And Then There were Three

by Grovehove

Summary

Months after Sherlock’s return, when John and Sherlock have finally become lovers, when they are taking back the lives they lost, they think their biggest problem is dealing with ex Colonel Sebastian Moran, Moriarty’s heir to his evil empire. That is until Mycroft shows them the error of their ways and they have to deal with John's unknown teenage recently bereaved and grieving daughter. A daughter who is afraid of her father, who resents being taken from her home and who hates Sherlock Holmes as much as he hates her. Established Johnlock. Rating may change later

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
Chapter 1. Sweetpeas and Surveillance

John stared in growing disbelief at the figure in the long dark coat, kneeling in front of the headstone, brushing away the fallen leaves and scattered debris.

In the dim light of the early autumnal morning, the little bouquet of purple and pink flowers provided a bright counterpoint to the sepia grave and its surroundings. The flowers were tenderly inserted into the empty grey urn and a pale thin hand reached into the bag resting on the ground to pull out a bottle of water to fill the container of flowers.

"Efficient" Sherlock drawled, from the comfort of his chair, one eyebrow elevated.

"Shut up Sherlock" John hissed automatically as he tried to hear what was being said on the screen.

"Sorry I couldn't get here last week, there was a bit of a..... um....., well they took me to see "her" again. They got worried and....."

The soft voice paused as its owner took a deep shuddering breath and then abruptly changed the subject.

"Do you like the flowers? I made a deal with Mr Mukerjee, to help him sort the newspapers for the paper rounds, and then I can pick any of the flowers in the shop for you. He was telling Layla off when I was there for tea one day, because she won't do it any more and so I offered. Mrs M told him it was a good idea and that Layla could help her make the evening meals instead. Layla wasn't too happy, but you know what she's like she's such a lazy moo..."

There was a soft watery chuckle, then a strained attempt at reassurance.

"This new foster family seem nice and it's not far from Layla's house so they let me go to tea there quite often, as long as I have done my homework, and not had detention that day. This place is just short term though, until the new social worker finds me somewhere I can stay longer"

There was a sort of desperate fake cheerfulness in the young voice which was heartbreaking and then the figure paused in the one sided conversation, whilst a slender finger gently brushed a colourful vibrant petal.

"I picked these Sweetpeas because they reminded me of you, delicate and so pretty."

There was another longer pause as if the figure was struggling with some internal monologue.

"I know I promised to be good Mum"

John flinched and paled, not noticing the way the two other men watched him. One with confusion, and the other with grim foreknowledge.

"And I am trying, but I couldn't let that lad....."

The voice stopped and swallowed, and they could hear the unshed tears trying to break through "let him.." another pause as if the voice could not say the words even alone at her mothers grave, and then she just blurted out with unhidden satisfaction.

"So I punched him, hard, and made his nose bleed, but Mrs Jones saw me and thought it was my
fault, well I suppose I did black his eye as well, and she did have to pull me off him, because I wouldn't let go of his hair when I was smacking his head on the ground, and kneeing him in his.... but I didn't start it Mum I swear"

The short strawberry blonde curls bounced as the head was moved desperately from side to side, satisfaction changing to entreaty, and then there was another deep shuddering breath.

"She was so cross Mum, and she started to shout, I hate it when they shout, its like my brain freezes, I got so scared I just couldn't say anything, "

the blonde head dropped into shaking hands

"But Layla stood up to her and told her what happened." 

Another watery chuckle

"She got detention for shouting at her and calling her an unobservant old cow"

She hummed in amusement for a second.

"I think it was the "old" bit that Mrs Jones really objected to"

An almost identical smirk crossed the faces of the Holmes brothers upon hearing the word unobservant, but Dr Watson didn't notice, he was too invested in watching and listening, a terrible premonition gripping him.

Another shuddering breath, a shrug and the lilting voice continued, sounding so young and lost

"Anyway now I have to talk to "her" about that as well as about you. And I hate it Mum, I hate it. I can't talk to her, I want you Mum, we could always talk about everything but I look at "her" and it's like there's this great big rock in my throat, and she sits there all smug, waiting for me to say something.... Or telling me 'write your thoughts down Jocelyn you will feel so much better'… How does writing down I'm miserable make me less miserable?"

The baffled anger in that voice resonated in John Watson's chest and a wry sympathetic smile crossed his lips.

"I swear Mum this counselling thing is only to make them feel better. Give the crying little orphan some attention, make her write some pointless crap, then we've done our duty and we can pass her onto the next department in the queue"

The angry young voice spat bitterly, but then the fight and the fury seemed to drain away leaving just a world of aching sadness as she continued in muffled tones.

"I do know it's supposed to help me Mum, and I promised you I would try, but it just doesn't help, truly it doesn't"

One hand moved up to her face and wiped quickly at her eyes, although the angle of the surveillance camera could not pick out her features.

The figure straightened up, thin shoulders pulling back as if gathering courage in an oddly familiar gesture. A stance that was unknowingly repeated by one of the three men in the silent room.

She rubbed her hands down the side of her coat.

"Sorry I've been whinging Mum, but I do have some good news. Got some good results for my
mocks, mostly A's and B's, see, all that time in detention paid off in the end!"

The figure glanced down at a wrist watch and gasped

"Shi ... oops I'm late, I've got to go Mum or I will be in detention again"

One hand went to up to her lips and then she blew a kiss at the name on the headstone "Catch and keep Mum". She whispered, the sob in her voice all too audible again after the determined cheer.

Then she whirled, coat flying, grabbed the school bag and raced towards the graveyard exit.

Leaving the bouquet of Sweetpeas on the grave of Mary Morstan

John turned to face Mycroft, his face pale "What, when, how" he stuttered with confusion, then the expression tightened "Tell me!" he demanded.

Sherlock watched the teenager move out of view on the screen and stated with irritation, as he turned to glare at his big brother

"Mary Morstan's daughter obviously John, but what has this got to do with us Mycroft",

He asked with growing annoyance. Lestrade had texted ten minutes before Mycroft's arrival with a very interesting case and they were wasting time. But Mycroft had been insufferably insistent upon them watching the media disk he had brought with him.

"Sherlock" John growled in warning and Sherlock turned to stare at him, confusion on his face as he took in John's obvious anger and distress. This was more that the good Doctor's irritating facility to feel sympathy for everyone and his dog. This was personal. His eyes flickered from the screen back to the Doctor and comprehension hit just as Mycroft opened his mouth to respond

"But not just Mary's daughter Sherlock" drawled Mycroft blandly as he turned towards John' drawn features. Sherlock stiffened at the implication and his elder brother's barely concealed satisfaction that he knew something Sherlock didn't.

"There is more film John if you want to see it " he offered with spurious kindness.

"Mycroft" John growled dangerously, "Who is that young girl"

There was an impatient sigh before he deigned to answer

"As my dear brother so accurately pointed out, she is Mary Morstan's only child, Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, born prematurely seven and a half months after you and Miss Morstan parted company, you to join the army and continue your medical training, Miss Mary Morstan to leave her primary school teaching position and disappear into the wilds of Wales, falling off the radar for nearly thirteen years until her extended NHS stays and hospice care for terminal cancer which regrettably resulted in her demise 3 months ago."

The information was offered with typical Mycroft Holmes bland precision.

"She told me the baby had died and that she didn't want to see me again,"

John slumped into the seat, unaware that he had uttered the words aloud, unaware of the differing reaction from the two Holmes brother's. Sherlock's furious confusion and jealousy, and Mycroft's
measured monitoring of his brother and partner.

Mycroft's calm unemotional yet oddly empathic voice continued

"Miss Morstan did lose a baby John, she was carrying twins and unfortunately one was still born. Apparently the Doctors were unaware that there was a second child, until some months after the still birth.

Jocelyn Jayne has been the prime carer for her mother since the illness was diagnosed three and a half years ago when she was 11 years old. She is now in the looked after children system, in temporary foster care accommodation undergoing bereavement counselling whilst her chances at a long term foster home are assessed.

Her grades are better than average considering the difficulties of her role looking after her mother, and the regrettable fact that most children in the care system do not do well in education. Her penchant for mathematics is unusually strong.

Her educational career has had a chequered history; she tends to have a temper and is rather too familiar with the detention room at her school. She is not bullied, her temper sees to that, she has few real friends, mainly because of her previous caring duties and the Morstan's relative poverty, however she is liked well enough and the friends she has made have remained constant during her unfortunate trials.

I am sorry John, I would have had more information for you but I only became aware of this situation two days ago,"

John stared at Mycroft without really seeing him. "One died" he repeated sadly. Sherlock went to stand behind him and put a tentative comforting hand on his shoulder, but then it was quickly removed. He wasn't comfortable with emotional displays in front of his brother, unless it was anger, or irritation.

Mycroft refrained from one of his civil but devastatingly sarcastic retorts because he could see the impact his words had created.

Sherlock asked the question before John could

"How did you find out about her Mycroft"?

Mycroft looked at the tips of his finger nails and spoke with deliberation.

"Dr Watson's security surveillance has increased since your return Sherlock, as the threat level was exponentially enhanced due to current risk factors associated with a certain ex Colonel Moran, more in depth monitoring of names of acquaintances has taken place and correlations have been made. Suffice it to say, the incident at Jocelyn's school last week was reported to the police and social services, this crossed the desk of a diligent duty officer, the name Morstan being rather rare, the officer subsequently gathered information regarding the death of Miss Mary Morstan, the connection was made, and more investigation was recommended"

John's head came up and he regarded Mycroft with a dangerous gleam in his eye.

"What happened at the school Mycroft?"

"It has been taken care of John"

Mycroft tried to deflect the question but John just repeated it, the danger now evident in his tone of voice and the look on his face.
"An ex-pupil tried to assault her in the school grounds but the young lady managed to defend herself, there was some indication that she could be charged with an offence due to the rather vigorous nature of her defence, however this has been dealt with, on the proviso that she attends further counselling session."

John’s hands had clenched into fists as he listened to Mycroft

"What happened to the ex-pupil?"

He almost growled, his unblinking eyes not moving from Mycroft's face.

There was a slight pause as Mycroft studied him,

"There was not enough evidence to keep the youth in custody after his assault on the young Miss Morstan, fortunately however he was apprehended a few days ago, when unconscious at the scene of a house burglary, he appears to have fallen down the stairs, and is now in the hospital wing of a secure facility waiting for his trial where he faces a rather lengthy term of imprisonment if found guilty."

"Hospital wing?" John queried puzzled.

"Unfortunately it appears the youth was rather clumsy on the stairs, two broken legs, dislocated shoulder, and fractured wrist."

John couldn’t be sure, but he thought he saw the merest twitch of Mycroft's lips as he answered.

Sherlock gave a bark of sardonic laughter, "Really Mycroft, rather obvious"

"Sometimes, brother dear, obvious is the best policy"

Mycroft responded without removing his eyes from the good Doctor standing in front of him.

"Now my dear John, we come to the difficult question, what do you want to do with this knowledge",

He continued to study John Watson, even though Mycroft could feel his brother’s tension rise. Mycroft’s concern for his brother was legendary, which included removing obstacles to his health and happiness, although the brat wouldn’t acknowledge it.

In all honesty although he liked the Doctor at times, he wouldn't have involved himself in his affairs, if not for his brother's inconceivable and unbreakable attachment to him.

The introduction of a bereaved teenage girl into this scenario caused him as much concern as amusement.

They hadn't really had long enough to completely deal with the fallout from Sherlock's recent imitation of Lazarus and now they had John Watson's baby blast from the past to risk assess and contain.

This situation would have to be monitored; the potential for escalation was enormous.

"Her safety takes priority Mycroft" John the ex soldier said sternly "The rest we can deal with later"

Sherlock had been quiet, very quiet, too quiet, fingers working frantically on his mobile phone

Mycroft responded to John, while not taking his eyes off his brother, a frown beginning to form
on his impassive face

"Then Cardiff it is, until this situation with Moran is resolved"

There was an uncharacteristic hesitation in John's demeanour.

"Does she know about me?"

Sherlock's stiffened but he still wouldn't look up from his mobile, Mycroft's anxiety levels were steadily getting higher as he watched his brother, but he still responded to John's question as courteously as he could.

"I have no idea if her mother told her about you. There was no effort by social services to find her father although your name is on her birth certificate which indicates that she either believes you are dead or it hadn't even occurred to her that you exist"

John swallowed once, and then his "military" expression descended, his mouth firmed and his chin jutted as he straightened his shoulders again.

He turned his head and looked at Sherlock, who was still engrossed in his mobile phone. "Sherlock?" he queried as it began to dawn on him how quiet his partner had actually become.

Sherlock finally raised his head and his icy stare was directed at the pair of them.

"The latest sighting of Moran is at the Hilton Hotel… in Cardiff"
Chapter 2 A Patch of Summer Sky

The nightmare woke her again, tears on her cheeks, pulse pounding and her heart aching. She wondered if she had been whimpering because her mouth was so dry.

For a long time, she lay huddled under the covers, in the dark bedroom too afraid to go back to sleep, in case she was drawn back into that awful, awful dream. She so badly wanted to crawl into bed with her mum, wanted her mum to hold her, to rock her and to whisper the comforting nonsense which used to chase the bad dreams away.

But her mother couldn't help her with this one, this nightmare was about her mother, this bad dream was her reality, her life, and she just couldn't see herself going for comfort in the middle of the night to the two men she now lived with.

God, as if dealing with her mum's death wasn't enough, she had been forced with no warning, to travel half way across the country to London, to go to a new school where they took the piss out of her because of her accent, and worst of all, cope with a new "family". Not a foster family, who at least had been on training courses, were paid to do the job properly and who knew what they were doing.

Oh no this was a "proper" family, consisting of two men and a real honest-to-god skull, a "family" who ran round London like lunatics, who forgot to buy milk, and who had police or big black cars pick them up or drop them off at all hours of the day and night.

And what was the reason that this was called a "proper" family? It contained her birth father. The one she never asked about, the one her mum never mentioned, because the one and only time she had asked, her mum had looked sad and scared in equal measure. So she had stopped asking.

Her father and his partner, her newly discovered father, whom she had met for the first time fifteen days ago. And hadn't that been a scene straight out of a bloody comic book!
In real life the secret service didn't swoop down on you like seagulls on a beach going for your bag of chips.
In real life terrified headmasters didn't bundle you into the biggest blackest car you have ever seen.
In real life you didn't have deal with a monosyllabic woman more interested in her mobile than in the terrified teenager sitting beside her in said biggest blackest car.

Fifteen days ago she had been "introduced" to her father. Her father, the man who had appeared in her life after fourteen years of total and complete absence.
Her father who she didn't know existed. Her father, who gave her a home out of duty, who could barely look at her, who started stupid conversations but couldn't finish them, who didn't seem to know what to do with himself around her, except mutter "Great" or "Fine" into his jumper, or limp off to make a cup of tea.

And then there was his partner, the arrogant, rude, baffling man who would have made the perfect wicked step mother if he had been a woman, and had any interest in anyone but himself. Though his magic mirror would tell him he was the cleverest of them all not the fairest, even if he was sort of gorgeous for an old guy. But since he didn't have a magic mirror he just kept telling everyone he met how bloody clever he was!
This man, who sometimes looked at her like she was a bug under his microscope, but mostly like she was a trespasser and a stupid one at that, who barely spoke to her except to sigh and restrain
himself from insulting her. Only sometimes he didn't restrain himself and if her father was around he would at least make the effort to scold him.

Effort, that's it, she was an "effort". Her father always had to make an effort for her; he couldn't just behave normally around her like he did with everyone else. It was an effort to smile, to talk to her, to look at her.

But her father had never made the effort to hug her. And if once, just once he had maybe she could have handled living here with the pair of them.

She didn't even know what to call them. Her father had never expressed an interest in being called Dad "Call me John" he'd said as if he was ashamed of the fact that he was her father, and as for his partner, the Prince of Darkness, sometimes she had this urge to call him "Your Highness" when he was being a right royal git. He hadn't offered the use of his first name, her father had told her and she had never plucked up the courage to actually call him by it.

Come to think of it, she had somehow managed to get through the entire time she had spent in 221B Baker Street without calling either of them anything.

So God no, no way was she going to them for comfort. Especially at night, when they were in their bedroom.

She shuddered in embarrassment just thinking about it. There had never been men when she had lived with Mum. She'd wondered why sometimes because her Mum was gorgeous, but they had never lived with a man, it had always just been her Mum and her.

Now she was living with not just one man, but two and she wasn't even sure that they all spoke the same language.

She could maybe try the old lady downstairs, but she took her herbal soothers before going to bed and she slept through anything, including that bloody violin playing. Besides which even if she could wake her up, the old lady would only tell "her boys" the next morning and then she would have to undergo another round of half hearted conversation, snide sighing, baffled male eyebrows and even, god forbid, more sessions with the grief counsellor, which would just make her feel more of a pathetic wimpy outsider anyway.

She was wide awake now, and she really, really wanted a cup of camomile tea. Camomile tea was their special tea; Mum had given it to her since she was little, when they were upset or afraid. They had drunk a lot of camomile tea. Every time they had to move on to a new place, every time they didn't have enough money, every time they had to forgo birthday or Christmas presents, every time they had spoken to the Nurses, and Doctors, every time they had gone to the hospital for chemotherapy…..

“Camomile tea, the Morstan girls’ solution to life, the universe, and everything”. That's what her Mum used to call it. She hadn't had a cup of camomile tea since coming to live here. She had no-one to share it with now. It was a caffeine only establishment as far as she could see.

She rose slowly out of her bed, and opened her door quietly. It was warm enough so her thin cotton lilac PJ's were fine. Not that she had a dressing gown anyway or a pair of slippers. She'd left them at the last foster carers place, and they had not been replaced. The rest of her stuff from Cardiff hadn't arrived yet or just plain wasn't coming.

That was another thing, her Mum always knew when she needed new clothes, but these two just didn't have a clue. Her father seemed to live in jumpers and jeans and the cranky Prince of Darkness with his expensive suits didn't give a shit. He'd even come to breakfast one morning just wearing a bed sheet, she hadn't known where to look and she could feel her face go up in flames,
until her father had smacked him round the head and growled "Not good Sherlock". He had glared at her and muttered something nasty, getting another smack across the head with a newspaper from the old lady who had just brought in some breakfast pastries as a treat, before he had flounced back to the bedroom to change.

Clothes, yet another thing to fret about and try to find some way to tell these two…men

She knew most of the creaky floorboards and steps in the flat by now, so she tried hard to avoid waking the pair of them up by tip toeing around them.

She made her way downstairs as quietly as possible, and there was enough light from the two large living room windows because of the open curtains, to see her way to the kitchen. She avoided most of the debris on the floor, but stepped painfully on the edge of one of "his highness" books that he had flung across the room from his chair. A quiet but pained groan left her mouth before she gritted her teeth and limped into the kitchen.

She collected the kettle, filled it with water and set it to boil. She found her Mum's little tea tin on the windowsill by the kitchen sink, where she had put it in a fit of defiance after she had unexpected seen the hard expression on her father’s face when she mentioned her mother one day. She resolutely averted her eyes from the other containers and bottles which could and frequently did contain the most disgusting experiments.

She was truly grateful that camomile tea did not require milk because there was no way she was going to open the fridge door by herself, in the dark, in the middle of the night… The memory of the plastic bag of ears she had found last Thursday morning in the salad drawer when she was trying to make her lunch for school popped into her head and she shuddered. She was even a bit worried about trying to find a mug, but she managed it without coming across anything that squelched or stank of decomposition.

The familiar motions of making the tea were soothing, and it wasn't until she was sitting at the kitchen table, with her mug of camomile tea in her hands, that she realised her mistake. Before she had even taken a mouthful, the gentle aroma of the camomile filled her mind with memories, her eyes with tears, and she began to sob. She couldn't stop. Trying desperately to be quiet, she deposited the mug on the table, pulled her legs up on to the chair, buried her face into her hands and rested her head on her knees.

"Why are you crying?"

Sherlock asked coolly, his voice unnaturally loud in the silence of the flat.

She nearly fell off the kitchen chair in fright, but he grabbed her arm to stop her. Her startled gaze met his focused silvery eyes once before turning her head away and she muttered "I'm sorry I didn't mean to wake you" in a panicked attempt to deflect anymore personal questions

"That's not what I asked"

He responded smoothly, and she could feel that focussed stare at the back of her neck as he towered above her.

"Does it matter?"

She asked wearily, as she made to get up off the chair and go back to her bedroom, head bowed.

"Answer the question Jocelyn"
He blocked her way, wouldn't move to let her pass him and there was absolute determination in his voice. She knew he wouldn't give up without an answer, so she raised her head and allowed him to see the tears still streaming down her face.

"I had a nightmare, about my mum and I was too afraid to go back to sleep"

She stated baldly, bracing herself for the mocking insults to start. But oddly there was just a waiting silence and she continued, avoiding his eyes, fixing her gaze on his left ear.

"I thought camomile tea might help" her hand fluttered in the general direction of the messy table, "but it made it… it made it worse" she stuttered tiredly.

"Why did it make it worse?"

Her father asked calmly from behind her, and she jumped again, startled, swinging wildly round to look at him,

"Look I'm sorry I really didn't mean to wake everyone, I'll just go back to bed now".

She desperately tried to back away from the two of them. She couldn't do this right now, not now, everything hurt too much and she didn't know how to trust them.

This time her father repeated Sherlock's earlier words "that's not what I asked Jocelyn" in a softer but no less determined tone. She stared at him, nonplussed but his expression didn't relent and his dark blue eyes never wavered from her face. Her shoulders slumped and suddenly she was too exhausted and sad to try to stand up to either of them anymore.

"We always drank Camomile tea together me and Mum (She could almost feel Sherlock's wince and quickly changed it), er Mum and I, it was our special thing, when things were bad… it was always just ours… when I tried to drink it now, I didn't even taste it, the smell made me... made me remember and all I could see was Mum”.

Her head dropped as she stuttered her way through the words and she almost tried to curve in on her self to stop the sobs forcing their way out.

Her father moved closer, and a hand tentatively stroked her hair.

"Is that such a bad thing, love, seeing your Mum?" he probed gently

She looked up at him, and his heart ached as he saw for the first time, the true depth of her pain on her young face.

"But it's not Mum I'm seeing, its Mum's body, it's always Mum's body just lying there so still and I can't bear it. I can't see her smiling, laughing, walking or even when she was angry with me. I can't see my Mum anymore, and I don't have any pictures because they lost them when they cleared out the flat. Every time I close my eyes I only see that body not my Mum”.

Her sobs had almost drowned out the words and as she wailed out the last sentence her hands came up to her face as her legs gave way.

Strong solid arms closed round her and for the first time in her life, she was held in her father's arms as he carried her to the living room. Her father held her shaking body close whilst he sat them both on the sofa.

John looked at Sherlock sadly over the distraught child's head. They had been out at a crime scene
and come back to the flat very late after she had already gone to bed. They were still awake when they heard the whimpering from her room, just as John had been about to get up and go to her, the noise had stopped and John had stayed where he was, thinking she had fallen back to sleep. Sherlock thought John had finally dropped off when he heard the creak of the floorboards, and the pained sound as she made her way to the kitchen. Determined not to wake John, after such a gruelling day, he decided he would handle this himself. But he had heard John get to the kitchen when he was speaking to the girl.

Sherlock knew John wanted to deal with this by himself because the girl was nervous and even afraid around him, he wasn't sure he cared too much at the moment, but she was John's daughter and he had decided that at some point he would have to make more of an effort even if it was only for John's sake. He consoled himself with the knowledge that this situation would only last until they had dealt with Moran, and then they would come up with a longer term solution that would involve a distant private school and short, very, very short holidays.

But now was as good a time as any to make that effort for John. For someone who avoided emotional outbursts at all costs, he knew this was something he could deal with. This was a mind problem, not an emotional one. He could actually help the dratted girl and ease some of John's strain at the current situation.

He ignored John's expression, knelt besides the sofa and focussed on the crying girl.

"What colour was your mother's favourite shoes?"

He asked, his voice low and compelling enough to break into her crying. She raised her head from her father's chest to look at him. He caught her gaze with his, willing her to answer him.

"Shoes" she muttered in exhausted confusion, he repeated the question with a patience that was normally foreign to him and waited through the silence that suggested she wasn't going to answer him.

"They were blue, with kitten heels and a little white bow"

She mumbled tiredly, and they waited in vain for her to continue but she simply stopped as if her brain couldn't cope with anything more.

"Tell me the first time she wore them"

He insisted, with the merest hint of gritted teeth. She would be helped whether she liked it or not!

"Sherlock, She's too tired for this"

John began to protest, whilst stroking her hair in a slow soothing motion.

Sherlock continued to ignore him and hardened his voice until it was the same one which normally interrogated suspects.

"Jocelyn, answer me, when was the first time she wore them?"

The girl opened her eyes wide, took one look at the expression on his face and nervously responded.

"It was our leaving assembly at my last year at Primary school; we had practised for it for weeks."
All the Mums and Dads were invited"

She began to relax back against her father as she told the story, memories flooding in and the tension leaving her body and her voice.

"I had a song to sing and Mum wore her new shoes with her blue and white dress. She said the mother of the star of the show should be dressed up."

A small giggle left her lips, and she continued sleepily

"She said it was such a special day that we could go to the park and then have ice cream in the café on the way home."

Her eyes closed as she remembered that long ago day when they had been happy, and a loving smile played on her face as her voice became slower and sleepier.

"I played with Layla and Amy and Liam the twins, on the swings, we tried to go higher and higher, we were going to fly in the sky like birds, it was so warm, and they were cutting the grass. Mum was chatting with the other grown ups. She was so pretty, with her long golden hair and dressed in blue and white, she looked like my own special patch of summer sky."

The last few words were so low that they could barely hear her, and then there was silence. They waited but she had slipped into a deep restful sleep.

John looked down at his daughter in his arms, and then looked back at Sherlock,

"That was good, a good thing you did" and he smiled

Sherlock cocked his head and grinned, warmth briefly lighting up those icy eyes.

"Not amazing, fantastic and extraordinary" he teased quietly

"All of the above, but more importantly a good thing" and John's free hand came out to tug a wayward brown curl affectionately.

He started to shift and pull her further into his arms to carry her upstairs to bed, but Sherlock stopped him.

"Leave her there, if you move her now she might wake again".

He wasn't sure if he could cope with anymore emotions tonight. He wasn't going to let John disturb her, besides which John needed to go back to bed and sleep.

John protested,

"She needs her bed, Sherlock she won't be comfortable here"

"The sofa is fine; I've spent enough nights on it"

He ignored John's snort of derision and continued,

"I will be here anyway, got some work to do and will keep an eye on her".

Before John could open his mouth, he added what he knew to be the clincher

"Problem?"
John rolled his eyes but he knew when he was beaten. He lay her completely down on the sofa, and Sherlock covered her with the throw. They watched as she found a comfortable position but she didn’t wake up, so John put his hand to his partner’s face and whispered good night.

When she woke up, she was lying on the sofa in the living room, why was she lying on the sofa in the living room? Her head ached and her eyes felt so scratchy and dry. She turned her head and saw Sherlock perched motionless in his chair, arms on his knees and fingers steepled under his chin, oblivious to everything. For a few seconds she just studied him as if he was part of her dream world and not real. As she looked at him, the confusion lifted from her mind and she began to remember what had happened.

She stifled an embarrassed groan, and slid deeper under the throw, she didn’t care if her father and Sherlock were now supposed to be her family, as far as she was concerned they were still strangers for goodness sake and she’d had a complete melt down in front of them but as more memories flickered through her brain, she grew thoughtful and the embarrassment faded to a thoughtful frown.

Sherlock became aware of a presence in his personal space, someone was staring at him, normally when he visited his mind palace, and he only left when he had what he needed. However this time, he could feel eyes on him, and a presence that was too close for comfort. He jerked into complete awareness, dropped his hands and raised his head, ready for the confrontation, only to become confused by the sight of the girl standing in front of him, studying him solemnly. He opened his mouth to utter a scathing comment, but she got there first.

"Tea" she muttered quietly and thrust a mug towards him. He took it automatically, looked down at the mug and then as he looked back at her with a hint of confusion, she leaned forward and kissed him gently and very quickly on the cheek.

His eyebrows hit his hairline and for a second he was actually stunned into silence. She stepped hastily back away from him and then spoke quickly, shyly before he had a chance to open his mouth, her face solemn and totally serious and her eyes did not leave his.

"The thing you did, it was amazing, really awesome. And I wanted to thank you; you gave me my mum back"

He opened his mouth but again she beat him to the punch line, as she offered him a shy but genuine smile and then hurriedly left the room.

"Don't let your tea get cold"
"She vomited on Mycroft's shoes."

Greg Lestrade spat out his mouthful of beer, and nearly choked on the residue. Splatters of the brown liquid hit the table, his tie and his trousers.

"Bugger it John! It's all over me now." he complained with a huge grin on his face trying to restrain the hysterical laughter at the image John had put into his head. But he couldn't stop it, and the laughter burst forth.

The strained look on John's face eased, and a grin began to appear as Greg's laughter became infectious.

"His face must have been a fucking picture..." Lestrade howled. "Perfect Pinstripe and puke."

John couldn't restrain the laughter any longer as he saw again the stunned and appalled look on Mycroft's face in his mind's eye as Jocelyn had lost the contents of her stomach.

"Please God, tell me you have that on film," Lestrade begged shamelessly, "do you have any idea what that would be worth, I could get Sherlock to work on anything I want without argument just by showing him that."

Suddenly John sobered, as the memory in his head re-focused onto Jocelyn's distress and alarmingly pale face before she threw up.

"She threw up when she was told I was her father." he uttered with a total lack of expression.

Lestrade looked back at him with concern, laughter instantly cut off.

"Ah" he sighed so this was why John had been wearing that old familiar 'I'm ok, don't fucking ask or I'll hurt you' expression for the last few days. The one that he had hidden behind during Sherlock's 'death', the one that had appeared once the shock of the initial grief had worn off.

The one he had worn when Sherlock had come back, while he had been deciding on the most painful way to kill him now he was no longer dead.

The one he had probably worn before he had punched Sherlock and then ruthlessly seduced him.

"John..." Lestrade began, not knowing quite what to say

John sighed,

"It's ok Greg, the poor kid was absolutely terrified, Mycroft's goons took her straight out of school, she was driven around the country for four hours, dumped on a metal chair in an abandoned warehouse, menaced by an umbrella wielding megalomaniac, then surrounded by strange men shouting at each other and all because of her unknown father."
"Who was doing the shouting?" Greg asked sidetracked by curiosity

"I was, at Mycroft, because she was in a bloody warehouse, the sort of place he uses to intimidate anyone he thinks has any 'meaningful' contact with Sherlock! Christ Greg, she's barely 14 years of age, just lost her mother, taken away from everything that was familiar, basically snatched in the middle of the day by big scary bastards and left afraid, when there was no fucking need…"

He took an angry breath and continued

"I was giving him what for, when Mycroft, the cunning git opens his mouth and says, 'We are just trying to do what's best for your daughter John', there's this god awful stunned silence, where we all just look at her, and then she stands up with a hand to her mouth, white and shaking, looks absolutely horrified, turns to run but Mycroft's in her way, she looks at him, bends over and vomits."

There was a growl from Lestrade and a look of angry disgust on his face

"If that had happened to one of mine I'd have decked the bastard, treason or not." Lestrade grunted, his hand tightening around the pint glass until his knuckles were white.

John looked at him with a faint air of desperation,

"Well that's why I wanted a chat with you, you've got kids, and I need some advice."

Lestrade settled back into the seat, it was quiet in the pub but it was still early on a Thursday evening.

"I'm not sure how much help I can be mate, I have two boys."

John grinned weakly

"A boy, I could cope with a teenage boy, I commanded enough lads not that much older than her in the regiment…. but a teenage girl, who barely speaks and will hardly look at me, and …"

He looked down at his pint, and shrugged his shoulders

"Don't you get any help from the Social worker who was looking after her?" Lestrade queried.

"She's coming to see us in a couple of weeks, but this situation is not good, the child is so nervous around the two of us."

he was interrupted,

"Nervous around Sherlock, I can't understand what you mean."

Greg muttered sarcastically, rolling his eyes and his eyebrows shooting towards his hairline

"Just how much of an arse is he being?"

"Oddly enough, he could be worse…"

John mentioned reflectively,

"Since the nightmare episode, he's backed off a bit, but he watches her like she's one of his bloody experiments."
"Nightmare?" asked Lestrade

"About her Mum, he helped her, mainly because he couldn't cope with the emotional outbursts I think but he did help her, the nightmares haven't been as frequent lately."

Lestrade had been watching him, and listening. He hadn't risen through the ranks to get to Detective Inspector without being clever, and perceptive, without understanding what made people tick. It was so obvious. John was going through the classic panic stage of a new father, even though his "baby" was fourteen years of age. Normally men had nine months to get over the panic, to start to accept the idea and then even look forward to it.

"Do you want her, John, do you want to be her father, and to take responsibility for her?"

He asked softly. His clear hazel eyes never left his friend's face.

John's head came up sharply from studying the liquid in his glass.

"Christ Greg what a thing to say of course I…"

He protested strongly but he stopped when he looked into his friend's eyes. Lestrade saw the understanding dawn as he digested the implications of his words.

John looked shattered.

"God help me I don't know, Greg…" he whispered, "I just don't know".

He paused to get his thoughts together and then spoke out loud voicing everything that he hadn't acknowledged because of his strong belief in duty and responsibility and his need to protect.

"I've only just got Sherlock back, we are still working through things between us and trying to clear the last of Moriarty's network and now there's Jocelyn. I look at her and I see Mary. She looks so much like her mother, I look at her and hear Mary tell me our baby died, and then I remember that she kept Jocelyn away from me deliberately. And I am really, really angry with Mary for that, and I have to listen to my daughter grieve at night for a woman who never even told me I had a child; And Jocelyn stares at me like she's scared of me, that's when she can bring herself to look at me or talk to me... It's not the right time to be getting to know my daughter; she needs more time and attention than I can give right now."

He downed the last of his pint in a desperate gulp and looked away towards the bar.

"Can give or want to give John" Lestrade asked coolly, John's head turned back to him at the pointed challenge, and his eyes widened at the stern look on Greg's face.

"Welcome to fatherhood, mate. Kids don't wait until it's convenient for you to love them or pay attention to them. You can't stick them in a box and take them out when you have time for a hobby. If she is nervous around you it probably because she is scared you are going to send her away for doing something wrong. Grieving kids fear something happening to the remaining parent, and as she already knows what happens to a kid with no relatives in our society, how much do you want to bet she is trying to make sure not to give you reason to send her away."

John flinched as he took in the unpalatable truth of Lestrade's words.

"What kind of normal life can I give her, Greg?" he reacted angrily
"What kind of normal life do you think she's had already, John?" Lestrade mocked.

He tilted his head and studied the baffled and angry blonde man with the beginnings of compassion, then spoke more calmly.

"There's no such thing as normal with family John, there's no perfect family life, we have all just got to make the best of it, and god help me but I'm going to sound like a soppy bastard.....and if you ever repeat this to anyone ever, there will be a trumped up charge and a cell with your name on it for an indefinite stay.....it's the caring that counts. Learn to love your daughter John and let her love you back..."

Then Lestrade began to snigger again

"Fucking normal my arse! Your partner is Sherlock Holmes for Christ sakes, you don't do normal or you'd have booted the bugger into touch years ago."

John paused and then slowly returned the smile, he sighed rubbing the back of his neck and relaxed the tension from his shoulders.

"Another pint Greg, it's my round"

John stumbled carefully up the steps of 221B, much more relaxed than when he had gone out and the truth be told much less sober too, he sniggered.

It wasn't that late, only about 9pm, but he and Greg had managed to down a fair few pints in the three hours they had been in the pub.

He was probably going to regret this at the surgery tomorrow, a night of beer and kebabs were likely to make his life very, very difficult in the morning but you couldn't have a proper skinful without having kebabs afterwards. It was a law or charter or unwritten rule or something. His army mates would disown him. Nothing like a proper kebab after a couple of pints.

He walked perfectly normally or so he thought, into the living room to see Sherlock at the desk on John's laptop again. He rolled his eyes and then wished he hadn't as it made him dizzy. He flopped down onto the sofa with relief.

"You are pissed John." Sherlock stated coolly without turning round to face him.

"No shit Sherlock." John answered facetiously, then as he saw his lover stiffen, he thought better of it and spoke in a more conciliatory but weary tone

"Actually it's more like pleasantly merry, had a couple with Lestrade after I finished work."

He didn't want Sherlock to know that he had a purpose in speaking to Lestrade instead of just going out for a few drinks.

Before either man had a chance to continue, Jocelyn came into the living room, in her pyjamas, her gaze swiftly skimming the two of them and looking around the room as she muttered

"Have you seen my school bag? I thought I left it in my room but I can't find it."

Sherlock ignored her but John gave her a huge fake smile.
"Here's my Jocelyn, how was your day today Jocelyn, come and tell your Dad all about it?"

Jocelyn straightened up and swung her head round to look at him in disbelief, she turned to look at Sherlock who had also abandoned his work on the laptop and was staring at John fixedly. Sherlock looked back at her wide indigo eyes and wary face and said sardonically "Pleasantly merry." She still looked rather confused but that cleared when Sherlock added "drunk."

A flash of hurt crossed her face and she blurted out angrily before she could stop herself.

"You have to be drunk the first time you call yourself my Dad."

"You have to vomit the first time you find out I am your father."

John reacted instinctively and then could have bitten his tongue out when she flinched and went pale.

"Jocelyn, go to bed, we'll find your bag in the morning"

Sherlock ordered without removing his eyes from John. But neither of them was listening to him, they were staring at each other with almost the same expression of hurt on their faces. He groaned inwardly, this was going to get messy very quickly if he didn't put a stop to it. "Jocelyn" he started but she interrupted him as she spoke directly to her father.

"I was car sick." she stated simply, her chin up, the merest hint of a tremor in her voice.

"What?" both men asked at the same time.

"I was car sick." she repeated, "I was so scared when they made me get in it, and I'd been in that awful car for hours, they wouldn't stop to let me out, and the longer I was in it the more sick I felt, I managed to not throw up in the car, and by the time we stopped at the warehouse, I was just grateful that it had stopped moving. But sitting on that chair listening to the shouting, just made me feel worse. I can't think properly when there's shouting. I didn't really understand what the umbrella man said until later, and by the time you all stopped to look at me, I knew I was going to throw up, I could feel it starting and I just wanted to run somewhere to do it without everyone looking at me."

There was an embarrassed flush on her face, but she refused to back down. She stared her father straight in the eye.

She had never reminded Sherlock more of John. Such a simple explanation which would have eased a lot of the emotional crap over the last few weeks. He could have found that out himself but he had selfishly not wanted to look at the situation because he had still been angry with John and the girl for this whole sorry mess.

"You don't even want me to call you Dad, you told me to call you John" She accused her father and now there was a distinct tremble in her bottom lip.

There was a considering pause and then John's smile became genuine, he gave her one of his rare soft sweet smiles and got rather gingerly to his feet before her.

"I did, didn't I? Well...Sherlock is always saying I'm stupid. So I withdraw that statement and am changing the rules, you are never ever to call me John, I will now only answer to Dad, now off to bed, its getting late and there's school tomorrow."

Jocelyn stared at him for a few seconds in angry bemusement, then turned and left without a word to either of them.
Sherlock tilted his head and studied John, as he slumped back down on to the sofa.

"You do realise John, that so far she had avoided calling either of us anything at all, when do you expect her to start calling you Dad?"

"One step at a time Sherlock."

John answered with a big jaw dislocating yawn.

Sherlock looked at him with condescending amusement,

"It appears to be time for your bed as well, and while I tuck you in you can tell me what parenting advice Lestrade had to offer."

"What…. How did you know… oh never mind"

John spluttered and then sighed in resignation as he allowed Sherlock to lead him to bed.
Jocelyn sat staring out of the window on the coach, it was still very early in the morning and she had tried to doze but her conscience wouldn't leave her alone, and she was cold too. Why hadn't she thought to bring her coat as well?

Righteous fury had fuelled her rebellion for the first couple of hours on that uncomfortable coach seat. It had driven her to dress in her jeans, old trainers and old grey hoody, to climb out of her bedroom window and gingerly, carefully, drop down to the side passage where the bins were kept.
She was good at getting out of bedroom windows, she had done enough of that when she would go and sit with her Mum in the hospice at night, when her foster carers thought she was safely tucked up in bed.

She then only had to climb out of the side alley and make her way to the coach station. She had pretended that the dark and mostly silent streets wouldn't intimidate her, but she still ran most of the way there with her heart in her throat and a stitch in her side.

She had memorised the route, she'd used the internet at the local library after school, because she hadn't dared to ask her father or Sherlock if she could use their laptops, Sherlock would have known straight away what she was looking at, and she had wanted to talk to her father first without the smug Prince of Darkness cleverly spilling the beans.

It was her fathers fault anyway, she had tried to talk to him, she had tried to ask him but he had brushed her aside again, more concerned with a stupid conversation with "His Highness" about some moron they were trying to find. Though since Sherlock did not suffer fools gladly she couldn't understand why he was so desperate to find some idiot called Sebastian.
Her father hadn't even bothered to actually listen to her, so she had got a bit stroppy (well alright a lot stroppy) because what she had to say was important and she needed him to listen to her, and he was bloody ignoring her again.
Then when she had swung round in a stupid huff, accidently knocking the bow of Sherlock's violin to the ground and snapping the strings, they had all assumed she had done it on purpose. Appalled, she had bent to pick it up but Sherlock's ice laden voice stopped her in her tracks "Don't you dare touch it."

She had looked up at him and tried to apologise "I am so, so sorry...I didn't mean-" but before she could even finish the sentence, the fury emanating from her father locked the words in her throat, and her eyes widened fearfully as she saw the expression on his face. She tore her gaze away from him and looked back up at Sherlock. She tried again, her voice wavering

"Truly, I didn't...it wasn't on purpose."

But he ignored her, as he focussed on the length of wood held gently in his hands.

"Oh Jocelyn, what have you done"

The disappointed voice of Mrs Hudson chided her from the entrance to the kitchen.

But it was the tone of controlled rage in her father's voice that finally made her start to tremble, he simply said
"Go to your room."

"I'm sor-"

"Not another word, go to your bloody room!" he roared, calmness gone and she took to her heels and fled, not hearing Mrs Hudson's scolding voice turn on her father

"John!"

She had flung herself on her bed, full of anger, fear and remorse, very, very near to tears. But she wouldn't cry she wouldn't. She didn't do it on purpose; she knew how important that violin was to Sherlock, she wouldn't ever do something that mean on purpose but they all seemed to think she would.

The feeling of anger began to dominate the other emotions and she knew what she was going to do. They could all just sod off, but especially her father, she had tried to give him a chance but he didn't want it so she would go and be with her mum tomorrow, on her mother's birthday and Dr John Watson and Sherlock Holmes could go get stuffed.

So really it was all his fault, she'd tried to say sorry, she'd tried to ask his permission and she had even tried to ask him to come with her, but he didn't want to know, and now she was banished to her bedroom without her supper like a little kid, and oh God he had looked so angry, it was scary, and no she wasn't crying, not really.

She wasn't sure how long she had been lying on her bed, she'd dozed fitfully but startled awake in the darkened room when there was a soft knock on her door, which opened to reveal Mrs Hudson with a plate of sandwiches, and a glass of milk. She switched on the bedroom light and Jocelyn blinked at her like a startled owl.

"Your Dad asked me to give you this as you didn't have your tea dear, thought you might be a bit peckish and you won't sleep properly if you don't have something in your tummy, although if I have said it once, I have said it a hundred times, I am not the housekeeper. " She said with a little smile.

Jocelyn murmured her thanks, and as she picked up the first piece, she asked quietly with her head bent.

"Are they still angry with me?"

Mrs Hudson sidestepped the question by telling her that they had gone out and would be back late, so if there was anything she needed she was to knock on her door.

The sandwich turned to sawdust in Jocelyn's mouth, but she carried on eating as she quietly thanked Mrs Hudson and wished her goodnight and then watched her close the door behind her.

She knew what she had to do now.

"How much longer is this going take Sherlock?" John asked wearily as they made their way up the stairs to the flat in the early hours of the next morning.

"It will take as long as it takes, John." Sherlock snapped, but then paused to look back apologetically at him.

"It needs to be right, John, we can't leave anything to chance, this is the last piece of the puzzle and then we can consign that bastard to the depths of hell and forget about him forever."
John knew he wasn't talking about Moran.

"I know Sherlock, but it's taking its toll on all of us."

They walked into the living room and as John went to put the kettle on, Sherlock moved towards his chair and saw the broken bow. He picked it up and cradled it until John passed him his mug of tea.

John stared at the bow and let out a long sigh, then went and collapsed into his chair.

"Like I said, it's taking its toll on all of us." he muttered wearily.

Sherlock looked at him,

"It was an accident John." he offered, truthfully but with a touch of reluctance

"Really! I had worked that one out, once I had cooled down" John acknowledged wryly,

"We are not making things easy for her are we? First time she actually has the courage to act like a normal stroppy teenager and we jump on her from a great height."

Sherlock reviewed the earlier events of the evening, he had been intent on the Moran problem, when it had happened and he had blanked most of the interaction between the pair of them until the bow was damaged and then his ire had further obstructed his normal deductive processes. In all honesty, he had perhaps even welcomed being able to legitimately vent his anger against her.

So he sat back, and went through everything again, and his eyes widened as he looked back at John.

"What did she want to ask you?"

"What?" John looked up from his mug of tea, startled.

"She was trying to ask you something that she considers important and she was afraid you were going to say no. It obviously has something to do with her Mother or she wouldn't have got so upset and distracted that she knocked over the bow. She is not usually clumsy."

"Oh shit, shit, shit, shit, shit" John groaned and wiped his hand over his tired face. "Am I doing this on purpose?"

Sherlock looked confused so John elaborated "Ignoring Lestrade's advice and jeopardising any chance of a relationship with my daughter...when she went to her room, she was scared of me, and I was angry enough not to care."

There was a silence and then Sherlock offered with reluctance "And I haven't made things easier."

They looked at each other with complete understanding.

"You can talk to her in the morning." Sherlock suggested. John gave him an old fashioned look, and he amended the sentence

"Alright we can talk to her in the morning," with a roll of his eyes which made John smile reluctantly.

John put his mug down, and walked towards the bedrooms
"I'll just go check on her before we go to bed."

"She'll be asleep John." Sherlock sighed impatiently

John shrugged and carried on up the stairs to her bedroom, he shivered a little, surprised that it was colder than normal in the stairway, but he opened the door quietly so as not to wake her. He knew it was stupid since he had gone out and left her in that state in the first place but he suddenly couldn't bear the thought that she had cried herself to sleep alone in the flat.

Strange, her bedroom was even colder than the stairway; he was confused until he saw the open sash window. Why the hell had she opened the window? She must be freezing. He walked towards the window to close it, glancing at the bed as he did so and came to a full stop, a surge of adrenaline driving all tiredness out of his mind. He went back to the doorway and switched on the light.

"Sherlock!" he bellowed "Get up here!"

"Mycroft, I thought you had increased security around the flat!" Sherlock raged at his brother.

"Sherlock, I have, and why am I here at this ungodly hour?" Mycroft responded imperturbably.

"Then how the hell could someone get in and take her Mycroft!" John was almost beside himself with worry, anger and guilt

"No-one did John."

Mycroft's reply nearly sent him over the edge, until Sherlock pulled him out of the way and addressed his brother with ominous calm

"Jocelyn was in her room when we left, she is not there now."

"Really Sherlock, is sentiment clouding your faculties, or perhaps you are just tired. Is that the only conclusion you have come to? Were there signs of a struggle?"

Mycroft responded with impatient condescension

John interrupted in disbelief "She's run away?"

Sherlock spat menacingly "And your security detail just let her?"

"Brother dear, they are only concerned with unsavoury characters breaking in; they were not monitoring anyone breaking out."

Sherlock deflected the punch John aimed at Mycroft but only just in time.

John turned his back on the two of them, trying to control the rage inside him. He shook off Sherlock's restraining hand.

"Finally" Mycroft murmured beneath his breath but he hadn't moved a muscle to escape from the potential attack. The girl had become important to them both even if they didn't realise it fully. Yet again he had been proved correct, the matter had escalated. It was long past time to bring some sanity back to the situation.

Now he had the reaction he had been looking for, he relented

"The CCTV cameras caught a slight hooded figure running from the alley. We have managed to
track her, with surprising difficulty I must say, as she ran most of the way to the coach station at Victoria. The cameras didn't pick up which coach she boarded, but only four coaches left within the time frame, Leeds, Edinburgh, Exeter and Swansea. As the Swansea coach stops in Cardiff, I think it is safe to assume she is on that one. I will have the coach stopped by the police and retrieve her…” before he could finish, John turned back to face them angrily and barked "No".

The Holmes brothers looked at him in surprise and he carried on,

"I want to get her, I, no We, need to get her, I am not having the police taking her off a coach like some criminal, it's bad enough she felt she had to do this, God almighty she will never speak to us again if we pull that retrieval stunt on her like the first time. We need to make this right" and he looked challengingly at Sherlock, who looked at Mycroft, who raised his eyebrows but nodded in acquiescence.

"And then she is grounded for the next ten years" John continued through gritted teeth.
Joss slipped off the coach at Cardiff central station, and began the long trudge from the centre of the city to the churchyard. She felt more comfortable in these streets, she knew which ones to avoid, which to run through and where she could relax. She was so busy taking in the familiar sights and smells that she didn't notice the plethora of CCTV cameras which followed her progress.

By the time she got to the metal church gates, she was so tired and homesick that she could barely stop herself from crying.

As she made her way down the tree-lined path through the rows of headstones and statues, she suddenly stopped and made a sound of despair. She hadn't brought any flowers; all that aggravation and she had forgotten to get any flowers for her mum's grave.

