A Sherlock Christmas Carol

by LacieRiverPanda27

Summary

Workaholic Mycroft Holmes choices his work time and time again turning away his brother, over working his PA and having no regard to those who his life effects. But will he get a chance to fix his mistakes? OR will he run out of time?

Disclaim on both Charlies Dick's 'A Christmas Carol' and Brian Henson's 'A Muppet Christmas Carol'.

Notes

So, in the original 'Christmas Carol' the character scrooge was in love with money. Unfortunately I couldn't imagine Mycroft like that, so I had him choosing his work over everything else. Also, there is no Mary Morstan in this. This is because I don't feel comfortable writing her character, and at the time when I first began writing this story season three had yet to air and I didn't feel comfortable writing a character I knew nothing about.

And now, your featured presentation......
Chapter 1

It was a cold December day, the sky was putting a fresh layer of snow on the grows of London. But it was not just any day, it was Christmas Eve to be exact. Many Londoners were busy shopping for those last few Christmas presents or the few ingredients they forgot for the Christmas feast.

A black unmarked car made it's way down one of the roads of London. Inside this car was Mycroft Holmes and his PA, or more commonly known as Anthea. The brunette girl was typing furiously on her blackberry and hadn't looked up for ten minutes so far. The two road along in silence. This comfortable silence between the two was broken when the PA suddenly snapped her head up from the phone's screen.

"Sir, your brother was spotted by The Eye of London. Apparently he was assisting DI Greg Lestrade on another of his cases."

"And what is his status so far?" Her employer requested.

"He is unharmed so far, but Dr. Watson has received a head wound from the murderer. Nothing serious, but he will be receiving some stitches."

"This was the Matthew case? Where the bodies kept showing up in River Themes?"

"Yes sir, the murder was Nathan Matthew, he worked for Mr. Yo Le, the Chinese Representative who was suppose to meet with you next Tuesday." Anthea said as she scrolled through her blackberry.

"I suppose he'll try and return to his home country now, won't he?" Mycroft said rubbing his forehead.

"That seems most likely." Anthea said without really paying attention to what her boss was saying.

"Yes, well than I suppose there's only thing left to do. Have our meeting rescheduled from next Tuesday at 4 p.m. to tomorrow at 3 p.m."

"But sir, you do realize tomorrow is Christmas?"

"Tomorrow is December 25th, just a date on the calendar." As they spoke the black car stopped in front of an office building. The driver got out and opened the door for his boss. Once Mycroft stepped out of the car, the driver wanted until his PA was out before going back in and driving back around to a parking lot not far from the building, awaiting orders for when he was to pick them up.

Mycroft worked endlessly, he felted surrounded by the piles of paperwork around him. He could almost feel new wrinkles making their mark on his face. The door to his office suddenly flew open and his PA brushed into the room. "Sir, your brother is here." And almost immediately as those words were spoke, his dark haired younger brother came swooping into his his office.

"What have you done this time Sherlock" Mycroft said with a groan.

"Please do try and give me the benefit of the doubt, I've actually come for a social visit."

"You?! A social visit?! What has Dr. Watson taken from you this time? Did he help Mrs. Hudson
hide your skull again?"

Sherlock rolled his eyes, "No, in fact Mycroft I came by my own will. As you most likely know, I and John host a Christmas party each year. It is usual a small intimate group, I have spoken to John, and he has agreed to let me invite you. No, I am not being forced, but I thought maybe this might get you to stop bugging me to come to mummy's cotillion."

Mycroft was torn between raising his eyebrows in surprise or groaning. "No Sherlock, I-"

"The party is tomorrow at seven p.m. It would been at six, but since John's sister, Harry, insisted that she was getting clean and wanted to celebrate with John this year. John has foolishly agreed, he is spending Christmas afternoon with his sister and than she is going to see some aunt. Don't worry about attire, although John insist it is semi-formal he will mostly likely be wearing some ridicules sweater. No doubt you'll be wearing on of your tailor made-"

"I will not be attending Sherlock." Mycroft said through gritted teeth. His younger brother had a bad habit of blabbering on when he was embarrassed about something. Ever since Sherlock's faked suicide he and Mycroft had grown even further apart. Where insults and scornful distaste once filled the air between them was replaced with silence. Not that they spoke much before, but now whenever Mycroft did stop by Baker Street to offer his brother a case, Dr. Watson would end up doing all the talking for Sherlock. The last time it had taken a full two weeks before he heard a reply from them. But by then the murder had already committed two more murders, and one being a teenage boy. After that Sherlock had gotten an ear full from John, Lestrade and Mrs. Hudson. Apparently it was a 'bit not good' and John made sure Sherlock understood that peoples lives were more an important than their 'stupid bloody rivalry'.

Mycroft realized that by inviting him into their home for an 'intimate party' entailed that he was 'intimate' with at one person at the party. Going by his relationship with both Sherlock and John, he could honestly say he wasn't intimate with either of them. Perhaps this could be his chance to fix things, to mend his relationship with his brother. But- there was simply too much work. Besides, if they did get Mr. Yo le in tomorrow and the deal went through, there would certainly be a handsome enough of money coming through.

"You- what?!"

"I'm sorry Sherlock, but I have a meeting tomorrow-"

Sherlock rolled his eyes, "I'm sure you can afford taking Christmas off tomorrow. Nearly the rest of the worlds does and they seem to be able to get along fine. Besides, I'm sure-"

"Sherlock, if that is all than please leave. I have work-"

"Why are you always so stubborn?! The one time I try and make an effort you turn me down because you have 'work' to do. I understand the importance of the Work, but you still have to rest sometime!"

"Dr. Watson seems to be rubbing off on you. Did you crash again brother?" Mycroft said with a scowl, he didn't need to be told off my his brother. His younger, ex-addict, 'sleeping and eating slow me down' brother for that matter. "Honestly Sherlock, I'd think you'd know by now-"

"Don't try and use reason Mycroft. Unfortunately when it comes to sentimental things Holmes logical doesn't work."

"Sentimental? To think that the day has come when The Great Sherlock Holmes has turned
to...Sentiment." Mycroft said the last word with such disgust that you could practically see it dipping with it.

Sherlock took a deep breath, "Mycroft, please, I'm-

"Please? Has the world finally come to an end? Leave now Sherlock, I'm much too busy-

"I am TRYING Mycroft! I'm trying to fix things with John, I'm still working to prove myself to Lestrade. Yes, my name has been cleared, but now I actually have to face the fact that I have friends, and now I have to be one. I know you think me heartless, but I think this whole ordeal has proved that false! People have died because of our stubbornness Mycroft! Could you not put your work aside for once and at least TRY!"

Sherlock was furious by the end of his rant. Mycroft had been polite enough to stay quiet and listen the whole time. But...He had work to do, not only the Mr. Yo le deal, but there was also a meeting in Germany in three days that he needed to prepare for, and he still had to call back-

"I'm sorry Sherlock, I can't make it. It seems I can't make you understand, so I will ask you politely to leave and that you give my regard to Dr. Watson."

Sherlock, with a dark and thunderous look upon his face, stood and staked out. As his coat flew behind, he slammed the door shut, causing the room to shake and a vase to fell and shatter.
"I cannot believe that over grow, pompous, git-"

"I'm guessing your visit with Mycroft didn't go so well."

Sherlock came home late that night, they had been on a case for the past three days now and John wanted to get some food inside Sherlock before the man crashed. Again. But when he said he was going to invite his brother to their annual Christmas party, John agreed that it could wait a few more hours. That was over three hours ago, which meant that it hadn't gone well and Sherlock had wanted to blow some steam off.

After Sherlock's return he and John shared many arguments from what Sherlock did while he was aboard to who used what cup. After these arguments Sherlock would go out for a walk to 'cool down'. John, with his stupid paranoia, would always have a small panic and won't calm down until Sherlock returned. This continued on until one day after a very heated fight, John decided to follow Sherlock and apologize. When he did find Sherlock, he found him sitting on a park bench smoking a cigarette. After that they agreed that if Sherlock quit, John would try and be little more understanding (and he also bought Sherlock his own mini fridge for his experiments).

John couldn't believe it had been nearly a year since Sherlock had returned from the (not so) dead. Yes, it had been a shock, yes, he had punched Sherlock, and yes, they didn't talk for almost a week after. But John soon grew weary and went and visited Sherlock at 221B Baker Street. Moving out had been one of the hardest things he had ever done. But almost as soon as he forgave Sherlock they were back to solving crimes. Not two weeks later John moved back in and they had been flat mates ever since.

"So, what happened?" John asked as he folded up the newspaper and put it on the table stand next to him. "That fat git turned down Christmas for work!"

