BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

by tigersilver

Summary

The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock?
Chapter 1

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Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: PG-13 (for now)

Word Count: 3,800 (so far)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock?

“If you do not cease that abysmal thrashing about, I will kiss you.” Sherlock blew out a puff of harsh hot breath impatiently, causing a flattened curl to ruffle fitfully off his pale brow. “John.”

“Kiss? Hmph!” John stared at the ceiling, too knackered to bother with the kissing, or even the idea of kissing, and especially the foreign idea of kissing his recalcitrant flatmate. “Like to see you try it, Sherlock.”

It was, as Sherlock would say, very dull, the ceiling. And very dimly lit, too, as they were situated in Sherlock’s room, where there was far less ambient light of a sunny afternoon. Sherlock favoured black-out curtains, it seemed. They were not, however, there for any such silly thing as kissing. They were there for the purposes of sleep and Sherlock was a prat and a brat and attempting to put it off, any way he possibly could.

“I might. If you continue to push at me, John.”

“Empty threat.” John sighed. “Kiss my arse, more like. You’re the one who’s making a fuss here and refusing to be sensible. Shut up, close your eyes and then maybe you won’t notice what I do. Nitwit.”

“I always notice what you do.” Sherlock had the temerity to sound reproving, as if John were the nitwit…or perhaps a halfwit. “I notice everything about you.” Or entirely witless, which Sherlock wouldn’t hesitate to accuse him of being if he felt it appropriate. “And currently you are flopping your feet and blinking far too often. Stop it. I can’t sleep. You want me to sleep, I am attempting to oblige you, but then you go and render it impossible, John. Stay your damn feet. Stop blinking.”

“And you think threatening to snog me will make me stop?” John jibed nastily. “That’s more than a little mental, far as threats go. Your judo now…that’s a different matter. You could always try on knocking me unconscious, Sherlock, but I can’t say as I think it’ll work. Now, close your own eyes and your mouth too, you great noisy tit, and get some shuteye. I’ll try not to indulge my toes, alright? Or blink unnecessarily.”

“Is it?” Sherlock segued from sardonically reproving to sanctimonious with barely a breath. He remained rigid, though, not shifting a single millimetre. “Mental? I think it’s actually quite a good threat as threats go, John. So…awkward. Socially. So humiliating for you if it’s bruited about we are really, er…the boyfriends. You’re presently engaged to your Mary, are you not? It follows that you wouldn’t necessarily want someone else snogging you, even as a joke or in retaliation. You’re
“Huh!” John snorted. “Wrong, Sherlock!” He rolled over onto his side to glare vaguely into the dim, peering at the detective laid out in mummy-like fashion by his side, even to the arms folded impassively across his thin, be-robed chest. “As you like to say—wrong. I am not engaged to ‘my’ Mary; we’ve only just started speaking of any kind of commitment and she’s hardly ‘mine’ just for the asking. Only a notion, damn you, and I must say it’s highly unlikely to ever pan out, given your place in my life. Please just shut up now. Please.”

“Me? Why me, John?” Sherlock jerked his chin abruptly, peeping sidelong to meet John’s searching gaze through a fluttering and generous fan of dark lashes. He seemed genuinely curious. “I’ve done nothing to hinder your path to true romance this time ‘round. You can hardly dare accuse me of it. I’ve been everything obliging.”

“Obliging? You don’t say?” John laughed softly. “Sherlock. Sherlock, just because you’ve not invaded Mary’s flat to drag me out bodily—thanks for that, by the way; much appreciated—and just because you’ve not teased her to tears the very few times she’s stopped over here does not in any way equate to obliging. You’ve only been….well.” He sighed and poked a gentle fingertip into the firm flesh of Sherlock’s upper arm for the barest moment. “Heh. You’ve been you, mate, but I’ll give you the one thing. You’ve been a little less you around her, at least. There’s that. Kind of you, cheers for that.”

John closed his eyes again, letting his hand drop and curl into a relaxed fist atop one of Sherlock’s posh pillows. Mother of god, but he was exhausted. And his flatmate was sure to be in worse condition. He sighed, exasperated.

“Now go to sleep, please,” he repeated, always game to repeat a request till his mate gave over from sheer boredom. Sometimes that particular tactic did, in fact, work.

Not this time, though.

“A…little less…of me. Hmm.” Sherlock’s eyes flashed as he snapped them back to stare straight up, presumably taking over John’s previous unremarked duty of glaring at the dull ceiling. “Whatever that means in plain English—oh! There—just there, John!”

“What?” John flinched, startled. “Where?” He went up on one elbow and stared frantically about the darkened bedroom, all thoughts of a decent nap scattering like chaff. “What is it, Sherlock? What d’you see?”

“Spider, see her? Right there.” Sherlock disengaged a languid hand from under his armpit and gestured with it upwards and to the left far corner of the boring ceiling. “Little brown thing, very active. I’ve been watching her spin for several minutes now.”

“Yeah? So?”

“Common sort, I think, as I’ve not been examining any other kind recently, though the web she’s made is of some small interest. See how it’s perfectly triangular there? See the repaired rents on the upper left? Course, I wonder what it catches to eat, in here. Can’t be much. Maybe moths. After your horrid jerseys, I don’t doubt.”

“Oh, I disagree!” John giggle-snorted as he flopped back down on Sherlock’s springy mattress, making certain to remain on his good side, and snuggled down into heathen comfort. “My jerseys aren’t horrid, leastways no more so than your wrappers, Sherlock, and—“
“There’s nothing horrid about my night apparel, John.”

“Hmm. Right.” The sheets were quite soft, John noted, and the pillows plentiful, too. He spared a second to envy; his bed, though larger across, was not nearly as nicely dressed out. “Point; you’re very posh, always, Sherlock, in person at least, but likely there’s all sorts of strange beasties lurking about in here for her to eat, I’m thinking. God knows what’s running wild. Have you ever cleaned in here, I wonder? Has Mrs Hudson, poor dear? I can’t recall anyone ever daring to tidy in here. Certainly not you, your Majesty.”

“Very little,” Sherlock sniffed, sending a gimlet-eyed glare toward his bedmate from the corner of one pale eye. “To sustain a spider of any variety in here, I assure you. Do not assume that I am some grubby, lax uni student on the basis of the state of the rest of our flat. There is a certain order to be attained, John, and I maintain it, thank you. And I seldom tolerate rubbish or vermin.”

John scoffed, just under his breath.

“Look here,” Sherlock raised his voice a half-decibel, “are you truly planning on chattering away in my ear the entire time? Because I’m not best pleased at being compelled into a fake rest-state in the first place and you’re—“

“You need to sleep, Sherlock,” John interrupted firmly, gently, seriously, all scoffing cast aside with nary a regretful blink. “Don’t deny you do. Everyone sleeps, even you.”

“I’ll sleep later; I’ve already said,” Sherlock grumped. “Leave off, will you?”

“No, now, Sherlock. You’ll sleep now, and I’ll sleep now, and after that we’ll have tea. That was the agreement. No reneging.”

Sherlock huffed.

“Fine! Just so; you needn’t repeat yourself. But make note you are the one preventing me, John,” he went on imperiously, a sudden hand gliding through the intervening space to come within an inch of John’s furrowed forehead. He proceeded to flick it sharply, right above John’s eyebrow, with a manicured forefinger. “You, you’re to blame, wriggling about, disturbing me. Yapping.” Not painfully, so much as more as a non-verbal reminder Master Holmes was not, indeed, best pleased to be occupying the same bed as John—nor any bed, really—on a perfectly good day meant for rushing heedlessly about London. “And saying nothing to the point. Nagging, actually. How can I rest under these adverse conditions?”

“Oh, bugger, this again.” John giggled darkly. “Always with the nagging, is it?”

“You’re an officious nuisance, John,” the man carried on, soft but sharp-tongued, almost kindly in manner, as if to a dear old auntie, “is what you are, always going on and on about the necessity of dormancy, John, and then not indulging yourself in it when we finally have the opportunity. You want your precious sleep so very much? Do you? Then sleep yourself, won’t you? Close your trap and bloody well sleep. Waste your damned life away doing it, see if I care.”

“Sherlock,” John intoned dampeningly, blinking sternly and slowly at the boring plaster, the innocuously active spider. “We’ve just gone over this. Three times now. I’m not going there again; you already agreed. Honour your fucking promise.”

Sherlock didn’t budge a muscle but John felt the whole of him tense on a cellular level. The bed practically vibrated; he rolled his eyes, unnoticed.

“Bugger that, John. It was forced out of me, practically at gunpoint. You forced me in here, you did,
and I still don’t see why you felt you had to. I was perfectly satisfied kipping on the sofa. Or
would’ve been, if you’d left me there undisturbed as any other decent flat-mate would do. Sleep
would’ve happened eventually, naturally; I am not above the call of transport when it’s common
sense. And it’s not—has never been—your particular concern where I sleep—if I sleep, for that
matter. Leave off!”

“Git. Settle down.” John was absolutely unshaken. “I am completely concerned and I should be.
What you get up to in a well-rested state is bad enough; I’m not having you running amuck ‘round
the City clocking in at zero hours downtime and that’s final. There’s only so much smoothing over I
can do, Sherlock.” He snorted, rubbing a fast hand over his frown to wipe it away. “Do stop fussing.
A bit of break, Sherlock, that’s all I’m asking. Just close your eyes, calm down, rest. Maybe even try
out being quiet, for a change. It does help the process along, you know, the quiet.”

“I don’t like—I cannot—“ Sherlock cut in, but that same quick hand was brushing over his wide-
Touching me?”

But he didn’t budge away, not at all.

“No, really, Sherlock.”

John felt the lashes batting fitfully against his palm, like trapped butterfly wings. He pressed down,
ever so gently, and paper-thin eyelids slid down under the faintest of pressures, conceding.
Sherlock’s wan features faced him blindly, muted in the shadows, all brilliance subdued. At this
close range and even in the nearly absent light John could see the signs of fatigue. Sherlock was
young yet; younger than John, of course, but not invincible. “Cooperate. Please.”

“Mmph?” Blinded for the nonce and reliant on the feel of John’s fingers to lend direction, Sherlock
looked confused for an instant, following after John’s fingertips, nudging into them like a haughtily
pleased feline into a petting. John smiled briefly at how deceptively innocent he was, his Holmes.
How very young, really. This was nothing he could imagine Mycroft ever doing, no.

Stiff as starch, the both of them, but not really. Sherlock could laugh, although he seldom did.

John smiled to himself, recalling.

“Relax a bit, will you?” he coaxed sweetly. “Stop berating me and do cease with this endless
distraction with things like poor harmless spiders and the damned divan. Or hypothetical snogs—or
Mary—or anything else you’ve got bouncing around that ridiculous brain of yours right this moment.
Just…just sleep, Sherlock. You’ll feel better. Hell, I’ll feel better, knowing you have. It’s only an
hour I’m asking you for. One short little hour of your time, that’s it.”

Sherlock winced. Dramatically.

“John. John, I—“

“Hey?”

The man stiffened ever so slowly, going rigid and barely showing any signs of normal respiration.
John’s smile disappeared.

“No. Shhh, Sherlock.” He leant closer, close enough to whisper, determined not to allow his mate to
backslide. Always he was a trying sort, and always having his way, but not this time, not if John had
anything to say about it. “Come on, please? For me.”
“Mnh!”

There was a pause, a longish one, whilst Sherlock shifted restlessly about, twitching and flinching under the residual warmth of John’s slowly withdrawing hand, and then began the process of ever so casually rolling over to his side. He was so long, so attenuated, John grinned again; it was like watching adaddy-long-legs or a newborn foal, all elbows and acute angles, and none of them in concert.

Sherlock turned his head and shoulders first, fully and ever so slowly, like treacle flowing cold, anchoring the upper half of himself with the weight of his arms coming close together. Then his torso and his lean hips, by degrees.

“That’s it, get comfortable,” John whispered, still smiling. “Come on.”

His long legs followed, first one knee bent slightly, drawing up, and then t’other, until at last he was mirroring John’s position but in reverse, his narrow feet settled into an elegant heap a solid twelve plus inches below John’s curled toes, rustling the duvet.

“Better?” It was the barest breath, almost sub-audible. “John?”

“Mmm, yes. Good boy.”

“Mngh.”

No single one part of either man encountered the other; just the waft of their breathing, caught in the small gap between their respective faces, mingling. Tea, butter, biscuits.

“…Must I?” It was plaintive query and John had to grin. “This is—“

“Dull; yes I know. And yes, you must. You agreed already, remember? Promised me.”

“But…but.”

“Shhh, shhhh, Sherlock. Hush, now.”

John, strangely reluctant to cease touching his flat mate, and perhaps mainly from a largely metamorphous fear he’d begin straight again with the distraction tactics, trailed one finger down the sharp line of the cheekbone Sherlock presented the dull ceiling. It felt oddly fragile beneath his fingerprint. Sherlock caught his breath for an instant and then released it on an almost inaudible sigh, lungs visibly deflating. His eyelids twitched; his one wrist turned upwards upon the pillowcase ever so slowly, exposed, as his fisted fingers uncurled one by one, going lax.

“John,” he said, ever so small. “John.”

“That’s it exactly,” John crooned encouragingly, heartened greatly by these small signals. “Keep those observant eyes closed for me, Sherlock, shut everything out. Nothing going on here anyway. Breathe in, breathe out, nice and steady and slow. Only for a very little while, I promise you, just a few moments more; you’ll hardly notice. Really, no time at all, Sherlock, but do…please…sleep. For me.”

“I.” Sherlock swallowed hard, with obvious difficulty even in the ill-lit room, though he gamely kept his brilliant eyes shuttered. Stayed quiet and still under John’s touch. “For you, even for you, I…can’t. John, I really can’t. You mustn’t ask it of me—”

“Sher—“
“Don’t you see?” The detective’s eyes popped open, wide as they could, grey-green and searching as they took in John’s abruptly worried frown. “It’s…I can’t. I try, really I do try, John, but I can’t. I can’t see how.”

“—lock? Oh…er.” John sighed, a long slow breath through gently pursed lips. “Yes, well. That’s a problem, isn’t it, then.” He licked them, apparently suddenly realizing they were dry, and Sherlock, still examining him fiercely, unwaveringly, did the same, unthinking. “A real one.”


“Oh, Sherlock,” John murmured, diverted, as his friend looked rather adorable, pouting, “whatever shall I do with you? Poor sod. I keep forgetting how hard this must be on you, tense twit you are, always running on fumes. You’re all buggered up, aren’t you, internally? Not accustomed.”

“Not a poor sod, John,” Sherlock snapped, though he kept his lids down. “And not buggered up, either.” He frowned and pushed his face forward across his pillow, rubbing his prominent cheekbone into it, making a shallow dent. “This is only a bit difficult, is all. You demand a lot of me. Always.”

“Maybe so,” John nodded. “Maybe I do, at that. But I’ll help, how’s that?”

“Help? Help how?” his flat-mate demanded suspiciously. “You have a drug, John? Why didn’t you say so in the first place, a drug would be—oh, but no. They leave me all muzzy, I can’t afford that; John—“

“No, not that, Sherlock. Just…here, let me, okay? Like this. No drugs needed for this.”

He slid his free hand carefully around Sherlock’s damp nape, careful not to tug at his hair, and cupped it, then began a slow spread-fingered drag through the curls, just pressing gently down on Sherlock’s scalp as he went.

“Nothing chemical, nothing that’ll mess up your head, just. Let me do this, just like this.” Came to end of it, right at the detective’s hairline, and subtly reversed the motion, smoothing down the disturbed seal-dark tendrils as he went. “See? That’s not so bad, is it? Feels good, doesn’t it? And it’ll help, I swear.”

“John.” The detective stilled, barely breathing. “John.”

“No, you’re already relaxing, Sherlock, a little. Don’t fight it; let go. I’ve got you.”

“…John?”

“Hmm?”

“Do you, really?” It was a whinge, but then again, it wasn’t. John grimaced fleetingly but kept up with his steady stroking. “John?”

“What?”

“Have me.” Sherlock buried his head as much as he could into the forgiving fluff of his pillow. “Or more like, maybe—“

“Sherlock?”

“I should say, will you—will you be keeping me?” His deep voice was muffled by down; John
could barely make out what he was asking. “Despite her? Your Mary?”

“Sherlock!”

“Whaaat?” Sherlock hissed, emerging from his pillow with narrowed eyes that glittered and a very sharp expression. “What, now?!” He jackknifed upwards, bringing up his kneecaps and clasping at them with long arms, all in one elegant motion. One that expressed great sullen gouts of energy, barely in check. “Is that not a reasonable question, John Watson? What are your intentions, man? Towards me—for me? I need to—I need to know. You must tell me, straight out. You must.”

“My—my intentions?” John faltered, his hand rendered useless for the moment. He blinked upwards and sideways at Sherlock, not comprehending immediately. “What’re you getting at, Sherlock?”

Sherlock threw his hands up in frustration, scowling. Eyes adjusted to the dim, John was able to discern every little twist to the lush lips, the speaking eyebrows. Certainly, the man’s voice was eagerly impatient to the brimful and spilling over. And thin to the point of tissue-silk, all the same. As if he hated to ask these questions, as if it pained him to force the words through his parted lips, past his darting tongue, but felt he must.

Interrogate John, his friend.

“Sherlock? What are you asking me? What are you saying?”

John too sat upright, extending his petting hand to catch his flatmate’s flapping forearm instead, clinging to it when Sherlock clamped it tight to his own waist in a swift, hissing movement.

“Don’t touch me! For fuck’s sake, don’t touch me if you don’t mean to, John—and speak! Why won’t you speak? I need to know. What you mean by this, coming in here. What you mean, by caring. By acting as though I matter a jot to you when I have never in my life mattered to anyone much, really. Certainly not my person, not what holds this!”

Sherlock clapped a hand to his pate, rubbing his mussed curls into a veritable frenzy. Ripped it away and employed it to bop John suddenly on the center of his chest. They were but inches apart suddenly and both breathing fast in the dark.

“Oi!” The lightening dark, at least metaphorically, for John’s eyes widened as he absorbed every sign of distress on that unusual face. He didn’t leave go of his arm, not for an instant. “Sherlock.”

It scowled at him, petulant.

“You cajole me into your boring sensibilities, your so-dull routines, and act as though there’s no way I can satisfy you if I don’t comply and go along with every one of them, no matter how difficult, how stupid, how pointless. You imply you are my friend, John Watson, my only friend and I admit it, and that you’re glad of it; it’s not grudging at all, but then you go off and dig up that horribly mundane female and she takes up all your spare time, much as your Sarah did, and that bloody twit Rachel or Regina or what-have-you did too! They crow over me and act as though they own you, though they never do, John—they never do! And then you take up with another one, as if they’re all interchangeable, your bloody females! You leave me to my own devices, John, and act as though it’s a hardship and a personal favour to me to allow me my work, my life, and then berate me when there’s trouble and you’ve not been there all along to oversee it. You give every sign you’re jealous of my time, my attention, and you could seem to care less when I make the effort to give it you, whatever I can spare, whenever I can. No! It’s ridiculous, is what! I don’t understand, John. What is it you want of me, exactly? How is it you want me? I cannot make it out, what path to take, how I must needs act around you—what I must do to have you happy with me—to lo-like me, John. And
it’s not fair, none of it; not proper nor sporting nor anything like. You have to say!”

So young, so very young, and yet the look in those eerie eyes was ages old in the making.

“Sherlock.”

“You cannot leave me stranded, not again. John.”

“But.”

“But what?”

“You left me…didn’t you?”

Just like that, Sherlock was laid back down again on the mattress, flopping into a strings-cut heap of limbs, arms extended way above his head. His fingernails scraped the headboard; John flinched at the tiny sound.