She pulled out the money she had in her pocket and knew she didn't even have enough to get her a small bunch of flowers. She didn't even have enough to get something to eat, she had spent all her money on the return coach ticket, she had been in such a temper she hadn't even thought about what she was going to do for food and drink before she got back. That was it, the last straw, tears started flowing and she leant against the cold stone church wall trying to compose herself.

"Stop it, this isn't about you" she scolded herself crossly. She began to walk towards her mother's grave again, rubbing the remaining tears from her eyes. She hated feeling this pathetic and useless, she had looked after her Mum for god's sake, making sure she ate, making sure she took her medication, she had done the shopping and paid the bills and now she felt like she was regressing to a little kid again, being ordered about all the time and not being allowed to think for herself.

Before she got to the grave she came to a full stop. She was surprised to see someone brushing away the leaves, loose dirt and debris, and on the ground besides the grave lay a bouquet of beautiful bright red lilies, roses and gerberas.

For the first time in ages she smiled. For the first time in ages she actually felt like smiling. She walked up to the oblivious figure and tapped her on the shoulder.

Layla let out a shriek and dropped the brush as she swung round to see a grinning Jocelyn.

"This is a bit early for you isn't Layla?"

Layla grabbed her and pulled her into a huge hug.

"I've missed you Morstan"

"Right back at you Mukerjee, so what are you doing here so early?"
Wasn't sure if you would be able to come, so thought I would do it for you, lovely, oh Joss no, no don't cry, or you'll set me off."

The two girls hugged each other even tighter, until Layla pulled back and looked at her best friend. What she saw made her frown in concern. Jocelyn looked so worn down and pale, her dark blue eyes were tired and her mouth looked like it had forgotten how to smile. Her strawberry blonde hair looked wild and in need of a damn good cut. She was wearing her oldest clothes and she looked so miserable and lonely that Layla's heart ached.

"Joss, when's the last time you had some fun?" Layla cocked her head, her plaited black hair swinging to the side, and her brown eyes carefully studying her taller friend's sad face.

"Fun" Jocelyn spat back, her hand pointing to her mother's grave, feeling her anger rise at the stupid question

"Yes fun Jocelyn Jayne, or have you forgotten how we always celebrate birthdays?" Layla insisted suddenly angry, at Joss, at herself and at those idiots who were supposed to be looking after her.

"What did we do with your Mum last year, come on tell me, what did we do?" Layla insisted. Jocelyn paused.

"Face paints." she muttered reluctantly.

"Yes. "Layla demanded triumphantly as a small smile broke through the defeated tired despair on her friends face. "And…?"

"We took cake, balloons, facepaints and those disgustingly pink princess costumes you found in the back of your Dad's shop, to the hospital. We painted Mum's face and head, we changed into those princess outfits, decorated her wheelchair with birthday balloons and raced her through the corridors until those miserable security guards finally caught us and chucked us out. Then we waited until they took her back to her room, we climbed back in through her window and raced her down the other side of the hospital. Had a picnic in the grounds, where Mum started a food fight with the ambulance drivers, before they found us and made her go back."

Layla chuckled "You had more cake on your face than in your mouth."

"And you had icing in your hair and up your nose." Jocelyn retorted with a grin.

Layla sobered and stared seriously at her friend.

"That's all I am saying Joss, is that your mum always, always made birthdays fun, even when she was …ill. Remember 'Girls just want to have fun?' Every birthday Joss, she played that damn song every birthday, yours, hers, mine and even the cat's. I remember dancing as we walked to primary school to that Cyndi Lauper song…if that wasp faced stuck up funeral director hadn't said no, it would have been perfect at your mum's funeral…she would have laughed her socks off."

Jocelyn just shrugged but gave her friend a reluctant smile and Layla continued,

"Aunty Mary had a laughing heart and you shouldn't forget it. Even if life is crap at the moment, you need to remember that."

They both stared down at the bold beautiful red flowers replenishing the grey urn, and the ones they had scattered over the grave with the little shiny gold and silver stars, Layla had also brought.
They had hung the bright red bow on the side of the headstone.

Layla turned to face her friend with a mischievous grin on her lips and unshed tears in her glistening determined brown eyes as she slowly pulled her iPod out of her jacket pocket

"So Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, how are we gonna celebrate your fabulous mum's birthday"

As the first bars of 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun' rang through the empty cemetery, Jocelyn let out a sobbing laugh, and then found she couldn't stop.

John drew a deep breath to ease the sudden tightness in his chest and rapidly blinked away the sudden moisture that had hit his eyes. He had forgotten how Mary had been able to make him laugh.

They sat back to back on the grave, calming down. Each lost in thoughts and memories.

"I'm in such trouble Layla, I've done something stupid." Jocelyn murmured heavily

"Detention again?" her friend asked sympathetically, "Lost your temper with those arrogant sods at school did you?"

"No, well yes but not really."

"Well that makes such sense Joss." Layla teased, but the pause continued after she felt her friend shrug her shoulders.

"Lots of stuff including detention, but mainly I didn't tell them I was coming here, well I tried to tell, I mean ask but it all went wrong and they made me so cross yesterday because they or rather he wouldn't listen that I …"

It took Layla a little while to understand the jumbled words, Jocelyn stopped as she felt Layla swing round to face her and look at her incredulously,

"Joss you didn't tell them you were coming here?"

She continued, her voice getting higher and squeakier

"You came all the way to Cardiff without telling them?"

There was a kind of horrified awe in the question …and then as Joss slowly nodded her head,

"You are in such trouble." Layla breathed, her eyes still wide with disbelief and discomfort.

"Mum and Dad would have my guts for garters Joss."

"Yeah well it's alright for you, you know how to deal with a fath -I mean male parent figure." Jocelyn snapped.

Layla looked at her with concern and then stated with authority

"Dad's are easier to handle than mothers Jocelyn."

Jocelyn’s face was a picture of angry disbelief

"I wouldn't know would I? And you haven't met mine, I'm living in a household where the adults
are more hormonal than I am, and more sodding secretive than characters in an Agatha Christie mystery."

Jocelyn protested through gritted teeth.

The silence in the black car was tense as the live feed from the security cameras at the cemetery was displayed on the video screen in the back of the car.

"Agatha Christie," Sherlock mused out-loud, "enjoyed her books when I was little but grew out of them by the time I was 9 the plots were ridiculously easy of the time."

"Your daughter has a very apt turn of phrase John" smirked Mycroft, "I have often thought the problems in 221B related to a hormonal imbalance!"

"The girl thinks she is having a private conversation with her friend Mycroft." John protested.

"They were installed to ensure her safety and fortuitously not dismantled after her removal to Baker Street, however we can remedy the situation right now John, do you wish me to turn it off?" Mycroft asked with innocence but his eyes gleamed knowingly.

John had learnt more about his daughter by listening to this conversation than he had in the weeks she had been living with him.

"Damn you no Mycroft." John snarled and subsided in his seat.

"If you are a girl there's only two rules you need to know when dealing with fathers." Layla instructed with an evil smirk. She ticked them off on her fingers

"One, you always make them think that what you want to do is their idea and two you allow them to believe that you will never, ever, ever, under any circumstances, ever...have sex"

"Oh my god Layla!" Jocelyn's heartfelt groan was a symphony of embarrassed protest, but her friend continued imperviously

"My Dad sulked for a week when Mum and I bought my first bra, and when I had my first period he didn't eat for two days." she laughed wickedly.

"Layla, shut up." Jocelyn pleaded, "I am going to have to poke my own eyes out with sharp sticks now so I don't have to look him in the face ever, ever again."

The tense silence in the big black car was broken by an odd snorting noise which appeared to come from the beautiful woman with the Blackberry. The men turned their heads to look at her, but her expression remained bland, her eyes glued to the phone.

"Did you want to comment Anthea?" Mycroft asked irritably. She removed her gaze from her beloved blackberry and studied each and every one of them for a few seconds and then smiled gently at them.

"Miss Mukerjee is a very perceptive young lady Sir. My father still believes that I will never, ever, ever, under any circumstances, ever...have sex."

Her smile widened mockingly before she returned to her blackberry, leaving a stunned silence, and the three men feeling like they had a lost a crucial battle in a war that they didn't know existed.
Layla, the ever practical and pragmatic one said

"Damage limitation Joss."

Joss raised her eyebrows but she continued

"Ring one of them Stupid!"

"And how do I do that?"

"Well duh, call their mobiles and…"

She stopped as Joss continued to stare at her with pitying irritation.

"You don't know their mobile numbers…"

Joss nodded her head with encouragement

"You don't know the landline number and you don't have a mobile."

"Give that girl a gold star" Joss uttered sarcastically

"Do you mean to tell me you haven't been given….oh for the love of …What kind of idiot is your Dad?"

Inside the car, as Mycroft, Sherlock and even the lovely Anthea looked at him with surprise almost bordering on reproach, Watson muttered grimly "Bloody good question young lady." and then turned to Sherlock and growled, "Did it occur to you either genius?"

Sherlock wisely made no answer.

But Layla hadn't finished there,

"And what the hell is the matter with you Jocelyn, why didn't you just ask?"

Jocelyn fired up and retorted fiercely with a depth of bitterness that shocked the secret listeners.

"Oh yeah, right, ask the Hero Doctor who's nobly taken on his motherless illegitimate brat, but who didn't want me to call him Dad, or ask the charming Prince of Darkness who either bloody ignores me or takes the piss out of me.
Oh and when do I get the chance to ask, when I am running out the door for school or do I try to wait up for them until the early hours of the morning. Maybe I should leave a bloody post-it note, 'Dear Daddy, when you are buying the milk, don't forget to buy me a mobile, lots of love Jocelyn kiss kiss."

Layla looked at her wide-eyed and she continued more calmly but still with an edge of anger.

"My stuff hasn't turned up from the last foster home. I need clothes, I need a haircut, I need slippers and I even need a bloody A-Z because I get lost every time I step out of that sodding door, those are necessities, Layla and if I can't ask him for that how the hell am I supposed to ask for a luxury like a mobile phone."

But Layla hadn't finished, she wasn't giving up and she added bluntly;
"It's not a luxury, it's a necessity for you, you're living in a place you don't know with people who are idiots, you don't even know what their bloody landline number is. And you ask by opening your gob, and moving your tongue lovely, he's the one that forced you to live with him, you didn't even know the bugger existed, it's his problem not yours."

Then she added with an evil twinkle in her eyes,

"Besides which, he owes you fourteen years of bloody birthday presents."

If possible John's face became grimmer, as feelings of guilt hit him after the girl's words. Sherlock's lips tightened but Mycroft's smirk grew larger as he murmured.

"Noble Hero Doctor and Charming Prince of Darkness, your daughter has a lovely turn of phrase John, maybe it's her celtic blood."

The look John flung him made him laugh out loud.

Joss stared at her in disbelief, and then snorted with reluctant but genuine amusement which turned into great gulping laughter that forced itself out of her chest and she dropped to lie across her mother's grave. Once the laughter had calmed, she turned her face to the headstone, put out her hand to lovingly trace the letters of her mother's name and then asked more calmly but with an underlying touch of sadness

"You are mad and mercenary Mukerjee, so why are you the only one who ever makes sense in my life?"

Layla put her arms around her friend and pulled her up into a hug

"You're missing your mum, you are missing your home and you now have to cope with idiots with less parenting skills than an amoeba, so not a lot of things in your life make sense now do they?"

Then she grinned wickedly, her dark eyes sparkling and rubbed her cheek affectionately against Jocelyn's.

"Besides which, I am fabulous, girl and you may worship at my feet…"

Jocelyn clung tightly to her friend and rested her head against her shoulder.

"No hugs either Joss?" Layla asked sadly

"No….. Well that's not really fair, one when I had a bad nightmare about Mum."

There was a pregnant silence and then Layla spoke so sweetly that Jocelyn almost missed the venom and was sure she had misheard her

"Joss, when I meet this pair of tossers, I'm gonna bring my brothers cricket bat."

There was another snort from the Blackberry wielding assistant, and unbidden this time, she stated coolly as she glared at both John Watson and Sherlock Holmes.

"I believe I did mention Miss Mukerjee is a very perceptive young lady."
"So, damage limitation huh?" Jocelyn repeated with a sheepish smile.

"I think there's a number on Sherlock's website." she drew a deep steadying breath

"And boy is that going to be a pleasant conversation…do you think your mum would do it for me?"

She asked only half in jest.

"You've never been a coward Joss." Layla looked at her quizzically,

"I don't know, I think I have been behaving like a total wimp since they forced me into that horrible, horrible, horrible black car." She muttered with a shudder.

There was a lengthy pause and as Joss turned to look at her friend in curiosity, she saw a strange almost frightened expression on her face as she stared towards the entrance to the church yard

"You mean like that horrible, horrible, horrible, black car over there." Layla asked nervously.
"What black car? What fucking black car?"

John looked with dawning horror in his widening eyes at Sherlock and Mycroft, who were both intent upon the screen.

Anthea was already on her blackberry and one of the CCTV cameras on the church tower was repositioned to face the church yard entrance. A split view came up on the screen, one showing the two girls, and the other, an identical black saloon to the one they were travelling in which was parked in front of the gate, its darkened windows hiding the occupants as successfully as Mycroft's vehicle.

"Dear God Mycroft, tell me that's one of yours." John pleaded, the panic evident in his voice.

Mycroft didn't answer him, but his actions did. He ignored both Sherlock and John and addressed Anthea,

"I want the police there now; get me the registration number of that car and team gamma will retrieve the two girls."

"Christ Mycroft, they will be too late, how far away are we?"

The panic in his voice was not reflected in the calm stillness of his body, Sherlock knew how stressed John was and it never failed to amaze him how John's body reacted to the flood of adrenaline.

"At least twenty five minutes John." Sherlock answered automatically, his brain racing through options and discarding them as quickly.

"Jesus she doesn't have a mobile." John groaned "I didn't get her a mobile phone." he repeated with guilty anguish.

"Shut up." Sherlock interrupted him ruthlessly,

"I'm trying to think, Jocelyn doesn't have a mobile but Layla? Of course she does...Mycroft?" he demanded.

The look of relief on John's face was palpable; Mycroft nodded his understanding whilst he sent a text and then informed Sherlock,

"The number will be with you momentarily."

John said, "Ring her Sherlock, no time for texts, tell them to run"

Sherlock dialled the number which had popped up on his mobile phone.
John looked at the screen willing the girl to pick up as they heard her phone ring.

Layla tore her eyes away from the frown on her friends face, and the dreaded black car, to pull out her phone and then scowl at the unknown number reflected there.

"Stranger danger." she mocked in a terrible West Country accent, Jocelyn looked back at her distractedly.

"What?"

"A number I don't recognise so not going to answer it, and who would be ringing me at this time in the morning anyway"

Layla shrugged, pressed the ignore button and put her phone back in her pocket.

The four occupants of the speeding black car looked at the screen in horrified disbelief.

"What, who does that? Dear God what is it like in a teenage girls brain?" Sherlock ground out in frustration

"No." John whispered in shock.

Mycroft and Anthea exchanged a grim look.

"What?" Jocelyn repeated distractedly, her attention divided between the car at the other end of the churchyard and her friend.

"Don't you remember that mad Cornish lady in that orange dress, when we were six, coming into class to tell us about Stranger danger…. 'Don't you be talking to no strangers now, because they're danger.'..." Layla repeated the atrocious accent and grinned at Joss.

John muttered aloud without realising it.

"I am going to find that bloody woman and teach her about stranger danger."

"I will make it my priority John" promised Mycroft harshly and it was unnerving how cold his voice could become.

"All the parents lost it because every time we saw someone we didn't know the whole class screamed stranger danger for a week." Layla continued amused

Joss's response was an evil smirk

"Oh yeah, I remember, it was Joseph's idea wasn't it, we wanted to see how long it would take the adults to go nuts…. That one was almost as good as the hamster, the box of Lego, the yellow paint and the fairy cakes episode... he was an evil little sod that lad."

Her admiring tone turned into a fit of giggles.

The conversation had taken less than twenty seconds, but to the occupants of the car it felt like hours.
Sherlock tried again and again but the calls were ignored, although they could see a worried frown begin to form on Layla's face.

"This is getting a bit creepy Joss, persistent aren't they!" she said.

Joss began to look worried as well and she kept on looking at the car.

By now even Mycroft began to lose some of that imperturbable cool and he suggested rather forcefully,

"Text her Sherlock."

John urged "Mycroft ring her parents, she'll accept a call from them"

Mycroft looked at John with surprised approval

"Excellent idea John."

As the two Holmes brothers bent to their respective tasks, in the silence they heard Jocelyn's speak in a considering tone with an underlying edge of anger.

"Layla, are you wearing your heels?"

"Joss I am not that short", Layla grumbled, "no I am not wearing them."

"Well since we are in Wales, reckon I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, how do you think that horrible car would cope with the scenic route to your house?"

The was a resentful bite to her words

"Oh God yes Joss, run, run now, you wonderful disobedient brat, and I will only ground you for five years instead of ten." her father pleaded at the unresponsive screen.

Layla raised one eyebrow and looked at the ominous stationary car again

"You sure Joss, if that's your Dad he is going to be so pissed at you"

"Lamb sheep, sheep lamb, he should have listened yesterday then shouldn't he!" Jocelyn muttered shrugging her shoulders, as she started backing away slowly towards the headstone, one eye on the car and one on her disbelieving friend, before she blew a kiss at her mother's name.

"Over the Wall, onto River Walk, past Bute Square and through the viaduct?" She grinned the challenge at her friend,

"Last one on Ninian Close buys the breakfast at McDonalds, and if it's me, you'll just have to lend me the money cos I spent it all on the return ticket and haven't got any."

She laughed recklessly as she took off running towards the back wall which surrounded the church yard,

Layla stooped in one graceful motion, grabbed her bag and took off after her friend.
They were over the back wall and on the river walk in a very short time.

As her father waited in trepidation for some response from the black car, Mycroft looked at Anthea, who responded immediately,

"Team Delta will be waiting on Ninian close, teams' Gamma and Beta will take care of the car and any potential pursuit, I have told them the route the girls will be following. I have diverted the police in case clean up is required first. I have also diverted our driver to the Mukerjee's residence instead of the churchyard."

"Thank you my dear" Mycroft responded

Sherlock was unwillingly impressed by Anthea's efficiency. John didn't even notice it.

Then they were all stunned to see the black car pull smoothly away from the church with no attempt to follow the girls.

"Teams Gamma and Beta are in pursuit sir" Anthea reported calmly,

"Mycroft, tell your people not to intercept but to follow them, we need to find out where they are going"

Sherlock urged and then after seeing the look on John's face he amended quickly

"Only of course as long as the girls aren't in danger"

Mycroft nodded imperceptibly at Anthea who became engrossed in her blackberry once again.

Mycroft phone beeped, he checked it and then looked at John,

"The Mukerjees' are expecting us"
She stood in the entrance to the kitchen uncertainly; he was intent upon the microscope on the
table in front of him and scribbling away on a notebook. She watched him work for a few
seconds, and then turned to go. This was so not a good idea.

"What do you want?" Sherlock asked irritably without removing his gaze from his experiment.

"I…. you're busy" Jocelyn muttered. She winced as she waited for the acerbic response and she
wasn't disappointed.

"You came to tell me something I know? How kind." he retorted with deadly sarcasm, and she
flinched as she moved from foot to foot.

She started to apologise and back away, but he seemed to reconsider, sighed and said in a slightly
less exasperated voice

"What do you want Jocelyn?"

He could almost hear her trying to gather the courage to speak to him, and intrigued he turned to
look at her.

She was still in her school uniform, although looking slightly dishevelled. Her practical black
shoes were scuffed, her hair was untidy, and there were ink smudges on her cuffs from the little
drawings on her hand. She wrote on her hands? He could remember being scolded for writing on
his hands at school, and for a moment he nearly smiled. But he suppressed the urge.

He checked the time, he had been so focused on his work he had lost hours, perhaps she was
hungry and needed access to the kitchen, but she didn't look hungry, she looked anxious. In her
right hand she clutched a piece of paper.

"A note from school?" he asked and saw her start and then look down at the paper as if she had
forgotten it was there. She nodded

"Parents evening, there's appointment times for all my subjects"

Curiosity satisfied he turned back to his work and promptly forgot about her.

Now it was her turn to feel exasperated, she drew a deep breath and spoke firmly.

"I have to confirm that someone will be there." She insisted bravely.

He responded without turning back to her, "Someone will be there, put it on the mantelpiece."
"The date is tom-"

"Yes, yes I told you to put it on the mantelpiece, now do shut up!"

She rolled her eyes, but she was also relieved, after the horrible fall out from her little trip to Cardiff, she had been following their rules, minding her behaviour and being so polite her Mum would have called a doctor thinking she was ill.

The drive back to London in that bloody car with the three disapproving adults had been a complete nightmare. The silence had been oppressive. Her father so angry even his breathing sounded furious, and Sherlock was either ignoring her or sending her nasty little glares. The intimidating man she'd been sick on before, the one she'd hoped never to see again, was apparently Sherlock's brother, so Mr Umbrella Man was likely to be in her life for the foreseeable future. He was staring blandly at her and smirking every now and then. Even that beautiful woman with the blackberry had studied her impassively for a couple of minutes, and then surprisingly winked at her once before she had joined the driver in the front of the car.

She had tried once to say sorry though, trying to stop her voice from wobbling but under the glares from the three of them she had shut up again, and just stared miserably down at the shoes on her feet, trying not to cry because she was scared and so so tired. Her father had the same expression as the night before when he had shouted at her, and after her adventure she just didn't have the courage to look at any of them. She might have been filled with angry bravado talking to Layla but that had all drained away when she had sat in the back of that horrible horrible horrible black car with the three very angry men,

She'd been so tired and the motion of the car had made her so sleepy that she had been unable to stop herself from dosing off, she was unaware that her father had forced Sherlock to sit beside his brother, to allow her to stretch out on the back seat, with her head on his lap, whilst he stroked her hair gently. Sherlock had taken Mycroft's overcoat and draped it across her, ignoring Mycroft's glares "Why didn't you use your coat?" he complained but Sherlock looked at him as if he was mad "My Belstaff? I don't think so". Mycroft had muttered with barely concealed relief "well at least she won't be car sick this time."

Being grounded hadn't made that much difference to her life in London, Layla was too far away and it was not as if she had any friends in this place anyway, so she was trying to be as unobtrusive as possible, trying to be good like she had promised her mum and avoided talking to her father as much as possible, because the look of angry disappointment in his eyes actually hurt and she didn't know what to say to him.

That was why she had chosen to mention the parents evening to Sherlock instead of her father. It was more comfortable to have a buffer between them at the moment, even if it was Sherlock, the arrogant pain in the bum.

The rest of her class had known about the date for parent's evening since the start of the term but it was short notice for her because she had only just joined the school, and someone had finally remembered that she needed to be included!

She placed the piece of paper on the mantelpiece next to that cool skull of Sherlock's and went off to her room to get changed out of her uniform, staying there most of the evening doing her homework and then having tea with Mrs Hudson because her father and Sherlock had gone out again.

The next day, she waited in the reception area, watching parents arriving and being taken to their appointments by their sons or daughters, she waited and waited and waited, trying to ignore the sneering smirks of the kids who liked to take the piss out of her, and what was infinitely worse,
ignore the curious and then pitying looks from the others who were nicer and from Mrs Stevens, the deputy head as she made her rounds.

Finally at ten to six, when she had been waiting for nearly three hours, when she saw the last of the parents leaving and the teachers packing up to go, and when Mrs Stevens came towards her, and said kindly

"Don't worry Jocelyn, I will contact your father and ask him to come in at a more convenient date, obviously something has come up unexpectedly, better run off home now and have your tea."

The resentment, embarrassment and hurt turned to a deep bubbling anger. She couldn't get any words passed the horrible lump in her throat, so she just nodded stiffly at the teacher and left.

She made her way slowly back to Baker street, trying to calm down, trying to tell herself there was a really good reason, trying not to be a total wimp and cry. She had thought this might make a difference, if he saw how hard she had worked maybe he would be proud of her for a change and even start to like her a little.

There was a police car outside the house when she got there, she had got used to that in the weeks since she had come to Baker Street, although the first couple of times she had been scared out of her wits, so maybe there had a good reason and they just hadn't had a chance to contact the school, she started to feel marginally better.

She could hear raised voices as she walked up the stairs, Mrs Hudson sounded upset, her father was talking in that abrupt way he had when he was angry, and there was a third voice she didn't recognise.

"For god sake John, I understand and I'm here aren't I, but it's only been a couple of hours, there's not much we can do yet except..."

They were making too much noise to hear her approach and she wondered idly what was wrong as she walked into the living.

"Hello." she said quietly. Then all hell broke loose around her.

"Where the bloody hell have you been?"

"Jocelyn, we have been so worried!"

"Inconsiderate brat, you have interrupted important work!"

A storm of words were directed at her, in tones varying from scolding to outright anger and disdain. She stood there and stared at them in sheer disbelief, her bag falling to the floor unnoticed. Her eyes found her father and Sherlock standing by the fireplace, she ignored the other two occupants of the room.

Shock kept her silent, but she could practically feel her blood boil with rage.

She vaguely heard a male voice mutter something about being glad he wasn't needed but she still didn't turn around, she couldn't remove her gaze from the two men in front of her, who were staring at her as if she had just crawled out from under a rock.

"I suggest you apologise to-" Sherlock's icy cold voice began, but he didn't get the chance to finish his sentence.
"Are you taking the piss?" Jocelyn asked with a terrible calm through gritted teeth, forgetting her intentions to be good, to obey their rules, forgetting her previous punishment forgetting everything but the angry disbelieving hurt filling her. The outrage on her face was clearly visible to both her father and Sherlock.

There was utter silence. Jocelyn had never knowingly sworn in front of them before.

The footsteps behind her stopped, Mrs Hudson drew in a sharp breath, her father's head snapped back and he stared at her assessingly, Sherlock narrowed his eyes at her, disdain on his face and a watchful waiting stillness in his long lean length but she was on a roll and not stopping for anything.

"You have the cheek to tell me that I am the one who needs to apologise." The calm was disappearing fast and her voice was rising.

They could see the struggle she had to hang on to her temper; she was clenching her hands into fists, and her body was rigid with tension and outrage.

"I stood there for three hours, three bloody hours, waiting for you, while every other parent who gave a shit turned up..."

"What? What are you talking about, you're not making sense." Her father interrupted

She glared at him, almost incandescent with rage,

"Don't tell me you didn't know, I told him, no I asked him, he said someone would come," and she pointed to Sherlock, "and he tells you everything."

She turned to Sherlock, tears of rage glistening in her eyes,

"Three possibilities Mr Genius Consulting Detective, you told him and you both couldn't be bothered, or you didn't tell him which would make you nasty, petty and just bloody mean. Or if you just deleted it, which shows how totally unimportant I am to the pair of you anyway."

The two of them were staring at her as if she had grown a second head and was spouting ancient Greek from it. She marched between them, reached up to the mantelpiece, picked up a piece of paper and slapped it hard against her father's chest. When he instinctively grabbed it and her hand, she tugged her hand away and hissed at him.

"Mrs Stevens will ring you tomorrow to arrange a meeting at a more convenient time for you, to discuss my educational progress. You might as well tell her to speak to my social worker in Cardiff, at least I know she gives a shit and I would hate to interrupt another exciting episode in the life of 'Pinky and the Brain'".

In the stunned silence she spun round, and marched towards the bedrooms, only stopping to look straight at Mrs Hudson and saying clearly

"I apologise if I worried you Mrs Hudson, I didn't expect to be waiting at school for three hours for someone to turn up who actually gives a f..."

"Jocelyn Jayne Watson, that's enough" Her father roared, but she spun round to face him with tears of rage and hurt running down her face

"My name is Morstan! You can't even get that right!" she spat, hating him at that precise moment. She stormed upstairs and slammed her bedroom door behind her, completely forgetting there was
a fourth person in the living room.

The three other adults turned to look at Sherlock, who shrugged his shoulders defensively and uttered "What?"

Mrs Hudson sighed deeply "Oh Sherlock what have you done now" and slowly went back downstairs to her flat.

"For Christ sake, Sherlock" John began angrily, but before he could continue DI Lestrade interrupted with amusement on his face,

"Your daughter is quite something John; I haven't met many people who could silence Sherlock Holmes without a weapon or extra strong duct tape."

Sherlock growled and stalked towards the window, where he stood staring out at the darkened street below.

Lestrade continued, his smirk getting bigger

"Bit of advice guys, buy a kitchen memo board, helps you keep track of things like this, and its a lot less wearing on the emotions."

He headed towards the stairs.

"Thanks for coming, Greg." John muttered distractedly with his attention firmly fixed on Sherlock.

As he went out they heard Lestrade chuckle evilly "Pinky and the Brain, classic, I have to remember that one."

Sherlock's head swivelled to look at Lestrade's retreating form, the frown of puzzlement on his face matched the one on John's as they stared after him, then they turned back to look at each other.

Sherlock could see the anger and disappointment in John's face and the unfamiliar feeling of guilt began to rise. There weren't many people who could make him feel guilty, he could count their number on the finger of one hand; John obviously, Mrs Hudson, Lestrade, once in a blue moon, Molly and bottom of the pile, Mycroft. The initial guilt for causing them pain when he had faked his death he had long since rationalised and dealt with, even the guilt of his return he had managed to suppress because of the joy of being back with John and the excitement of the hunt for Moran. Guilt couldn't change who he was, but John was the only one for whom he actually tried to modify that behaviour in the first place.

"I forgot John." he admitted uncomfortably. "I was working in the kitchen and she came to tell me, I did promise her that someone would go and then I got distracted." He hated to admit to being at fault but this time he also felt guilty because of the look of hurt on the girl's face. It was obvious even though she covered it up with anger.

"Christ Sherlock, I thought, well you know what I thought after Cardiff, and you are standing there telling me that you knew where she was all along!" John's voice was getting louder by the syllable. "What the hell's the matter with you?"

"I can't afford to get distracted, John." He flung angrily at his partner, who wasn't haven't any of it.

"Then why did you come back?" John asked mercilessly
The taller man paled but before he could say anything, John continued

"We were all distractions Sherlock, me, Mrs Hudson, and Lestrade but you could afford us, you made room for us in that genius too human mind of yours, now you need to clear a bit of space for Jocelyn. Just a little bit, love, she's not that tall, unlike her Dad."

and he grinned wryly, anger suddenly abating as it always did with this impossible beautiful man.

"She won't take up much room but she needs to be there too."

"John, I don't know if I can do this." He suddenly confessed his eyes full of panic.

"Jesus, Sherlock, you bested the most dangerous criminal mind in the world, you came back from the dead, you have the man who is the British government at your beck and call, and you can't handle one teenage girl?"

"Can you?" Sherlock retorted

"Touché." John winced. Then straightened his shoulders and stared implacably back at him.

"Use your problem solving skills Sherlock, remember when you felt alone, it wasn't good was it? I know what it was like to feel that alone, I was alone before I met you and when you 'left' being alone again nearly destroyed me. Now she feels alone and I don't want that for her, not when she has us"

They stared at each other for a long time until Sherlock nodded slightly

"I'll try John, I'll try" he offered with an uncomfortable smile.

"That's all I want, and you know damn well that Sherlock Holmes trying something is always far superior to ordinary people actually doing the same thing" 

John acknowledged, turning away to hide the lump in his throat

"Now I have to go sort this out with Jocelyn" he straightened up and looked like he was gearing himself for battle.

"No John,“ Sherlock announced with determination, "I caused this problem, I will go and talk to her"

John winced and thought about Jocelyn's likely reaction to being apologised to at the same time as being told it was her fault anyway for being stupid, and tried to find a way to tell him that maybe it wasn't a good idea but as per usual Sherlock got there before him

"I said I would try John,"

John resigned himself to picking up very large pieces after the emotional fall out on this one.

"Call Angelo's and get something in for us all, she likes Italian, and we can sit down together to eat. Get her something sweet for desert too"

Sherlock suggested nonchalantly as he headed towards his desk

"That's a bloody good idea" John said impressed "and we'll have an evening in with her, watch some crap telly"
Sherlock gave a long suffering dramatic sigh but made no demur as he left his desk and headed towards Jocelyn's room.

There was a knock on her bedroom door, but she refused to answer. She was bitterly angry and hurt and she didn't trust herself to speak. She wanted to scream and throw things but she knew it wouldn't get her anywhere except in more trouble, but she would be damned if she would speak to them right now.

The knock came again, more impatient this time and Sherlock's voice said "I'm coming in Jocelyn."

"No you're not, go away." she answered angrily, restraining the desire to use the worst words she could think of to tell him to leave her alone.

"Tough." he responded before opening the door.

She was sitting cross legged on her bed, glaring at him, her fair hair looked like she had been tugging at it, and her dark blue eyes were spitting fire.

An image suddenly popped into his head from a case involving the disappearance of a toddler, where the only clue was a colourful book full of those idiotic little fairies with which they brainwashed little children and turned them into idiots.

She reminded him of the naughty pixie who was always cross. He nearly laughed at the unexpected allusion. Good God, he thought he had deleted that horrible book from his hard drive, but it had obviously become stuck.

He ignored her for a moment as his gaze roamed round the room. He hadn't been in this room since they had given it to her and he was curious to see what she had done with it. Not a lot, and then he remembered that her possessions were still in Cardiff.

She hadn't had a chance to make the room hers yet and the recognition of its temporary transient ambiance made him thoughtful.

He turned back to her and saw her angry apprehensive expression. She was bracing herself for him to say something hurtful and trying not to show it.

"I'm sorry" he said simply, not taking his quicksilver eyes off her.

She caught her breath and looked disbelieving, her wide blue eyes blinked at him, and it was … sweet.

He nearly smiled. She really did look like her father sometimes. If he could remember that then it might make it easier on all of them. Interesting concept, a mini female John.

"Wh...what?" she stuttered.

"Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, I ask your forgiveness for my selfish and thoughtless behaviour and for causing you any inconvenience, hurt or embarrassment."

He stated formally in his beautiful baritone voice which seemed to wrap itself around her strangely like a big soft blanket. Her eyes became enormous and disbelief turned to wary confusion.

He carried on steadily, never taking his eyes from her face,

"My actions were not deliberate in nature, I was …distracted, I forgot and I did not inform your father, who had no knowledge of the parents evening at your school, and was angry tonight because he was worried about you" A pause
"He is now very angry with me" he admitted wryly.

He tilted his head to one side and continued to study her as she stared at him wordlessly.

"Your father is ordering Italian for us all at the moment, and we thought we would spend the evening watching tv, is that acceptable to you?"

She nodded her head slowly; he carried on knowing she was wondering why her father hadn't made his appearance.

"He would have come to talk to you himself, but I told him that this was my fault, and he paid me the courtesy of allowing me to speak to you alone."

"He called you Watson because he thinks of you as his" he added as an afterthought, and then was horrified to see her eyes fill up with tears.

It was getting to be rather unnerving for the great Sherlock Holmes, trying to win the approval and acceptance of an unhappy teenage girl. When it was necessary and when he could be bothered, he could always manipulate situations to his satisfaction but this was taking an awfully long time, he was having to work to get her forgiveness, just like her father had made him when he had returned after the fall. God they were a tough pair.

He decided to throw in his trump card. Bribery was supposed to work with kids wasn't it?

He put his hand into his trouser pocket, and then Jocelyn surprised him again

"Thank you" she whispered, but she didn't drop her eyes from his and he could see the sincerity in them "and I am sorry too, I knew you were busy and I could have mentioned it to him myself, but after Cardiff..." she shrugged uncomfortably and didn't continue. She looked down sadly.

The new pink smart-phone landed on the bed in front of her. She stared at it as if she had never seen one before and then up at Sherlock in patent amazement.

He smirked at her, and waited for her reaction. It was taking longer than he thought necessary for her to say something.

"It's Pink", Sherlock began to pout as he pointed out the obvious at her lack of verbal response.

She looked at him helplessly,

"Girls like pink", he continued with growing irritation.

She opened her lips to enlighten him that most girls grew out of the colour pink from the age of 10. But she saw the look on his face. He had tried to do something nice for her with hardly any data to go on. Teenage girls were not his area. He could have just got her a bog standard boring black phone but he had made the conscious decision to choose a pink one that would appeal to a girl, or more specifically her.

It was actually endearing, she wasn't going to slap him down for it and she wanted that phone so badly she wouldn't have cared if it was hairy with purple fluorescent spots.

He had begun to walk towards the bedroom door obviously tired of waiting for a response from her when she stopped him in his tracks with one single word.

"Sherlock"
She had never used his name before. It came out hesitantly as if she was afraid he would object, but strangely he felt a sort of warmth in his chest.

He turned slowly round to see her grinning at him like a mini mad Cheshire cat, and she asked, her face alight with excitement.

"Can you show me how to use it please?"

Then as if she couldn't contain herself she leapt off the bed, and before he had time to react, wrapped her arms around him in a fierce hug. His arms hung uselessly by his sides for a few seconds then hesitantly patted her on her back. Thankfully she pulled away from him, and he took his opportunity to escape.

"Time for tea" he uttered desperately and left.

She went downstairs, Sherlock had gone to their bedroom and her father was in the kitchen laying the table. Amazingly it wasn't covered by experiments, books and paperwork, and actually looked like a normal dining table for the first time since she had come to Baker Street.

Her father looked at her and gave her a proper smile, she realised it was the first one since the "Cardiff episode". He came closer, and said calmly

"I'm sorry about today Joss, it was a misunderstanding and it got out of hand, I'll talk to the school tomorrow and arrange a meeting. Ok?"

She decided then and there that she didn't care if John Watson and Sherlock Holmes didn't do hugs, she did and they would just have to get used to them.

She stepped closer to her father and wrapped her arms around him. She didn't make it last too long, she had decided on hit and run tactics, to wear them both down and keep them guessing.

The meal had been almost normal. Dad had talked about his day in the surgery, Sherlock had rambled on about the IQ test he would force any police officer to undergo before they were allowed to join. Jocelyn had listened and watched fascinated. Now the dishes were done, and the table cleared after the meal.

Her father and Sherlock were sitting on the sofa when she came in with three mugs of tea on a tray. The mugs were deposited on the coffee table in front of the sofa.

There was a barely concealed grin on her Dad's face and a smirk on Sherlock's mouth, as they both patted the space between them on the sofa.

She eyed them warily as she sat between them. They were up to something,

"Jocelyn, we will look at some of the functions on your phone while your Dad finds something for us all to watch" Sherlock said once she was sitting down.

She was engrossed in what Sherlock was showing her and did not notice her father skimming through the channels until he found the one he wanted.

The next thing she heard was the highly recognisable theme tune to her favourite cartoon

"Pinky and the Brain,

Pinky and the Brain,
One's intelligent and
The other's insane

The words to the refrain came across loud and clear. Jocelyn's head swung round to look at the TV in horror. She lunged for the remote but her father easily held her off.

"We thought we might watch this Joss, we haven't even heard of this before, is it good?"

Sherlock asked innocently, but his grin was evil and her father started to laugh.

The suddenness of her elbows connecting with the ribs on either side of her caught them both unawares, and the muffled male grunts were incredibly satisfying.

She took the remote control out of her fathers unresisting hand and switched the channels until she found the reality competition show "Four Weddings".

She peeped sideways at the pair of them, and honour was nearly satisfied at the horror illustrated on their faces when they realised that the show was about weddings and only weddings. But they hadn't suffered enough. She would have to crush them.

Jocelyn grinned naughtily at the pair of them as she popped the remote down the front of her top and twisted the knife in a way that left Sherlock in awe and her father crying with laughter.

"If you don't like this, we could always watch America's next top model" she said sweetly.

Chapter End Notes

Disclaimers… Same as the others, not mine, never will be, only having fun. The wonderful world of Pinky and the Brain is owned by Warner Bros. Can't you just see the expression on their faces when they watch an episode!
"I'm bored" came the whine for the seventh time in the space of ten minutes and finally there was a reaction from the man lounging on the sofa, sipping his tea and trying to read the morning newspaper.

"You should have thought about that before you got yourself grounded young lady", his voice was calm and unconcerned, and he continued sipping as he refused to put down the paper.

Sherlock snorted, and continued working on the laptop; he had called up a stopwatch on the screen and was running a little side experiment on the timings of Jocelyn's reactions.

There was silence for all of three minutes,

"But it's Saturday and I'm bored, its cruel and unusual punishment to be bored on a Saturday, It's prohibited in the UN Charter of Children's rights, and if its not it should be"

There was a strange breathy sound and the paper rustled, but there was a conspicuous non response.

She really, really didn't like the feeling of being ignored and she watched him tune her out for five minutes, before she uttered blandly in as boring a voice as possible

"So I told him that I thought my father might have a problem becoming a grandfather at his age, since he is only 60 but he offered me a talking unicorn and a free trip to the moon so of course I said having sex was fine only I would have to insist on England winning the football world cup, but he seemed to think that would be a problem as it was so far out of the realms of possibility that he would have to find another inhabited world to find some other female to make babies with in his insulated purple plastic spaceship."

There was an expectant pause as she stared at the disappointingly unmoving newspaper, until Sherlock drawled from the desk without looking up

"Your father has another twenty years before he reaches sixty Jocelyn, do try to be realistic"

She giggled helplessly for thirty three seconds before managing to control herself but lost it again when her father corrected Sherlock smoothly

"Twenty one Sherlock, get it right"

She waited for seven minutes and forty seven seconds.

"I'm bored, bored, bored, bored, bored" she intoned in a singsong voice designed to be as irritating as possible
"Go and tidy your room" Her father grunted unimpressed.

"My room's always tidy" she snapped straight back "unlike this living room" she muttered under her breath.

"What did you say?" Her father growled

"Nothing" she denied quickly.

Sherlock was enjoying this experiment; he would label it the Parental Power Struggle in his notes, he might even devise a series of experiments to test the results. So far John had the edge; obviously his time in the army had inured him to this kind of dangerous interaction. But Jocelyn was an unknown element and there was a particular gleam in her eyes that suggested she might relish this challenge.

He made sure his attention was focused on the laptop when Jocelyn suddenly looked at him. She stared at him with determination for nearly four minutes before he raised his head to look at her. A further ten seconds whilst she stared solemnly at him, then gave him the most outrageous wink and looked back at her father, her head tilted.

Sherlock nearly laughed out loud, how fascinating, he recognised that stubborn "you'll not get the better of me" expression. Father and daughter were both wearing it now.

"I'm bored, bored, bored, bored, bored" she sang again, but her father ignored her.

The grin fled her face so quickly Sherlock almost thought he had imagined it,

Seventy nine seconds later and she asked in her sweetest most innocent voice

"Well can we play a game then, what about Cluedo?"

She plastered a hopeful puppy expression on her face

"God, no" her father exhaled as Sherlock's head came up in interest.

"We could give Sherlock a handicap, to make it fairer" she wheedled

"We never play Cluedo because Sherlock thinks the victim did it"

Her father ground out

"Really, how is that possible" Joss turned a fascinated face towards Sherlock who opened his mouth to happily boast about his wonderful deduction when her father lowered his paper and glared with unmistakable warning at the pair of them

"I want to read this paper in peace and that's what's going to happen, are we clear?" The tone of voice would have quelled any rebellious solder in his old regiment.

He couldn't believe it when the same pout crossed the two different faces in front of him.

He wasn't going to laugh; he was not going to laugh. He was going to relax and read his damn paper. It was his Saturday too and he was going to relax. He was bloody well not going to feel sorry for her or guilty.

He settled back and raised the paper again.

Sherlock wondered if Jocelyn had noticed that John had been reading the same page since she had
Sherlock wondered if Jocelyn had noticed that John had been reading the same page since she had started her attention seeking antics.

John tried to read in the resultant silence, a part of him waiting for the next comment, but as the minutes ticked by with not a sound from her, guilt started to nibble away at his concentration, he risked a sideways glance and saw her staring fixedly at the carpet.

"Oh for god's sake put the TV on and watch something" he suggested irritably, and snapped his paper back into place.

John thought he heard the word "Grump" whispered but when he peered over the top of his paper she looked as innocent as a new born lamb; he scowled at her and retired behind the paper again.

She risked a quick look at Sherlock, and then said innocently

"But Sherlock's working and I don't want to disturb him"

The deep indrawn breath from behind the paper nearly broke her composure but she couldn't risk laughing now.

Sherlock was beginning to believe that John was outclassed and outgunned in this contest.

She went and sat on the floor by the sofa, her head in line with the hand holding the newspaper.

Slowly over a period of seventy four seconds she lowered her head until it was resting on the edge of the sofa, inches away from her father's left arm.

"There are three spiders near that hole on the ceiling" she noted casually.

Both men looked up automatically.

Sherlock had forgotten he had fired the gun at the ceiling. The bullet holes in the walls had been repaired but the workmen must have missed that one.

Thirty six seconds later

"Do you think spiders are allowed fresh air" she asked wistfully

"I'm sure they are, if they haven't been grounded" was the ironic answer.

Seven seconds later

"But if we went out together, wouldn't that technically count as being grounded because you could make sure I didn't enjoy myself, and fresh air is supposed to be good for growing kids, isn't it Doctor?" she persisted gently, still staring up at the ceiling.

Sherlock approved of her attempt to use logic as a basis for bargaining

John closed his eyes, he wouldn't look at Sherlock, he wouldn't. He continued to ignore her, although he was now desperate to laugh.

She turned to rest her chin on the sofa instead of the back of her head, and stare directly at her father with big wide eyes and a saintly expression on her face

Thirteen seconds later

"We could do the shopping together and I could help you with the chip and pin machines" One fair eyebrow rose hopefully.
John drew in a shallow breath, no deep breaths or he could start to laugh, he wasn't going to laugh, he wasn't going to laugh and if that sod Sherlock didn't stop smirking over at them, he would ask Lestrade to make sure he had no cases for a month.!

Finally, after forty three minutes and fifty nine seconds of covert warfare, Jocelyn delivered the treacherous teenage daughter coup de grace.

She placed her face close to her fathers, and simply used the one word that had lain between them unspoken since her arrival

"Daddy….. please?"

While she went to get changed to go out shopping with her father, John turned to Sherlock and said wryly,

"Well you were a big help, I just got played didn't I?"

"As well as I play my violin John" was the evil amused response.
Puberty, Privacy and Misperception

Chapter Summary

Puberty and teenage embarrassment. lots and lots of embarrassment. beware
So Jocelyn finally realises that they heard her conversation with Layla. Infact they heard everything... She is so angry she could kill them, and then Mrs Hudson makes it worse....
Poor Jocelyn, overload of embarrassment as only a teenage girl would understand.

Comments would be great, tell me what you think..

Next chapter has Mycroft and a surprise.....

Disclaimers: As previously… and this is such fun.

It was the following Thursday, it was raining; the morning was dark and miserable, and she was nearly late for school again. It wasn't her fault this time. Her father had been still asleep, and she had been trying to stay quiet while getting ready to go to school.

But Sherlock had been particularly obstreperous; he had been up all night working on something which can't have been successful because he was grumpy and didn't care who knew it.

He had been in the bathroom with no concept of the time, she had tried to get his attention quietly but he had ignored her until she had lost her temper and pounded on the door, saying in a very loud voice

"Sherlock I need to wee… now".

Unfairly her father had blamed her for waking him up and then Sherlock for being Sherlock. He and Sherlock had started a sniping war which made her even more uncomfortable and she was desperate to get out of the door that morning.

But he was equally determined that things were done 'properly', she was going to have breakfast before she left and she needn't think otherwise, he was barking out orders and expecting to be obeyed. He was in full officer mode with a sprinkling of doctor knows best even though he was exhausted.

She could see him clinging onto his temper through gritted teeth right up until the point where there hadn't been any milk for her cereal.

As his face darkened he started to shout, something about it always being the bloody milk, and Sherlock shouting that milk was tedious and so was John. Jocelyn had grabbed her bag, her coat, and practically ran out of the door. She heard one of them call her name but she pretended she hadn't.

They weren't her favourite people this morning and she had had enough.

She hated shouting, she couldn't deal with it and she would rather go hungry to school and have something there for breakfast. She trudged her way through the grey, wet windy miserable morning.

She felt as miserable and grey as the morning and she wasn't looking forward to her day. She
enjoyed her lessons for the most part but today the thought of biology, double maths, and then double physics was as depressing as the rain.

So she wasn't as focused on her class as normal and her brain drifted until something that had been buried deep floated to the surface and began to nag at her until she finally began to listen.

The clues had been there, but Sherlock had been proved right; she was as stupid as he claimed most people were. What did he say about ordinary people, that they had funny little brains? Well her funny little brain hadn't noticed anything.

She had trusted them. She didn't trust easily but they were her only family now and you were supposed to trust family, weren't you? She had actually trusted them. She hadn't joined the dots at all because she wasn't expecting there to be any dots.

But there they were, bright, shiny and so obvious, once you knew what you were looking at. She had used a very basic version of Sherlock's method of observation on herself and the nagging thoughts, out of idle curiosity and procrastination so that she didn't have to concentrate on class work and now, now she was going to kill him and her Dad.

Slow painful deaths which would wash away the cringe-worthy, toe-curling, blush-generating, sick-making images and sounds in her brain.

Sherlock's gift of the phone pre-programmed with every number she could need, even Layla's; Mrs Hudson taking her to the hairdresser after school last week and then late night clothes shopping, (she'd especially loved the Hollister T-shirts even if Mrs Hudson had balked at queuing to get in and the murky darkness in the store); the pair of soft purple cosy slippers she'd found in her bedroom; the oh so casual comment from her father that Stephanie the social worker would be bringing the rest of her belongings from Cardiff when she came to visit in a couple of weeks time, but the clincher, the absolute eureka moment, was in her double maths lesson, when she pulled out a London A-Z instead of her geometry workbook.

Then the 100 watt light-bulb had switched on in her head and dazzled her with its obviousness. The Pythagorean Theorem they were supposed to be reviewing disappeared like dissipating mist from her conscious mind and she felt like she had been punched in the stomach, with air leaving her body in a gasp.

