bit of a problem." He took the certificate and tore it into two. "Oops."

Mycroft chuckled with mild amusement. "You do know that that was just a copy. The real certificate is on file with the GRO."

"Of course it is." Nothing was ever that simple. "You actually went through with making it official."

Mycroft seemed to ignore that. "Ah, we've arrived."

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They'd arrived, it seemed, at the posh, curved stone steps of the Landau. Mycroft let himself out of the car, picking up the briefcase and hooking his customary umbrella over his wrist. He turned around to gesture to John. "Come along. We have a reservation."

John was more than a little blown away by the place. "I'm not sure I dressed right for this place," he said noticing the gold accents on the walls and the conspicuous amounts of waistcoats and cravats on the diners within.

"Oh, don't worry about that," said Mycroft with an unctuous smile. They were met immediately at the door and ushered past the main dining room through a passageway to a narrow private dining hall. A single, lonely-looking, round table was placed at the very end, next to the bay window. Several men in dark suits stood at attention just outside door. They nodded to Mycroft as he passed. John gave them a timid wave, but they seemed to look straight through him.

"Going a bit all out, aren't you," John remarked. "This apology must be costing you a pretty penny and then some."

Mycroft let out a pleasant laugh. "I can afford it. That is one thing you should probably know about me. I am, by anyone's standards, a very wealthy man."

"Hmm," said John, smiling as their greeter pulled out his chair. "Perhaps I should look into finding myself a 'minor government position.'"

Mycroft's smile increased and his eyes twinkled with unbridled avarice. "Oh, you've but to ask, John. I would be delighted to take you into my employ."

*I walked into that one,* John thought, and he shook his head. "I'm quite sure you would."
Their greeter muttered a polite offer of service, which Mycroft waved away. He then turned and left the room. It wasn't until the door had closed that John realized there was no menu in front of him.

"I took the liberty of ordering," said Mycroft swiftly, seeing the question on John's lips.

"You seem very comfortable taking liberties, I've noticed," remarked John dryly.

"Oh," chuckled Mycroft. "I am. It's second nature to me. But in this case I don't think you should mind. It will mean that our servers will not be bothering us so much. And this is a bit of a sensitive topic."

As if on cue the door opened again and a woman in a crisp black uniform with a long white apron brought in a bottle of wine. Their conversation ground to a halt while she went through the formalized ritual of uncorking and pouring. John scratched an eyebrow while Mycroft reveled in his little part. When it was done they both had a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon.

John broke the ice again. "Not to ruin the mood of what I expect will be an absolutely smashing lunch, but I want a divorce." He flashed a tight little smile that hopefully telegraphed that his tolerance was stretched to the limit.

"May inquire as why?" Mycroft asked mildly.

John's leveled a look of disapproval. "Because, this is a farce and we both know it."

"Do we?" Mycroft frowned and made a show of draping his serviette across his lap. "That was a bit presumptive. I, for one, take our partnership quite seriously."

"Do you now?" humored John. "That must be why you object so strenuously to my infidelity."

Mycroft bent his head. "Infidelity? With whom? You don't mean Sarah, because both of us know that never went beyond kissing. Or do you mean your new girlfriend, that sweet nanny -- Mary, I believe is her name. You do realize she doesn't believe in sex before marriage." Mycroft met his eyes. "Oh yes, I see she told you."

John's smile became more forced. "A marriage which might happen, if I'm weren't already inconveniently married to you."

"Oh," said Mycroft shaking his head. "Marriage? To Mary? I would never let that happen. She's utterly unsuitable. She's far too mousy and uptight for you."

"I think that is for me to decide," said John.

"The only reason you haven't already grown bored of her is that Sherlock is still monopolizing your time. She is a pretty face on a personality as bland as rice pudding."

"She's got more going for her than that,"

"In any case, as your spouse, I forbid it."

"You are not my spouse!" It was the first time John raised his voice. He was startled himself by the vehemence of it. Looking down he noticed he'd knocked over his wineglass and the heavy linen tablecloth now sported a sizable wet spot.

"Why are we even contemplating another marriage?" Mycroft asked, as he lifted John's glass back
up and poured more wine in it. "At the risk of further wetting the table, I note that your choices in women have been very safe as regards to your virtue. I'm not sure whether you possess an unusually large streak of chivalry, or if you just aren't as 'into them' as you pretend to be."

John didn't spill his wine again. He took it and deliberately sipped. "Are you insinuating that I'm using Mary as a beard? For whom? Why?"

Mycroft raised a brow, but said nothing.

"Sherlock isn't interested in me that way. What we have is entirely platonic."

"I'm well aware of that. Otherwise I wouldn't have had the papers drawn up. I'm not so cruel as to undermine Sherlock like that."

Ah, so there was a line Mycroft wouldn't cross. It was oddly reassuring.