“Yes, yes of course,” he sneered. “And you shan’t let me forget it, either, will you?”

“It’s not,” John licked his lips, following his flatmate down, so that he lay again upon his side, the better to see. “It’s not like that.”

“Then, John,” Sherlock swallowed hard, gulping, fighting for air in a room suddenly so close, so dense with tension there seemed to be no space left for something as simple as oxygen. “What is it like?”
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Carry on, John.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’
Author: tigersilver
Pairing: Sherlock/John
Rating: PG-13 (for now)
Word Count: 1,540 (this part); 5420 (in total)
Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One.

(*)*))

What is it like? John?

John had held a particular image in his head for months on end, alongside the other. The other was horrible; it comprised the whole of his nebulous dreams, shattered. Blood—far too little, somehow?—and a wrist that was a blank slab of slate, cool and lifeless and unthrobbing. If that were even a word, but it was true, all the same. Life had fled, from him, from Sherlock, in the space of a moment.

He’s only grateful he didn’t hear the thud, the smack of flesh and cloth on pavers. He can imagine it well enough but he doesn’t need to add that exact sound to his nightmares.

The other image, the one he clings to and obstinately, is also of his flatmate, his friend. Appearing miraculously in his new place, without the slightest warning, and simply standing there, larger than life and breathing—fucking breathing!—waiting for John to surge forward—acquiescent of and happy, perhaps, to receive the inevitable outpouring of John’s ecstatic transport: the laughing, crying, shouting, whimpering he’d no doubt create—and embrace him. Draw him back eagerly into the fold of the living. Usher him joyfully to a future that they never had. That same one Moriarty had stolen away on a whim.

He has always been able to imagine that moment with great clarity. It’s always in his new flat, because that’s the place he’d been able to fall to pieces most recently. 221B had left him stalled out, his brain buzzing with the great illogic of the situation and so stifled by memories so vivid they left no room for rank possibility. The iron probability, more like, that Sherlock, his inimitable, amazing Sherlock, was really, honestly passed on. He’d had to go from 221B, from Baker Street; had to flee the broken-in sofa and the smiley-face, the Assam tea-and-burnt sulphur odour that permeated the carpet, the books and the pristine glassware and the closet of posh clothing gathering wrinkles from lack of wear in their cellophane drycleaner’s wrappers. He couldn’t, for the life of him—that small
stubborn spark remaining—stay at home, not with all that. Not and truly grieve. And Ella had seen it as her bloody mission to make him grieve, it seemed.

Perhaps he owed her for that. He was sane, after all, or at least a marginal approximation. He likely wouldn’t have been, had he stayed at home. Would have descended into the full madness of grief.

But still. He could see it, nearly taste and hear and smell it, the sudden unexpected-yet-still expected presence of a three-year’s along Sherlock Holmes burning bright, tiger-like, in a newer, smaller flat come of Mycroft’s kind provision. He could practically feel the warmth of Sherlock’s familiar coat falling in drapes about him as he clung, sobbing, giggling—sobbing again. He could both feel and hear the drum of two heartbeats rising above the noisy gulps of his repeated swallowings, flavoured by Sherlock’s knowing, chuckling bass-limned vowels, all public school and mock-mocking, as he remarked casually, ‘Of course I never did die, John. What do you take me for, a fool?’

And he could imagine so clearly that dark head bent fondly over his own, that sharp-cut cheek resting light upon his tumbled grey-blond pate, that nearly soundless huff-hiss-purr Sherlock always and ever expelled from his pale-skinned thorax when he was very pleased by events, indeed. Long arms about his hunched shoulders as John held on, held on oh, so strong, believing and disbelieving both; he could feel them tight and hot. The smell of citrus rushing up his nose; the same lime-washed cologne that lingered as a bright note far below the scents of the City and the oil from deft leather-clad fingertips left on tufted leather-covered coat buttons and then always, always the tang of formaldehyde from St. Bart’s mortuary, and all in a forgiving cloud rushing about his spinning head, clogging it. And the warmth. For Sherlock had been inexplicably warm, always: an excess body heat pouring off him in waves and droves, well-nigh visible on the darkest of nights, brilliant as the chill slash of his deducing grin. That heat John could feel, almost, if he imagined as hard as he could—if he closed his eyes and went Zen-state in his comforting fantasy. That heat, and the accompanying press of a taller, narrower torso, topped with broad shoulders; the wasp-waist swaying, the graceful shuffle of booted feet as Sherlock most deliberately did not stomp John’s poor hapless toes to smithereens.

All this he held, this great mental construction, his own private Mind Palace, sacrosanct in his head. The very best of pleasant dreams to carry him through.

*Carry on, John.*

Excepting it was nothing like that, really, when it came, the experience of having Sherlock back again in his life. Nothing like, no, but the feeling had been that exactly: indescribable.

And now it seemed Sherlock Holmes wished to really, and apparently quite, quite desperately, learn what next it was John wanted of him. What new miracle or proof he could give his friend. Because John had been already handed his own particular miracle, he had, and now it was days and months on, scads of moonrises and rosy dawns spent poring over clues and chasing criminals. Cases had come and gone, lines of communication, of ancient fire-forged trust, they’d had all been reestablished, barriers barged through and broken down. 221B re-attained and made a home again.

Like hounds, they had padded circles about their old territory, their known and respected bounds, and made it theirs, marked it, after too long an absence. But—

There was a difference. Nothing was never the exact, specific ‘same again’; one could not return home to the *same* home.

John had never once received his fabled hug, his crying jag, his opportunity to simply luxuriate. As with every other instance involving his best friend on earth, it had been different again from anything he envision. It had been sudden, yes, but sudden in that they literally stumbled across one another, as
they’d done once before in the long-ago Case of the Blind Banker.

Converging, unexpectedly, and yet…of course. Fucking, of course.

It had been emotionally wrenching, yes of course it had, but more due to the plain fact there was no time allowed to John to stagger about in the noisy, damp, searing welter of either his phenomenal gratitude or his long-burning fury.

It had been—and John really should have anticipated it turning out precisely like that—literally a chance meeting on the streets and then it had devolved into an immediate seamless falling into of old roles, old ruts—the blessedly insane familiar. Sherlock the pursuer, the one grand key to unlock all mysteries, knight-errant, and John the guardian hound, the squire, fast on his odd ex-flatmate’s heels, nimbly gathering up railing loose ends in one hand, his gun ready-cocked and trusty in the other as he relentlessly ran after.

Like that, then, and the mythical embracing moment John dreamt of despite Ella had been solidly disregarded as an airy-fairy fantasy and a childish wish. Swept away by sheer circumstance.

And further, after, later, when they were cleaned up and settled in, it turned out upon private reflection that John had never thought to figure in to his calculations that one bewildering, devastating, utterly brilliantly-barmy factor: the new Sherlock Holmes, the post-death version.

The Sherlock who puzzled him and amazed him, infuriated and exalted him—he was still in residence, of course. Occupying his own head, and all of a piece; taking up all the space in John’s head as well. Just as per usual. But never had he seemed so stiff, so constrained, so perilously close to fragile as he’d seemed recently…gradually. John noticed, naturally, being the noticing sort. Thin to worn-through nearly was his detective and gone from snarky opaque resilient to rice-paper transparent and with all his deceptive coolness and verve fallen in pathetic shards about his nice, hand-made shoes. Cracked, like Venetian glass, the cold-shocked sort that held prisms of tiny breaks, infinitely beautiful damage.

If one knew Sherlock, really knew him through and through, one could tell the difference instantly. It didn’t require a detective nor even an omniscient elder brother to point it out.

A child. Lost. Wondering. Precisely that, under his mask of knowingness.

And, as with all children, he was curious, naturally. Needed…to know.

And this was Sherlock, and for Sherlock, it was never merely curiousity, it was his life’s blood, his imperative, his precious Work.

“Then, John,” Sherlock asked. “What is it like?”

In the space of half-a-blink, in a split-second’s indrawn breath.

On the crest of a sour distraught quirk appearing on lips that usually spat only cold facts, clear observations and pure ineluctable reason.

Within the agile turn of a dimly-seen spider’s leg, spinning; in midst of a curiously leaden weight of descending discarded wishes, fallen like dark angels, like spent stars, John realized finally just what was being asked of him.

Demanded, no.

Begged, yes.
So, naturally enough, he replied with the very first thing that entered his plebian normal-sized mind and shoved its way to his heedlessly common-garden, boring, old tongue.

He said—

“Sherlock.”
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Dear John.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: PG-13 (for now)

Word Count: 2,200 (this part); 7,600 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One.  ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?)

(*)*(*)

There’s something a little odd about John Watson. She’s thought so for ages now, but it really only adds to his charm.

‘Like to like’ her mum always said and it’s true. Walking wounded, the both of them, and plus he’s adorable, John is, and vaguely…dangerous. It’s a killer combination for a woman with a pulse: those surgeon’s hands, that soft-looking hair, that collection of nervous tics he’s got and the very slight and mysterious limp.

Broad shoulders, trim waist under the lab coats, fucking gorgeous calves. Rugby man, John is, and the hint of a limp she detects every now again never seems to stop him, either.

He’s a prize, really. She’s thought so from the moment she was hired and her opinion’s not budged an inch.

It’s John’s eyes that are the zinger. Mary’s got a sneaking feeling he’s seen some things she really doesn’t care to know about but yet is terribly curious over all the same. They’re fascinatingly dark and deep at times, a lovely blue ‘round the pupils, but then at others they seem to shade to a hazel or seem pale and grey-hued, even verging on a misty slate. They’re rather incredibly deceptive, just like the man himself.

Or maybe it’s his obstinate chin or the curious tilt of his head, just so, as if he’s ready for anything, anything at all. But whatever he is, whatever he may be when he’s not in Mary’s purview, John’s certainly a subtle one. He’s the sort worth a second look, and then that lingering, appreciative third.

He’s the sort one takes home to Mummy and Mary only wishes her’s was still about to help her coo over him.
But it’s very early days for that, all the same.

“Hullo, John. G’morning, how are you?” she chirps cheerily when he wanders into the office. Sarah’s down her office already, sucking down an extra-large espresso to stave off the perpetual sleep-dep (twins, and what were she and that idiot man of hers thinking, any road, popping out two ginger-topped tykes at once?) and Doctor Blair, the locum, is seeing the first round of fresh walk-ins, all drunks and barroom brawl vixtims left over from the previous night. John’s roster is all returnees thus far: follow-up calls from his loyal pensioners and worried mums with their snotty brats, wound care, preventative shots and the like. Nothing out of the ordinary, then, excepting John’s looking a bit shell-shocked this morning.

‘Course, he often looks that way of a morning. There’s that bloody detective, isn’t there?

“Morning, Mary,” John smiles genially at her, as he always does. “How’s my best girl, then? For you.” Plops a paper carryaway cuppa before her and a scone, both just as she likes them. She can’t help but rise from her station and press upon his person a fast hug in gratitude.

Dear John.

Oh, dear John.

“Ta, John. Such a gentleman.”

“And how are you this fine morning?” John wants to know, lingering over the schedules of appointments she’s posted in serried rows on the office corkboard first thing as he sips at his cup. The majority of the patients will be walk-ins but that’s no excuse not to start the day with some attempt at order. “Sleep well?”

“Oh, yes.” Mary smiles wide and welcoming, reluctantly leaving go of his one shoulder, though a hand lingers long, trailing down a sturdy forearm, tfingering a slightly frayed sleeve. John’s well muscled, under the ancient and unfashionable jacket. He’s just a shade shorter than she, as well, and she’s grateful she’s wearing her usual workaday white leather trainers, with no heel to speak of. John generally goes for the taller ones himself, fit and trim under sail, and Mary’s carrying a smidge of extra padding, much as she hates to admit it. John’s well muscled, under the ancient and unfashionable jacket. He’s just a shade shorter than she, as well, and she’s grateful she’s wearing her usual workaday white leather trainers, with no heel to speak of. John generally goes for the taller ones himself, fit and trim under sail, and Mary’s carrying a smidge of extra padding, much as she hates to admit it. She’s a bit curvy, but that’s alright; John’s certainly not complained of it yet. Their attraction was fully mutual and it’s coming along fine, just fine, yes it is.

“Yes, um.” …Still, she’s traditional sort of girl, she thinks, and she likes a man whom she can look up to, at least a bit. Ralph had been just such a man, but Ralph’s not here. “I think so, since I’m standing here and not growling into my blotter like our big, bad, nasty boss lady. You?”

She does admire John, but its usual on direct eye-to-eye level.

“Is she cross? Already? Poor Sarah.”

Not that that’s an issue, as John’s really a very big man, for being smallish and shortish. On the inside, where it counts. Just like Ralph.

“Hmm. To be expected, really.” She nods sapiently. “You, John?” she persists, and only as there’s a dark glint in John’s eyes she doesn’t quite understand. It's puzzling; she might not like it. ”You did sleep, right? Last night?”

“Eh.” John blinks at her once; glances away almost immediately, as if the question were utterly shocking to hear instead of a set phrase perfectly to be expected, a commonplace pleasantry. “Er,
yes, I s’pose. Well enough, at least. Thanks for asking.” He pauses significantly, and Mary waits with bated breath for some reason unknown, but then he goes on to say nothing of worth to explain his pause. Nothing at all, really, only puffs out a breath that billows out his cheeks and drinks deep from his cup, snuffling a bit. Which is adorable. “Right. So, what’s on?”

Dear John. Mary knows she’s not the only who thinks so; is not the only one by far who’d love a chance to sweep Doctor John Watson up and carry him away for a little spot of pampering, a bit of a roaring good time—a bloody cuddle. And a hearty shag, too, or maybe two of them in quick succession. She doesn’t doubt he’s got the resilience, not, not at all. And she’s almost achieved all these small wishes of hers, several times. But—but.

“Well, super,” she replies hesitantly, and takes John’s copy of the daily schedule off her desk to hand to him. Their fingertips brush in passing; it’s very nice. “And not too much on, really. But you’ll still be needing all the sleep you did have, John. Colonel Parker’s first up for you and you know how he is.”

There’s always something.

“That I do, more’s the pity,” John nods, juggling list and his own cuppa in one hand as he goes about shrugging off his thin jacket with the other. “He’s a real—” John doesn’t continue, but the grimace speaks volumes. “And the wife.” Mary watches him as he pulls a regulation white wrapper from the nearby set of hooks, and she observes very carefully, because it’s been impinging upon her intuition that something isn’t right with John, not this morning. “Oh, shit!”

He fumbles his tea, almost.

“Oh, for chrissake, nearly spilt it.” He swaps his various burdens nimbly. "Thank the lord I didn’t, though, yeah? Tea, all over—who needs it?” he adds, and there’s another of those long-suffering, patient little huffs, his gaze gluing itself to the paper print-out, scanning it. "Hmm. Bugger.”

“Mmm.” Mary nods and notes the incipient bags shadowing the steady, focussed eyes under blondish brows; they’re faint and eggplant purple-hued, just the same as that bloody detective’s favourite shirt. "No."

“Don’t need that, too; not today.” John twists a self-deprecating lip. “Heh. Right, then. I guess the wife will be tagging along with him? As usual.”

“Of course she will,” Mary returns cheekily, and she perhaps has to work a bit harder than normal to keep up her habitual sunny smile, just for John. He looks as though he could use one, directed at him. “When is that old harridan ever not? But!” And she grins, mischievous-like, caught up in the pleasure of sharing over the favour she’s done him and patting John on the forearm again for good measure, “but, just so you know, I’ve his new scripts and all his specialist referrals all made up right here, ready for you to hand over. You may bow down to my superb efficiency anytime you fancy, love.”

“Oi,” John cracks his own grin, finally, and perks up visibly, standing taller. “Ta, Mary. You’re a wonder.”

“All part of the service, ducks. Aim to please, we do.”

Mary hands over the Colonel’s chart, watching as John deftly stacks his schedule on folder and balances his half empty cuppa on top. His familiar old military-issue stethoscope, which had been tucked under his jacket and bland blue button-down vest all along, makes its first appearance of the morning. Mary takes a moment to admire him; he’s just so fine. So tidy ad capable and…and quite
enthraling, in his own odd manner.

“You just ring ‘round when you need me,” she adds, in a excess of welling affection. “I’ll come straightaway and deflect the old cow for you, chat her up a bit. You know she likes the gossip.”

“Bad telly wins again,” John cracks a fast and ready twinkle. “You’re truly a love, Mary.” With a peep ‘round to check for witnesses, he graces her smile-creased cheek with a peck. "An angel." A promising peck. She can feel the faint blush rising as he does it; it’s a marvellous morning, actually. “Hmm. Er, and, ah….wanted to ask you?” he goes on, clearing his throat and looking very shy indeed, almost boyish, a thing she knows he is not. “Ah, something…nice? For later?”

“Yes?” And this is exactly what Mary’s been waiting for, since she woke up that morning to an empty bed. It’s a glad moment and it speaks to the both of them that it’s a sweet one, as well; no rush, no bother, no pressure. Just…comfort. Two people, liking one another. Like liking, of course, but Mary’s always been ever so fond of John Watson just the same. “John?”

“Lunch later?” he clears his throat again, tilts his chin enquiringly. “It’s only a half shift for me, I see. Done by one; d’you think you can manage it?”

“Oh,” Mary chirps, and the day is brilliant even if she can hear herself being twittishly girly, and she’s ever so chuffed she’d taken the time to really fix up her hair. “I think I can squeeze you in, Doctor Watson. Somehow.”

“Good,” John nods promptly, “very good, hmm,” and his tentative half-smile firms up nicely. Mary fancies that even the shadows ‘neath his lovely eyes grow lighter in hue. He looks brighter now, his dear blond-grey cap of hair even shinier, silkier, his teeth flashing whiter-brighter, as if speaking with her has made all the difference to his day, in every way. She can only be yet more glad of that. It’s thrill in her veins, rushing. “That’s really—ah. It’s good,” John repeats, softly. “That. Super. One, then? Or thereabouts, yeah? I’ll try to hurry through.”

“Yes, but no worries,” Mary bobs her chin, pleased as punch, and secretly gloating. Not in a malicious way, oh, no, but more because John’s eyes are fixed solely on her, not his schedule, and his mobile’s not pinged once, this whole time. “Let’s try for it anyway, no matter when. We’ll sneak away if we must, alright? Bolt off, come what may. Bugger the schedule, what?”

“Live dangerously, yeah?” John is happy, teasing her, and he’s absolutely grinning at her full on as he finally pivots away to make his way down to his small corner office. The tallcase clock a grateful patient willed the now ever-grumpy 'Doc Sarah' ages ago chimes a sonorous seven bells in the main waiting room. "I can do that."

"I know you can." Yes, she's flirting. Bugger that; she's allowed. No law against it. "John."

“Oops! Must dash but—brilliant, thanks,” John sings out and salutes her sideways in a teasing way as he trots off. “For luncheon, I mean. Just let me go and gird up my manly loins for the descent of the bleeding Colonel, yeah? Send him straight in when he fetches up, love, would you? May as well not keep him hanging about. You know how he gets. Frightens the others.”

“Aye, aye, Cap’n, sir. Will do.” Mary returns a tiny curtsey and they take the barest moment to smile at one another long and slow down the short sterile length of the connecting corridor before John opens the door preparatory to whisking himself inside his small exam room. She may or may not be considering John’s ‘manly loins’; no one alive would blame if she did do, she believes. She’s heartily glad there’s no rule against dating one’s other boss—the fit one, the charming one—at this madhouse of a clinic.
There’s a banging at the main door, which quite sounds like the knob of an elderly cane pounding it, all polished bamboo and brass. Mary catches the high-pitched twitter of the Colonel’s wife and the Colonel’s basso grumble, both complaining in tune, if atonally. She jumps to, but the intake nurse Judith is already bustling past her, having the matter well in hand.

