Babylon II

by Rehfan

Summary

Sherlock has been badly scarred. He asked to be. John didn't know. How long can Sherlock hide it from him before the shit hits the fan?

The final chapter in the White Ladder series.

The arc of a relationship. Two people who are meant to be with one another will always find one another.

Notes

This is a Sherlock Johnlock fanfic that is based on the music of David Gray's album, White Ladder. Each chapter is named after each track in sequence and is headed with a quote from that particular song.

The album was released in 1999, but it's one of my favorite albums and it is available for download on iTunes. Please download it. You won't regret it.

Part Eleven's song is a slight remix of the second track on the album, hence the title: Babylon II.

It can be found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmK-YWSJ8Eg
"Saturday, I'm running wild
And all the lights are changing red to green.
Moving through the crowds I'm pushing
Chemicals all rushing in my bloodstream."

The cab pulled up before the door to 221B Baker Street and John got nervous. All those cab rides he had taken here in the past had never put him on edge, but today the butterflies in his stomach were dancing a tango. Was Sherlock even at home? Lestrade said he would be.

The cabbie cleared his throat and glanced over his shoulder at his fare. John caught his eye and his cheeks reddened. Why was he so damn nervous? He shouldn’t be. This should be as natural as breathing. But he hadn’t lived here for eight months.

He paid the fare and got out of the cab. Summer was still in London, but today’s weather brought an unexpected chill. John shivered.

He stood on the sidewalk for a few minutes just looking at the building he had called home for so many years. Funny to be contemplating coming back. It should feel like a step backward and it didn’t. It felt like… coming home. Finally coming home.

John smiled to himself as strangers passed him giving him odd looks. Strange to see a man staring at a building with a dopey grin on his face. Must be a nutter. And maybe he was. Maybe this was the most insane thing he had ever done. And John had done a lot of insane things: rooftop chases, jumping into fountains in February, shooting psychotic cabbies, saving girls from gigantic crossbows, wearing a vest made of Semtex a madman had strapped to him, chasing after a mythical dog in the woods, and helping best a dominatrix. All of this done for, with, and in the name of Sherlock Holmes. John’s grin widened into a smile.

Sherlock bloody Holmes. The name alone brought a smile to his face and a thrill to his heart. Oh, to see that face again, to hear his voice. John wondered if Sherlock had been eating properly then decided that he didn’t care. John would take care of him. Sherlock was his again…Wait.

Well… he wasn’t, was he? John’s smile faltered.

Sherlock had kicked him out of his heart. John had left to live with Mary. Sherlock had got on alright without him. After all, Mary and Greg were right: he was a grown man. Sherlock could make his own decisions.

But the decision Sherlock made (almost a year ago… Jesus, has it been that long?) was a unilateral one made without John’s input. John was so shocked and hurt that he couldn’t argue with Sherlock about it. He just tried to carry on.

And yet… the heart wants what the heart wants.

John squared his shoulders, preparing for the onslaught of Sherlock’s sharp tongue. He would be raked over the coals for his failed relationship with Mary. John only hoped that the detective wouldn’t read the fact that it was because he called out Sherlock’s name during sex. That would be mortifying.
He opened the street door with his key. Sherlock never asked for it back. Mrs. Hudson either. Sherlock knew that he’d still be helping with his cases, even though he was no longer living there. John supposed Mrs. Hudson’s reason for not asking for it back was that she was just a hopeless romantic.

Nothing had changed in the foyer, but then, why would it? He hadn’t been off to Afghanistan for a three year tour; he had only been here two weeks ago. Still, John couldn’t help but note the details: worn but well-kept carpet, scratches along the wallpaper from when those Americans bust ed in, and the creak of that one step. John looked up the stairwell toward the door above. It was out of his line of sight, but he got chills just the same. Was that a violin he heard?

The cane caused him to take his time, each of the seventeen steps a small agony. Sherlock knew when they met that the limp was psychosomatic. His limp disappeared that same day. All thanks to Sherlock for that. John wanted to give the cane up again. He wanted to have his life back again. But once again it was all down to Sherlock.

Sherlock, please…

As he reached the landing, John could feel his heart beating fast in his ears. His head was swimming. He opened the door to the sitting room and his heart skipped a beat.

Sherlock had his back to John, his violin perched on his shoulder, bow at the ready but not touching the strings.

“John”

John briefly closed his eyes at the sound of his name. Sherlock didn’t turn. He waited.

“Sherlock,” John replied as even-toned as he could. He realized that his knees were shaking.

“I hear you have a room to let,” John said with a false casual tone. John looked about the room. It was tidier than he expected. Not picture perfect, but extremely well kept considering it was Sherlock living there. It suddenly hit John that Sherlock was expecting him. And that Sherlock wanted to make a good impression. But why? To prove that he could care for himself properly without John? Most likely.

John frowned and took a seat in his old chair by the fireplace without invitation. Now it was his turn to wait.

~080~

The violin offered some distraction as he waited for John to arrive. Sherlock knew it would be any day now. He didn’t need to call Lestrade to confirm anything. Sure enough, there was a taxi with John (my John) getting out of it. John stood on the sidewalk and looked up.

Sudden panic hit Sherlock and he stepped away from the window. Why did I do that? I don’t want John to see me. Why? He searched his heart for the answer, but he was unused to the attempt. Sherlock shook his head in frustration. This was not going to be easy.

He put bow to strings and sounded out a few sweet notes before hearing the creak of the stair below. John was coming home. Sherlock’s heart swelled with joy… and yet his heart was in his throat all at the same time. Happiness and… what? Trepidation? Nonsense. He had nothing to fear. John was his free and clear. He and Mary were over. She had no claim on him. So why be afraid?

The scars. John could never see the scars. Sherlock thought about all those white and red lines across his backside. He blushed with shame.

The door creaked a bit and Sherlock clearly heard the step of his long lost love.

“John,” said Sherlock, trying to keep his voice from breaking. The effort of containing his joy was almost too much. He wanted to throw down the violin and embrace his precious John. But how would John take that? Would he be shocked? The last time he was here Sherlock was a bit unpleasant to him. It would confuse John. Sherlock decided that aloof was best.

“Sherlock,” said the familiar voice. Sherlock didn’t turn around. He merely shut his eyes at the sound of John’s voice.

“I hear you have a room to let,” said John. Sherlock could hear the faked jocularity in his voice. So, John was nervous too. He was afraid that Sherlock would be cruel to him again. Obvious. Well then, best not to be.