"Hmmmm...Sounds like someone else I know." John said with a knowing yet fond smile. "Oh please! That was completely different! Besides, even I was social for a day!" Sherlock said as he stalked to his room without closing his door. "Oh I'm sure he'll change his mind. He'll probably talk with Anthea and have her change his scheduled and be here in time for cake!" Sherlock returned a few minutes later in his pajamas and plopped down on the couch. He took up the entire couch as he sprawled himself out and cracked his toes and then loosened himself as he let himself sink into the couch. "Hmmmm...Still, he's a work addict and is a Holmes. Two things that never mixed well in the Holmes family. You'd be surprised to find that not all of us are heartless-" John rolled his eyes with a smile. "-but most are usual either heartless OR some sort of addict. Not to bore you with my family story, but he wasn't always like...this." John raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"There was a time when he would jump at the chance to go to a party, and not just a business one. Mummy use to 'force' us (more me than him) to go to her cotillions. Much to your surprise I'm sure, Mycroft was quite the ladies man."

"Mycroft? A ladies man! Bollocks!"

"He's changed over the years, and not for the best. If he doesn't do something about it soon about it...Well, I shudder to think."

There was a silence that spread over the flat of 221B. Sherlock, in deep though and John in looking far off pondering the next words that would come out of his mouth. "Did you tell him yet?" John
said, making the silence turn from comfortable to fill with tension."

"No."

"Sherlock...He's going to find out-"

"When and if, my brother does finally come to his senses I'll be here waiting. Until then I ask that you keep our promise not tell him."

"Of course Sherlock...But- maybe Mycroft could-"

"No John, I don't want his help."

John signed defeatedly and shook his head.

"Make sure Mr. Yo Le is here tomorrow on time. If he isn't then cancel any purchases he has made and have Brutus collect him. Make sure Brutus doesn't...damage him. It was tedious having to deal with Mr. Gillian's lawyer last time, I don't wish to repeat that experience if it can be avoided-"

"Sir, I couldn't get Mr. Yo Le for tomorrow. I made sure to look into his purchases and he bought I plane ticket for a plane to Tokyo for next week. He agreed to come in day after tomorrow-"

"You wish to ask me something?" Mycroft asked staring at his PA, watching her shift from foot-to-foot, fidgeting with the hem of her dress, and curling her hair around her finger for the fifth time.

"Sir...There's no appointments for tomorrow...And since you're not going to your brother's party I won't be needed to alert Reggy with the car-"

"The point."

"I would appreciate if I was allowed the day off tomorrow."

There was a silence that settled in the room that made the PA worried that her request was to be denied.

"Very well, since it would seem everyone else thinks tomorrow is of some importance. But I want you in an extra hour early the day next!"

A smile appeared on the PA's face as she left the room to gather her coat and things. She stuffed he blackberry into one coat pocket and pulled out an iPhone out of the other. She waved to Reggy as she went to hail a cab for herself.

Maybe, just maybe, there was still hope for her boss.
Mycroft continued to work endlessly, apparently Mr. Yo Le had a business partner in Brazil who owned an airport and lent out private planes. With the help from his business partner, Mr. Yo Le could easily get his men out of the country with new identities. If he could get one of his men down at the airport- well, first he would have to find out which airport, what type of airplane they'll be taking, how loyal the pilot is to-

*Knock**Knock**knock*

Before Mycroft could yell to leave him be, his door flew open for the second time that evening to reveal two men dressed still in their winter coats and gloves. Holding back a groan, Mycroft addressed the men. "How might I help you?"

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Holmes, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" Mycroft questioned back with an alarmingly calm voice to the men.

"Plenty of prisons..." Spoke the first, with a quiet, questioning tone.

"And the poor houses." demanded Mycroft. "Are they still in operation?"

"Both very busy, sir..." Answered back the second, confused and shocked at where this conversation was headed.

"Those who are badly off must go there." Mycroft said finally rising his voice in frustration. He didn't have time for this. These men were in the way between him and his work. Surely stopping the boss of a would-be murderer is more important than this! This bumbling idiots were taking up too much of his time valuable time. It was time they left. "Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said Mycroft, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population!"

The two blinked and looked towards each other for moment, then back to Mycroft. They had obviously never been refused before. "Now, if that was all, I trust you can show yourselves out?"

Without saying another word, the two men left with bemused looks upon their faces.

Snow began to fall heavily through the London air as Mr. Mycroft Holmes had his way home. He sat in the backseat of his car waiting for the seat-warmers to start up. He rubbed his hands together to keep them warm as he set his briefcase next to him on the seat.

"Drive me home Reggy, then you can go home and have tomorrow off."

"Yes sir!" Reggy said happily as he put the car in 'drive' and took off from his boss' office. Silence filled the car as Mycroft opened his briefcase and began looking over his work. He gave his PA the evening and the next day off, so he'd have alert his men himself. He could get Thomas to look into finding out which airport Mr. Yo Le's business partner was holding his planes at.
"Sir...We- We're here."

Mycroft looked up and blinked in surprised as he noticed there they were parked in front of his house. Mycroft nodded and put his paperwork back inside his briefcase and left the car. As the car drove away he walked up the few steps to his door. He reached into his winter coat pocket and began fishing for his house keys. As he did this he happen to glance up once and notice that the knocker on his front door had transformed into a different shape. He snapped his head back and did a double-take. He blinked when the knocker began to take the form of a human face. But not a human face, but the face of one whom he was once very familiar with. His breath caught in his throat and his eyes widen in shock.

A hollow voice was heard in the wind, a whispered "...Holmes..." drifted into his ear as he shook his head.

When he looked again his knocker had once again taken its true form. Mycroft dismissed the event thinking to himself that he was simply tired from the days advents and that some well deserved rest would cure him from these hallucinations.

Even while he was inside the safety of his home, Mycroft felt wary and shaken from the fright on his doorstep. The face he had seen was one with much likeness of his father, the late Mr. Holmes. With the memories of his father dancing around in his head, Mycroft began checking in each of the rooms in his house.

The late Mr. Holmes had made Mycroft his apprentice from a young age. When he wasn't abroad in other countries, he would spend his with Mycroft, teaching him everything he knew about the business world and people. When Mycroft was old enough, his father took him along when he go abroad. Once Mycroft finished his schooling, his father hired him as his representative and soon his partner.

But that was seven years ago, after his father's death Mycroft took over his position and ran it himself without a partner.

Once satisfied with his search, Mycroft retired to his room with a small plate of food and a cup of tea. He eat his food in a armchair by the fireplace in his room. The fire warmed him and he ate his food greedily. During his work he had over time acquired a bad habit similar to his young brother. If the work he was currently involved in was time consuming and needed to be done by a deadline he would skip meals and would only have a cup of tea that his PA would bring him from time-to-time. Time soon became a blur to Mycroft; he felt his eye lids become heavy and his hands dropping into his lap. He rested his head by the shoulder of the armchair and let the darkness of sleep take over him.

Mycroft Holmes awoken hours later by the sound of a bell of his wall ringing. At first it rang only once, and seemed to stop once he took notice of it. But once he closed his eyes again the ringing began again. This time the bell continued ringing even when Mycroft stared at it with awe and wonder. The bell suddenly stopped letting tension fill with silence creep into the late night air. The moon was high in the sky and the air had a chill to it that was not created by the December winds.

From the stairs behind Mycroft, there was a clanking sound ascending. As the sound grew nearer and nearer, Mycroft draw in towards himself. He heard a moan come from the stairs as the clanking sound grew louder. The once faint sound began as loud as thunder. Mycroft heard his name come out like a moan. Along with the clanking noise he heard footsteps stomping on the stairs.
The noise stopped all at once when it reached the top of the stairs and seemed to be standing in front of Mycroft's door. The bedroom door flew open and a moaned "Mycroft!" came in like a gust of wind and blew out the fire. The lights in the room faltered and soon the room was consumed with darkness.

Mycroft felt around until his hand found the drawer of the nightstand that was next to his armchair. He opened the drawer and felt inside until he found a small candle and a old pack of matches. He placed the candle on a candle-stand and squished the match in between the match pack and the flap of the match pack. With the match lit he brought the light to the candle. With the new light he looked around the room until his eyes settled on a figure standing in the middle of the room.

Mycroft instantly recognized the figure which was that of his late father. Mycroft stared with wide eyes and dropped, trembling lips. "What do you want from me?" He questioned.

"Much." His father's ghost answered back.

"W-who are you?" Mycroft said grabbing the edges of his dress robe and held his candle forwards towards the ghost.

"It is I, your late father, Silas Holmes."

"Th-that's impossible! This must be some trick! Even the smallest of things could affect one's senses! A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Suddenly the room grew dark and began to shake. The chandelier trembled and the metal objects in the room clanged together. The lights started to flicker and a forceful nearly knocked Mycroft off his feet. Mycroft Holmes crouched down and used his arm as a shield from the wind coming from the unknown. The ghost of his late father raised his hands and began to shake himself. A sickening moan came from within the ghost that caused Mycroft to put his hands over his ears to try and block out the soul racking sound.