When she could take air into her lungs again, she actually groaned out loud in class.

Mr Mathews the teacher had asked her if she was alright, and she could barely answer him, as the memories of the conversation she'd had with Layla were running through her brain like a corrosive wildfire.

She must have looked really awful because Mr Mathews sent her to the school nurse, and after she murmured something to that nice sympathetic woman about feeling sick, with stomach cramps, which was true, but not for the reason assumed by that nice sympathetic woman, the school nurse rang Baker Street to ask permission for Joss to go home.

Mrs Hudson answered and of course agreed. Joss couldn't remember if her father was at the surgery and no doubt Sherlock was out doing whatever mad Sherlock things he did when he was out, she just needed to get to her room and curl up in a corner and die from embarrassment because if they were there and she had to face them now, she would be arrested for patricide and what ever the formal name was for also killing the love of your father's life and consulting detective, homicide, no there should be a special name for it 'Holmicide'.

God she was going nuts, she was blathering, her brain was making insane puns because it couldn't face the fact that they had heard everything. Everything!

Every time that came into her head, her body wanted to instinctively cringe into the smallest shape
possible, her muscles jerked involuntarily and a strange guttural sound would seep through her
gritted teeth and clenched jaw.

She wanted to kill the pair of them, no she needed to kill the pair of them with every cringing fibre
of her being; they had listened to everything and not told her, they had heard every word, every
word, every bloody word, of her conversation with Layla. .

Oh god oh god oh god, they had heard Layla say that about pretending to not ever have sex, "oh
god please kill me now", the words seared across her brain.

No! No she didn't want to die, she wanted Layla's big brother's cricket bat, Vimal would let her
have it or Layla would spray paint his motorbike Barbie pink whilst adding glitter to the seat and
handlebars, and then plastering his helmet and leathers with "Hello Kitty" stickers.

Layla was good that way, a true friend.

Joss would use that cricket bat on the lying deceitful, lying, betraying, lying, benighted, lying,
bloody, bloody two faced lying lying, fibbing pair of gits.

Her mind was like a frantic hamster on a wheel, recycling everything that was said in vivid
technicolor all the way back in the rain to Baker Street, and the embarrassment, anger and sheer
sense of betrayal was curdling her stomach and making her head hurt.

"Parenting skills of an amoeba" "Adults are more hormonal than I am" "Owes you fourteen
years of birthday presents" "Only two rules when dealing with Dads" "Love Jocelyn Kiss Kiss"
"He should have listened to me yesterday then"

They had listened to her private conversation, private…. conversation. How bloody dare they?
What the hell else were they doing? Were there cameras in the flat? Was she being followed to
school? Were the teachers spying on her too? What about Mrs Hudson was she some sort of
superspy? The man in Speedy's when she bought a sausage roll?

She could feel the paranoia spiralling out of control and she tried to take deep breaths to calm
herself.

Before she knew it, she was standing outside the black front door, soaked to her skin and praying
to any deity that would listen, that her father and Sherlock were out.

Jocelyn opened the door like a condemned prisoner walking to the gallows, rain trickling from her
hair down her neck and making her shiver, she tried to be quiet and unobtrusive, she really did not
want any attention from anyone at the moment, but it wasn't her lucky day.
There she was, in the hallway, hovering like the proverbial sparkly fairy godmother, Mrs Hudson
of the understanding smile and conspiratorial wink. She spoke in a low murmur and patted her
shoulder consolingly.

"Are you ok dear, time of the month is it, well don't worry, I've mentioned it to your Dad and
Sherlock so you don't have to, I was a teenage girl once too and know how embarrassing you
must find it to tell the boys upstairs. So they won't bother you now they understand what's going
on. If you need anything and feel that you can't ask them you just come to me. Your Dad has got
painkillers ready for you, but you just tell them what you want to do, they won't give you any
trouble"

She patted her arm kindly and went back through her door, oblivious to the stunned expression on
Jocelyn's face.

"God hates me" Joss whispered in absolute horror, her face as pale as the hallway wallpaper, what
had just happened? How could there be even more to be embarrassed about. How?

Now her father and Sherlock thought she had come home from school because of period pains. Her father, Sherlock Holmes and menstruation. Menstruation, Sherlock and her father. Sherlock, Menstruation and her Dad. No matter how they were combined those words should never ever be uttered in the same sentence. It should be against the law.

She was just going to turn around, leave the house and walk out in front of a bus. It would be kinder and more merciful than having to face the two of them and then live to old age knowing that they knew that…nononononononononononononono.

The door upstairs opened and her father peered down at her with sympathetic concern.

"You ok Jocelyn?"

She couldn't help it, she just closed her eyes, leant against the wall and whimpered as she prayed for the ground to open up and swallow her whole.

Her father ran down the stairs towards her, he put an arm around her shoulders, and tugged her gently until her head came to rest against his blue chunky jumper then said in his calm voice,

"Its ok love, let's get you upstairs and then you can have some painkillers and go lie down. Unless you feel nauseous as well? I'm sure we have a hot water bottle somewhere if you need it"

He was obviously trying his best to remind her he was a Doctor, not just her father

She tried to speak but her tongue had frozen to the top of her mouth, she physically couldn't make her tongue move. She needed to correct this now, she needed to stop this right now, she needed to tell him before they got upstairs and Sherlock was there too.

Oh god, oh god, telling the two of them together that she wasn't…, she didn't have her… no, no, no, no, no, NO.

Her head knocked against his shoulder as she shook it, and she felt him wince. It untangled her tongue, and she asked worriedly "Sorry did I hurt you?"

He shook his head dismissively so she tried again, pulling away slightly from him but still unable to look him in the face.

"Dad, it's not my.."

Sherlock popped his head around the door, and asked irritably "Are you two coming up, any time today", but his quicksilver eyes flickered over her in an almost scientific fascination. She could feel the blush spreading all over her face and even to the tips of her ears.

"Give her a moment Sherlock" her father snapped "She's obviously not feeling well"

"Well do you need assistance getting up the stairs?" Sherlock asked impatiently.

Just as her father opened his mouth to respond, Jocelyn finally lost it, screamed with frustration and stamped her foot. They both stopped and looked at her.

She could actually see the word "hormones" flash across the two smugly understanding superior male faces.
That was it. They were so dead. "It's not my period, I just didn't feel very well at School" She shouted at the pair of them.

There was a stunned silence and two pair of male eyes looked at each other, and then looked back at her.

"But the school nurse rang and Mrs Hudson said ..." her father started to query.

She spoke through gritted teeth, "It was a misunderstanding, I didn't know what the nurse said to Mrs Hudson until I got here"

"You were whimpering, why were you whimpering?" Sherlock insisted ignoring the silent messages from John to cease and desist.

She swallowed and closed her eyes tightly; it didn't help that she could almost feel the amusement her father was holding back. Then some righteous anger hit her backbone and gave her the courage to look Sherlock straight in the eyes, ignoring the heat flooding her cheeks.

"Because "time of the month", "period" and "menstruation" are not words that should ever, ever, ever, be part of any conversation that we have Sherlock."

Did she just say that to Sherlock Holmes, in front of her father, she was just going to throw up right here and now and sod the pair of them!

Sherlock snapped back impatiently

"Why, puberty involves the physical changes to sexual maturation, it is a perfectly natural bodily function, including menstruation and the growth in your b..."

"Dad" she wailed as she shot death glares at Sherlock and bared her teeth.

"Sherlock, timing" John interrupted sternly and shook his head at him.

Sherlock looked at John with a faint air of puzzlement "Not good?"

"Bit not good, yeah" John replied very, very carefully with not the slightest hint of the laughter he was suppressing.

John turned to his shrinking offspring, still resisting the urge to laugh, and asked her

"So tell me what's wrong love, where does it hurt?"

"And that right there is another can of worms entirely" thought the stressed, furious and nauseous youngster.

She ducked her head and made her way up the stairs muttering about needing to get changed without answering him directly, John frowned faintly as he followed her up and Sherlock raised one eyebrow as he watched her go past him.

John called after her firmly, "Living room when you're done Joss, ok". She shot him a strange almost grim look over her shoulder, but she nodded her head.

John had just made tea for the three of them when they heard Joss come down the stairs from her bedroom. Sherlock was perched on his chair, John was sitting in his, with his leg stretched out and the pair of them studied her when she came through the living room door. There was a slight frown on John's face. She was wearing her pyjamas and slippers and had a towel rubbing her hair
"Tea" John nodded to the coffee table, but she shook her head before she sat at the furthest corner of the sofa away from the pair of them, with her legs drawn up to her chest and the towel around her neck. "Still feel sick" she muttered. They could almost see the tension and distress gripping her body.

"Joss" her father prompted gently, but she refused to look at the pair of them.

Sherlock studied her, "What have you found out Jocelyn?"

Sudden anger sparked in her eyes, and she said sarcastically

"Well I was in science first of all and we were learning about the parenting skills of amoebas, then when I was in double maths, the London A-Z came in really handy for geometry, and suddenly 2 & 2 really did make 4"

The angry glare she directed at the pair of them could have reheated their tea faster than the microwave.

"Ah" said her father,

"Your point being" Sherlock asked indifferently.

"You listened to everything didn't you" she accused,

John said "Shut up Sherlock" before he could say a word. Sherlock huffed in annoyance

"That was a private conversation Dad" Joss continued.

"And you didn't even have the common courtesy to let us know where you were Jocelyn" Sherlock snapped irritated.

"Well duh, where else was I going?" she retorted angrily "and don't try to change the subject"

"It was necessary Jocelyn" her father said calmly, she looked at him disbelievingly.

"How could that possibly be necessary, it was a private conversation and you have no right, you didn't even tell me later that you were listening, that's just creepy and how did you hear it anyway" her disgust and alarm was obvious.

"CCTV in the church yard, and it was necessary because of Moran" Sherlock was bored now and wanted the conversation over and done with

"Sherlock, we agreed" John was furious, but Sherlock turned away to his laptop, ignoring him.

Joss looked scared now, and her gaze moved from Sherlock to her father in confusion. Her father sighed, loudly and pointedly

"Moran is a problem we are dealing with"

"But" Jocelyn asked anxiously,

"You don't have to worry about it, love" he insisted "We panicked when we didn't know where you were and the CCTV allowed us to make sure you were ok until we arrived. I'm sorry you feel it invaded your privacy but you have to know that I would do it again if it kept you safe and I don't care how embarrassed you are"
the tone of his voice was calmly stern and unrelenting.

"I was imaging cameras all over the place even in the flat, and being followed to school" she muttered.

The two men shared a glance but refrained from speaking, as she continued,

"I have been making plans for using Layla's brother's cricket bat all the way back from school, you know" she glared at the pair of them

"But how did you access the CCTV…" she asked perplexed, then her eyes rounded as well as her mouth as the penny dropped and she turned to Sherlock and drawled

"Oh boy, your brother is so scary"

"The most dangerous man you will ever meet" he agreed with a smirk.

John shook his head in frustration, and continued as if there hadn't been any interruption

"You don't need to worry about it, but just be sensible" and he gave her a faint smile

"I don't need to teach you about Stranger Danger right", he teased, and his West Country accent was definitely more impressive than Layla's.
She closed her eyes and cringed, Sherlock snorted with amusement.

"Ok, deal, you forget about the conversation and I'll forget to ask Layla for the cricket bat" she said with shuddering determination.

"Are you threatening us Jocelyn" Sherlock asked intrigued, while her father was trying to conceal a smirk

"Oh yes" she responded simply. "I know where you sleep"

Her father laughed out loud and when he got his breath back he spluttered"Ok Joss it's a deal",

"Sherlock" he prompted. There was a long suffering dramatic sigh, but he said

"It will be deleted from my hard drive but only after I have the answer to one question"

Joss braced herself painfully for scientific curiosity about menstruation, it couldn't be anything else.

"What did happen with the hamster, the paint, the Lego and the fairy cakes?"
Chapter Summary

The Alternative Emergency Contact

The school summons John to discuss Jocelyn behaviour but he can't make it. Mycroft Holmes turns up instead....

Warning: This chapter contains mentions of bullying and homophobia so beware.

She was waiting in the school office with the pastoral head of year. A formidable looking woman who was the school equivalent of Lestrade but with more of a nasty streak!

"Ah Doctor Watson, thank you for coming so promptly." the teacher began with her hand outstretched, and a politely insincere smile on her face.

"My name is Mycroft Holmes, Mrs O'Brien, unfortunately both Dr Watson and his partner my brother, are unavailable and as the matter seemed to be urgent, I have come in their place."

The woman drew back with an instant frown and started to object,

"I'm sorry but I need to speak to a parent or guardian about this Mr Holmes, not some sort of family connection..."

"Mrs O'Brien, if you review Jocelyn's initial registration details, you will see that as her step father's brother, I am listed as an alternative emergency contact."

He contradicted smoothly, the epitome of calm caring concern, standing there, elegance personified in his expensive grey three piece suit, his weight balanced upon the grey umbrella held in his left hand.

Mrs O'Brien's discomfort made her miss Jocelyn's startled wide eyed glance up at Mycroft. The swift look he gave Jocelyn made her gulp and dip her head again.

But he had already taken in the state of her uniform, the graze on the knuckles of her right hand and the fading redness of her left cheek. He noticed the way she had paled when he had come into the room, the redness of her eyes where she had been crying and how she clenched her fists.

However the teacher wasn't giving up the fight just yet and she asked sharply

"Jocelyn, is this correct?"

Jocelyn could feel the intense stare coming from Sherlock's brother but she didn't dare risk another look at his face, she raised her head and addressed the teacher without looking at Mycroft again.

"Uncle Mycroft has picked me up before Miss, and even been there when I was being sick". She responded with the absolute truth. He had picked her up from Cardiff and she had thrown up on his shoes.

Her reply amused him. Mycroft admired the adept nature of her answer, telling the truth without telling the truth, and managing to get a dig at him simultaneously. Uncle Mycroft indeed!
"Very well Mr Holmes," Mrs O'Brien began snippily, "I asked for a parent to attend today because..."

Mycroft had been studying Jocelyn as the woman began to speak and he saw the way her body braced itself almost for a blow, and she wasn't even aware of the pleading but despairing look she sent towards him, as if he was going to blame her for the situation.

He did blame her for the situation but not in the way she thought.

He looked back at Mrs O'Brien and interrupted her yet again.

"You are of course aware that there is a court injunction against the journalist Miss Kitty Reilly approaching, contacting, or harassing my brother and his partner in any way Madame?"

"P..pardon?" the confused teacher asked in alarm.

"How do you think the court will view the actions of this school by allowing the said Miss Kitty Reilly anywhere near the stepdaughter of the man she tried to destroy with her lies and fabrications three years ago",

The dangerously interested expression on his face and the condescending amusement in his voice was beginning to raise wary goose bumps on the woman's arms. Although his gaze was focused on the woman standing in front of him, he was well aware of the effect his words had on John's daughter. She stiffened with surprise and then relaxed as if something had clicked in her brain.

"Jocelyn is Sherlock Holmes's step daughter?" asked the teacher incredulously

He heard Jocelyn shift in her seat as if to interrupt then she subsided quietly again.

"Ignorance is no defence in the law Mrs ...O'Brien" he smiled with the smoothness of a hunting shark.

The woman stared at him with obvious shock but he continued dangerously and with the beginnings of real anger,

"And at what point was the child actually going to receive medical attention as she has obviously been assaulted by a group of at least five, her shirt is torn, her trousers have holes where she has been thrown to the ground, she has been slapped in the face and her hand is damaged whilst trying to defend herself from this outrageous attack."

Jocelyn slowly raised her head and her dark blue eyes stared at him with appalled fascination.

"Two of them." she whispered despairingly.

The teacher didn't hear her, she was too focused on replying but Mycroft's lips twitched infinitesimally.

"Really Mr Holmes, Jocelyn was restrained from her unprovoked attack upon Miss Reilly, by a group of other pupils. In this type of situation, we normally involve the police but Miss Reilly persuaded us not to out of the kindness of her heart. She came here to talk to the class about a professional career as a working woman journalist and she was subjected to this disgraceful behaviour."

She frowned disapprovingly at the bent head of the seated girl

"Unfortunately Jocelyn has had problems fitting in since she arrived at the school and today is the
culmination of her antisocial behaviour...."

The woman tried to take control of the conversation again but the look on Mycroft’s face dried the words in her mouth.

"Professional, Kindness of her heart" He scoffed dangerously

"Really, Mrs O’Brien", he mocked, using her words back at her "I think the school needs to consider it’s position very carefully, subjecting my niece to that woman, and allowing the obvious and prolonged bullying by a group of her classmates... I believe that Jocelyn requires rest and recuperation from her ordeal for the next few days and then the adult members of her family, including myself will be attending a meeting to discuss both Jocelyn's future and the future of the school.”

The menace in his voice made Jocelyn shiver and it wasn't directed at her. She almost felt sorry for the teacher, but the heavy and prolonged scolding she had received from her dried up that inclination very quickly.

"Come Jocelyn" Mycroft said softly, without taking his eyes from the stunned woman in front of him "it's time to go home". Mycroft waited for her to grab her school bag from the floor in front of her and then headed out of the office.

Jocelyn trotted obediently behind him, not daring to look back at the seething and frightened woman in front of the desk.

Outside the school gates, Mycroft came to a stop at the ubiquitous black car; the suited driver got out and opened the back door.

Mycroft looked down at Jocelyn who had come to an abrupt halt and made no attempt to get in.

"Really?" she asked with a pained expression,

Mycroft's left eyebrow climbed and he tilted his head at her

"Don't try my patience Jocelyn." he said calmly.

She swallowed nervously, peeped at him warily from under her eyelashes, and took one step forward but then stopped again and looked down at his shoes, his beautiful black leather shoes which were so shiny she could almost see her face in them.

"It's just that I feel sick and I don't want to..." She trailed off, "Please Mr Holmes." she whispered.

He stood there considering her bent head and the faint tremor he could see in her hands, then took her school bag from her and handed it over to the driver, and nodded.

"Very well Jocelyn we will walk for a while, until we come to somewhere we can have a decent cup of tea and a little chat."

The MacDonald's restaurant was quiet, which suited his purposes, however the gratuitous use of the word 'restaurant' for this fast food processing plant was literally a criminal offence as far as Mycroft Holmes was concerned and he made a mental note to see what he could do about it, as he looked around at the garish primary colours decorating the walls and the puerile advertising.

Tea in a cardboard tube, how inventive and utterly, utterly repellent. A cynical corruption of civilised behaviour which would be eradicated mercilessly, when he had the time to do it.
However, the place seemed to be having a calming effect on the girl, and he needed to find out what had been going on, which was the only reason he was sitting in this nightmarish environment, sipping washing up liquid blatantly contravening the Trade Descriptions Act by being falsely labelled as tea. It had absolutely nothing to do with the wistful look on the girl's face as they were walking past the building, absolutely nothing.

Then, his phone beeped, twice

**Is Jocelyn ok? Where are you?**

**JW**

**Legwork Mycroft?**

**SH**

He ignored them to look at Jocelyn again, and she was munching her way through some cardboard sticks, they laughingly called French fries. The French would be mortified at the libellous and slanderous slur to their cooking skills.

She looked up at him and gave a sudden grin

"Would you like one?" She offered kindly.

His shudder was noticeable and he stared at her repressively

"You are a repulsive child." he stated with disgust.

Her grin grew wider; she nudged the cardboard box of fries towards the pale elegant hand that was resting on the table. They locked eyes; hers were twinkling with mischief and his scowling ferociously.

He looked down and plucked one with the tips of two fingers and gingerly put it into his mouth. His eyes widened as the flavour hid his taste buds. He took another one.

"If you ever mention this to Sherlock or your father, I will have you locked up in that car until you are thirty." He menaced.

The threat did not seem to have the desired effect because she actually giggled, but quickly suppressed it.

His face looked faintly amused for a couple of moments, and then he demanded implacably,

"Tell me what happened with the Reilly woman."

The smile drained from her face.

"Who is she?" She asked warily

"I believe you heard what I said to Mrs O'Brien Jocelyn, now please answer my question"

"I heard what you said, but I didn't understand it" she challenged him stubbornly, but wisely refused to look at him

She heard him take in an irritated breath, and said quickly before he could speak
"Please"

He was angry with her now, and it showed

"You must be well aware of what happened nearly four years ago, when Moriarty forced my brother to jump from the roof of the hospital as the only way to protect your father, and the others, the media frenzy which crucified Sherlock as a fraud, especially when Sherlock "miraculously" came back to life seven months ago and it was all raked up again so I would advise you for your own sake not to try my patience any further young lady"

She had paled, and her eyes filled with tears but she spoke with a quiet dignity that made Mycroft feel something uncomfortably close to shame.

"Mum was diagnosed with cancer nearly four years ago, when she lost her job, we had to sell pretty much everything to pay the rent including our TV and the old laptop we used for the internet. The only newspapers I saw were wrapped around the odd bag of chips we had for tea. The only telly I watched were cartoons at my friend's house. Six months ago... six months ago Mum was dying. I was with her every evening until the day she... left me. Aliens could have landed and I wouldn't have known or cared less"

But Mycroft couldn't leave it there

"You have had access to the internet since you have been at Baker Street, are you telling me that you haven't researched either of them?" He sneered deliberately, in order to gauge her reaction.

Her anger made her reckless and say things Mycroft knew she would never have told him voluntarily.

"I asked Mum about my father once and she looked so scared and sad I never asked her again." She drew a deep breath. "She changed the subject on me, Mum never did that. Even when the Doctors told her there was no more hope, she told me, and we faced it together. Why would talking about my father be worse than telling me that she was going to die?"

Now she had started, she couldn't stop and Mycroft listened intently.

"When I was brought here, I was too afraid to ask questions. I don't know why Mum was scared of him. I was selfish, and a coward. I didn't want to find out anything bad about him because I wanted a family again and I need to get to know him first before I ask him about Mum. I don't expect you to understand but the answer is no I haven't looked up either of them, because I wanted Dad to tell me if it was important. I didn't want to see someone else's version of anything"

She rubbed unconsciously at her sore cheek and then took a hasty sip of her drink as if to wash away any more words.

Mycroft considered her in silence, and then spoke not unkindly

"I'm afraid Jocelyn that I can't afford to indulge that sentiment any longer as your lack of knowledge has now made you the weak link in the chain."

"Weak link?" She queried in puzzlement

"Easy prey for Kitty Reilly weren't you?" he asked coolly

She flushed, feeling unaccountably as if she had somehow failed him, but quickly paled with consternation and then pain as Mycroft succinctly and calmly told her of the events leading to
Sherlock's "death", his undercover mission to destroy Moriarty's web and his return. Her eyes filled with unshed tears

"Oh poor Dad" she whispered as Mycroft sat impassively through her predictable reaction.

"Poor, poor Sherlock", Interesting, slightly less predictable but a credit to her intelligence and compassion.

Then her hand reached out and clasped his tightly as she said sadly

"It must have been awful for you too, knowing he was alive and watching people grieve".

He looked at her hand in amazement, the feeling of her small soft hand offering comfort, and the genuine pity on her face as she studied him. That was….. unexpected.

John Watson had still not completely forgiven him for his actions before the fall, although unusually Sherlock whilst normally finding immense enjoyment in holding grudges seemed to have forgiven that particular transgression with Moriarty, but Mycroft couldn't remember the last time in his adult life that he was offered the kind of unconditional comfort that appeared to be coming from the girl.

Jocelyn saw the look on his face and misunderstood; she flushed and withdrew her hand, "I'm sorry"

"Tell me about Kitty Reilly Jocelyn" Mycroft repeated the earlier question implacably.

Her shoulder slumped in submission

"We were in PD" she began, Mycroft raised an eyebrow "Personal Development" she explained.

"I wasn't really paying attention" she admitted wryly "I was trying to catch up on some work I had missed in History, PD's boring at the best of times, but for the last couple of weeks we have had professional people come in to speak to us about career choices and they have been so dull" She complained. "Its not their jobs but they just talk at us like, well they talk at us not to us, its embarrassing"

She caught the expression on Mycroft's face, rolled her eyes a little (the insubordination of which surprisingly amused him although he didn't let it show!) and got herself back on track

The PD teacher had left the room to the speaker as per usual, and Jocelyn hadn't even heard the name of the redheaded woman now standing smiling in front of the class. She was too busy trying to copy up the history lesson on the Wall Street Crash.

Suddenly she realised that the room was silent, and there was someone standing next to her desk. She looked up into the smiling face of the speaker, but shivered because her green eyes were as cold as ice.

"I would be so grateful if you would put away your work about "the fall" of Wall street, Miss?" she asked sweetly, before Jocelyn could answer, that bitch Jenny Clay piped up in her high-pitched nasal twang

"Jocelyn Jayne Watson, Aunty Kitty, oh sorry Joss I forgot, your parents weren't married were they, your surname is Morstan isn't it?"

Jenny smiled so sweetly at Jocelyn she wanted to get up and punch her especially since she and her little group of moronic friends seemed to find it so funny. Jocelyn shot the cow her patented
death glare, then turned back to the adult still standing by her desk who was smiling at her as if Jocelyn had made her day.

"Well I am here to talk about being a professional journalist "smiled the woman, and "now, if Miss Morstan will kindly pay attention I am happy to tell you all about my most famous work"

There were sniggers again from the lump of Clay and her gang of morons in the back and Joss began to feel uncomfortable as if she was missing something they all knew.

The redhead started talking about someone called Richard Brooks and how she had single handed made the discovery that the poor man had been a pawn in the great game.

But before she could continue, one of the girls, who at best previously had been not unfriendly to Joss stood up and said coldly

"I'm not sure this is appropriate Miss Reilly, I thought you were to talk to us about career opportunities".

Joss thought her name was Maisie Ross and they had smiled at each other a few times.

The redhead looked taken aback for a few moments and then her face darkened, but before she could speak, one of the lads, Will Hunter heckled cheekily

"Don't you want to tell us about the court case you lost Miss".

There was a smattering of sniggers from his mates which caused Jenny Clay and her crowd to react angrily, the jeers started and the uproar in the class drew the irritated PD teacher back in. Joss felt like she was in the middle of a battle she had caused but without a clue why.

By this time, the furious and discomforted Kitty Reilly was glaring at the rest of the class not just Joss and then the bell rang for break.

Somehow she found herself flanked by Will's and Maisie's friends, Will looked at her once and muttered "You're OK Morstan" before he and his mates headed off towards the cafeteria, Maisie gave her a straight stare and said "Stay out of Jenny's way for a while, she won't be happy" Then she grinned at her before heading off to the library with her friends.

Jocelyn knew she needed some air to clear her head, she really didn't understand what had just happened, and she decided to stay away from all of them and slipped out the entrance to talk a walk in the school grounds. It was too cold for most of the rest of the school to be out, and that was just fine with her. She was so engrossed in her thoughts that when she turned the corner of the science block she didn't initially see Clay and her cronies talking to the redheaded woman.

"You know the rest of it" Jocelyn said quietly to Mycroft.

"How long has Jenny Clay and her friends been bullying you?" Mycroft asked smoothly. Joss looked at him in disbelief, "How.." then she stopped short and groaned. "You're a Holmes, that's how" she muttered defiantly.

"Are there any more of you" she asked angrily, but subsided when she saw his expression "Sorry" she offered quickly

"I didn't say I was being bullied before today" she tried again, but he dismissed that easily

"Of course you did, just not in words, so what happened to you today that you retaliated and brought the wrath of the charming Mrs O'Brien down upon us all?"
She really and truly considered lying, but when she looked at his face, she knew he knew that. Her shoulders slumped in defeat and she just sighed.

"Same old stuff really they took the piss out of my accent, my clothes, my accent, my hair, my accent, my lack of friends, my accent. Not very original" she said with a contemptuous smile "Oh and did I mention they really have a problem with my accent" she continued.

"I imagine that distraction technique is moderately successful with other people or you wouldn't have tried it with me Jocelyn!" was the mild comment, and Jocelyn could feel the hairs rise on the back of her neck with atavistic fear.

"You are not a stupid young woman, I will not repeat this again. What did they do to you today Jocelyn, that would make you retaliate?"

He could see the stubborn jut of her chin, so very like her father he sighed internally. Mycroft continued to stare at her, letting the silence do its work.

She bit her lip as she pleaded with him, getting close to tears.

"Please, isn't that enough, does it really matter what else they said?"

The waiting silence became oppressive and she fidgeted in her seat in the booth as she tried not to drop her eyes from his. Her eyes began to glint from unshed tears until she finally had to look down.

"We are not moving from here Jocelyn until you tell me everything."

She shook her head and muttered

"They were nasty, Mr Holmes they wanted to hurt".

"I think that we can dispense with the formalities Jocelyn, Uncle Mycroft has a nice ring to it don't you think?" he asked sardonically.

"You were the one who started that" she snapped right back, "It suited you to be my stepfather's brother."

She shot up from the booth in a hasty instinctive attempt to escape from him and the whole situation but he took her hand in his and wouldn't let go. She stood beside him and strangely she made no attempt to pull away, instead she hesitantly turned her hand so that her fingers could grip his tightly. Ah comfort, she needed comfort.

He pulled her closer until they were both sitting on the same side of the booth, and unexpectedly she leant against his arm hiding her face, as she spoke the vile words aloud.

"They told me my mother died from aids because my father was gay. They told me that Sherlock was a fraud and Richard Brookes was right. I didn't even know who Richard Brookes was until you told me what happened." She drew in a deep shuddering breath

"They were laughing like hyenas, and that horrible woman stood there smirking and watching it all like she was taking notes. They were lying, Uncle Mycroft, I didn't attack that woman but I bloody smacked Jenny Clay, before the rest of them took me to the floor." She finished with fierce satisfaction.

He gave her a few moments for her to regain her composure.
"Why haven't you told your father or Sherlock about this before now?" he asked sternly

"Because I thought it would stop, just new kid stuff and they would get bored, I could wait it out, wasn't worth making a fuss because they were idiots, and I really didn't care but then for some reason it started to get worse about three weeks ago, especially Jenny Clay and when it got nasty I didn't want to tell them what they were saying, suppose I am going to have to tell them now" she muttered miserably.

She was still resting against his arm as if she had used up all her energy and had nothing left in reserve.

Mycroft silently noted that three weeks ago, Kitty Reilly was finally dismissed from her job after the newspaper was forced to pay for her failed court case and the compensation awarded by the court.

Mycroft looked up at the CCTV camera in the corner of the room and raised one eyebrow sardonically. The camera bobbed once.

"No time like the present Jocelyn" he said almost kindly as John walked up to the table and slid into the seat opposite them. His worried blue eyes flicking from Mycroft to Jocelyn.

By the time they were dropped off at Baker Street by Mycroft's driver, Jocelyn was exhausted. Her father got out of the car first, but before she followed him, she turned to look at Mycroft and gave him a tired but genuinely warm smile

"I hope I didn't try your patience too much",

He gave an unexpectedly deep chuckle and patted her hand gently.

"It will be dealt with Jocelyn, you are not to worry"

Her father saw how exhausted she was and sent her to lie down for a couple of hours before their evening meal. She got to her room and then stared with amazement.

On her bed, there was a bright pink laptop, adorned with beautiful purple ribbons and an enormous bow, attached to which was a note which read:

"Don't ever forget that knowledge is power Jocelyn. I noticed your phone was a frankly alarming shade of pink and thought this would accessorise nicely with it. Also the colour may ward off Sherlock's attempts to monopolise it, however that cannot be guaranteed. You could try passwords based on the solar system and you may want to customise it with scenes from "Pinky and the Brain" as an added deterrent.
Your Uncle Mycroft."
Interlude: Red

Chapter Summary

So here's another interlude, sorry, that's if you can call something with 4k+ words an interlude, but it doesn't really advance the plot and yes there is a plot. Other than a few little strands which will be picked up and elaborated upon. Oh who cares just enjoy, and please feel free to comment.
I had a vision of Jocelyn wearing something that the two men would have a conniption fit over and it carried on from there. I can also see Mrs H as a rather fashionable young lady in her day

"You are not going to school dressed like that" Sherlock stated in shock as Jocelyn was hurriedly pulling together her school bag

"What?" she muttered distractedly as she continued to rummage down the side of the sofa for her favourite pen

"Go and get changed" he ordered implacably, the frown on his face unmistakable

"What?" she repeated, as she finally found the recalcitrant pen and tugged it out of the cushions depths

"Go and get changed" he ordered again, his voice becoming louder with irritation. No one ignored Sherlock Holmes.

"Yuck Sherlock that's a finger, you left a stinky dead finger in the sofa"

She cried out in disgust contorting herself into strange shapes as she hopped hastily way from the piece of furniture as well as trying to drop her pen into her bag without falling on her backside to the floor.

John popped his head curiously out of the kitchen and took in the scene. He almost inhaled his toast in shock and after a severe bout of coughing, he cleared his throat enough to splutter and repeated Sherlock's original statement, the tone of his voice going from startled to firm in one sentence.

"You are not going to school dressed like that"

"Dad, Sherlock left a rotting finger in the sofa" Joss complained loudly at the same time so missed what he said.

It distracted him for a few seconds and he glared at Sherlock who raised an eyebrow, frowned at his stupidity and jerked his head back towards the girl, filling her schoolbag.

John gave Sherlock a "we haven't finished this" look and then winced at the sight of his daughter and repeated his earlier statement firmly
"You are not going to school dressed like that"

"What?" Jocelyn's dismissive reply caused John to tighten his lips and Sherlock to narrow his eyes dangerously as both men studied the oblivious teenage girl.

"Jocelyn" her father tried another tack and asked with ominous calm "Why aren't you wearing school uniform?"

There was a pause as she focussed some of her attention on her fathers words and they could see the frustrated expression which crossed her face.

"Because it's wear your own clothes day", she sighed with exasperation "You pay a fee for charity and get to wear your own clothes .... For the day" she responded sarcastically

"I did tell you last week, but you don't listen to me do you?" and impatiently rolled her eyes at the pair of them

"I am going to be late" she complained as she stuffed yet more items into her bag, still not giving them her full attention.

Sherlock wondered idly why Jocelyn's school bag was always so full, was it some sort of survival instinct, being prepared for everything including a nuclear war.

The only thing she didn't seem to have in it was the kitchen sink but he was pretty sure it included handy wipes so she didn't need the sink. The next time he didn't have a case, he would devote some time to the mystery of the schoolbag and catalogue the contents over a period of time to see if it changed.

"Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, you are not going to school dressed like that" her father bellowed at her.

She came to a full stop, spun round and put her finger to her lips

"Dad, indoor voice!" she scolded him, "Why do you two always have to shout like you're on a parade ground in the morning?" She complained with irritation. "It hurts my head"

The two men looked at her as if she had gone insane. What on earth was an indoor voice, thought Sherlock in confusion. She frowned back at them.

It took a few seconds but they could see the actual point when the words her father had shouted, penetrated her consciousness, her eyes widened to stare at him in astonishment. Her eyes flickered from one face to another, then looked down at herself in confusion and looked back at the pair of scowling men in front of her.

"Why, what's the matter with it, it's clean and ironed and..."

The two men spoke at the same time "It's too short"

Then her father continued "and too red."

Sherlock stated factually "You can see your legs, way too much of your legs"

John complained "There are no sleeves, it has straps, your arms are bare and it shows too much of your... neck and ... the rest of you!"

Stunned Jocelyn blinked at them with her mouth agape

"It's a dress so my legs aren't covered, it's not a pair of trousers, and it's short because I am a
short person."

She stressed carefully, her eyes flickering between the pair of them as if they had suddenly metamorphosed into the parental equivalent of the "nutter on the bus", unstable and unpredictable.

"It's a short dress with straps, because it's a summer dress but I do have a cardigan to go with it. I have to wear this summer dress because the colour theme for the clothes today is red and my summer dress is the only item of red clothing that I own, therefore I am wearing my short summer red dress with tights and a cardigan. Ok?"

She spoke to them as if they were rather dim children and smiled with blatant false sweetness.

Sherlock and her father both shook their heads at the same time

"No" Sherlock said simply

"No, no way" was John's response.

Jocelyn stared at them both in consternation, then her chin came up and she scowled angrily

"Well I am not going to school then because I am not going to be the only loser wearing school uniform today"

"I didn't say you had to wear school uniform, you can wear something else" her father said calmly with exaggerated and fading patience.

"Again, you are not listening to me" She protested sarcastically "I have to wear red, no red no school" as she flung her bag to the ground and began to stomp off back to her room.

Now John was getting really angry, "Don't you dare leave this room young lady",

She spun round and glared unrepentantly at him.

"Well if I can't leave the room, I can't go to school anyway can I?" she retorted snarkily, glaring at her father, the fury darkening her blue eyes.

Sherlock stared at her in disbelief "What did you just say you impertinent brat?" he hissed.

Her chin came up and the fulminating glare she was directing at her father, was turned on Sherlock

"I thought you were actually supposed to be a Consulting Detective or are you getting deaf in your old age?" she spat right back at him.

The looks on the faces of the two men would have made a grown man tremble, but the teenage girl was almost vibrating with rage and was way beyond caring.

"What's it got to do with you anyway, you're not my father" she challenged bitterly.

There was a flash of something in Sherlock's icy eyes that only John recognised as hurt, but she just saw the indifferent mask he normally presented to the world.

John had had enough.

"No but I am" he ground out angrily and quick as a flash she turned on him too,

"And don't I just know how happy that makes you" she accused, words spilling out of some deep
well of resentment that surprised her, but she couldn't seem to stop.

Her father scowled, refusing to respond to that volatile statement but said dangerously through gritted teeth.

"Jocelyn, I think it would be very wise of you to apologise right now for your behaviour".

"You always know when an adult threatens you that they've lost the argument" she challenged unrepentantly and filled with angry bravado.

For a few seconds Sherlock felt unwilling sympathy for her as he knew that feeling very well. He was always being threatened when he won the argument, but she hadn't won this one, so he couldn't see what she was complaining about!

The angry stand off between the three of them was interrupted by the calm voice of Mrs Hudson

"Oh dear, whatever is the matter. All this shouting before breakfast can't be good for the digestion"

"I'm sorry we disturbed you Mrs H" John answered stiffly without removing his eyes from the glowering face of his daughter.

"Jocelyn is being a complete brat Mrs Hudson" Sherlock growled with intense irritation.

Outraged Jocelyn said "They are both being totally unreasonable and horrible Mrs Hudson, they are just mean" and her lip trembled when she looked at the elderly woman's sympathetic face. No she wasn't going to cry, she won't give them the satisfaction

"John just tell me what this is about" Mrs Hudson asked calmly.

So John told her, and they are all a little disconcerted when she laughed lightly and said

"It's a very pretty dress Joss dear, but if your Dad and Sherlock don't want you to wear it today, well that's easy enough to resolve"

Sherlock snorted with disbelief, and Mrs Hudson scolded him with a chuckle

"Really Sherlock, couldn't you figure it out, she just needs to wear something else red."

Before her father or Sherlock could respond, Jocelyn muttered subdued,

"Dad did say that Mrs Hudson, but I don't have anything else in red"

Mrs Hudson just tutted and said to the two men, "Well why can't one of you lend her something red to wear"

"She's not wearing my clothes" Sherlock reacted with instant irritation, "besides which I do not wear the colour red" he sniffed disdainfully.

Mrs Hudson raised her eyebrows at him but turned to John enquiringly, who answered thoughtfully

"Don't think I have anything red Mrs H, maybe couple of jumpers with red stripes and a pair of red boxers"

Sherlock snorted again, but John ignored both him and the disbelieving look on Joss's face.
Sherlock stared straight at Jocelyn and grinned evilly as he asked so innocently

"What about you dear Mrs Hudson, have you got anything Jocelyn can wear?"

"Well I'm sure I must have, I did like a bit of red in my younger days" Mrs Hudson said cheerfully
"Come down stairs when you are ready Joss and we'll find something"

The three of them watched her go down the stairs and heard her opening and closing her door.

Jocelyn looked stricken; she opened her mouth to speak and then closed it again in disbelief. Sherlock's evil grin got wider and he gloated

"That solves your little problem doesn't it Jocelyn darling"

She flinched away from him and directed an appalled look at her father which nearly made him smile; this was the perfect punishment for her outrageous behaviour.

She swallowed hard and seemed to struggle to find words.

"You are going to make me wear Mrs Hudson's clothes, an old lady's clothes to school" she whispered in disbelief,

"Well you were so adamant, no red no school, it's the perfect solution isn't it" her father answered cheerfully. Sherlock sniggered with unfeigned enjoyment.

She threw a furious glare at Sherlock and he grinned with malicious triumph right back at her.

"You are both horrible and I hate you" her voice wavered and they could see that she was very near to tears.

"I don't think we are particularly fond of you at the moment" was her father's unconcerned response.

"Come along dear" called Mrs Hudson from the lower floor.

Jocelyn refused to look at either of the smirking men as she headed to the stairs.

"Jocelyn" her father's voice stopped her as he warned "if you are rude to Mrs Hudson, believe me when I tell you that you will regret it."

"I wouldn't be rude to Mrs Hudson" she looked back at him mortified.

"Your behaviour this morning has been disgraceful but you will not inflict it on Mrs Hudson, do I make myself clear?"

She nodded, subdued and made her way slowly down the stairs, feeling two pairs of eyes watching her every move.

She walked into Mrs Hudson's living room and smiled uncomfortably at the older woman, who winked conspiratorially back at her.

"Come and have a look at these darling girl" and she flung open the wardrobe door in her bedroom. Jocelyn stared in disbelief for a few seconds and then gasped in delight as she began to laugh.

"They think.." she spluttered with giggles,
"What? That it will be a punishment to wear an old lady's clothes"

Mrs Hudson chuckled wickedly, her eyes twinkling.

"I told you I liked to wear red in my younger days, now let's try a few things on."

Joss made her choice and after a consoling hug from Mrs Hudson, went slowly back up the seventeen step, the butterflies in her tummy becoming more active the nearer she got, her head bent and shoulders drooping. This wasn't going to be pleasant.

Sherlock was at the desk, working on her father's laptop and her father was by the window, staring out while he sipped his tea. They could hear the hesitant steps on the stairs, and even the hitch in her breath as she entered the living room. They both refused to acknowledge her presence. She cleared her throat uncertainly. She shot a quick glance at them but they still refused to give her any attention. She knew what they were waiting for. She turned to face her father.

"I am very sorry for my behaviour this morning, I'll wear my school uniform if .. I mean please may I wear my school uniform" she asked quietly. looking down at his shoes. So she saw when he turned round from the window to look at her.

"You heard what I said earlier Jocelyn, I am very disappointed in you, and you owe Sherlock an apology, please have the courtesy to look him in the face when you do so" She raised her head, there was a flush on her pale cheeks, and she looked from her father's grimly impassive face to Sherlock's mockingly expectant one.

"I'm sorry" She forced out but that wasn't enough for him, he definitely wanted his pound of flesh. Sherlock tilted his head. "What for Jocelyn?"

She winced but refused to drop her head again. She had her father's courage.

"For my behaviour Sherlock, I was mean, and rude and unkind and unreasonable and horrid, and I hope you can forgive me"

Her father had the sneaking suspicion that each and every word was her definition of how she saw their behaviour rather than hers, but there was nothing in her apologetic tone to challenge. Sherlock didn't suspect, he knew and it amused him.

When Sherlock made no response, she turned back to her father and tried one last time

"So you are okay with me wearing Mrs Hudson's clothes to School then; you aren't going to change your mind Dad?" She asked quietly, her eyes wide as they stared into his. He just raised one eyebrow at her, his face unrelenting.

"Ok that's a no then" she ducked her head as she spoke in a low voice with a slight uncertain stutter "I'll just go and get changed and go to school"

That afternoon, as the taxi pulled up outside 221b, Sherlock was sulking, "For God's sake John, she's a big girl and we're not normally in the flat waiting for her when she comes home from School"

Sherlock knew that John was probably feeling guilty about Jocelyn's punishment, but he wasn't. She had been a complete brat, he refused to acknowledge that there may have been provocation, and that first dress she had worn had been totally inappropriate, his Joss.. er John's daughter was way too young to attract the kind of attention she would have received in that dress. He'd have
had to follow her around all day making sure she was safe. So making Jocelyn wear Mrs Hudson's clothes actually served his purposes two fold, a punishment and a deterrent to that kind of attention

"Sherlock we need to mend fences. After this morning, she will have had a tough day at school, so we are going to be home for her, and we are going to sit down to eat like a proper family. Are we clear?" John barked with irritation

But he had lost Sherlock's attention, John turned to see what had taken it. At the corner of Baker Street, there was a couple of kids, the lad wearing what seemed to be a red rugby shirt and was talking quite intensely to the shorter young girl walking besides him. Under the black swing coat, she was wearing a deep ruby red vintage 1950's rockabilly swing style silky red dress with a big red bow on her tiny waist, accessorised with matching kitten heel shoes and a deep red bow in her blonde upswept hair..

"Damn it, I should have let you follow her round all day instead" John complained bitterly. The unexpected comment caused Sherlock looked at him in surprise,

"You knew?"

"Please, that's what I was going to do, but you are better at it than me." John said simply, his grin wry and self mocking.

They looked at each other and turned as one to head off towards the two young people.

Jocelyn had seen them coming and grinned up at the dark haired lad,

"I don't think you will be allowed in for tea",

He looked at the pair of determined men bearing down on them and quickly handed over her school bag, 

See you tomorrow Morstan, got to get home"

he muttered and beat a hasty retreat before her father and Sherlock got to them.

Jocelyn started to walk towards them and the flat. Her eyes searched her father's face, he didn't look mad anymore, and something eased inside her chest. Then she saw Sherlock's smug expression, and decided after everything the Prince of Darkness had put her through that morning, he was fair game. Not enough to make them angry again but just something to wind him up a little.

She beamed at them both before they could speak, and gave a little twirl

"What do you think? Isn't it gorgeous? That was such a great idea Sherlock, wearing Mrs Hudson's clothes, all the girls were so jealous. It really made an impression"

She sneaked a little look behind her at the lad who was disappearing down the street, and then blinked innocently up at their glowering faces.

"But you told me I had to wear it Daddy" she smiled with sweet charm, "I did ask you this morning, twice".

Her father narrowed his eyes at her in warning, and as Sherlock opened his mouth to let rip, she suddenly reached out and took each man's hand, all mischief gone from her face.
"I really am sorry about this morning" she said earnestly. "Please don't be cross anymore"

The seconds passed until her father cleared his throat, and said huskily, almost unwillingly

"You look like your mother in that dress"

Jocelyn's face lit up with pleasure, and she dropped both hands to hug him, he held on to her tightly and rubbed his chin against the top of her head.

"Thanks Dad" she whispered

"How sweet" Sherlock mocked as he started to head back to the flat, John and Jocelyn looked at him and then looked at each other. They practically had to run because of his long strides as they followed him into the flat, and she caught up with him as he was taking his coat off, and his arms were trapped, she latched on to him like a limpet, buried her nose in his chest and hung on for dear life.

He looked down at her with irritated confusion, and then looked up at John's smirking face, who shrugged at him as if to say your problem mate.

"Jocelyn" he tried to shrug her off, "Not letting go until we are friends again" she muttered into his chest.

"When were we ever friends?" he asked confusedly and then became uncomfortable as he saw the expression on John's face, but it was Jocelyn's reaction which really surprised him, she laughed, he could feel her giggles through his chest.

"Why are you laughing?"

"What are we then?" she ignored his question and asked her own, still giggling.

It threw him off balance; he wasn't sure how to answer. What was she to him? What was he to her?

The questions raced around his mind and needed to be considered carefully. He needed to think about this. He had been ignoring the question he knew that, letting other issues take precedent but now she has asked he was going to have to consider it.

John's face was getting darker as the seconds ticked by without him answering.

Oddly Jocelyn looked up at him with something approaching compassion,

"Can we at least stop being cross with each other?" she asked him gently as if she understood that her previous question had disturbed him.

He considered her request and nodded, he had much to think about, and he didn't have the energy to waste on anger any more. Besides which he had a sneaky admiration for how she turned the tables on the pair of them.

He decided to distract John and answer her last question at the same time

"I'm not cross anymore Jocelyn" he paused and she smiled at him as she stepped away from the hug. He felt an odd sense of loss which he dismissed impatiently

"I'm just curious, who was the young man in the red Rugby shirt?"

He noticed with satisfaction that John's attention was now firmly fixed on his daughter.
She risked a quick look at her father and then back at Sherlock, and shook her head in unwilling admiration at his manipulation. He grinned at her and she grinned back at him, enjoying the challenge, two could play that game. Sherlock was such fun sometimes and he didn't even know it.

"It's the Welsh national rugby shirt, his mum's Welsh would you believe," she commented inconsequently "Better get changed out of this and take it back to Mrs Hudson"

"No, no darling, sit down and tell us all about your new little friend" her father smiled showing too much teeth and Sherlock smirked at the success of his distraction. Besides which he also wanted to know who the lad was.

Jocelyn grinned wickedly, as she made her voice husky with admiration.

"He's not little at all Dad"

The looks on their faces were priceless but she wasn't going to laugh, because she decided to really grind their noses in it.

She tilted her head and asked her father curiously

"I'm only grounded for another week right? Then I can go out with my....friends?"

Her eyes stayed wide with innocence as comprehension hit them both at the same time. She was anticipating the growls of disapproval trying to keep her face straight.

And then the tension was broken by all three mobile phones beeping at exactly the same time.

The text message on John's mobile phone read

Really John, you sent her to school dressed like that?

MH

The text message on Sherlock's phone read

Really little brother, Mrs Hudson's clothes a deterrent?

MH

The text message on Jocelyn's phone read

Jocelyn, do you think young Mr Hunter will have an aversion to big black cars?

Uncle Mycroft

"Don't you dare Uncle Mycroft", "How the hell does your brother do that?" "Mind your own damned business Mycroft"

Mycroft Holmes laughed when he heard their instant loud vocal responses. He'd had a particularly irritating and wasteful day containing the damage caused by an idiotic MEP who had been indiscreet and he needed some amusement, his family were just so delightfully easy to tease.