~080~

John sat in his old chair and watched Sherlock carefully, bracing himself against any arguments. He didn’t want to fight today. He wanted this to be civil.

Sherlock finally turned and John saw what he feared. Sherlock had lost weight in two weeks. His face was more angular than usual and his skin looked drawn, his face a bit haggard. No sleep then either. Terrific.

“Are you asking to move back to Baker Street, John?” Sherlock asked. He tried to maintain that mask of uncaring expressionless ennui, but even he could feel that he was failing at it.

John watched Sherlock carefully as he lay down his violin and sat in the chair opposite. “I am,” John said. “But I expect that you knew that already.” He paused, pursing his lips, evaluating the detective. Finally he said, “That is, if you’ll have me.”

Oh God, John… I’ll have you. I’ll have you in any way you let me.

The errant thought made Sherlock’s cock twitch. Calm yourself, Sherlock. John can never see you naked again, remember? This is not something you need to encourage. Stop it.

“Of course you’re welcome to move back,” said Sherlock amiably, mustering all his efforts to be as accommodating as possible. “I’ve not used your room for anything in particular. I even had it repainted.”

As soon as the statement was out of his mouth, Sherlock felt a twinge of guilt. He had intended for John’s bedroom to be converted into a lab as it was when they were sharing Sherlock’s bed, but he just couldn’t bear with the idea. Mrs. Hudson had already arranged for it to be painted, so he let that go. Sherlock just never bothered to move the bedroom furniture out. The truth was he didn’t
want anyone but John in that room. After a few months, it became a sort of moratorium to what they had had. Sherlock avoided it like the plague. If you had paid Sherlock a million pounds, he doubted that he could even reach the top landing without breaking down completely.

But today was different. If John was truly moving back, Sherlock would fly up those stairs in an instant, his long legs skipping every third stair easily; all because John would be at the top of those stairs. That’s all Sherlock needed.

“Repainted?” said John, a bit shocked. “What did you explode in there?” Sherlock opened his mouth in protest and John held up a hand, “Never mind. I don’t want to know. But it is alright, isn’t it? No gigantic mutant mold spores wandering about or anything?”

Sherlock huffed in protest. “Alright,” said John. “If the room’s in good shape, and on offer, I’ll take it.”

“Excellent,” said Sherlock, holding back his exuberance with all the will power he could muster. “How soon would you be moving in?”

“Soonest,” said John. “I really didn’t unpack much at Greg’s and well… There’s really no room for me long-term there what with his kids visiting every other weekend and all.”

“Fine… fine…,” said Sherlock absently, not caring about the details of Lestrade’s offspring. “I’ll call a mover. They’ll have you out of there in a matter of hours.”

“Sherlock,” John protested. “There’s really no need—“

Sherlock held up a hand and waved it in a dismissive gesture. “Nonsense, John. It’s no trouble. Besides, it took you weeks to move out of here. It’ll take you weeks to move back in properly. And what with your leg and all…” Sherlock’s gaze drifted down to John’s bad leg.

“Fine,” said John. It was practical to hire movers. John was surprised that Sherlock didn’t hire movers when John said he was leaving to live with Mary. His bad leg twinged at the thought. No. This was a step in the right direction. Sherlock was willing to have him back. John was more than willing to be back. There was hope here. Things might just work out.

~080~

John kept reminding himself that things with Sherlock would take time. It had only been a month since he moved back. Things were falling back into place as they were before. John's love for Sherlock was mellowing and that was okay. It was enough to be around to help him.

He stood at on the edge of the crime scene and waited for Sherlock to signal to him that his services were needed. The murder of a child (the second child in a string of horrible kidnappings and murders) had all the Yarders on edge. Greg Lestrade walked over to John and placed a hand on his shoulder.

“Kids,” he said solemnly. “They’re the toughest to deal with.”

“Yeah,” agreed John softly, his eyes never leaving Sherlock. It wasn’t because he had a sexual fantasy going on, it’s just that the rest of the room was too completely horrible to look at. Sherlock was a perfect distraction in this hell. “Have you informed the parents?”
“They’re on their way to the morgue to identify her,” said Greg. After a pause he added: “Thanks for going back to Baker Street. He’s been better. We can all tell.”

“Sure,” said John absently. “No problem.”

“Really?” asked Greg incredulously. “No problems whatsoever?”

“Hmm?” said John. “Oh… well. Not NO problems. Just a few hiccoughs. I had to set the rules back up for what’s acceptable in the fridge and what isn’t. And for him to not borrow my things without asking.” Greg did his best to suppress a smile. “And there’s always the whole thing about him practically dragging me out of bed at night so he can play me some violin music or walk me through some thoughts he’s having about these crimes. That one had to be nipped in the bud early this morning, actually.”

“Explains the dark circles under your eyes,” Greg said.

“Yeah,” John said as he tried unsuccessfully to stop a yawn. “We’re getting back to our old routines. It’s slow going, but we’ll get there.”

“Well… all I know is that he seems genuinely chuffed to have you back. It shows. So… er, thanks,” said Greg.

“As I said,” said John. “No problem.”

~080~

“Where the hell is Lestrade?” said Sherlock impatiently.

“He’ll be here,” said John. “Just sit tight.” John was trying desperately to get Sherlock to calm himself. The conclusion of the case, the solution to all these horrific murders, was inside the building in front of them. Two more children were kidnapped. Sherlock was sure they were inside the abandoned steel factory along with the murderer.

The property was still privately owned and Lestrade was obtaining the warrants to break in. Once in hand, Lestrade and his men could move forward, but Sherlock knew that Lestrade knew that if he rang up Sherlock now, the detective would go racing into the building without any back up.

Sherlock was also aware that this Gifford guy was dangerous. Five children murdered in as many months and now he’s taken two more. He was escalating. Desperate. This was not a man to be trifled with. And there were two young lives in the balance tonight. Sherlock fairly itched at the waiting Lestrade was intentionally making him do. He began to pace. John watched helplessly until he had had enough.

John blocked Sherlock’s way and held him by the shoulders. “Stop,” he commanded. Sherlock’s eyes went wide. This was the first time John had touched him in the four months they had been living together. It felt so good to be held by John in any way.