As suddenly as it began it ended. The room stilled and the wind seemed to have run its course. Nothing looked as if it had ever moved. The lights, although back on, were dimmed. His father's ghost seemed to return to its previous state and stood still with its chain wrapped around him.

"Do you still doubt me my son?"

Mycroft, left speechless for the first time in his life, only shook his head. With eyes wide and cowering, Mycroft slowly approached the ghost.

"I have come bearing a warning, from the evils I have done during my life so have I fashioned these chains. Because of my deeds; neglecting those I loved, forcing those important to me away, and becoming cold hearted to all, I am forced to carry with me these chains for all eternity."

Had this been a normal conversation, with a normal person, under normal circumstances, Mycroft would have become irritated and scoffed at such....Sentimental things. But this was not a normal conversation, with a normal person under normal circumstances.

"Listen well and heed my words, if you do not change your ways Mycroft, you too shall be forced to carry such chains like mine. But should you choose to dismay my words, your chains shall be twice as heavy! As punishment for not changing when given a chance."

"But- But father, I knew you to be an isolated man, but as you told me long ago, caring isn't an
advantage. It leaves as with hurt, sorrow and anger. Isn't better to never have to experience those things? Tell me, were these acts so damnable that you must be punished for them?"

There was a look of sheer horror on the ghost's face as Mycroft spoke. For the true effect of his actions were finally revealed to the late Mr. Holmes. "Oh my son! Look what I have created! I have neglected my family and now my deeds have taken root in the hearts of my descendant!"

"I- I don't understand-"

"Tonight, you shall be visited by three ghosts. The Ghost of Christmas Past, Present and Future. Heed their words that you might be saved from the barren in which I have punished myself with."

As the ghost turned to leave he looked over towards his son once more and with a longing look upon his face said "The first ghost shall come when the clock strikes one."

And without another word the ghost of Mycroft's father vanished into the night.
The Ghost of Christmas Past

Mycroft shakily made his way towards his bed all the while his eyes darted to every corner of the room looking out for any other supernatural beings that were rumored to visit him that night. Once he made it in his bed without bumping into anything, he closed the bed curtains surrounding the bed and turned off the bedside lamp. Sleep seem to evade Mycroft as he tossed and turned in his large king sized bed. No matter what position he changed to, he couldn't seem to get a good position that would get him quick enough to his gun in his bedside table or to the small alarm on the dress that would signal his men to storm his house. After hours of restlessness, sleep finally took pity upon the man and let him fall into a deep and dreamless slumber. But this peace was soon taken from him as a bell began to ring alerting him that it was one o'clock and his visitor was now due for their appointment.

Mycroft looked around, but saw nothing. Sighing in relief, Mycroft lay back down and tried to return to the sleep he had found. But this relief was short lived as a blinding light filled his room and slipped through the creeks of the bed curtains. An angelic voice rang out through the air that summoned him from his bed. Mycroft opened his bed curtains and saw a figure that seemed to be flowing in the air. The figure had a face like that of a child and the body of that of an angel. Golden locks flew in the air as if they were defying gravity along with the rest of the figure.

"Who and what are you?!" Mycroft said with an expression of sheer shock and terror.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."

"...Long Past?" inquired Mycroft: observant of its dwarfish stature. "No Mycroft Holmes, your past." The ghost not only had a face of that of a young child, but a voice of one as well. "Of what business do you have with me?" Although Mycroft was sure that he was so far in shock that his brain could not come up with words on its own, his mouth still seem to have the ability of forming words.

"Your welfare." The ghost extended a hand towards Mycroft as it spoke. "Rise, and walk with me."

Mycroft gave the hand a suspicious look over. He slowly and cautiously put his hand upon the hand of the ghost. To his surprise, instead of a cold or mist like hand, the ghost's hand was soft and smooth like that of a woman. As he walked along side of the ghost, Mycroft noticed that they began to near the window on the far side of his room. Terror filled Mycroft as his mind finally came to the realization of what the ghost was about to do. "Wait! I am a mortal! I will fall!" With those words Mycroft recoiled and distanced himself from the ghost and the window.

The ghost put out its hand again towards Mycroft. "With but just the touch of my hand and you shall upheld in more than this."

Mycroft took the ghost's hand again and allowed the ghost to lead him up so he was standing on the windowsill. Soon Mycroft and the ghost were no longer in his house but rather in the air. Mycroft blinked and looked as the earth below him began to disappear and all turned to a bright blinding light. Just as sudden as the light began did it leave. Mycroft soon found himself on the ground again, but rather than the cold, dark streets of London, he stood outside of an old familiar school building.

With the snow freshly fallen, boys ran through the white blankets as the school year ended and the Christmas Break began. Cars from different families were waiting in a line outside the school building to pick their children up from the boarding school. The Holmes family was one of the lucky few who lived close enough to the school that a simple drive was enough to bring Mycroft to and from the school. But even with the short distance, Mycroft still remembered the cold Decembers that
he had spent at the school's dorms.

Mycroft, now a full grown man, stood outside the old building and looked upon it with awe. "I know this place! I came here when I was a boy!"

"Do you remember the way?" The ghost asked in its young voice, which was quite fitting for the time and place. "Remember it! I could walk through there with a blindfold!" As Mycroft and the ghost stood there a group of boys ran around them playing in the snow, waiting for the cars that would bring them home.

"I know those boys..." Mycroft said as he began to reminisce.

"Friends of yours?" The ghost inquired.

"Friends are hardly the word I'd use. We were classmates, nothing more."

Just as before, the outside world faded away and soon Mycroft found himself standing inside the school. The room was silent, as it should have stayed. With the Christmas season coming upon them, all the children and teachers would have left the building to return home to their families to spend Christmas with them. But a moment later, a young boy entered the room carrying his books.

Most people would assume the boy was either behind in his studies or a procrastinator who received a low grades now trying to raise them. But Mycroft Holmes knew better than most, this young boy was he, Mycroft Holmes, trying to get a head start with the next years studies. Although he was already two months ahead of everyone in his class, Mycroft, by the end of the year, would be two years ahead of most children his age.

"Come Holmes, let us see another Christmas."

Years passed by Mycroft as if they were no more than pages of a book being turned. One moment he saw himself sitting alone reading and another he was standing to gather more paper from the school supply closet. The pages of his life finally stopped turning as they reached another Christmas with young Mycroft sitting alone in his classroom. Suddenly, the school classroom was opened by a woman with dark, black, curly hair and eyes the color of all the different shades of the sea. She held her lean figure in a way that could comfort the smallest of babes yet tower over the most stubborn man.

This was Mrs. Holmes.

Mrs. Holmes scanned over the room, and once her eyes landed on young Mycroft's form she darted over to him and put her hands around his neck and peppered him with sweet kisses.

"Mother...?" Questioned the boy Mycroft, startled but still happily surprised to see his loving mother.

"Yes Mycroft, I've come to bring you home!" The mother said with a beaming smile. She sat down next to Mycroft, taking his hands into hers.

"Home?" Mycroft said the word as if he had never heard it before. His face was screwed and scrunched up in confusions.

"Yes my dear son. Home, for good this time! Your father is so much kinder than he use to be. One night he spoke to be so gently that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home. He told that; yes! You should come home and that I was to send for you at once! Oh Mycroft! You've grown to become quite a young man now! Gone is my baby whose father sent away!"
As his mother spoke, the young Mycroft eyes widen with joy. At the end of her speech, Mycroft threw his hands around his mother's waist in an embrace.

"Oh Mycroft, you are never to return here, and we shall have the happiest Christmas once we return home!"

As Mrs. Holmes spoke a deep voice spoke from the halls. "Bring Mr. Homes boxes down!" And in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Mycroft with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him.

"Always a delicate creature, with a breath she might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

"So she had," cried Mycroft. "You're right. I'll not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!"

"Before she died," said the Ghost, "She had more children I think."

"One child," Mycroft returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your brother."

Mycroft seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."
Fezziwig's Party

Just as all things before, the school house and yard faded away and brought Mycroft and the ghost to another Christmas in Mycroft's past. The duo soon found themselves standing in the bust streets of a city. It was night and the sky had already darken, the street lights were shining down upon the ground in which they stood on. In front of them stood a large building with tall narrow windows in light was pouring out of. "Tell me Mycroft," the ghost said with an out stretched hand pointing towards the building. "Do you know this place?"

"Know it?!" Mycroft said with a hit of happiness in his voice. "I was apprenticed here!" The ghost led Mycroft inside the building where a party was underway. Laughter and music filled the air of the merry party. As Mycroft looked about the party he pointed an older gentleman, Mr. Welsh Wig, merrily talking with one of the guests.