At that moment door opened and the conversation simply stopped. Mycroft sat back as the soup course was served. Neither said anything until the server left once more. John watched for a minute while Mycroft sipped at the broth with a look of blissful appreciation on his face. Noticing John's scrutiny, he attempted to steer the conversation on to methods of cooking and flavor combinations, which might at another time have been interesting, but today seemed to be Mycroft's way of putting the previous discussion to rest.

John wasn't having it.

"How the deuce do you take this all so … calmly. You act as if you are happy to be saddled with me."

Mycroft looked up from his chilled tomato consommé with goat's cheese. He smiled warmly. "I am happy to be saddled with you."

He waved John down. John's consternated snort. "Oh I know, at first it was all about practical manners. Very unromantic, I must admit. But as the days passed, the idea of being married to you grew on me. The relationship, even though it was fiction, brought me happiness. I found myself liking the idea more and more. I hadn't realized how lonely I'd been before you came around."

"Lonely?" John remembered the two men guarding the door. "It seems to me you are never alone."

"Oh, there's employees," said Mycroft dismissively. "And peers. But it's all hopelessly entangled with work and position. You are someone I find I can be free around. You neither toady to up me, nor are you intimidated by me, despite knowing the power I wield and my intellectual superiority. You truly treat me as a person, rather than some inhuman force. I can count on one hand all the people who have been able to stay so composed in my presence."

"Are you saying--" John hesitated. Even forming the words in his mouth felt odd. "Are you saying that you've fallen in love with me – because of that rubbish piece of paper."

"I'm inordinately fond of you, John," Mycroft all but purred. "It would deeply hurt me if anything were to happen to you. And I find you physically, emotionally, and mentally attractive. It's a bit much to expect any of that to be reciprocated. But maybe, now that the notion's been introduced, it
might grow on you to think of me… if not with love, at least with tenderness."

Tenderness wasn't really the word for what John felt at the moment. But fondness wasn't actually that far from it. Fondness and fascination. And out of those came forgiveness, even of ridiculous situations like this one. It was hard to stay angry at Mycroft. He wasn't sure how Sherlock managed to do it.

But even so, this was too far. Mycroft had to realize that.

John tested the waters. "So, even you admit that this partnership is fiction. Suppose I were to file to have it annulled? Would the paperwork somehow go awry?"

Mycroft didn't even deign to answer. John thought he briefly saw hurt, but it was covered by the man's composure.

"Hmm. And how far are you willing to go with this charade? What if I were to ask for access to your bank accounts."

"It would please me very much if you did. Then I wouldn't worry nearly so much about you and Sherlock being properly fed and equipped."

"And if I wanted to show up and see you at work – just because?"

"Unless I was steeped in a matter of great urgency, I should very much enjoy you stealing me away."

"What if I were to announce our relationship, put a notice in the paper."

"Sherlock's brain would probably explode and I imagine there would be a magnificent row about it. Your Mary would likely never speak to you again. Your friends from work would be a bit surprised – but only in the fact that you married me rather than Sherlock. My life would not be altered a bit."

Mycroft leaned forward, mischief in his eyes. "Shall we do it? It could be fun." Then before John could answer, he leaned back again. "No, of course, not. It was just meant to get a rise out of me."

John narrowed his eyes. "And what if I expect conjugal rights?"

Mycroft didn't skip a beat. "Then I would take you home with me after this meal and spend the rest of the afternoon pleasing you senseless." Mycroft's eyes glowed.

John felt a hot surge through his body. Suddenly he felt very vulnerable. Far too many possibilities flashed through his mind in the next second. His face flushed deeply. "Mycroft… I'm not actually…"

"I know," said Mycroft with a small sigh of disappointment. "You are just testing to see how far I would go. How real I'd make this. I hope you have your answer. But don't be so alarmed, I am very patient and am willing to wait as long as you wish to consummate the relationship."

John's jumper seemed tight around his neck. As he stretched it a noise shocked both of them. The door opened and a server came in with a platter hoisted on her shoulder. Never had John been more grateful to be interrupted.
The next course turned out to be roast rack of lamb with anchovies, garlic and artichokes. They spent a few minutes tucking into their food. The portions were small and artfully arranged about the plate, but every bite was amazing. It was possibly the best meal John had ever eaten. It was only after they’d worked their way through most of it that the conversation resumed.

"May I ask what your biggest reservation is?" Mycroft took a sip of his wine.

"That you didn't ask first. You made a pretty sizable life decision for me and didn't even bother to inform me until months after the fact."

"I thought so. But done is done and no harm has come of it." Mycroft leaned back and rubbed his hand slowly over the bowl of his glass. "And your second reservation."

"I'm heterosexual."

"Except for that time when you weren't."