Something in his eyes must have given Sherlock away because John immediately let go and took a step back. “Look,” John began. “Greg will be here in the next ten minutes. You know that. I know that. We also know that that madman has those two kids in there, but we also know that right now – right this split second – they are not in immediate harm. They are tied up upstairs, perhaps
they’re injured, unconscious, but most likely alive, and the killer is right there,” John pointed at a first floor window. The face of the killer was lit by a bright gooseneck lamp. He seemed to be sewing a ragdoll together. Each child was found with a ragdoll at their sides. The killer lowered his head in concentration over his task. Everything had to be just so with him. John’s stomach twisted at the sight of the monster.

“He’s not going anywhere as he’s two dolls to make tonight. We have the time,” said John.

John’s reasoning was sound. Sherlock took a breath. He just wanted to see the criminal behind bars. Even though he was not known to have a fondness for children, Sherlock knew that every child deserved a happy childhood. He also knew that this bastard had been ahead of them for a while now and it rankled to be bested by a man who stuck his tongue out in concentration as he sewed button eyes onto ragdolls. Oh, but that would end tonight and gloriously. Sherlock couldn’t wait for Lestrade’s men to get here.

His mobile rang. A text. From Lestrade. Sherlock looked down the row of buildings to the corner indicated in the text. He raised his hand cautiously, trying not to alert Gifford to their presence. He saw Lestrade’s signal back. John pulled out his Browning. Sherlock looked at John. John held his glance and nodded once. All was ready.

Lestrade’s men went up first, followed by the armed army doctor and Sherlock. Gifford was taken without so much as a whimper. John searched the building for the stairs that led to where the children were on the upper floor.

“Up here!” John yelled down to the police below. “They’re up here. Alive!”

Sherlock walked through the door and stood to the side as he watched John hugging Brittany Swanson. The little girl was filthy head to toe, but she was alive. John smiled at her and introduced her to a female sergeant who took her by the hand and led her downstairs to the waiting ambulance. Michael Swanson was dirty too, but happy to be found. Older than his sister by two years, he understood more about what was happening and was grateful to see the police. John scruffed his hair fondly, giving him a lopsided grin which the boy returned. He was exhausted, but he and his sister would be alright.

John watched the boy leave with another sergeant, the same smile plastered onto his face. He caught Sherlock’s eye and his grin spread to a smile. Sherlock smiled back. The room was empty now. The two men just stood there, smiling.

“Let’s go home,” John said finally.

“Yes, John,” said Sherlock. “Let’s.”

Outside the building the entire world was there: police, ambulance, firefighters, and the press; all assembled to witness the capture and arrest of Charles W. Gifford, kidnapper, child molester, and murderer. He was a man who would not scruple to strike defenseless children, raping and beating them to a bloody pulp, only to lay out their bodies ceremoniously, placing a ragdoll in their arms as if they were just sleeping. He was a man of no moral fibre. He was sick and twisted. And he was also a man built strong as an ox.
Sherlock and John were proud to have the press take their picture as they exited the scene. They were all smiles. This is what it was all about: capturing a dangerous criminal before he could claim another victim. The feeling was heady. Finally, they turned from the press line and disappeared from view among the flashing blue lights.

The two men exchanged glances as they walked away. There were no words needed. Each knew the other’s thoughts. They had exchanged the same looks months before and it had always meant the same thing: You were wonderful. I love you.

There was a stirring of the crowd behind them. They both assumed it was the press coming in with their questions. There was shouting and a bit of commotion, but the two were so wrapped up in each other that they failed to notice that Gifford was racing toward them.

“Stop that bastard!” shouted Lestrade. “Sherlock! John! GUN!”

Sherlock and John turned at the sound of Lestrade’s voice.

That’s when they heard the gunshot.

John pulled focus on Gifford who had been tackled to the ground by four policemen in riot gear. The gun in his hand was still pointing in John’s and Sherlock’s direction and instinctively, John put out his hand to pull Sherlock down and away from the gun’s path.

But Sherlock wasn’t there to grab.

John looked over at where his best friend should be. Sherlock was on the ground clutching his side, his eyes as wide as saucers.

Falling to his knees, John instinctively placed his hands over Sherlock’s and pressed in. Blood was everywhere. Sherlock groaned in pain and John’s panic rose. “I need a medic here! Someone help! Man down! Medic! Medic!”
Hanging By a Thread

Chapter Summary

Sherlock has been badly scarred. He asked to be. John didn't know. How long can Sherlock hide it from him before the shit hits the fan?

The final chapter in the White Ladder series.

The arc of a relationship. Two people who are meant to be with one another will always find one another.

Chapter Notes

This is a Sherlock Johnlock fanfic that is based on the music of David Gray's album, White Ladder. Each chapter is named after each track in sequence and is headed with a quote from that particular song.

The album was released in 1999, but it's one of my favorite albums and it is available for download on iTunes. Please download it. You won't regret it.

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"I only wish that you were here. You know I'm seeing it so clear, I've been afraid, to show you how I really feel, Admit to some of those bad mistakes I've made"

“It’s not fatal,” John said to Mycroft when he arrived at the hospital room. “It’s a bit more than a graze, but he’ll be fine. Gunshot wound to the right lower quadrant of the abdomen, through-and-through. The bullet nicked the small intestine, but they’ve sewn that up. Otherwise, no major organs affected. He’ll live.” John was telling Mycroft all this, but he wasn’t so sure he wasn’t trying to tell himself that Sherlock would be okay.

“Thank you, doctor,” said Mycroft. “Mummy will be pleased to hear that Sherlock will survive. We do worry about him so.”

“Yes,” said John, eyeing Mycroft warily, “as any family should.” He turned his gaze back to Sherlock. John said again to no one in particular: “He’ll be fine.”

The two men watched the man in the bed. Sherlock was sleeping peacefully under the sedative they had given him. Fresh from surgery, he had his side wrapped in gauze underneath his hospital
gown and John thought he looked almost angelic under the lowered lighting.

He will live, and so will I.

A doctor poked her head in the room. “Are you family?” she asked.

Mycroft gave John a look. John made to leave the room and Mycroft quickly put a hand on his arm. “We both are,” he said. John looked at him, stunned.

“Very good,” the doctor said. “I’m Dr. Candelish. I over-saw Mr. Holmes’s surgery. I believe there’s something I need to inform you of…” She gave them a concerned look.

“Not necessary,” said Mycroft. “It was something of a problem, but it’s been solved and it’s all in the past now.”

“Ah,” said Dr. Candelish looking greatly relieved. “So you know about the—“

“Yes, doctor,” said Mycroft with a thin smile. “We know all about it. No need for concern. We’re looking out for him now. Aren’t we, John?”