"Why, it's old Mr. Fezziwig!" Mycroft exclaimed as he watched the older man laugh cheerfully while is round belly began a shake which could shame Santa Claus. Mr. Wig, otherwise known as Fezziwig, was short man with a round belly. He had gray hair which was undone as he danced lightly on his feet. In the center of the room men and woman alike were dancing to the sounds of classic and Christmas music. No pop or anything from the culture, the music in the room was made by small band that was hire and so well liked that they played every year for the Fezziwig's party.

Flashes of color danced around the room as the gowns of the woman glittered and the suits of the men were the only consistent in the room. The white tile made small clicking sounds as the people danced upon it. The darkness on the other side of the windows only happened to set the mood and add another color to the room. The golden chandelier shone brightly and cast down light bright enough to have come down from the heavens. But these were not the only spectacle in the room. A great feast was laid out with cakes, roast turkey, mince-pies and plenty of beer! There was chicken and rice, fruit and vegetables of all kinds. Mashed, boiled and sweet potatoes, brownies and muffins, cookies and puddings. It was a feast fit for a king! Yet, in the heart of this great feast was a younger Mycroft, looking like a manic. "Mr. Wig! Have you seen the price for the food, the ratings for the band, the cost for the decorations and-"

"Calm down Mr. Holmes!" Fezziwig said with a beaming smile. "There is a time and place for worry about money. Tonight is for neither of those, have something to drink to calm your nerves Holmes, there are many of fine young ladies in the room and plenty of agreeable men, get yourself some company. Ah, Belle! Perfect timing!.

Mr. Fezziwig turned Mycroft around and was met with the lady Fezziwig had introduced as Belle.

"Belle, this is Mycroft Holmes, my apprentice and one of my brightest employees!"

Belle's bright blue eyes shown as he looked into Mycroft's. Her brown curls were pulled up into a draped down around her shoulders. She wore a dark blue dress which was strapless but her top half was covered by a light gray wrap. Her red ruby lips spread across her face in a warm smile. Her eye fluttered as she gave Mycroft her hand.

Mycroft took in the young girl's beauty as he raised her hand to his lips and placed a gentle kiss upon.

"It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Holmes."

"The Pleasure is mine I assure you, and please, call me Mycroft."
Mycroft Holmes stood afar as he watched his younger self dance with Belle. He was in awe as he looked on as the two young people spun around the room. Although the room was filled with music from the band and the noise the people talking were making, the only sound Mycroft, both old and young, could hear was Belle's laughter. As the music came to end, Mycroft and Belle walked off the dance floor and went to get a drink. The entire world seemed to fade as the younger Mycroft stuck out his arm in which Belle took hold off with her own. The two talked amongst themselves for the rest of the night and would decline when anyone dared to mention changing dance partners even for as much as one dance.

Mycroft and Belle's relationship continued on long after the ball in which they met. As young couples do, they carried on in their own bliss, completely oblivious to the cares and troubles of the world. Belle became the most precious thing in the entire world to Mycroft. She was worth more than gold to him and was far more beautiful than any form of nature or object man could ever build. They tried and planned to spend every day they could together. Whether it was coming over for dinner or a morning stroll before leaving for work, they always found time to spend together.

It was on such a morning when Mycroft finally realized that there was no one else he would rather spend the rest of his life with. So, with preparing, no ring or gift he could give her as a token; Mycroft Holmes propose to Belle on a summer's morning. Belle immediately said yes and the two began planning for their future. As Mycroft began rising up in government, he was able to afford a ring and got the best money could buy.

Business for Mycroft kept brings good seasons and Mycroft kept rising in government world. But as he kept rising, the situations he had to deal with kept getting more and more serious. Soon Mycroft found himself having to deal war scares in different countries and found himself having to fly out of England more and more. But Belle did not give up hope for them even then. While Mycroft keep planning for the futures of countries, Belle planned for their own future. With the little money she had, she bought a little cottage in the county that she knew Mycroft had his eye on. It was a wonderful surprise for Mycroft's birthday and Mycroft moved in not long after. After much consideration and conversations from both sides of the family, Mycroft and Belle decided they wanted to be tradition and wait until they were married for Belle to move in.

It was not long after that the problems started. Sherlock was now in his teens and had found the pleasures of drugs. When first confronted, Sherlock exclaimed it was a simply experiment and he could stop whenever he wanted. Sherlock's new habit put a strain on everyone. When their father all but disowned Sherlock, their mother would nearly burst into tears whenever the subject was spoken. The only person who treated Sherlock like a person was Belle. Although neither Sherlock nor Belle considered themselves friends, they had an unspoken agreement to be civil with each other.

Belle wouldn't talk about Sherlock's drug habit and Sherlock kept all his comment about Belle's and Mycroft's relationship to himself. And everyone was fine with this, pretend it wasn't there and it
wasn't. Everyone was fine.

Everyone but Mycroft, that is.

Mycroft began to scold Belle, thinking she was doing the same as everyone else and simply letting Sherlock get away with destroying himself. Belle tried to explain herself, that while everyone else was making the problem worse by their reactions; she was only trying to be the calm in the mist of the storm.

With everyone at ends with each other, it was no wonder that Mycroft tried to bury away his problems with his work. If he wasn't there, then it wasn't his problem. His brother was now nearing his twenties and could care for himself. If he wanted to destroy himself and abuse his body until he overdosed and died, fine! It wasn't Mycroft's problem. No, Mycroft's problem was that the ambassador of England was feeding the public negative words after his trip to France was cut short due to a riot. Now some riots were going on about starting a war, which both governments knew would never happen.

It was because he was so far buried in his work that he never saw it coming.

The morning walks slowing stopped, the dinner with parents or at private restaurants just stopped. The surprise afternoon kissing session became few and fewer that when they finally came to a stop, Mycroft never noticed. Mycroft's parents noticed, Sherlock noticed, Mycroft's co-workers noticed, but not the man himself. So when Belle came into Mycroft's office with an expression filled with sorrow, everyone but Mycroft knew what was about to happen.

His PA at the time been filled with dread and wished she could become like the few other workers who had made themselves scarce when they saw the sorrow filled lady. With both women giving each other a solemn nod, the PA went to notify Mycroft that his fiancé was here to see him. Mycroft snapped his head up to tell his PA that he was far too busy. But instead he ended up shutting his mouth, not in surprise, but rather in curiosity. Belle knew better than to show up at his work when he was busy, and his PA knew better than to show someone in when he was busy. So why had these two both broken those rules?

"Could you please make this quick, I have a meeting with-"

"When are we going to get married?" Belle held her hands together in front of her. Nervousness did not go unnoticed by Mycroft; this feed his curiosity even more. Mycroft let out an exasperated sigh. "Can we not do this now, Belle? I promise we'll talk later. You know I'm very busy, I can't be-" To Mycroft's surprise, Belle let out her own sigh. "Myc...We've been planning this wedding for over two years."

"Yes, and then Russia decided to-"

"Don't you dare try and put the blame on someone else Mycroft Holmes! We both know that if you wanted you could arrange for us to be married within a few hours and we could be back at the house unpacking my things!"

"If this is about you moving in, then fine! You know I'm fine with whatever you want-"

"No Mycroft, this is about me wanting to start my life with you. This is about me wanting to spend my nights in your arms. This is about me wanting to be the one you come home to at night. This is about us; you've shoved this off for far too long!"

"Belle I promise, as soon as this all slowdowns-"
"Your job is to manage the world Mycroft; we both know it will never 'slow down'. Don't promise something you can't keep."

"Belle please, try and understand."

"I'm trying Mycroft, I honestly am. But the more I start understand the more I get scared."

This made Mycroft finally rise from seat. From the time she starting talking Belle began taking steps forwards until she was standing in front of Mycroft's desk. Tears began to threaten to fall from Belle's eyes. She tried her hardest to keep herself composed. But as the conversation continued on, she could see only one way this would end, and it frightened her to no end. Belle was losing him; both she and everyone else knew this. No one ever said anything because they all feared this day would come.

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"I have been replaced."

It was not uncommon for rumors go around that someone in the government is having an affair. But Mycroft knew Belle, had this been the case she would have confronted him out front. No, this was something much worse. She was here to confront him on falling out of love with her.

"May I ask what has replaced you?"

Belle gave a sad smile. "You work Mycroft; it comforts you in your times of trouble. It brings you happiness when you wish to escape the world and now it has freed you from the one thing which has kept you from completely giving yourself into it."

"Belle, you know my work requires much from me! We talked about this! I can't just get up and go, do you know how many people count on me? If I were to just-"

Belle shook her head in defeat. "We were in bliss Mycroft, we ignored the troubles of the world and now they have caught up to us. We were young and foolish, we've both grow so much since then, and we've changed into two completely different people."

"And do you think my feelings just because of that?"