"Stand down, dear," Judith smiles, winking, murmuring, "I've got it. Carry on, will you?"

“There’s a love,” and John’s voice carries back faintly from down the corridor, along with a ghost of a folded-up smile. “Cheers.”

The door shuts smartly as he ducks away in, his concerned-for-the patient frown settling over him. Mary heaves a sigh of her very own, the first of the morning, though her pleased—and pleasant expression—never sags.

She pivots back to her desk on a neat turn of pretty ankle and seats herself, automatically tidying up already immaculate stacks of charts. It keeps her busy till her gift cuppa has cooled enough to sip comfortably. She doesn’t care for beverages to be too hot as to scald, though John never minds, being ex-Army.

All about her, the clinic bustles to life, Judith going back and forth to escort the patients streaming by Mary’s tiny oasis of collected calm. The Colonel deigns to bark at her in passing; his ball-and-chain only sniffs.

There’s something off with Doctor Watson, the dear man. Mary knows it, just as she knows a lot of things she maybe might not want to think too hard upon.

It’s that detective bloke, the right wanker, likely. It always is, in the end. No—from the start.

But a girl can hope and dearest, darling Ralph—bless him and blast him, both, for dying like that, foolish hero—would have wanted her to hope, at least.

She really only hopes she can eke by with being a bit selfish a while longer, because god knows, she’s terribly, awfully fond of John. Dear John.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Burns the question.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: PG-13 (for now)

Word Count: 2,800 (this part); 10,400 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/? ) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?)

(*)(*)(*)

It’s all fine. Really.

“Freak,” Sally nods, motioning them upwards, excelsior! Up the rickety, formerly grand steps at a gallop. “Right this way.”

“Oh, god, you again,” Anderson growls, turning on a blue-bootied heel upon the first landing. “Bloody Christ!” But the wanker shifts his worthless arse out of the passageway and falls into step well behind the rest of the team.

“Come along, Sherlock; up here,” Lestrade snaps the wrist band of a beckoning gloved hand. Sherlock and John stride and trundle up yet more stairs and along endless hallways, respectively, John hampered by his hastily slapped on clean-suit. “This way. It’s a right mess, I have to warn you. Both the body and this place. All falling down around our heads, like. Makes it bloody hard to do any work.”

“So I see,” Sherlock sets his lips in a thin little line as he ducks a descended Tudor-style rafter and steps over a tumble of discoloured plaster chunks. He glances behind him, mindful of John’s slower progress through the half-collapsed remains of the third floor hall. “Mind the nails on that bit of rosette moulding, John, just there. They’re all popped out; could cut you.”

“Er,” John replies from hard by his elbow. He’s caught up to Sherlock and Lestrade and peers about him carefully as he goes, picking his way. Their torches dim out all the dark edges of their surrounds. Sherlock blinks fast, concentrating on not missing a single clue. “Ta.”

“Of course,” the detective rejoins suavely, but then his eye is caught by something vastly more of interest: the body, lit up by stands of portable sodium-blue spotlighting. If the falling-down house is a disaster, the victim looks as though a wrecking ball had hit him—squarely straight across the face. It’s gone, completely, and NSY had better hope they don’t need rely on dental records for
identification.

It was a bit of an alright, Sherlock’s happy to say—all of it. Were anyone to ask how he feels, but they don’t. Haven’t. Not Molly, not Mycroft, not even Lestrade—er, Greg. Right, he must remember to address him as ‘Greg’.

He could do that.

But not now. Now was all about the work.

“Lestrade,” he says, eyes darting everywhere about what had clearly been the master suite, “who owns this building?”

“Don’t know yet,” Lestrade answers, absently. He’s motioning the rest of the forensics team to wait outside the open door. Where it hung, at least, half ripped off its hinges. “Some estate’s got it, we think. Locals say it’s haunted.”

Sherlock snorts. He can well believe the locals would equate falling down and abandoned with ‘haunted’. Even if the mansion is still properly located in greater London, it’s sitting on an ample plot and quite secluded.

“Bosh!”

How it came about, he means to say, and his return to London not being anywhere near approaching as awkward as he’d —very occasionally—ventured it might be. When he considered it at all, the final result, because of course it wouldn’t do to dwell. Counterproductive.

“ Weird thing is,” Lestrade’s murmuring in his ear, “the bloke’s decked out in a bespoke tuxedo. All hand stitched, that; Italian wool. Must have cost the Mint, that suit.” He nods at the body—male, middle-aged, strong and fit, especially the upper body and limbs, but just begun running to fat. “Can you imagine, him being dumped off here, looking like that? Makes no sense a’ tall; should have been discovered at the bleeding Opera.”

“Yes, thank you, er…Greg,” Sherlock snaps back, mindful of John’s listening presence at his back, and hoping John will approve of his foray into making nice with the Inspector. Not that he’s a problem with making nice with Lestrade, but…it is a strain, at times, to recall that his circumstances have significantly altered.

He drops down to his knees to have a better look at the man’s fingertips. They’re calloused, heavily, but nicely manicured as well, and there’s an odd white chalky substance caught deep under the smoothed edges of the left-side pinky finger’s nail. No!—not just that. Something more, something different. “I can see the chap’s clothes for myself; no need to tell me. That’s Bert’s work; he’s down Burlington Street—Anderson & Sheppard. I know him well. Or,” he shrugs, “I did, once.”


John expels that certain little huff of air through his nostrils which indicates he’s amused by something unspoken and Sherlock is all at once fiercely glad to hear it.

Oh, but he’s home again. Every small sound from John reassures him of it.

“Just so. “ He catches up the dead man’s hand and waves it about, watching it flop, gauging any number of items as to flexibility and hand strength, habitual use and rigor mortis. He tries the other, with similar result; lifts both legs and eyes up a pair of expensive footwear. Back to the hand again—
there was something. “John! John, come over here, will you? I need your opinion.” The body’s passed on through rigor already and is pliant again. It’s been a bit since whoever it was killed him. No signs of struggle, either. “Right. Time of death?”

With a pleased sigh to be included at last, John hustles up and joins Sherlock on the floor, examining the body.

It’s all so familiar, so comfortable, and John’s so evidently delighted with his own involvement that Sherlock has to hide a sneaky grin behind a gloved palm. It wouldn’t do for Les-er, Greg, to see him too much in alt.

“Oh, er, what with the flaccidity, two, three days, maybe,” John replies, fingertips skating over the corpses’ joints, poking through rapidly undone buttons and beneath a scarlet cummerbund. He does doctor-y things for a moment longer, finally drawing back to peer up across the corpse at Sherlock’s patient expression. “Hard to say, without a rectal temp. But he’s been a while, poor fellow.”

“No signs of struggle, either. “Right. Time of death?”

With a pleased sigh to be included at last, John hustles up and joins Sherlock on the floor, examining the body.

It’s all so familiar, so comfortable, and John’s so evidently delighted with his own involvement that Sherlock has to hide a sneaky grin behind a gloved palm. It wouldn’t do for Les-er, Greg, to see him too much in alt.

“Probable cause?”

John laughs, a surprised bark. “Oh, I should think that should be obvious, mate. Head bashed in by something roundish but sharp. Massive trauma, brain damage, collapsed trachea. Whatever it was was huge and heavy; likely instantaneous. One blow and,” John snaps his fingers, “it’s all over.”

Sherlock knew that, but he nods cordially anyway. “Thank you, John—and this? What d’you say this is, this powder?” He’s dug out a sample of the whitish powder and thrust it in a little sac, one of the dozens he keeps readied in his one pocket.

“Dunno,” John leans forward, peering through Sherlock’s pocket lens. “Looks like…like plaster-of-Paris, maybe?”

“Yes, indeed,” Sherlock’s quite chuffed. “It is, John! Good work…and I think…I do honestly believe, p’raps also a hint of marble dust. Stone, of some type, at least. See the crystalline nature of the granulations? Been scraping away at the rocks, this one. Looking for something in particular, I don’t doubt. And methodically.”

He turns the man’s hands about in his own, eying every ridge of callous and wear.


“Let me think, will you? Don’t fuss so!”

“Sherlock,” John murmurs; Sherlock shrugs at him, wrinkling his nose.

“Yes, alright.”

A modicum of fuss only, when he’d come back again. Some press briefings (and he’d been happy to note that that bloody wench Kitty What’s-her-painted-face-big-boobs had moved on; likely popped off to the States, where they clamoured for her sort, heaven help them) and a few (a very few; he’d been middling out of sorts then) lines of explanation for his absence placed as an update on his own long-somnolent site. Of course John had scooped his words right up and copy-pasted them over to his own blog, as Sherlock had been quite succinct. He’d been flattered, really. There’d been no other, better way than his method to provide the heaving masses of the populace an explanation. It was all about the shift of his personal and professional life back to a steady-state, and with some alacrity.

“Hmm.”
In the interim, he’s presented a well togged out gentleman, faceless, a stone mason’s hands, and with an array of clues pointing the way to only a few possible professions.

“He might very well be an archeologist, our victim,” Sherlock announces, seconds later. Yes, that would do.

“Eh?”

“Anthropologist, mayhap, but something of the sort—um, what do they call them? An Egyptologist? And a quite notable one, I’d wager. These scrapings look more like what I’ve seen come off Etruscan sarcophagi, really. University academic, then, by default, to even garner the permissions in this day and age—the Italians are really very jealous over them these days; so are the Greeks; need a sponsor—but also heavily engaged in regular field work, so remarkably well funded. Likely corporate, that. Deep pockets required for the likes of Bertie, you know? Funding on that scale only happens if there’s a decent reputation already built up, and prior successes in past digs, so. Yes, definitely. You’ll find he’s affiliated with a major university, I should think; likely a prof. Sabbatical currently, p’raps, for his speciality, but a paid one, I don’t doubt. Who’s in that rarified circle’s not been accounted for, Lestrade? Any academic illuminati gone missing recently? ‘Round the Mediterranean? Italy?”

‘Read all about it!’ Well, in London there’d been a spot of real hue-and-cry, when Sherlock had risen from the dead. The Mail had commended him effusively for Moriarty’s demise; he’d diverted a preoffered knighthood to a later, mythically saner future date by dint of pressing heavily on his brother’s numerous connections, but John’s quiet observation early on had proved quite correct. Dust did settle, come what may, and the all –seeking Eye of London moved inevitably on.

Holmes and Watson were—are—back in business, full steam ahead.

“Really?” John exclaims quietly, rocking back on his heels, and Sherlock basks momentarily in his expression. Oh, yes—that’s it. That’s it, exactly what he craves. Or a part of it, leastwise. “All of that simply from a few specks of mouldy old dust under his fingernail, Sherlock? Brilliant!”

“And the callouses, John—don’t forget them,” Sherlock mutters, ducking his chin shyly. “These are workman’s hands, but very well cared for, nonetheless. Conclusion’s inevitable.”

“Oh, is it?” John’s grinning. “You don’t say.”

“Oh, oi!” Lestrade’s grinning, as well, quite pleased with Sherlock, and his eyes fixed on his mobile. He turns the face to show off the screen, where a digital headline flashes unreadably: AP Rueters.

“Absolutely, there is, now you mention it. Just on the news feed—see it? That Albert Pevans-Willoughby bloke, the youngest nevvie of old Sir Arthur Pevans—you know of him, right, the famous Cretan scholar? He’s passed on, but his nevvie Albert's in the same field as him and he's just now been reported in as a no-show on his latest dig in Minos. Wife distraught, foreman frantic and all that rubbish. Aha!”

“I don’t, actually, but I’ll take you word for it, Lestrade.” Sherlock musters up a small faux smile to match the one brilliantly blooming across the Inspector’s features. “Right. Come now, game’s safely afoot, John.” He rises up rapidly, deftly in the cramped space, a hand out to help up his assistant.

“Shall we? Finished here, I think; nothing more of note worth viewing. We can await Les—ah! Greg’s –findings just as easily at home.”

The Inspector’s already gone away, off to set some poor sod—likely Sally—on the trail of the MIA nevvie of the so-famous deceased Sir Arthur. The forensics team streams in, chattering inanely about the coagulation of the copious floods of cold blood on the tattered carpet, the lack of a
reconstructable jawbone, and the dangers of snagging one’s clean-suit on the splinters of wood from
the damaged furniture. They part about John and Sherlock as if the two were twinned dolmens, standing solidly planted in the river of time.

“Certainly, very good.” John smiles, shifting towards the gaping open door. “Let’s go. I could positively murder for a hot cuppa right about now. Damned house is freezing!”

“Surely.” John shivers involuntarily, proving his observation, and Sherlock casually lays a warm hand at the small of his back, hoping his residual body heat will transfer. “Hurry it up, then. Don’t dawdle,” he scolds, grinning. “Slow top.”

“Piss off, you.”

Made a bit of splash, Sherlock had, coming home. It had not been without a few passing prurient references to the purported personal paeans of joy experienced by one Doctor John Hamish Watson, ‘confirmed bachelor’. The Mirror seemed especially fond of that *bon mot*.

If one believed the tabloids, they were already lovers, he and John. Had been, for ages. Damned Kitty!

Yet.

He’d felt oddly…grateful. For that. Gossip and twaddle, but it lent a bit of credence to his long-overweening drive to return to 221B, to be vindicated, to reassure John he was, indeed, all that. And possibly more, one day. The idea of ‘more’ trembled on the precipice of Sherlock’s waking dreams, like a sore tooth, throbbing. He’d been ever so lonely, with his faithful blogger separated from him. Lonely and alone as he’d never been before in his whole life, and that was saying something. Who could blame him for wanting it all, every particle possible, when he’d the chance again, tipped like an unexpected Christmas present into his lap?

And, of course, all the evidence indicated John was happy, now. Quite happy.

‘Happy’ was such an amorphous word. Pitifully personal, and defying absolute definition of the mechanics of it. How one would ensure it, or make it come to be—or deepen its state into one of permanence.

…Still, nothing like having the world taking up for one, cooing over a partnership that stood staid and fast against all encroachments. Oil on the gears, what, and didn’t that help his agenda along most excellently well? Oh, yes. Yes, it did. Been cake in the end, all icing on cake.

Fly speck in the icing, though.

‘Confirmed bachelor’, his bloomin’ arse—there was Mary. There’d always been a ‘Mary’—a Jane, a Susan, a Moira—but this one. This woman, she was particularly dangerous. A real snake in sheep’s apron, this one.

Sherlock would be called upon to tread very carefully. How he hated that!

“See you again, John.”

“Cheers, Sally.” John’s in the midst of stripping off his safety garb and handing it off a convenient constable, one who looks awed to servicing the great Doctor Watson. “Good luck with it.”

Sherlock nods toward his semi-nemesis, sharp as anything, but only politely acknowledging. He does not scowl at her at all, though, so points to his tally, yes?
The sergeant does glare at him, from under beetled brows; however, it’s only habit.

“And—do have yourself a nice tea, Freak.” Sally pulls fully away from the mobile glued to her ear to call out after them as they go, flapping a pretty hand as John clambers into the waiting taxi. “Handing me masses of bleeding overtime. Was my day off; you know? Thanks for that.”

“Pfft!”

Remained to be seen, though, the fall-out. Ramifications, long-term results.

“Just see if you can manage to accomplish the task in a correct and timely manner for a change,” Sherlock grumbles, under his breath as he’s settling into the cab’s well worn seat, but not so quietly that Sally couldn’t hear him through the drawn-down window if she’s still listening. “Like maybe track down the weapon, as it’s clearly missing—“

Remained to be seen, as well, what John might want. Who John might want.


If there was even a choice in the offing. Be just like John Watson to simply let events fall out as they would, allow himself to be sucked without fuss into a life of bland domesticity, now and then spiced up with a soupçon of Sherlock-style adventure.

“Oh!” Sherlock harrumphs snidely, and more for comic benefit. Teasing John is ever rewarding. “Only If I must, John. You know how they are, this lot—lazy as sin. Always afraid of a little legwork. A spot of pointed encouragement will work won—“

“Which that wasn’t, thank you, and do shut your gob. It all went well, I think—this crime scene. Very civil, up till now. We don’t want to ruin it, do we?”

“No, John.”

Sherlock does growl, just a bit, a wordless rumble roiling beneath the buttons of his brand new vintage greatcoat, but John’s sideways gleam at him from under wheaten lashes is infectious, and somehow he finds himself unable to stifle a tiny chuckle.

“Of course we don’t. It’s what they get up to while I’m not standing over them I’m concerned with.”

“Sherlock!”

Sherlock bats his lashes, tilts his head enquiringly, all butter-wouldn’t-melt. John tries—and fails—to control a grin.

“Yes, John?”

Of all things, Sherlock only wishes to provide what John would want. What that was, though, was a puzzle.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Dear Sherlock. Damn Sherlock!

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: PG-13 (for now)

Word Count: 1,700 (this part); 12,100 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/? ) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/? ); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/? )

(*)*)(*)

“Oh, boys.”

For three solid years, plus a little, there’s been some variant of those words dancing on Mrs Hudson’s tongue or floating about in her head. The phrase followed rather naturally upon the skirts of ‘Oh, Sherlock’ after John Watson arrived upon the scene and it established itself as a refrain that never quite left her, after. Even in silence, even in doubt.

(Oh, boys. Oh, boys! Oh…boys. Oh (my) boys.)

Singly or together, she’s overwhelmingly fond of them, but at the moment it’s the Doctor who concerns her primarily.

“Oh, John,” she chirrups, making her way into the kitchenette, where John’s sprung up and is hovering awkwardly by the table’s edge, a teetering chair still trembling slightly from the rush with which he’s shot to his feet. One quick glance about tells her all she needs know about the precarious state of ‘B’.

“There you are, dear.”

(Shes often wondered whether dear Sherlock’s fascination with the insects is really the result of some of subliminal influencing, like those adverts for Coco-Cola the proprietors used to edit inbetween the scenes of the animated films she went to see at her neighborhood cinema as a girl. She’s been toying with mentioning that hypothesis to the dear boy as an aside the next time he brings a bloody harpoon home and trails it all across her freshly hoovered carpets.)

“I was just popping by to read the meter, but I must admit I wouldn’t say no to a fast cuppa, thank you. My hip…and those horrid stairs, John. Terrible things, stairs; I’m not a young woman any
longer, I’m afraid.”

She clutches at it, just so; screws her pleasant features into a slightly pained expression, despite the fact she feels not a jot of it. Sky is clear, no humidity; for once in a blue moon the weather in London is nigh on perfect: crisp and clear, but yet warm enough in the evenings yet she’s no call for her usual remedies.

“Oh! Oh…Mrs Hudson, of course you are,” John smiles at her, welcoming but weary, and takes a tentative step towards the hob. “Never say that and--and certainly.” He’s mustered up enthusiasm and welcome out of thin air; Mrs Hudson’s eyes narrow. “Certainly, yes—tea. Tea is it. I was just— I’m afraid Sherlock’s not—at home—right this moment.”

She coos, “Never mind that.”

Sherlock is the least of her worries at the moment. It was the glimpse of dear John just now, a bare breath ago as she peered curiously ‘round the corner and into the flat proper. The passthrough to the kitchenette provided her a clear view: the good Doctor alone, with no one watching him, no six-foot-and-rising shadow hovering, and seated slumped at the scarred table. His mussy blond head had been cupped in his golden-skinned hands, furrowed forehead pressed much too tightly against interlaced fingers; complexion grey as the bleached Formica itself and barely visible through knuckles so white with desperate tension she fancied she could detect their minute cracklings of cartilage-on-bone, almost experience the ghost twinge of sympathetic pain twitch taut and blazing in her hip.