John gave Dr. Candelish a thin smile and nodded.

“You see?” said Mycroft smoothly. “Nothing to fear.” He gave her one of his most charming smiles. John thought it made him look positively reptilian.

Ah,” said Dr. Candelish. “That’s alright then. Just making sure. Thank you, gentlemen.” And with that, she departed.

“What was that about?” said John once the door had closed behind her.

“I expect they spotted Sherlock’s old track marks from his... darker days,” replied Mycroft. “They are duty-bound to report those things these days.”

“Oh,” said John satisfied. “That explains it. Yes... I should have thought of that.”

“Well...” said Mycroft. “You have had other things on your mind.” Mycroft gave John a sideways glance that John didn’t see as the two men stood vigil at the foot of the detective’s bed.

~080~

Even though John Watson was the only truly qualified health professional in the whole of the 221 Baker Street address, Sherlock stubbornly wanted to care for his own wounds.

“Why don’t you let me help you with the one on your back?” he said one day through the bathroom door. Sherlock had locked him out. Again.

“I am perfectly capable of reaching it myself, doctor,” replied a petulant Sherlock. “There really is no need.”

“I realize that there’s no need, Sherlock,” John said. “I was only trying to help. And in case you’ve forgotten, I do fix up people for a living.” There was no response from the other side of the door, but John could hear Sherlock grunting with the effort. He said: “Did it in the army as well, you
know. Lots of gunshot wounds in the army.” Another grunt.

Stubborn man. What the hell’s he thinking? He can’t see that wound. Not even in the bathroom mirror. It’s too high up. How is he managing? I bet you anything he’s gone and gotten it infected. Damn it, Sherlock.

“Let me in, goddamn it!” John was really angry now. He jiggled the handle of the door and banged on it. “Sherlock… please.”

The door swung open suddenly. A perfectly attired Sherlock stepped out and into John’s immediate personal space. Sherlock’s face was expressionless. “As you can see, doctor,” he said. “I’m fine.”

“Liar,” said John. Sherlock raised an eyebrow. “You always say that I’m to not just to see, I’m to observe, right?” Intrigued, Sherlock tilted his head slightly but said nothing. “Well….” John went on: “I observe that you have beads of sweat on your forehead. Sweat that is more than exertion. Your face is flushed and you’ve got sweat forming under this white dress shirt already. Even though I saw you slip it on just before you entered this bathroom, not twenty minutes ago. And presumably you’d have to remove it again in order to bandage yourself back up, so as you stand here, you haven’t been wearing it for very long at all.” Sherlock’s face held a lop-sided grin. Emboldened, John went on: “Now to my medical mind, the excessive sweat and the flushing coupled with the week-old gunshot wound you’ve suffered leads me to deduce that you have a fever due to infection.”

Sherlock raised his head and he frowned. “Interesting observations, John,” he said. John crossed his arms, pleased with himself. “Entirely incorrect, but interesting.”

Sherlock walked past a stunned John and sat in his chair in the sitting room. John walked up to his own chair, stood behind it and gripped the back. He was angry. “Do you mean to tell me,” he began. “That you don’t have a fever? That you know more about human anatomy and physiology than a licensed physician does?”

“Certainly not,” he said.

“At this moment,” Sherlock said coolly, “I believe I do.” He steepled his fingers, closed his eyes, and willed John to drop the subject. Ah, but John was like a bulldog with a bone.

“Like hell, Sherlock,” he said. “As a doctor, I can’t let this pass unexamined. As your friend, I can never let this pass. Take your shirt off.”

Sherlock’s eyes went wide open at this. “Certainly not,” he said.

“This is not up for debate, Sherlock,” said John, coming around the chair to stand before his friend. “Get up and take off your shirt, or I swear I’ll take it off you myself.”

“You will do no such thing,” said Sherlock. He gripped the arms of his chair, bracing himself against whatever John had in mind. Sherlock wasn’t sure that John wouldn’t risk popping his stitches to satisfy his own curiosity. No, not curiosity, this was concern.

John saw the rebellion in Sherlock’s eyes and wondered why he was being so damn stubborn. Was it pride? Or was it…? John decided to change his approach.

John placed his left knee between Sherlock’s thigh and the arm of his chair, leaned forward and kissed him soundly. It was a chaste kiss, but thorough, lasting for more than half a minute. At first, Sherlock was shocked and John could tell because of his response, but within seconds the detective melted into it. John kept it chaste even though he was tempted to take it much further. He cupped
Sherlock’s chin with his hand and moaned softly against his mouth. He felt Sherlock reach up and hold his side. His hand was so hot against his clothing. John wanted Sherlock so badly at that moment that he almost lost control and forgot why he kissed him in the first place.

John broke the kiss gently and stared into Sherlock’s eyes. “I love you, you daft git,” he said softly. “Please let me help you before you break my goddamned heart.”

Sherlock almost whimpered at John’s confession of love.

“And by the way,” John added as he leaned back and stood before Sherlock. “I was right. You do have a fever.”

Sherlock offered a weak smile and stood up. They were so close that it ached for them not to be touching. Sherlock looked at John for the longest moment. Finally he said: “I love you too, John Watson.” Sherlock saw something shift behind John’s eyes at this and the floodgates opened. Sherlock couldn’t help himself. It’s as if those six words were a lock that had been clicked open and all the feelings that his heart held came pouring out of him in that instant. “I love you so much, John. I’m so sorry for everything. I’ve done something. I’m not proud… I didn’t want to tell you… I’ve been so afraid… I love you so much.”


“No, no… Nothing like that… I just… I didn’t want you to see… I’m so sorry, John,” said Sherlock. He was practically sobbing and the sight made John very nervous. Sherlock’s hands were clenched into fists and John reached out and pried one open, placing Sherlock’s palm against his chest and holding it there with both of his.

“Take a breath, Sherlock,” said John. “It’s alright. Whatever it is, it’s alright.”

Sherlock’s fingers dug into John’s shirt. “No… no it’s not alright… It’s horrible… I don’t deserve you, John Watson. I’m not enough for you… You don’t need to be with a monster like me… Please, John… Please don’t hate me…,” sobbed Sherlock.