Belle fidget with the ring on her hand as she spoke. "What once brought you happiness now only brings you misery. Can you honestly say that living with me in our cottage is what you want? Think back Mycroft, when was the last time you were even at the cottage? Because I know it was not within the last month, and if my suspicions are true, nor the month before that. How can I marry you fully knowing that it will only bring you misery? So now I have come to give you what which I hope you can finally have find your true happiness. I'm release you."

"Have I ever sought to be released?!"

"In words? No, never."

"In what then, has changed to giving you the idea that being released is what I want?"

"You nature, in who you are. You have altered yourself for your work so much that you are no longer the carefree young man who fell in love with me. Tell me Mycroft, would you seek me out? Would you try and win me back? We both know you never would." Mycroft's throat had long since collapsed; it was a struggle to speak. "You think not?"
"If I could, I would gladly think otherwise." Belle answered back. "God knows. How do think I must have felt when I realized this? Had we not been engaged, had we not met, could you honestly say that you would still seek out me? Someone who you would gain nothing if wed to? No advantages, no connections, no power. " Mycroft went to speak, but Belle held up her hand to stop him. "I know you Mycroft, so I know that within a few years, this all shall be nothing more than a memory of long past, a dream that will fog over from the day-to-day routines that will become your life. May you be happy in the life you have chosen."

And with those final words she left.

"Spirit! Take me back to my house! How is it that you delight in my torture?!" Mycroft cried out as Belle made her exit.

"One more," replied the ghost. "One more shadow from you past."

And just like all the other shadows from his past, the scene faded away and a new one was brought into light. This one made Mycroft sick to his stomach.
Mycroft Holmes soon found himself standing in his childhood house in his parent's room. There, lying on her bed looking sickly pale and as fragile as ever, was Mrs. Holmes. Her black hair was down flowing around her. Her usual bright eyes were dimmed and were beginning to fade. Her face, even though hollowed and paled by her sickness, still seemed to somehow beaming its own radiant sunshine. Kneeling next to her, holding her hand was Mycroft. His ginger hair had start thinning and turning a rusty color. Since the last time his older self and spirit had seen him he had put on weight and his eyes had lost any joy that once shone brightly in them.

Mycroft, the older, shivered as a chilly breeze entered the room. Most would question why the bedroom window was opened in the middle of winter. But the reason why seem to burn itself in Mycroft's head. He could still hear his mother's voice, so small and soft, as if he might open it, for she wanted to see the snow one last time. Even at her death, Mrs. Holmes was still as beautiful as ever. Her black hair never lost their curls and famed her heads like a halo. Her hands were still as soft as they were in her youth. The tips of her fingers felt like flower pedals, yet her grip never faltered and was as strong as a tidal wave; pulling it's victim under itself in full surrender.

The room was filled with silence as Mycroft watched his younger self rube his mother's knuckles. Although all attention was on the dying woman on the bed, other painful thought passed through Mycroft's head when he remembered who was not in the room. Mycroft remembered that day clearly, later that night, when his mother had well passed, he would find his little brother in a drug den, high and badly beaten. He would then send Sherlock away to a rehab where Sherlock would spend the next few years in and out. Once he was clean he would meet DI Lestrade, who would only be a Sergeant at the time, and help him on his first case for the NSY. After, Sherlock would only shot up two other times within a five year span. Then he would meet Dr. John Watson, and wouldn't hit up since.

"Mycroft," both Mycrofts were pulled from their thoughts at the sound of their mother's frail voice. "Promise me; promise you'll look after your brother." Mycroft could see the anger and hurt pass through his face at the mention of his brother. "Please Myc, promise me."

"'My-Mycroft' is the name you gave me," The boy fought to say. "If you could possibly struggle all the way to the end."

His mother smiled and gave a small laugh, but the laugh so turned to a coughing fit which had both Mycroft's running to her side. While one Mycroft, the older, stood at the end of her bed, looking on with eyes filled with sorrow, the other helped her sit up and gave her glass of water and helped her drink from it. "Please mother, the doctor says you must take it easy, rest now."

"Rest, I'm dying Mycroft, I'll have the plenty of time for resting. If this is to be the last day I shall have, then I shall spending laughing, no doctor is going to tell me how I am allowed to die. That is for me to decide." Mycroft, the younger, gave a sad smile. "Still as stubborn as ever."

"Spirit!" said Mycroft in a broken voice, "take me away from this place."

"I told you these were shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "That they are what they are, do not blame me!"

"Take me away from here!" Mycroft exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!"
Mycroft shut his eyes and turned away from the scene. He knew his mother had not long, minutes only, and he could not bear to watch his mother die a second time. A strange feeling came upon Mycroft, but as the feeling past he could still hear his mother's words to him. When he finally opened his eyes, he found himself still abed and tangled in his blankets. Drenched in his own sweat, Mycroft felt exhausted and after sitting up for a moment, collapsed on his bed.

"Promise me; promise you'll look after your brother."
Lying on his back with the bed curtains still drawn, Mycroft stared up at the ceiling. Taking short deep breathes, Mycroft tried to calm himself. *Sentiment*, what a disgusting word. His past was full of it; sitting next to his mother, listing to her as she took her final breathes. Belle, her name alone was a reminder of what sentiment could do. It was powerful enough to become a weakness.

As he lay there he heard the bell began to ring. As the chiming sound rang through the night air, Mycroft felt his heart skip a beat. His whole body seem to freeze at the sound, waiting for the next ghost. A sliver of hope went through him as the thought of the whole experience being a dream. The old memories of his past still lingered in his mind, made fresh and clear from his recent visit. As the bell finished ringing Mycroft steeled his nerves. He was not about to be scared out of his wits as he was the first spirit. Should another ghost come he was going to be ready for it. He sat up and tried to appear calm and cool as possible. Whatever was about to happen, he was going to be ready for it.

When five minutes came and past Mycroft grew irritated, he couldn't stand people being late. Now some ghost who was suppose to break into his house and most likely make him get out of bed, at this hour, was making him wait?! The nerve!

Ten minutes, fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, finally a single chime rang out signaling that it had been a half-hour. Mycroft was beginning to think that he had imagined the whole thing and should call upon a doctor in the morning. Honestly, how foolish must he look? Sitting up in his bed, nerves steelied as if he were waiting for some war? Armed in his night clothes and night cap? How he must look! Angry at himself for beginning so easily fooled, Mycroft decided to end this for once and all! He was going to open his bed curtain and prove to himself that all was well and that he had dreamed up the entire thing. As his hand gripped onto the curtain he pulled it back with such a force he surprised himself that it did not fall.

The moment the curtains flew open, a blinding light came upon Mycroft and caused him to screw his eyes shut and turn away.

As light began to fade away, Mycroft blink any his blindness and at the same time felt his stomach growl. His bedroom had completely transformed. His cold gray walls were now decorated in red and green, wreaths and bows covered the room, and a large Christmas tree now stood in the room. But what caught Mycroft full attention was the large Christmas feast which smelled warm and heavenly.

"Come in!" A deep yet merry voice cried. "Come in, and know me better man!"

Mycroft left his bed in a shyly motion. The spirit which was now seated in his room seem to be glowing, which was odd that Mycroft noticed this first seeming as the spirit was also a giant who strangely resembled St. Nickolas, better known as Santa Claus.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present!" The ghost was dressed in a green robe bordered with white fur. His clothes hung so loosely on him, that his chest was opening bare, covered in gray curls. His feet were left naked, with no shoes nor socks to cover them. On his head he wore a green holly wreath, decorated with ice crystals. He wore his dark curls wild and long. Although his voice was deep and rumbling, it was merry and the air around him seem to lighter as well. The spirit took in the look of awe clearly written across Mycroft's face. "Have you never seen the likes of me before?"
"No," Exclaimed Mycroft. "Never!"

"You've never seen my other brothers? For I have many and I am but very young in comparison to them!"

"No...I'm afraid I haven't had the pleasure. Have many brothers do you, if you don't mind my answer?"

"More than twenty hundred!" Said the Ghost merrily.

"...Imagine the shopping list." Mycroft muttered to himself. As Mycroft said this, the Ghost of Christmas Present began to rise.

"Come, touch my robe."

To shocked to comprehend, Mycroft did as he was told and held on fast.

Suddenly the whole room vanished. The wreaths, the bows, the tree...the food. The house as well vanished too; Mycroft looked around and found themselves on the streets of London. It was around early morning, as the sun had begun to rise. It was Christmas morning, where the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their homes, and from the tops of their houses, and gave delight to the children to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snow-storms.

Even though they were outside in the freezing cold on this joyous morning, working rather than warming themselves by a warm or in the company of their families, each and everyone seem to have a smile alight on their faces. Their cheerfulness could not be put out by any cold winds or freezing snow, but rather seem to grow as the small flurries fell from the sky. As they shoveled they would greet each other with warm smiles that were specially reserved for Christmas Day alone. One could hear the joy and glee that bathed itself in their welcome of the Christmas day.