“But, Sherlock’s..." John falters. "He's not--"

"John, dear." She flaps two dismissive hands at her most favoured doctor ever, quick as winking; regards him with her full chin cocked perkily. She’s as cheery as a robin redbreast, she’s aware, though much more smartly turned out. “I don’t need him,” she counters kindly, “not to read the meter, love. Hardly calls for a detective, does it, marking up the tally?”

John makes a mildly snorting, agreeing noise, blinking fast all the while. He sways a scant millimetre to the left, favouring the one leg; she ignores his small slip with great panache, utterly resolved in a steely sort of way. Mrs Hudson’s not attained her years without picking up a few tricks along the way: she knows how to deal with recalcitrant children. Wounded children. Especially boys. Sulky ones, too. Witness dear Sherlock.

She advances upon the kitchen, kitten heels tapping. John stands his ground, but barely. His eyes widen just a bit. Seems a bit dazed; that's reaction, no doubt, to being startled.

Laying a careless hand upon the back of the other chair parked at their table, Mrs Hudson stares him down in the manner only an elderly English woman can muster.

Her tenant flinches and flushes faintly, so she knows she’s gained his full attention at last, drawn him back for a moment from whatever waking nightmare he’d been living over again in reverie.

“Tell me,” she asks, sweet as floss, “how have you two been faring? You’ve been always on the out-and-about, these last few days. Why, I’ve hardly seen either of you boys, even in passing. There’s a new case on, then? It must be that, what with both of you rushing about all hours.”

The flutter of her lashes indicates 'that' way points toward a certain sort of controlled madness.

"Tea, right." John spins on a heel abruptly, bustling to make the tea; no sign of his ancient injury showing at all.
“A case?” The kettle slams onto the hob. "Er. Yes...well."

“Oh, sorry,” John utters—and then he’s busy peering into the fridge. Mrs Hudson hears him, sucking great gulps of cold air. Refreshing, of course. For a shock victim.

“You’re in luck, Mrs Hudson.” He turns the most awfully jollying face towards her, the little wretch. “We’re miraculously in milk today. Biscuits, too. Will wonders never cease? Do sit down, Mrs Hudson. Tea coming right--”

“John,” Mrs Hudson finds she really can’t bear this. She cannot watch one of her boys suffer another single unbearable moment if they needn’t or oughtn’t. Not a bit of that nonsense will she tolerate. She’s seen this all too often before now: the grey blanch, the dark circles, the frazzled nerves, the tattered attempts at usual Watson-smiles. It’s more than pathetic; she winces discreetly. “John, never mind the tea. Sit down.”

“Missus Hudson!” He raises the kettle off the burner at her; it sloshes in steamy protest, peeping.

“Now, John.” She’s raised children of her own, cheers for that; Mrs Hudson is perhaps more familiar with the show of a fine military command than is John, the actual veteran—but currently, confusingly, more the ‘confirmed bachelor’. What is it about genuine human emotion that renders even extraordinary men so feeble-minded? But there’s no answer to that. “Sit.”

John snaps the knob on the burner to ‘off’; the nearly boiled kettle rattles onto the counter, more than likely scorching it slightly where it settles.

John sits. Flops, really, into the seat he’s just only vacated. Mrs Hudson leans her trim bulk forward, her dress crinkling quite satisfactorily from the starch-and-sizing, and lays two slightly arthritic hands flat and square upon the cool surface of the small table.

“Now, tell me. What’s the matter, John? What is it?”

“It’s Sherlock.” The words tumble out of their own volition. “It’s always bloody damned Sherlock, isn’t it?”

A tangled note of weary despair, the overtones of convoluted concern, the descending, despondent chords of bewilderment—all present and accounted for the discerning listener to take in, no mistake.

She frowns, keyed into all of it. “What about Sherlock, John?”

"Sherlock." John scowls. Buries his empty hands in his lap where she can’t see them. “He’s asked me a question, Mrs Hudson.”

“A…question.”

There’s a wee spot of flurry. John gestures large and wide with one arm, the hand of it half-fisted, and if the table hadn’t been for once cleared of Sherlock’s many and messy ‘experiments’, likely the floor would littered with shards of shattered glass and bits of broken microscope.

“What sort of…question?”

Really, she’d prefer never again to see her boy’s lovely eyes reflect that particular expression. Lost, and wondering, just like a little child. One who’s been slapped upside the head and has not the faintest clue of it, what the cause might be, or what to do next about it.
Her one tenant, the sensible one, dear boy, he huffs and he puffs and rolls his eyes at her, patently speechless.

“Sherlock has?” she probes gently. Yet the poor man seems so weary, so washed out despite his distress. She’d already deduced within a fraction of an instant of entering the flat there’s been little sleep to be had in 221B, that Sherlock’s been pushing them both to the utter limits again. “What’s he asked of you now, dear? Do tell.”

“Oh! What it’s like—this.” John waves at the flat, fingers uncurling wide to encompass the history of it, from Union Jack pillow and holes in the wall, to bombed out windows, to Mycroft’s inimitable brolly pokes into the fibres of the threadbare carpet, to the lingering sickly-sweet scent of fresh apples and cyanide harking back to the dark days of Moriarty, popping by for tea…and the tea, lashings of it, and the gone-off milk to go with it—to the very film of dust that settled into the flat during those long, long days of silence, “This—and me.”

“You, dear?”

“What I,” he croaks and pauses, swallowing repeatedly, eyelids lowering dramatically as he brushes a hand across his brow. He groans. “What I— require.”

“Eh?” Mrs Hudson quirks an eyebrow at him. “John?”

“He wants—he’s asked of me—me, mind you!”

A minor howl, is what she’d term it, that noise John utters. He flaps his hands, his arms, his whole torso shifts in on the chair and she sees his sincerely navy blue eyes are swimming in stoically blinked-back moisture; that specific image pangs so deep in her womanly heart she’s flinching as well, in purest empathy.

“He wants to know, the wanker—to—to be told, right out to his face, just like that, easy-peasy, as if this were something—something I’ve known about, a idea I’ve ever really even thought of all this time and no—no! I haven’t! Oh, fuck, I’ve never!”

"He’s mad.” It’s an outright sob, hardly muffled, and Mrs Hudson can’t help but clasp wildly at her boy’s capable hand as it whizzes heedless through the small space between their two heads. She catches it but it doesn’t stay the flow of John’s muddled misery in the slightest. “Oh, but he’s mad, Mrs Hudson, mad as a bleeding hatter! He’s mad.”

"Dear.” So bitter. The very air of the flat sours with it. “John—“

“What’s it like, that’s what he wants, Mrs Hudson; for me to tell him that and how do I know? What am to say to that—what’s it like? How can he not already know?”

The John Watson Mrs Hudson knows so well has finally slipped up again, but good. All bets are off, all manners discarded, flung away in an excess of emotion. This is no doctor, no soldier, no faithful sidekick seated before her—nor a boy, either, to coddle.

“Mrs Hudson!” His jaw works for an instant; he’s reaching, she can all but see it, and the hardest thing she’s ever done is to not rush ‘round the table and hug this boy.

For he’s not that. Not at all, no.

It’s a man. He’s a man, John is, nothing more than a man caught up in the thick of it, and he’s shockingly unsteady on the edge of a precipice not his making.
Dear Sherlock, she thinks, eyes on John. Damn Sherlock.

“John.” She tightens both her cautiously comforting grip and her lips. “Go on, dear. Say it.”

“How can I; how can anyone—even tell—or say, or—Mrs Hudson, will it never end?”
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Bloody Mary.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’
Author: tigersilver
Pairing: Sherlock/John
Rating: PG-13 (for now)

Word Count: 1,300 (this part); 13,400 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?)

(*)(*)

“John.”

Awaking to an empty flat harks back to the bad old days; Sherlock’s instantly stroppy. John’s never been a coward, though, so it must be the surgery.

He’s not sure he approves of John’s responsibilities when they don’t pertain to him directly, but there’s little he can do about it. The work’s all consuming for him, naturally, but John has a whole other field of expertise and John’s one of those bloody ‘people persons’. He genuinely likes them, as a group, the sods, and he’s not happy unless he’s using his skills to heal the sniffles of sundry brats and ease the gout of the ill-natured elderly.

“John, your assistance would be most appreciated. Right now.”

The case he—they—have on at the moment is hardly worth calling a ‘case’: they have the identity of the victim, a whole slew of suspects and interested parties with both motive and opportunity besides, and it’s been fairly cut and dried thus far, assembling the pieces of the puzzle. Not even a puzzle proper. Only lacking the weapon, which must’ve been mechanical; something to do with shattering stone and even slicing it, and Sherlock’s fairly positive there’s a quarry in the vicinity of the mansion Albert Pevans was found which plays host to just such an esoteric item.

“John, here, if you please. Come here. I need you.”

There is, in fact, a quarry within fifty miles of the house where Pevans was found. There’s more than just one. He could be there already, if he—they—procured a car, but it’s no use, no damned use, is it?

“Tea would be delightful, yes.”

“John, your mobile.”

“Hand over those tweezers, will you?”

“And just where did you hide my charger when you were tidying, John? Is it too much to ask to leave things where things should be left? How am I to find what I need when you’re always moving the contents of the flat about?”

“John? What did you and Mrs Hudson speak of, just now?”

“I don’t like her, John. Insipid woman.”

“Crap telly!”

“What sort of name is ‘Mary’, John? Boring, is what. Boring!”

“Bored, John.”

“.Could do better, you know? For fuck’s sake, I could do better—little sod.”

“Vastly bored….ah. There it is. Why ever would you put that there, of all places? Bugger.”

Sherlock’s accustomed to speaking aloud. To no one and nothing. The echoes lurking about in various deserted rooms in his Palace, really. He recalls the nuance of specific voices very well indeed—is almost a savant about it, and everyone knows voices are the first things to flee memory. He barely remembers his own father’s, even, but John’s voice is carved in, deep, very deep.

“This is deadly, John. I do so despise waiting; I can feel my brain atrophying. Waiting is reserved for fools and dead men, John. Of course you said to wait. Of course. As if I’m a child!”

“Why hasn’t Les—er, Greg phoned already? Surely they’ve turned up something by now? I cannot believe you wouldn’t go with me. We’d have it tracked down in less than two hours, John; I’ve an idea of where it is, the device. Instead of kicking our heels about, thumbs up our bloody arses, wasting time! Execrable!”

Sherlock’s accustomed to speaking to John, specifically. It twists his gut to conceive of a future in which he won’t be able to. He’s been there, done that, owns the t-shirt to prove it (Sally’s idea of a jest in good fun and this is why he’s not fond of pub humour, thanks—really! Who would wear a piece of clothing touting one’s own name on it emblazoned in bold font, like a common packet of cereal?)

“John?” Just because John’s not currently in the flat is no reason not to address him. John’s his—his. John’s his flatmate, if naught else, and Sherlock can speak to him, or at him, whenever he pleases. He pleases often. “John, surely your shift’s through by now? Where the bugger’s my watch, now? Did you tidy that off somewhere undiscoverable, too?”

John’s bedside stand shows no sign of Sherlock’s ancient Breitling. He does discover a glossy-paged porn mag, though, and perusing that lurid sample for a few moment’s of flip-through scanning provides some relief from the attenuated boredom of waiting about for something exciting to happen.
“Crikey, John—have a look at this.” Really, the contortions people get up to during the act of sex—quite limbre, some of them. “Pfft!”

“I—bet—I! Yes!”

He can, as it turns out, also bring his knees to the level of his earlobes and he can, with a grunt of effort, lock his ankles successfully behind his neck. It’s unusual for a man of his build and height to be so flexible but Sherlock’s all about that sort of thing; it’s a stock-in-trade trick he has in his arsenal. The martial arts and the intermittent bouts of boxing keep his transport deceptively wiry and quite, quite strong in tendon and sinew. Criminals tend to be at least somewhat fit, at least the working class ones, the pickpockets, thieves and thugs, and Sherlock must needs keep up.

“No—non, nyet, nein. No, I say. Ridiculous!”

It’s possible he may actually be more worn out than he believed, previously. There’s a quaver in his thighs from hyper-extension and John’s sanely simple bed frame is bollixed up with unnecessary frills like decorative newels at each corner—or whatever they may call them; Sherlock can’t recall right now. Not important. What’s important is one thin, knobby ankle slips into the narrow crack between planed arch of cheap pine wood and machine-cut post oak ball and wedges. Firmly.

Sherlock scowls, which is no change a’tall from the expression he’s been sporting all the day through.

“John, I may be stuck, John.”

Yes. Yes, he is. Humiliating, is it.

“Ouch, John! Come along just here, will you? Damned headboard’s a bugger. I’ve a cramp now, setting in. Hurts.”

Sherlock’s quite chuffed no one is there to see.

“This…is…horrid.”

“Dreadful, John. Need a cold compress.”

“No…not. Heat.”

A very long time in the loo, standing under the shower and maliciously exhausting the whole store of hot water, ta ever so; hope you freeze off your bum, John Watson—well, that does Sherlock a world of good.

“Tea,” he announces cheerily to the empty kitchenette, “lovely tea, but none for you, John.” He swishes the hem of his clean wrapper about, barely avoiding sending a litter of empty beakers off the drainboard and straight into oblivion. He huffs, rolling his eyes at the mugs sitting there. Two mugs, yes. Their landlady must’ve used his, then. “You don’t deserve it, abandoning ship like this. Bloody clinic. I daresay the Colonel was there, first thing, roaring away at you, and his cow of a wife with him. I hope he ran your squeaky clean little Boy Scout arse through the wringer, Doctor.”

“…Bloody Mary.” The pun doesn’t even strike him till moments later. He snorts biscuit crumbs in a spray all over the surface of their table, which their landlady must’ve wiped down much earlier in the day, but he’s certain John would not find that epitaph amusing in the least.

“What to do?”
Music—even the thought—turns his stomach, which rumbles in an aggrieved manner.

The making of music is abominable. He can’t bear it.

He’d talk even to that twat Mycroft now, if he was forced to. It’s that bad. Too bad.

“John. What to *do*, John?”

He doesn’t *know* the answer, cannot *deduce* the answer and John—his friend John—won’t simply tell him.

“John. Here; come here.”

“…John?”
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

That rat bastard Sherlock!
(Go to sleep, Sherlock, just go the f**k to sleep.)

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17 (yes, now we get down to the meat of it, people. Heed the change in rating, plzthnxbye)

Word Count: 2,200 (this part); 15,600 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?);

(*)*(*)

John’s abruptly, coldly furious.

How dare—how dare—Sherlock ask him that?

What’s it like? Now, come on—be serious!

But it’s not cold, it’s burning; it’s burning the heart right out of him and he’d thought his heart was safe enough, now.

He rolls over, aggressive, and pins his source of irritation to the bed.

“Sod you,” he growls, and it’s hateful, this raw scrape Sherlock’s left across his soul, his psyche. “Piss off.” How dare he need an explanation for something so much theirs—who the fuck does he think he’s fucking with, asking that? “Bastard.”

“Jo—“

So it’s John, actually, who instigates the threatened kissing. He plants his lips on Sherlock’s as though they were a tactical assault. He bears down with hip bone and bent elbow and half his body weight thrown over top his flatmate’s and he’s actively trying to crush, to quell—to level to dust this rank insubordination.
Sherlock chokes, which is to be expected, probably: he’s just had the air knocked clear out of him. Chokes and struggles and gasps—“John!”—but he’s not struggling to get away, no.

He’s…not struggling to get away.

He’s scrambling closer, any way he can, and John can smell desperation in the very air between them. There’s no air between them, not at all, not anymore, and the vanishing point between two mates having a much needed lie-down and two men going at it at like rabid dogs has well and truly vanished.

John recalls how his heart had been caught strangled in his throat the whole time Sherlock had stood poised at the top of St Bart’s. Tastes the fear, the horrid last-minute hopes he’d had, all fallen down like Dumpty. Now he’s spinning about in his head like one of Sherlock’s teddies, round and round the garden, and—fuck—

It’s grand.

That literally only whips up John’s building fury to a frothing.

Grand! Who could imagine it would ever be grand? Sherlock’s freaky as a whole circus in one go and is likely only messing with his head, with his very world-view, and John’s been so utterly content with his very own minor miracle; this new one simply bowls him over. Miracle? What miracle? Shocking corkscrew is more like, completely perpendicular to the entire known world. John’s world is round and spinning no longer; it's flat and quaking like a boiled pudding instead. He absolutely hates having his feet swept out from under him—he abhors it.

“You bastard,” he hisses at Sherlock, into Sherlock’s mouth cavity, actually, and it’s not love, nor the nebulous cloud of ‘feel’ that most closely resembles love that he’s always (and forever) felt for this loon that fuels him. That's not the cause, no. It's fury. Plain old anger, and he's fucking full of it, to the brim.

Sherlock bites the imprecation right off his lips. Sherlock groans John’s name, over and again, and his fingertips are everywhere they can be, clamping down, latching on, scaling parts of John as if he’s Olympus in miniature. John groan-growls in wordless, frustrated response and kisses the little fucker in his arms harder, deeper, stronger.

Oh, but he’d love to give Sherlock such a pounding! Giant brat wouldn’t be able to sit for a week after John was finished with him!

He hates him; John literally hates him. The man’s a monster, a brute, and he’s clearly starving for attention in this area, if in no other. John’s certainly familiar with the cumulative bollocks-blueing feeling of not getting off for months and months on bloody end—this exceeds it, manifestly. It’s been years, likely, for Sherlock, if not decades.

It angers him more that he feels so suddenly old, all at once. Sherlock is so smooth, so shapely and svelte under his lips and his hands. Fresh as a daisy despite the muggy overlay of exhaustion. No man who’s experiencing a snog of the likes of this one should be simultaneously be comparing himself to Father William. No man!

“Cock sucker,” he snarls, biting down on Sherlock’s neck. “Ingrate—bastard!”

“I can be.” Sherlock’s panting now. “If you want, I will be—John.”

John does not--no, cannot--reply. It’s confusion talking; the poor git's addled. That's the reason why
John nagged him into napping in the first place, isn't it?

The dim room has turned dizzy-bright with the flashes of angry red behind John’s fluttering lids; that’s the blood rushing to his head on it’s inevitable path to points southward. He’s not inhaling nor exhaling properly at all—he’s in danger of hyperventilating at this rate. He’s in danger of being more turned on than he is already—or should be, ever, in any parallel universe—by his utterly ‘round the twist fucker of a mad flatmate.

“Oh, blast,” he gabbles, and rolls completely over top of the mouthy, squirming detective, a last-ditch attempt to quash him. “Shut it. Go to sleep, will you? Just—go to—sleep. Now.”

It makes no sense, but nothing ever really does. Of course, of course; when does it ever? When doesn’t Sherlock turn all John’s natural assumptions upon their respective heads; when doesn’t he defy common illogic? Just all the time—all the bloody sodding time and that’s brilliant, yes, but not so brilliant right now, when John’s been tipped turtle, mentally.

Gawd, no. The bastard.

Something clearly has to be done about this. And it’s clearly up to John to do it, because his ditsy, airy-fairy, games-playing roomie’s not in control of a single sodding thing. He’s hit the wall, proverbially--must have. Likely wouldn’t know stress-relief if it slapped him across his face. Likely couldn’t wank his way out a paper bag—he’d be much too busy deducing it.

“Bastard!” It’s a very boring refrain, and he’s damned sure ‘Mummy’ was married to Papa, or whatever the two Holmes brothers called him, but John just can’t be bothered to yell a single thing more hurtful than that. Not to Sherlock. "Bastard, bastard, bastard!"

"Jo--"

Oh-god-Sherlock.

And that is why this is happening. It’s Sherlock. It’s all incredibly Sherlockian, and he’s got a mate who’s not only a noun but also a verb form and a bloody adjective, all by himself. The blasted Woman had it right, all along.