He leant back and switched off the live surveillance feed. He would however do a little research on Jocelyn's new friend.
How to Piss off your Pet Policeman.

Chapter Summary

Lestrade is not happy, not impressed and out for revenge. Sherlock is not happy, not impressed and out for revenge. John loses the moral high ground and Jocelyn just wanted a walnut whip.

Some swearing

The good Doctor's daughter is in custody. Not necessary. MH

Lestrade was irritated. The message arrived at a busy crime scene he was co-ordinating, a particularly nasty murder. Bloody Mycroft Holmes, he was not his pet policeman despite his previous highhanded orders which were always phrased as reasonable requests and had admittedly been carried out because of his influence with everyone from the Chief Constable to the bloody Mayor of London.

But this, not a chance. Lestrade had much better things to do with his precious and limited time than sort out the problems of some troubled idiotic teenager who had got herself arrested. Mr Government could just sod off this time.

Wrong place wrong time. MH

The second text arrived exactly five minutes later and pushed his blood pressure into the realms of the stratosphere. He actually growled when he read it, to the astonishment of Anderson and the rest of the forensic team who began to move faster and did everything to try to get out of his line of sight as unobtrusively as possible.

Who the hell did Mycroft Holmes think he was? Stupid bloody question, Mycroft Holmes knew exactly who he was, and what he could do, and didn't he just love rubbing the noses of other "minor" public servants in it. What did it matter to him that Lestrade was supposed to be dealing with serious crime, it wasn't as if they were having a quiet spell, there was never a quiet spell in serious crime, without having to sort out some piddling little family problems for the Holmes boys.

Your prompt attention to this matter would be appreciated Inspector.

MH

The third text pushed major irritation into outright fury. By God he might not be able to get his hands on Mycroft Holmes and tell him what he thought of him and his flagrant abuse of his power, but there was an arrogant teenager with the erroneous belief that she could get away with anything just because she has Mycroft 'a minor position in the government' Holmes wrapped round her little pinkie, and now waiting for Lestrade's obedient arrival to release her. Well was she going to get a damn surprise!

He marched out of the crime scene, a newsagent on a busy shopping street, to the relief of his team because he had been getting grumpier and more unreasonable with each text he received, to
one of the unmarked police cars that was blocking off the road, just stopping quickly to tell Donovan that he had something unexpected to attend to and that he would be back once he was done. Donovan asked if he needed her to go with him, but he shook his head and uttered to her confusion.

"No a scary Detective Inspector from New Scotland Yard will do nicely for this."

His smile was grim and vengeful. The mood he was in, Donovan was not inclined to ask for an explanation, she just nodded and backed away, almost feeling some sympathy for whoever was going to be treated to that particular scary Detective Inspector. Then again, they more than likely deserved whatever was coming to them she thought with a nasty smirk.

He got to the car, his eyes roamed the street until he spotted the nearest CCTV camera. To the confusion of his driver, who didn't see the slow turning of the camera until it faced the car and the grim faced man beside it, Lestrade stood there for minutes without getting in. When he was sure the camera could see his face, he glared at it with righteous fury and nodded his head once.

Just as the driver was about to ask his boss what the problem was, Lestrade got in and told him to get a move on, he didn't have all day to dawdle. The driver took one look at the man's face and wisely refrained from commenting, even though this bad mood wasn't usual for the Detective Inspector.

The car ride to the station was spent in silence, again not usual for the Detective Inspector. Normally he and the driver would have some good natured banter about football, because they supported opposing premier league teams. The driver thought something big must be going down, and knew he could find out what from Sergeant Donovan when the dust has settled.

Lestrade remembered his manners enough to thank his driver and told him to get a cup of tea before he would need him again as he walked into the bustling police station.

He was relieved to see that the desk Sergeant was an old friend from his training at Hendon Police College.

"Finchy, kid was brought in earlier today, name of Watson, no ,no it's Morstan, Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, where have you got her?"

Paul Finch looked at Lestrade with amazement, "It's only a suspected shoplifting charge Greg, what the hell does your division want with her?"

Lestrade raised his eyebrows, "You don't want to know Finchy, you really don't want to know.” he sighed.

"Where is she?"

The desk sergeant walked him to one of the interview rooms and they could see a young girl sitting at the desk, busily working on what seemed to be her school work.

The young copper in the room with her was bored stiff.

Lestrade looked at Finch, who answered the unspoken question

"The other kids brought in at the same time were creating such a fuss I put them in the cells to calm down until their appropriate adult arrives. She hasn't given us any grief, answered every question, even if she was reluctant to give her father's contact details at first, asking if she could just clear this up by herself, because it was just all a misunderstanding. Then when she realised that she would have to stay until someone came for her, she asked very politely if she could do her homework while she was waiting, I didn't see the harm. Got young Reid in there with her but
there's no real need, just reminding the lad that a copper needs to have patience." He chuckled,

"She was a bit indignant when she was brought in, not rude mind you, but she's just plain scared now. Minding her p's and q's and bricking it about her Dad turning up. Reckon its wrong time and wrong place for that wee lass."

Lestrade looked at the desk sergeant strangely for a moment as his words echoed one of the Mycroft's blasted texts.

"She'll be released into my custody once I have finished the interview." Lestrade informed the desk sergeant, Finch smiled knowingly as he began to walk away.

"Don't be too hard on her mate, she's a nice kid."

He walked into the interview room without ceremony and jerked his head at the constable allowing him to leave. She looked up startled from her school work. He could see the faint tracks of tears on her face and she looked very young and very, very scared.

She saw the expression on his face, and swallowed something that seemed to be stuck in her throat, as her eyes widened with fright. She tried to control her suddenly erratic breathing, with not much success.

It was so obvious that she didn't know who he was. He didn't bother enlightening her

It amused him, the last time he saw her she didn't notice him because she just wanted to kill Sherlock (and who could hold that against her) and her father. Now she was so scared she couldn't take her eyes off him.

He made his scowl even more pronounced and spoke sternly,

"I don't appreciate being here young lady, I have far more important matters waiting for me to deal with so when I ask you questions you will answer me promptly and truthfully."

He leant forward, nearly six feet of pure intimidation. He wanted this over and done with in as short a time as possible. He had work to do damn it. She flinched and shrank into the hard metal chair. Her hands started to tremble, and she put the pen down carefully besides her books.

"If you lie to me I will know and you won't like the consequences, do you understand me?"

The angry growl in his voice was designed to put the fear of god into her.

"No Sir, I mean I wouldn't, I … Yes sir, I mean Yes sir." She stammered; her face as white as the paper she had been writing on, as frightened tears filled her eyes, and her bottom lip wobbled.

'Terrorising scared little girls now Lestrade, nice one.' He thought sardonically.

But he continued implacably, remembering Sherlock's tactics with unsuspecting witnesses.

"You were part of a shoplifting gang." He stated coldly "You were there to steal from that hardworking shopkeeper with your mates."

It wasn't a question but she reacted to it as if she had been poked with a cattle prod.

"Oh god no sir!" She denied horrified.

He ignored her outburst, "You are on CCTV and the shopkeeper has included you in the
identification of the gang, and you will be charged with this offence.”

His phone buzzed in his pocket, and he smiled with satisfaction, but refused to look at it, he hoped Mycroft Holmes was satisfied with his 'attention' to this matter. That would teach him to take the piss.

That smile was the final straw for the girl and tears started to flow down her cheeks as she tried to speak, desperate to explain, not holding anything back.

"I only went in the shop for some Walnut whips." She hiccupped in distress, "I was on my way back from school and wanted to get a something nice for Mrs Hudson, she wasn't feeling well this morning, her hip was hurting, and she's been so nice to me that I wanted to do something nice for her. I saw the corner shop and went in to ask if they had any because it's her favourite.

"I'm supposed to go straight home because I'm grounded but I didn't think they would mind just this once if it was for Mrs Hudson."

She confessed with a deep shuddering breath but the expression on the face of the really scary policeman in front of her did not change and she carried on desperately

"Those boys came in, while I was asking the man behind the counter, and then started causing trouble. Please I swear I don't know who they were, and I didn't have anything to do with it. I just wanted the chocolate for Mrs H, I'm not lying sir, I swear I'm not."

She stared up into his face, it was so stern and cold, it was odd when he had such a kind looking face with his silvery hair and dark eyes, but those chocolate eyes were so hard, and there was no sign of that face softening. Her heart sank, she felt sick, how did she land up in these situations? Her father and Sherlock would go nuts. Was this police officer going to put her in jail? She had to know what was going to happen to her, why wouldn't he believe her.

"What happens now sir?" She asked tremulously.

"Now we wait for your father to turn up and then we will all have a nice little chat." He answered sardonically. He had no intention of charging her with anything, his desk sergeant had been correct about the wrong place wrong time (he refused to acknowledge that Mycroft Holmes had said it first because he was still pissed off that he had been called away from the crime scene for this).

She buried her head in her hands and began to sob in earnest.

"They are going to be so angry again, nothing I do is right at the moment, I'm going to be grounded for the rest of my life." She muttered to herself.

Lestrade finally allowed the sympathy he had been hiding to resurface and banish his justified irritation at Mycroft Holmes. He looked down at the defeated sobbing girl and said calmly "One last question Jocelyn!"

He waited for her to obediently lift her head, rubbing her eyes before she looked into his and answered timidly "Yes Sir?"

"I need the answer to this and you had better be truthful… which one's Pinky and which one is the Brain?"

Sherlock was angry, he was actually furious. Mycroft had sent him a text to say Lestrade was going to charge Jocelyn, some idiotic shoplifting thing that she had been caught up in. Sherlock
was perfectly capable of reading between the lines, and knew almost as much from what his annoying elder brother left out of his texts, as from what he included. Mycroft had angered Lestrade, now the DI was taking it out on his Joss…er…John's daughter. Not something that would happen with Lestrade on a good day but Mycroft must have really pushed his buttons, the fat idiot.

Lestrade knew better than to question a minor without a suitable adult present. And any charges would be dropped through lack of due process, as Lestrade damn well knew. Therefore this was designed to be a nasty lesson for Mycroft with Jocelyn as the unwitting instrument of Lestrade's vengeance.

Jocelyn would have been terrified, and oddly thinking that made his anger greater. Lestrade had some explaining to do. It had better be good or Lestrade's murder might be the next case they called him in on, and by god they would never find the body. He'd have the idiots tied up in knots for years and they would never realise it.

He strode through the building like an avenging angel, his coat flapping behind him dangerously until he got to Lestrade's office, whereupon he flung open the door and was just about launch into a diatribe, when he realised that only Jocelyn was sitting there, working at her school books with a can of coke and an empty chocolate wrapper on the desk near to her.

She looked up startled at the noise of the door hitting the wall and then he saw the absolute relief in her eyes, before she dropped her pen, and launched herself at him bodily.

"I've been so scared." She sobbed into his grey shirt as she held on to him for dear life.

"I swear I didn't do anything Sherlock, please believe me, well I did do something but it was just to get a treat for Mrs Hudson and I honestly didn't think you'd mind but I wasn't part of that gang."

She rattled her confession out like an automatic machine gun without an off button, barely stopping to breathe, until Sherlock interrupted her irritably

"Slow down Joss." She didn't notice that he had called her Joss instead of Jocelyn, but she did feel the warmth of his hand against her neck and drew comfort from it, as he didn't seem to want to move it.

"Dad's going to be so mad isn't he?" She whispered into his shirt.

"I don't think he will have any right to criticise since he himself had an ASBO for defacing public property with graffiti a few years ago." He answered calmly.

Jocelyn looked up at him open mouthed, he was amused to see that the annoying crying had stopped as he thought it would, by changing the topic. He had happily sacrificed John's moral high ground for the sake of his grey silk shirt.

"ASBO, my Dad?" she asked incredulously "An honest to goodness, real, actual anti social behaviour order?"

"That was also a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time." He added refusing to answer her inane questions.

Lestrade was walking back to his office with his coffee in his hand, when he saw the tall figure illuminated through his window, as he drew nearer, he was gobsmacked at the sight that met his eyes. What the hell, Sherlock was cuddling the distraught teenager. Now, that he needed to get on film, but the amusement faded as he met the arctic unblinking gaze directed his way as he came
through his own door.

Shit, Sherlock was in a mood, a bad one at that. He noticed the almost instinctive way Sherlock hugged the girl closer when he came in, and then ruthlessly thrust her away.

Without taking his eyes off Lestrade, Sherlock addressed Jocelyn,

"Go and find a computer to play on, if you find one with pornography leave it alone, its Andersons' and you will catch that hideous disease called stupidity".

He then shoved her out of the door and closed it behind her.

Lestrade saw her open her mouth, close it, shrug and walk towards one of the empty desks and sit down.

"Sherlock" he acknowledged the man warily, as he moved to sit down behind his desk, well aware that Sherlock hadn't removed his fulminating gaze from him for a second.

"What the hell do you think you are playing at Lestrade, terrifying her like that?" he hissed and Lestrade actually felt menaced. The hairs on the back of his neck were raised.

"My job Sherlock" he answered coldly

"Bollocks Lestrade, what the hell has a shoplifting charge got to do with you?" Lestrade leant back in his chair and gave Sherlock an evil smile

"Precisely Mr Holmes" with the stress on the name Holmes

"Well you didn't need to take your temper out on Jocelyn because of Mycroft" Sherlock growled, still angry

Lestrade laughed sarcastically, "That's bloody rich coming from you Sherlock, you take your temper out on everyone because of Mycroft"

The staring match they indulged for a full two minutes finally stopped when Sherlock threw himself into the chair that Jocelyn had been using to do her homework.

"Give me that coffee Lestrade, and think yourself lucky that pinching your coffee is all I do to you, and even luckier that I am collecting her and not John"

Sherlock grunted and Lestrade handed it over with an ironic twist of the lips.

"I bought her a coke and some chocolate" Lestrade found himself muttering defensively. Sherlock raised one eyebrow.

Then the two of them looked at the incoming text message on their mobile phones.

Lestrade what have you done to my daughter you bastard

JW

Sherlock, John looks very displeased.

MH

"Oh for god's sake Sherlock take her home" Lestrade groaned with exasperation,"I have got
bloody work to do"

Sherlock looked at him with interest,

"No I don't need you on it, just take that kid back to her father, before the next case you work on is either my murder of your interfering idiot of a brother or John Watson murdering me"

He didn't think he had ever seen Sherlock laugh quite so hard before.
"Thanks Papa." She murmured distractedly, as she concentrated on her homework, sitting at the kitchen table after she had cleared a space with determination and gritted teeth. She didn't have a desk in her room yet, it was the kitchen table or Sherlock's desk and he created such a fuss if she tried to use either.

"Don't touch the experiments Jocelyn, don't you dare move my laptop Jocelyn. Just sit down and shut up Jocelyn. My work is much more important than yours Jocelyn. Use your bedroom Jocelyn".

All variations of the same theme. Stay away from my stuff Jocelyn

Her father had finally persuaded him to allow her the use of part of the kitchen table, and the loud "discussion" they had, seemed to have convinced him to be a bit nicer to her lately, even to the extent of helping with some homework when she asked.

Though after he had rescued her from that bloody scary policeman, he could be as rude to her as he liked and she wouldn't care. She supposed that scary policeman had been ok in the end, she'd figured out that he was the one in the flat the night of the failed parents evening, (so there Sherlock not "all teenagers were just hormonal mayhem on legs with more hair than wit") and he thought the Pinky and the Brain insult had been really funny.

No he had been alright even bought her some chocolate, though it really looked like Sherlock was going to hit him at one point when he had come to get her. Sherlock hadn't even moaned at her on the way home.

She didn't notice the silence, it wasn't uncommon for her comments to be ignored as her father and Sherlock concentrated on something, so she missed the uncomfortable glances that ranged between her and Sherlock, she didn't see her father's mouth open and close in shock, nor the initially disbelieving then very thoughtful expression on Mycroft's face.

Sherlock stiffened and stared intensely at her oblivious bent head for a few seconds, shot a fiery glance at both his partner and brother, refusing to utter a word and then tore out of the flat. The two remaining adults stared at each other, speechless, until Jocelyn dragged their attention back when she muttered "Sherlock, did you say that the .." but stopped in bewilderment, as she looked up from her books and saw he was no longer there.

"Oh, has he gone out? Dad do you know how to apply this equation, it's…"

She stopped at the strange almost angry expression on her father's face, "Dad?" She asked uncertainly, her nervousness increasing when she caught sight of Mycroft staring at her as if she had done something outrageous and deserved a very long trip in that damn car.
It was nearly 2 in the morning when he finally came back to the flat; he was tired, he had ignored most of John's concerned texts and all of Mycroft's infuriating ones. He had a lot to think about, but he had finally sent John a text to tell him he would be home, and John's answer was a simple "I'm here".

It has made him feel guilty, as well as, well whatever else he was feeling about the "Papa Incident" but at least he knew John would be waiting for him in their home, in their bedroom, and he could recognise and appreciate the feeling of satisfaction that knowledge gave him.

The living room was dark, only the street lights filtered through the curtains and Jocelyn lay half dozing on the sofa, when suddenly she heard his voice

"Why aren't you in bed?" He asked coldly. He stood there, still with his coat on, collar turned up as if he was about to go out again.

She blinked and yawned, and turned to face him. He couldn't see the expression on her face but he knew she was studying him.

"Waited for you." She said simply

He waited for more but she just lay there watching him.

"Why?" he asked coldly. He stood there, still with his coat on, collar turned up as if he was about to go out again.

"Dad and Uncle Mycroft seem to think I have upset you, they weren't happy with me, have I upset you?" she asked curiously but with no other discernable emotion.

He looked at her strangely; she was not reacting in her normal manner, no attempt to appease or apologise. It was almost as if she didn't care.

"Why would they think that?" He asked refusing to answer her question.

"Please, I called you Papa and you shit yourself and ran away." She uttered scornfully

"What?" He stuttered shocked, his cold indifference shattered. How dare she?

"The great Sherlock Holmes who flings himself off a fucking roof to save the people he cares about, can't face being called a pet name by his lovers daughter?" She mocked mercilessly.

There was a disbelieving pause and then the rage that boiled up within him actually made him step towards her with the intention of, he wasn't quite sure what, but it was going to be painful to teach the brat a lesson. He stopped abruptly as he realised his emotions were overwhelming and he needed to calm down to focus on her, to work out what she was playing at.

There was also the unspoken acknowledgement that John would not be happy if he broke his daughter. Unlike his mugs he only had one. John put up with and forgave bullet ridden walls, scientific experimentation, sleepless nights, dangerous cases, violin playing, rudeness, and even playing dead for three years. He drew in a deep breath. Sherlock was certain physical and lasting damage to his daughter would be considered more than a bit not good, despite any immediate satisfaction he might get out of it.

When the rage cleared from his mind, the vacuum was filled by confusion instead. He moved closer so that he could see her expression, there was a strange smile on her lips whilst she was looking at him as if he was a child who had disappointed her.
"Jocelyn Jayne Morstan you are in such trouble." He spat viciously, but she interrupted him again and said with a compassion that shattered him

"No I'm not, cariad but you are aren't you?"

"Did you just call me cariad?" He asked incredulously. "Isn't that a Welsh form of endearment, like darling?"

"Technically it's beloved or cherished one but darling will do as well." She answered indifferently "Mum used to call me that when I was being a complete pain in the backside, just to remind me that I was loved."

Love she was talking about love? She was telling him he was being a pain in the backside but he was loved. What?

"Mum made me promise to be good you know." She continued seriously as if he hadn't spoken "Sometimes my definition of good isn't the same as everyone else, especially the Adults I have to deal with, and Mum knew that. Most of the time I got detention at school because I was late, and I was late because I would spend the night with Mum in her room in the hospice. The carers I stayed with never knew I wasn't tucked up in bed after they had gone to sleep. I would climb out of the window and get into that hospice because that was what Mum needed even if she tried to deny it. I would be back in that bedroom the next morning and they never knew a thing. I was there the morning she died even though they tried to keep me away. Even after promising her, sometimes my definition still wins... that's why I went to Cardiff."

She mused almost objectively, shrugging her shoulders with acceptance.

She sat up without taking her eyes off him and continued calmly,

"Now you need me to tell you a few things even though you'd deny it."

He opened his mouth to protest but she talked over him as if she was the adult and he was the child. He didn't know how to deal with this. He could handle aggressive adults, threatening moronic or pathetic people who got in his way or from whom he needed information, but what did he do with an almost-adult, teenage girl who was treating him with this kind of dangerous empathy.

"I said you're the one in trouble because you are scared of me, of the implications to your life, the one you've only just got back, and how much trouble I have the potential to cause between you and Dad."

He gave a sharp indrawn breath as he stared at her with horrified fascination but she wouldn't let him speak

"I know you could persuade him to send me away if you really wanted to."

There was a hitch in that calm voice as if she found even the idea distressing, let alone saying it aloud.

"And I am asking, you not to do that, well to be totally truthful I would get down on my knees and beg you not to do that if that's what it took. Dad and you are my family now and it would hurt me so much to lose that. I won't ever deliberately jeopardise what you have with him, I swear to you on the memory of my Mum."

In the pause, he tried to regain control and uttered pityingly in his gravelly voice "Caring is not an advantage Jocelyn."
She laughed, she actually genuinely laughed, how the hell could she laugh when she knew the pain of losing her mother?

"That's such bollocks Sherlock and you know it. You care for Dad and he makes you stronger not weaker. Loving other people gives you the courage to do amazing wonderful, awful things and be happy even if it can't last."

She waited for a response but he seemed stunned into silence, his quicksilver eyes glued to her face, so she offered reassuringly

"I don't expect you to love me you know, you've made room for me because of Dad, I know that and that's ok."

"I know its ok." Sherlock said confusedly, he did not understand this conversation; he was being pulled along like a rowing boat in a tidal wave. "Love you?" He repeated and he hated that his voice got higher with tension but still she smiled at him,

"I think of you as Papa sometimes because you were so cute when you came home covered in that blue woad, you looked like Papa Smurf and it made me laugh. It stuck in my head and Papa suits you."

Who the hell was Papa Smurf, Cute, did she just call him cute as well as darling/beloved/cherished. Impossible as it seemed, but he tensed up even more. There was an ache in his chest that he didn't understand. She got off the sofa and walked towards him until she stood uncomfortably close within his personal space and looked up into his cold still face, letting his hard gaze see everything on hers.

"I am really sorry that I upset you today and embarrassed you in front of everyone, I won't call you Papa out loud again until you ask me to, but you need to know that I care."

She paused and then said with determination, "No lets do this properly, no beating about the bush, I love you Sherlock Holmes... like I love my Dad but you don't need to worry about it because it's not something that can be changed, and I don't expect you to become someone different because of it."

She spoke to him as if he was some sort of frightened animal that she had to reassure. She didn't wait for a reaction to her words; she knew she needed to reinforce the message. For such an aloof person, Sherlock was extremely tactile, touching the manual experiments, handling the evidence of a crime, the choice of materials of the clothes he wore, playing his violin instead of listening to music, always texting rather than speaking on the phone, even if he didn't use it on living people most of the time.

Well she hoped he did with her Dad, but that was another matter entirely. Sometimes they behaved as if they barely liked each other, and she had never seen a casual caress between the pair of them.

She took hold of the lapel of his coat and tugged until his face came into reach and she went on tiptoes to press a kiss against his cold cheek.

"How the hell can you love me, you barely know me?" He rejected it angrily to cover the aching confusion.

"You're grumpy, inconsiderate, selfish, brilliant, manipulative, amazing, rude, funny, vain, lazy, wildly generous, dangerous, gorgeous, the drama emperor of the known universe, stubborn as a rock, you love my Dad and your friends so much you killed yourself to save them and then came back only when you had personally made things safe. You hate being bored and take it to extremes. You talk shit about emotions because you don't know how to handle them and it's too
scary to try. You can 'see' everybody except yourself. You gave me back my mum when I thought I had lost her forever. Is that enough to be going on with?" She asked lovingly with a hint of laughter.

He stared at her with wild eyed shock, his heart hammering in his chest, but ground out firmly, desperate to stop whatever was happening to him and focusing on the most frightening aspect of her words.

"I won't ask you to call me that name Jocelyn."

Suddenly for the first time, he saw tears gleam in her eyes and they actually hurt him.

"I know...Papa." She whispered painfully, her hand touched his cheek so gently, the smile finally disappearing, leaving her face sad and tired and she turned away to go back to her room, feeling his eyes burn into the back of her.

As she got to the hall, she saw her father standing in the shadows; her shoulders were slumped in defeat but she gave him an uncertain watery smile.

"Think he needs you Dad." She murmured, as she went to move past him, but she suddenly found herself enveloped in a warm pair of arms, her head resting on his chest just below his chin. There was a muffled hiccupy sob, and then she whispered

"I didn't mean to hurt him Dad."

The only response was a strong hand stroking her hair

"S'pose my prison sentence just got extended for swearing didn't it?" She grumbled, and she felt the laughter rumble through his chest. "Mind you I thought I was heading for actual corporal punishment when I saw the look on his face."

He raised her head so she could look at him, and again she interrupted before he had a chance to speak.

"Do you mind that I called him Papa?" She looked at him warily.

He smiled down at her wryly "Felt a bit jealous actually." he admitted gruffly but she saw the way his lips twitched when he whispered "Papa Smurf", she couldn't help it, she giggled quietly against his chest. "He did look adorable, mad as a box of frogs, but adorable." She sobered and carried on

"I won't do it again without his permission, I didn't mean to do it this afternoon, he was just being so nice helping me with my homework, it slipped out without me realising."

Her father made no comment just said gently, "Off to bed Joss, there's school tomorrow."

She sighed tiredly, not ones for speaking about feelings her new family, she and her mum would have thrashed things out over a cup of camomile and a chocolate digestive, but no with these two it was like drawing blood from a stone… but she was as stubborn as they were, she wouldn't give up hope.

She headed off towards her room as her father went into the living room. She could hear the low murmur of voices as she trudged tiredly up the stairs.

Maybe she could get one of them to agree to a day off tomorrow morning… or even just to have a lie in.
She woke up with the pale bleary sunlight thrusting its way through her nondescript curtains. It was 9.30 in the morning. Her alarm hadn't gone off, why hadn't her alarm gone off, she was so late for school; she groaned out loud, not more detention for goodness sake. She would have to get Dad or Sherlock to write something in her planner to get her off the hook; after all it was mostly their fault for being such pains about one little word. It wasn't as if she had come home drunk or announced she was pregnant with twins, that's all she had done was use a pet name and the world had come crashing down around her ears… so they could bloody well deal with it.

It was so quiet in the flat, she was sure they had both left already and that made her so cross, she didn't have anyone to write that note.

She hurriedly dressed in her school uniform and remembered she had left her bag with the planner in the living room, she rushed downstairs, the strange noises coming from the room not penetrating her consciousness until her eyes actually made the connection for her and she came to a full stop and then uttered in abject horror.

"Oh my god, my eyes, I have to burn out my eyes" before swinging round so that her ramrod stiff back was to the living room and her eyes were resolutely fixed on the stairwell.

"You have a bedroom, why aren't you using it… Oh god I'm scarred for life, I am going to need therapy for centuries. Sherlock you are eating Dad's face" She wailed with horror.

She could hear more noises as her father made to get up but Sherlock said sharply as there was the muffled thud of someone being pushed back against the sofa.

"No, if she has a problem with two men kissing, she has to deal with it."

"Oh for god sake you great prat, its not that, you are both old, old people aren't supposed to snog, especially in front of teenage daughters. And they aren't supposed to make noises, such horrible, horrible noises." She complained bitterly.

Then the tips of her ears went red and her shoulders stiffened as something else seemed to occur to her.

"oh my god you were going to have sex in the living room"" she got out in one great gulping horrified breath, and then there was an even more mortified shriek.

"oh my god you have already had sex in the living room". She drew more air into her starving lungs.

"Is there something wrong with you, we drink tea in that room, and at your ages you could break a hip!" she was almost hysterical with embarrassment.

"I am going to go to Mrs Hudson until you can behave properly, and if you are continuing your snogging session throw my school bag down stairs."

John pushed a disbelieving and stunned Sherlock off his chest, and sat up trying not to laugh at the expression on his face about being called old, personally not sure if he was offended or not that his daughter actually thought that.

He said with amused exasperation "Just come in and get your school bag Jocelyn."

He could see her head shaking before the words left her mouth.

"No way, no how, not even if you had that pair of Red Doc Martin boots I want being hand
delivered by Gerard and Mikey Way dressed as Killjoys and wrapped up in red ribbons with tickets for all their gigs for the next ten years." was the emphatic refusal

She was going to make them wear paper bags over their heads before she would go back into that flat ever again.

"You two are so going to have to make this up to me or I will have to tell on you to Mrs H." She warned as she ran downstairs.

"She called us old, the cheeky little sod."

John began to laugh, he was laughing so hard that he was snorting. It was just as well he was used to Sherlock's penchant for the dramatic but now he had his own little drama princess to deal with too. She could really be Sherlock's daughter instead of his sometimes. Then he corrected himself no, never instead of, that should be as well as. She handled Sherlock's behaviour as if she had dealt with it all her young life. He had expected things to be a lot more difficult between them, but she handled him.

She seemed to have more of a problem relating to John. He felt a sudden surge of the same irrational jealousy he had felt yesterday when she called Sherlock Papa that he tried to block again. It helped when he saw the baffled and outraged expression on his lovers face.

Sherlock couldn't see what was so funny, couldn't John see that the girl was trying to blackmail them, and then a thought struck him,

"Who are Gerard and Mikey Way? They have obviously taken advantage of her and why haven't we heard of them before now? What is a Killjoy, and what kind of pervert delivers boots to kids dressed in red ribbons. I will contact the school to see which class they are in and…"

John just laughed even harder, and then pulled Sherlock back for another 'snogging session' because when he was so woefully ignorant he was irresistible, before he attempted to explain the nature of the relationship between a normal teenage girl and My Chemical Romance.
The Afternoon after the Night before.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Jocelyn could hear the shouting as she made her way up the stairs. Oh God, Uncle Mycroft was here trying to persuade Sherlock to do something he didn't want to do. There would be that horrible screeching on the violin soon to drive him away but they were both so stubborn, sometimes it didn't work.

Then she heard her father's voice talking calmly and another male voice answering. She'd heard that voice before.

Oh bugging hell it was that scary policeman from a few days ago. Panic hit, making her feel sick and dizzy, had he come for her, what had she done this time? Then to her relief, she remembered that Sherlock had known him at the station, nicked his coffee, and he had been in the flat when it had kicked off over parents evening, although she had been too furious to notice, so he must be one of the policemen that Sherlock worked for.

Sherlock was going to be insufferable for hours, no days, if they were nagging him. Her Dad would get all protective, and try to chuck them out, Uncle Mycroft would start making obscure and menacing threats to everyone including the skull and then there was the policeman, she wasn't sure what he would do but he could be really, really scary and she didn't want to be around to find out.

One day, please god one day she would be able to come home from school and the living room wouldn't either be a war zone of irresistible forces up against immovable objects or totally devoid of human life forms.

She was so hungry, it was bound to be a bloody takeaway meal again today because Sherlock would go ballistic if she tried to cook something in the kitchen where he had set up his latest mad scientist experiments. She should have called him Frankenstein instead of Papa, he'd have forgiven her for that, and would even have been flattered the contrary git, and right now she really, really fancied beans on toast, she had been thinking about it all the way home. She'd missed lunch because she'd been working in the library, needing to get something sorted before the end of the day.

Beans on toast with grated cheese and a dash of Worcester sauce, her comfort food. Her mouth was watering just thinking about it. She needed comfort food after the shit couple of days she'd had, being arrested for something she hadn't done, scared silly by that mean Detective Inspector who was actually supposed to be a friend of her Dad and Sherlock, (God help her if she ever met anyone who didn't like them), getting it in the neck because of one silly little tiny tichy wee word that had slipped out of her mouth, detention again because she was late, and why was she late, because she had stayed up to try to talk to Sherlock, worried that she had upset the two of them with that one silly little word, even if she was pissed off at him at the same time.

Then if that wasn't enough, if they hadn't been too engrossed in snogging this morning and freaking her out to just sign her bloody planner, she wouldn't have had detention today. She was sure they hadn't even noticed that she was late coming home.

She was getting so tired of their crap, she had all these new things to deal with and they weren't making life any easier for her. She was trying her hardest to fit in with them, and had actually begun to love them much against her better judgement, but it definitely was all one sided, she knew that Dad might like her but she didn't think he actually loved her. He was Mr Responsibility.
and was quite capable of doing his duty towards an unloved daughter. Sherlock tolerated her most of the time, sometimes she thought she entertained him but if she was suddenly to disappear it wouldn't make that much of a ripple in his self centred world. God he went mental over being given an affectionate pet name, what the hell would he do if he actually decided she counted, probably never speak to her again. Which on reflection after some their so-called conversations might not be such a bad thing!

It got a bit tiring being called stupid, an idiot, or variations on that theme.

Life was so unfair; the one person who had loved her unconditionally, the one person who had always been there for her, had been torn away from her. She still missed her mum so much, it hurt like a gnawing bruise that spread outwards from her heart and today was a bad day. She hadn't really minded the snogging stuff once she had got over the shock, not that she would tell the pair of them, there was too much potential for teasing and blackmail, but it had made her wonder about her Mum and her Dad together, and all the useless, addictive what-ifs and what could have been. If they had been together would he have been able to spot her illness earlier, would she still have been alive?

Her day had not had one of the best starts, and then once the what if game had taken hold, it had rapidly gone downhill from there.

She had wanted to cry, she had wanted to be by herself and curl up until the ache stopped but she had been stuck in school, and now when she thought she would at least have some time to herself in the flat, relaxing in her pyjamas, scoffing her comfort food while watching programmes she wanted to watch on the TV and not having to listen to their stupid opinions of her choice, there was a roomful of over active testosterone carriers baying for blood at each other. She didn't even want to look her father or Sherlock in the face at the moment remembering this morning's fiasco.

To cap it all off, she also had to get her father's signature on the work experience form from school, which meant having to explain everything, probably twice if Sherlock ignored it the first time round. After getting told off by her form tutor because she was late, and given detention at the end of the day, she had been dragged off to see the school's career advisor who had informed her that all the more "interesting" work experience places were gone because she had joined the school in the middle of the term (he even had the nerve to say it as if it was her own fault!) so she would have to go to the local supermarket. She'd been quite prepared to accept that, it was only a week of her life after all, and she used to enjoy helping out at Layla's Dad's shop. It was when he also said that as Jocelyn was so frequently in detention she obviously had no ambition to go further in life so that type of work experience should suit her very well, that Joss began to burn with indignation.

She asked very politely through gritted teeth if she was allowed to arrange her own work experience as she thought her father might want her to do that.

He looked at her scornfully for a second and then said patronisingly "Well of course if you can arrange something but it will have to be in place by the end of the week and the school will have to approve your choice."

He made it clear he didn't think she could. Therefore she was even more determined to sort something out rather than be saddled with his option. So she had spent the lunch break on the internet and had found what she was looking for. Now that's all she needed was a parent/guardian signature and it was all sorted.

"Jocelyn, are you going to come through that door, or are you taking up residence on the stairs?" Sherlock loudly asked, his voice full of irritation.

"At least it's bloody quiet out here." She muttered to herself, then thought sod it and responded in
kind, very, very loudly.

"Sorry Sherlock I'm having a bit of trouble getting through the sound barrier as there's so much noise and hot air coming from the living room!"

In the stunned silence that met her remark, she turned into the kitchen instead of the living room, looked at the mess on the table, shrugged her shoulders and then went to the cupboards to find a tin of beans. Once that was in her hand she stood looking at the refrigerator, her head tilted, debating whether she wanted grated cheese enough to brave whatever horrors were stored in there this time.

She really wanted the beans on toast but if she had to dig eyeballs out of the butter dish she would not be able to eat it, she sighed and then swung round to ask the mad scientist she lived with what was in there only to find the four men staring at her from the living room. She had been so engrossed in her task that it hadn't dawned on her that they had actually stayed quiet.

"Jocelyn, what are you doing?" Her father asked her very calmly, he was treating her as if she had lost her marbles she thought indignantly.

"I want beans on toast, I'm hungry." she answered shortly. "What's in the fridge this time?"

Her father's eyebrows hit his hairline, but she was looking at Sherlock, and saw his face darken at her question,

"Oh never mind, can I have some money please to go downstairs to Speedy's?" she asked her father wearily, fed up to the back teeth of everything and everyone.

"Can't you wait?" Sherlock asked irritably and the four of them saw anger flash across her tired and stormy face as she slammed the tin of beans down onto the kitchen table and responded

"No I can't, I didn't have breakfast because of you and Dad, I missed lunch because of that pig of a career's advisor, I had detention after school because I was late this morning and neither of you signed my planner because you were both 'Busy' ( busy was uttered scornfully with fore finger gestures ) and I am hungry." The last word was emphasised at a near shout.

Then she closed her eyes waiting for the storm to break over her head. So she didn't see the hand John held up at Sherlock to stop any comment or the warning looks he directed at Mycroft and Lestrade, who had looked at each other with raised eyebrows and mouthed "busy" and she didn't see him come closer, until all of a sudden she was resting against a woolly jumper and feeling the thud of her father's heartbeat.

She stiffened and tried to pull away, she didn't want a cuddle she wanted some food damnit, but he wouldn't let her go.

"Bad day?" he asked softly. She was still very tense as she was held against him, but she nodded her head once.

"Cup of tea and beans on toast it is then" he uttered still with that incredibly calm soothing voice, he sometimes used with Sherlock when he was being unreasonable. "Why don't you pop up to your room and get changed out of your uniform and it will be ready for you when you come down"

"Really?" she murmured in faint surprise, but obeyed when he turned her around to face the stairwell.
She had finished off her meal at the kitchen table. She had ignored the conversation from the living room, which at least was not as loud as before, and tucked into the beans on toast that her father had rustled up for her.

Once Sherlock had come in, looked at her plate, with the melted cheese and beans, taken a spare fork and eaten some, nodded and gone back to the living room, all without saying a word. She had shrugged her shoulders and carried on eating. Knowing Sherlock he had probably never tried beans on toast before and wanted to see if it was edible. She was lucky he hadn't just spat it straight out again.

She washed her dishes and left them to drain, then walked back through the living room on her way to her bedroom, when she noticed that the Policeman, Sherlock and Mycroft were engrossed in their conversation and that her father was just watching them. She took her opportunity, speaking quietly.

"Dad, I have a form from school you have to sign, it's for my work experience week."

He looked at her with interest but before he could say anything, Mycroft asked in his most bland tone of voice.

"Is that the reason you were upset with the school's career advisor today Jocelyn Jayne?"

"I didn't say I was upset with the Career's advisor" she responded quickly hoping to nip that particular topic in the bud

Sherlock piped up, helpful as ever and said pointedly

"You called him a pig."

Suddenly to her irritation she was the focus of four pairs of eyes again

"What did he do?" her father asked still calmly but there was a gleam in his eyes that she wasn't sure about.

"What's your teacher's name Jocelyn?" Mycroft asked with a sinister smile, that actually sent a shiver down her back, before she scowled at him.

The policeman didn't say anything, but she knew she was the focus of his attention in fact the way that they were all watching her made her feel very uncomfortable.

Oh for the love of … Why did she have to live in a household with an overabundance of testosterone, if there was only a better balance with oestrogen, things would be a lot calmer and more sensible. She decided to concentrate on her father; she really didn't have the energy today to deal with all four of the nosey interfering males in the room. She pointedly turned her back on the other three and responded to her father

"It's nothing Dad, you just have to sign the permission slip to allow me to attend the week's work experience"

He gave her an understanding grin and just raised one of his eyebrows. She gave an exaggerated hard done by sigh, which made Lestrade's lips twitch, Sherlock roll his eyes and Mycroft conceal his amusement with a frown.

"Mr..." she paused, shot a wary look at Mycroft, then changed it to "my career's advisor told me
that I have to go to the local supermarket, because every other placement has already been taken, which is my fault because I joined the school so late into the term, then of course because I am always in detention I have no ambition and that particular placement will prepare me for my future behind the tills or sorting out the faulty chip and pin machines for confused customers"

She paused and then gave the room a big fake smile which did not conceal her tired irritation

"Happy now, has that little nugget of information added value to your days"

But before she could finish and explain any further, Mycroft purred with annoyance

"Oh I don't think any family connection of mine need resort to working for a supermarket, dear Jocelyn, you really must give me your teachers name so that I can correct the poor fellow’s misconception about your options"

He smiled silkily at her and mused,

"I am sure I can arrange something much more suitable, perhaps a stint at the offices of the Ministry of Education, or at the Houses of Parliament or ...

But before he could finish Sherlock growled

"Do you want the girl to be bored out of her mind, brother dear, she can assist her father and I with a case when the time comes, it will be much more interesting and relevant to her future"

Her father had only enough time to utter his name in protest before Lestrade laughed out loud, and said

"I don't think so Sherlock, no way are you dragging a teenager to a police crime scene, and anyway have you actually been CRB checked so that you can supervise a chil..."

He shot her an apologetic glance and quickly changed it to

"a young person in the workplace? There are strict rules and regs about work experience and I seriously doubt you would successfully pass a CRB check. If she wants experience of proper police work"

He grinned annoyingly at Sherlock

"Then I am happy to speak to Human resources and she can have a week at New Scotland Yard"

He grinned triumphantly and Jocelyn began to wonder when her work experience actually became the catalyst for another round of instinctive male competition and one-upmanship.

"Don't be such an idiot Lestrade, I don't want police stupidity wearing off on her, and if she comes into contact with Anderson, it could irreparably damage the brain cells she has got, if she can't come to a crime scene she can help me experiment at the morgue, Dr Molly Hooper is an excellent example of a professional woman with an interesting career"

He smirked satisfied with the compromise, totally ignoring the irrelevancy of having a CRB check, he knew Mycroft could sort that out for him, and then frowned at the level of protest which met his perfectly reasonable suggestion.

"Morgue" Jocelyn opened her horrified eyes wide and looked pleadingly at her father.
"Sherlock stop being such an idiot" her father snapped

"Jocelyn is going nowhere near murder victims or other dead bodies, I can sort something out at the surgery and she can come to work with me instead. She'll have experience of the medical profession, the kind that work with live patients" he finished wryly.

There was an expectant silence as they all turned to look at Jocelyn, she didn't know whether to throw hysterics, laugh or just cry, perhaps if she jumped out of the window they would leave her alone. Why did they keep doing this to her?

She took a deep breath, how to do this without offending them all and possibly being grounded for life

She started hesitantly

"I really didn't mind the supermarket placement, I used to help out at Layla's mum and Dad's shop which was fun, it's only for a week but he was being a judgemental jerk and I wanted to prove him wrong by myself really. If one of you do it for me it sort of feels like cheating,"

She looked at them hoping they would understand, Sherlock looked like he was going to pout, Lestrade looked amused, Mycroft opened his mouth to speak, but her father said simply "let her finish Mycroft" with an odd look on his face, which if she didn't know better might actually be pride.

"Sherlock, thank you but no thank you, you would want to kill me before the first half hour was over because you would have to explain everything and I would more than likely vomit" She continued rapidly without giving him a chance to respond

"Uncle Mycroft, thank you but no thank you, I wouldn't want to let you down." She was pleased with that but then ruined it by adding, "and Sherlock's right I would be bored silly."

She turned to Lestrade

"Detective Inspector Scary," he grinned at her and she smiled back "thank you but no thank you. Once inside a police station was more than enough for me, I don't want to repeat the experience, from either end, ever"

She looked at her Dad who was beginning to look like the cat who got the cream, and this was the most difficult one of all, she almost couldn't find the words

"Daddy, I'm sorry, I just couldn't, there were so many hospital visits with.." she stopped unable to add more and looked anxiously at him as she saw the disappointment cross his face but then that strange expression came back.

"So are you actually opting for the supermarket" Sherlock asked in outrage as if personally offended "When you have all these other options, and, Mycroft as the omnipotent lucky dip?"

"I didn't say that" she protested earnestly "I sorted something myself lunchtime and as long as Dad signs the form I can do that instead"

She stopped and looked at him hopefully. There seemed to be a collective exasperated indrawn breath from behind her, while the amusement on John's face grew.

"Jocelyn what have you sorted?" It was odd how threatening the patient tone that Mycroft used could be
"Oh, sorry, a community radio station. I was supposed to do that back in Cardiff so I thought I might give it a go here. Music and talking all day, should be fun"

She smiled enthusiastically as she looked at them and saw the varying stunned and confused expressions, the smile became uncertain and then faded from her face, leaving her looking anxious.

"Problem?" she asked nervously.

"Is that what you want to do in the future Joss?" her father asked curiously,

"Its just a week Dad, I'll probably only be making the tea anyway, its no big deal" she protested trying just to get it all over and done with

"Well what do you want to do?" Sherlock asked irritably, he was like a dog with a bone; he just wouldn't let it go.

Jocelyn's eyes flashed, "Well when I was three I wanted to be Lala from the Tellytubbies, then when I was five I wanted to drive Thomas the Tank Engine, when I was six I wanted to be Blossom the badass powerpuff girl or Sandy the Texan ninja karate squirrel in Spongebob Squarepants, but my life's ambition is to be a Timelord and have my own Tardis."

Lestrade swung away, his shoulders shaking with laughter, John sniggered, Mycroft's eyebrows hit his hairline but Sherlock wasn't impressed,

"I asked you a serious question Jocelyn, how do you intend to plan for your future if you don't know what you want to do, so what do you want to do?"

His tone was haughty and dismissive, and before John could protest, she finally snapped

"I don't know, haven't the foggiest, for the last three and a half years, I haven't even wanted tomorrow to arrive because it would take Mum away from me so I didn't think about it and I'm still not ready to "

Suddenly she was angry again, what was the big deal, it was only five bloody days. Why did they have to make everything so bloody difficult.

She sighed and muttered "Sorry" into the uncomfortable silence. Her father reached for her hand, and said with a kind smile

"The Radio station really sounds interesting love, get me the form and I will sign it"

Mycroft proved exactly how much a master of one-upmanship he was, and he wiped the floor with any opposition.

"How do you feel about work experience at the BBC, Jocelyn, Radio 1 any good for you?" He offered with a small provoking smile.

The incredulous gobsmacked expression on her face made her father and Lestrade laugh out loud, whilst Sherlock hid a smirk and complained bitterly

"You are such a show off Mycroft"
Teenagers in secondary school the UK have to attend either a week or two weeks worth of "work experience" as part of their personal development. Sometimes parents & family arrange it for them or they are arranged through the schools careers advisor. It is a formal process and they are monitored at the work place by teachers from the school. Despite Joss's assertion that she will only be making the tea, the placement is designed to allow them to experience more than that. In fact current health and safety rules may have removed that task from the experience.

CRB is criminal record bureau check and any person working with children or young people has to have one in place by law.

More angst for my poor little Jocelyn. She is still not sure of her place in her Dad's affections.

Please pretty please leave a review and let me know what you think. It really helps

Disclaimers: As every other chapter, only Jocelyn and the plot are mine, everything else belongs to the masters of this universe may they be forever blessed.
My Family and Other Animals

Chapter Summary

The thought of someone sending Mycroft Holmes corny jokes when he was in a meeting and then rounding it off with a smiley face made me laugh so hard that I nearly couldn't write this chapter.

Not that I want to influence you or anything …… The jokes are corny but I love puns what can I tell you.

Lots of awww moments, nail varnish and corny jokes. Oh and Sherlock, and hugs and Sherlock ...we mustn't forget Sherlock

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was Friday evening, school had finished, and it was the weekend. Two whole days without school coming up to enjoy and… she was still grounded.

Lunchtime at school she had listened to some of her new friends, well Maisie Ross's friends really, who had sort of adopted her after the fracas with Jenny Clay and that red headed Reilly woman, make plans to go shopping and see a film, and she had tried to ignore the twinges of envy. She knew it was her own fault, and she knew she couldn't wheedle out of it with her father, he'd given in that one Saturday morning but only to go food shopping which he considered to be a chore anyway and the only treat she had got out of it was one little bar of chocolate, and the odd satisfaction of actually having her father to herself for a little while.

But it seemed like she was going to be grounded until she was ancient, or twenty five, whichever came first, the way things were going.

Maisie had turned to her with half a smile, but before she could ask, Jocelyn shook her head and just muttered "grounded". There was a sympathetic groan from most of the girls in the group.

"He's really strict your Dad." Kate Davies, a tall, brown haired quiet girl stated solemnly.

"Ex-army." Joss said simply, and then her innate honesty made her add,

"Took off to Cardiff without telling him, they had to come and find me, he wasn't a happy bunny."

Sharp indrawn breathes and winces reflected their understanding of the situation. They had changed the subject sympathetically.

Will Hunter and his mates had stopped near their table, talking about their weekend plans, and bubbly Cassie Adams had suggested that they meet up and all go together. Will's friends seemed to think it was a good idea, and while they were making arrangements, he wandered casually round to her side of the table and asked "Ok Morstan?" Jocelyn looked up at him in surprise "Fine Hunter, how about you?"

There was an awkward silence, as if he was waiting for her to say something else and then Will wandered off again.
Jocelyn looked at him with confusion and raised her eyebrows at Maisie who just smirked and turned back to the conversation again.

She had got home from school, just as her father and Sherlock had been preparing to go out.

"Hi Dad, Hi Sherlock, Bye Dad, Bye Sherlock."

She had muttered slightly resentfully, and turned away as she heard them go down the stairs, oh joy another long afternoon and evening in on her own. No-one to speak to, even Mrs Hudson was going to her friend Mrs Turner's place later for the night. And it was a Friday so she didn't even have to get up early in the morning for school.