The scene soon vanished and Mycroft found himself standing in front of a small flat. There was nothing out of the ordinary about this flat, nothing that would give away who lived here. The flat door opened and a kind older woman stepped out and received the mail from the previous day. As she did this she looked up and raised her hand in greeting towards someone riding down the street on a new bike. A 'Merry Christmas!' rang out and was answered with back by the person on the bike saying the same.

Mycroft suddenly found himself inside the flat in the middle of the living room.

"Mum, close the door! You're letting all the warm air out!"

Mycroft recognized the voice immediately; it was the voice of his loyal PA.

"Lighten up darling! It's Christmas Day! There's nothing to be sour about!"

An older man wearing antlers and holding two mugs came out and placed a kiss on Andrea’s cheek. "Morning dad! Sleep well?"

'Andrea was still in her sleeping clothes covering herself only with a dark bathrobe and fuzzy slippers. Her hair was down and unbrushed, looking like teenager who just rolled out of bed. Mycroft almost didn't recognize her, with her blackberry obviously in the pocket of her bathrobe, she looked nothing like the PA who was always at his beck and call.

"Breakfast is almost ready dear; why don't you and your dad get started with the stocking?"
'Anthea's' mother called from the kitchen.

"Oi! None of that mum! We aren't starting without you! Plus, Walter's not here yet and he was well pissed last year when we started without him! Give him five more minutes mum!"

As Mycroft looked around the room he saw a picture of 'Andrea and her parents and a young man standing in front of a Christmas tree. The picture was obviously taken a few years back, as 'Andrea's hair was shorter. Walter must have been young man in the picture, and going by his nose and ears he was her brother. Most likely away at college, being supported not only by the part time job he had (Obvious, going by his right hand he is a cook for a local restaurant) but also by the family.

By the picture alone Mycroft deduced he was studying the law and was aspiring to become a lawyer. Although he obviously hated taking money from his family but, going by his clothes, he needed it. There was no way he was going to be able to repay his debts without it. He was only in his second year and had at least two more.

A familiar smell of roasted turkey caught Mycroft's attention. Turning to the kitchen, he saw Andrea's mother put a small, almost duck size, turkey into the oven. Mycroft frowned, why did they have so little? The flat was nothing impressive, something someone in the lower middle class would be able to afford. The Christmas tree was plastic, and the food being cook was hardly enough to feed them. Mycroft knew how much Andrea was being paid, surely she could afford better than this?

Oh.

An empty beer bottle came into Mycroft's sight. It was on the coffee table in the living room, and going by the stained rings under it, there had been many others there before it. And there, on the wall going up the stairs, there was a line of picture frames of people who varied of shape and size. From same infants to an elderly couple, these were obviously there extended family.

"Is anyone staying with us this Christmas?" Andrea asked as she flipped through the channels on the telly.

"Yes, unfortunately your Aunt and Uncle Luci got evicted from their apartment and need a place to stay."

A scowl came from Andrea. "But mum, that'll mean Alex and Henry will be staying here as well!"

"And we will happily welcome them." Andrea's father spoke. I know they bother you, sweetheart. But you know every well that if we were in their situation they would welcome us into their home. Me and your mother will try and kept them out of your way, but we all need to cooperate. Understand dear?"

Mycroft had a feeling that this was not the first time they had supported another family member. What Mycroft couldn't understand was why Andrea didn't leave? She made enough money to buy her own place, her parents were old enough to go to a nursing home, or she could right out confront her father about his drinking problem and tell him to get a job and support him and his wife. With a second job Walter could surely support himself. And their families problem were not their problems, there were certainly other places, like motels, their Aunt and Uncle could stay.

"She stays because it is what she feels as right." It was the first time the spirit had spoken since they left Mycroft's house.

"This was the house she grew up in; it would pain her to leave it. She has also already confronted her father, but his addiction has been going on for well over ten years now, they all know it will be a
slow and long process, but he is taking steps, they may be the first ones, but they are steps. Walter has had anxiety problems since he was a child. For him to leave and go to college and get a job are huge steps for him. A second job would only make him worse. I do not expect you to understand why they help their family, when you turned your own away."

"But her life could be so much better. She has let sentiment get in the way and now look where she is!" Mycroft all but yelled aloud.

"And is it truly such a bad thing? She has the same roof that has been over her head her whole life. She had a loving mother and father who care for her just as much as she cares for them. She has a family who will share their homes with her, so why is it wrong that she willingly opens her arms for them? When with all her problems, she has one thing that you do not."

"Oh, and what might that be? Happiness?! I am perfectly happy the way I am!"

"She has love."

The spirit’s answer caught Mycroft by surprise. According to his brother, love is a chemical defect found on the losing side, and Mycroft couldn't agree more with him. Mycroft had learned this the hard way; love took everything, it was greedy and was never satisfied until it had consumed everything and then left you to grieve alone and in the dark.

"She is reassured almost daily that her family loves her. Not just in words alone, but also in their actions. They understand way she is away so much, they understand why she does what she does. And in the same way she understands they have their own lives as well and cannot she face the world alone sometimes. She does not blame them or condemn them, instead she tried to see things from their point of view, and in turn they do the same for her.

"Love is both give and take. It feeds off from one another and sees to satisfy each other. When both people love each other and see to each other’s needs, they both find themselves even more in love and wanting even more of each other. How can they not? When you find something that pleases you, how can you not wrap yourself in it? When you have a loving family, why is it wrong to want to surround yourself with them? When you find someone you love, why is it wrong to want to be around them all the time? It isn't, but when we don't understand, when we take and confuse it with giving, when we lose ourselves, that is when we misinterpret love, and find ourselves hating it."

Mycroft could not help himself; a swelling feeling in his chest began to spread. A want, no, a need to have this consumed him. A desire to have what Andrea has, a desire to be surrounded by love filled him. He could not stop the spread of joy and happiness in himself when Andrea stood and welcomed her brother with a hug and kissed his cheek.

His smile grew even brighter when Andrea's Aunt, Uncle and cousins arrived and they welcomed each other with cheer and warm smiles upon their faces. The scenes seem to glow and Mycroft could practically feel the warmth from their happiness come beaming from deep within their hearts.

That was when Mycroft turned to the spirit. "Take me to see my kin; I want to see my family."
The Christmas Party

Chapter Notes

Okay, so please forgive me for being a lazy ass and not posting! I started getting back into groove.... and then life was just like "Nope! I'm gonna throw all this shit your way!"

I've written up to Chapter 11 (which just happens to be the longest chapter I have ever written) and will posting them soon!

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mycroft found himself standing in the middle of another flat. This one, unlike the last, was familiar. The flat 221B which stood on Baker Street was transformed from its usual chaos to being covered in Christmas decorations. There stood a Christmas tree in the corner of the room decorated with colored lights and glass balls. On the very top seat Sherlock old friend; his skull. The skull was decorated with a Santa Claus hat as it sat watching the rest of the flat from its seat on the tree. White lights and wreaths covered the room giving the flat a warm feeling.

Even though it was Christmas Night the Christmas excitement was still fresh and anew. John and Sherlock were holding their annual Christmas party; Dr. Molly Hooper, DI Lestrade, and Mrs. Hudson all sat in the living drinking warm drinks as they sat by the fire. Presents had be opened and dinner had be eaten; chocolate fudge, apple pie and egg nog were all spread on the coffee table, in arm distance reach of all the guests.

"Sherlock, how about we play a game?" Molly suggested, loosened up from all the egg nog she had drunk.

"A game? Really Molly-" Sherlock began to complain.

"Oh Sherlock, I think it's a splendid idea! When I was younger there was this we use to play "Yes or No". It was always so find to see what everyone could think up! Ah, like this one time-" Mrs. Hudson was interrupted by a groan coming from Sherlock.

"If I agree to play can we please skip the story Mrs. Hudson?!"

"Very well... But only if you agree to go first!" Sherlock suddenly jumped up from his seat and began circling around the room. "Fine, give me moment...Okay, I've thought of something." Smiles seem to spread upon everyone's face as they each took turns guessing.

"Is it a vegetable?" Lestrade asked.

"No." Sherlock asked flatly.

"A Mineral?" Molly asked, knowing how much Sherlock liked looking at different minerals under the microscope at Bart's.

"Nope!"
"A mammal!" John asked as his face light up.

"Yes."

Glee passed through each person as the new information was found.

"Is it found on a farm?"

"Never."

"In the city?"

"Usually."

"Is it handsome?"

"Certainly not!"

"A dog?"

"No."

"A cat!"

"Nooooope!"

"Is it a pest?"

"Quite often."

"A mouse!" Molly yelled out, the game began to intensify as the guess went on. None of them were willing to give up. "No!" Sherlock said as he walked around the room with a knowing smile.

"A rat!" Lestrade said a loud, almost yelling.