John is furious. So blindly furious he thrusts a reaching hand out and deftly rips down the waistband of his mate’s drawstring sleep trousers. So incredibly angry he lays a nimble practised set of fingers on that same bastard’s half-hard prick and fists it, pulling tight, pushing with bunched fingertips and squeaky-tight knuckles, and doesn’t hesitate to stop for a second to add a little spit to the proceedings to make them go along that much more smoothly.

“Uh!” Sherlock yelps, roiling in his grip. “Gnghhh!” His eyes are wide, wide, and oh, so glittering-bright. Like a foxes eyes they are—they glow incandescent with every stroke.

It’s amazing. John could care less; he’s spitting mad. Just so.

“Sleep,” he orders, biting off chunks of words viciously, “you will sleep, Sherlock, and if I can’t make you sleep the one way, I’ll do it t’other—and no more questions!”

“John—please, Jo——“

“Don’t ask me stupid shit, Sherlock! And shut your stupid gob up finally-completely; not another word out of your lips do I want to hear, because it’s only saying stupid things at me. Just sleep!”

Another hard snog, and Sherlock’s bereft of English, but still noisy. He writhes a bit under John’s
mouth and hands, but that’s alright then. At least he’s paying attention to what’s happening to him.

It’s about par for the course. Except, not. John is swamped, just as abruptly, but with tenderness, and his flashflood anger is nought but a fleeting blip fading fast. How can he maintain it, when Sherlock looks like that, all worn down to the nub and needing of John’s care? How can he be furious when it’s this man? This man, above all others?


“Come, Sherlock,” he coaxes, his hand gentling, fingers settling into a smoothing, soothing rhythm, “come on, mate. Please, please…ah!”

“John.”

Sherlock’s chin comes to land sharply on John’s tumbled hair and presses down firmly, almost painfully hard upon John’s scalp. He claws at John, with fingers and toes. His voice raining down above John’s head is not needy or weak or even much surprised, John notes. It’s a deep timbre and velvety as ever, all whipped mascarpone laced with butterscotch and dark, dark honey, but there is detectible within the rubbly grate of strain on already stretched nerves. Just a little guttural gravel in the whisky-dulcet tones to whisk away the last of John’s lingering subliminal doubts he’s doing the right thing—the proper thing, just now. That his flatmate positively needs this all-out assault on his senses to happen to him; that his friend needs it more than anything on earth at the moment.

Needs **him**.

“Sherlock, Sherlock, Sherlock,” he chants softly, and the head of Sherlock’s knob is glassy-hot with spit and dripping thin liquid in between his knuckles as he rubs a fine fucking good ‘un out. He can smell the musk building, bitter and rich, and his hand cramps, he’s yanking with such a perfect bow form, all across the instrument that is the detective’s cock. “Sherlock, that’s it.” He’s not thinking of cocks now particularly; if he is, he’s thinking of cocks as a means to an end. “Good man,” he mutters, over and over, encouraging. “Come on now, let it go—give it to me, Sherlock. Give me it, all you’ve got, mate.”

“John!”

They pant at each other, entangled.

“Oh—John!” Sherlock gasps and arches, cheek sliding, gouging the harsh hint of skull bone into John’s unprotected ear as he burrows his nose into John’s hair; uses those violinists’ fingers of his to latch on to John-the-giver, John-the-conductor—and that’s what this is, all of it of a piece, what John is engaged in. His incredible anger was but the short fuse, the wick leading straight and sure down to the great well of warm, golden-hued tenderness rising swift within him for Sherlock. For Sherlock, the heated glow that’s always, always present. It’s care, is what, such a great lot of care he has inside him for this man, and that’s what John **does** for Sherlock: he cares and he cares and he cares some more, ever so much, ever and always.

“Jo—nnnnn….oooh.”


“Aunghhh…..”

So sue him for it. There’s times when a bloke’s just gotta get off; John knows this from experience.
There's times when his brain will implode if he doesn't. When sleep is elusive and the world just won't stop, round and round like teddies in the garden.

He's Sherlock's chosen light; so be it. Sometimes a flash of brilliance is what's needed to rest weary eyes, blind them, really. To stun a glorious mind into submission—to shock out the fuses on Sherlock's echoing Palace and cast upon all the many rooms a forgiving, welcoming, loving Dark.

"Oh—John….oh…"

"Very good, that's it," John's nothing but praise for him, his detective, the only one in the world, as he rubs his damp hand down Sherlock's rucked-up pants to clean off the gobs of thick spunk. "That's fine, Sherlock, oh, just fine—you did so well; just relax. Enjoy. It's a bit nice, isn't it?"

At Sherlock's piggish grunt and half-nod, John's kind enough to haul the man's pants and pajama trousers up again to his waist, haphazardly, and to use the fine fabric to soak up Sherlock's spent seed, too, where it has seeped sticky into crease of thigh and the ruff of wiry pubes under his palm. He knows full well his mate abhors being filthy, unless it's the direct result of the Work; this he can do something about, yes.

"Sherlock," he murmurs kindly, contentedly now he's had his way, petting away all the while most assiduously. "Well done, Sherlock. Just fine, is it. Ever so fine. Sleep now, Sherlock—sleep."

"Mnngh…mmmph…mmm." A series of sweet sighs translate to virtual blasts of harsh air in John's audial canal. He hides his inevitable wince as best he can, stopping himself from jerking away abruptly to avoid them. "John….." Sherlock murmurs, slurring, smacking his lips, and then, seconds later, with enormous contentment colouring the word: “Ja…’hawn.”

Dead silence, then, punctuated once only by a sudden, honking snore, like a bolt from the blue. Poor bloke can’t draw a clear breath, likely, what with all John’s hair, their pajama shirt lapels bunched up round their necks and his own foolish curls clogging up his highborn nostrils. Suffocating, how close they’ve become.

The doctor grins; tugs at various folds of fabric with all the deliberation of a chess master, seeking to array the board to his liking, and shifts the whole of his person minutely and ever so carefully, sufficiently to sort Sherlock’s heavy head over to the dubious comfort of his good shoulder. Just there, where the bulge of gathered muscle will serve to free up Sherlock’s airways.

An unintelligible noise from the detective informs him this is good—very good, what he’s just done. Sherlock’s functioning as a shock blanket, really. To John's mind he is, at least. All fear, all worry over the service he’s just mostly unthinkingly done for his difficult flatmate is completely obscured by the comfort of having the larger man’s sodden afterglow half-pinning John's person down to the springy mattress. John had, it seemed, forgotten completely how very marvelous it felt to be held. Simply held close, like the merest child.

Well. That’s all right, then. Fair’s fair. He'll take that as his due.

"Oh, Sherlock."

John’s careful to stay still as a statue for a bit longer, to allow his mate a few moments to collect his breath and to succumb quietly into the eager hands of Morpheus. He hopes it’ll be a least a few hours more than the one single set of sixty moments the detective promised him before, scowling.
Was a very decent wank, that—very fine. John’s a bit proud of himself, really. He’s not lost his touch a’tell, has he?

With a pleased sigh, and by dint of mentally heaving off, albeit gingerly, his nagging awareness of his own prick, still heavy and unsatisfied between his sweaty thighs, John closes his remarkably sticky eyelids thankfully upon the dimmed-out vision of the tiny brown spider yet spinning inconsequentially, the faint reassuring sounds of the passed-out detective huffing none so silently in his ear, the sensual feel of Sherlock’s ridiculous down-stuffed mound of pillows cradling his stubbled jaw and takes up happily what he is handed by circumstance: his much-coveted nap.

God, yes. Bring it.

John’s job’s complete; his job’s very well done, too. He’s accomplished six sorts of impossible just now and all ages before brekkers, thanks. Cheers for that.

He’s a stint down the surgery on first thing in the morning, after all.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

P(assion)[does not equal]C(ommitment), no. [Delete, delete, delete.]

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17 (yes, now we get down to the meat of it, people. Heed the change in rating, plzthnxbye)

Word Count: 1,600 (this part); 17,200 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?); (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' [NC-17] Part 7/?);

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It’s the hollow slam of wood to wooden casing that awakens Sherlock.

A door thuds shut firmly. In his mind’s eye the brassy knob is shiny-bright with repeated nervous fondling, the arched curvature of its artful set into the bland white plastered walls is oddly intriguing. It’s a very attractive door, this one, painted scarlet with hints of purple, almost ancient Persian in structure and design, and more than a small percentage of his begrudging waking mind would dearly desire to open it again. Step on through, gad about heedless of consequences. But that’s not possible; it’s not to be.

At what feels like the crack of dawn but absolutely isn’t Sherlock stands planted firmly with his back up against the barrier to this metaphorical hole in his head and glares about the reaches of his mental palace in a furious manner.

After a moment or two—spent blinking up at the tedious ceiling and the slightly more interesting Tegenaria sample that inhabits a corner of it in reality—he assays a casual saunter away from that particular door and the uncharted area that lies behind it, pulsing passion-scarlet.

Stubbornly, the farther he progresses ‘away’, the more he is able to ignore and dismiss as aberration the entire passage leading up to that doorway and everything he’s glimpsed beyond it. He goes about this with all the will in the world, all the determination he can muster. Deletes the existence of the doorway and all that might lie behind it—so tempting—as much as he is able, though it pops up persistently from his mental rubbish bin more than once when he’s not minding throughout the day.

Can’t have that.
One furious wank does not a love affair make. P(assion) ≠ C(ommitment).

Intimacy(best mates) ≠ Intimacy(lovers).

He’s not prone to fancy, much, at least not of this sort. Well, he is, but he’s also perfectly capable of not giving into will o’ the wisp diversions. Can’t go there, no—more, shouldn’t go there. That way lies ruin, and madness, and...term it that self-same passion, clouding up reason, obscuring the mind. His mind.

That way, that path, that door is verboten.

He was only seeking data, that’s all. That’s Sherlock’s current Truth and he’ll stick to it, ta. A way forward, cautiously, circumspectly. Wanted to know what manner of ways he might please John, in the near future. Juggle John and John’s bloody old work, John’s latest girl, and The Work, his; nay, the whole of his life, partially reconstructed, tin pie plates aloft, endlessly, beautifully spinning. Can’t blame him if he was deluged in it, drowned in fathoms more sensory input than he ever expected or hoped for.

John’s hand and mouth(A helping hand, a drowning mouth) ≠ John (the whole entirety of Doctor John Watson).

Sherlock doesn’t understand John, not a’tall. John isn’t a tease. John’s fairly straightforward. It is completely far afield for John Watson to lay hands on Sherlock Holmes for any reason other than to heal or in passing courtesy or sentimental fondness. John is not a bloke who jerks another bloke off for a lark. No, it’s him. It must be him. He doesn’t understand, any more than he understood yesterday—or last week—or last month. Or years ago. It has been for actual years now, hasn’t it, their relationship, and yet he still cannot quite compute the breadth and depth and ramifications of it all, can he?

John does have quite a bit of temper to him. Yes...perhaps that was it, what has happened to them. Having been wanked off contrarily leaves Sherlock Holmes in a filthy mood.

Sherlock’s in a strop not only because he’s overslept and there’s something of a case on, not merely because there’s no morning tea waiting cooling on the counter, not solely because John’s toddled off to his stupid clinic without warning Sherlock he was going and despite the pressing need to hire a car and visit various quarries in search of the plaguey archeologist chap’s murder weapon—no.

Sherlock’s in a strop because his brain won’t behave as it should now he’s fully conscious. He’d such a beautiful plan for sniffing out the proper method of retaining his best assistant in spite of this Mary female and now it’s devolved to so much rubbish.

Yes, and the mythical door he envisions so perfectly acutely is also rubbish. It must be. John’s been offered any number of engineered opportunities to request/demand a greater degree of physical intimacy than priorly available before Sherlock’s shocking re-entry into London society. The man has not made use of a single one of them; one would logically assume John is not, in any way, interested in Sherlock’s fanciful door or the vast unexplored territory that lies behind it. John...has Mary for that sort of nonsense, although Sherlock deduced quite early on that John and Mary are whiling away their days in a turgidly slow courtship.

Dull, that. Painful to witness.

He’s virtually growing cobwebs himself, just observing. It only proves again the utter heights of his affection for John that he hasn’t interfered, not even a little. And he’s not entirely certain he’s even
really interested. When he stares John straight in the eyes he feels all woozy—that can’t be good, can it?

No, no, some areas should never be delved into. Some doors should stay locked tight.

Well…he’s asked John a simple question, yes. But that’s not a crime, is it?

He cannot be held to blame that John’s reply is virtually unintelligible. What sort of answer is ‘Sherlock’, anyway? Makes no sense, none at all.

He doesn’t understand.

He may never understand.

But this is bosh. A waste of Sherlock’s precious minutes, time he could spend fruitfully elsewhere.

Right, then, to the Work, dull as it will likely turn out to be:

Fact: he knows the purported identity of the victim. That would be Albert Pevans, PhD Arch, affiliated with several large universities, both at home and abroad, and something of a celebrity in his own world. Well-off and erudite, demonstrably learned, and of an unassailable pedigree both personally and professionally, the man is or was known as an irreproachably honest scientist, above error, and spilling over with integrity. He is also known for his insatiable curiosity and his philanthropic works.

Fact: this same man’s latest favourite field site in Minos has suffered recently several instances of petty pilfering. Small items have been reported missing: a crudely carved fertility totem, for one, similar to the others discovered near Knossos. A funerary glazed clay vase, nearly intact when unearthed. Some antique jewelry crafted of gold and cabochon jewels, intrinsically worth perhaps a thousand pound sterling but intangibly almost too valuable for even Lloyd’s to insure.

Fact: Pevans has a teenaged daughter with a known drug habit, currently boarding in a Swiss finishing school and undergoing discreet rehabilitation. Fact: Pevans and his wife have been rumored to be traversing through a series of marital difficulties. Fact: Pevan’s wife of twenty years is an anthropologist in her own right, somewhat less celebrated than her husband, and is involved in Pevan’s dig, professionally and managerially.

Fact: he has Lestrade and his so-called ‘team’ to provide further details as to exact time of death and cause, but he’s already in possession of a close approximation, thanks to his observations and John’s field expertise. Time: 38 hours post-death at instance of initial police exam (Anderson’s rectal thermometer). Cause of death: massive blow to frontal lobe. And post-death there occurred a fairly gruesome guillotine-style removal of the remains of Pevan’s facial features, including jaw bone and cartilage shards. Bleeding copious at death; should be spatter spray on the weapon that gave the blow. Bleeding minimal after deposit of body at the abandoned estate. Blood pooled and chilled, incidental. Fact: the murder weapon isn’t at all ‘missing’ from the scene of the crime; it’s the body that was moved away and dumped, after the fact.

Fact: per Lestrade’s report, the estate is not connected in any way to Pevans or any of Pevans known associates. It is likely negligible in the whole picture. Dumping ground.

Hypothesis: Uncertain as to whether this is actually technically ‘murder’ at all.

Next steps: Locate the weapon(s), find the motive (if it exists), find the murderer (if that’s what one may call the person who dumped the body).
Corollary Hypothesis: There is no murderer, per se. This may be an ill-concealed mishap. It may even be all bloody Pevan’s fault in the first place.

Next step, additional: Request Lestrade pull financial records on various South East England area quarries, particularly those privately owned.

Next steps: Hire a car, hijack John and go visit quarries. Two quarries, to be exact: Blashenwell and Alfrington, though he’s laying odds it was Purbeck marble scrapings, given the greenish hint to the microscopic scrapings he’s collected from beneath Pevan’s fingernail.

Next steps: Wall off the corridor leading to the door. Never mention it again…unless John does. John won’t, of course. Why ever would he?

It’s with a growling snarl Sherlock whirls his coat about him and clatters down the steps, off to NSY to nag away at Lestrade for his much-needed financials.

It’s only his bloody fancy—a trick of the light—the door to 221B seems a bit…odd, when he glances back behind him. Scarlet-purple, perhaps, and of a sultry set. Not at all the entry to the home of a silly pillow, a battered settee and John’s ancient laptop.

He nearly misses the final stair, tripping, when it strikes that perhaps he’s now as technically homeless as any of his network.

“John!”

It’s with a sinking feeling in his gut Sherlock tells the cabbie to drive him to the clinic, on the double. That he hadn’t meant to go there at all only makes it feel more horrid.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Mr. British Government.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17 (yes, now we get down to the meat of it, people. Heed the change in rating, plzthnxbye)

Word Count: 400 (this part); 17,600 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 7/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?)

(*)*(*)

There’s something dreadfully off with Sherlock.

Greg, the more he ponders it, is certain he’s dead-on. His gut never lies.

Witness the outstanding evidence of lack: it’s been nearly twenty hours and there’s been no texts and no sign of him down the Yard.

No sign of the Doctor, either.

This is completely unusual. Here he sits, with a de-faced corpse of a famous bloke, a ‘haunted’ house, a bespoke suit (Hullo, Bertie, and wasn’t he a delight to interview—not) and a total lack of motive or weapon to speak of. Sherlock should be crawling all over this, like a morbid fly on a cowpie.

Sherlock should not have bothered to mention such inconsequential items as poking-up nails in the scenery of the crime to his colleague, Dr Watson, either. Shouldn’t have given John a hand up, nor fuzzed over him like that. For that was a great deal of solicitousness expressed, at least for a Holmes.

Greg would know.

Sherlock should’ve dragged that same long-suffering gent off on a chase of some sort, soon as he’d examined the body, but he hadn’t. By all reports (thank you, Mr British Government), the two of
them had hied their lazy arses back to their flat and holed up for the duration. There’d been no outside visitors, either.

Sherlock had been persuaded to engage in the much verbally abused (by Sherlock) notion of a lie-down, even (yes, Mr British Government, that would be TMI) and had, as it turned out, slept for more than eight hours in total. Straight through.

Oh, bloody fuck yes, there’s something terribly wrong with Sherlock.

Mental, of course, but he’s always been that.

Emotional, more like, but that’s—oh, no, he’s not setting even a toe tip in that landmine. He’s enough on his plate, cheers.

…Upon reflection, Greg concludes it’s probably best if he doesn’t enquire. Some doors (and some cans of *E. hortensis*, per Mr British Government, the sapient sod) should never be cracked open.

Besides, there’s Mrs Hudson, and Greg scoffs merrily at the patently ridiculous idea she’s not poked her nose in yet. If he needs to know anything—and if there’s this continued gawd-awful silence emanating ominously from 221B—he’s positively assured Mr British Government will be stopping ‘round to tell him all about it.

And bring him along a spot of nosh, which would be grand. As it’s been twenty hours.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Coq au vin vs. cock du Sherlock: what'll it be, John? What will it be?

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17 (yes, now we get down to the meat of it, people. Heed the change in rating, plzthnxbye)

Word Count: 1,700 (this part); 19,300 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One, ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' [NC-17] Part 7/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?)

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Strain, that’s what it is. Stress and strain. His last nerve, Sherlocked. His peace, cut up. Also Sherlocked.

By the approach of noon the doctor is well ahead, having triumphed over the irascible Colonel and settled into a nice, easy rhythm. Having had a bit of a heart-to-heart, ‘clear the air’ with his landlady, first thing that same morning, and trotted away down the steps of 221B with a remarkably clear conscience.

Having arranged a luncheon date with a very pretty lady to look forward to, as well. Except—

There’s something about Mary, as they say (John chokes on his own spit when he catches himself actually thinking that phrase; oh, my! He should be strung up for his markedly odd sense of the ridiculous, really). Oh, but she’s really lovely, Mary is. A lovely person, a lovely girl. But.

Sweet-natured, equipped with a dreadnought-dark funny bone that seems to match up to John’s, and delightfully female. All curvy; nice calves, generous bosom. Er, still….