“I don’t hate you, Sherlock,” said John. He didn’t understand this at all. Sherlock wasn’t making any sense. “You’re not a monster. They’re stitches, they’ll heal. You’ll probably have a scar—“

At this, Sherlock wrapped his arms around John’s shoulders and buried his nose in his neck. For the first time in his whole life, Sherlock Holmes cried in front of another human being. His body shook with the sobs that came out of him, carrying with it a lifetime of restraint, control, and repressed emotions.

John reached up and held him close, now extremely confused as to what exactly was happening. All he did know was that Sherlock loved him back. And for now, that was enough.

John held Sherlock until all the major crying was done. Slowly, Sherlock allowed John to usher him to the sofa to sit. John made sure to sit on his good side so that Sherlock could lean easier into his chest. John carded his hand through Sherlock’s hair as he waited for his breathing to steady. As he waited, he closed his eyes and enjoyed the feel of Sherlock against him: the warmth from his feverish body, the pressure of Sherlock’s weight on him, the feel and smell of his hair that brushed his face, the feel of his hair and skin under his hands. It was wonderful. It was home.

Sherlock was stunned at himself. What just happened? He lay there in John’s arms, the pain in his side throbbing constantly, almost in time with John’s heartbeat. Sherlock closed his eyes and tried to concentrate on getting himself in control, but couldn’t. John was holding him. Everything would
be alright because his John was holding him. Sherlock snuggled deeper into John’s chest and sighed. Finally… finally… finally.

~080~

“Take these for the fever,” John said as he handed Sherlock some pills and a glass of water. Sherlock sat on his bed still fully clothed, but soaked with sweat from the fever. His fringe curls were plastered to his forehead and John brushed them away after Sherlock had his meds. John set the glass on the nightstand and knelt to take off Sherlock’s shoes.

“What are you doing?” said Sherlock.

“I’m getting you into bed,” said John as he set the shoes aside and beckoned Sherlock to stand with a crooked finger. “You’re in no shape to be walking about. You’re extremely feverish and if I can’t get it under control myself in the next day, you’re going back to the A&E for treatment. No arguments.”

“John,” said Sherlock. “I’m not… I don’t want you… please.” He didn’t get up. Sherlock just sat on the bed with a pathetic look on his face.

“Please, what, Sherlock?” said John. He was getting pretty annoyed with this run-around.

“Please don’t look at my wound,” Sherlock said weakly.

“Why shouldn’t I? You said you didn’t want me to see… what, exactly? Your stitches? I’ve seen worse, I’m sure,” said John with a small chuckle. Sherlock was being ridiculous.

“No… It’s not that… I just don’t want you,” said Sherlock.

John gave him an appraising look with pursed lips. “What’s going on, Sherlock? You don’t want me looking at your wound, but it’s not the wound that you mind me seeing. You also think you’re a monster for something you’ve done. And you broke down on me when I talked about scars… I’ve seen all your scars, Sherlock. I know them by heart, just as you know mine. I don’t mind them.”

Sherlock had no more words. He just looked at John with pathetic, pleading, crystalline eyes.

John held his gaze for a few quiet moments. Finally he whispered, “Trust me, Sherlock. I love you.”

Sherlock’s eyes never left John’s as he allowed the doctor to slowly unbutton his shirt and slip it off of his body. At first, John didn’t say anything. The gauze was a bit tilted on the anterior injury due to Sherlock’s bad perspective. Then John sat on the bed to get a view of the posterior wound.

John’s body went cold. He felt sick.

What the hell…? What the fucking hell…?

John looked up at Sherlock who was visibly shaking. He had never seen the detective so broken.

“Sherlock,” said John. Sherlock closed his eyes. Here would come the words that would be the beginning of the end for John and Sherlock, Sherlock was certain of it. He heard them in his head
before John ever spoke them: “Sherlock, what the hell… did you do?”

Sherlock opened his mouth, but nothing came out at first. On his second attempt he whispered hoarsely: “I’m so… so… sorry… Please…” His chest heaved as he held back another round of body-wracking sobs that welled up inside him.

John sat for a moment in shock. This is why Sherlock thought himself a monster undeserving of John. Why did he do this to himself? Who did this to him? What was it meant to accomplish?

So many questions reeled through John’s head. In the end, however, there was the man before him: a man who loved John. A man who was so desperate to… what? Punish himself? Why? Sherlock said that he didn’t deserve John. Would his despair drive him to injure himself?

John didn’t have the heart to ask Sherlock any of this. He simply sat silently and watched his best friend cower in the wake of John’s judgment. Sherlock didn’t even look John in the eye. He was that ashamed.

Well… If I’m going to hear this story, I’ll hear it all.

John had noticed that some of Sherlock’s scars and welts extended past his belt line. John stood up from the bed and walked part way across Sherlock’s room. He turned to face him and simply said: “Strip.”
Chapter Summary

Sherlock has been badly scarred. He asked to be. John didn't know. How long can Sherlock hide it from him before the shit hits the fan?

The final chapter in the White Ladder series.

The arc of a relationship. Two people who are meant to be with one another will always find one another.

Chapter Notes

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Thank you thank you THANK YOU to all my dedicated readers! Your wonderful comments were the motivation I needed to see this through! I really appreciate each and every one of you! And YES... I plan on writing more Johnlock! Stay tuned!

This is a Sherlock Johnlock fanfic that is based on the music of David Gray's album, White Ladder. Each chapter is named after each track in sequence and is headed with a quote from that particular song.

The album was released in 1999, but it's one of my favorite albums and it is available for download on iTunes. Please download it. You won't regret it.

Part Eleven's song is a slight remix of the second track on the album, hence the title: Babylon II.

ALSO: Quotes used are from the Brian Hooker translation of Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac"
It can be found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmK-YWSJ8Eg

“And if you want it, come and get it,
For crying out loud.
The love that I was giving you was never in doubt.
Let go of your heart, let go of your head,
And feel it now.”

Sherlock couldn’t breathe.

“Strip.”

The word hung in the air like the sword of Damocles.
Sherlock was standing before he knew what was happening. All he could do was look helplessly at John. He looked so angry. He was going to leave once he saw the scars… all those scars.

Sherlock unbuckled his belt, unfastened his trousers and brought trousers and pants to his ankles in one awkward motion. The wound in his side was arguing loudly against his movements.

John pointed a finger at the ground and moved it around slowly in a circle. Sherlock kicked out of his clothes, closed his eyes, and turned around.

At first there was silence. It was a deafening silence in which the sound of a pin dropping might have been heard.