"No...Again." Sherlock's smile grew, enjoying his friend's frustration.

"A cockroach!" Mycroft yelled out, forgetting for a moment that no one could hear them.

"How about a leech!" Mrs. Hudson said from her seat in Sherlock's usual chair.

"Oh dear, this really is just too wonderful!"

"Oh wait! I got it!" John said from his red cushioned chair. "A creature that is usual considered a pest, it's never at a farm and usual in the city, but isn't a type of insect. Why, it's Mycroft!"

A sneer of a smile appeared on Sherlock's face as he nodded signaling that John was correct. As laughter filled the room, a cold sadness passed through Mycroft. Angry, hurt, and sorrow were all emotions that Mycroft had spent years making himself above. As much as he wanted to yell at his brother, he knew they could not hear him.

As Mycroft was about to tell the spirit to take him home and show him no more Sherlock's laughter sudden took a cold turn and transformed into a fit of coughs. Panic and concern appeared on John's face as he got up to help his friend. "I think that's enough for you Sherlock C'mon, it's late, it's time you went to bed."

Sherlock continued to cough as John put his arm around him and helped him to Sherlock's bedroom.
where he shut the door giving them privacy from the others. As Mycroft looked around the room it seemed everyone knew what had happened to Sherlock, for none of them seemed surprise at the scene. Mycroft, realizing that something was wrong, followed flatmates to Sherlock's room.

Inside the room, Sherlock was seated on his bed in his pajama bottoms. His night shirt hung from his shoulders as he fought with his shaking hands to button up his shirt.

"It's getting worse, isn't it?" Asked John as took care of Sherlock's dirty clothes.

"Shaking more frequently, my muscles have been weaker lately, and I've had a headache all day."

"Did it ever go away from yesterday?"

"...No."

Mycroft anger course through him, how had he let this slip pass by him? How long had his brother been like this? Now that he thought about it, he couldn't remember where his brother and his friends were on priority for surveillance. Should something have happened and he wouldn't have been alerted until all other priorities have been dealt with, and those weren't few.

"Alright, take it easy Sherlock, don't get yourself worked up. Get some rest, okay? I'll tell everyone to keep it down, I'll check up on you in a couple hours, okay?"

"Umhm, good night John."

"Good night Sherlock."

"Tell me Spirit, will my brother live?" Mycroft stood, watching his baby brother drift off to sleep as John left the room. "I see a empty chair next a fireplace, a tombstone returning to a spot where it had once been placed before, and a violin left abandoned by its owner."

"Spirit, is there nothing that can be done?!"

"What does it matter?" the spirit said in a suddenly irritated voice, a great transformation from his usual merry voice. "If he's going to die they he'd better do and decrease the surplus population!"

Mycroft felt dread come over him as his own words there thrown back at him. He felt cold to his own harshness. Had he really said that? Yes, it was true he could be cold towards people at times, he wasn't called 'iceman' for no reason. But that seemed simply cruel, even for him. Suddenly the need to change all that he had done surged through him. He could now see how all he need affected those around him. How could he be so careless as to turn away his *dying* brother as though he were just another salesman? His hardworking PA, forcing her to work even harder.

He felt like a new person, he could change things the moment he returned. As soon as he got back to his house he would order Sherlock's file, find out what was wrong with him and what could be done. This would certainly not be the end for him! In fact, Mycroft could go as far as to say this was just the beginning.
A/N: Okay, so if any of you have watched 'The Muppet Christmas Carol', you'll notice that I'm going back in forth between the story plot for the movie and the original book 'A Christmas Carol' written by Charles Dickens. This is because there are some scenes from 'The Muppet Christmas Carol' that I really liked, but they also left out some stuff that I wanted to make got in this story. So in case any of you were worried I was going to leave out a bunch of stuff. Don't worry, I will be sticking as close to the original plot as closely as possible!

Btw, what would you guys say to adding in Johnlock? I wasn't originally, but I'm seriously considering it.
As Mycroft throught about all that he had seen, joy filled him. He would make things right, he would find out what was wrong with Sherlock and get him the help he needs. He would make sure Anthea would receive a bonus and it was well since time she got a raise. He would set things right, everything would turn out all right! Mycroft was determined to make it so. Deep in his own thoughts, it wasn't until Mycroft had realized they were no longer in his brother's flat that he noticed the Spirit's outward appearance had changed. As Mycroft gave him a look over, he noticed that the ghost's hair had turned gray, his skin had become wrinkled and pale.

"Spirit, are your kind's lives so short?" Mycroft asked with curiosity evident in his voice.

"My life upon this world is quite brief." The Spirit answered. "It ends tonight."

"Tonight?!" Cried Mycroft

"Tonight at midnight. Come Mycroft, for the time draws near."

It was at this moment that chimes out stating that it was three quarters past eleven.

As Mycroft observed all the Spirit's changes, he noticed something peeking out from underneath the hem of the Spirit's robe. "Please forgive if I am wrong, but I believe there is something not belonging to you protruding from under your skirt. Is it a foot or a claw?"

"It maybe a claw, for there is flesh upon it." The Spirit answered sorrowfully. "Come look."

As the ghost brought back the foldings of his robe, there sat two children. They look horrid, wretched, hideous, abject and miserable. They looked more like creatures then children, starved until they were only skin and bone. The pink tender flesh of most children was yellowed with brown spots covering their arms and legs. Their hair was matted and dead. Even though they were only children, they look wolfish, with scowls and shriveled hands, as they glared with malice and hate.

Mycroft stepped back, appalled at the boy and girl who clung to the hem of the garment. Mycroft, who was taught to give a false compliment rather than a harsh truth, tried to say that they were fine children, but no words came, the lie so large it choked on itself in his throat. "Spirit, a-are these yours?" were the only words to escape his mouth.

"They are Man's." The Spirit said as he looked down upon the children. "They cling to me, disgusted with their fathers. The boy is Ignorance, and the girl, Want. Beware them both, at any degree, large or small. But beware most the boy, for with him only doom will come." The Spirit stretched out his hand towards the city and said "Ruin to those who are in ignorance yet speak! Use it for your own factious purposes and you will make it worse! And abide the end!"

"Have they no shelter?" Mycroft cried
"And are there no prisons?" The Spirit answered back with Mycroft's own words. "And are there no poor houses?"

It was with these words that the clock struck twelve. Mycroft quickly turned to try and find the Spirit, but saw that he had already left the earth. As the last chimed through the night air, Mycroft remembered his late father's words. Searching his eyes found a seldom Phantom, he beheld the hooded figure, draped as it slowly walked towards him through the mist.

With the words being spoken, Mycroft knew this to be the Ghost of Christmas Future.
The Last and Final Spirit

Chapter Notes

Please be sure to read ALL the new chapters! I have posted chapters 9, 10, and 11 all at once! 9 and 10 are relatively short, but are just as important to the plot! Once you have read them... Carry on!

P.S. This is the longest chapter I have ever written!

P.S.S. What would you guys say to adding in some Johnlock? It's wouldn't be anything major, just some side stuff. Honestly I don't mind either way, whether they are just friends or anything more, this story is about Mycroft.

As Mycroft Holmes saw the spirit silently approach, he knelt down before him. The very air in their presence seem to thicken with tension and impending doom. The spirit was shrouded in a deep black garment which concealed its head, face and very form. The only thing left visible was a thin, pale outstretched hand. For without this, it would have been difficult to distinguish the spirit from the darkness of the night.

"Do I have the pleasure of being in the presence of the ghost of christmas yet to come?" Questioned Mycroft, with as much dignity and reserve as he could muster. The Ghost of Christmas yet to come left him senseless and witless. The spirit did not answer back with words, only stretched out his hand further and pointed downwards.

"You are here to show things that have not happened yet, but are still to come?" Mycroft pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?" The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received. Even though Mycroft was well now used to the company of the spirits', he feared this silent this spirit so much so that his legs actually began to tremble. The Spirit observed him ever silently, allowing Mycroft time to recover.

"Ghost of the future!" Mycroft suddenly proclaimed. "I fear you more than any of the ghosts I have thus far seen this night! But I know that you have come to do me good, and I hope to live to become another, better, man. I am prepared to bear your company, and do so with a thankful heart. Please, will you not speak to me?" The spirit gave no reply, instead only raised its hand to point straight before them.

"Lead on, then." Mycroft said, "The night is ending fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit."

They did not seem to enter the city; rather the city seemed to come up all around them. As it came upon them, they found themselves in the heart of it; amongst the fast moving cars, the beggars who sat alongside the buildings, the people chattering among themselves, men entering cabs, women leaving stores with arms full of bags, just as Mycroft had seen them nearly everyday.

The spirit lead Mycroft in front of a large building where a group of men could be seen leaving. The Ghost pointed his hand as the words of the men became more clearer.
"No," said a great fat man with a monstrous chin," I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he's dead."