Friday night used to be treat night with her Mum, they would buy some popcorn and watch a DVD, it didn't even have to be a new one, and they would watch an old favourite, like *Mulan*, *Shrek*, *Aladdin* or *The 10th Kingdom*. Even when her Mum was taken to the hospice, they would make Friday night special somehow. Is she wasn't up to watching something, Jocelyn would read her a story, using silly voices to entertain her. One of their favourites was Kenneth Grahams "The Wind in the Willows" with Ratty, Mole, Badger and Toad.

Now she had an absent father, an empty flat and a skull for company. Yippee.

Maybe she could make herself a friend by sticking Sherlock's body part experiments together. She could call it Fred, and they could become best friends forever or until the smell got to her and she chucked him in the bin.

She gave an unconscious sigh; her shoulder slumped despondently, and turned around to sit on the sofa. Her eyes widened as she saw her Dad standing in the door way watching her with a slight frown; she looked at him wistfully as he walked towards her and put a gentle hand to her cheek,

"Joss, look, once this is over... things will be better, I promise."

"Promises don't work that way, Dad, you shouldn't promise things that might not be possible." She contradicted him softly, with a haunting sadness dulling her eyes.

He didn't want to ask what promises had been made to her that hadn't been kept, he thought he knew, he could hear Mary's voice in his head telling her everything would be alright.

"Joss, I know you haven't known me for very long, but when I give my word, I keep it, now you know the rules, if you are worried about anything go to Mrs Hudson, only use our mobile numbers if it's an emergency, and if you can't get hold of me or Sherlock, ring Mycroft or Lestrade, we will be back as soon as we can."

Unexpectedly he dropped a swift kiss to her other cheek.

"John! Are you coming or not?"

Sherlock bellowed impatiently from the bottom of the stairs. For one mad needy second she almost asked him to stay, but she could see in his mind he was already half way out of the door with Sherlock.

He tapped her nose gently, "See you later."

She gave him a small smile and then he was gone. The sound of the front door closing behind them, made a splinter of loneliness shiver through her until she thrust her chin up and straightened her shoulders unknowingly imitating her father.
Jocelyn had had her tea with Mrs Hudson, who had taken one look at her face and offered either to stay with her or take her along to Mrs Turner's house, but Jocelyn had persuaded her to go and had settled in for a boring evening on her own.

She tried watching the TV but couldn't find anything interesting, if Sherlock had been there he would have made it enjoyable, he was so funny to listen to and watch when he was engrossed in crap TV programmes. Her Dad would laugh when Sherlock would shout his deductions at the screen.

Bored, she took out her mobile and scrolled through her contacts, Layla would be busy with her family, and she didn't have numbers for anyone at the new school. Then she saw Mycroft's number and a wicked twinkle lit her eyes as she bit her lip, and then shook her head in an effort to dismiss the bad, naughty, bad very very very bad idea that was taking hold in her brain.

Mycroft Holmes sat in the luxurious conference room facing the Ambassador of a recalcitrant Eastern extremely rich country who was being stubborn with regards to the extremely reasonable request of the minor official of the British Government, when he felt the vibration alert from his smart phone.

He looked at his beautiful assistant with a frown; she raised her eyebrows to indicate her ignorance. He smiled courteously at the insufferable official in front of him and checked his text messages.

"What do you get if you cross a kangaroo and a sheep?"

He frowned ferociously to cover his utter incomprehension and confusion, and the Ambassador shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

The phone vibrated again

"A woolly jumper...."

His eyes widened with incredulity. Did the child not realise that he would know who had sent it? If Sherlock had put her up to this, there would be repercussions.

There then came a spate of texts involving sheep jokes

"Where does a sheep go for a haircut?"

"The baa baa shop"

"How many sheep does it take to make a jumper?"

"I didn't know sheep could knit"

"How do sheep keep warm in winter?"

"Central Bleating"

The number of texts and the gradual smirk which chased the scowl from his face, made the uncomfortable Ambassador's anxiety levels spike.

When the imperturbable Mr Holmes actually gave an involuntary short laugh, which was instantly cut off, the Ambassador could not take it any more, he knew he was in trouble; he began to speak in a much more conciliatory tone but was disconcerted to see Mr Holmes raise his hand to silence.
him without even looking at him whilst he sent his own text.

The Ambassador's complete capitulation to Mycroft's demands came less than five minutes later, freeing Mycroft and his assistant from a meeting they had assumed would go on to the early hours of the morning.

*Jocelyn Jayne, I am in a meeting. If you are bored, I can arrange for a nice car trip for you.*

*UM.*

Joss grinned as she read through the message and considered it. He had threatened her with the car again but he didn't actually sound angry, he was always threatening her with the car, but she knew she was in real trouble when he actually stopped threatening and the car just turned up to take her.

He also technically hadn't actually told her to stop texting him.

She sent him a sorry emoticon. Then helpless giggles left her mouth because she was almost certain no one had ever sent Mycroft Holmes a smiley face before.

As Anthea ushered the broken and shaken Ambassador through the door, Mycroft stared at the latest text from Jocelyn.

"*Anthea, please enlighten me regarding this image.*"

Anthea looked at the text, and kept her composure

*I believe Miss Morstan is saying sorry Sir.* She explained in her succinct way. *"It is an emoticon; you may have seen the smiley faces which were the original image."*

He stared at her blankly for a moment as if she was speaking a foreign language, at least not one of the seven he was fluent in, and then nodded his head in comprehension.

"*Ah, I understand, thank you Anthea that will be all.*"

Anthea turned and walked away with her usual elegance, not for one second allowing the laughter inside her to bubble up and escape or a smile to cross her perfect features.

Jocelyn's phone rang, an image of a pink iced cupcake popped up. Sherlock was such a git sometimes, he had pre-programmed the phone with all the numbers he considered she needed and pictures for all the numbers. He'd even managed to find a cute one of Layla… the only contact on her phone who had an image instead of an actual photo was Mycroft and she wasn't quite sure why it was a cake, except that Sherlock always taunted him about his diet although Mycroft looked quite fit for someone that old.

She looked at the ringing phone feeling suddenly uncertain. The texting had been fun, but it didn't seem that amusing now he was on the other end of the call waiting to speak to her. Time to take her punishment like a big girl.

*"Hi Uncle Mycroft." Her mouth wasn't dry, and her voice wasn't wobbly, she was sure they weren't. If she told herself that often enough she might actually believe it.*

*"Jocelyn Jayne."* responded the smooth rich voice sternly. The voice destroyed any resolve that she had to tough it out. She said in a rush of self preserving cowardice before he could continue,

*"Are you really cross, please don't be cross, I'm very sorry and won't ever do it again."*
There was a pause and then the smooth rich voice carried on as if she hadn't said anything

"I'm curious Jocelyn, why would you think it appropriate to text me in such a manner?"

"You are cross."

She muttered dejectedly, what had possessed her, he'd complain to Dad, (not Sherlock who would think it was funny) and she'd get told off again, and … oh what the hell if she was going to get told off she might as well tell him the truth.

"Because it's Friday, I wanted to make you smile with something silly, you work so hard all the time, and I like you, I was really bored and it made me laugh."

She blurted out truthfully if rather disjointedly, waiting for the axe to fall.

There was another pause and she could feel her nerves tighten unbearably at the lack of response when the smooth rich voice continued

"Jocelyn Jayne, it interrupted a very important meeting, causing my guest to totally misinterpret my actions and closing the meeting earlier than anticipated."

"That's not good then?" Jocelyn stuttered, wincing, oh hell now another months worth of being grounded.

"Quite the contrary my dear Jocelyn" Came the cheerful response

"Pardon?" She asked confused, and became even more so when she heard his next words

"What do you call a sheep with no head or legs?"

Jocelyn responded automatically, her brain too stunned to say anything else

"I don't know Uncle Mycroft"

"A cloud." He intoned calmly.

The stunned silence continued for a few seconds until she was overcome with giggles the laughter helpless and relieved at the same time.

"Now young lady, you should go and open the front door. You mustn't keep your visitor waiting."

Mycroft continued imperturbably as if he had never cracked a joke in his life.

"A visitor, but Dad and Sherlock and Mrs Hudson are out, I'm not supposed to. .." Jocelyn began but Mycroft interrupted

"There is nothing to worry about, now go and answer the door. Goodbye Jocelyn Jayne." He rang off.

Joss looked at her phone with her mouth open, then as she heard the knock on the front door, her mouth closed with a snap.

Well if Uncle Mycroft said there was nothing to worry about, who was she to argue.

She ran down the stairs and opened the door to Maisie Ross and her father.
John had left Sherlock in the morgue at St Bart's, he could do nothing further to help him, so he had decided to make his way home, and at least be there in the morning when she woke up. The poor kid.

He opened the front door quietly and took his jacket off. As he made his way upstairs, he could hear the murmur of the TV. Well she was either up late or she had forgotten to switch it off when she had gone to bed.

He moved into the darkened living room with only the light from the TV to see by and gaped in astonishment at the state it was in.

There were bowls of popcorn lying in front of a tented area made up of duvets and pillows. The TV was showing some animated film with penguins, the room smelt of popcorn and the sharp tang of nail varnish remover. What was even more surprising was that there appeared to be two bodies under the duvet den.

He switched on the light and the duvet den crumpled in on itself to the soundtrack of shrieks as two heads and shoulders appeared above it and two pairs of eyes, one pair dark blue and the other pair hazel stared at him in surprised fright.

"Dad!" Jocelyn scowled, but her complaint was cut short when she saw the look on his face.

"Hello Mr More…er…sorry Watson, my name is Maisie Ross." Said her friend as they were both clambering to get up from the floor, bare feet with painted toenails.

"Hope you don't mind but came to spend some time with Joss while my Mum and Dad are at a show. They should be here soon to pick me up."

The two girls exchanged uneasy glances at his lack of response,

"I'll tidy up Dad, I know it's a bit messy." Jocelyn offered uncertainly, trying to work out what was making her father angry.

"I don't remember being asked about this Jocelyn." He spoke sternly,

"It's my fault, really Jocelyn didn't know I was coming, it was a surprise, I didn't want to spend the evening by myself tonight and as Joss can't come out with us tomorrow, it just seemed like a good idea." Maisie hurriedly explained, looking back and forth between father and daughter

Maisie's normally cool and calm manner seemed to have deserted her as she realised that Joss was likely to get blamed for her great idea. They had both enjoyed the evening and Maisie hoped that she hadn't made things worse for Joss.

Joss looked at him defensively "It wasn't an emergency Dad." She pleaded.

John stood there under the gaze of the two worried girls and began to feel like a git.

It had worried him though, Joss could have opened the door to anyone and technically she was grounded though if he raised it he was sure that she would point out that she had not left the flat. She had been upset when he left, he knew that. It felt oddly good to see her react like a normal teenager with a friend over. He relaxed, the house was under surveillance and they hadn't really done anything wrong.

He gave them a cheeky grin, and said

"Ok, what are we watching, pass me that popcorn but I've got dibs on the sofa."
And he switched the light back off and headed to the sofa to lie down.

When Sherlock arrived at Baker Street about an hour later, he found a strange man banging on the door.

"Who are you and what do you want?" He growled dangerously, the noisy sod was going to wake up his famil…er John and Jocelyn

"I've come to collect my daughter." The strange man said mildly, "I know I'm a bit late but getting out of the show took us rather longer than we bargained for...are you Mr Morstan?"

Sherlock's brain seemed to go into freefall, what the hell? Joss was theirs, she was John's daughter, there hadn't been any other man in Mary Morstan's life, according to Mycroft and things Joss had let slip, he'd be damned if anyone was taking her away from …

Oh, he wasn't talking about Jocelyn. Stupid, stupid emotions clouding his reasoning. There was someone, another girl, this man's daughter with Jocelyn. He ignored the odd feeling of panicky relief and finally answered the strange man's question, almost civilly

"No, I'm Sherlock Holmes, my partner Dr John Watson is Jocelyn's father."

The man grinned at him and held out his hand "Benedict Ross, Maisie's Dad."

Sherlock shook it with a calculated smile. His gaze flew over the man in front of him. Dressed up for the theatre, single piece of jewellery, a wedding band, carried a pager, therefore on call, medical professional, no not humans, traces of fur on his trousers therefore animals, a veterinary surgeon. Pleasant enough, one female child he loved and indulged.

It was always good to have additional sources of information, and he didn't have a network available at the school, but a father of a school friend, it was an excellent opportunity, too good to miss.

They made their way upstairs to find the two girls engrossed in the film and John fast asleep on the sofa with a bowl of popcorn rising and falling gently on his chest. As Sherlock's hand went to the light switch, Joss noticed him, "Please don't Sherlock, it'll wake Dad." She asked quietly.

She had nudged Maisie and the pair of them had scrambled up from the duvet.

"Come on Mais, get a wriggle on, and help Jocelyn tidy up, your Mum's waiting in the car."

"Don't worry Mr Ross, I'll tidy up."

Jocelyn offered as her friend pulled her shoes on and scooped up her stuff. She gave Joss a one handed hug, then she and her father disappeared back down the stairs with whispered thanks and goodbyes.

The yawn caught her unawares and nearly dislocated her jaw.

She looked up at Sherlock; he had surveyed the living room with a frown, and then was regarding her with a strange expression on his face.

"I am going to tidy it up Sherlock."

She asserted tiredly, please god he wasn't going to throw a wobbler about the mess, she was too
tired to handle it; he didn't seem to care if he created it but he was nearly OCD about anyone else leaving it untidy.

He came closer and didn't take his eyes from her face, she frowned up at him with puzzlement

"Did you have a good time?" He asked coolly, and the frown turned to a puzzled smile "Yes, I like Maisie."

She yawned again.

"Go to bed Joss."

"But I need to tidy….

"Go to bed Joss."

As Sherlock looked like he wasn't going to take no for an answer, she gave into impulse and gave him a hug. He normally stayed well out of reach if he thought she was in a hugging mood, he must have realised that there would be a hugging risk if he was within arms length this time, yet he had come closer anyway. "So to sum up milord, Sherlock Holmes was an active participant in the crime of receiving his own hugging"

Jocely's tired thoughts were jumbled and nearly made her laugh

She could have sworn she felt his arms tighten fractionally around her, and one hand brush through her unruly hair, before he pushed her gently away.

She went and brushed a kiss on her sleeping Dad's forehead and as she straightened up, she looked back at the tall gorgeous elegant inscrutable man watching her, and sudden comprehension made her utter in shock

"You called me Joss, you never call me Joss."

"It's important to use all the facts Jocelyn, I called you Joss twice."

He responded with absolutely no hint of a smile.

"But Sherlock" she began until she saw the eyebrow rise and his frown

She knew from his expression that he wasn't going to say anymore no matter how many times she asked. She gave him a confused smile and went to her room.

He watched her go, and then looked at her sleeping father lying on the sofa.

The words he refused to speak aloud echoed in his head until he could allocate them their proper place in his mind palace.

"My John, My Joss….My family, mine."
The chapter title is a lovely hilarious book by Gerald Durrell. Read it if you have a chance.

Disclaimers: As per the previous chapters. Only playing
"I don't have a father." she said with confused panic. "Where's my Mum?" She could hear the whine in her voice. She hated whining like a little kid, she would be 11 in a few months but it hurt, everything hurt, her shoulder, her arm, and her head. Oh her head was pounding like Niall Riordan's drum at break-time until the playground supervisor had enough, caught him and confiscated it.

She remembered falling off the climbing frame, when she had been playing with Layla and the twins.

She remembered Layla looking at her in fright as she lay on the ground.

She didn't remember anything else but her mum was coming, she would be here soon. So she didn't know why that nurse kept on talking about her father coming to be with her. The nurse had got it wrong. She'de never had a father, but the silly woman kept on saying not to worry he was arriving soon as if that was a good thing, she didn't have one. She'd never had a father.

Her mum would sort everything out, she'd be here soon, she would. She just had to be patient and her mum would come. It was silly to be so scared, her mum would deal with it, and tell that nurse off for frightening her.

She didn't want to look at that nurse again, everything was too confusing and her head ached really, really ached. Everything was so strange, she didn't even recognise the hospital bed curtains, at the Heath hospital they had pictures of all the famous landmarks in Cardiff including the Castle and the Cricket Grounds, but these ones just had flowers on them. She'd had enough accidents to know the A&E department well in Cardiff.

There were an awful lot of English voices too, more than normal in a Welsh hospital, while she was trying to understand these strange things, she didn't notice that the nurse had slipped out and returned with a Doctor, but when the tall fair-haired lady Doctor spoke to her, she jumped.

"I'm Doctor Nelson, Its Jocelyn isn't it?" she asked calmly, but continued without waiting for a response

"Does your head hurt Jocelyn; can you tell me what happened?"

Joss looked at her with exasperation, she'd already answered the same questions which had been asked by the ambulance man, by the nurse in A&E, and there had been a policeman too before the ambulance arrived. He hadn't been wearing a uniform, but somehow she had known that he was a policeman. He'd been the first one to mention her father, and he had asked questions too, strange questions even while he had sat in the back of the ambulance with her and held her hand. She remembered he'd held her hand. Oh her head hurt so badly, trying to remember.
But even though she was getting frustrated, she answered politely because her mum always said there was no excuse for bad manners.

"Yes, my name is Jocelyn, yes my head hurts very much and I fell off the climbing frame in Roath Park. Please where's my Mum?"

The Doctor used her little torch to look in to Jocelyn's eyes, which made Jocelyn's head pound even more and made her feel really really sick. It almost took her mind off the horrible, horrible vicious pain in her shoulder.

The door swung open and suddenly the room seemed to be filled with people, and they all seemed to be staring at her. The lady Doctor looked cross but it was hard to hear what she was saying, as the room seemed to be closing in and then receding on her. She tried to focus on the new people; there were four of them, four men.

She recognised one, it was that policeman without a uniform. He went to stand by the wall and seemed to be watching everyone whilst still staring at her with a frown on his face, and seeing that frown, suddenly an image popped into her head, one that made no sense but it was so real it made her heart thump faster. She was looking up at him as he loomed over her and he looked so scary, he frightened her. She blinked her eyes and the image was gone, she shrank back, winced and rubbed at her head, confused, he hadn't moved from the wall so why did she see that.

Then there was the grey man with a grey umbrella. His coat was grey, his suit was grey, only his shoes were black. He moved so quietly and smoothly to stand by the head of her bed with his gaze so focused on her that she felt threatened for a moment. For some reason Jocelyn was fascinated with the umbrella, the umbrella made her feel safe and her eyes continually flickered to it, because it was easier than looking anyone in the face.

And then there were the two men arguing with the Lady Doctor.

Or rather one man was arguing and the other was listening and sometimes trying to rein his companion back. A tall pale man with dark curly hair and flashing eyes, who swung his long coat around like it was a weapon, and waved his hands around like a maniac was the argumentative one, his words seemed to be weapons too, if the look on the Lady Doctors face was anything to go by, but she couldn't keep the words straight in her head, she heard things like

"Shut up Sherlock", "Trauma through the assault" "anterograde or psychogenic amnesia, memory loss due to " "Shut up Sherlock" "No Pain relief while being monitored" "the shoulder wound may need surgery later ""Shut up Sherlock"

And then there was a shorter blonde haired blue eyed man who seemed to listen intently to the Doctor, nodding at times as if he understood what she said, scolding and glaring at the dark haired man but who kept on looking worriedly at Jocelyn lying on the bed.

The sound level in the room became unbearable, and Jocelyn began to sob.

"Please the noise." she cried, her hands going to rest on her temples "Where's Mum, I want my Mum." She whimpered.

The silence was absolute, only the sound of her sobs disturbed the room.

The shorter blonde man came closer and dark blue eyes regarded her with deep concern and guilt.

"Joss, Sweetheart." the blonde man said tentatively, soothingly, worry etched on his face.
"It's ok, you are safe love, I'm here now, no-one will hurt you, we won't let anyone hurt you. You are safe now sweetheart"

She looked at him blankly, tears falling down her cheeks

"I don't understand, who are you?"

"It's Dad Joss." He tried again, a soothing hand reaching to comfort her, but he stopped immobile, shocked to the core by the terrified scream which left her mouth.

The Policeman jerked to attention and glared in fury at everyone, stepping away from the wall with menacing intent.

The tall pale man flinched, his flashing eyes seemed to blur, his lips compressed with pain but he stayed silent and the grey suited man gripped the umbrella until his knuckles were white. They seemed too stunned to move.

Horrified, the nurse moved towards the bed and the terrified girl but was stopped by the Doctor's hand and a quick shake of her head.

Jocelyn scrambled frantically to the head of the bed, bringing her knees up to her chest, hugging them tightly, not taking her eyes from that man, that stranger, that liar, feeling the nausea rise and block any remaining noise. The movement hurt her throbbing shoulder and she wanted to cry.

His blue eyes darkened almost to black with pain, he was pale but stayed very, very calm as he took a step back to try to look less threatening. He murmured,

"It's okay Jocelyn, look I'm stepping away, I'm not coming closer, I promise."

A hand touched her arm and offered comforting words in a rich smooth voice.

"Jocelyn Jayne there is nothing to be afraid of..." But he was abruptly interrupted

The agony in Jocelyn's head after her scream triggered the nausea; she turned to the side of the bed and vomited helplessly. The grey suited man withdrew hastily as the nurse came round to that side of the bed with a bowl, and held her head comfortingly as she retched.

Vaguely in the background, she heard the policeman without a uniform speak with dry humour.

"Deja vue Mycroft."

Once she had stopped, and the nurse had cleaned her up she lay back exhausted. She curled up into a ball, trying to make herself as small as possible, desperately wanting them to leave her in peace until her Mum came. Why were they here? Nothing made any sense. Mum, Mum, Mum she chanted in her head like a safety talisman.

The tall man stepped forward; his glittering silver eyes focused totally on her now, not the lady Doctor. She felt like she was trapped in front of the headlights of an oncoming vehicle. His eyes caught and held her own even though she wanted to close them, shut them all out, and pretend they had gone.

She was trembling now, this was bad, it was going to be bad, deep, deep inside she knew this was bad. She whimpered a word without realising it. "Mummy."

She didn't see the blonde man pale even more and rub his face, or the winces of the Policeman and the man in the grey suit, because she was still staring at cheekbones and the quicksilver eyes which wouldn't let her go.
His voice was smooth, deep and so gentle. It surprised her, the gentleness. His tone hadn't been gentle with the lady doctor or the nurse who had tried to keep him quiet.

He had been sharp with the umbrella man as they had come through the door, and the looks he had thrown the policeman without a uniform could have curdled milk.

Not that he ever kept milk long enough to curdle it…… the random thought hit her chest like an arrow and she ran from it like a frightened wild animal running away from a hissing spitting blazing forest fire.

She didn't know these people, she didn't, she didn't, she didn't, and she wanted her mum

"Jocelyn, Jocelyn look at me." The tall man repeated himself so patiently and calmly over and over until he could see her mind focus on him as well as her eyes.

She raised her aching head again, refusing to look at the shorter blonde man besides him, knowing instinctively that he was a threat to her peace of mind.

"What's the date today?"

She blinked at him confused, well at least he wasn't asking her what happened, if someone else asked her that question she was going to scream, even if Mum was going to be cross. But why was he asking her that, didn't he know?

"It's 5th August " she answered quietly, still confused at the question. The nurse took a deep breath as if she was going to disagree and Jocelyn looked at her in confusion.

"Jocelyn, look at me" the voice of the tall intense man was unremitting and made her turn back to face him "What's the year Jocelyn, tell me what year it is?"

She frowned at him, was he stupid or what, but she humoured him, she was just so tired and she hurt. "2008" she sighed and then she couldn't help it, exhaustion claimed her, her eyes began to close again, she just needed to close her eyes for a little while, and then she'd be awake when Mum arrived.

She didn't see the sharp nod of understanding from the Doctor; she didn't see the sad pained expression that crossed the blonde man's face. She didn't hear the sharp inhalation from the man in grey or the sympathetic look from the policeman without a uniform directed at the short blonde man, and she didn't hear the words of the tall man as he pulled out his phone and dialled a number.

"Layla Mukerjee this is Sherlock Holmes, tell me what happened to Jocelyn on the 6th August 2008."

Chapter End Notes

This story sets up the events for the next series of chapters... warning lots and lots of angst.
Please comment, would love to hear your views and thoughts. Any ideas about what's happened?
"I'll burn the heart into you"

Chapter Summary

Bad man alert. All from his point of view. Short but pivotal. Poor Jocelyn

Warning, swearing, mentions of torture and sexual assault but nothing graphic

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It had been so fucking easy. The arrogant bastards had thought she was safe. Even the omniscient and powerful Mycroft Holmes had taken his eye off the ball, or rather off their sweet little blonde haired blue eyed girly.

They had all been a paranoid after the car incident in Cardiff, he would have picked her up then, but there had been an unexpected emergency he had had to deal with so he cut his losses and left.

He had decided then to let them settle into a false sense of security, until the time was right for him and his plans.

He'd been "busy" with other things, money making, power broking, consolidating his position after a challenge from a vicious but stupid rival but he hadn't forgotten about Watson.

Captain John Hamish Watson had been his, since Jim had given the order. Jim had been a crazy bastard, and he had decided that he wanted one soldier to kill the other. If he could have managed it Jim would have found a sniper who was also a medic just for Watson.

Moriarty had a thing about symmetry; he'd known him to abandon lucrative, extremely lucrative projects just because "the symmetry's wrong darlin' man", he could never understand how that lilting seductive voice had sounded reasonable and normal when mentioning the insanity behind his decision making.

He'd had the good Captain in his sights whilst waiting for Holmes to jump and once he had seen the tall man take a nose dive into the concrete that was that, he had packed his gear and left.

Despite the illustrious return, Moran was a literal man; the contract had been basically five words,"jump, leave, no jump shoot" and Holmes had jumped, therefore the contract had concluded.

He would not have gone after Watson or the others because of the return of Sherlock Holmes. Water under the bridge as far as he was concerned, but that prick Holmes had to start destroying his livelihood and he couldn't let that pass.

The only thing Moran was passionate about was money. He had joined Moriarty because he paid obscene amounts of money to gain the best, he had made himself indispensable to the mad little bastard, had enjoyed the games and never, never overstepped the mark with him because he had had to dispose of too many other stupid bastards who had.

He had earned his status as second in command for Moriarty, with blood, sweat and tears, of course they were the blood, sweat and tears of his victims.
Moran had inherited most of Moriarty's network, Moriarty's plans were another matter, and they had been complex and kept mainly in his head, which had ended up splattered across the roof of that hospital, so he had no hope in hell of controlling that anyway. He dealt with the stuff he could handle and conned or terrorised Jim's more able minions into believing he could handle more.

Moran was greedy, Jim had paid well but now he got more, so much more and he loved it. Holmes had been targeting too much of the network and Moran was losing money and staff at a rate that was unacceptable.

He was under attack and he was the consummate soldier. He might lose some battles but he would win the fucking war.

Jim Moriarty had been an exciting if unstable boss. His games had been amusing but they were too much effort for Moran. He had always preferred the direct approach. Jim had often told him he had no imagination and if he was honest, he didn't care. He had enough imagination to see what would happen if he allowed more of the network to be destroyed by Holmes and Watson, and it wasn't going to happen.

He had the legendary patience of the sniper and he could sit and wait for his target to come to him. Anything else was irrelevant really, unless his streak of self preservation and vengeful nature, usually deeply buried but strong when released, were triggered together. His loyalty to Jim had been strong but he would not have pursued this if stupid fucking Sherlock Holmes hadn't come after him.

Now he had to deal with Holmes and Watson and they were going to regret it.

He studied the trembling blindfolded girl slumped against the wall through the window of the small bare cell like room. At first she'd tried to be calm and ask what they wanted, but her voice had wavered through fear, then when his men had got a little rough with her, she cried for her father, using both Dad and Papa as if she couldn't make her mind up what he should be called, until she had been slapped a few times to shut her up.

He had personally supervised her collection, which had been too, too easy. The black saloon car had worked like a charm; she had even been smiling when she had popped her head through the door. The look of surprise and embarrassment on her face had been endearing, he had almost chuckled because she had thought she had made the mistake. He was willing to bet she was about to apologise when he had pulled her into the vehicle and thrown her to the floor.

He had studied her patiently and it had taken a little while for the fear to kick in. He had watched the realisation dawn on her face, the puzzled shock change to horrified fear. She had looked wildly around to find a way to escape, and he had simply taken his gun out of his jacket pocket and rested it on his knee. He had just held it without seeing the need to point it at her and she had cowered back onto the floor, her eyes enormous with shock and fright. He smiled at her kindly and she had shuddered.

He hadn't bothered to have her drugged; he wanted her to describe the whole experience to her father and Holmes.

It had to hurt, enough to make them back off but not enough to make them seek retribution. Holmes was an unpredictable maniac like Moriarty but Watson would be relentless and hunt him down without mercy.

The adrenaline junkie part of him almost thought it might be worth it to challenge himself against Watson, but the materialistic greedy luxury loving shrewd business man heart of him ignored it. Moriarty was truly an abject lesson in allowing an obsession to become an addiction and thinking
the world well lost for a last fix of staring into dangerous silver eyes.

He was not going to ever underestimate Holmes or Watson, but they had been stupid enough to underestimate him.

There were many, many ways of sending them a message, if you had the stomach for it. His conscience was flexible, he didn't have a problem targeting anyone including the young and the old, he took no pleasure from it, it was merely a means to an end, and ensured that he got what he wanted. And as far as Sebastian Moran was concerned, what he wanted was paramount.

He could arrange for the removal of non essential body parts, maybe Holmes could run some experiments on them, he thought with cold amusement.

Then there was the use of judicious scaring, he could leave a reminder on that pretty little face. A possibility but he had to tread a fine line with that.

He had discounted a deliberate sexual assault. It would have triggered an extreme reaction. The man was a father, soldier and a doctor after all, and even the unpredictable Holmes could be pushed too far and become irrational in his desire for revenge.

The idea, the plan, what he was actually going to do to her, had come to him when he remembered Jim's words to Sherlock at the pool, that wonderful melodramatic shit about burning the heart out of him.

They would know who was sending the message when they saw the brand burnt into the kid's shoulder, and he would even use the same side as Watson's wound. Kiddies liked to imitate their parents didn't they and play grown ups.

After a couple of days softening her up with fear, hunger, targeted psychological comments and whispers which would convince her that it was all her Dad/papa's fault and a little rough stuff, he would finish it up by burning a heart into her as a warning for them to cease their activities.

And if they didn't he would rip all their hearts out with his bare hands, or rather his pragmatic nature would avoid the melodramatic, and his little red dot would line up on each forehead and their brains would redecorate the walls of 221B Baker Street.

He opened the door to the small cell, and raised the pink smart phone he had taken off the kid when he had searched her. He had made it as uncomfortable for her as possible in order to add her fear. He would use her own phone to send her father tantalising images of her plight. The video pictures would show their little girly defenceless and terrified.

He might even make her cry for her Dad Papa again, that would really twist the knife in Watson's guts, and Moran knew how much Sherlock valued Watson, he had dived off a fucking roof for him after all.
What do you think? I'd be grateful for your comments.
"Teenagers scare the living shit out of me"

Chapter Summary

Layla versus the Baker street gang. Teddy bears, neanderthals, singing my chemical romance songs, motorbikes and cuddles. And lots and lots of angst.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Layla burst through the door to the silent private hospital room like a whirlwind on speed. She'd just spent three hours on the back of her brother's motorbike travelling from Cardiff, (for which Joss was so going to pay once Layla knew she was ok, it had been a nightmare, she'd had to ride in her salwar kameez because she didn't have time to change into jeans and still "convince" Vimal the big git to take her before her Mum and Dad came back from the Wholesalers with supplies for the shop).

Then she'd had to sneak a look at the hospital computer when the lady on reception had refused non too politely to tell her where Joss was, to try to find the room number, and now no bloody suited and booted Neanderthal with an earpiece and a suspicious bulge in his shoulder jacket was going to stop her getting to her best friend.

Please, she had three rugby playing cricket mad older prehistoric brothers plus her darling old fashioned father, and she'd been running rings round them all since she learnt how to smile let alone talk or walk.

The use of an unexpected and judicious punch to the Neanderthal's gut when she had given him her best hesitant, obedient and "butter wouldn't melt big brown eyed trust me I'm only little" smile which had made the idiot relax for a fraction of a second, had given her the opening to dash past him and the other idiot suits weren't fast enough to get to her, especially since Vimal the Cro-Magnon sweetheart had become offended that someone was daring to manhandle his baby sister and had rugby tackled the one leading the pack. He'd knocked them down like a set of bowling pins, bless his enormous cotton socks. He always had been her favourite brother.

She didn't look back to see him being restrained and handcuffed, with security men bustling him away and talking urgently into their communication devices. She would get him sorted later, Joss was her priority now.

What the hell were these stupid, stupid, stupid people doing to her Joss? They were supposed to be looking after her. That call from Sherlock Holmes had terrified her, she wouldn't tell him a bloody thing without seeing her Joss first and if they had caused this, she would make them pay. Vindictive would be her first, middle and last name as far as they were concerned.

She came to a full stop as she saw her friend laying there unresponsive, shit she looked so pale and small against the white sheets and blue blanket. The light in the room had been dimmed. She dragged her eyes away from her friend with difficulty and saw that there were other people in the room. Joss's father was sitting at her bed side, his hand so close to hers but not touching. He had looked up at her entrance, his face remote and shut down.

That Sherlock Holmes numpty had been sitting slumped against the wall, as far away from Joss and her father as he could get without being outside the room, but on her entrance he had slid
upright using the same wall and focused his intimidating attention on her. The third, the smooth menacing one with the umbrella that she remembered had that horrible big black car, had started towards her with determination saying coldly

"Miss Mukerjee I'm afraid it is not convenient for you to …..

but came to a surprised stop when she had literally growled at him. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a small smile cross Dr Watson's face.

She had met them that one time in Cardiff which hadn't been pleasant, when they had collected Joss from her house. She wouldn't forget the expressions on their faces as she and Joss had tumbled into the kitchen, out of breath, giggling and still munching on their hash browns from McDonalds.

She had got into such trouble with her parents. God her Mum and Dad had scolded her for a week, which wasn't exactly fair as the only thing they had really done was put flowers on Joss's Mum's grave, and had breakfast at Macky Dee's but she hadn't dared argue. Her parents had been absolutely raging, but she couldn't find out what had been said to them.

She could understand the men's anger at Joss's running away, even if it was their fault she had done it, and she had behaved, barely but she had behaved, not letting rip like she wanted to when she'd found out what had been going on, when Joss had blurted out how unhappy and miserable she was at that flat in London, when she had broken down at her mum's grave, but if they had caused this… they wouldn't know what was going to hit them. She was so angry.

"Layla stop growling, my head hurts" Jocelyn's disgruntled voice muttered sleepily. All eyes turned to the figure in the bed, she hadn't moved from the foetal position she was in, and hadn't opened her eyes.

"You awake Joss or just complaining in your sleep" Layla's voice was quiet, but they could hear the smile in her tone. There was no response to Layla's question.

"Thought so" Layla sighed, and seeing the questioning look from Joss's father, she carried on, "last time we had a sleep over she sang the whole of "Teenagers" at the top of her voice until I woke her up,"

"Teenagers?" Mycroft queried in confusion and John answered dismissively before Layla could

"My Chemical Romance Mycroft, you know Teenagers scare the living shit out of me"

"What?" both the Holmes brothers asked at the same time looking at John Watson as if he had lost his grip on reality.

"A popular song by a popular music ensemble" John responded sarcastically, Layla looked at him reluctantly impressed

Sherlock frowned, and said curtly "Jocelyn hasn't talked in her sleep with us"

"Well that might be because you actually need to be in the same place as her when she's sleeping"

Layla hissed nastily. "It's not often she has any company is it?" she condemned roundly.

The anger level in the room increased exponentially, but before Sherlock could blister her hide with his response, and the suit smack her across the head with his umbrella, she heard the cold voice of Joss's father.
"Layla, I take it you are here for a reason not just to throw a hissy fit"

Layla glared at them all with contempt and dislike;

"You are supposed to look after her" she spat, and watched satisfied as guilty rage crossed Sherlock's face, and pain flared in the eyes of Joss's pale faced father. The suit in the corner looked like he was chewing a wasp and sucking a lemon at the same time.

God this wasn't helping Joss; she needed to help Joss not vent even though they deserved it.

She deliberately stopped, took a deep breath and turned to face Sherlock.

"Tell me why you asked about the 6th August 2008?" she demanded with bravado

He looked at her coldly, but before he could speak, John spoke softly and tiredly from the chair beside the bed.

"Joss was abducted and hurt Layla and now she appears to have lost her memory, she has been asking for her Mother and she doesn't know who we are".

Layla stared at him in stunned disbelief, it hurt to breathe, it actually hurt to breathe and then her face crumpled and tears formed in her eyes.

"Aunt Mary was diagnosed on that day" she said haltingly, the remembered sadness making her sound so young

"The day before we were in Roath Park and Joss fell off the climbing frame. She spent a night in the Heath hospital because she hit her head"

She looked at her friend lying there and whispered in despair, a tear rolling down her cheek.

"This is so not fair; she's going to go through that again, finding out about her mum for the first time, that's such a shitty thing to happen"

Anger flared and she glared up at Sherlock,

"When you find the scum that did this you will make him pay won't you?"

Surprise flared in his eyes and then reluctant amusement, there was no "if" in her question. She had no doubt that he would find Joss's kidnapper. Something in his face must have reassured her because she turned away from him and focused on John.

"When are you going to tell her? Please let me be here when you tell her, I was with her when she lost Aunt Mary, through all of it... please" she begged painfully, still visibly upset

John wasn't sure that he has the energy to deal with Layla anymore, but when he saw her face, he relented, and he held out his hand to her. She took it and held on for dear life.

"It's better if she remembers by herself Layla, trying to force things could make it worse for her. Do you understand?"

"How can you leave her believing that her Mum is still alive? She'll hate you for it". She protested desperately.

"For God sake Layla, this is not up for negotiation, leave it alone"
Sherlock's cold voice made a shiver run down her back; damn that man could be scary when he wanted to be.

She looked like she was going to argue, but after she saw the expressions on each adult's face; she finally nodded her head reluctantly and turned her face towards the bed again.

"I won't lie to her" she stated simply without taking her gaze from Jocelyn

Her grip on John's hand tightened, and she asked quietly

"May I stay for awhile please?"

John gave a faint smile, "If I said no would you actually go?" he asked wryly.

She didn't answer; her attention was focused on Jocelyn, who finally seemed to be waking up.

"Layla, why are you here, where's Mum?" Jocelyn asked fretfully, still keeping her eyes closed.

Layla dropped John's hand, then bent and opened her backpack, pulling out a pale cream, blue and pink coloured old soft toy bear before she moved closer to the bed.

"You know where she is baby girl, now shift up I want a cwtch" Layla said calmly as she took off her shoes and ignoring the adults, climbed on the bed with Joss.

Sherlock looked aghast and went to stop her but John shook his head at him.

Mycroft raised his eyebrow and frowned.

She curled up beside Joss, head on the pillow, staring at her friends pale face.

Joss snuggled against her and seemed to relax again for a few seconds, then asked in a clear carrying confused voice.

"Layla you've got boobs, why have you got boobs, you didn't have them in the park"

Layla giggled, she couldn't help it "Meh, shit happens" she shrugged.

"What does that even mean you lunatic" Joss asked crossly, her eyes still closed and a frown on her face.

"Jocelyn Jayne is such a pain, she fell off the stupid climbing frame"

Layla sang with childish mockery and Joss opened her eyes wide and glared at her.

Layla could feel the tension rise in the room, she hoped they would have the sense to keep quiet and let her deal with Joss. She knew there was more going on that they weren't telling her but she didn't care, she knew how to help her friend and she wasn't going to leave it to them to stuff it up. Joss needed all of them including the numpty men in the room and they didn't understand that she really wouldn't forgive them for not telling her. She'd known her best friend since they had learnt to walk together. She wasn't going to leave her in this state no matter what they said.

She smiled lovingly at her scowling friend, then pulled the toy bear from behind her back and laid it on the pillow between the pair of them.

Jocelyn stared at the bear in confusion, "Ambrose" she whimpered, and something about her voice made her father stand and come closer to the bed.
Layla could feel the glare from Sherlock trying to burn through the back of her skull and heard Mycroft's menacing "Be very, very careful young Lady" uttered in an undertone. For a few seconds uncertainty and fear churned through her and she shivered but she ignored it, this was for Joss, only for Joss.

Jocelyn's finger stroked the bear's face lovingly for a second and then Layla saw the knowledge bloom in her eyes.

"Why is Ambrose here, I left Ambrose with Mum when she died Layla so she wouldn't be alone in that…. so she wouldn't be alone…..I didn't want her to be alone"

Joss was rocking in her distress, tears falling, as she stared into the wet eyes of her best friend.

"Layla, what have you done?"

John Watson condemned furiously, his only answer was a sob as she refused break Joss's gaze.

Sherlock moved forward with the speed of a viper and pulled Layla off the bed, he held onto her as she struggled and sobbed to get back to Joss. Sherlock looked at his brother and jerked his head towards the door. Mycroft took hold of the crying, wriggling teenager and half carried, half dragged her out of the room.

On the other side of the door, Mycroft swung Layla round to face him, his face as cold as ice, but she could see the rage in his eyes. Before he could utter one word, she begged "Please let me go back to her please" tears still pouring down her face, but she was no longer struggling to break his grip.

Mycroft stared down at her implacably,

"I am not sure if Dr Watson will allow you near her again, and I can't say that I would blame him, that was unbelievably stupid Layla, and you could have done untold damage to Jocelyn"

But as he saw her pale and flinch, he relented slightly and said more gently

"Let's find your brother shall we and then we will have a chat, about boundaries and following rules”

Jocelyn heard her father's voice, saw Sherlock's grim face as he took the struggling Layla away from her and suddenly the rest of the barrier blocking her memories shattered, everything came rushing back. She remembered and she screamed in terror

"Daddy, Papa help me"

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Chapter End Notes

A cwtch is the welsh word for a hug or cuddle

The next chapter will be even more angsty sorry, it's a flashback to what happened when she was in Moran's clutches and explains why Sherlock and John aren't exactly
on the friendliest terms at the moment…

Disclaimer: Only Layla and Joss are mine, only playing with the wonderful world of BBC Sherlock.
Messages Part 1

Chapter Summary

How John, Sherlock and Mycroft find out Jocelyn has been abducted and what happens when they do. This is why John and Sherlock are not on the friendliest of terms when Joss is found. This is a two parter.
Warning really really angsty, no fluff

The first message was received at 4.30pm on the Wednesday afternoon

Sherlock was in the morgue when his mobile went off.

"Molly" he called annoyed refusing to take his attention away from the results of his experiment "phone, jacket pocket".

There was no response to his demand, for a second he was confused, Molly always did as he asked, ordered, or charmed, but then irritated he remembered she was away from her proper place in the morgue, on at a medical conference of all things. He'd have brought her up to speed with the latest advancements in forensic science in a couple of hours, what the hell did she need to go away for three days to a conference for? Inconsiderate thoughtless woman.

He concentrated on the microscope in front of him for a further minute before it dawned on him that the irritating noise was the specific tone he had selected for Jocelyn Jayne, he had almost forgotten that he had picked that theme tune, his Joss, er John's daughter's pointed insult had amused him when he had researched it. Not that he would have told her that, his choice of the tune was also designed as revenge, and she had blushed so gratifyingly and glared at him ferociously when she heard it the first time, when he had asked her to ring his number on the pretext of not being able to find his phone in the living room. Jocelyn was almost as much fun to tease as her father.

He was now glad that Molly Hooper was not available, despite the inconvenience; she was bound to ask why he had the theme song to "Pinkie and the Brain" on his phone. Not that he had any intention of telling her but it would be annoyingly boring to have to listen to the questions. He gave in and took his own phone out of his own jacket pocket.

What was Jocelyn Jayne sending him a photo for? She knew better than to interrupt him when he was working, but as he went to put the phone away, he paused. Then an uneasy frown appeared, she did know better than to interrupt him when he was working.

He opened the message.

Mycroft Holmes was in his favourite seat at the Diogenes club, relaxing in the silence and stillness of the elegant room, savouring the 55 year old single malt Macallan whiskey poured from the unique Lalique crystal decanter, a trifling gift to himself to celebrate the successful public return of his little brother from the dead, and housed at the club for those rare moments when he could simply relax and enjoy it.
He had put away the latest evaluation reports on persons of interest to the British Government. He had allowed his assistant a rare and appreciated day off. He was revelling in the slightly naughty feeling of being free of the burdens of his office and dare he say it off duty, as he sank into the comfortable, well used leather arm chair, allowing his eyes to close as the taste and the aroma of the drink filled his senses.

His phone vibrated insistently, he slowly opened his eyes and regarded the blasted thing balefully. Much as he adored and appreciated modern technology, just sometimes there was something to be said for a slower pace of life, and waiting for Her Majesty's Royal Mail to deliver a suitably stamped and enveloped message would admirably suit his requirements at this precise moment. However Mycroft was too much a creature of duty to ignore the shrill demanding summons from the phone, and too professional to utter the sigh lurking on his lips because of the annoyance. As he picked the phone up with a disdainful movement, the frown creasing his smooth forehead lightened to be replaced by a wryly disapproving smile and a gleam of amusement in those penetrating eyes.

If this was more of her sheep jokes, he would simply have to speak to her father. Interrupting a meeting with an irritating foreign official was one thing, but Jocelyn Jayne's playfulness was not appropriate when he was communing with the one and only Macallan.

He opened the message

That first message had appeared on John's mobile phone, when he was in the surgery on the afternoon shift. He had felt the phone vibrate in his pocket but ignored it as he was with a patient. After the consultation with the lonely and chatty elderly gentleman had ended and before he called for his next patient, he took out the device, thinking it would be a text from Sherlock.

He smiled intrigued when he saw it was from Joss, she didn't normally send him pictures. When he opened the message, his eyes couldn't process the image at first.

For a second he wasn't sure if it was her, half her face was covered, although the hair and the uniform was the same, but then he knew. Jocelyn, his Jocelyn, his daughter, his little girl, oh god, his Joss was blindfolded standing up against a wall.

It was dark, wherever she was, it was dark but there was just enough light to see her shrinking figure and the hand that was holding a gun against her cheek. His stomach churned and he felt cold, so unbelievably cold.

He shook his head in disbelief. This wasn't right, she would be home having her tea with Mrs Hudson after coming back from school. No this wasn't happening. It was a mistake, some sort of hoax.

Then he saw the message beneath the picture. Six words which made his heart falter in his chest.

"More to come, check the website"

By 5.30pm, John and Sherlock were both back at the flat in Baker Street, where Lestrade and his team had also arrived in order to co-ordinate the operation and the data gathering. Mrs Hudson was desperately trying to take her mind off Jocelyn by running around making tea for everyone, and driving everyone to distraction until John pulled her into his arms to allow her to weep, and then took her downstairs with a female constable so that she could rest. As he had left her with the
"We will find her Mrs Hudson, Sherlock will find her."

Mycroft had his people trawling all the CCTV footage in a five mile radius around the school and trying to access the GPS system on Jocelyn's smart phone.

As John trudged his way back to the living room, his mind flashed to the night before, when they had been behaving like a family. He stopped for a second, his fist clenched, a family; they had been behaving together like a family. Jocelyn had thrown a bit of a strop at Sherlock in front of her amused father.

"Sherlock I asked you about using the kitchen three days ago to make the cakes for the school's enterprise day and you said you would let me know if there was a problem. You didn't tell me there was a problem." She complained.

"Yes I did Jocelyn, and I am not going to argue about it" he snorted dismissively.

"When did you tell me that?" She asked confused, staring at the back of his head whilst he was using her Dad's laptop.

"I told you lunchtime Jocelyn" he got up from the desk to face her as he answered.

"But Sherlock I was in school lunchtime" she stated her confusion deepening, not noticing her father's smile widen.

"Well I can't be held responsible for the fact that you weren't here to listen to me "he uttered infuriatingly.

John snorted with laughter at the disbelieving and outraged look on her face, and then tried to hide it from the pair of them by coughing.

Jocelyn's chin went up and she argued stubbornly, ignoring her silly father, "I need the kitchen Sherlock and you aren't being fair"

"Stop being boring Jocelyn Jayne, think outside of the box, or even just think, go and buy the cakes and shut up",

Sherlock turned away from her as if that was the end of the matter.

Jocelyn threw a furious questioning look at her father, who just shrugged noncommittally and tilted his head at Sherlock's back. She glared at him "Not helpful Dad", but he just grinned at her, he wanted to see if she could get Sherlock to change his mind by herself, instead of her usual tactic of using John as a buffer to get her own way.

She swung back round and stalked towards Sherlock

"No, Sherlock I can't do that, it's cheating and not the point of the exercise. I need to use the kitchen, I need the table cleared and I have to be sure what I make isn't going to poison half the school because of your experiments" she argued firmly, her shoulders back and a determined look on her face.

Sherlock turned to face her with a ferocious frown "Use Mrs Hudson's kitchen" he pointed out as if she was too dim to see it herself.

She marched up to him and locked eyes stubbornly with his. Her deep blue eyes, so like her
fathers, refused to look away from the gleaming dangerous silver gaze.

"I can't, her oven is too small and there's not enough room in her kitchen to store all the cakes I need to make"

He glared at her but before he could offer another objection, to his dismay, she reached up and wrapped her arms around him in a determined hug, "pleeeeeeaaaaase" she dragged the word out in an annoying fashion

Still holding on to him through the hug she told him, "it will only be for a couple of days, well one day to make the cakes and then they will go to school the next day and I will make a cake specially for you as well" she offered pleadingly " I make really good cakes".

Her expression was a strange mixture of stubbornness and attempted bribery, John's amusement grew as this time it was Sherlock who threw him the angry frustrated look. He did the same thing to Sherlock, shrugged and tilted his head at Joss.