John decided abruptly not to ask how Mycroft knew. Like Sherlock, Mycroft made a point of knowing everything about the things that interested him. The irony was "that one time" wasn't too different from the situation he was in now. Then he'd been overwhelmed and infatuated with his dorm mate at Barts. Steven was much brighter and more talented than John, though not the level of genius that Sherlock and Mycroft were. He'd had an ego to match. John found Steven fascinating; Steven had found him convenient. One thing lead to another...

"Everyone experiments at uni. And it was more his idea to have sex than mine."

"I see. No, I don't doubt you." Mycroft nonetheless smiled like he'd scored a point. John snorted. "It wasn't exactly marriage material. It barely counted as friends with benefits. We never told anyone."

"You never told anyone," Mycroft corrected. "He considered you quite the conquest. You know, you really do have an extraordinary talent for dealing with insufferable egotists. It's very much a part of your appeal."

"And it's all neither here nor there," said John.

Abruptly, Mycroft took his serviette off his lap and stood up. John wondered if he might have said something wrong, but running his mind through the conversation he couldn't find any reason why Mycroft would be upset. Himself, maybe.

John stood automatically, clutching for the linen square as it fell off his lap. When he looked up again, Mycroft had come into his personal space and was looking down at him from inches away.

"Mycr—" John said, then his mouth was covered. A large warm hand carded through the hair at the back of his neck. Another, wrapped around his back, gently pulling him forward into Mycroft's chest. The kiss was gentle but insistent, taking in his upper lip, then a bit of tongue slipping in slyly past his guard. Tentatively he kissed back, savoring the texture of his lips, the smell of his aftershave. It had been a long time since anyone had kissed him. And no one had ever done it this carefully or thoroughly before.

John gasped and pulled away far, far too late to pretend that he hadn't enjoyed it. Mycroft's lips drifted to the side of his throat, under his ear. There he nipped gently. "Oh—" John gasped. "Okay,
"The advantages of being observant," murmured Mycroft in his ear, "Is that it becomes very easy to notice just what areas provoke what reactions." And with that he licked the cup of John's ear and nearly sent him to the floor. It was as if all the bones in his body had turned to rubber and his entire concentration was caught up in that one incredible sensation. "Imagine now what I could do if I had access to the rest of your body," Mycroft breathed.

"Nnnngh," was all John could muster up. His cock felt hot and needy.

Mycroft released him and John let out a small sob of disappointment. Then his mind returned to him. "My god," he managed.

"Do sit down before you stumble, please," said Mycroft moving back to his end of the table. "They will be bringing our desert any moment. You may want to compose yourself a bit, though I do enjoy the look on your face right now."

John tugged his jumper and rubbed his face with his hands. He willed his crotch to quiet down and behave. "God," he repeated. "What was that for?"

"You tested me earlier – I was testing you."

"Seeing if I could withstand your seduction?"

"Absolutely." Mycroft had clearly come to some sort of conclusion.

The door opened up and the server took away their dishes. She returned soon after with coffee and cups of crème brulee. John found his serviette on the floor and placed it across his lap again. Then tasted the dish, but the flavor eluded him. He couldn't get the memory of Mycroft's kiss away. It sent little thrills of pleasure through him.

"I should be furious at you," John said. "Absolutely furious."

"But you aren't," replied Mycroft with utter certainty.

"No, I'm not," he admitted with a sigh. "I've a terrible weakness for Holmeses. It's going to get me into horrible amounts of trouble one day."

"One day?" Mycroft chuckled. "I should say it already has."

"True." John snorted. "So shall I assume that our faux-partnership isn't going to go away, no matter how much I protest?" John let his fingers touch the spot on his neck where Mycroft had kissed. It still tingled.

"You can be utterly certain of that," said Mycroft amicably.

"You really do take possessiveness to new heights. I should be scared of you."

"But you aren't."

"I'm a nutter," said John.
Mycroft sat up straighter. "Which reminds me." He reached down and brought his red briefcase up. Snapping open the lid, he reached in and drew out a velvet jewelry box. He laid it on the table between them.

Hesitantly, John reached out and took it, flipping the lid up. Inside was a wide band of white gold with a square cut diamond set deeply into it. It matched the ring that Mycroft had been wearing for weeks or maybe months.

"You are proposing? Is that what this lunch is really all about? Doesn't this seem a bit… moot… considering?"

"The parts maybe out of order, but isn't it more important that they all end up being there in the end." Mycroft's eyes seemed to plead. "Eventually we might make it back to first glances across the room and tentative flirting."

John laughed, then he flipped the lid back down and handed the ring back. "How about we stick to moving forward from this point on. We can try dating. See how it goes." Giving Mycroft a tolerant smile he added, "Maybe you'll convince me to wear your ring. I don't know. But from now on, let's try to make everything real."

Mycroft glowed as if John had handed him a Christmas present.

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