Sherlock heard John step closer. Somehow, facing away from John, it was easier to explain about the marks on his body. Sherlock said, “It was a cat o’nine tails. I was trying to—“


John hung his head in defeat. He brought his hand to his mouth and began to sob silently.

Suddenly, he stopped. This is not what Sherlock needed. What he needed was to know that John still loved him, despite his obvious… insanity. But did he? Could John love a man who could allow something like this to happen to him?

John had borne witness to a multitude of man’s atrocities in war, disfigurements among them. But this? This was a breed onto itself. This was not Sherlock being tortured for information. This was Sherlock being tortured because he asked to be. He wanted this for himself. It was unthinkable. It was unbelievable. That this beautiful man with that beautiful mind could allow…


John knelt before Sherlock and peered closely at one scar on his left thigh. It was one of the longer more prominent ones and looked older than some of the others.

Gingerly, he kissed it.

Sherlock’s eyes flew open wide at the gentle touch. At first, he couldn’t identify how John was touching him. That wasn’t a hand or a fingertip tracing along that scar… it was… oh, dear God. Sherlock closed his eyes and wept silently. He was being forgiven.

John trailed light, gentle, tender kisses all along the scar, from the outside of his knee where it tapered to a fine point, to the inside of his thigh where it was thicker, more prominent. Someone – obviously right-handed – had administered the strike, he thought absently.

He then chose another on his other thigh and kissed along its length. And then another… and another… John covered each and every scar with a kiss, sealing it closed; healing its mark, showing the man that bore them that John loved him beyond his flesh.

Finally, John stood behind Sherlock, the last scar blessed with a kiss, and held him close, wrapping his arms about Sherlock’s shoulders and leaning his face against Sherlock’s torn back.

Sherlock was beyond tears now. At first, he sobbed quietly, but soon calmed under the gentle ministrations of his John. John’s hands had moved across his body gently, soothingly, making all those wounds go away in an instant. Soon there was nothing in the room but Sherlock’s sensation of where his John was. And just like that, Sherlock’s heart was healed.
Sherlock lay in his bed and allowed John to inspect his wound.

“The infection doesn’t look too wide-spread. I think with meds for pain and a good night’s sleep, you should be able to function tomorrow,” said John.

“Good,” said Sherlock.

“Well enough, of course, to go back to the A&E for a proper checkup,” said John as he re-taped the wound’s dressings.

Sherlock groaned.

“None of that,” said John. “You’re going and no mistake. OTC meds for pain are one thing, getting proper meds to fight infections are necessary at this stage. You could get worse. And I’m not letting the man I love die of septicemia. And that’s an end to it.”

John got up from the bed and patted Sherlock on the back. “Sit up,” he said. “I need to wrap some gauze around you so you don’t lose your wound dressings in the middle of your sleep.”

Sherlock felt like he could sleep for a million years. John’s forgiveness of his six-month lapse in judgment was like water to the deserts. John knelt before him with a new package of the gauze roll. He wrapped the gauze around Sherlock’s torso securely with an expert hand.

Sherlock watched him work. Absently he realized that he was stark naked with John kneeling between his thighs. John didn’t seem to notice. Sherlock felt his cock twitch and fill. He closed his eyes and tried to will it not to happen. He didn’t want to ruin this moment with base urges. He wasn’t crude like that.

John finished his work and looked up at Sherlock. “I love you,” he said.

Sherlock smiled. “I love you too.”

John lowered his head and took Sherlock’s cock in his mouth. Just like that.

Sherlock tilted his head back with the sensation as John sucked his cock as far down as he could go. John came off his throbbing member with a wet pop and looked up at Sherlock. John loved this part: the first glance at a wanton and lust-filled detective.

Sherlock did not disappoint. His pupils were blown wide, his eyes half-lidded, his gorgeous mouth was slack. It was all John could do to not fuck him through the mattress. Mindful of Sherlock’s wounds, John lowered his head again and satisfied his own desire for Sherlock by mouth-fucking him.

John’s tongue slid up and down the shaft as he worked Sherlock’s dick. Once at the top, he circled the head with his tongue. Sherlock moaned his approval, lightly caressing the back of John’s head and shoulders with his hands.

How often had Sherlock fantasized about this? John, where have you been?

“I’ve missed you so much...,” said Sherlock. “I love you, John… thank you… oh God, thank
you… my John… Forever, my John…”

John teased Sherlock’s frenulum with his tongue and heard Sherlock’s breath shudder. He glanced up and saw the beautiful man the way he always fantasized him: mouth agape, head tilted back, his skin impossibly pale and perfect… even with the scars… maybe because of them. The thought sent a wave of passion through John.

John gripped Sherlock’s hips and bobbed his head with abandon, his cheeks hollowing with the suction. Sherlock cried out: “Oh! Ah! John! Oh God, John! Son of a… please, John… I’m going to cum… Please… Oh! God! Yes! YES! John! My John… John John John John John John John…..” Hot cum pulsed into John’s mouth when Sherlock called out his name. John swallowed it all reflexively, the taste bitter and salty, just as he remembered it. Oh God, it was beautiful.

John’s neglected arousal was beginning to drive him crazy. He unfastened his pants and took out his cock. He planned on just wanking and having Sherlock watch, but as always, Sherlock had other plans.

Sherlock pulled John up a bit, signaling him to stand. The detective then slid to the floor, minding his wounds and grabbed John’s legs to straddle either side of him. Sherlock guided John’s cock to his mouth and began to suck him off.

John didn’t need much. All he needed was to feel the hot, wet, mouth of Sherlock Holmes on his prick and to see those beautiful eyes and cheekbones beneath those curls and he was done. “Oh God, Sherlock… only you… Only you, Sherlock… So good… so fucking good… and so fucking beautiful. Oh dear God, Sherlock… Yes… Oh God yes… just like that… You suck such good cock… Oh my God…” moaned John. It was such a relief to be able to say these things out loud. It was even better when Sherlock could hear him say these things. The detective hummed around John’s prick and John came in gushes of ejaculate, as if he had been holding back his whole life for just this moment. John cried out when he came, an indistinct sound that said all his brain couldn’t articulate in words.

When John looked down, Sherlock had pulled off of his cock and was wiping his mouth with the back of one hand. Sherlock’s eyes bore into John with a lust that would never be sated. This was how it was meant to be. This was the way it should have always been. John was never going to leave this man’s side ever again. Sherlock would die before leaving his John.