This was ridiculous, why wasn't the stubborn chit listening to him. Sherlock grasped her arms in order to push her away, but as he looked down at her eager pleading face, into the same beautiful eyes that her father had, he sighed loudly, scowled bitterly and then growled begrudgingly "Cheesecake, a big one"

She grinned and nodded her head like that idiot dog named for a prime minister from the TV insurance adverts.

John's laughter had been unrestrained this time, and he laughed even harder when they both turned to look at him with the same pouting expression.

The memory made John's face became even grimmer, they were becoming a family, and they weren't going to lose her now. Sherlock would find her, Sherlock would find her. He was Sherlock Holmes and he would find their daughter. He had to hold onto that, he wouldn't let that picture get to him. He believed in Sherlock.

The door bell rang, and there was instant silence in the building, Sherlock just made it to the top of the stairs before Lestrade did, but it was Lestrade's calm and patient voice that told John to open the door slowly. As John went to the door, adrenaline flooding his veins and so calm now he had something to focus on, his soldiers mind was racing through the permutations of the situation, and though he would have appreciated his gun, he was eager to get that door open and deal with whatever…

Sherlock's phone rang shrilly; John stopped and looked back up the stairs as he listened to Sherlock repeat what was said for his benefit

"Mycroft, one of her school friends carrying a bag;"

There was a small exhalation of collective breaths, but the tension remained, until John flung the front door open to an oblivious and chirpy Maisie Ross.

"Oh Hi Dr Watson, is Joss in? I'm just dropping off her bag," she smiled cheerfully at him as she held out Jocelyn's school back pack. "She dropped it when she got in her uncle's car, sorry meant to bring it over sooner but had a dentist's appointment after sch…"

Her cheerful chatter came to an abrupt stop as she saw the hallway fill with adults both suited and uniformed, appearing from all corners to stare at her intently and then behind her suddenly appeared two uniformed policeman as if to block her exit. Her eyes grew wide and she looked back at John with uncertainty "Dr Watson?" she asked nervously.
"Maisie, would you come in for a little while please? I, er we need to talk to you about Joss"

John tried to keep his voice as calm and soothing as possible not to frighten the kid unduly, they needed answers, any information they could get and terrifying the youngster wouldn't get them anywhere, although he could feel his patience wearing thin.

Her anxious hazel eyes widened even more; she took another glance at the uniformed policemen behind her and nodded her head jerkily.

Maisie sat on the sofa and tried to answer every question she was asked. Most of the questions were asked by an older man with grey hair and kind eyes, who introduced himself as an Inspector Lestrade and who had made Dr Watson get her a can of coke.

They wouldn't tell her what was happening, but she was worried sick about Joss, and Joss' other father, stepfather, whatever he was, was eerily quiet and just kept staring at her with his fingers under his chin. But she went through her answers at least four times, Inspector Lestrade telling her gently that going over things more than once helped people to remember more details and she was desperate to remember more details for them, but she didn't even know the registration plate number of that big black car.

They had all been talking outside the school gates before heading off home, when Joss had grinned with pleasure and said "Uncle Mycroft", she had headed towards a really big black car, and the back passenger side door had been thrown open. Maisie had seen Joss head towards the car, but had got distracted by one of her other friends, she hadn't seen Joss get in, but heard the car pull off smoothly and then seen Joss's school bag abandoned on the pavement. She had picked it up and brought it round after her dentist's appointment.

Maisie felt so useless, she could see that she wasn't giving them the information they needed; she looked apologetically at the Inspector and Joss's Dad, "I'm sorry I don't know what else I can tell you". The fact that they were so kind to her made her feel worse, and she was so worried for Joss, she wanted to cry, and her lip trembled with the effort not to, why hadn't she taken notice of something useful like the number plate. Joss's Dad patted her hand gently and said kindly "You have been a big help Maisie, really, you mustn't worry, Jocelyn will be fine"

She only half heard his words as she suddenly thought of something or rather someone who might be able to help.

"Charlie" she uttered aloud as the idea struck. "What?" John asked surprised, and the adults focused on her again.

"Charlie Davies, Kate's little brother, year 7, he likes car numbers, and he was with us when Joss got in the car" she spoke excitedly.

"Doesn't mean that he would have seen it" Lestrade pointed out kindly, and then looked taken aback at Maisie's frustrated frown

"No, you don't understand, Charlie would have seen it, he was with us, and Charlie really, really likes cars and their number plates, we always walk home together cos he gets picked on, but he really loves car numbers"

She pulled out her phone and before they could stop her dialled a number

"Katie, did Charlie see the black car that Joss got into, did he get the number? Wicked, haven't got a pen, text me."
Lestrade stared at her incredulously as Maisie handed him her phone when the text message came through.

A sad and scared Maisie was taken home by one of the uniformed officers.

The second message came through at 10.00 pm that same evening, one of the police officers had been monitoring Sherlock's website. Lestrade had hoped to see it before John and Sherlock in case it was … but Sherlock had set up an alert and had opened the link before Lestrade could even say his name. This one was a video and the volume was high enough that John heard the sound in the kitchen.

He came out and stared at Sherlock, who suddenly pleaded uncharacteristically

"Let me watch it first John", the look he gave Sherlock made the other man flinch, and Sherlock turned back to the website waiting for John to stand beside him.

Lestrade tried the voice of reason and experience "John don't do this" but John ignored him and told Sherlock in an expressionless voice to play it.

The video panned around the bare room to the sound of terrified sobbing, and then focused on the girl crouched in the corner, as small as she could make herself, her head was buried in her knees and her hands hugged her legs.

The camera was being walked towards her and John stiffened as who ever was filming the damn thing, got closer and closer to her. She heard the movement and cowered as close to the corner as she could get.

"Please don't" she whimpered her voice hoarse from terror and tears and then continued begging pitifully "Please let me go home, please, I want my Dad, please, please don't hurt me again, please, I want my Dad, my Papa… Dad, Daddy, Papa, please let me go home to Daddy, Papa". The film stopped there.

John didn’t take his eyes from the laptop; his daughter's terrified words ringing in his ears. Lestrade tried to speak to him but he was buried in the hell of the video and didn't hear him.

Sherlock's voice broke through the horror as he told him urgently

"She's still alive John, it had only just been filmed and uploaded. She's still alive do you hear me"

and he fiercely shook his lover's shoulders to force him to acknowledge his words.

John blinked at him and the rage erupted,

"She was crying for me, she was fucking crying for us and they have already hurt her"

"Yes, but she's alive John and she will stay that way because this is a message, he's using her as a message, he's not interested in killing her"

Sherlock held on to him as he tried to get John to understand what was happening. John pulled himself away, the rage still visible on his grim face

"He's fucking hurting her and we can't stop it" he ranted with despair and defeat.
Lestrade took a step towards John but before he could speak, Sherlock continued deliberately with his voice cold as ice.

"How does this help Jocelyn John? We need to be working to find her, we need to focus, not falling apart because of useless emotions generated on purpose by Moran"

To the utter shock of everyone in the room, without a word John Watson punched his lover in the face and then walked out.
Messages Part II

Chapter Summary

Warning: Sweary words and psychological tormenting.. also some violence but nothing too graphic.
Part II of Messages.
Poor Joss is still in Moran's clutches. John and Sherlock are twin puddles of rampant guilt and rage. Lestrade is afraid of Mycroft and Anthea just keeps the coffee coming.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

4.30pm on Friday

"Two days Lestrade, two fucking days" John looked haggard, he hadn't slept, he hadn't eaten, but his voice was deadly and his eyes promised the retribution of Armageddon

"He's had her for two days and we can't find her".

The lack of accusation in his level gaze made guilt hit Lestrade like a series of rapid punches. He hated kidnap cases, hated them because the balance of probability was always towards an unhappy ending. The ones involving children were the most difficult. The last successful child abduction case he had worked on was the American ambassador's kids and that had only been successful because of Sherlock and John, though he wasn't sure if the word successful fit either because that had kicked off the events which had led to Sherlock's three year "death."

Guilt was a feeling he was getting used to as he had been relegated to unofficial peacemaker to the rising animosity between John Watson and Sherlock Holmes and it disturbed him to realise that nothing he could say was making a difference to the pair of them. He had honestly thought nothing would ever be able to tear them apart again after Sherlock's return, but the danger that Jocelyn was in, the graphic images of the terrified girl, were bringing out all of John's resentment, insecurities and trust issues. And Sherlock, God help him, didn't seem to be able to cope with John's withdrawal. Every time he opened his mouth, he not only put his bloody foot in it, he dived in headfirst! It would be laughable if it wasn't so tragic.

John had returned to the flat within an hour after his uncharacteristic explosive reaction. He had marched until he could start to breathe again, until he could think again through the rage and protective instincts that were screaming at him, ignoring his aching shoulder, ignoring his aching leg, his aching heart dictating his actions, and knowing at the back of his mind that he still didn't have the privacy he needed because he was being followed by Mycroft's people. It would be the icing on the cake if he was abducted as well but at least he would be with Joss.

He didn't want to take it out on Sherlock, but the rage was there, deep and festering and ugly and Sherlock had triggered it. He and Sherlock had known what they were getting into, when they went after Moran, But Joss hadn't signed up for any of this and they were all letting her down. Fathers were supposed to protect their kids weren't they? How had he messed up so badly when he knew what both Sherlock and Moran were like?

God, he had wanted the chase, the adrenaline, the excitement and the revenge which had blasted
him out of the dull apathetic grief raddled lonely boredom and depression which had been slowly killing him since he had watched Sherlock fall to his death.

He had thought when Sherlock returned to him that he was being given a second chance. He had thought it was his one last miracle. Those weary silver eyes in that pale thin exhausted and sad face had looked into his disbelieving face for the first time in three years, not saying the words but using his eyes to show John how much he loved him and how sorry he was, and John's heart had literally started to beat properly again. He had thought that was it, that he couldn't want or need or love anything or anyone else as much as he loved Sherlock. He went from being so alone to being part of something amazing again, to being with Sherlock, the two of them in their own world again, until Mycroft's baby bombshell and then there were three, all in less than a year.

To his utter amazement, total terror and secret joy, he had found out that he had a child, a daughter, a teenage daughter. He had always wanted kids and it had tortured him when Mary had lost the baby, and then dumped him out of the blue. He had thought there was still time for children when he had been dating all those women when he was invalided home, thinking about it later, when he had admitted how much Sherlock meant to him, he realised that the desire for kids and his subconscious attempt to rid himself of his uncomfortable attraction to Sherlock had all been part of his desperate dating regimen, not that he wasn't physically attracted to the women, he bloody well had been, but once he and Sherlock were together, he had put away his desire for a child, there had been no contest really, it had come down to a simple choice Sherlock or some future child.

And then along came Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, or rather a frightened grieving young girl was snatched from her familiar life and forced to live with people she didn't know or trust, a girl who missed her mum and who had looked at him like he was the bogeyman, who terrified the life out of him, who had a temper and courage in buckets. A typical teenager, who could be a cheeky little sod with a wicked sense of humour and who made him laugh. Jocelyn Jayne who somehow had changed her fear and distrust of her father and his impossible, improbable partner into acceptance and love, without any overt encouragement, who had the insane courage to text stupid sheep jokes to the most dangerous man in the Government because she liked him, and whose smile was the same beautiful smile that had enchanted him when he met her mother for the first time. Why had it taken her abduction for him to understand that he loved her? But then he had a track record of that, didn't he, he had only realised how much Sherlock had meant to him when he had "died". Dear God she didn't know he loved her, he hadn't told her

He rubbed at his eyes, surprised to find them wet.

His lost little girl was being held hostage and hurt by Moran as a fucking lesson to him and Sherlock. His fear for her was different, deeper, worse than the fear he had faced in battle. He could accept his own mortality but not hers. His usual coping mechanisms seemed to be letting him down, but the tremor in his hand was still absent which was a good sign.

His phone beeped at him and a curl of apprehension shivered through his guts. He pulled the phone out.

Going out, homeless network, come back and eat something

SH

The tension in John's shoulders eased a little, and there was a small curve to his lips that hadn't been there for a while. Sherlock's version of an apology. Because John had always tried to make him eat, he had always taken that as a sign of caring. Christ the first thing John had done when he saw Sherlock after the return, well the first thing after the punch, and after that amazing snog, was to make him eat something.
Since the return, Sherlock had always told him where he was going; when he had come apart in John's arms and begged John to let him come home, he had promised that he would never leave John in the dark regarding his whereabouts ever again. Of course it was Sherlock's version of not keeping him in the dark, but John appreciated the gesture nevertheless.

A second text:

**Nose not broken, someone loves me.**

**SH**

This time an unwilling laugh broke through as Sherlock used the same words as Irene Adler had all those years ago.

He turned around and went back to Baker Street, he went home.

Sherlock had already left, he had muttered something about finding the homeless network and disappeared within ten minutes of John's exit, after a quick visit to the bathroom to stop the blood dripping from his nose, he had flung on his coat and raced out the door as if all the demons in hell were after him.

Lestrade had made one attempt to reason with Sherlock but had been stopped, not by the seemingly cold expressionless face, but by the fear and guilt in those incredible silver eyes. The lad was as frantic in his own way as John was.

Lestrade had taken him to one side, out of earshot of the rest of his team and spoken bluntly "Don't be a dick Sherlock, come back for him in one piece, and soon, he needs you now. They both need you now"

Sherlock had studied him for a seemingly interminable length of time, which in reality was only a minute but Sherlock's low voiced oblique response actually reassured Lestrade

"Moran is not an original thinker Lestrade, he does not have the same imagination or creativity as his previous boss, and he is lazy, he takes the path of least resistance to get what he wants. She's in an empty building, it's in London, from the moment he picked her up to the first message, there wasn't enough time to take her anywhere outside of the greater London area and it will be somewhere they have used previously. Keep looking for the car. Run checks on all the organisations we know were fronts for Moriarty's network"

He took two steps away, and then stopped and spoke the difficult words softly so no-one else could hear.

"Look after him Lestrade, until I come back,"

Lestrade's soft chiding response caused the departing man to stiffen and bow his head in acknowledgement before he swept out of the door.

"I did that before Sherlock, I was hoping not to have to do it again"

Lestrade was grateful when Mycroft arrived from where ever Mycroft arrived from.

His amazingly efficient personal assistant providing the kind of superb coffee that made him determined to marry the woman, even if that made him a bigamist, as his mouth salivated in anticipation, and the coffee refreshed his tired and aching head just through the aroma alone. Anyone who could conjure up that kind of coffee under these circumstances was a pearl beyond price, if Mycroft's personal assistant had been a man, he would still marry him for the coffee alone.
It was probably the first time he was actually grateful to see the interfering posh know-it-all smug irritating powerful, menacing, and truly dangerous git from the Government. However not even Mycroft's presence could unite John and Sherlock in their usual defensive tactics against him, the rift between the pair seemed too wide to bridge at the moment,

But at least, Lestrade thought, between Mycroft and himself, they could alternate between referee and linesman. Referee calling time on the worst of the behaviour whilst the linesman tried to head it off before it happened. Not that Mycroft Holmes would understand the football analogy but that's what it felt like they were doing. The tension was so strong that his mind tried to distract him and he suddenly had the disconcerting image of Mycroft blowing a little diamond encrusted gold whistle, and shaking a red umbrella instead of holding up a red card, wearing a pair of football shorts and then had the inappropriate urge to chuckle out-loud.

He turned it into a coughing fit and Anthea sympathetically passed him another cup of the superb coffee. That was it; he was definitely going to marry her.

John seemed to be shutting down more and more, pulling a "Sherlock" in fact. Not letting anyone in and obsessively watching that damn video message until Sherlock finally slammed the laptop closed. "Not good John"

The silent argument between them was painful to watch but it seemed that Sherlock won that round, as John hunched his shoulders and turned away from the laptop and his partner to go and make some tea in the kitchen.

The third message arrived at 10pm on the Thursday evening. A live feed video of the exhausted cowering youngster listening to the drawling poisonous words being directed at her

"Poor little Jocelyn, are you hungry and thirsty little Jocelyn? I haven't been a very good host have I, no food or drink since you've arrived, no chair to sit on, bed to sleep on, no heat in the cold bare room"

She started at his presence and raised her head from her arms to watch him with horrified fascination. Her eyes were bruised from lack of sleep and red from the tears she had shed. Her lips were trembling with distress. They could see the faint shivers racking her body, even though she had her hands tucked under her armpits in a desperate attempt to keep them warm.

She watched the indistinct figure enviously, whilst he raised a bottle of water to his lips and sucked noisily with deliberate enjoyment. They could see her swallow convulsively as the man drank, and then bite her lips hard as the bottle was emptied slowly on the floor. She leant forward and her hands dropped to her knees in an obvious effort not to try to lean forward catch some of the water in her palms.

"Please" she whispered once, unable to stop herself, her finger nails digging into the palms of her hands. Her trembling increased visibly.

"I'm sorry Jocelyn, did you want some?" The amused voice taunted "Oh dear, I've wasted it all now"

The look on John's face promised deadly retribution, Sherlock catalogued everything about the room Jocelyn was in, and the faceless man who was tormenting her. He refused to think about her, he needed to do what he did best in order to find her. He would find her, and Moran. Then Moran would never have any power over his family again. Moran would never have any power over anything again, including his own breathing…
Lestrade winced as the kid begged, as far as he was concerned there was a special hell reserved for bastards who hurt kids and he would be more than happy to send this piece of shit there personally.

Mycroft watched and waited, he saw everything and everyone and that bland untouched expression became even blander and totally unreadable. Those piercing eyes showed nothing, but the fingers that gripped his umbrella handle were as white as bone. Lestrade noticed that Mycroft's beautiful PA no longer watched her smart phone; she was watching her boss the same way one would watch a softly swaying cobra, knowing it was going to strike but not when and there was an uneasiness in her manner which nagged at the Inspector like incipient toothache.

They could hear a smile in the calm male voice as he offered with mock sympathy

"This is really your father's fault you know. Your father and Sherlock Holmes. If they had left me alone, left my business alone, I wouldn't have to hurt you now. But I'm not cruel, girly, I will let you have something to eat and drink, and you only have to do one little thing for me. Just one little tiny thing for me, what do you think Jocelyn?"

She looked at him warily, full of trepidation, licking her dry lips, waiting for the trap to fall.

The taunting voice continued its blatant attempt at temptation

"You only have to tell me that this is their fault Jocelyn and I will let you have something to eat and something to drink, you only have to look straight into the camera and say in your best voice, this is all your fault Daddy and Sherlock, and I will give you something to eat and drink, that's not hard is it girly"

She stared at him disbelievingly for a second and then closed her eyes, and hung her head as if it was too heavy for her to lift up anymore.

"It's alright sweetheart, it's alright Joss, just say what he wants you to say, you need the food and drink, just say it, please just say it, they are only stupid words, just say it".

John's voice was hoarse with desperation, he didn't realise he was uttering the words aloud, leaning towards the laptop as if his physical actions would somehow transfer through the screen to his daughter. His forefinger touched the bent blonde head on the screen gently. Sherlock came to stand close behind him and held onto him. This time John didn't pull away, he took the comfort offered. Despite Sherlock's calm exterior, John could feel the rage coursing through Sherlock's fingertips and sparking like electricity into his own waiting tense shoulders

They waited for her response, each adult in the room, holding their breath and mentally urging her to say the words, to get the nourishment and liquid she needed, and then Johngroaned in frustration as he saw the expression on her face when she finally opened her eyes and stared up at her captor.

Her chin was thrust out with the stubbornness that was her father to his core; the pleading terrified pliant young girl had submerged beneath the rage that stared out of those fierce indigo eyes, and she simply said one word "No", but her eyes, those expressive eyes glared straight at his face and was therefore picked up by the camera lens, and those angry eyes called him every filthy word she could think of.

The back handed slap from the large male hand across her angry face was the last image before the feed was closed down.

The fourth message arrived at 7pm on the Friday when neither Lestrade nor Mycroft were there, out dealing with separate things that they weren't discussing with John or Sherlock. Although
there were still plenty of their respective members of staff both inside and outside Baker Street.

It was a text message simply saying

**You can have her back now.**

They had both looked at each other with apprehension for a second until Sherlock had frantically texted back

**Where is she?**

The only response was a picture of Jocelyn, pale and unconscious on the concrete floor, dried blood on her lips and her left shoulder was bare.

John muttered confused, "**Have they drawn a heart on her shoulder?**"

Sherlock's voice was ice cold as he answered "**It's not a drawing John, it's a brand**"

John closed his eyes, rage coursing through his very veins then looked up into the intense silver gaze locked on his face and said very softly, so that none of the other people or the surveillance equipment in the flat could pick his words up, and even if they did, they wouldn't comprehend his meaning.

"**He's not a very nice man is he?**"

The understanding smile in those beautiful eyes was the only answer he needed.

Lestrade had a lead; Sherlock wasn't the only one with informants and one of his oldest and most trusted had directed him to an abandoned construction site over the river. He had decided not to tell Sherlock or John yet as there had been too many false leads already but something told him it would really not be a good idea to let Mycroft know this location before he and his team got there.

He just hoped he wouldn't regret it, he wasn't sure if he would need Mycroft's type of assistance but he was a policeman damn it, meant to uphold the law, not be judge, jury and execut…. he refused to finish that thought, just because Mycroft Holmes had been eerily scary lately did not mean anything disturbing… yeah right…

He didn't have a lot of time for this, if Mycroft Holmes did not already know where he was heading, his people would be right behind him.

His team piled out of their cars and took the areas assigned to them; he had already told them their priority was the safe retrieval of the girl. He hoped to God this wasn't another wild goose chase. He didn't want to go back to them and say…..

"**Sir**" came the excited shout from Constable Kershaw, "**It's the car, we've got the car!**"

He took off at a run, and once round the corner of the building, skidded to a halt beside Kershaw. He saw more of his team converging on the area, until there was a ring of police around the car.

It sat there, abandoned, the back passenger doors flung open. They couldn't see into the front, the tinted windows were too dark. He nodded at his selected firearms trained team members and he and they pulled out guns. The rest of the unarmed team stepped back from the danger zone to allow their colleagues to do their work.

Lestrade shouted the standard warning "**Armed Police, come out of the vehicle with your hands in the air**"
There was no response so he called the warning again.

They moved closer to the vehicle, two officers on opposite sides of the front doors pulling them open whilst colleagues trained their guns on the inside.

"Clear" called both officers, and Lestrade moved towards the open passenger door.

He saw the shoe clad foot first, dangling off the back seat, the type of unisex black school shoe that all the teenage kids seemed to wear. Dear God, no, he thought as he moved swiftly forward. She was crumpled on the back seat, not moving, he couldn't see her breathing "Fuck, Fuck, Fuck" he was whispering under his breath, as he tucked the gun back into its holster, then screamed "Ambulance now" before he was climbing into the back of the car and reaching to find a pulse.

He found her pulse, thank god but she was unconscious and so cold, he saw the damage to her shoulder and the rage that flooded his body sharpened his brain.

"Kershaw, I want photographs of this now. When we get these scumbags, there will be so much evidence they'll go away forever."

The photographs were taken at speed and then he gently moved her into the recovery position, and covered her with the blankets one of his constables had fetched from the parked police cars. He left her on the back seat of the car, and sat beside her. Gently holding her hand he was murmuring softly "It's ok now Jocelyn, you're safe, you're safe now" as he pulled out his mobile and dialled John's number.

"I've got her John, She's alive but she's hurt. The ambulance is on its way. No, no go to the hospital. I'll be with her all the time, I promise, all the time. I won't let her out of my sight".

He put the phone away and saw Jocelyn start to move restlessly "hurts" she whimpered sounding much younger than her years.

"It's ok Jocelyn, Joss you're safe now, your Dad will be with you soon" he reassured comfortingly, louder this time, hoping to cut through her distress.

The next words she uttered, before she slipped back into unconsciousness made him feel sick with the combined effects of overwhelming pity and rage.

"Mum, where's my Mum"

Chapter End Notes

AN

Okay flashbacks are over. Apologies if the police procedural stuff is a bit off, but do know only certain fully trained police officers are allowed to use firearms in this country. Hope it's realistic. Next chapter will start to deal with the aftermath.
The Blame Game

Chapter Summary

The Blame Game, they are all blaming themselves, and each other. Sherlock needs tactile proof that his family is ok aka cuddles, John needs Sherlock but is talking himself out of it. Joss needs bed rest and more importantly for them to go back to "normal" and not go any where near Moran. Mycroft asserts his authority and then there is the sheep.....

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Daddy, Papa help me"

Joss's scream lanced through to his heart like a precision scalpel, but John got to her first. He stood there against the wall, his fists clenched, trying to force the useless emotion away. Caring was not an advantage, caring was not an advantage, caring was not an advantage, but in his mind all he could hear was Jocelyn's laughing contradiction

"That's such bollocks Sherlock and you know it"

He wanted to pound something, he wanted to grind Moran's face into a pulp, he wanted to delete him from existence, he wanted to destroy him, he wanted to... ..... Caring was not an advantage

"I don't expect you to love me you know, you've made room for me because of Dad, I know that and that's ok."

He flinched as more of her words came back to him, as clearly as if she was saying them now. Caring was not an advantage, caring was not an advantage. Her amused voice rang in his ears

"You care for Dad and he makes you stronger not weaker. Loving other people gives you the courage to do amazing wonderful, awful things and be happy even if it can't last."

His restless brain remembered her words, her voice was echoing in his mind as he stared at his John holding onto his sobbing daughter. His own eyes were wet. Why were his eyes wet?

"I love you Sherlock Holmes... like I love my Dad but you don't need to worry about it because it's not something that can be changed, and I don't expect you to become someone different because of it."

She had cried for him, as well as John, she'd called him Papa again but he wasn't running away this time. She'd screamed for her Dad and her Papa. And he hadn't been able to find her. The guilt and shame were shredding him from the inside out. His brain, his skill, his arrogance and he hadn't been able to find her. His brain raced.

He knew John was angry, he knew he had let John down, he knew he had let Joss down; he knew it was his fault that their Joss had been held captive for that long. Every blow, every word that had hurt her was his fault because he hadn't found her.
John did not know it yet but he would leave him and take her, John was going to leave him, he had forfeited the right to his love, he hadn't kept his John's daughter safe.

Moran was going to die; he would make sure of it. Then his John and his Joss would be safe, even if they weren't with him and Moran would be dead, dead, dead.

He wanted to leave, he wanted to run, and he wanted to get away. He wanted to take something to forget, to remember, to make these overwhelming feelings go away. His skin crawled with the need to take something.

John would kill him, John would be so disappointed, John would tell Mycroft. Mycroft would… who cared about Mycroft?

There would be a drugs bust at Jocelyn's home, not going to happen. He wouldn't allow that to happen. That was never ever going to touch her. He had to convince John to stay and not take their girl away. How did he convince John to stay and not take their girl away?

God, he needed to hold her and John, just for a moment, he needed tactile tangible proof that she was safe. He needed the physical proof they were both safe. He needed to hold his family.

He drew in an unexpected sobbing breath and was surprised when John twisted his head and looked at him. Those beautiful indigo eyes looked at him and saw him as only his John could; he took in everything, saw everything, saw what Sherlock couldn't and held out his hand.

Sherlock closed his eyes in relief and then launched himself at the pair of them.

His long arms enclosed both of them, he could feel her shuddering begin to calm down, and he rested his forehead against John's and held them close. He breathed them in and kept them close.

Jocelyn was squashed between her father and Sherlock, she never wanted to move, she didn't care how much her head hurt, or her shoulder, the terrible fear was beginning to subside. She was with her Dad and her Papa.

"Daddy, I want to go home, please", she whispered into his neck but it was Sherlock who answered in a husky voice that sounded like he hadn't used it for weeks.

"Not yet, Love, you have to stay for a while because you need treatment, but your Dad and I will take you home as soon as the Doctors say we can"

John smiled into Jocelyn's hair, he wondered if Sherlock realised how much like a parent he sounded. He'd seen Sherlock's reaction to Jocelyn's scream and despite his underlying unresolved issues had realised what Sherlock needed. He always knew what Sherlock needed, especially when the beloved idiotic genius did not have the remotest clue himself.

He made up his mind.

He gently disentangled himself from Sherlock and released his daughter, who stared at him in alarm; he pushed her gently towards Sherlock

"Go to Papa, I need to take her shoes to Layla and rescue her from Mycroft"

There was a stunned silence from the pair of them and Sherlock looked at him with trepidation. John couldn't help it, and he stroked that beautiful cheekbone and gave him a sweet sad smile. Then turned away with a lump in his throat, stooped to pick up Layla's shoes and made his way to actually rescue Mycroft from Layla.

Sherlock's arms loosened from Jocelyn, and she looked at him pleadingly
"Don't go Sherlock".

Something eased further in his chest, and slowed his racing brain

He looked down at her and smiled,

"Not going anywhere love, but you need to lay down so how about we have a "Cwtch" isn't that what Layla called it, when we are both horizontal!"

He lay back and she lay against him, as close as she could get. One pale elegant hand stroked her hair, and his other held onto her trembling fingers.

"You are safe now love" he soothed without thinking about it. Her head was against his chest, feeling the comfort of his heartbeat against her cheek.

"Sherlock, I'm sorry" she offered softly. He frowned in confusion, "Why?" he asked curiously. "I called you Papa again when I said I wouldn't, its just I was so …" she paused and he could feel her tighten up with distress. "And then Dad called you Papa too, I'm sorry I know you don't like it"

There was a long silence, and when he didn't answer, he could feel her relax into him further as exhaustion and pain caught up with her and she drifted back off into an uneasy sleep.

He closed his eyes but it didn't stop the tear which slowly travelled down the side of his face.

"Dad, don't do this"

The tremulous scared voice cut through the rage, the shouts and the accusations ringing through the flat, like a hot knife through butter.

All three men turned to face the pale, shaking purple pyjama clad figure clutching the doorframe to the entrance of the living room as if her life depended on it.

John stiffened, she was supposed to be in bed resting, had they been shouting that loudly they had disturbed her, but his voice softened instinctively

"Go back to bed Joss, you shouldn't be up yet."

She looked past him at the calm expressionless mask on Uncle Mycroft's face to the tense baffled guilty discomfort on Sherlock's. Her father looked shattered, guilty, angry and lost.

She shook her head slowly, wincing a little.

"Joss listen to your father" Sherlock muttered a pale version of his normal demanding self. Mycroft cocked an eyebrow at her, and tilted his head towards her bedroom, a little frown telling her he wasn't happy.

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She smiled faintly, "Been listening to him and you all for the last ten minutes, couldn't miss it" but the smile faded when the only response to her pitiful attempt to lighten the atmosphere were various degrees of wincing and frowns.

She looked at her exhausted father with concern.

"It wasn't their fault Dad, stop blaming them"

Her father's frown grew, his mouth pinched as if holding back words that would poison and
blisters.

Her expression became haunted and vulnerable, tears glinting in her eyes as she continued

"I shouldn't have gone near that car, are you going to yell at me for that?"

He flushed a little, but then his face softened as well as his voice

"Joss sweet..."

"No Dad, just listen" she said wearily

"It was Moran that took me not Sherlock and Uncle Mycroft. It was Moran that pulled me into that car, who sent you those pictures, who frightened me, who hurt me. Moran"

She emphasised the last word after the revealing little stutter, the trembling in her limbs increasing every time she mentioned that name. She felt so awful, everything ached, even her eyelids and she just wanted to sleep but this was important.

"I know that Joss" her father began through gritted teeth

"Then why are you blaming them? Because they couldn't find me? I know Sherlock's amazing, but he's not God, neither is Uncle Mycroft even if he likes to give that impression".

She tried another faint smile but the only reaction was the small smirk that crossed Mycroft's face. Sherlock wasn't looking at her anymore; he was staring fixedly at the skull on the mantelpiece. Shit, shit, shit, why were they all being so stupid? Were they all that engrossed in their own bruised egos that they couldn't see the truth? She couldn't bear it.

She tried to find the words that would make this better, that would stop this, they were tearing each other apart and the only thing she had wanted was to come home and for things to be normal or as normal as possible for Baker Street, but this, what they were doing was as nearly as frightening and painful as Moran's treatment of her.

"Can't you see they feel as guilty as you do?" she rested her head against the frame. It was getting hard to actually focus on her father. She was starting to feel lightheaded and very strange.

He made no response to that comment just straightened his shoulders and thrust out his chin, he wouldn't look at Sherlock and Sherlock wasn't looking at him.

Stupid, idiotic, obtuse, stupid, stubborn gits.

She looked pleadingly at Mycroft but he was watching the two of them with an expression of disdain that tried unsuccessfully to cover his obvious concern.

"Bloody hell Dad, even I feel like it was my own fault".

There was a dry sob in her voice, and suddenly her father and Sherlock were focused on her again, her Dad instinctively shaking his head, "No Sweetheart" then Sherlock was saying clearly and coolly "Don't be stupid Jocelyn Jayne". Which actually made her laugh weakly.

"Don't you think that blaming each other lets him win" she tried again and her heart sank when there was no change in their expressions. The draft from the hallway was beginning to make her feel cold, and she wasn't sure if she was shivering because of it or trembling because she felt so yucky.
"Bad things happen and sometimes the only thing you can do is live with them"

She looked down and they knew she was thinking of her mother. Then her head turned back to face them, this time there were silent tears falling down her cheeks, the trembling in her body was more pronounced.

"He let me go so why can't you all just deal with it" she asked with angry frustration, "It would be nice to think you are glad to have me back instead of more concerned with your wounded egos" she accused them bitterly. There was an appalled silence as her words sunk in.

"Joss, no love, you can't believe that" her father looked horrified, his hand stretched out and Sherlock's head came up as if she had slapped him, his lips white

"Joss, you idiot that's not true" he protested huskily.

Mycroft's bland gaze flickered over her, and something in it relaxed as he saw the reactions of the two men.

She looked at the pair of them as if she still didn't believe them. Her grip on the door frame tightened as she said in a hoarse quiet voice

"And instead of blaming each other and feeling sorry for yourselves, what I would really like is for you, to, to, to make sure that that horrible man doesn't come near me again" She stammered in her fear and distress.

Then her strength finally left her and she slid down the doorframe and came to rest on the floor, shaking like a leaf, dry sobs racking her body.

The two men were on their knees beside her in moments as she tried to control her sobs and breathing.

Sherlock took her hand and cupped the back of her neck with his other hand. He soothed "Jocelyn, my Joss, he won't come near you ever again. Your father and I" there was a tiny pause and then he continued firmly "and your Uncle Mycroft will make sure of it", his voice was as gentle as when he spoke to her in the hospital bed.

John was kneeling, checking her pulse and stroking her cheek as he scolded her softly

"Jocelyn Jayne Morstan the only reason you are home instead of still in hospital is that you promised to be good and rest. This is not resting"

"Sorry. Legs went a bit wobbly, might need some help to get back up" she muttered wearily and grimaced up at her concerned father.

"Jocelyn Jayne, you will listen to Sherlock, and your father. Moran will never get near you again and you need to rest" Mycroft insisted implacably.

"Come on Sweetie, lets get you back to bed" John murmured comfortingly as he reached to pick her up but was stopped by Sherlock's soft voiced plea

"Let me John". He looked at him in surprise, saw the expression in those haunted silver eyes and nodded slowly something easing the deep rooted anger and bitterness in his chest.

He knew his anger was unreasonable, he knew it, he was trying hard to forgive Sherlock for not finding her sooner, he couldn't understand why he was so angry, he had managed to deal with the rage and betrayal of Sherlock's fake death, but he couldn't, he couldn't get passed the images of
her begging that bastard not to hurt her, begging for her father and Sherlock to come, and Sherlock hadn't found her. His amazing extraordinary, genius of a partner had not found her. Lestrade had.

Joss was right, Moran had let her go and the implications of that terrified him. How could they keep his daughter safe? How could he protect Joss living at Baker Street, when this could happen again at any time? How could he reconcile his need to be with Sherlock with keeping his little girl out of danger? Was it even possible? Didn't she deserve some normality, having a parent there when she needed him, and even when she didn't? Didn't she deserve to come home to eat tea with her Dad, to tell him all about her day, to have friends and god forbid a boyfriend, to have him there watching crap TV with her, helping her with her homework, taking her shopping, attending her parents evening and knowing her father wasn't going to rush off on some dangerous adventure with a dangerous self centred genius who couldn't rescue his own fucking partners daughter. Give her a normal loving life where she wasn't afraid of someone coming after her.

How did he do that if they were living here at Baker street with Sherlock?

He closed his eyes with despair. He'd lost him once, how could he do this, how could he deliberately leave him but damn it all to hell how could he stay. She had suffered enough.

Joss had looked up at the two of them, there was something else she needed to say but she didn't know how to. She thought if she said the words, if they left her lips, she'd start to scream and never stop.

Sherlock gently slid his one arm under her legs and the other around her back and rose to his feet. John often forgot how strong he was despite his wiry frame. Joss tucked her head onto his shoulder as he took her back to her bedroom, her father following close behind. Sherlock could feel tears on his neck but she made no obvious sounds of distress.

He placed her gently on the bed, as her father sat down beside her to check her pulse again.

"You mustn't worry Jocelyn" Sherlock said calmly, as her father tucked her in properly. "He will not be allowed to come near you again"

"I know" she acknowledged jerkily "its not that, I know you'll keep me safe, its just I don't want him coming near you, either of you" Confused, the two men exchanged glances, then looked at her for enlightenment,

"He wants to stop the pair of you, he's dangerous, please, please promise you'll stay safe, don't go near him, please" she became frantic as she hung on to their hands.

"I can't lose you, please promise please" she was hysterical in her distress, clinging on to their hands as if she was never going to let them go.

"Joss, Joss calm down" her father dropped back down to the bed and scooped her into his arms, rocking her as he looked up at Sherlock and mouthed "what the?"

Sherlock's uncertainty turned into a vicious scowl of comprehension but the tone of his voice didn't change as he asked her gently

"Joss, what did he say to you?"

John's face tightened with understanding and a frightening rage which she couldn't see because he kept her head buried in his shoulder.

"He said he liked to be fair.... because Dad had seen you die the last time, he would kill Dad first,
in front of you so you would know what it felt like…. but not to worry because you wouldn't have long to grieve he would kill you next, after telling you that he was going to kill me and you would die knowing there was nothing you could do to save me…. But I really, really wasn't to worry because he wasn't really going to kill me or then again he might, but if he did it would be quick and it wouldn't hurt"

She sobbed the words hysterically into her father's shoulder, and then looked desperately from Sherlock to her Dad.

"Don't go near him, please don't go near him" she begged terrified. "I can't lose you too,, I can't, I love you, please"

The calm stern voice unexpectedly emanating from the doorway cut through the shocked silence and her hysteria

"Jocelyn that's enough now, you will calm down"

Mycroft stood there, and to the surprise of both Sherlock and John, she took in a deep shuddering breath and then another and another as her head dipped back to her Dad's shoulder and she clung desperately to him.

"Jocelyn look at me" he continued inexorably and waited with patience until she raised her head, ignoring the frowns on the faces of the two men in front of him.

"Your father and Sherlock are under my protection, Colonel Sebastian Moran will not come anywhere near them"

Jocelyn looked into those calm all knowing eyes for a long moment and then gave a tired relieved sigh. She didn't see the enraged expression that crossed Sherlock's face or the unimpressed version which crossed her fathers.

"Now go to sleep" was Mycroft' parting shot, as he moved forward and thrust something white into her arms and then left the bedroom, taking no notice of Sherlock and John.

Sherlock was the first to make it back into the living room, spoiling for a fight with his elder brother. "If you seriously think that…." He began viciously but he was interrupted without hesitation,

"Of course I don't but the child was hysterical and terrified" Mycroft snapped right back "and neither of you had the sense to say what she needed to hear"

"Thank you Mycroft, but I fail to see how lying to her will ease her fears in the long run" John's voice was as icy as Mycroft's

Mycroft's smooth smile was as predatory as it was amused.

"Who said I was lying to her John?" he smirked

Sherlock threw back his head, outraged but his elder brother continued his deliberate provocation, as John stared at him in disbelief.

"Uncle Mycroft is going to look after Jocelyn and an integral part of that is making sure that the pair of you are safe, because right at the moment, you both can't even look after your own relationship, let alone your daughter and each other."

He enjoyed the discomforted rage on both faces as he sauntered to the doorway.
"I will be in touch little brother. Good day to you John"

Jocelyn lay exhausted on the bed, she was so tired and drained, and she didn't know if she had made things worse or not, but the thought of losing either of them terrified her.

She loved Uncle Mycroft too, and he had promised he would look after them, he'd promised. Her mind was shutting down, relief and exhaustion overtaking her when she turned her head to look at the object Uncle Mycroft had virtually thrust at her and she had dropped it on the bed.

She stared at it puzzled until she understood what it was, then she began to laugh helplessly; it was white, fluffy and looked just like a cloud. He'd left her a soft toy sheep. She was still giggling as she cuddled it close and fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

AN:

Lots of angsty stuff again, but she did get a toy sheep, so there should be some brownie points for that right? Will get back to fluff sometime honest.

Next chapter will be another interlude. Layla v Mycroft. The immovable force and the indomitable spirit. Couldn't do it justice in this one and thought it deserves a standalone.

Please let me know what you think, comments are love share the love.

Disclaimers: As per all the rest, only Joss and Layla are the product of my fevered imagination x
Interlude: Shoes

Chapter Summary

The immovable force meets the indomitable spirit. I will let you decide which ones which.
Layla has to deal with the consequences of her actions and four angry men. Without her shoes. She tries to take her own advice about damage limitation but she still doesn't get her shoes back.

Then she has to make things right with Joss...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Layla sat in the uncomfortable chair facing the desk, glaring daggers at "The Suit" who was leaning back but still managed to tower above her menacingly.
She hated tall people, she hated tall people in suits, she hated tall people in suits who towered over her and thought that they had the right to glare at her, she hated tall people in suits who towered over her, who glared at her, who dragged her way from her best friend, who scolded her for doing her best for her best friend, she especially hated tall people in suits who towered over her, glared at her, dragged her away from Joss, scolded her for hurting Joss, and might, just possibly, might even be … right.

Why did they have to take her away before she could make sure Joss was ok?
Another five minutes, that all she had needed, a measly five minutes but between that nasty Sherlock numpty and "The Suit" they had ruined it. And to top it all off, her feet were cold, where were her shoes? He'd dragged her to this office in her bare feet.
She was so angry she could scream.
She looked up at the horrible tall person in the smarmy suit and her face was still tear- streaked but totally defiant. She hated him.
His expression was just as fierce as he stared back at her unwaveringly.

She had been unceremoniously towed through the hospital corridors by the tall angry man, still sobbing, wanting desperately to get back to Joss to make sure she was ok, and flanked by his thuggish Neanderthals. She had even swallowed her pride and begged him once to let her go to Joss, but the only answer had been a cold glance and a raised eyebrow without even stopping. She hadn't noticed her bare feet then, she was too upset too care.
They were joined at some point by an extremely beautiful woman who regarded her once, raised her eyebrows, gave an impatient frown and then proceeded to ignore her as she trotted alongside "The Suit" whilst not taking her eyes of the smart phone she had in her hand.

Layla was momentarily distracted from her tears with unwilling fascination; the woman, in the most amazingly gorgeous mouth watering heels, seemed to instinctively avoid all obstacles without looking up at all. How did she do that?

Now she was in an office, with two armed Neanderthals on the outside and one on the inside. The one on the inside looked uncomfortably familiar, before she realised that it was the same one she had punched in the gut, and who now refused to take his hard green eyes off her, with an
expression on his face as if he would really, really, appreciate it if she decided to move from the chair.

The slinky sexy woman with the built-in mobile phone attachment had disappeared down the corridor after muttering something about refreshments.

Layla looked at the grim faced Neanderthal and then back at "The Suit".

"I didn't realise I was that dangerous" she mocked defiantly, wiping away the remaining tears from her cheeks.

"You aren't," was the immediate derisive answer, and then he added sarcastically "I however am that important".

Pompous old git she thought with irritation and his frown grew even more threatening as if he could read her mind. There was no way he could read her bloody mind, he was a con artist, he was, no way could he know what she was thinking. The breath hitched in her throat.

"Your brother will join us shortly." The Suit announced coldly with barely hidden satisfaction.

Shit, shit, shit that would mean three large males in the same room as her, who were all pissed off at her to varying degrees then. Not good. She was sure at least one of them would have no compunction about physical retribution, and that didn't include her big brother.

What had she told Joss about damage limitation? She needed to take her own advice sometimes, it was bloody good advice even if she did say so herself. First things first.

She turned her head to the Neanderthal, (who was actually quite good looking in that clean cut suited graduate hard man, sort of way), looked bashfully at him with widened eyes, and swallowed the obstruction in her throat.

"I'm sorry "she offered contritely "I shouldn't have punched you but I needed to see my friend and you were stopping me".

The impassive face remained unimpressed; he didn't take his eyes off her as he drawled neutrally "Apology accepted Miss".

He might have accepted her apology but his eyes still pinned her to the seat, and promised trouble if she even dared to twitch. She knew he wouldn't relax his vigilance around her again.

She gave him one of her best and sweetest smiles, and it bounced off his impervious hide, well she couldn't win them all, but she wouldn't give him anymore trouble, not without at least a week's head start, Harry Potter's cloak of invisibility and a regiment of devoted personal ninja bodyguards in massive armoured tanks between him and her.

Then she turned back to "the Suit" who was staring at her with cold amusement.

"Feeling a little outnumbered Miss Mukerjee?" he drawled with a smirk.

She flung him a furious look "Do you like being a bully?" she snarled.

His smirk grew larger as he ignored the remark

"Just who are you?" Layla asked angrily, and then lost it as he refused to answer her trivial questions. "Don't you ignore me" she hissed like an angry kitten.
"Don't worry young lady, you will soon receive my full and undivided attention, and I seriously doubt you are going to like it."

The lack of emotion in the promise was truly scary and her eyes widened with unexpected fright for a second before comforting anger chased the unwelcome fear away.

Mycroft was coldly furious; the girl could have caused untold damage to Jocelyn. As he escorted her uncompromisingly behind him to the office set aside for his use (there was always an office set aside for his use), he was accompanied by his highly trained staff. Yes his highly trained staff, all of whom had been circumvented by this annoyingly resourceful infant. Once the child had been dealt with there would be a review of their performance, a review that would undoubtedly entail a punitive re-assignment.

He noticed that his highly trained staff were avoiding his gaze, and young Wilson's eyes were glued to the girl trying hard to hide the seething anger under what he erroneously thought was an expressionless mask.

Hmm Mr Wilson had been the one assigned to guard the door to Jocelyn's private room, and the diminutive Miss Mukerjee had still found her way in.

Perhaps a little lesson was in order for the pair of them.

She had spoken just once, pleading to go back to Jocelyn, but he was not inclined to accede to her request, he had seen the look on Jocelyn's face and heard the despair in her voice after Layla's little stunt. Layla was still sobbing as he pulled her along until Anthea's arrival seemed to distract her, and her tears dried up.

Wilson opened the door courteously, and obeyed wordlessly as Mycroft indicated that he precede the pair of them into the office. It pleased him to see the momentary uncertainty cross the young agents face.

"Sit down Miss Mukerjee" he ordered calmly as Wilson took up his position beside the door. She obeyed but glared up at him amusingly like a ferocious kitten sitting smartly on the seat.

He stared straight back at her, the intimidation intentional.

He observed her dispassionately, she was shorter than Joss, with long mahogany straight hair in a plait which was now less than pristine, no doubt the after effects of the motorcycle ride from Cardiff, threaded through with little pearls, in her pretty salwar kameez, the tunic a vivid turquoise colour with white embroidery decorating the sleeves and neckline, and her trousers a darker shade of the same colour, her matching dupatta or scarf hanging from her shoulders. The pansy brown colour of her eyes made her look like the perfect modal for little Miss Sugar and Spice and all things nice.

As a professional Mycroft Holmes admired the deceptive camouflage, it was exceptional and no doubt had ensured young Wilson's downfall.

She didn't flinch at his regard but it was close and then her eyes saw the agent beside the door. He could see the exact moment that she recognised him and how she tried to swallow past the discomfort and uncertainty. Her eyes widened with painful comprehension and he could see her drawing her courage in order to speak to the man.

The oddly honest apology amused Mycroft but he didn't let it show.
Wilson however still regarded her the way a postman on his first job, would study a huge snarling
dog, waiting for it to try to take his leg off even though he responded courteously to the apology.
Mycroft Holmes had an intense dislike of bad manners and his teams knew it. They minded their
P's and Q's when they were on duty with him.

He really must review the CCTV footage of the corridor to find out what exactly young Layla
Mukerjee had done to the capable SAS trained, martial art expert, Cambridge Blue, Philip
Andrew Wilson, and then damn well incorporate it into the next field training sessions for the
teams, with Wilson providing the role-play until Mycroft decided otherwise. One should always
learn from one's mistakes.

Wilson looked up from the girl and saw his superior's expression. For just a second he looked as
discomforthed as the girl, was that a faint blush on his cheeks? Then the mask dropped back into
place and he returned his gaze to the young troublemaker, as did Mycroft when the impudent brat
dared to mock the presence of his agent.

He could see her reaction to his words in her eyes, so she thought he was pompous did she? His
amusement deepened but he made his scowl more pronounced. He really would not put up with
her insolence a moment longer, and as he ignored her petulant demands, he retaliated with an
outright threat. When he saw her pale with fear, he hoped she realised just how much trouble she
was in. He ignored the feeling of slapping down a frightened kitten.

John found the office easily enough; he followed the trail of traumatised staff in the wake of
Mycroft's regal imperious procession. The two armed guards outside the door were a dead
giveaway too. As he went towards the door, one of the overzealous guards stepped in front of
him.

John raised an eyebrow and chuckled darkly,

"Go ahead Mate, after the last three days I've had, it would really make my day if you tried to stop
me now".

The guard stiffened at the challenge and the dangerous gleam in John's eyes, but the other guard, a
woman, put a restraining hand on her colleague's arm and said very diplomatically

"You can go in Dr Watson"

John shot the original guard a considering look, but the man stepped back and hastily apologised,
he was almost disappointed, thumping someone right now would relieve a great deal of
frustration, then he relaxed his shoulders, remembered his manners and gave a short nod of
gratitude.