Willing and able, and quite understanding of John’s various small frailties, his small fails as a human being, a gentleman. The hole in his existence he’s still recuperating from; all that he does not speak and will not speak of, ever. Caring and quiet about it, never flaunting her knowledge, in just the way
John most appreciates. Except…

Patient like Job and amazingly tolerant of John’s flatmate, not that she’s seen much of him, nor will if John has his way. An angel. However—

There’s something about Mary that is not, well…not Sherlock.

Sherlock is Sherlock and there’s no getting round it. And it’s Sherlock’s prick John’s musing over on the periphery of his workaday mind—and has been all morning, despite ‘clearing the air’—and not Mary’s rueful-sweet smile.

Perhaps he’s not quite shaken off all the fury he felt.

Because, curse Sherlock Holmes for always questioning, for always wanting to know how and why and what for, all the bleeding particulars of any given situation. Curse him for prying at John’s brain like sticky fingers thrust into a lowly crackerjack box and digging away doggedly for the prize.

No—fuck. John swears, silently, grimacing.

He’s a lunch date in just an hour. Hmmmm…maybe French? There’s that new bistro round the corner from the clinic that all the nurses at Bart’s rave over. That would be nice, probably. They likely do chicken of some sort; John does like chicken.

In some sort of fancy-pants sauce. Right. Sauce—he likes saucy foods, he does. Likes the feel on his tongue, the buttery smoothness…ah!

_Bugger._

_Coq au vin_ versus _cock du Sherlock_ should be no contest when it comes to whetting John’s flagging appetite, but it isn’t.

It’s fucking disturbing; he’d thought he’d worked his way through this, courtesy his worldly-wise landlady. A prickly path, a quagmire, navigated nicely. But….no. Apparently not. Evidence suggests ‘not’.

There’s evidence in his pants, damn it all.

John squirms a bit on his seat cushion, sending his chair skittering up tight upon the edge end of his desk. There’s a coil of heat in his gut, rising reluctantly; he can feel it. There’s a flush he can feel spreading up the column of his neck. He feels…he feels feverish.

He hates that. Shouldn’t be happening at all. But…it is. And god help him.

His very hand refuses to leave go its sense-memory of another man’s tumescence. He’s gripping a biro but it feels hot, his palm, as if he’s burnt it. And not some ‘other man’s prick’, either—_Sherlock’s._

John’s chest is tight under the white coat’s emblazoned caduceus. No—his ribcage is heaving slightly, due to his brand-new breathing pattern. For god’s sake!

John has a date in less than an hour. His flatmate knows nothing of it, so likely it’ll go swimmingly. He has hopes. Another step down the road with Mary, which is a damned fine turn-up for the books.

Or…is it?

He’s clammy-damp with a fine sheen of perspiration under his clothes. If he glances in the mirror,
he’d likely be treated to sight of a curiously uneasy John Watson, a John who is undeniably aroused. Red of face, lips parted and chapping from all his licking at them. Bitten at nervously; pupils blown. Well…he does have a lunch date he’s anticipating….

It could very well be all due to dear Mary. But.

It isn’t—it so isn’t.

The detective is proportional. John has confirmed the evidence of his eyes with his fist. He is thin but he’s fit. Boney in places; a man could count his ribs but the skin over them is soft, soft as a baby’s bum. Bugger, but his bum is as soft as a baby’s, full and plump, nicely firm. His hair is also soft and curly; seal-coloured hanks of satin falling through sifting fingertips, and his eyes are the eyes of a siren, an otherworldly alien, a lost boy.

John sways where he sits. Clutches at his half empty ‘in’ tray with slippery fingertips, reaching blindly for another chart. He feels a bit sick, actually.

His voice is made of smoked cognac and dark caçao, and he asks the very worst of questions with that voice of his; makes all manner of difficult demands upon his only mate. He can, it seems, do all this even without speaking aloud.

Sherlock: it’s a language. One John can hear even without ears.

What’s it like?

Bloody hell. It’s like Sherlock. It has always been like Sherlock and it always will be. John lives in a world flavoured by the adjective Sherlock, ruled over by the proper noun Sherlock and, fuck, but he lives driven.

“Oh,” he breathes to the empty room. “My god.”

What he wouldn’t give for Sherlock’s art of deletion.

But he’s a man, a normal man, really, and he cannot forget. Not for an instant.

Denial's a river in Egypt. No doubt the archeologist bloke with no face would've known. John knows John’s trousers are growing ever more uncomfortable the longer he entertains the diamond-clear recollection of a very important part of Sherlock’s absurdly perfectly proportional anatomy, jerking rigid in his hand, and not so many hours ago he's any hope of the memory blurring through attrition.

Sherlock. It was ever so hot and long and hard like obsidian, thick of girth near the base and then tapering nicely. There’s a curve to it, which a tiny part of John had found exquisitely charming. Sherlock had issued the very best of small sounds when John had stroked it, when he had milked it, and when he had run the pad of his thumb up the undervein. Worse even than that, there’s John’s total recall of that snarky, smart-mouthed prat thrashing wildly under his tongue, ‘neath his best mate’s weight thrown over—hiding but not hiding at all. Under cover, really, acting like any other bloke surreptitiously having his rocks off. And the huge tit apparently had been very much liking the whole damned experience, going by those noises, those so very pretty noises. Getting into it, getting off.

“Bloody. Hell.”

The tongue which ushers that voice into the world, the soft palette? Delicious. Steamy and outright brilliant.
John literally cannot recall a single snog he’s enjoyed more.

He has to moan aloud when he realizes this. He’s a date in under an hour, with a very nice woman. A woman he’s ever so fond of.

It would be awfully nice to feel shame, John feels, apropos his own abrupt, unwanted reaction (a heady and quite inappropriate swelling of the groin; all observable symptoms attendant upon an upswell of raging physical desire), but he cannot seem to bring himself to do so.

Shame is alien; Sherlock is never bothered by shame. Well…the once, maybe. Alright, twice.

Shame, though. Circumstances seem to be against it. There’s Sherlock himself, for one, looming large in the doctor’s mind’ eye, intruding rudely upon John’s obligatory but dull review of his upcoming patient files.

Only the six more and then he’s out the door, collecting Mary on the way, and they’ll have a very nice lunch, he’s certain.

But not *coq au vin*. He doesn’t even know what he was thinking, considering French cuisine. Mary would never like it; she was a plain meat pasty-and-a-pint girl and that was super.

…French, huh?

John has to wince. He knows all about subliminal urges.

Oh, yes, and curse kindly old Mrs Hudson, with her ‘married ones next door’ and her ‘I always was of the opinion he cares for you, dear, much more than either of you ever realized’ and her sly ‘and you, for him’. And her bloody knowing smiles and half-winks and hand-patting. John could do without snappily dressed little old ladies who seem to understand his inner John more than he understands himself, thanks.

A pox on the so-lovely Mary, too, for not being just a tad bit more aggressive. How many times now have they *not quite* or *only nearly*? Too many, that’s what. One would assume John-and-Mary weren’t really all that.

"God. This can't. I shan't, I won't. No!"

John shudders, closing his eyes against the clean and simple lines of his exam room. It’s so beautifully sterile, nothing like the flat.

He’s always shied away from deducing himself and Mary. Many a time has he avoided indulging in such a Sherlockian occupation. He’s not bored in the slightest. His relationship with Mary is exciting, never tedious.

He has nothing to feel the slightest bit guilty for, just as Mrs Hudson said. ‘Poor dear Sherlock’, she’d said, ‘he never seems to know quite what to—exactly how to…?’ And she’d shrugged in that speaking way she had, insinuating all manner of things and visibly allowing John to come to his own conclusions and it had been good, all good. Very good.

John nods to himself. Shrugs.

Oh, yes, that. That had been *nothing*, nothing to speak of or dwell on or worry over. It had been a damned hand job and a few messy smooches, nothing more. Comfort, if anything.

*Fucking comfort*, in reply to ‘what’s it like, John?’
Because John couldn’t have knocked the bastard upside the head to render him unconscious and he couldn’t have merely hugged the contrary git as he’d wanted to, once—no, but still.

No, sir, none of those explicitly common human reactions would be at all understood by the likes of Sherlock; that wasn’t how he operated. Not his plane of existence, not his ken. No, it had been required of John to be spectacularly shocking—a stab in the dark, through the heart—and it had required of him to be stunningly powerful, sufficient to send Sherlock safely off to Nod with the rest of the bloody Lost Boys.

...And if that turned John Watson into a modern-day Wendy, what the fuck, yeah?

What the bloody fuck.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

It's ever so quiet; why is it so quiet? Enquiring Inspectors would like to know.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 970 (this part); 21,780 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 7/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?)

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“Ah..’em.”

Greg looks up from his desk so fast he nearly gives himself a case of whiplash.

“Inspector? Good afternoon.”

The mendaciously gracious tones of Mr British Government have Greg instantly wincing.

“Look,” he says, starting to rise, running a quick hand through his tumbled hair, “I am sorry, you know I am, but it’s this bloody case, My—“

“Yes, all right.” The dapper gentleman who has invaded his space practically clicks his heels as he nods genially to a pair of late middle-aged blokes standing to one side and slightly behind him. Between all three they’ve the cramped doorway completely blocked. Greg can just see Sally hovering outside, a frown plastered large on her face, and little beyond that he can make out the brilliantine gleam of Anderson’s truly pathetic middle-part hair style. “I believe Mr Whirring here and his assistant Stanley may be of some use with that,” Mr B.G. adds, and he’s smiling.

When the British Government smiles at a person like that, Greg knows it could very well be dangerous. That the unnerving twinkle in the polite intruder’s eye sends quite a different sort of a frisson through his cerebral cortex is quite incidental.
“Erm?” Greg is quite accustomed to Mr British Government—familiarly known as Mycroft or that fat git to his intimates—randomly appearing in NSY; he is not as used to receiving any sort of help with his cases from the other Holmes brother. In fact, he objects to it, really, on principle. His nostrils flare and all his attitude of ready apology vanishes abruptly from his rapidly congealing features. Greg does sternly protesting like there’s no tomorrow; it’s a gift. “Now, look here, Mycr—er, Mister Holmes, I did not ask for any outside assist—“

“Mr. Whirring’s family happens to own the Kesterwicke Quarry, Inspector, and Stanley here has the day-to-day running of it,” the elder Holmes interrupts Greg’s pre-rant with consummate style, stepping fully to one side and well inside the office—and incidentally budging his suited arse right up next to Greg’s desk—to wave his companions on through. “Kesterwicke is considered a working museum of sorts, a functional antique quarry and one quite popular with the tourists and the educationally minded. And they’ve recently suffered a very—ah, well.”

The gentleman smiles round the room, a twitch of the thin lips and a crinkle round the eyes, but his gaze returns unerringly to Greg’s at the finale. Greg could swear he feels the very slightest brush of a set of buffed fingernails up his aching spine but that’s likely only a certain sense of rather ominous expectation getting the worst of him. He is knackered, yes. Also starved. Quite possibly twenty hours chasing his tail is too many.

“Stanley here has a positively fascinating incident to relate to you, Inspector, personally. In your role as the authority in charge of the case, naturally, regarding your recently defaced archeologist. Quite,” he pauses again and significantly as the two other chaps glance uneasily about the clutter that comprises a detective’s office, “quite…enthralling.”

“Oh?” Greg sniffs. “Oh, really, now?”

“Yes.”

No—alright, yes, actually. Greg is quite correct, on one point of rapid deduction. There’s only one Holmes hand visible and it’s wrapped capably round the butt end of the brolly. The other is occupied rubbing discreet circles ‘round the small of Greg’s back, right up under the tail flap of his rumpled suit jacket.

Greg sighs. It feels, oh, so brilliant, but Mr British Government is clearly not here to provide him a much needed Swedish massage.

“Hmm.”

He hums, impatient. This is all very well but he has work to get through before he can even consider popping along home to spend time with his personal representative of duty to Queen and Country. No matter how terribly persuasive that representative can be.

“Indeed.” The man smiles. More brightly. Well...with more teeth, at least. “If we may?”

Greg pulls a face at him. It is blandly disregarded.

The other two gentlemen instantly train their eyes away again, each pointedly examining the towering stack of files as if they have never seen such things before and were, indeed, completely and utterly boggled by the fact Greg has not actually smothered under his assorted paperwork.

Mr British Government has the temerity to wink at Greg on the sly; to actually lower one slow eyelid and bloody well wink. He even tips his chin just a bit, which is the very last straw as far as Greg is concerned.
Camel is broken. He’s been trounced, pounced and re-trounced, apparently. *Fait accompli*, silver platter.

*Bugger* his bloody boyfriend. He needs an AZ just to pick his way through the potential mantraps Mycroft is ever setting out.

Greg snorts. He’s thin on patience, but amused.

If a male Holmes were ever to resemble something so common as a Labrador retriever, Greg thinks Mr British Government would quite have the proper demeanor down pat. He’s ever so very pleased with himself, indeed, and Greg is a realist. Mycroft has the disgustingly sentimental tendency to bring him horribly useful presents at the office and it appears that this duo might very well be his latest.

“Does he? Right, well. Fine.”

The Inspector subsides back into his swivel chair, resigned, flapping a hand about to indicate the two other seats relatively available and—incidentally—allowing the man pressing discreetly up against his near side ample opportunity to withdraw that giveaway hand trailing practiced fingertips up his vertebrae.

When the brolly handle once again shows two hands folded upon it, Greg prepares himself to be ‘helped’. God knows how many hurt feelings he’ll have to feel guilty over later if he doesn’t; the British Government is shockingly sentimental.

“Let’s have it, then. You two, tell me all about it, will you? Go on.”
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Sherlock: 'I don't need no stinking appointment!'
Mary: 'Arrrrgh!' 
John: '***!' [Gawp]

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 1,170 (this part); 21,900 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' [NC-17] Part 7/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 11/?)

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Sherlock sweeps into the clinic with coat flapping. He’s past a protesting Judith in no seconds flat, and penetrating the inner reaches in a snap. It’s quite crowded, the waiting room, but he is no stranger to John’s schedule. As co-Head John’s been assigned a light roster, and is likely catching up on his paperwork. If he has any more patients they can easily be rescheduled to the locum.

“Excuse me, sir—oh!” The attractive woman clad in white-on-white startles to her feet, exclaiming. Her voice sours almost instantly. “It’s you,” she announces flatly, and Sherlock smirks, all acid and thinned lips and gives her a nod, noting the freshened-up lipstick and the not-quite-suitable for a medical facility roll-and tuck of her copious hair under its netting. “What are you doing here?”

Mary Morstan is somewhat attractive, Sherlock supposes, if one is a fan of the blowzy milkmaid look, but truly, she’s nothing special. She is, however, radiating a severely massive cloud of disapproval in his direction, throwing all she’s got into pointed glaring. He can see this is difficult for her; she’s normally quite innocuously pleasant.

“Doctor is busy. You cannot just barge in, Mr. Holmes!”

“Between patients?” Sherlock demands of her breezily and then barely stops for the doubtless
grudgingly truthful reply before thundering down the short corridor leading to the private exam rooms. “No, no, don’t bother. I’ll see myself in, thanks.”

“Mister Holmes!” The two largest are in the rear; one is Sarah’s, one is John’s, and both have their respective doors shut tight. This doesn’t prevent Sherlock from wrenching John’s open, whisking himself right on through, and promptly closing the cheaply constructed wooden panel on the Morstan female’s inquisitive nose where she’s gone and trailed after him, yapping nonsense and throwing up her hands. “Good afternoon.”

“You can’t do that!” She’s in the midst of scolding, but the door, though mass-produced, is also fortunately soundproof. He has no need to bother further with her and so he promptly locks the door behind him.

Ah, blessed quiet. Well, there’s the rubber wheels of a chair abruptly rumbling across a vinyl mat and onto tile.

“Hey! Hey, Sherl—!”

John is there. Naturally. In all his white-coated glory he rises like a minor male-version pocket-Venus on a clamshell, jaw dropping, lips already flapping.

“Shut it, no. Please. Wait.”

Sherlock presents the flats of both palms to halt John mid-flap.

“Do not,” he begs. Er…commands.

He cannot possibly tolerate any further disruption. He’s on a mission. Nothing will prevent him from accomplishing it, either; John’s fit of stupendous aghast go hang.

Sherlock had nearly stopped the cabbie twice on the way over. Once because he quite convinced himself there would be ample time to discuss what had happened between them after John’s shift at the clinic, the other because he’d been quite certain he was witnessing in real time the beginnings of a bungled robbery out of the corner of his eye whilst the whistling cabbie whizzed on through a disreputable neighborhood.

But the shop people would have to go hang if they needed any sort of special assistance. Sherlock was certain it was all being recorded on his brother’s CCTV’s in any case and the would-be suspect was right there, his acne-pocked face quite visible despite the yanked-down hoodie. They certainly didn’t need him.

Besides, it had struck him, right in the gut. If, by some happenstance, John might’ve have made post-shift plans with the Morstan woman, Sherlock might not have his chance to speak to the act of sex they had shared until much later or even the morrow. And that might lead to him—even Sherlock has to admit there’s a sense of proper timing crucial in all relationships, even the few he’s attempted—being too late. Literally, as well as metaphorically. And he required John fully present and accounted for, in person, specifically, to provide Sherlock his much-desired clarification, i.e., to tell Sherlock exactly what had happened and—if his hunch was correct—to help Sherlock do that again. That being the sex act, or one of the more enjoyable precursors to the full panoply.

The hand job, it had been…brilliant. Really…very…good.

He’d quite like the chance to do it himself, cheers, in return. Right this minute. He’s a bit rusty, alright, but with the right man it’s actually enormously fun. If he were really swamped by tedium, he’d write out the equation: John’s hand + Sherlock’s prick=intense pleasure.
He’s long been convinced John is the right man; the question has been whether he is the right man for John.

What is it like, John?

Questions are raised solely to be answered. That is their purpose.

Sherlock is quite chuffed with himself for not halting the cabbie over some silly case of nervous dithers. A bout of emotional clap serves no one in this matter. He’s not a lowly schoolboy and he knows all the signs of desire when he sees—er, feels—them. John had most definitely desired him.

John had, however, nimbly twisted that raw lust down another track, putting it to use to shove Sherlock gently over the precipice of boring exhaustion and to nudge him into the much-abhorred sleep state. Yes, he had, the bugger, but that is, in the long run, forgivable on his part. John does these things to Sherlock because he cares.

He cares.

Sherlock cares, demonstrably. He cares beyond all measure; he has his heart on offer, any damned time John would like to take it up. He should hope John has noted that.

Ergo, they care. For each other. And the fretful female rattling John’s doorknob is complicating matters, just as the Sawyer woman managed to do ever so long ago.

“All right, John.”

It feels ever so much better, finally having a real, breathing, large-as-life John to address. Sherlock is not above employing his vivid imagination to summon a facsimile of companionship—never has been, and he still has his ancient teddy tucked away somewhere, or Mycroft has it saved, which is more likely—but for conventional conversational purposes even the most grandiose mental scenarios fall terribly, sadly short of the mark.

He needs the man; he has the man—let it commence.

“John, about last night—“ he begins, swiftly, back to the door to muffle the residual knocking and knob-twisting. “I’ve been thinking and I—“

And then his eyes widen, appreciably, and he starts forward, almost stumbling over the fringe of the plain sisal mat John’s wide desk is centred on. He takes in every detail he can assimilate quickly about the current physical state of his good doctor as he shoves his way towards John—ever towards John.

John is not tall, no, but the file-ridden blotter does not a thing to disguise his condition—er… condition?

“Oh, that had best,” Sherlock purrs, jumping tracks in barely a beat, eyelids lowering seductively as he concentrates his stare on the lower half of his flatmate, “be all for me, John. Or I shall be very cross.”
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Target achieved.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 400 (this part); 23,000 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? [Start with Part One.](BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' [NC-17] Part 7/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 11/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 12/?)