~080~

“Six days, no cases, but good news: the infection is gone,” said John. “See what a good round of antibiotics will get you?”

“And I’ve finally got those bloody stitches removed,” said Sherlock. “It’s Christmas.”

“You still have to mind the wound though, Sherlock,” said John. They left the A&E the happiest of men. And it was a good job that all was well with Sherlock’s wound, because the detective had yet to thank his blogger/doctor/friend/lover properly for the kindness he had shown him almost a week ago.

During the past six days, they had been physical, but due to Sherlock’s obvious limitations, only mildly so. Sherlock wanted more. He felt better than he had in ages. He was eating properly
without being begged. He was sleeping soundly with John by his side every night. He felt stronger every day, as if John’s mere presence were a source of hidden power.

He was still bored out of his mind with no case to work, but bored with John was infinitely better than bored without John.

~080~

It was a quiet evening in 221B. Winter was in her full glory and it was freezing in their flat. John lit the fire while Sherlock played. The notes of the violin were bittersweet and soft. Sherlock played with eyes closed as John watched. Firelight was always so flattering on Sherlock. As Sherlock stood before the window, John noticed that it had just begun to snow. How perfect was this picture, then?

If the past year had taught John Watson anything it was that Sherlock Holmes meant more to him than any other person had in his entire life. What fates had brought them together, John could only guess, but he was thankful and grateful to have this amazing beautiful creature in his world. And that’s what it was, really: John was a complete person onto himself, but with Sherlock, he became more than the sum of his parts. He was brighter, faster, and better than he ever had been. And if he wasn’t being too much of a braggart, he would say that he complemented Sherlock in the same way. They were two sides of the same coin, entirely compatible.

John closed his eyes and listened to the music, smiling to himself.

The song ended and John opened his eyes to find Sherlock standing before him, violin and bow on the chair behind him.

“I thought you were sleeping for a moment,” Sherlock said softly.

“Are you in the habit of staring at me when I sleep?” asked John with a grin.

“You mean you’ve never noticed before?” said Sherlock.

“Yes…,” said John, giving the question some thought, “I had noticed. Although… I just thought it was something you did every once in a while. Do you do it often?”

Sherlock looked at the fire. “Every night,” he whispered.

“Seriously?” said John, genuinely stunned. “Why?”

Sherlock looked into the fire for a long moment. His face was sad. John was about to say something when the detective finally spoke: “I’m… still not sure how to… navigate in this relationship, John, so I’m just going to say this. You mean more to me than I have words to express.” Here, he looked John in the eyes. “You are the one true thing in my life, John Watson. I cherish every moment that God grants me to be with you. You are my heart.”

John was so stunned by this confession that he broke eye contact with Sherlock. His hands gripped the arms of the chair.

Sherlock was concerned. “Bit not good?” he asked.
“No,” said John, stifling a sob, “No... very very good, Sherlock. Better than you know.”

Sherlock smiled and said: “‘Love, I love beyond breath, beyond reason, beyond love’s own power of loving…’”

“What was that? A quote from something?” said John, amazed that Sherlock hadn’t deleted all forms of poetry and flowery prose long ago. Perhaps this is the only quote that remained.

“Rostand… Cyrano de Bergerac,” said Sherlock. “Mummy took me to see the play when I was seven. It had a few good fighting scenes, so she thought I would like it because of that. She didn’t think I’d notice that it was about a deformed man who was in love with a beautiful woman and hadn’t the confidence to tell her himself how he felt.” Sherlock looked into the fire again and said: “She had no idea that it would impact me in the way that it did.”

“And you didn’t delete it?” said John.

“Oh... most of it I did, but somehow, try as I might, Act 3, Scene 3 always stays with me,” said Sherlock. “Haunts me, more like.”

“Act 3, Scene 3?” asked John.

“The balcony scene in the moonlight. Pivotal. Where Cyrano gets to actually tell Roxanne how he feels with his own voice. She thinks it’s Christian, the man she’s infatuated with, but it’s really Cyrano hiding there in the shadows, looking up and worshipping her, loving her,” said Sherlock. He turned to John and got down on his knees before him. “Just as I love you and still feel that I don’t deserve you. But I’m braver than Cyrano, aren’t I, John?” Sherlock’s eyes were welling up.

John leaned down and kissed Sherlock softly on the mouth. “You are much more brave. Braver than even you realize,” he said. “Take me to bed, Sherlock.”

~080~

They never got farther than the sitting room floor. Sort of apropos, thought Sherlock.

Soft kisses were exchanged, each more passionate and long-lasting than the last. When things proved to be too intense, Sherlock got up and went to their bedroom for lube and condoms. When he returned, John was standing getting ready to extinguish the fire.

“No, John,” said Sherlock. “I want you like this. Please.”

The two men regarded one another for some moments in the firelight.

“Do you remember any more from that play?” John asked.

Sherlock quoted: “‘I never look at you, but there’s some new virtue born in me, some new courage. Do you begin to understand, a little? Can you feel my soul, there in the darkness, breathe on you?’” Sherlock closed his eyes. John stared at him in awe.

He continued: “‘Oh, but tonight, now, I dare say these things -- I…to you…and you hear them! It is too much! In my most sweet unreasonable dreams, I have not hoped for this!’” Sherlock opened his eyes and looked at John with such love. His blue eyes were welling up with the meaning behind
these lines. This was real for Sherlock. These are the words that are written on his heart. John knew he had talent as an actor, but he had no idea that words this sweet and truly meaningful could ever be composed by man – let alone spoken directly to him with such passion.

"'Now let me die, having lived.'" Sherlock went on taking John’s hand in his: "'It is my voice, mine, my own, that makes you tremble, as a blossom among the leaves—You tremble, and I can feel, all the way down along these jasmine branches, whether you will or no, the passion of you trembling…'” John realized that he really was shaking. All he could do was stand there and stare as Sherlock leaned toward him and whispered in his ear: "'What is death like, I wonder? I know everything else now…'”

Sherlock kissed John with all his heart and soul. His tongue lingered over John’s lips asking for permission to explore. John parted his mouth and let Sherlock take control. After all, this was his love note to John, his grand confession, the exclamation point on his ultimate statement of love. Sherlock tasted tea and John, his tongue brushing John’s smoothly and slowly, dipping in and out and around John’s mouth in a dance meant as a caress more than anything. John melted into Sherlock with a deep moan at the sensation. John was hard already and he hadn’t taken a stitch off.