The second guard opened the door for him, and he walked into the tension in the office. As a
soldier he had assessed many dangerous situations, before deciding on his best course of action.
He took in all three occupants in the room and was hard pushed to decide who was the most
dangerous. For just a moment, he was able to ignore the tangle of strong emotions that had him in
its grip, and almost feel entertained.

Mycroft's looked distracted, Layla looked delicate, dainty and despairing in equal measure and the
agent looked almost dismayed.

He was impressed; little Layla had managed to disturb the imperturbable Mycroft Holmes and
discomfort one of his men.

He focussed on Layla, and recognised the distress beneath the angry bravado. God, had he ever
been that young and troublesome.

Mycroft broke into his musings as he asked him with surprised concern "Is everything alright John?" He hadn't thought John would leave his daughter's side without being prised away with a crow bar. Why was he here? Had something happened?

John held out his hand, Layla's shoes dangling from them. Before Layla could stir from the chair the other occupant in the room, Mycroft's man came and took the shoes off him and then went back to stand by the door staring at her again. Her shoes behind his back and out of her reach. If John didn't know better, he'd have sworn the agent was actually daring her to try to take them, but there was no way one of Mycroft's staff would be that unprofessional. Mycroft had observed the by-play but deemed it unimportant; he was more concerned with John's sudden appearance in the office. What was happening with Jocelyn and Sherlock?

Layla looked stunned for a second and John wondered if she was going to cry, then her chin came up and she glared furiously at the agent and at Mycroft's indifferent back.

Mycroft ignored her to concentrate on John; "It wasn't necessary to bring them yourself John" he began. John tore his gaze away from the kid, and saw the concern in the elder Holmes face.

"He needed some time with her" he answered Mycroft's unvoiced question obliquely; Mycroft blinked with surprise, and uttered a small understanding "ah".

"Is Joss ok Dr Watson?" the soft question seemed uncharacteristic of the abrasive Layla but then she had been subjected to Mycroft for the last thirty minutes so no doubt it would have had an effect on her.

Truth be told, John was still very angry with her, the look on Jocelyn's face when she had seen that damn soft toy, the heartbreaking despair had just about finished him off, and when she had screamed for both him and Sherlock, in total terror, he had reacted instinctively and scooped her up into his arms without thinking about her injuries and hurting her. Now he wasn't sure it was a good idea for young Layla to be anywhere near Jocelyn for the time being. She was too volatile, he couldn't trust her to behave and listen to him and his Joss needed some calm and quiet

He didn't get a chance to answer her before the door was opened again, this time to reveal a young man still in handcuffs that John didn't know, but who scanned the room anxiously until he saw Layla. The relief on his handsome face was tangible, and then it gave way to anger.

Layla's face was a picture; she had looked at him as if he was the cavalry riding to her rescue, and then became crestfallen as she saw his rage.

John presumed this was one of her long suffering brothers.

Mycroft spoke to his agent coolly "Remove the handcuffs from Mr Mukerjee please Wilson", and as the agent went to obey, Layla's brother quickly took in the rest of the people in the room

Mycroft had been tempted to dismiss the young man out of hand, as a rather large but dull addition to the equation until he had seen the anger spark in his eyes and Layla's interesting reaction to him. Despite her manipulation of her big brother, she obviously knew when she had overstepped the mark. And the dull brother obviously had boundaries she wasn't allowed to cross.

The lad was tall and broad, nearly as broad as Wilson, he had the stance of a rugby player and the nose on his handsome face had been broken more than once. He wore the leathers of a biker with
ease and whilst irritated at the handcuffs, did not seem too bothered about the thought of being arrested. He and his little sister shared the same hair and eye colour. Mycroft was willing to bet that he was as underestimated as often as Layla was. Interesting family the Mukerjees.

He spoke to his sister in Bengali, which unfortunately for them, was one of the languages that Mycroft was fluent in. More than 200 million people world wide spoke Bengali, and ranked as the 6th most spoken language, it was inconceivable that Mycroft Holmes would not learn to understand it.

"Layla, what have you done this time?" "I told you Vimal, she needed me"

"Right so that's why you have managed to piss off all these suits, and get me arrested because Joss needed you, and where are your damn shoes?"

"Vim…." She started in a whining voice

"That's enough Layla, more than enough" he turned away from her and looked back at the elegant cold man in the suit, and the shattered looking man in the military style jacket.

Vimal Mukerjee stared at Mycroft Holmes and John Watson consideringly and then spoke directly to them for the first time. He went straight for the jugular.

"Why are you frightening my little sister? You forced her to come here, you keep her against her will and you scare her spit-less with the threat of your thugs, and what's worse terrified her by letting her think she had damaged her best friend, the sister of her heart".

The young man's question was as cold and clinical as any posed by a Holmes brother.

John looked at him with dawning respect and an unwelcome sense of shame as he looked from the lad challenging them to the young girl sitting on the chair staring open mouthed at her big brother. "Vi" she whispered as she took his hand.

He tore his gaze away from the two men in front of him and looked down at her still with that frown, "Doesn't mean you are not in deep doo-doo lovely" but his tone of voice was kind.

Before John could speak Mycroft stated calmly, refusing to feel the slightest guilt.

"The intention was to keep your sister from further harming Jocelyn; I doubt if Layla is actually terrified for her life. And she directly disobeyed professional advice and Dr Watson, here, Jocelyn Jayne's father's, own expressed wish regarding the best way to treat Jocelyn's psychological trauma"

But Layla's brother was made of sterner stuff, Vimal wasn't backing down "Professionals huh? The same kind of professionals who decided to treat the psychological trauma of a just bereaved thirteen year old girl who locked herself in the room with the body of her dead mother by calling the Cops?"

"What?" John whispered in disbelief while a disturbed expression crossed Mycroft's face.

The stubborn lad continued

"Who do you think got Joss out of the room by finally climbing in the window from the outside and just sitting there, being with her. Because according to the Professionals there was no way that another thirteen year old girl could do any good in that situation and they wouldn't allow Layla near the door to talk to her. But it was perfectly alright for the Police to try to bully her out of that damn room"
He looked straight at John "Don't ever underestimate those two girls when it comes to their friendship" The advice almost sounded like a warning, and both John and Mycroft stiffened.

John murmured "Layla said Joss wouldn't forgive us for not telling her about her Mum as soon as possible"

Vimal squeezed his sister's hand comfortably and shrugged "If she said it I have no doubt its true"

He turned back to his sister and scolded, this time in English

"But that doesn't mean you had the right to ignore what was said to you. You have a tongue Layla Mukerjee, as we all know damn well and you could have used that tongue to explain properly, but you got in a snit didn't you because you were already angry with them."

The look on his face dissuaded her from arguing, she knew her big brother, she could wind him round her little finger, he normally just laughed at her antics, but when he did get cross, it was worse than her parents scolding her, because he was almost always right.

"What makes you think Joss' Dad will let you have anything to do with her ever again after this, how can he trust you?"

She looked up at him appalled, Mycroft Holmes looked at him with appreciation, the boy was good, two sentences and she finally realised what she had done.

John saw the fear and dismay in her face, and felt sorry for the kid, she shot him a worried scared look with tears in her eyes and then scrambled up from the chair and came to stand in front of him, her brown eyes desperate as she spoke directly to him

"I swear I would rather cut my hand off than hurt Joss Dr Watson, please don't stop me being her friend, please, I'm sorry I disobeyed you but please let me be her friend"

No more bluster or bravado, no more cheeky retorts or angry impudence, all the fight had been scared out of her by the thought that she could lose her best friend. She could fight anything but that.

She stood there, her heart in her eyes, trying desperately not to cry, not knowing what else to say to convince this man to allow her to still be friends with Joss. John Watson had the same colour eyes as Joss, and they stared at her consideringly, the same way that Joss looked at her sometimes if she thought Layla had gone too far.

A very subdued Layla and fed up Vimal Mukerjee were being escorted by Mycroft and Wilson to the hospital entrance. John was accompanying them on his way back to Jocelyn's room.

"My bag and coat are still in Joss's room" Layla muttered without looking at anyone. She wasn't going to ask, she wasn't. She just made it a statement so that they could deal with it.

Vimal made the request instead, to her surprise. "Dr Watson, would you please allow Layla to collect her things and say goodbye to Jocelyn"

John sighed, wanting to refuse but then saw her down bent head, "If she's sleeping, you are not to wake her Layla", he offered sternly with resignation and she nodded eagerly. She'd agree to anything as long as she could get through that door and see her friend.
Layla slipped quietly into the room, Joss was on her back lying in her bed and staring at the ceiling. She'd heard the door open but hadn't looked up to see who it was

"You mad at me Joss?" Layla asked huskily, why Joss wouldn't look at her.

Neither girl realised they had an audience. Sherlock was in the corner of the room by the window, not in Layla's line of sight, and her father and Mycroft stood in the door way with Vimal and Wilson standing behind them. They could all hear Layla's words.

Sherlock turned quietly to face the two girls, if Layla played any more tricks, he'd have her out of the door so fast…. And then he saw John in the entrance and tension eased in his chest again.

The silence continued for a few seconds until still without looking at her, Joss's voice was cold. "Why did you have Ambrose?" was the surprising question; well surprising to most of the adults listening.

Vimal just grinned. The things that mattered to those two were never what mattered to anyone else.

John shot a look at Sherlock who had even less of a clue, but he looked intrigued. Mycroft was concentrating on Jocelyn, and Wilson was looking bored.

Layla looked uncomfortable, then blurted out "I didn't want to tell you but I found him in the bin after the service at the crematorium, that creep of a funeral director had put him there."

"You kept him all this time without telling me?" Jocelyn asked with disbelieving hurt.

"I didn't know how to" Layla whispered. "It was too soon, what was I supposed to say?"

They stared at each other, and then Joss narrowed her eyes, "What did you do Layla?"

Vimal perked his ears up and swung round to peer suspiciously over John's shoulder at his little sister.

Layla shrugged her shoulders innocently, "I don't.." but she didn't get to finish the sentence as Joss repeated "What did you do to the Funeral Director Layla?"

Layla sighed and admitted "I couldn't think of anything that wouldn't upset the people who have to use his services as well, I really, really wanted to leave a smelly fish under his floor boards but..."

Both Mycroft and Sherlock smiled with appreciation over the neatness of her proposed revenge.

John shook his head in despair, sociopaths, teenage girls, and minor officials in the government, what had he done in a past life to deserve this?

Wilson looked intrigued and Vimal was just thankful she hadn't done it.

Joss seemed to relax a little, smiled, shrugged and just muttered "Ok"

"Ok?, that's it? You are not going to give me grief over anything else, your Dad and the rest seem to think I've damaged your brain!" Layla asked incredulously, then she grinned "Mind you, you'd have to have a brain to damage Morstan"

"Cheeky mare" Joss groaned, "Ambrose hurt the most " she admitted sadly , "the rest of it just merged in together, it was so scary and horrible Layla thinking Mum was going to come and having to deal with a bunch of strangers"
Layla crept closer and closer "Was it bad baby girl?" Joss knew she wasn't talking about the memory loss. Joss nodded at her friend and closed her eyes again. She wasn't ready to speak about any of it yet not even to Layla. She knew her Dad and Sherlock were waiting to speak to her and no doubt Detective Inspector Scary and Mycroft too, but right now she couldn't.

Sherlock threw Layla a fulminating glare, Mycroft's frown returned but John seemed to relax. If Joss wanted to talk to Layla that was fine with him, he knew how hard she found it to discuss things with her counsellor and he was not sure if he could prompt her to talk without wanting to blow Moran's brains out and frightening the life out of his daughter.

She felt Layla beside her, she felt Layla take her hand to raise it to her cheek and Layla rubbed against it like a cat. Joss could feel her friends' tears on her hand but she couldn't open her eyes. She hurt all over and just wanted to go to sleep, but she was terrified of being alone again, that horrible man had left her in that dark cold place alone for hours and only came to torment her, she just wanted her Dad and Sherlock to hold her and not let her go.

From far away she faintly heard Layla's words

"Your Dad has told me to be patient and wait for you to call me, he said we can still be friends but you need to rest"

The uncertain tremble and her meek voice were so unlike Layla Joss finally opened her eyes and stared at her

"Numpty I love you and you will always be my best friend, don't care what anyone else says"

Joss uttered fiercely, with a glare directed at the adults lurking behind the unaware Layla. Vimal's chuckle was deep and rolling, and it startled Layla into turning around.

"I think it's time to go now Layla" Mycroft's voice was firm but not unkind, as John walked into the room and went towards the bed. John gave Layla a small comforting smile as he walked past her and focused on Jocelyn.

Layla collected her belongings and went to her big brother, she leant against him and looked so shattered, that Mycroft decided they would be driven home, After all Jocelyn didn't have enough friends yet, she couldn't afford to lose any. A three hour motorbike ride was not acceptable in Layla's physical condition and Mycroft Holmes always liked to safeguard and encourage future … potential.

Philip Andrew Wilson sat on the big motorbike with a pleased grin on his face. He had always loved bikes and having a three hour ride to Cardiff would blow the cobwebs away after a crap day. Especially since he got to have a lift back in the fabulous limo which carted his boss Mr Holmes around. Maybe his career hadn't gone totally down the toilet pan because of that bratty kid after all.

Chapter End Notes
AN

Long interlude wasn't it. Sorry Layla gets a bit carried away or rather I get carried away with Layla and Mycroft. What did you think? Hope you enjoyed it! Please comment review... please, reviewing is love and the world needs love or I do anyway...

Disclaimer: Only playing with the wonderful world of BBC Sherlock, OC's are mine

Nearly forgot, all commenters, subscribers, bookmarkers and kudos givers are amazing wonderful beautiful angels sent down from heaven just for me. Hugs xxx
Playing the Blame Game and Winning.

Chapter Summary

How Jocelyn is dealing with the aftermath of the abduction and her injuries. And to top it all off, then she has to give a statement to Lestrade.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

They were waiting for her in the living room.

She'd been dozing on her bed again; she was just so tired all the time, and she ached everywhere. This was the third day she'd been home from the hospital, she had woken up and she was lying there on her bed staring aimlessly at the ceiling, cuddling the sheep with no name (she couldn't face holding Ambrose yet) trying not to think, trying not to remember, reciting lyrics from every My Chemical Romance song she could think of, trying not to cry because if she started, it would be hard to stop again and they got upset when she cried. And if she did cry, when she'd finished, instead of feeling better, somehow it just made her feel worse.

Her father had started to mention counselling once or twice and if she carried on weeping like a watering pot, he'd have her back with that woman faster than she could say the bloody word counselling.

She just needed to be left alone for a while, not physically, God no, she was terrified of being by herself, but she didn't know what to say to Dad or Sherlock when they were in the same room. She was such a mess.

She had no appetite, the thought of food made her feel sick. Her Dad and even Sherlock attempted to coax her to eat, which was rich coming from Mr "Its only Transport" himself, and she did try, she did, but it was so hard.

Her Dad had lost his temper just the once, he had snapped at her when he had made her favourite beans on toast with grated cheese and she had turned her head away. He hadn't even raised his voice but the tone was enough, she knew he was cross with her so she tried to choke down what was in front of her, until he had seen the trail of silent tears on her cheeks and finally she had fled to the bathroom to throw up everything she had tried to eat. He had sat himself on the bathroom floor beside her after she'd clean herself up and he had held her close then, rocking and whispering sorry over and over again as if it was his fault and it had made her feel even worse. This was all her own stupid fault, if only she hadn't gone near that horrible horrible horrible car.

So no crying, absolutely no crying. She mustn't start crying.

She knew one of them was in the flat with her. Since she'd been allowed home from the hospital, it seemed like they had a rota set up, they were taking it in turns to stay with her, she'd woken up once and there was Uncle Mycroft's personal assistant sitting on the chair next to her bed, ignoring her as she focused on her mobile, but with a cup of tea and some toast on a tray right next to her. She'd simply said "Eat" without raising her head once.

She wasn't left alone, but they didn't seem to know how to deal with her, especially after she'd lost
She tried not to think of his name, his face, his raised hand, or his words, she was trying so hard to wipe him from her brain, to delete him like Sherlock did for all the stuff he considered unimportant, but she couldn't and sometimes she felt like she was going to explode with the anxiety, fear and panic.

She wanted to tell them, to talk to them but there was a lump in her throat again that only let through the words that didn't count.

She decided she wanted a cup of camomile tea maybe that would calm things down. Perhaps she should try to watch some telly with who ever was in the flat. If she could focus her brain on one thing for a decent length of time she might feel better. She might even ask Mrs H if she had any cake, she normally baked one once a week because of Sherlock's oddly sweet tooth. Her Dad would be pleased with her if she tried to eat.

Today was the first time she had changed out of her PJ's. She was so fed up of them and not being able to have a bath or a shower. Her Dad had told her she was not to get the shoulder dressing wet, and when she had asked about a bath, he had said no not unless someone was with her because of her concussion and she was still too weak.

She had looked at him in disbelief but he hadn't been joking, he was serious. She didn't even like the idea of Mrs Hudson helping her in and out of the bath, but her Dad hadn't meant Mrs H she knew that, because he thought it was something Mrs Hudson shouldn't be doing at her age and he did not want to bother her, and there was no way, no way that Joss was going to let him do that for her, he might be her Dad and a Doctor, but he hadn't been there when she was a baby, not even changed her nappy, dressed her in baby clothes or given her a bath when she was little, and did what ever adults did with babies and toddlers, so not happening now, no way in hell was her Dad helping her in and out of the bath.

So she had to make do with a shaky wash by herself at the sink. But she couldn't do anything about her hair, it hadn't been washed since the night before she had been…, she had been…., been taken. Maybe her Dad could take her to a hairdresser just to have it washed, then the thought of leaving the flat for any reason made her stomach plummet and she felt sick again. She'd ask him to help her wash her hair. That way she wouldn't have to go anywhere. The thought of being outside of the flat, where that Man could find her was too frightening. So she refused to consider it.

But she really, really wanted to be able to have a bath which was one of the reasons she was determined to try to eat again, to get stronger, to show them that she was feeling better, so the first step of her plan was to actually get dressed instead of staying in her pyjamas all day.

She had to try to convince him she was feeling better, maybe if she tried hard enough, she could convince herself at the same time.

She had put her comfy old jeans on, that had been a bit of chore because moving was just painful as it hurt her shoulder no matter what she did though she managed it, but her tops were really too difficult, hurt too much, until she had a brain wave and went to the laundry basket of clean clothes Mrs Hudson had brought up the day before. She picked up one of her Dad's old jumpers, the nice soft green one he wore when he was lounging around the flat and that always made his eyes look bluer for some reason, and pulled it on, with difficulty, but she at least managed to get it on over her painful shoulder and dressing.

Part of the plan was to show them she could manage, so she had to get dressed by herself, instead of asking for their help again.
She must look a complete idiot but it didn't matter.

It hung down to her knees and the sleeves hung off her arms and way past her hands, she rolled them up into big thick cuffs until they reached her elbows and the neckline was wide and misshapen but she didn't care, the jumper made her feel safe, even though it was freshly washed, it seemed to smell of her Dad and it comforted her and made her feel better. The effort to dress exhausted her and she sank back down on the bed to rest for a little while. When the dizziness receded, she sat up slowly with care to carry out the second part of her plan and left her bedroom.

She padded quietly and carefully down the stairs in her cosy purple slippers and heard talking in the living room. More than one of them had stayed today then, she thought with a faint smile, but then the words being spoken became clearer and she stopped in shock about two steps from the living room entrance where she could see her Dad at the fireplace looking very serious and Sherlock who was staring fixedly out of the window as they listened to the familiar voice.

"I'm sorry John, I've left it as long as I can, but I need to speak to her now, she has to make a statement, we are loosing valuable time and she may forget something. I can get a female officer to sit in on this if you think it's a good idea but we do need her statement. Its official now, mate"

Detective Inspector Scary spoke apologetically but firmly to her father.

Sherlock didn't turn round from his standpoint at the window, but his deep baritone voice spoke carefully almost neutrally instead of with his usual impatient passion.

"Lestrade is correct for once John; you know he is and she needs to..."

"I know what she needs Sherlock"

John's voice was cold and emphatic, and cut Sherlock off before he could continue, but he turned his head because he had noticed something in his peripheral vision, and he saw his daughter's white face starring pleadingly at him, slowly shaking her head. She had dressed herself and made her way downstairs without being fetched today.

He locked eyes with her, paused for a second while the love and pride obvious in his face tried to reassure her, then he straightened his shoulders and calmly and deliberately said without releasing her from his gaze

"And Lestrade is right, she has to make a statement and she has to do it today."

He raised his hand and held it out to her, refusing to let her look away from him.

Sherlock turned from the window and Lestrade got up from the seat, both alerted by the change of tone in John's voice.

Joss was shivering, she felt so cold but she couldn't take her eyes away from her Dad's face, she did not want to do this, she couldn't do this. She just needed to step back and retreat upstairs to her room, he wouldn't make her, he knew how scared she was, he wouldn't. She knew she had to talk to the police at some time but not now, not today, she wasn't ready, she didn't want to go through this now, she wasn't ready, really she wasn't. Her breathing started to come faster; she could feel the panic building. But her Dad's steady gaze wouldn't let her move.

"Jocelyn, I'm sorry sweetheart, but I need to talk to you, and you need to talk to me about what happened, I need as much information as you can remember. I know its hard but we have to do this"
Lestrade moved a step towards her as he spoke, kind but determined. His brown eyes were warm and apologetic. He had taken his coat off but looked so official in his dark suit, even if he wasn't wearing a tie.

She thought it was strange how scared she was now when he was trying to be nice, she had thought he'd been so scary when she had been in that interview room at the Police station, but this fatherly kind Lestrade terrified her to her core. Because he knew it was going to be difficult and painful but he was going to make her talk to him anyway.

She was going to cry, she knew she was, and the words wouldn't come. They would be stuck in her throat and she wouldn't be able to speak. She couldn't answer him.

She looked back at her Dad frantically and he hadn't moved, his hand was still out waiting patiently for her to come to him. Her legs felt like they were nailed to the spot. She wanted to beg him not to make her do this, but she could see the decision in his face. Why had she got up today, she could have been safely in bed and they'd have left her alone.

She heard Lestrade start to say something about needing to record the statement, and maybe it would be best to go to the police station where they had the equipment and Joss took a step back as her face became even whiter.

Her father barked out without taking his eyes off her

"She stays here Greg, not negotiable"

and before Lestrade could respond; his mobile phone indicated an incoming message. He opened the message and read it quickly. After reading it, he turned to John and Joss again and spoke soothingly;

"I'm sorry of course we can do it here, Jocelyn, we don't need to go anywhere else"

It seemed as if the content of the message had changed his mind about conducting the interview anywhere other than the living room at Baker Street.

Sherlock was willing to bet that the message was from brother Mycroft; he would pickpocket Lestrade later and find out for sure. He knew that Mycroft still had cameras in the flat, and probably more after Joss's abduction. Mycroft was ever a man who locked the stable door after the horse had bolted.

He dismissed Mycroft from his mind when he saw the fear and reluctance in her body language and her too thin face, he saw how small and vulnerable she looked in her father's shabby disgraceful favourite jumper. If truth be told, he was personally rather partial to that jumper, he had removed it from John himself as he had been wearing it the first time they had….. and the shade of green did wonderful things with John's eye colour.

His heart seemed to take an unexpected plunge at how defenceless and lost Jocelyn looked, it was the same way John had looked when he had made his miraculous return, all those months ago. She was his and John's now and no-one would harm her again, and that was the reason that they would get Moran. Therefore Jocelyn, his Joss, like it or not, had to speak to both Lestrade and himself.

"Jocelyn" Sherlock's voice interrupted her introspection and she tilted her head to look at him, her shivering distress very obvious not only to Sherlock but also to the two other men in the room

"Please Sherlock" she whispered. It was all she could get passed her blocked off throat and thick tongue. Lestrade frowned with compassion but this had to be done. He had given her as much
time as he could poor kid, but they needed to deal with it and from the way she was behaving she
needed to talk about it even if she didn't want to.

Sherlock didn't move closer to her, but he focused his extraordinary unblinking eyes on her and
said in the same calm tone her father had used

"Jocelyn, we have to catch him and only you can help us" when her scared expression turned
frantic at the use of the word "us" he corrected himself smoothly," help Lestrade and his police
officers do that"

She saw the truth in his eyes and so desperately wanted to disregard it, a tear rolled down her
cheek which she ignored. She took a deep audible breath, and another, and another, which
seemed to unlock her stiff legs, and she leant forward and stumbled towards her father, reaching
for his hand and leaning against his broad chest.

His other hand stroked her hair, as he felt her tremble convulsively,

"That's my good brave girl" he soothed repeatedly, until the trembling slowed and she spoke, her
words slightly muffled against his chest,

"Can I have a cup of tea first please Dad" and when Sherlock groaned instinctively and mock
growled "It's "May I" Jocelyn Jayne" her father felt the small giggle, and for the first time in the
last few days he actually looked at Sherlock properly and grinned at him.

Sherlock felt the pain that had been building up in his chest since Joss's abduction and John's
emotional and physical withdrawal ease somewhat at that familiar expression. John had looked at
him again. There had to be a way through this.

"I think the Lord of the land of Grammar wants a cup as well Dad" Jocelyn joked weakly.

She sat on the sofa, her Dad close beside her, holding her hand, she was trying not to lean into
him, she was trying to sit up straight and do this properly. She was trying not to be terrified but she
couldn't guarantee that she just wouldn't attach herself like a limpet to her Dad when they started
asking her questions.

DI Lestrade was in her Dad's chair and Sherlock was in his as they both faced her, but they were
all just chatting normally, at least Dad and DI Lestrade were talking about football and Sherlock
was making sarcasticcomments about grown men being paid to kick a silly little ball, what was
intelligent about that, and it helped her to calm down.

They had finished their tea, and she had relaxed enough to almost switch off during their
conversation, only really listening to Sherlock make some snippy comment which was funny,
when Lestrade turned to her with a smile and calmly commented

"Maisie Ross is a nice girl Jocelyn, is she your best friend?"

She looked at him in surprise but answered readily enough, not noticing Sherlock's attention was
now strictly on her and Lestrade

"No, my best friend Layla is in Cardiff, I don't know Maisie very well but she's fun and nice"

She smiled back at him without thinking. Then she asked confused,

"But how do you know Maisie?"

He still wore that relaxed expression as he answered her question
Maisie saw you go towards the black car Jocelyn, but she didn't see you get in, she only found your school bag after the car had left, and she brought it home for you, so why don't we start there hmmm. Why don't you tell me what happened when you left school and saw the car.

His voice didn't change, it was kind and calm and interested but the smile left her face and she stared at him wide-eyed, the lump in her throat getting bigger by the second.

Her father squeezed her hand gently in encouragement but no-one interrupted; they just waited patiently and quietly for her response.

Joss drew a deep shuddering breath, but she didn't take her eyes away from Lestrade's calm face. She started to speak slowly, trying to get the words through that lump in her throat.

"I was with Maisie and the others saying goodbye, when little Charlie, Katie Davies's brother pointed out the big car to me, as the rest of them were still chatting. Charlie likes cars and he likes telling people about them," She gave a small smile then continued

"I thought it was Uncle Mycroft's car, the door was open, and I went over to say hello.

Her hand squeezed her father's tightly as she paused trying to find the words to carry on.

"I popped my head through the door, but it wasn't Uncle My... Mycroft" she stuttered slightly but there was no comment, they all waited patiently for her to continue.

"It was a stranger and, I was embarrassed, I started to say sorry but he, he grabbed me and I ended up on the floor in the back of the car".

Her bottom lip began to tremble but she carried on

"I was stupid, I still thought it was something to do with Uncle Mycroft"

Her voice started to get quieter and her eyes dropped to her feet, she didn't want to look at anyone anymore.

"I asked the man what was happening, but he didn't answer me and the car started to move off. I still wasn't really scared, just confused and when I tried to get up and reach for the door, he pushed me back down and then he .....

She stopped and the shivering started again, then she looked up straight into Lestrade's face

"He took out a gun from his jacket pocket and rested it on his knee. Then he smiled at me.... He smiled at me as if it was all some silly misunderstanding but he kept that gun on his knee and he kept me on the floor of the car."

She didn't see the murderous expression on her father's face, she didn't notice that Sherlock had stiffened, his face even more unreadable than normal and his fingers were drumming on the arm of his chair; she kept her gaze on Lestrade who's expression was still calm and kind.

Sherlock asked softly

"Do you know how long you were in the car Jocelyn?"

She shook her head apologetically, and whispered

"I was too scared to take my eyes off him, it felt like hours but I don't know, it was still light when the car stopped though, I know because one of the doors was opened before he put the blindfold
on me. He was really angry with whoever opened the door."

"What happened next Jocelyn?" Lestrade prompted gently.

"I tried to ask him what he wanted, what was happening, but no one would answer me; they just pushed me into the building. They didn't like me talking, so I shut up and I was by myself in a cold and dark room. I was too scared to move" she admitted as if she was ashamed

"Could you tell how many people were there Jocelyn?" Lestrade asked carefully just before her father asked a question too.

"What do you mean they didn't like you talking?" Her father's voice seemed to have dropped a couple of octaves.

Joss really didn't want to answer her father's question so she concentrated on Lestrade's

"I don't know, at least three including the man in the car, but I couldn't see anyone and it was hard to hear the footsteps. The place felt big and it echoed".

She hoped by answering Lestrade's question that it would distract her father but then Sherlock repeated it, only put it more bluntly

"What did they do to you because you were talking Jocelyn?"

She looked at him pleadingly but he just raised one eyebrow as he waited for her to answer him. She looked down again and unconsciously rubbed her cheek

"Slapped me a few times" she said quietly "and again when I cried for..." She didn't finish the sentence but her father did "When you cried for us", it wasn't a question but she nodded her head without looking at him or Sherlock.

She didn't want to do this, it was upsetting her and upsetting them, what was the bloody point.

Lestrade must have been a mind reader because he leant forward, took her free hand and said reassuringly

"Your Dad and Sherlock both know how important it is to get all the facts Jocelyn, of course they will be upset because of what happened but we need to know, and knowing this stuff will help me to catch him, and your Dad and Sherlock need him to be caught too. You are being very brave but you just have to be brave a little longer. You have to tell us everything even though you think it might hurt someone. Do you understand?"

Lestrade could see the tears in her eyes as she nodded with reluctance.

Sherlock's steady gaze was oddly comforting. He didn't look upset, he looked focused the way he normally did when he was on a case, but with none of the impatience. So maybe this would be ok as long as her Dad........

Her father released his grip on her hand and she turned to him in alarm, his hand came up and stroked the cheek she had rubbed.

"Everything Joss" he said simply and dropped a kiss on her forehead, then pulled her closer until she was tucked under his arm.

She closed her eyes and leant against his chest, it took a few moments for her to gather her courage and composure again and then she began to talk, she talked and talked until her voice was
hoarse. Once Sherlock went to get her a glass of water and she drank it down in one go. She answered their questions, sometimes crying, sometimes trembling so hard her teeth chattered, sometimes stammering so much she could barely get the words out, but she told them everything she could think of, until finally she was so exhausted she was crying and could barely string two words together and she buried her face against her Dad.

Her father said gruffly "Enough now Lestrade, she's had enough"

"John, you know we need to go over it again" Lestrade protested but with not too much vigour as he saw the look on John's face.

Lestrade stood up from his chair and put on his overcoat

"I will get this typed up and then we can go through it again before Jocelyn needs to sign it." He said in full police officer mode to the room in general.

Then he crouched down besides the sofa and tugged gently at a curl of Jocelyn's hair.

"Hey," and as she turned to look at his face which was now level with hers, his brown eyes smiling warmly at her

"Thank you young lady, you did really well and you were very brave"

She gave him a weary smile. He looked at her assessingly for a second and then said out of the blue

"Why didn't you say the words he wanted you to say, Joss? Why didn't you blame your Dad and Sherlock so that you could get the food and drink, they would have understood, in fact your Dad was urging you to do just that"

The sudden surge of anger in her face put some pink back into her pale cheeks and drove away the fear as she responded to him.

"It wasn't their fault, it was all his fault, all his doing, he was the one hurting me, and not my Dad or my Sherlock, he was the only one to blame and he wasn't going to make me say it was theirs not for some measly food and water, he could shove his food up his.."

She stopped suddenly remembering who she was speaking to and blushed.

He was grinning at her and said "His fault right, not your Dad or Sherlock's"

and she nodded not sure where he was going with it, then he said more softly but still as emphatically

"And not yours either Jocelyn, his fault, only his, you remember that."

John smiled at the neat little thrust and Sherlock tried to hide his smirk. Sometimes Lestrade could be useful, it would give her something to think about instead of playing the blame game with herself.

Lestrade walked with Sherlock towards the door and began to say

"I dare say this will ..." but he was interrupted suddenly by Joss's bewildered comment. "That's what he said" and there was confusion in her voice

"What Joss?" her father asked as the other two men turned to stare at her.
She sat up slowly, her hands rubbing at her aching temples

"When he thought I was asleep once, he said that word, he said it to the other man, he said....."
She struggled to get it right, to get through the grip of exhaustion which was messing with her mind.

"Adair, he said, Adair, Adair's next"

Chapter End Notes

AN

Angst and more angst but poor Joss isn't just going to bounce back from her ordeal is she? And she had to work through a few things. She's also just given our boys a major clue. John's still not happy with Sherlock. There may be a kiss and make up interlude a little later..... or there might not.
Interlude: Love

Chapter Summary

This is a bonus interlude, full of angsty fluff or fluffy angst. Take your pick.

John and Jocelyn talk about what it means to love someone you are really angry with. Joss thinks they are talking about Mary but John realises he is actually talking about Sherlock.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

John hadn't really been sleeping just laying there trying to rest, trying not to wonder where Sherlock was, trying to stop thinking about getting up and going to find him, when he heard Jocelyn make her way quietly to the living room.

He was in bed alone, it was becoming a common occurrence, he couldn't seem to sleep properly these days without Sherlock and his heart ached for it. Sherlock had been running himself ragged since Jocelyn's abduction and now she was home, he was even worse; they had agreed that one of them would stay with her at all times until Moran was apprehended. That it turned out to be John most of the time was not a chore but it worried him, there had only been a few occasions when he had accompanied Sherlock like old times and they had satisfied a deep unexpressed longing that things could go back to their version of normal. But the gulf between them seemed to be getting wider and the idea of taking Jocelyn away, somewhere safe was gaining ground in Sherlock's absence.

He flung off the bedclothes and went to see what was wrong with his child. His child, two words that he had given up on, two words that he had thought would never apply to him now that he had Sherlock, two words that satisfied a long held longing but now he wanted to share them with Sherlock. He knew Sherlock cared for her, he was even sure that he loved her in his own way, but he wasn't sure that this was the best life for her.

He didn't bother putting the lights on, he just followed her to the darkened living room. She was sitting on the sofa staring down at her knees and he could see her shoulders shaking.

She was crying again, trying to be quiet but the breathy little sobs couldn't be repressed.

"Joss" he murmured softly, she jerked and then whispered "Sorry didn't mean to..." but he interrupted her with a gentle chuckle "Been there and done that darling, haven't we?"

He was answered with a watery giggle, and then she raised her head and looked at him. "Bad dream" and she shrugged her shoulders as if it was commonplace now.

He sat himself down besides her, and sank back against the cushions, the heat from his body warming her in the chill room and waited for her to speak. Poor kid had enough material for nightmares for years to come.

When she did speak it was wasn't what he was expecting
"Did you love Mum?" she asked quietly, still not looking at him. Her shoulders tensed up.

John closed his eyes for a second, then started to move as if to get up. He didn't want this conversation right now, he wasn't sure if he ever wanted this conversation, he would take her back to her bed and …

"Please Dad, it's important" she whispered pleadingly and her hand came out to touch his arm tentatively as if she was afraid he would pull away.

He stayed still for a long moment, then relaxed back into the sofa.

"It hurt me very much when your Mum left me, when she told me that we had lost the baby and that she didn't want me anymore." 

His voice was impersonal and not particularly kind. And Jocelyn drew herself in a little, wincing.

"Finding out about you, that you had been kept from me for thirteen years, that I had missed everything, from your first words to your first day at school, finding out that she had lied, made me hate her for a while"

He continued as if he was talking about the weather. He felt her flinch beside him and now he was angry. What did she expect?

"Is this what you wanted to hear Jocelyn" he asked sternly with a touch of cruelty.

Damn it, with everything else they had to deal with, why was the kid bringing this up now. How was past history important right now when he could be losing….losing something precious, something he thought he had lost forever three years ago and was now in jeopardy again?

She wouldn't look at him as she continued.

"But did you love her first?" she persisted desperately. He looked at her strangely, still angry but then sighed and gave her a wry smile. 

"Yes Jocelyn Jayne I loved your mother and I thought she loved me, why are you asking me this now?"

"Is it easy to hate someone you love, someone you miss so much?" she whispered "when they are not there to explain anything. Is it easy to cut yourself off from them when once they meant everything in the world?"

She pleaded confused and hurting.

The image of Sherlock's beloved face floated across John's mind at her words and he huskily responded

"No Joss it's not easy and it's not right either, if you love them you need to give them a chance" he wasn't sure if he was speaking to her or himself.

For god's sake what had he done, what had he nearly done, three years, he had lost him for three years and he was contemplating... Dear God he had nearly decided to walk away from Sherlock. What the hell was wrong with him? Jocelyn had been found, and they would keep her safe. He had nearly pulled a classic Sherlock Holmes disappearing act with his daughter so that he could protect the people he loved, and how much grief had he given Sherlock for it when Sherlock had finally returned.
He was going to destroy everything they had worked for because of a waste of DNA like Moran. Captain John Hamish Watson had not been thinking straight since this whole thing had started, he wasn't going to destroy his own life; he was going to destroy Moran's. He was going to protect his family, Sherlock and Joss and God help that moron Moran.

He heard Joss asked tentatively "Dad?" to reclaim his attention; she looked so hurt and ashamed as she told him

"I dreamed that Mum was crying and I was shouting at her, and I told her I hated her."

"Come here sweetheart" he pulled her against him and held her tight.

"I don't hate her Dad, I don't, I miss her so much but I remembered what I did to you and I was so angry with her"

"I don't understand, what did you do to me?" his voice was soft and soothing

Again her answer was not what he was expecting

"I screamed" She said if she was ashamed, "I am so sorry I screamed Dad". She wiped at the tears impatiently "please forgive me"

He frowned at her with bewilderment, "Joss I still don't understand..." he said slowly.

"At the hospital, when you said you were my father, I screamed and I am so sorry" she confessed in a rush, the words tumbling out of her mouth in desperation.

He shifted her closer and his warm hand took one of hers and held it comfortingly

"Sweetheart you were confused, afraid and in a great deal of pain, you weren't yourself"

"But I was Dad, I was ten year old Jocelyn, and when I was ten I was scared of you."

Her words actually hurt him. They hurt something deep inside him and he tried to breath through it. He stared at her and then forced one word out of his suddenly dry mouth.

"Why?" he asked carefully.

She drew a shuddering breath,

"When I was little I asked Mum why I didn't have a daddy like Layla and the twins, I asked where you were and why you didn't come to see me.?"

John winced and waited for her to continue

"She, she didn't answer me, she looked at me, stroked my cheek and walked away. But her face was so sad and so scared, it frightened me. From then on I thought..., well the idea of you scared me. My mum never seemed scared of anything, she was always positive, there was always an answer, but she was scared of..."

John finished the sentence for her "Me "he said blankly. God it hurt

Jocelyn was silent for a moment and then continued in a low sad voice

"I only asked her once more after she was diagnosed and she was getting worse, I wanted someone.. I mean I saw my friends fathers, and I was desperate for someone to help... but she still
wouldn’t answer me. I thought I would try to find you myself and I wrote you a letter but I didn’t know what to do with it. I didn’t even know your full name only John and that you were a soldier because I heard Mum once say that to Layla’s mother"

She rambled and wiped the tears away.

"But she just got worse and I couldn’t let myself think about you then." She wouldn’t look at him.

Joss was terrified now she knew she had to finish this, to try to explain. But what if he sent her away, what if he hated her. He must be so angry with her, because he wasn’t even holding her hand now, he’d never said he loved her and she didn’t know how he was going to react. Please let it be ok. Her voice was so low; John had to lean closer to hear her

"When I was brought to London, I was so scared; everybody was shouting, I was too scared to even ask what was going on. I didn’t know who you were until Mrs Hudson said I was going to be living here with you and called you my father. I just felt so ill in the car and that warehouse; I wasn’t listening, to anything"

John flinched guiltily, only now understanding just how scared the child had been when she had been picked up and dumped in Baker Street

"Seemed like everyone but me had a say in my own life. I didn’t know what to do, everything was just so..." she sighed sadly "and you didn’t seem to like me much and I know Sherlock definitely didn’t" she finished with a weak chuckle.

He made an instinctive move to deny it, but then thought back and realised how it would have seemed to her, so he sank back beside her with his eyes closed, listening to his daughter speak.

"I stayed in my bedroom trying not to think, just being afraid, until I decided that if I was here I might as well make the best of it. I thought that since I didn’t know why Mum felt the way she did, and I couldn’t ask her, I should make up my own mind about you".

There was a long pause and John slowly opened his eyes, to see her staring at him with worry in her face.

"And what did you decide Jocelyn Jayne? "He asked calmly, not showing the surprising anxiety which had grown inside him as she spoke.

"I decided that I want to be with you and Sherlock, I know you have no choice but to look after me but maybe you will love me someday and I decided that I was cross with Mum for keeping us apart."

She dipped her head at the last part and the shame was visible in her expression again. John looked at her in consternation and pulled her round to face him.

"I don’t know why your Mum kept us apart, she must have had her reasons, but she loved you and you love her, and trying to hate her will only hurt you. Your Mum knew that you love her Sweetheart. The reasons why she did what she did don’t matter now, we can’t change it so you... we have to let it go. But there is one thing I need to put you straight on young lady” and his voice firmed up. "I do love you, you are not a duty and I am so glad you are part of my life, I am so glad you are part of our lives because I know Sherlock cares for you too"

She stared up into his face desperate to believe him
"I know I haven't told you before, but that doesn't mean I didn't feel it. I am proud that you are my daughter and you will always be loved." And his hand stroked her face.

"Bed now sweetie" he ordered gently, she nodded and then just rested her face against his shoulder for a few seconds. 

She let him help her to her feet; it was still awkward trying to find her balance with the pain still in her shoulder.

He took her to her room, tucked her in like she was a little kid with the sheep with no name, which made her smile and he dropped a kiss on her forehead, as she snuggled down, her eyes already closing

"Do you want me to stay til you go to sleep?" he asked gently, but she shook her head sleepily. One last kiss and he left her room.

He took out his phone and sent a text

**Come home soon, we need to talk**

**JW**

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Chapter End Notes

So I thought I would get John to tell Joss he loves her, cos the silly sausage has managed to avoid doing that so far. It actually turned into a bit of an epiphany for him regarding Sherlock too….. hhhhhmmmm.

Disclaimer:

Not mine we all know who they belong to, only having fun in their world.
Make up or Break up?

Chapter Summary

Mycroft has to work on Joss's definition of an Uncle, something about indulging and spoiling instead of bullying.
He might have thought about that before he risks Anthea's sanity and to cap it all he ends up making Mrs Hudson think he's lovable.
Fluff, fluff and more fluff, there's so much fluff we need to vacuum. Enjoy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Mycroft Holmes was distracted. He never allowed himself to be distracted, so he was also irritated. He rarely allowed himself to be irritated so he was also not best pleased with himself. Mycroft Holmes was irritated and distracted and causing his staff to find any plausible and implausible reason to remove themselves from his vicinity.
His favourite justification so far was that the Darjeeling tea had become contaminated with the Oolong so now more supplies had to be sought, which would entail an urgent visit to the specialist Tea Palace in Covent Garden. He had sanctioned that enterprising young lady's escape with dark amusement.

It hadn't occurred to her that as it was 5.00 am in the morning, the Tea Palace wouldn't be open for at least the next three hours. He would watch the CCTV camera footage himself just to see the look on her face when she got there and looked forward to the next staff performance reviews with interest. She had shown such potential in her desperation to remove herself from the danger zone that he thought she could handle more challenging projects, and it would also be a timely reminder to the rest of his staff about the consequences of trifling with Mycroft Holmes, even if it did amuse him at the time and made him forget the irritation and disgruntlement but it had definitely added to the distraction.

Finally his dependable, reliable, stalwart, unflappable, ever professional imperturbable assistant snapped.

The disapproving look Anthea gave him when he had to ask her to repeat her report for the third time that morning was unmistakeable and his question obviously the last straw. She sighed deeply, moved with deliberation around his desk and into his personal space and told him sternly

"Sir, I have re-scheduled your meetings, and you now have a window of four hours before you have to attend the next one. The financial analysis will be ready for you to review before your meeting at the Bank of England and at this moment in time, you are a drain on staff productivity instead of your usual inspiration to it. I have arranged for your special car to be outside."

As he frowned at her, prepared to argue, her professional demeanour cracked and she begged hoarsely

"Please Mycroft for the sake of my sanity, go and do what you have to do".

His eyebrows rose in surprise, this was only the third time that Anthea had ever called him by his first name and it only occurred during dire circumstances.
He regarded her steadily and she refused to back down. He rose from his seat. Silently she held his jacket ready for him to slip on. She smoothed his jacket at the back with one hand and handed him his umbrella. He looked at her but before he could open his mouth she made a shooing motion towards the door. He took a step towards it and then stopped, she spoke before he could

"I have issued a list of suggested venues to your driver, depending on the reaction you receive to your 'request'."

Mycroft gave her a small genuine smile as he gently patted her shoulder in gratitude. She really was invaluable, and she knew him too well.

The black car pulled up smoothly outside the destination. His door was opened, and Mycroft alighted with elegant grace. He walked up to the door, knocked and waited patiently. Mrs Hudson opened it, still in her pink floral dressing gown. She looked at him with surprise "Mycroft Holmes why are you here so early in the morning?"

Then she frowned in panic and shot a worried glance upstairs "Oh dear is everything alright?"

Mycroft smiled soothingly at her "Everything's fine Mrs Hudson, I am here to speak to Jocelyn"

Her frown grew, "But Mycroft its only 7.30 am, what in the world can you need to speak to her about at this time in the morning"

Mycroft's smile widened as he avoided her question and instead ushered her towards her own flat door. He followed her inside knowing that Jocelyn had spent the night with Mrs Hudson as her father and Sherlock were out. She didn't sleep in the upstairs flat by herself any more. She had not left the environment of 221B since her return from the hospital. She had become too afraid to leave and what were John and Sherlock doing about it, nothing as far as he could see.

He feared that it was rather too comforting for all of them. Her refusal to leave the building meant that John and Sherlock didn't have to worry about her whilst trying to deal with Moran. This however was not normal behaviour for the same child who would climb out of her bedroom window to stay the night with her mother at the hospice and then return again before her foster carers woke up, this was not the behaviour of the child who took off to Cardiff by herself for her deceased mother's birthday. This was not the child that punched bullies even when she was outnumbered. This was not the child that punched bullies even when she was outnumbered. This was not the child who had angrily defied Moran's attempt to blame her father and Sherlock for the kidnapping, nor the child that send him irreverent sheep jokes at the most inappropriate times.

She was refusing to go back to the Counsellor that he had organised upon Sherlock's surprising request months ago; even when Mycroft had persuaded the highly recommended, very expensive Counsellor to make a house call, Jocelyn had fled to her room and refused to come out. Sherlock had laughed. Not for the first time Mycroft wondered if Sherlock was a changeling.

John had not been impressed, with Mycroft for his "interference", with the Counsellor for being there, with Sherlock for laughing. The only one left unscathed from John's savage tongue was Jocelyn; however both Mycroft and Sherlock had seen the worry in his expression as he looked in the direction of her bedroom.

The Counsellor had merely shrugged her shoulder, smiled good-humouredly and cheerfully charged Mycroft for an extra two hours of her time. He had however received some excellent advice for his money about the situation.

He admitted to himself that it had been praying on his mind. He had viewed the surveillance tapes and seen her struggle to deal with the aftermath.

He had grown rather fond of the girl and he was not going to sit back and watch whilst she
became really ill. She was already physically scared about leaving the house. He could not allow this to continue. He would possibly have waited a few more days but Anthea had forced his hand or rather he had forced her hand, he thought with a smirk. Now was an excellent time to strike. Her father and Sherlock were out, so there could be no objections, at least until after his plan had been put into place. He could handle Mrs Hudson, well most of the time. Jocelyn would be barely awake enough to refuse and she would be out of the house and in that car with him before she could even say the phrase "Counselling not required"

Jocelyn came out of Mrs Hudson's spare room, yawnning and confused. She rubbed at her eyes as she looked from Mrs Hudson to the tall elegant man who had followed her into the living room. She queried in a soft, sleep heavy voice "Uncle Mycroft is everything ok?"

"Everything is fine Jocelyn Jayne, Please go and get dressed" his rich voice was calm and firm and brooked no argument.

A gleam of satisfaction lit his blue eyes as she went to do his bidding without arguing, she was still half asleeep.

"Mycroft Holmes, what are you up to?" Mrs Hudson demanded, bright eyed with suspicion.

He looked at the kindly elderly woman and gave her a genuinely amused smile.