"When did he die?" inquired another.

"Last night, I believe."

"Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, lighting a cigarette. "I thought he'd never die."

"God knows," said the first, with a yawn.

"What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a thin, long neck and matching long and pointed nose.

"I haven't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again. "He hasn't got any family left, perhaps he left it for his department. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know."

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

"It's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "lord knows I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?"

"I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the pointed nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one."

Another laugh.

"To be quite honest I'm not sure if I will go. I do not require food, but I've always found funerals to be much too depressing for me. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Good afternoon gentlemen."

With that the men broke apart, each leaving to go a separate way. Mycroft knew these men, he turned to the spirit for an explanation. But the ghost only pointed to where another two men were just greeting each other.

"How are you?" said one.

"Just fine, how are you?" returned the other.

"Quite well!" said the first, "I suppose you've heard the news than? Old geezer finally hit the bucket!"

"Yes I've heard, quite cold isn't it?" replied the second.

"Yes, quite seasonable for the Christmas time. Tell me, do you skate? Jane, you know the front secretary? What's to plan a office party..."

The rest of their conversation seemed to fade out, as it only contained meaningless small talk that was exchanged between the two co-workers.

Mycroft was at first confused as to why the Spirit would emphasize such a trivial conversation; but feeling that it some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what it could perhaps be. As this was the Christmas of the future, it seemed the time was only a few years from his present time. So Mycroft tried to think of those connected to him who might be sickly or older. No one that these men would have known fit the description of the dead man they spoke of. It was obvious this person was
unlikable, they had no family, and were quite wealthy. Perhaps one of the member of the Diogenes Club? But how would these men know of them? These men were businessmen whom Mycroft had dealt with from time-to-time. There would be no reason for them to the member of the Diogenes club.

But not doubting that to whomsoever they spoke of had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clue he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy.

Mycroft Holmes knew this building perhaps better than his own house. While this was not his workplace, he visited quite frequently during meetings and inquiring new relations. As he looked around he saw a man in a business suit leaving an unmarked black car. As the man exited the car he noticed an older looking Andrea trailing not far behind him. The man was quickly meet and was greeted with the highest respects.

"Welcome! You must be the government official we've been expecting. My employer would like to thank you for bringing up the the business of the Diogenes Club to his attention..."

Mycroft could see no likeness of himself in the man. The man was younger, sharper dressed in overly expensive suits that were more uncomfortable than they were worth. A look of annoyance crossed over the man's face as the chattering secretary continued on talking only stopping for a quick breath. Mycroft had been in the man's same position all too many times. When a big fish visits a small pond it seemed to cause quite a commotion.

Quiet and dark, beside him stood the Ghost, with its outstretched hand. When he roused himself from his thoughts, he turned towards the Spirit. Its Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and feel very cold.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Mycroft had never been before, although he recognised the type of place this was. The back streets were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, high, ugly. The streets, stores and houses were dowsed in the offenses of the smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.

There in the midst of this horrendous scene was a darkened den. The skeleton of a fully operating store sat decaying, but was disturbed and unable to rot away in peace. Broken windows and missing floorboards were the only decorations in the dimly lighted room. Broken glass cases were lined up at the front of the store and rotted wooden shelves were either eaten away until they fall on an angle or were a touch away from falling apart. Odd and ends were littered around the store, on display for the few customers. 'Clean' syringes were lines up in a row in a metal case next to a pile of what looked a small string-drawn bag full of leaves. A whiteboard hung behind the main display with different types of drugs and their prices.

But what was even more rare were the more commonly looking items that were on display. Rolex watches, newly fresh and clean silk bed linens, even name-brand suits that costed more money than anyone coming into this place could ever possess. Behind a counter was an old man; perhaps nearing his seventies and hoped to make some money off of anything that he could bear to part with? But the man's appearance told another story. They spoke of many harsh winters spent on the streets, of years of addiction and of how long it had been since he had lasted bathed.

As Mycroft and the Ghost came into the presence of this man, a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and
she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh.

"You couldn't have met in a better place," said the old man, removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come into the parlour. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two an't strangers. Stop till I shut the door of the shop. Ah. How it skreeks. There an't such a rusty bit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; and I'm sure there's no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, ha! We're all suitable to our calling, we're well matched. Come into the parlour. Come into the parlour."

The parlour was the space behind the screen of rags. The old man raked the fire together with an old stair-rod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night), with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again. While he did this, the woman with the bundle threw her lot on the floor, and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

"Come now Mrs. Dibbler, who's the unfortunate sod this time? We've all the same business as you, and as my policy 'Snitches get stitches.'"

"Dead," Replied Mrs. Dibbler, "so not like he'll be miss'n any of it anyways. I tell ya, he wasn't even missed! Nah, instead lay gasping his finally breath, all alone."

"Punishment for a life of sins," said the old man, knowing Mrs. Dibbler had come from a family of faith. "It's simple a judgment on him."

"I wish it was a little heavier judgment," replied the woman; "and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We know pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe."

But before old Joe could do so, the man whom had enter along with them came forwards and produced his findings. They were simple things, a plain golden ring, an old broken watch, and a beaten and battered black umbrella. Joe looked through the things and then reached into his pocket to produce a small sum of money. "There's you part, I wouldn't pay another pound more if I was gonna be shot for not doing it. Who's next?"

Mrs. Dibbler quickly natched up the chance before it could be stolen from her again. The first things she came forwards with were folded sheets that looked to be almost unused, along with silverware, a couple of fine china tea cups with saucers and a few stained doilies. "Now undo my bundle Joe, you won't be disappointed!"

Joe bent down and began unraveling the bundle, having to undo many knots. Finally once the bundle was free, he took out some large and dark fabrics. "Bed curtains?" exclaimed Joe, "You don't mean to say you took them down, rings and all, with him lying there?" said Joe.

"Yes I do," replied the woman. "Why not?"

"You were born to make your fortune," said Joe," and you'll certainly do it."

"Well I certainly wasn't gonna hold back when it only takes my hand reachin' out for it. And certainly not for the sake of a man he was!" Mrs. Dibbler huffed out. "Now be sure not to spill anythin' on the blankets!"
"His blankets?" Joe inquired.

"Whose else? He certainly ain't gonna get cold without them!"

"Lets hope he didn't of anything that could be caught." Joe said as he folded the blanket. "Ha! Still warm too!"

"Don't you be afraid of that," returned the woman. "I an't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah. you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me."

"What do you call wasting of it?" asked old Joe.

"Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure," replied the woman with a laugh. "Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. Not that it helped! He was ugly in life, he was ugly in death, no fine shirt ain't gonna fix that!"

Mycroft listen to the conversation in horror. As the small group continued about their business going through their spoils in the dim lights, Mycroft viewed them in utter disgust and hatred. They were like demons to him, turning a corpse into a market.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the same woman, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it, handing Mrs. Dibbler a large sum. "This is the end of it, you see. He drove everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Spirit," said Mycroft, shuddering from head to foot. "I see, I truly do. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. But good lord, what is this?"

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it remained unmoving, announced itself in awful language. The room was very dark, too dark to tell what was in it or what type of room it was, though Scrooge glanced round it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Mycroft glanced towards the Spirit. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Mycroft's part, would have show the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side.

"Spirit," he said, "this is a dread filled place. Please, let us leave, for I shall learn no lesson here, trust me. Let us go."

"I understand," Mycroft returned, "and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power."

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

"If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said Mycroft, now quite beyond agonised, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beg of you!"
Again the scene changed, to a small flat with a mother anxiously pacing back and forth, while her children played with a small dog in another room. The front door was suddenly opened and a young man entered, quickly shedding his outer coating. "Tell me, what has happened?" The wife asked as she ran to her husband's side to aid him with his things.

"I went to the house to go see, and was meet by the same half-drunk woman whom I spoke of last night. It seems she told the truth, he is dead."

The wife seemed to breath a sigh of relief as she joined her husband on their couch. "Than who will our debts be transferred to?"

"I don't know, but when we find out, we'll be ready! Should his successor be even more heartless, I won't turn up empty-handed. We may sleep easily tonight, my dear!" As soon as they finished speaking, the children, in realizing that their father had returned, came running and embraced the man. The house soon became happier, a dinner was set with smiles gracing everyone's faces, and even the children, who did not understand the situation, seemed to have lifted spirits. It made Mycroft gasp in horror, that the only emotion caused by a man's death was one of pleasure.

"Please," Mycroft once more begged the Spirit, "Let me see something more tender, in connection to this man's death, there must be! Or even a darkened room, such as the one we just left, would be more pleasant for me then this."

So the Spirit did as it was asked, and showed Mycroft a darkened room, filled with mourners and grief. A room where a multitude of tears had just recently been shed.

The Spirit brought Mycroft to 221B Baker Street.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!