Sherlock’s hands moved over John’s body, mapping out all the places his mouth wanted to be: a bicep, a shoulder, his neck, a hip, the base of his spine, the nape of his neck. Achingly the kiss lingered even as Sherlock broke it, the tips of their lips still touching, each man breathing into the other’s mouth. They opened their eyes and felt their souls bond as they gazed.

Sherlock wanted to weep. He wanted to shout with joy. He didn’t know what he wanted other than John, right here, in this moment, for all time, for always. Sherlock felt John’s erection pressing against his thigh. His own cock throbbed in response.

Silently, Sherlock took a step back and removed all his clothing, watching John do the same. Both men stood in the firelight, scarred from battles they had no business fighting. As they reached for each other, they realized that all they had ever wanted stood before them. This was contentment. Happiness. Bliss.

Sherlock had placed the lube and condoms on the mantle and he took them down now. Coating his hand, he touched John’s hard prick. John’s head flew back at the sensation and he let out a small grunt. Bending his knees just so, Sherlock aligned their cocks and grasped them together. Both men moaned at the sensation and simultaneously began fucking Sherlock’s fist. The friction was gorgeous.

Leading with their tongues, Sherlock and John licked and sucked on each other’s mouths for what seemed like ages. Sherlock grasped John around his waist and clutched his backside to hold him close. They slowly fucked Sherlock’s fist as John ran his hands all over his beautiful detective, pausing to squeeze and tease Sherlock’s nipples.

He got Sherlock’s breath to stutter with that one. Good… so fucking good… so damn beautiful. My Sherlock. Forever my Sherlock.

John broke the kiss and turned Sherlock around. He reached for the lube, coated his hand with it and reached around Sherlock to jerk him off. John kissed Sherlock’s back reverently, taking care to follow every scar to its termination as best he could. He ran a thumb over Sherlock’s slit and smeared the precum over his shaft as he stroked Sherlock’s cock.

Sherlock reached back and grabbed John’s hips, wanting to feel the doctor’s hardness against the cleft of his arse. John got the message and rut against Sherlock’s arse, what lube that was on his dick becoming a welcome slickness to his efforts.
“I want you inside me, John,” said Sherlock, his breath shallow from the sensation of it all. “I need you to claim me. To own me… possess me, John. My John… please.”

John took Sherlock’s hips in his hands and guided the detective to his knees. He pushed Sherlock gently to the floor and smoothed his hands up Sherlock’s back. Side-lit by the firelight, his scars jumped out at John. John had once thought that Sherlock in this position looked like a martyred saint from a classical painting… the scars made the image complete. Eyes closed facing the fire, Sherlock looked utterly, crushingly angelic.

John smoothed his hands over Sherlock’s arse and placed his face to his cleft. Gently, tenderly, he kissed the delicate skin on either side of Sherlock’s hole, finally running the tip of his tongue around the opening.

Sherlock moaned John’s name… that voice… that damn voice… Oh dear God, yes. My Sherlock… forever my Sherlock.

John slipped the tip of his tongue inside Sherlock slowly, carefully, lovingly. John was so contented to be rimming Sherlock’s arsehole that he hummed. Sherlock let out a loud moan.

“Oh God, John… Don’t stop… Please… so good… your tongue feels so fucking good… hnnnnnngggg…..,” keened Sherlock and he rocked his hips up toward the sensation, attempting to increase the pressure. John wiggled his tongue around inside Sherlock just to hear him whine again. Sherlock did not disappoint.

“Fuuuuck… John! Oh yes… yes yes yes… Oh God… please… John… I want to cum… Let me… Oh God… Haaannnnnggggnnnnn…..,” said Sherlock as words left him. His hips began to sway side to side with his anticipation. He needed to feel John inside him. He wanted that man to thrust so deep. He wanted John to come undone screaming his name.

John broke off from tonguing Sherlock and inserted a lubed finger inside him. Indistinct groans came from Sherlock as John slowly finger-fucked him. After a bit, he added another finger, allowed for Sherlock to adjust, and finally thrust in a third. Sherlock let out a hiss with the sensation.

“More, John,” said Sherlock, his pelvis rocking with the motion of John’s hand, every thrust intending to impale himself on John’s fingers. John curled his fingers just so and hit Sherlock’s prostate. Sherlock let out a keening whine that John had never heard before. John practically came from it. Oh, he needed inside Sherlock and right fucking now.

Carefully he removed his hand, slipped on a condom, lubed up, and lined up his now throbbing cock, precum dripping from the tip.

John leaned in close and said, “I love you, Sherlock Holmes, but I’ve got to be honest, old friend… I’m going to fuck you through the floor.”

Sherlock’s eyes went wide and he smiled. “Go on then, old friend. I want to scream your name… Make me.”

John could feel a trickle of sweat drip down his spine as he slowly entered Sherlock in one go. Balls-deep in the detective he paused, allowing for Sherlock to adjust to his girth. To his credit, Sherlock took him in with little to no trouble at all. It was as if he were made for John to fuck. Perfection.

John pulled almost all the way out of Sherlock and thrust into him again suddenly, making
Sherlock’s eyes go wide. Oh sweet weeping Jesus, that was good. “Again, John,” said Sherlock. “Fuck me. I’m yours, John. Only yours. Fuck me hard… come on… come on…Ugh!” he exclaimed as John thrust in a second time.

Over and over, faster and faster, John thrust into Sherlock, each push a mark of ownership. Mine mine mine mine… all mine… forever… for always… MINE.

John reached around and pulled on Sherlock’s neglected cock. Sherlock’s back arched and that was all it took for John… seeing his gorgeous detective splayed out like that… it was too much… too beautiful… John felt the wave of orgasm crest over him and he heard Sherlock coming at the same time, both men spilling their seed, crying out each other’s names, completing a moment that was theirs forever.

~080~

Sherlock and John watched the fire wrapped up in the blanket from the back of John’s chair. They snuggled in each other’s arms, Sherlock’s head resting on John’s shoulder. John was carding his hand through Sherlock’s sweaty curls and feeling very tired.

Suddenly, Sherlock’s phone went off. Sherlock reached into his trouser pocket for it, glanced at it and then looked at John.

“Lestrade. Case,” he said.

“Alright,” said John giving Sherlock a sleepy grin.

“Are you sure?” Sherlock asked teasingly, “Could be dangerous.”

John looked into Sherlock’s eyes. “Oh, God, yes,” he said.

And the game was on yet again.

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