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“Oh gawd. Er—yes—but!”

John’s natural tendency towards honesty is almost always his downfall. He goes boiled beet-red and makes like a landed salmon for a moment, twitching. One palm darts to cup and cover his giveaway stiffie, hide it from view.

“But—but—but!”

Sherlock, in place of leaning his long torso forward far enough to grip John’s shoulders and wrestle him across the desk as is his first inclination, makes a lightning alteration to his plan and rips away at his own coat, scarf and shirtng instead. He spins sideways on a heel to position himself better for his hurdle. The crowded blotter prompts a sidesweep of knife-hand to clear it off completely and he’s already well on his way over in a flash, balanced precariously on one extended arm, fumbling with his belt buckle with the other as he goes. Thus, no time is wasted and, if a passing vehicle can’t stop the intrepid detective mid-heat on a criminal chase, there’s no way a stationary lump of boring furniture will when he’s finally feeling romantic.

John gapes at him, stalled out by embarrassment. Only for a second, as Sherlock achieves the John-side of the desk in a blink and is right there. He deftly tilts up his doctor’s chin just so, using the velocity gained from his leap and employing the fingers from the ready arm that had balanced his
full-body fling. Those fingers clamp hard on Johns open jaw and a set of questing, eager lips crushes his quarry’s smack-flat, smothering them like thumped-down pillows.

John tastes blood from where one of his canines grazes Sherlock’s poking tongue.

“Grrnnphff!” he says. Sort of. Sherlock hums his pleasure. He gropes desperately at John’s hidden cock with the hand not holding the doctor captive, forcing the folds of lab coat out of his path.

Then the boring brown leather belt. Then the boring tan corduroy trousers, yanked floorwards. Then the tartan-print pants, flimsy-soft as they are from much washing, the elastic giving way with ease.

Finally skin. On skin.

John’s unsteady respiration is broken by a sharp inhalation through his nostrils as he flinches. The shiver only brings him closer, his hot damp prick butting into Sherlock’s hot damp palm like an eager puppy—or the butt of a trusty revolver.

“Oh god…oh-god, oh-chriiiist…” one of them moans.

“Hell, yes!” growls the other.

Concluding equation: John’s bared skin=one Sherlock Holmes transported instantly to the rather transcendent state of ‘gloriously happy’.

There is sizzle.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

SRSLY?

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 70 (this part); 23,070 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' [NC-17] Part 7/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 11/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 12/?) ( BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 13/?);

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“Seriously?” Greg wants to know. Stanley, who is one of those slow sort of chaps, grins at him like a right loon, having retreated gratefully back into what Greg thinks is his naturally silent state. “You did that?”

Mr Whirring twitters, “Yes, well, he thought he was helping. You know, what with the kids coming and all. Busses of them. That morning, especially.”

“Helping?”

Greg is floored. Poleaxed.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Pressure!
('Cap'n, it's gone above 9,000!')

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 200 (this part); 23,270 (in total)


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John Watson rapidly revises his learned opinion of the previous snog with Sherlock to give this new, improved one top billing.

He’s engaged in a serious mutual chemical reaction, the sort Sherlock would be crow over, he’s sure, were he in his kitchen-lab, but he’s not. He’s here, feeling up John’s privates like a bloke who means to do something really brilliant with them in the very near future, and he’s got his own trousers down to his knees, so this is mutual. Very mutual, and he can feel it right down to his toes and right up to the tips of his hair follicles and the tingle extends even to his bloody elbows and the sensitive webbing in-between thumbs and forefingers. Not to mention his poor befuddled cock, which has ramped up ten notches from ‘very much interested in a fuck, inappropriately at work’ to ‘f**k, so much as look at me funny, arsehole, and I’ll goddamn blow!’

“John!”

The doctor has no idea why he has not, in fact, spent himself all over his flatmate’s knuckles, but he sensibly writes it off to the mind-blowing method in which they are snogging.

“Ye—“
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

'Just the facts, Ma'am.'

BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows'

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 1,500 (this part); 25,400 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' [NC-17] Part 7/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 11/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 12/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 13/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 14/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 15/?)

(*)(*)

“And it’s this machine that did Pevans in? Gruesome.”

“Oh, yes. We’re very proud of the old gel. She’s quite the—ha-ha!—‘Auntie-Q’.”

Mr Whirring fumbles in a satchel he’s laid up against his leg and pulls out an old photographic print. Much yellowed, with the edges crinkled and creased, it’s encased in a plasticine wrap and labeled neatly in faded india ink ‘Bloody Mary’.

“Here, see?” he says helpfully, just forestalling the migraine the Inspector’s felt building up behind his eyebrows for the last half hour or so. “Just there was where Stanley found him. Poor chap.”

The very large machine pictured looks a bit like an oversized guillotine with a metal entry-and-exit chute attached horizontally. Antiquely elegant, it sprouts all sorts of attachments and smaller adjusting devices but the thing that catches Greg’s eye first is what looks a great deal like a cast-iron, blunt-ended battering ram, stationed just so on the far end of the chute, beyond the blade of the chopper.

It’s suspended on a heavy chain and it looks as though it might swing freely, if released. There’s a
lever alongside the chute which is connected to the U-shaped hook the chain is looped through; if a person were to knock into it accidentally, say, the business end of the blunt object would be free to go.

Mr. British Government peers over the Inspector’s shoulder to have a look. He hums almost soundlessly in Greg’s nearer ear, which is not quite as happily distracting as Greg would like it to be. His eyes, unfortunately, are glued to the wicked-sharp chopper.

…If Pevans tripped in the half-light of dawn or perhaps suffered a stroke or heart attack…

“Quite efficient, that,” Mr British Government observes dryly, stepping back to resume his relaxed stance, propped upon his brolly and just offside Greg’s swivelly chair. “Does the job.”

Greg muses that Mr BG may’ve been honestly admiring of the device; he shudders quietly. Whirring meanwhile points cheerily to the business end of the blade.

“All the way down, you know. Clean cut,” he states calmly. “Like the clockworks. We keep her well-oiled, ‘course. Old Mary’s the best we ever had when it came to the splitting and shaping end of things—ha-ha! Poor Stanley here had a devil of a time cleaning her up, after. Can’t have our Mary rusting, you see—far too valuable, she is.”

The Inspector swallows hard. He’s not going to need either of his guests to explain to him how it was Pevans lost his head, or most of it. This is all to the good, as Mr Whirring chatters on round the subject, quite happily occupied nattering on whilst the lump that is Stanley smiles shyly from his corner of the cramped office, peeping glances over at his superior every now and again.

“Yes, well, I’ll be pleased to show you how it may’ve happened in a moment, but first—I must just say!” Whirring sniffs; he’s so changeable in moods, it’s a bit like a period farce. Greg didn’t realize people like Whirring even still existed. “This man Pevans was very persistent, you know?”

Mr Whirring carries on, a definite tone of ill-use tingeing his unending flow of words. He lays the photo on the Inspector’s blotter, adjusting it to his particular liking.

“Wouldn’t leave go for an instant his idea of popping along to the quarry last weekend, as I’ve mentioned. I told him again and again we’d be happy to host him for a private tour whenever he might like, but not that day of all days—the children coming, you see; far too busy—but he kept rabbiting on about how he’d travel arrangements set in stone—ha-ha!—and then some charity do he had to attend and how it wasn’t convenient for him. Asked me if he could just come on out and poke about when he liked! Well, of course I said to him no, it wasn’t the slightest bit convenient, we were already overbooked and run quite ragged, but he must’ve come along anyway. As we found him—well, Stanley was the one who discovered the mess he’d left, really, just in time to avert total disaster, and you know how that turned out—as we’re here, now, before you. Yes, indeed!”

Greg swallows a snort. Stanley, for all that he’s a lumbering soul twice Greg’s stone and definitely verging on the far side of daft, must have hidden and extraordinary depths. The Inspector’s met many a criminal who lacked Stanley’s skill in hiding an unwanted body.

“Well, about that,” he says, wanting to hark back to a few pertinent details, such as Stanley’s connection to the abandoned estate, when Mr Whirring titters at him, a whinnying sort of discreet bray that is really very irritating. The old fart lays a hand on his Stanley’s huge ham-sized hand and pats it, approvingly.

“I thought—really, I did, Inspector, but much later, when I could think again after the kiddies and their minders had all gone away—it was most ingenious of dear Stan. Taking Pevans off and away
to that place; quite the mystery, what? As to how he came to be there at all—be a bit of conundrum for the local constabulary, eh? And then of course it bothered me, later, because of the trouble he’d cause, and having brought trouble to us from the start, which is why I called in on Mr Holmes here, at the Club, soon as I possibly could make a break up to the City. And this dear fellow—“ A gesture indicates the elder Holmes, who smirks, “was then so kind as to direct us to you fellows down the Yard—why, and even escort us along, as I’m afraid neither Stanley nor I have been much for the City in ages. Excepting the Club, naturally.” He sighs expressively. “For we’d no idea what to do with the fellow after that, you see. He couldn’t just stay where we put him, of course—there’d be a stink. Haha! Pardon!”

“Of course.” Mr British Government nods kindly. Which is super, because the Inspector is incapable. “Exactly right.” He’s been ever so quiet, but the Inspector can’t help but notice he, too, finds the gregarious Mr Whirring a tad bit tedious. His one eyelid is twitching, minutely.

“I was quite certain the local police chappies would never find the poor unfortunate soul otherwise.” The man blinks over at Greg, moistly, as if abruptly and emotionally touched by Pevan’s fate. He all but dabs an invisible hankie to his pointy nose. “It’s a sad business, this, if I do say so myself. Poor soul, poor sad soul, to go in that way, and all for nothing. I only hope he didn’t suffer too, too much.” He sniffs and it's Stanley’s turn to pat his paw. “In the end.”

Really, the man shows every sign of being all set to bawl into his suit cuff and Greg grabs at the box of tissues he keeps available on his desk preemptively, shoving them forward.

“Please!” he gasps out. “Take one!”

“Oh, dear, oh, dear,” Mr Whirring waves the box away, collecting himself with alacrity. “No, no, thanking you ever so much—there’s no need. I’m quite well, only a bit sentimental. Loss always does have this sobering effect upon me.”

“Uh..huh.”

“Really, I’m only glad to say our wee little ones visiting weren’t subjected to the gory aftermath. Stanley said he spent ages hosing down Mary that morning before they arrived at the lot—and this after driving him off the premises. So much blood, Inspector—so much effort!”

“Yes. Apparently,” Greg concurs firmly. “Effort, exactly. Now, if you don’t mind, may we go over the entire series of events one more time, and slowly? I find it hard to accept he’d be that much of an idiot as to chop his own face off—“

“To spite himself?” Mr Whirring is damnably irrepressible for an elderly man. And well recovered from his bout of the doldrums over Pevans messing up his bloody machine and creating a spot of bother for his foreman. “Oh, I rather wager it was a matter of curiosity killing the cat, if you will? Haha! Except that satisfaction didn’t very well bring him back, did it, poor thing. Don’t you think so? Bit of a hubris thing, that.”

The Inspector rolls his eyes under cover of the hand he swipes across them fleetingly. He’s knackered. Pevans couldn’t have changed out his tog after death, so that requires an explanation, and Mr British Government is chuckling behind him, unnervingly in concert with the godawful museum piece that is Whirring & Co.

“From the top, then,” he states patiently, firmly, authoritatively, and drags himself upright in his chair to emphasize his incredibly business-like attitude. “And just the bare facts this go round, please. No extraneous commentary.”
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

In which Sherlock verbally bitch-slaps his rival and John giggles inappropriately.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 1,700 (this part); 25,400 (in total)


(*)(*)

Surfaces are relative.

There’s the wall, the door, the floor, the desk and the exam table to choose from. Desk is best, as it’s most convenient.

Pleased with this salutary logic, Sherlock’s fingers tighten boldly on the hollows and juts of John’s hips and lift.

“Hup!” he says, and John find himself mostly laid back upon his cleared-off desk, his bum sliding as Sherlock adjusts him. “Hang on,” the cheery voice under his chin adds—the man has somehow managed to fold himself up sufficient to bite at John’s neck while he’s lifting. John nearly takes a nasty crack on the jaw when Sherlock lifts his head unexpectedly after a second’s frantic suckling.

“Almost—have—it—right—"

**Bang-bang-bang!**

“Ow!” John yips. “Sherlock!”
The insistent knocking at John’s office door finally ceases. He barely notices but Sherlock does. He’s bitten John maybe a bit too fiercely on the collarbone area in his startlement.

“Sorry, sorry—here, this. This needs to go, right now.”

John assumes correctly that ‘this’ means his trousers, bagged about his knees currently. They are massively in the way and very irritating, true.

“Can’t have this…”

*Ping-ping-ping.*

The office extension does not ring through, being in various pieces on the tile, however John’s mobile does as it tumbles out of his trouser’s pocket. Sherlock has grabbed at a kneecap and a cuff hem both and nearly dragged the one corduroy swath off John’s bent leg in his hurry. Fabric’s turned seamside out and is stretched as far as Sherlock can comfortably get it to go. There’s shoes in the way. And John’s aged tartan pants, ruthlessly cutting off his circulation.

“What in the bloody hell—bloody hell, Sherlock, what d’you think you’re doing?”

*Ping-ping-ping.*

John’s mobile continues to chirrup at them from its new location halfway across the room, almost under a filing cabinet. Sherlock spares a moment’s poisonous glare at it and snarl: “Shut up, you infernal woman! Don’t you know when to—to!”

“Sherlock! My mobile—urrrr-ah!”

Sherlock’s clearly outraged. By contextual mundane objects: John’s recalcitrant inside-out trousers, his pants where they strangle John’s calves and the insistent ringing of John’s mobile. This doesn’t prevent him from burying his face into John’s pubes and licking madly at what he finds there.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake! Ridiculous!”

Till Sherlock stops with that abruptly, vanquished by the mundane, apparently.

“Grrrr!”

John’s ancient boxers lose their elasticky battle with Sherlock’s rending fingers—no, his gloves. He’s got his bloody leather gloves still on, the kinky bastard!

“Now, wait just a second here, Sherlock!” John roars, possibly appalled. Yes, definitely appalled —*this is his office!* Struggling feebly upwards on an elbow, he’s attempting to sort out logically what his manic flatmate’s doing to him. The gloves are not on, for chrissake, no matter what else is happening to him without his actual verbal consent! “I’m not about to be buggered in my own off—“

*Ping-ping-ping.* **Bang-bang-bang!**

“Oh, shiii—er, one moment, John. I must just—er, pardon!”

John’s prone body, where it lays mostly sprawled across his desk, half-clothed, and flushed pink over every exposed inch, is abandoned abruptly.

“Wha-what? What now?”

His flatmate strides—or attempts to, which as he has his own pants and trousers caught round his
shoelaces, ends up being more like a fast and ungainly waddle—over to the locked door, fiddles the knob and then tears it open. With such force the knob dings the plaster.

“Whaat, now? Will you just stop? Be off!” he shouts at a blushing, scowling Mary Morstan, bearing down upon her shorter stature like an irate Jove. “Be off with you! Can’t you see I’m in the midst of a most important private prostate exam? Do you not understand when you are not wanted?”

“No…oh, no….no, please, lord.”

John’s head thumps back onto his desk. Defeated, he moans more loudly and dearly hopes with all his heart his ex-girlfriend cannot actually see him in the pose he’s been left. Well, most of him. Mary can likely make out his face where his head has lolled sideways into the safety of his bunched-up lab coat sleeve in an excess of sheer humiliation, and maybe she can see as well his rock-steady hands where he’s raised them to clutch wildly at his own ruffled hair, preparatory to pulling it out by the roots. Each individual strand.

One by one.

He quite thinks he’d like to put them to use strangling his flatmate, but that’s clearly a lost hope. He should’ve gone and done that ages ago, if he were ever going to, and now that singular perfect moment is lost to ancient history.

His head throbs, painfully. As he’s thumping it.

“I—I was only—I—you!” Through the rush of blood in his ears John catches Mary’s voice, sputtering. “You bastarding, boyfriend-stealing, son of a bitch—you freak of nature!”

“Cease and desist, damn you!” Sherlock’s having none of it. “I have not stolen anything, you foul-mouthed, frigid little twat—John was mine to begin with! You’re the one trespassing, if there’s anyone! And—and!”

“Let John go!”

“Please, please, no…” John moans again, because Mary can certainly see Sherlock’s cock, which is bobbing boldly out from between the dark curls between his bared thighs and is scarlet and rather wet-looking. Fuck, but she’s been handed an eyeful of all the glory that is mostly naked Sherlock on a platter and any soul with the sense of a daft goose would be able to take two, make four and sort out precisely what’s been going on here, in John’s office.

Mary’s deductions not being to the point, in any case, as Sherlock has the bollocks to inform her, word by damning word.

“—simply trying for a peaceful shag here—“

“Oh, my god, Sherlock!” John winces and moans, quietly to himself, and long, hoping to drown out what sounds very like a sob. “Urrrrrr……!”

“—had more than my fill of behind-closed-doors and bloody brain-dead females—Marys!—poking their snouts in—“

There’s no point in shouting out at Sherlock to leave Mary be and stop tormenting her, either. P’raps the pathetic sound John makes is also a plea to the goddess of bad timing, who has apparently seen fit to incite poor dear Mary into a fit of concerned curiosity and send Sherlock into a grandly possessive snit.
John senses the waiting room just down the corridor has gone dead silent. He could bet and win certain money that every man Jack and woman Jill in that room has both ears cocked and is glued to the impassioned imbroglio in progress just around the corner, out of sight.

“—laying their sticky fingers on what’s mine and has always been mine, woman!”

John gulps, all the perspiration sheeting his body going cold. Do something—yes, he should do something, even if it’s wrong.

“This isn’t—this can’t be—oh, shit. Mary!” He calls out at last and likely to no avail. “Mary, I never meant—I’m ever so sor—”

“Now. Go. The hell. Away.”

His random pointless apology is completely overridden by his flatmate’s low-toned bellow. It’s deadly, what with all the many layers of utter hatred it contains. Sherlock is in rant-mode and there’s nothing on earth that’ll stop him, no. Not till he’s finished of his own accord, stubborn git.

John grins. Fleetingly.

“I—you—John!” It’s a bit of a stifled wail.

John flinches.

“For the bloody love of all that’s holy, woman—go away now,” Sherlock is hissing at Mary as he steps back from the field of battle at last, only his head poking furiously through the vibrating-on-its-hinges door he’s caught deftly on the rebound. “Stop with that stupid clingy nonsense!” He all but stamps a foot at her in angry revulsion. “John’s mine and you’re not having him, either, alright? And he’s busy at the moment, can’t you see? Reroute his damned remaining patients to that Blair bloke, won’t you? Hold all his calls, there’s a good girl! Good day.”

The door slams again, cutting in twain a last tiny squeak of shocked-to-the-core gasp. The lock snicks. John, with his eyes firmly shut against the shattered ruins of yet another romance-gone-foul vaguely hears the trundle-stomp-and-squeak of Sherlock’s feet across the tile. Hot breath on his cock is his only warning he’s been effectively pounced upon once more. His stomach tightens. He flexes: fight or flight instinct’s got him firmly in hand.

On the upside, his mobile has gone dead silent. There is no more knocking at his door, either. Effectively, the clinic as a whole has ceased to exist outside the bounds of this room.

“John.”

His cock—half-flagging due to all the confusing goings-on—is engulfed by the selfsame mouth that’s just effectively sent poor dear Mary scampering off, tail between her legs.

“My John.”

John sighs. Thanks his lucky stars Sarah owes him a thousand favours for covering her shifts when she was heavily pregnant with the twins; thanks his cross-tied garters Mary is ultimately a good girl, a sensible girl, a sweet girl and—most importantly—a very discreet girl.

Mary will also…probably…understand…one day. John hopes.

And braces himself against the desk as much as he’s able, because it’s coming straight at him, whatever Sherlock’s up to next. This is Sherlock the verb-form, obviously, and John is a practical
man. He can guess what’s brewing up in the disturbed air of his sanctum.

Sherlock’s throat, he notes absently, could rival a boa constrictor’s. He’s got John swallowed down to the root and he doesn’t appear to own any sort of gag reflex to speak of.

John gurgles. His mind is fast being wiped clean of any memory of the last two minutes, which can only be a good thing in the long view.

“Ga-gor-shusss,” Sherlock mumbles ‘round the head of John’s cock. “Want thisssh.” He sucks John down hard, very hard indeed. It is excusisely painful, the resulting pressure, and excellently well done. John’s hips thrust up like cannon shot; he flails a bit until he can grab hold of that bobbing dark head of hair.

“Ah-ah-hah-hah!”

The good doctor also manfully stifles an escaping scrap of a giggle. One shouldn’t giggle during passionate interludes—it isn’t done.

“Noow,” Sherlock proclaims, every evidence of profound satisfaction in that chocolate-scotch voice of his, as he pulls off John’s fully revived prick with a smacking-wet pop, “where were we?”
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Sentiment. Oh, god, yes.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 2,210 (this part); 28,300 (in total)


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“What’s that look for?” Sherlock segues quite easily from triumph to quick suspicion, and narrows his mercurial eyes at John in an examining manner. “What are you thinking?”

John fights his wobbly jaw, attempting to control it. There’s so much that would love to pour out and he cannot bring himself to say any of it. He flops a bit between the hands Sherlock’s laid to hold him steady and uses his equally wobbly elbows to gain some much needed perspective. Squinty-eyed detective stare meets furled sandy eyebrows over a clinician’s cool gaze; smacks headlong.

“Take your sodding gloves off,” is what he says, and mostly he is also extraordinarily calm under fire —those medals weren’t for nothing, cheers—and his hands where they shove at the desk are like stone slabs, they’re so steady. That is not, however, what he meant to say. He tries again: “And you’re in a bloody doctor’s office, for fuck’s sake, Sherlock. Go dig out a frigging condom and some lubricating jelly, will you? Because I’m not about to be bumbled by you without them.”

Sherlock frowns. “John?”

He swallows ever so slowly, pursing his lips, and John’s a bit fascinated with the motion in his throat. Such a pretty white throat it is, too.
“John, is this—this is?”

John is treated to a flatmate temporarily lost for words. Politically correct words, he fancies, because Sherlock always has plenty of other words at hand, so many they are at times offensively overwhelming.

He also swallows, cotton-tongued suddenly, as this next bit isn’t easy and he’d much rather just get on with the shagging, but they really should have the awkward awful crap out the way.

“Is this what you want or is this a stratagem?” he asks. He feels required, though he doesn’t buy into the idea for an instant. Rubs one hand absentmindedly down his cock whilst he pauses, where it’s still wet with Sherlock’s spit. “Do you…do you have feelings, Sherlock, or are you just—?”

All right. Maybe there is some validity to Sherlock’s being stuck in the same old, same old groove. The raft of resentment that’s lingered for months on end since Sherlock’s return threatens to swamp him.

But.

Again, he’s in the midst of a massive emotional turmoil and the medical man in him cautions him to proceed very slowly—take no chances, what? The thing that he had no intention of ever thinking of all the way through has indeed come to pass, right here and right now, and he is poised—they are poised; correction—on the verge of Something Very Big.

He has only ever seen Sherlock hesitate when he was perched on bloody St Bart’s rooftop like a bloody suicidal gargoyle. If this is Very Big in the Sherlock-world, as it is in the John-Zone, it will pay out all the odds to be exceeding careful.

Kid-glove careful. Accordingly, there’s not a single sign of anything not ‘fond-friendly’ visible on the doctor’s face.

“I’m not lying, John, if that’s what you’re asking me.” Sherlock still has the bollocks to look fleetingly wounded. “I would like—I want, very much—“

He stops and the mercurial frown of frustration that’s never far from his features when he’s dealing with normal people returns in force.

“You tell me, alright? Since you’re the self-proclaimed expert, you can bloody well tell me!”

He steps back, shuffling. John realizes again the utter ridiculousness of their situation and cannot quite manage to suppress a ready grin. Poor chap is still hampered by his shoes and trousers; John has to snigger a bit over that.

“What? Are you hoping I’ll fall flat on my face, then?”

“No—no, Sherlock, you idi—“

“Or what, then? That I’ll confess to sentiment, John? Is that what you’ve been waiting for? You remind me of the damned spider, John, you know? When I thought you were Moriarty that one evening, that evening at the pool, remember it? It was all I could not to shoot you—no, to kill you, with my own bare hands. I hated you so—I could not believe you, of all—”

Lost boy, John thinks, lunging forward. My—Sherlock!

“Look, you raging twat! It was nothing like that!” he shouts, instead of pointless cooing, and he’s
almost mindless all at once with the tipsy-turtle emotions of recalled fear and loathing and the current
and overwhelming desire to simply shut this whole horrid line of questioning right down, douse it
completely for fear it’ll derail them, also completely. But…he doesn’t. Questions are meant to be
answered; he owes Sherlock that. “How dare you—I mean, how, Sherlock? You know me better —
you know me so well.”

“To know you,” Sherlock states determinedly, categorically, stripping black calf leather off his long
fingers one by one, in sequence, “is to love you—yes, yes, I do know; cheers, John. Hence Mary.
Hence…the others. The ones I don’t have personal recollections of, having been forced to fake my
own bloody death!”

“But, but,” John stammers, “I don’t hold that against you. You know I don’t, mate.”

“No…maybe not,” Sherlock licks his lips consideringly and drops his discarded gloves on the floor.
A few chart pages down below ruffle quietly, but mostly all of either of them can hear is the pound-
pound-pound of rushing blood in veins, throbbing for a variety of reasons, and the curiously careful
tones of each other’s voices. “Maybe you don’t think so, John, but I’ve been watching you, all along,
and I think you do, really. You must. Stands to reason.”

“Sherlock,” John has had quite enough. “Sherlock.”

His instinct is correct; this will go nowhere, and fast. He still has a hard-on. So does his flatmate.
And his flatmate, as always, is missing the one crucial point of all John’s myriad actions by a very
wide mile: the crux.

“Sherlock, will you just trot on over to that cart over there, see it? Marked ‘Family Planning
Supplies’, that’s it. And reach in and bring me over the stuff. Time is wasting, you know? And
there’s only so long Sarah can stall them all off—she’s in a right gittish mood today. We haven’t very
long.”

Sherlock—wonder of all wonders—does.

“Here,” he says brusquely, dropping packets in excess on John’s belly. “How much prep d’you think
you need? Three fingers worth?”

“Well, shit, yes, Sherlock!” John exclaims roundly, shrugging faintly to knock the sharp-edged
 corners off his sensitive skin. “It’s been ages! Now—go to it, yeah? Put that on you—slick me up.”

“Fine!” his loon of a lover snaps disagreeably. “I will, then.”

“Good,” John growls, “because this is painful, I’ll have you know, the waiting, and I’m a bit ticked
off with you, coming here.”

“If I hadn’t,” Sherlock slops an enormous amount of clear slime all over one hand and uses the other
to convey a sterile sheath foil to his snippy mouth, “you’d have gone off with your damned
girlfriend. I, at least, know all about—“

He rips the packet edge with his teeth and shakes away the foil, spitting and lisping.

“Yes, go on? Genius.”

“I knowth-thw-thwip. Pah!”

John’s eyes widen a bit as Sherlock handily applies aheath to cock whilst busily reaching out and
under with the smeared fingers and groping enthusiastically at John’s flinching arsehole. Such
“You!” the detective finishes up, grinning nastily at John, just as grimly as the bloody restored to pride-of-place skull does, and all the while poking away at John’s hole with some seriously musically-inclined finesse. “Know you through and through, irritating little prick you are. Dullard and dim as you may be, you’re easy enough to sort out.”

“Thanks for that,” John is instantly more at ease; it’s as if the act of prepping for a shagging he really never truly anticipated is as effectively relaxing as he knows the astounding afterglow will be. Which instantly starts the bare for a spot of much-deserved teasing. Sherlock does so deserve every jot John can dish out. “But totally untrue, liar. Don’t even thin-ka-ka—oh! Yes, that’s it—you have a bloody clue, mate—okay, okay, a little deeper—yes! Go! B-Because you haven’t or you’d never have even asked me wha-wah! Whoa, Sherlock, ease up a little! Not nice!”

“How sorry,” his flatmate mumbles, blushing and bending his endlessly long white spine into the task, coming so close to John’s quivery flesh with his lips that he slyly sneaks a lick across one of John’s parted thighs. And another. Which is absolutely fine, really. “That—is that too much? John?”

“No! No…and don’t you dare stop! I’m warning you, Sherlock.”

“I shan’t.”

John smiles, chuffed. He rubs a roughly fond hand through Sherlock’s sweaty curls where they dangle and has the further temerity to pet the man.

“Good, because I’m saying this once and once only—argh! But not if you stick your whole damned hand in, Sherlock! Ages—it’s been ages, I said! Sheesh, have a little care for an old man.”

“Not old, John.” Two fingers finally quirk curiously into their ultimate goal, prodding. “Neither of us are exactly wet behind the ears, either, but never old. You do have a remarkably puerile way of think —“

John laughs aloud. “Oh, just shut your silly gob, Sherlock,” he giggles—and it ends on a very pleased hiss as Sherlock shows off, just a bit, twirling and twisting three fingers, buried past the second knuckle. “Urrrrr-ahhh!”

“—ing,” Sherlock continues peaceably, “which I, in turn, must find incredibly soothing or something, as I cannot seem to not want to speak—“

John’s prostate is suddenly a very happy organ, ta ever so, and expresses its newly pleased state by sending a set of rolling shivers through John’s twitching limbs. Also a wave of what feels like raw electricity, as his vision goes all black velvet wonky and Sherlock’s nattering is gone fuzzy at the edges.

“—to you, often, and will, John, will want to, I daresay, daily, so—“

“Now!” the doctor barks, falling off his propping hands and forearms abruptly. “Now is good, Sherlock—try now, sod it!”

It’s a little weird and eerie, but John could swear the bland boring wooden of the door goes all violet—pansy violet dark—and scarlet in colour, and perhaps it takes on the look of something out of a harem. He smells his flatmate; he smells salt and perspiration, the hint of tears and saliva and the bland clinical non-smell of latex and lube. He feels marvellous; nothing hurts unless it’s a really awesome sort of hurting, and he’s ever so ready to be invaded.
“Oh, please, please, now—ugh!”

He knows he can count on his utterly impossibly intelligent detective friend to sense that, yes. Or even deduce it. Yes, the latter is more like….

“Ah—ah-hahhah! Sherlock!”

“Yes, John, oh, John, my John,” Sherlock chants, rising up and thrusting in past his own retreating fingers all in one amazingly languidly long-lasting motion. “John, John, John, I want this—want you—oh, can’t you just say it? For me, John—what—what is?”

“It’s—it’s!” John gulps, swallows, rocks into penetration, and his eyes are wide open, locked on desperate pale ones tainted green as grass, blue as sky and clear as pure water. *Fascinating effect,* he thinks, with the itty-bitty bits of him still thinking. *Just look at those pupils!* “It’s like thi-thi-ISSS!”

“John!”

“II!” John moans, “I—I—I am like her—Her, that woman. Ohgawd, ohfuck!”

“More?” Sherlock pants frantically, pumps frantically. “Say you want more, John.”

“Of course—I want—more!”

“I’m giving it to you, John, I am, I’m giving it, all I can give—“

Oh, but those eyes.

So, so…very.

John has no words within him to describe them but the one: ‘Sherlock’

“Like—I like you, god-shagging-damn it,” and John has no clear idea of what’s spilling out of him, just this moment, only that Sherlock needs to hear it—it’s the one thing his friend cannot deduce.

There is always, always the ‘something’. For Sherlock there’s a great many *somethings* and paradoxically there’s also very few.

“I love you,” John whimpers, forcing sound into sense, “don’t you see? So—so simple, it is.”

“—wanted—wished for—“

“Yes, of course.”

“You never said—never inti—inti! Mated, Jo—John!”

People, John decides, should leave the bloody earnest confessions till after the sex. It would be so much more logical, what?

Because this is a stupendous fail, them talking, but he’s got the idea already.

“How—how was I to know?” Sherlock wails, ramming his cock into John’s liver. Or approximately there; it certainly feels like it.

John grunts empathetically; it’s all he can manage.

“Marys, marys, marys!” Sherlock snarls, each one a trigger to a shove-wriggle. “Bloody-bleeding-
sodding Marys everywhere I look, all ’round me! John—John?!”

“Er—ulp?”

“Is it good? D’you like it?”

John rolls his eyes at his partner. How can it not be good—it’s Sherlock!

“Wank-wanker!” he snorts, nodding. Bangs his head; bloody desk! “Shut—hrrrngh….”

“Yes, I thought,” Sherlock drawls—or tries it on, as if he is capable of drawling, which he surely is not—“that the angle of traj—ect—fucking-fuck me.”

With a mutual look of complete agreement, they give the hell up. It’s a sad, bad show, that, talking whilst shagging. No good will come of it. Shagging first and foremost; chatting after.

Er. Maybe.
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Sherlock-the-walrus.

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 280 (this part); 28,300 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 7/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 11/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 12/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 13/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 14/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 15/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 16/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 17/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 18/?)

(*)(*)

“Ja-Ja—hon-hon-hawnnn…ye-arggg-hah!”

Geniuses made absolutely no good sense when ejaculating. They proved refreshingly normal.

John would be sure to fire off a missive to the Lancet with his medical findings, soon as he had a free moment, yes.

“Ohffffwah-fuh-fuh! Fuck-shit-yeah!” John is normal, thanks. And blazingly brilliant, in every cell. Every one. All over.

Oh. God. Yes.

“…so much of me….” Sherlock’s mumbles, sometime later, in the foggy distance. “….you are always, always….John…John.”

“Hmm?”
“John,” he yawns. “John.”

John smiles vaguely at nothing much in particular when he feels his abused neck being mouthed.

“Always,” he rumbles, and the weight of a slack consulting detective’s reassuring, and the room’s ever so white-white-on white, and they’ve painted it all manner of sex shades, he and Sherlock; it makes it all so real, so real—purple, scarlet and shouting of life—life. “Always…and…and ever.”

He has no real idea what he’s saying and it’s clearly all nonsense and doesn’t matter. It maybe never mattered, the words, the answer. It was that each one was there, to make the sounds, to create the sounds of life. For each other.

“Gnnngmmph.”

Sherlock snorlles with contentment, making himself more comfortable on his John-bed, in his John-life, and John’s got no major issue with being squashed flat. He must be smitten because normally he would, rather.

This is Sherlock-the-walrus, then.

“Oof!” he says, to be smart. He pokes fitfully. “Get off!”

Sherlock pinches his waist and makes no move to do so; they go on as they mean to go on, these two.

“Oh…now, really.”

It’s an answer, of sorts, that is. A beginning, at least.

“Wanker.”

He’ll have time, he knows, to get ‘round to the rest.
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

The answer to this riddle is, of course, 'Sherlock'.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

BBCSH ‘Strange Bedfellows’

Author: tigersilver

Pairing: Sherlock/John

Rating: NC-17

Word Count: 400 (this part); 28,300 (in total)

Summary/Warnings: WIP. The burning question is the same as it ever was: what does John require of Sherlock? Start with Part One. (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 2/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 3/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 4/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 5/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 6/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 7/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 8/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 9/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 10/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 11/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 12/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 13/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 14/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 15/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 16/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 17/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 18/?) (BBCSH 'Strange Bedfellows' Part 19/20);

(*)*(*)

Text received from Lestrade, to Sherlock Holmes; 13:28: Not a murder, after all. Accident. Bloody freak of an accident. Can’t even charge the accessories. Bit of a cock-up all around. Stand down Sherlock. Not that you didn’t bloody the hell stand ME up. Prat.

Text sent from Sherlock Holmes to Lestrade; 14:14: I know. Knew it all along. Bloody Mary, is it? Knew the fat git give you it, the particulars. Don’t waste my time again, Greg. And give the fat git my best regards. And love to Mummy. SH

Text from Lestrade to Sherlock Holmes; 14:14: Sod the fuck off.

Text sent from John Watson to Sherlock Holmes and Gregory Lestrade; 14:14: Girls, girls.

Text from Mycroft Holmes to John Watson; 14:28: Kindly do not inform my sibling of the diet regimen you’ve given me. It has been successful, thus far. I wish to relish his shocked expression, actually, and that reminds me: Mummy wishes to host the both of you for tea, Sunday @ 3, at home. Supper after en famille; stay the night. No regrets accepted. Prepare for the very worst.
Text from John Watson to Mycroft Holmes; 14:30: *Thanks. For not a lot. Jesus, Greg. Get some sleep.*

Text from Sarah to John; 14:40: *You owe the clinic a new desk, John. That cannot be sterilized. I hate you.*

Text from John to Sarah; 14:47: *Too right. Cheers. Half a day today, love. Off, out.*

Text from Sarah to John; 14:48: *I do hate you.*

Text from Sherlock Holmes to Sarah Sawyer; 14:49: *No. You don’t. And stay well back. And your female staff, too.*

Text from Stanley Aethelthwaite to Percival Whirring; 15:05: *Odd ducks, the lot of them. We are well shot of them all. There’s a full spa bath in here, did you know? All the jets on now. Bubbles galore. Join me.*

Text from Whirring to Aethelthwaite; 15:06: *Coming!!!!*

Text from John Watson to Greg Lestrade; 15:27: *Is it possible for us to kidnap each other? Before the weekend? Take a leaf from your git’s book.*

Text from Judith Ponsonby to Mary Morstan; 16:10: *Come on, old girl, buy you a pint to sob into. KK? Fuck this life.*

Text from Mary to Judith; 16:12: *Fuck this life, you are on, bring it.*


(*)*(*)

Chapter End Notes

This is where I apologize for everything I’ve not done correctly: the lack of beta, the strange use of language, the possible offense to people named Stanley, and my taking liberties with the trufax of quarrying apparatus.

For the record, Pevans was a quite curious cat in the manner of some enthusiastic scholars and satisfaction trimmed his whiskers profoundly whilst he was trespassing all over a privately owned quarry, searching out samples of the Purbeck marble. Overexcited and under stress, he dropped stone dead in the lap of ‘Bloody Mary’, a device used to shape marble blocks for building. His collapse brushed the lever and the machine did its job: that is, tap and slice. Stanley, foreman-cum-tour guide, coming across this debacle very early in the morning, hosed off the resultant bits and blood, kindly redressed Pevans in the formal kit he had in his boot, hauled his remains off to a safe place he knew, suitable for stashing, and thoughtfully dumped the body way up high, third floor, abandoned house, to keep off the curious local young lads and lasses, for safety's sake. Later, when the stone dust had settled, he and his (ahem) boss and longtime companion Whirring concluded it was a better idea to inform the police of this chain of events.

Ergo, there was no real crime and there was never a murder; Mr Pevans is a well-learnt klutz I made up solely of whole cloth, and this is absolutely not a case fic.
For the record, Judith has been carrying the torch for Mary for quite a long time now. By implication, there are any number of 'Strange Bedfellows' in this fic. I do hope you enjoyed it despite all that. Cheers!

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