"They won't even think of blaming you Mrs Hudson, I will be the villain of the piece but it will help her, and please allow me a half hour head start before you contact them"

Mrs Hudson shook her head at him; and the odd thought that Mycroft Holmes could be as lovable as her Sherlock sometimes crossed her mind

Jocelyn sat in Claridges Hotel with Mycroft Holmes, wearing her oldest my chemical romance tee-shirt, lilac hoody, jeans and purple converse boots. She looked at the breakfast laid out on the beautiful table in front of her, the elegant luxurious surroundings and felt uncomfortably out of place, everyone else in the room looked as immaculate as Uncle Mycroft, if only he had said something, she would have made more of an effort, but to be fair, Uncle Mycroft hadn't made any disparaging comments, he had just looked at her for a few seconds when she came back dressed into Mrs Hudson's living room and then smirked at her, his eyes full of amusement. Though she had to admit that she didn't think anyone would dare to say something about her appearance, Uncle Mycroft was too formidable.

The morning had been rather full of shocks, from Uncle Mycroft's appearance to the fact that he had refused to heed her pleading, and ignored the tears that had trickled from her eyes when she had almost succumbed to full blown panic as he took her towards the front door. She had looked entreatingly up at the flat but she knew her father and Sherlock were out. He had taken both her hands in his and smiled at her softly; a real full smile which reached his blue eyes and oddly it had made her feel better and had distracted her.

Uncle Mycroft normally only smiled with his eyes and a quick twitch of his lips, so she knew he was amused. She had thought he only had two other types of smiles; his threatening smile he directed at people when they weren't doing what he wanted or the diplomatic one he used when he tried to make people actually do what he wanted. She had seen him use both on everyone from Sherlock's skull to the man who served behind the counter at Speedy's Café. She had even been on the receiving end once or twice until he had decided he liked her, and had taken to just smiling with his eyes.

They had stopped at the door, and he had taken her hands in his, as she had cringed away. He had
smiled at her as he had simply said "Please Jocelyn"

She had closed her eyes and nodded reluctantly, not seeing his smile widen with pride and satisfaction. The door had opened and he had tucked her hand into the crook of his arm as he led her down the steps. She could hear the pulse pounding in her head as she thought about sitting in one of those horrible, horrible big black cars again, and looked to the curb in desperation. She wasn't going to get in one of those things again, it didn't matter if Uncle Mycroft even made puppy dog eyes this time, she wasn't going to get into that car. She frowned in puzzlement, as her eyes roamed up and down the street.

Where was it? Uncle Mycroft always travelled in those big black cars, had it gone round the block while he had been in the building? She looked up at him confused, only to see him nod to the man holding the passenger door open of the….. Mini…. a black Mini.

They were going to get into a black Mini? Mycroft Holmes had been driven here in a Mini and they were going to be chauffer driven away in a black Mini? He smirked down at her widened eyes and bewildered expression. "Is there problem Jocelyn?"

She looked from him to the Mini, and began to grin, her panic and fear of leaving the flat temporarily forgotten by the surreal joy at the thought of Mycroft Holmes in a Mini. "Really?" she asked disbelievingly.

Mycroft sipped at his delicious Darjeeling tea, thankfully not contaminated with Oolong and studied Jocelyn thoughtfully. She was looking around her with fascination and a touch of discomfort, but there was no evidence of panic and outright fear. They were at his usual secluded table adorned with a little bouquet of delicate scented freesias and were waited on by the discrete and attentive staff that hadn't turned a hair when the naughty minx had deliberately asked for a bowl of rice crispies. Mycroft had laughed and after a surprised look at him Jocelyn had giggled too.

Her rice crispies had been delivered with a bowl of delicious mixed fresh berries, ice cold milk, freshly squeezed grapefruit and orange juice, hot buttered toast, warm butter croissants and a range of jams. Obviously the kitchen liked a challenge.

"I really think we are going to have to work on your definition of the word Uncle" she sighed mournfully as she peeped up at him through her eyelashes.

"You're supposed to spoil me and indulge me with treats, not bully me" Mycroft looked at her sardonically "Breakfast at Claridges is not an indulgence?"

"Not at this time in the morning Uncle Mycroft, and I'm wearing my oldest stuff too, I look like a right scruff" she grumped at him, half meaning it and then smiled reluctantly.

"It's a lovely treat, thank you but why?" she asked simply. He didn't pretend to misunderstand her "You needed it" he answered calmly.

She tilted her head at him as she thought about his answer then asked innocently with a wide eyes "I suppose Dad and Sherlock thought I needed this too?"

If she hadn't been watching his face so closely, she might have missed the imperceptible wince and then the spark of appreciative laughter in those piercing eyes.

Suddenly she sobered, and looked him straight in the eyes. "Can I ask you something?" Mycroft cocked an eyebrow at her and she took that as encouragement to continue.
"It's about Dad and Sherlock," she paused and then continued with some difficulty as if trying to find the words she needed. "They don't seem to be friends at the moment, they barely talk to each other and they don't even seem to like each other very much. Is it my fault, because of what happened?"

She didn't take her shadowed eyes from him. He spoke carefully

"Your father and Sherlock have had a lot to contend with over the years, but the one constant is their love and loyalty for each other. Your father is angry about what happened to you, as is Sherlock, and each in their own way is thinking about how to protect their family. They just have... different views on that at the moment, and things may be a little rough until they work through it. Do you understand Jocelyn?"

She nodded slowly

"But what can I do to make it better?"

"You can't make it better Jocelyn Jayne, only they can but that doesn't mean you can't assist with the effort." He grinned wickedly at her, "You can be a bridge, child, remind them you are there, remind them that they belong together."

After breakfast, and using the fact that she had complained about her clothes as a basis for their excursion, he had utilised Anthea's list and had taken Jocelyn shopping, Mycroft Holmes style. Private viewings at exclusive shops. It had also served to reassure Jocelyn that she was safe and not surrounded by people where she would feel vulnerable. One step at a time.

Jocelyn was disappointingly stubborn about accepting gifts (just like her father) despite her little speech about the definition of an Uncle and the obligation to spoil and indulge. But he had arranged for the items she had liked but politely refused to be delivered later to Baker Street anyway.

However he had triumphed with one gift, the silver pendant of a stylised winged dragon with blue jewelled eyes she had smiled longingly at while he thought he wasn't looking, was now hanging around her neck. "It's so pretty Uncle My, thank you" she had been so pleased that he had even allowed the appalling shortening of his name. She thought it was a pretty piece of costume jewellery. Mycroft Holmes did not purchase costume jewellery. She didn't realise that it was platinum with embedded perfectly cut sapphires.

Mycroft escorted Jocelyn up the stairs at 221B. He would not allow Jocelyn to face the music from John and Sherlock alone. Not that they would be angry with her, but they would still be angry and he actually wanted to see their faces when they realised that the outing had done her good. She didn't look so sad and drawn; there was colour in her cheeks, even if she now looked somewhat tired.

As they entered the living room, Jocelyn turned to him and said solemnly "Thank you" then she grinned tiredly at him "The Mini was a fab idea Uncle Mycroft, I loved it" and she hugged him.

As she rested against him for a few seconds, she could hear noises, she moved her head slightly so she could hear the noises more clearly, she looked up at Mycroft for a clue. His face now had a light tinge of pink, and there was both embarrassment and amusement showing there.

Joss realised that the noises were coming from her Dad's and Sherlock's bedroom, and there was something familiar about them. They were noises she had heard before. Oh. The morning she had walked in on them in the living room. Oh, oh, oh. Her eyes widened with understanding, but
when she heard her father's long drawn out moan of "Sherlock", her face flooded with heat, and she begged Mycroft desperately "There are still some places we didn't go on your list aren't there?" as she began tugging him towards the door.

Mycroft allowed himself to be manoeuvred; he would have to text Anthea to reschedule the rescheduled meetings and then he would take the child for tea.

Mycroft managed to restrain his laughter until they were back inside the Mini. It was her question which finally triggered the laughter much to Jocelyn's disgust, even while he was wondering how she knew those terms. Obviously watching too much day time TV or those awful soap operas like Eastenders.

Jocelyn had been remarkably quiet until her blushes had died down, then she looked thoughtful, and then determined and even a little anxious. She asked Mycroft because he was a Holmes and they always had an answer for everything, and in all seriousness as if it was a perfectly reasonable question.

"Do you think it was 'make up' or 'break up' sex?"

Chapter End Notes

AN:

Finally some fluff. After all she's been through I thought it should be Joss's favourite uncle who indulges and spoils her, and he fully intends to shower her with treats.

Hope you enjoy, please feel free to comment and you will be forever known as wonderful xx

Disclaimers: as previously, nothing is mine except for the mad plots, Joss, Layla and the other OCs.
A Social Worker calls

Chapter Summary

John's embarrassed by Mycroft, John is angry at Mycroft, John is jealous of Mycroft, Sherlock thinks its funny, then the Social Worker arrives, which makes both Sherlock and John angry. Joss warns the Social worker off her father and Sherlock but elopes with the Bump who has cast a spell over Joss and Mrs Hudson. Mycroft is hovering. Oh and there's kissing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sherlock and John had headed straight for their room when they had returned home. John had decided that Jocelyn was safe enough with Mrs Hudson for a couple of hours and they both needed some time alone. John needed this, needed Sherlock, needed to reconnect with him. Sherlock was almost insane with gratitude that John was no longer absent emotionally or intellectually. That he was not leaving. That he was not taking their Joss and leaving.

They did not hear Mycroft and Jocelyn's return or their hasty second departure.

So when they finally remerged and had eaten breakfast, John had actually managed to persuade Sherlock to eat something, and Sherlock had complied because he simply did not want to be at odds with John this morning, John had decided it was time to fetch Jocelyn, and wandered downstairs, relaxed and happy.

Sherlock was relaxed and oddly happy too, lying on the sofa in the living room, when he heard John stomp upstairs, John had returned from Mrs Hudson in a towering temper. "Your bloody brother Sherlock" he ranted.

Sherlock raised an eyebrow in surprise at the change in the man who had happily gone downstairs to fetch their, his daughter, er Joss.

"What's the fat fool done this time?" he asked amused and then seeing John was alone, he peered around with curiosity "Where's Jocelyn?"

John's glare became more pronounced

"He came at some ungodly hour this morning, made her get dressed, hustled her out of the door and hasn't brought her back yet. You know how difficult its been for.."

But before he could finish his sentence his mobile phone beeped, and Sherlock's vibrated in his shirt pocket.

Was it make up or break up sex? Jocelyn is hoping it's the former. MH

John's eyes widened in horror, a flush creeping up his cheeks as he looked at Sherlock, "Yours from Mycroft too?" he asked faintly. Sherlock smirked at John's embarrassed expression "I take it
they came back at one point”

There was a second beep on the mobile phones.

**Retail therapy for trauma. She will need more wardrobe space. MH**

Sherlock chuckled wickedly as he saw John's face darken.

"Mycroft is ever the consummate tactician John, make you feel guilty first which ensures that you can't complain about the amount of money he has spent on her."

"Oh can't I?" John contradicted grimly "We'll just see about that when he gets here"

**Will be back in 20 minutes. She's fine, just tired. She enjoyed herself John, don't spoil it for her. MH.**

John's good mood from the morning had totally evaporated, bloody Mycroft Holmes who the hell did he think he was? Joss was his daughter and if she wanted to go shopping, he'd be the one to take her. Sherlock watched every thought cross John's face and his smile grew wider.

"You are jealous of Mycroft", he crowed with delight.

John turned his glare on Sherlock, "What?" he spluttered.

"Come on John, would you really enjoy taking Jocelyn shopping?" Sherlock mocked.

"Going round all the shops she wants to see and waiting for her to pick up pretty baubles, and try clothes on until she decides she likes it or she doesn't?"

He mimicked a high female voice "Does my bum look big in this Daddy".

"Sherlock" John reprimanded and then slowly grinned, as he looked at him thoughtfully.

"You can pay him for it if it will make you feel better, but Mycroft will have enjoyed spoiling the kid".

Sherlock continued to grin at John as he could see the weight of his words strike home.

"Well as she is still out, and we have approximately 17 minutes and 20 seconds before they arrive, come here"

And Sherlock pulled the startled soldier down on top of him, and started nibbling at the grumpy lips above him until they curved against his own and John became rather more enthusiastic.

Sherlock was enjoying John's attentions when he heard the visitor arrive, her voice a pleasant murmur as she spoke to Mrs Hudson.

He decided to ignore it, she entered at her own peril and this time with John was too precious to waste for some idiotic case. He had truly believed that he was losing his John and the girl, his Joss. God that had hurt, he hadn't known what to do about it, he Sherlock Holmes the great Consulting detective had not been able to find a solution to the problem which hadn't involved begging John on his knees to stay and he would gladly have done that, but John himself had come to his rescue.

John always came to his rescue, how could he live without him ever again?

John had talked himself into staying whilst having a heart to heart with Jocelyn, the night before. He was going to find some way to thank that kid. Only it would have to be done in a way that
John wouldn’t object to and get all territorial about. Although John's feelings of jealousy had been roused by Mycroft, he thought John would not have a problem if he, Sherlock, were to make more of an effort as John had been trying to get them to behave more like a family. So perhaps he could treat her more like a daugh.. a member of his family, well not the way he ever treated any of his own family or they treated him. No he wasn't going to treat her like family, their relationship would be better than that.

It was a bloody miracle. He hadn't yet found out what had changed his John's mind but he would and then he would file it away in his hard drive for future reference as his secret weapon if John ever wanted to leave him again.

John was resting against Sherlock with his face buried in his neck, blissfully kissing his way up Sherlock's jaw when he finally heard the visitor. His head popped up and he mock scowled at Sherlock. "You heard that right?" his low voice rumbled through Sherlock's chest, and Sherlock closed his eyes in pleasure. "Mmmm" was his only answer. John fondly nipped his lips as he grumbled "Sod" and then Sherlock groaned as John left the sofa and him. He frowned with annoyance as he saw John re-arrange his clothing to something approaching respectability, then just lay there smirking up at him as John looked at him with raised eyebrows. His John could be so circumspect sometimes. John leant down and whispered softly in his ear.

"Tidy yourself up you gorgeous git before she gets upstairs or I might have to change my mind about tonight's night shift at the clinic. You know the one that I already declined because we have.....plans"

Sherlock pouted and narrowed his eyes at John, who stood there with an unrelenting expression, but he did as he was asked, begrudgingly but he did it. He even put his suit jacket back on, and as he turned to the mirror to make sure he looked as good as always, he caught the lovingly amused expression on John's face. He decided to get rid of their visitor immediately, he didn't care how interesting the case was, at this precise moment in time he was much more interested in John. Losing him again had been too close

The young woman dressed in light blue jeans, tan boots and a colourful woollen poncho with a baby carrier on one arm stood in the living room doorway, looking around her with bright eyed interest. The room was lit by the mid morning winter sun from the two large windows and the fire which burned brightly, it was warm and cozy.

As both men regarded her from opposite ends of the room, the only thing visible about the baby swaddled in a soft yellow blanket was its brightly patterned soft woolly hat and a tiny button nose; it was the same gaily patterned hat that the mother took off her own black short straight hair.

The woman had been shown upstairs by a cooing Mrs Hudson.

On the other shoulder she was carrying a rather large navy holdall sporting cheerful bright yellow ducks.

Sherlock had huffed with annoyance and before John could say anything he had dismissed the young woman with a wave of his hand and said curtly as he turned rudely away to face the mirror again.

"Sorry, wasted journey not taking any cases at the moment, even if they are interesting which yours obviously isn't."

John stared at his partner appalled; he hissed "Sherlock" through gritted teeth and then looked at the young woman apologetically. She stood there with a slightly surprised expression, and then before John could say anything, the young woman laughed gently with genuine amusement
That's not a problem Mr Holmes; it is Mr Holmes isn't it? You see I am here to actually take on your case.

She stood there with a pleasant but determined smile on her face.

Surprised, they both looked back at the confident young woman, who had put her large hold all down and had settled the baby carrier on the sofa, smiling down at the child and saying softly

"Haven't you been so good sweetie". Then she returned her gaze to the two men staring at her.

Sherlock raised one eyebrow, his earlier irritation at being interrupted with John, had changed into a deeper anger, something was wrong with this picture and he was not amused. After a few seconds study, he uttered coldly and precisely

"Social worker, back from Maternity leave, driven from Cardiff this morning", then he gave her a fake wide smile which didn't warm the ice in his eyes

"Here to see us regarding Jocelyn Jayne"

She matched that smile and upped it as the penny dropped with John and his pleasant relaxed demeanour stiffened into military formality as he uttered coolly

"I should have thought it would be common courtesy to let us know you were coming Miss?"

The insult subtle but definitely there. Sherlock grinned, it wasn't often his John was uncivil but he was obviously not impressed by this impromptu visit. He almost had it in his heart to feel sorry for the young woman, John had not been happy with Mycroft this morning; she was now going to be on the receiving end of the aftermath and his annoyance with her arrival.

Then again, he didn't feel sorry at all, but he was going to enjoy the show. He wasn't worried about repercussions because Mycroft could sort out anything.

Her non-smile smile widened, and now the amusement in her eyes grew, as she responded still with that pleasant amused gentle tone of voice

"Oh it is Mrs Carlton, Dr Watson" and she wriggled her left hand at him deliberately, then continued as he did not react. "But do please call me Stephanie"

Then her smile became as formal and as dangerous as John's when she continued and went straight on the offensive.

"Hmm courtesy, interesting word that, but not sure how applicable it is in this case. Jocelyn Jayne Morstan, fourteen, only child of Mary Morstan deceased. Let's see I think I have these events in the right order but do feel free to correct me if I haven't, these are the events which have occurred in the last four and a half months without the involvement or knowledge of the social worker assigned to her" she began ticking the list of on her fingers.

One, She was removed from school and everything familiar in a most brutal and frightening fashion by what has been described to me as a snatch worthy of a Guy Ritchie film

Two. "Given" to a father she had never met and who, incidentally to date had absolutely no previous contact or perceived interest in her",

Her eyes flicked mockingly over the two disbelieving stunned men then continued tapping on her fingers and ticking off her list
"Three. Bullied at school for an extended period of time, and did not tell her new...carers until she suffered an assault.

Four. Abducted for a second time, and suffers both mental and physical assault.

Five. Hospitalisation because of said assault.

Six. Now off school due to those traumas.

Do you have anything else to add to the list Doctor Watson, Mr Holmes?"

Then the smile dropped from her face as she glared sternly at John and Sherlock.

"Now where in all that have you earned a courtesy call?" she challenged with mock concern, and then lightly scolded him.

"It's called Safeguarding looked after children for a reason you know Dr Watson."

And she put the same mocking emphasis on John's title as he had put on the "Miss".

John's anger was palpable, and Sherlock was glaring at her, his eyes ice cold with rage. Stephanie stopped, waiting politely for them to speak whilst observing their reactions.

However the next word uttered in the living room came out as a delighted and amazed "Stephie", when Jocelyn walked in, Mycroft close behind her wearing his bland non threatening expression. The one that normally meant he was at his most dangerous.

Her father looked at her with surprise as she practically ran over to the young woman, it was the most animated that they had seen her since she had come home from the hospital, and Joss obviously intended to hug her. But she stopped dead when she saw the baby on the sofa, and she dropped to her knees in fascination in front of the baby.

"Bump" she let out a delighted squeal, a sound that her father and Sherlock had never heard her make before "You brought Bump".

Stephanie Carlton smiled down at the teenager with fond pleasure and said

"Jocelyn Jayne Morstan meet Tweli Taliesin Carlton"

Before Joss could stop herself she looked at the smiling woman with appalled shock, "Stephie you didn't call him that" then she clapped her hand over her mouth in horror, apologising with her eyes.

Stephanie laughed out loud, her dark eyes sparkling and her chuckles deep and rich,

"You are still so easy to wind up lovely girl, of course we didn't, we couldn't saddle Bump with that he'd never forgive us, although of course I would have blamed his father. No he's named Sion Timothy Carlton after his granddads."

"Sion means John doesn't it" Joss asked pleased, and she swung round to smile at her father, her smile faltering in confusion as she saw the unhappy, unwelcoming and downright angry expressions on the faces of the two men, she looked back at Stephanie and comprehension hit when she saw the gleam in her social worker's eyes, she sighed and groaned pleadingly

"Steph what have you done now?"
Another deep chuckle made its way out of Stephanie's throat.

"Lovely girl, there was a beautiful lady downstairs who let us in and became smitten with Bump. I am sure she would love to spend some time with my gorgeous boy, how about you take him downstairs to introduce him properly, and you can argue about who's going to cuddle him first?"

John, Sherlock and Mycroft watched the interaction between the two of them with bemused fascination.

Joss got up from her knees and stared sternly at her social worker, her shoulders back.

"You know you are supposed to include me in any discussion Stephanie, it's part of the rules"

Sherlock and Mycroft looked at her in surprise and then both had the same thought, she sounded exactly like her father when he was in no nonsense officer mode. John continued to look bemused.

"Jocelyn, this is a little informal chat so I can get to know your new family better, of course you will be involved in the proper stuff" she reassured charmingly

Joss stood there uncertainly as she looked with worry from her father and Sherlock back to the smiling Stephanie. Joss was uneasy, she knew that smile, Steph might look like a pushover and even talk like one but she was more worried about what she would do to her Dad and Sherlock. She'd be willing to bet that they hadn't met anyone quite like Stephanie Carlton before. Then she looked at Mycroft and began to worry about Stephanie.

She shrugged apologetically at everyone and as she picked up the baby carrier carefully from the sofa, she told Stephanie in a low but determined voice

"Be nice Steph, I like them very much"

Stephanie smiled sympathetically at her but made no comment, and that in itself caused Jocelyn to look protectively back at her Dad and Sherlock, ready to change her mind and stay, when her father smiled at her and chided gently

"Just be careful on the stairs with the baby Joss, we'll give you a shout when we are done"

Joss walked carefully out of the living room, feeling like she was being given safe passage through a war zone, she just hoped that there weren't too many casualties before the peace talks broke out.

Chapter End Notes

AN: Finally caught up with all the chapters I needed to upload, so from now on the updates will take a little longer because I am actually writing the new chapters.

Sorry...
The next one has more of Stephanie, Bump and Jocelyn...

Go on be brave, tell me what you think so far... I dare you. ; 0 ). Really hope you are
enjoying it, I love writing this story but feedback is really really useful. If you think there is something that doesn't work that well please let me know so that I can work on it and if you think things are good please feed my ego my lovelies. xx
Mary Mary quite contrary, changes her mind when she has a baby girl. Mary tries to find John. Joss ponders the nature of dirty nappies and new fuel sources for space rockets. Joss swears off sex because she has to change a nappy and John decides for that alone he will welcome Stephanie into his home. Sherlock changing a nappy... never.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The sweat was cooling on her forehead, her fair hair was plastered to her skin, her body thrummed with the aftermath of the pain, the cannula in her hand itched but Mary Morstan looked down at the sleeping child in her arms and smiled. God her baby girl was so beautiful. She heard the midwife bustling around the room, writing notes and humming softly to herself. She heard the background noises of the busy maternity ward but nothing, nothing disturbed her deep joy at holding this precious child in her arms. “Hello my darling, welcome. I love you” she whispered adoringly.

After the hell she had endured during the pregnancy, losing this little ones’ twin, losing John or rather sending him away when she had been in that black fugue of despair, depression and anger, then all the complications that her body had suffered, almost as if her damn body was trying to kill this baby too, holding this beautiful child in her arms was a miracle. She hadn’t told John that there had been twins, she was too afraid of hurting him again if she had lost the baby. And Dear God she was so ashamed of what she had done to him. John Hamish Watson, the love of her life, and she had sent him away believing she hated him and that she blamed him for the death of their baby.

But now, she could tell him now, she would beg him to forgive her, she would grovel; get down on her knees for his forgiveness. And even if he couldn’t forgive her, (how could she blame him for that when she knew what she had done to him), he deserved to have some part in his baby girl’s life. He had radiated happiness when they had learnt she was expecting, there had been no denial or fear just unadulterated joy and excitement, and he had been so devastated when they had lost it. He had a right to love their little girl, their Jocelyn Jayne even if he hated her own guts.

Dear God, she had missed him so much, his smile, his laughter, the way his beautiful eyes would twinkle with mischief and love, his kindness, and the instinctive way he looked after her. The look in his eyes that told her she was the most precious, desirable, adored being in the universe.

She had named their baby Jocelyn Jayne because it was the name of the London river boat where they had first met. She’d come to London with her father who had business in the city and done all the touristy things. On her penultimate night in the city she had been bored because yet again her father had abandoned her in pursuit of his business needs so in a fit of pique she had joined an evening cruise, not knowing that there was also a stag night full of medical students determined to enjoy themselves. John was a part of the stag night and some of his friends had given her a hard
enjoy themselves. John was a part of the stag night and some of his friends had given her a hard time but John had stepped in like a knight in shining armour. She had pretended not to know that he had set it up with his friends bless him, she had heard the whole slightly drunken plot when she visited the loo but she had played along because John had been oddly sweet and so bloody hot, that black tee-shirt showing off those muscles and flat abs, with that very, very, nice backside so delightfully delineated by his jeans and oh yeah, she fancied him too.

She didn’t think John would remember the name of the river boat but she didn’t care, she did and meeting John, falling in love with John, loving John was the best thing that ever happened to her, until she had actually brought his daughter into the world, alive and kicking, her little face scrunched up and wailing for all she was worth, and she had fallen head over heels in love for the second time in her life. John and John’s daughter, her perfect loves. Now she only had to convince the man she had so dreadfully hurt to give her another chance and she could have, hold and adore her beloved family for the rest of her life.

Joss stared in fascination at the sweet faced baby boy held securely in Mrs Hudson’s arms and listened with a grin to the funny nonsense Mrs H was lavishing on the baby. She even remembered some of the nursery rhymes she thought with delight.

Especially “Sing a song of Sixpence” with the actions for “pecked off her nose” which were making little Sion Timothy Carlton chuckle infectiously, and she couldn’t help but laugh too.

He in turn was staring up with concentration at the smiling face above him, when suddenly his cheeks turned red and his little nose scrunched up and there was a burbling gurgling sound and then the foulest smell she had ever encountered hit her nose.

“Urgh Mrs Hudson, has he just...?” she backed away from the pair of them with a frown making repeated gagging noises. Mrs Hudson took one look at her disconcerted disgusted face and laughed outright.

“He’s not a doll you know, what goes in must come out, and you enjoyed feeding him his bottle a little while ago, now you have to deal with the consequences”

Joss’s eyes widened with total horror “Oh no Mrs Hudson, I’m not going anywhere near that, I can’t change his nappy, that’s too gross”

Mrs Hudson’s grin faltered but the gleam in her eyes grew wicked as she said pathetically

“But Jocelyn darling, my arthritis is playing me up something rotten, I won’t be able to hold a healthy wriggling baby still to sort his nappy out, but I can teach you how to do it properly and your friend Stephanie will be pleased because we can’t leave the little mite in this condition”

Joss looked at her bland face suspiciously; she just knew she was being taken for a ride, but she didn’t know how to call the elderly lady an opportunistic con woman without being rude. Mrs Hudson was a very formidable lady in her own way, more than capable of sorting Sherlock’s nonsense when she felt the need. And her Dad knew better than to mess with her too. She’d even had Uncle Mycroft on the ropes a few times.

She looked back at the gurgling smiling baby time bomb, just how hard could it be to deal with something like this? Other people did it day in day out; babies were born every minute of every day, and needed their nappies changing. If you thought about it, the accumulated rancid world pile
of disposable nappies could probably reach to the moon or at least power the craft going there with all that methane gas.

Mrs Hudson’s gentle cough brought her mind back to the matter in hand instead of moon rockets powered by baby poop. Joss blinked at her and then sighed in capitulation

“I bet you win a fortune at Poker don’t you Mrs Hudson. Tell me what I have to do, but I want double thickness household gloves, a pair of tongs, a plastic Mac and an industrial face mask” she complained bitterly.

Mrs H just gave that infuriating tinkling laugh of hers.

Mary hadn’t thought it would take this long to find John; their Joss was nearly six months old. She hadn’t realised that when he had left, he had literally taken everything with him, everything. She had stayed in a hotel for a few days after the last fateful screaming match when she had blamed John for losing the baby, when she had told him she hated him and never wanted to see him again, told him he had better be gone by the time she was back. Christ she had been so unhappy and despairing she had driven him away. But she had calmed down before returning to the flat, hoping that he was still there, hoping they could talk and hoping for something better, but when she had got back to their home, and he had cleared out, she felt a deep hollow guilt but also oddly relief as if it gave her the time to deal with her own sorrow and loss instead of having to cope with John’s too.

Her guilt had only grown when she realised that he had paid his half of the rent on the flat for the next six months so that she wouldn’t have to move or consider having someone else share. But he hadn’t come back at all. She had come home one day ten days later to find his sister Harriet there, in a towering temper flinging the clothes he had left into a bag, totally ignoring her until she flung John’s key at her. Mary had hesitantly asked how John was and the woman was almost murderous. She had hissed dangerously

“It’s nothing to do with you any more, don’t even think about contacting him again, because I will hurt you. That was his baby too you evil bitch.”

Mary had been stunned by the sheer venom in Harry’s voice, they had never been particularly close, because John’s sister liked to party a bit too much and she had a nasty tongue when she was intoxicated but this was vicious.

She had tried to get information from Bart’s hospital where he had trained when he was a medical student but they wouldn’t tell her anything. None of his medical student friends would even speak to her, she had even tried Mike Stamford, John’s best friend at the college and the first time he had looked at her as if she was dirt beneath his shoes. But she had persisted, she hadn’t wanted to tell Mike about Jocelyn Jayne in case he told John himself and she wanted to be the one to do that, but she had hounded Stamford like a stalker, she had no shame when it came to this, she knew how much she had hurt John and she needed to put things right, and introduce him to his daughter. She had finally decided to tell Mike why she was so determined to find John when he had capitulated and told her that he had joined the army to finish his medical studies. She had looked at him in wide-eyed shock, not hearing his bitterly sarcastic “In the grand tradition of running away to the French Foreign Legion because of a broken heart”.

She had opened her mouth to thank him when he had glared at her and told her coldly.

“That’s it, that’s all you get. Don’t come back again” and he had turned and walked away from her before she could say another word.
It hurt, she had been trying to ignore the reactions she had been getting from his friends, and she had thought they were her friends too. She knew she had treated John badly but not one of them had shown her any compassion. It hurt. A cold ball of anger settled in her stomach and she decided that enough was enough. It was only John she had to apologise too, not his friends as well.

That decision was the first step in her determination to relocate back to Wales.

Jocelyn Jayne ran lightly up the stairs to the living room of 221B.

“Haven’t finished yet Joss” John scolded gently, but she was shaking her head as she took in the fact that they hadn’t moved from the same confrontational positions as when she had left.

“Need to change the baby Dad” she grimaced. Stephanie looked at her with a grin,

“Clothes or Nappy darling?” she asked amused. Joss looked at her apprehensively, and rolled her eyes “I dunno, he smells though”.

She ignored the winces from Sherlock and Mycroft, it might either be the thought of a smelly baby or her use of less than proper English, knowing the Holmes brothers it was more than likely the two things, and since she had been sentenced to changing a dirty nappy she didn’t care. They didn’t have to do it did they?

Suddenly the thought of either Sherlock or Mycroft having to change a smelly nappy brought laughter bubbling up and her eyes narrowed for a second as she wondered if she could con one of them into it. She grinned, wickedly. Her Dad looked at her with amused confusion. He didn’t ask, he was just pleased that she was smiling.

Sherlock gave a crack of laughter and said firmly “Not a chance Jocelyn Jayne” She pouted at him.

“Really Sherlock, why not think of it as one of your experiments, I’m sure the data would be invaluable in the future” she used his own arguments against him as she wheedled shamelessly, her eyes wide and innocently earnest as she blinked up at him.

John bit his lip to stop the laughter erupting, and before Sherlock could respond to that blatant manipulation, Mycroft shot a look at the girl and inserted smoothly “That’s a splendid idea Jocelyn Jayne; one must always take opportunities where one finds them Sherlock”.

Sherlock scowled at the pair of them, “Not going to happen Jocelyn” he growled, his irritation growing as John’s shoulders were shaking trying to restrain the laughter and Mycroft’s knowing smirk was more than visible.

Stephanie watched the interaction between the three men and the girl with professional interest, before she bent down to the baby bag and rapidly and efficiently pulled out wipes, cream, a disposable nappy and a pale green baby-grow with little cars on it.

“Here you are love, do you know what to do?” she asked gently as she handed the stuff to Jocelyn.

Joss looked at the items with dismay, “Mrs Hudson is going to show me” she sighed, and after one more hopeful look at Sherlock, who crossed his arms and refused to play the game, she sighed
and turned to go.

Stephanie called after her, “When you change him Jocelyn, make sure he doesn’t wee on you. Little boys have a tendency to do that.”

There was a shocked silence.

“Stephie, that’s just gross, that’s so gross, I can’t even begin to describe how gross that is on the scale of absolute grossness”

Joss protested, and the look of disgust on her face made Stephanie chuckle.

“If this is what you have to do when you have a baby then I am so not ever having sex”

Joss muttered to herself as she ran down the stairs, not realising all the adults in the room above could hear her.

John turned to Stephanie and said grudgingly with a twinkle

“I think you might just have earned your welcome with that remark”

Stephanie Carlton smiled back at him “If only it was that easy to put teenage girls off sex Dr Watson, I would be touring secondary schools with dirty nappies for a living” she sighed.

Mary had tried a letter to John’s regiment but it was returned un-opened, she considered going back to Mike Stamford but honestly didn’t have the stamina to go through another round as the Scarlet woman with the righteous self satisfied so and so. She had other things to worry about at the moment. Her estranged father had disappeared back to India, where she had been born. He had not been happy that she had stayed in London with John. He didn’t like John. He had someone more appropriate lined up for her. He had started to speak to her again once John had gone but he had not been happy when she had given up her teacher training studies before the baby was born and he was really unhappy that she was an unmarried mother, it didn’t fit in with this respectable image. He hadn’t even come to see his only grandchild though Mary had notified him of her birth. He had sent her money to get something for the baby (which she hadn’t spent yet because it felt like he was buying her off) and then told her he was moving back to India for good. He had just left as if she and her baby meant nothing to him.

Her rent was due soon and she hadn’t been able to get back to work, she couldn’t find anything which paid enough to allow her to stay at the flat she and John had shared. There wasn’t a spare room so a room mate was out of the equation, even if she wanted a stranger anywhere near her baby, which she didn’t and even if she could find someone who could cope with the demands of a young baby, which was doubtful.

She had gone to see about any possible money she could claim from the State, but they had referred her to Child Support Agency who had aggressively tried to get her to give them John’s details so that they could chase him for child support. Mary was horrified; she didn’t want John to find out that way about Jocelyn. What kind of start to their relationship was that? He would resent Mary and the baby. She wanted to tell him herself, but she couldn’t get these ‘jobsworths’ to
understand that. Just because she needed some monetary assistance to get back on her feet, that
didn’t mean they had the right to take over her life.
So she now seriously had to think about moving. Using the money her father had given her would
allow her to set up home somewhere cheaper than London. It wasn’t as if there was anyone in
London who cared about her and her baby anyway. She had felt deserted by everyone, was she so
evil that no-one could love her?

Her child would always know she was loved; she would make damn sure of it. There would be
nothing her Jocelyn Jayne could ever do which would make her mother abandon her.

She would try to contact John again when they were settled in their new home, but now her
priority had to be to find somewhere she and Jocelyn Jayne could build a good life together, and
she knew it wasn’t going to be in London.

Mrs Hudson had undressed the baby by the time Jocelyn made it down the stairs again. And he
was lying there only in his nappy, kicking his legs and gurgling away to himself and anyone else
who would listen.
Joss looked at Mrs Hudson suspiciously, “Thought he was wriggling too much for you to handle
Mrs H”, Mrs Hudson smiled serenely at her,

“He was so good Joss, it was easy, are you ready to change his nappy?”

Joss groaned pitifully as Mrs Hudson began to laugh.

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for delay, had the dreaded lurgy and the beloved laptop threw a tantrum
and needed a little stay in the IT hospital. Anyway this is an interlude. Mary kept
forcing her way in when I was trying to write the second part of the social workers
visit, so I decided to let her have her way. There is a purpose to this but I am a bit
undecided about it.. Let me know what you think.
As always disclaimed disclaimed disclaimed.. only playing.
The Social Worker Calls Part II

Chapter Summary

Stephanie makes her presence felt, asks lots of awkward questions and threatens Mycroft
John learns something distressing about Joss's past. Sherlock is worried about John’s potential reaction

Sherlock and Mycroft don’t carry boxes and Sherlock refrains from too many insults at Mycroft's expense

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The unofficial ceasefire lasted until they heard Joss knock on Mrs Hudson’s door and then close it behind her.

Ignoring the three men in front of her and without waiting to be asked Stephanie sat down on the sofa, and opened the large navy and yellow duck patterned baby bag. She pulled out a folder scented with baby talc, and closed the bag again.

Sherlock was still scowling at her from the fireplace, “Do make yourself comfortable Stephie” he drawled with menace, his eyes icy with disdain.

She grinned unrepentantly up at him, “Well in that case, I really fancy a cup of tea right now Mr Holmes and a biscuit if you have any, it was a long trip from Cardiff and the motorway was horrendous”

John snorted unwillingly at the almost murderous expression which crossed Sherlock’s face. Mycroft was studying the social worker as if she was some sort of troublesome bug he was about to squash

Stephanie moved her attention from the “Disgruntled Dad” and the “Big mouth Boyfriend” to the suave suited and very very sure of himself tall male who had turned up with Joss. As she appraised the man and the menacing stare he was directing at her the penny dropped.

Her smile became almost as predatory as Mycroft’s, her musical voice dripping frost

“You’d be the ‘family connection’ who managed to put the fear of God into my temporary maternity cover colleague” She said and it wasn’t a question.

The infamous Holmes eyebrow lifted on both Mycroft and Sherlock at the same time.

John looked at Mycroft in surprise for a second but his irritation at this blasted interfering woman was too deep rooted to give a shit at the moment. He actually just wished Mycroft had put the fear of God into this one as well.

He was then stunned to hear Stephanie’s next icy statement “Perhaps I should warn you I don’t believe in God and nobody frightens me off from doing my job, which by the way I am very good
at” Her smile was as icy as her words as she continued “The last person to try that shit with me ended up with a suspended sentence for threatening behaviour and five years incarceration for child abuse.”

Mycroft’s eyes widened at the obvious threat and he blinked.

John stared at her in disbelief, had she just threatened Mycroft Holmes, she bloody well had. Sherlock stared at his brother expectantly waiting for the menace, the posturing, for the “Minor official in the British Government” to assert his authority. But Mycroft merely stared at her and muttered “Fascinating” under his breath.

“Now look here Mrs Carlton” John began, his eyes were flashing dangerously “Joss is my daughter and whilst I appreciate your concern, I find your attitude to be totally inappropriate for a social worker who knows nothing about her but some bare facts.”

Sherlock smirked with pleasure and Mycroft continued to look between the two of them as if he was at centre court in Wimbledon.

John’s comment made her look at him with almost pitying disbelief,

“I know nothing about her? I have known that child since she was three, she was in fact my first case, and if you think for one moment that I will not exercise my duty of care for her, just because you think you can bully or bemuse me, you are very much mistaken. That child deserves the best and if you can’t measure up to her needs then I will make sure someone else does.” The ice cold statement was spoken with all the passion of a religious vow.

The three men were again shocked into silence.

“What do you mean you’ve known her since she was three?” John raked a hand through his tousled hair as he asked with confused and angry concern.

Stephie looked at him and there was a strange expression in her eyes, it was almost contempt. He stiffened with offence and clenched his fists. She flicked a look from his face to his fists and pointedly looked back up again as she continued.

“Jocelyn Jayne at the age of three came to the attention of child care services when her mother was remanded in custody for theft. At the court case she was sent to prison for three months which was rather harsh on a single mother with a toddler on benefits but as the complainant made such a fuss, the prison sentence was inevitable.”

The look of shock on the faces of the three men was almost laughable, but Stephanie was not amused. Her expression hardened

“Joss had never been apart from her mum, it was traumatic for her, she wouldn’t eat, she wouldn’t sleep and it broke your heart to hear her sob for her mother. Eleven years ago the prison service was not so tolerant of child visitors, so she didn’t get to see her mother for the whole three months.”

Her dark eyes studied John without compassion as if she was remembering that little distraught girl and blaming him for it. John flushed with anger and an odd sort of shame. He muttered defensively “I didn’t know about this” and in his peripheral vision he took in Mycroft’s apologetic shrug as Mycroft busied himself on his smart phone. Sherlock bent that intense gaze of his on the social worker and listened to every word dropping from her tongue as if his life depended on it.

John had to believe she was saying the truth as Sherlock hadn’t called her up on anything yet, but god he hated this, this gap in his knowledge when it came to his child and why hadn’t Joss said anything. But then again he hadn’t exactly made it easy for her to speak of her mother to him had
he? He was still too angry that he had missed so much time with his little girl. Sometimes on his way home he would see fathers with their little children, especially the ones with little blond toddlers and it would hurt dammit, seeing the little kids look of almost adoration at their fathers and knowing that most of the time Joss had been afraid of him, actually physically afraid of him, to know he had missed so much with her, hurt.

His silence must have offended Stephie because she responded to the statement that he didn’t know with an almost vicious retort.

“Really Dr Watson, your sister never told you she had the mother of your child arrested and imprisoned, what an interesting family life you must have”

Again the stunned silence hit the room as three pairs of eyes looked at the social worker who was beginning to look discomforted as if temper had made her say more than she should have. John’s mouth fell open with shock and Stephie knew she shouldn’t have gone that far, but for god’s sake, his self righteous attitude and his lack of proper care of Jocelyn made her very, very angry and he deserved it she thought defiantly until she and the rest of the adults heard Joss pound up the stairs, much sooner than she was supposed to.

Her father had gently told her off, and Stephanie had nearly laughed at that comically disgusted expression on her face when the kid had explained that the baby needed changing, until slowly that expression was replaced by her discomfort at the strained atmosphere. Stephanie had tried to distract her by asking what she needed and then Joss had wickedly tried to convince the “Big Mouthed Boyfriend” that changing a baby’s nappy was an excellent science project, and the arrogant so & so had actually unbent enough to actually laugh at her, and Joss had grinned back at him unrepentantly. Mr Suave & Sinister had even joined in the attempt to convince the Boyfriend it was a good idea, much to Joss’ delight, whilst “Disgruntled Dad” looked on and laughed, and Joss had sent him an affectionate grin.

Stephanie watched the whole interaction and began to reassess her original opinions.

She still had to make sure though, there had been too much taken away from the kid and not enough returned as far as she was concerned. They were going to learn to be better parents and if she had to kick their backsides and slap them about the head a few times, then so be it.

Once Joss had been supplied with the necessary tools to deal with her horrific task, Stephanie had added the little comment about weeing baby boys and Joss’s shriek of disgust and low voiced vow to never have sex had relaxed the strained atmosphere in the room. Stephanie decided to get down to business. Lesson 1 was about to start. She turned to face them with a gleaming smile.

John Watson attempted to bring the conversation back to Mary’s incarceration, but Stephanie avoided the issue by pointedly looking at Mycroft Holmes and telling John that she was sure that he understood that she was there to deal with Joss’s present and future not her past.

She then proceeded to grill them on how much they knew of Joss’s likes and dislikes, She was presently surprised when both the Boyfriend and The Dad had stated My Chemical Romance when she asked about her favourite band and even the Suit had murmured “I believe “Teenagers scare the living shit out of me” is her favourite song”

Stephanie had nearly grinned but she restrained herself. Her Dad had known Joss’ favourite comfort food and the Boyfriend had smirked at the Suit when he had mentioned Sheep jokes.

Stephanie wasn’t a fool, she knew what they were doing, but it was fine, those were the easy questions. She then proceeded to ask the hard ones. When was Joss going back to school? What
options had she picked for her GCSE courses in year 10? How were her grades? How was she getting on at school, had she made friends, were her friends allowed to come back to the flat? Was she allowed to go out with her friends? What did she do when her father and partner had to work? Was she still taking singing lessons? How much weekly pocket money was she allowed?

What were they planning to do for Joss’s birthday? It was coming up soon and she would be fifteen. She didn’t miss the panic that crossed her father’s face on that one. Did he even know when her birthday was, she decided to help him out just a little. “November 3rd isn’t that far away now Dr Watson”, and she pretended not to notice the grateful look he gave her.

By the time she had finished there was an odd sort of silence in the room, as if the three men had been pulled through a ringer and didn’t quite know what to do about it.

Stephanie had given John the first genuine smile since Sherlock had been rude to her on her arrival. “Hard work being a parent isn’t it?”

She put down her file, looked at John and asked almost gently “That cup of tea would be lovely right now Dr Watson, while Mr Holmes gets Joss”

“Oh yeah, yes of course” John mumbled, his head still swimming with the frightening understanding of just how much he didn’t know about his daughter in the present let alone the past. Sherlock was looking at him with concern, and Mycroft spoke calmly

“I will get Jocelyn John”

Stephanie had been rummaging in her duck bag and pulled out a set of car keys, she tossed them towards Mycroft who caught them by reflex.

“I have the last few boxes of Joss’s belongings and clothes in the boot of the hire care parked outside. Would you please bring them in?”

She smiled challengingly at him, and when it looked like Mycroft was finally going to show his teeth, it was Sherlock who actually stopped him and walked with him to the door, “I will come with you dear brother”

Sherlock stuck his head around Mrs Hudson’s door and told Jocelyn to go upstairs, before she could ask any questions he had disappeared out the front door with his brother.

Mycroft’s driver had opened the boot of the car, and was removing the assorted boxes and cases under his boss’s watchful gaze when Sherlock came to stand beside him.

“I will have an in depth report on Mary Morstan by 5pm this afternoon Sherlock,” he said without waiting for Sherlock to speak. “Why didn’t you have this already?” Sherlock snapped irritably at him but he knew the answer anyway. Mycroft did nor deign to respond to the idiotic question. Not one of them had actually considered it important once Jocelyn Jayne had been delivered to her father.

“I need to know what Harry’s role in all this was Mycroft, John is still in shock but once he thinks it through and realises that Harry knew about Joss and didn’t tell him” Sherlock’s voice trailed off uncharacteristically, Mycroft looked at him with perfect understanding “Indeed” he answered softly. “Do you think the child knows?”

“I doubt it” Sherlock considered “she has only just learnt to trust him, us, she still wouldn’t if she knew about her Aunt’s involvement in her mother’s incarceration, and whatever else she may have done”
By the time they had finished the conversation the driver had taken all the boxes into Baker Street, he handed the car keys back to Sherlock and then opened the car door for his boss. Mycroft had hoped that Sherlock’s distraction would see him through until he had driven off but he was not so fortunate. Sherlock tilted his head and studied the car and his lips quirked. But he must still have been in a relatively good mood because his only comment was “Well she wouldn’t have got into anything bigger” there wasn’t even a sniping comment about Mycroft and his love handles being able to get into a mini, before he turned his back on his brother and went inside

John was alone in the living room staring into his mug of tea as if it held all the answers with the kind of distant expression on his face that Sherlock hadn’t seen since his fake funeral and had hoped never to see again.

“Where are they?” Sherlock asked calmly, John looked at him blankly for a moment, “Jocelyn and that Social worker” he prompted with fake impatience.

John’s eyes focused again and he was back in the room with Sherlock, “Bedroom, do you want tea?” he answered shortly.

“John” Sherlock began, “Not now, Joss could hear” John sighed heavily, then almost as if he couldn’t help it “I will fucking kill her if she knew about Joss all this time and never told me” the rage was bitter and deep and barely contained.

Jocelyn sat on the bed beside the sleeping baby boy watching Stephanie wander around the room, picking things up and putting things down.

“Spill kid, do you really want to be here?” the uncompromising words were expected and Joss actually smiled at her. “Yes” she said simply, and when Stephanie turned to her and focused “the expression” on her, she grinned “Scary expression or not Steph, I want to be here.” She looked down and continued softly “Didn’t at first, was scared spit less of them, and just wanted to go back to Cardiff because I understood how things worked, and there was Layla and her family and Mum’s grave…. Things were difficult but I want to stay Steph, please”

Stephanie sighed and then grinned at the girl. “I know you do Sweetheart, but they haven’t done their best for you Joss and I am going to make sure that happens. No-ones perfect baby girl but they haven’t even come close to mediocre let alone gold star material, and as for you, why haven’t you decorated this depressing room. Not even posters up Joss?”

Joss shrugged uncomfortably “Afraid it wasn’t going to be permanent Joss?” Steph smiled understandingly.

“Well now you have got all of your stuff from Cardiff, you can enlist the help of those two strong men downstairs and get this place sorted can’t you? And honey, I am so sorry you had to wait for everything, I was furious when I realised that no-one had sent on your belongings.”

“Does that mean I can stay Steph?” Joss asked eagerly.

“I was just cross about their lackadaisical attitude Joss, wouldn’t, couldn’t take you away without a damn good reason” As Joss smiled in relief, Stephanie decided not to tell her that she had come to London totally convinced that she had too many damn good reasons to take her away, but the kid actually loved those two idiots downstairs so she would have to work with that. She’d already lost one person she had loved in her short life; Stephanie couldn’t bear the thought of seeing the
child grieve again. But they had better buck their ideas up or she would make damn sure they would regret it.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the delay. Stephanie has been causing me problems, she wouldn't let me write the chapter the way I wanted to.
The Name's Watson, John Watson

Chapter Summary

Jocelyn has a sleep over with Maisie because John and Sherlock are attending a very formal evening party with Mycroft.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Dad, you look gorgeous” Joss’s voice was filled with awe, and her blue eyes were wide with admiration as she peered at the vision of sartorial elegance that was her father, standing in the living room doorway, as in her fascination she leant over the back of the sofa.

It was a couple of days after Stephanie the social workers visit, it was Friday and Maisie was coming to 221B for a sleepover because Sherlock and her father were going out with Uncle Mycroft of all people to a “do”.
Of course it couldn’t actually be a drink down the pub with Uncle Mycroft but this was really, really posh, they were going to wear formal evening dress.
They hadn’t told her the reason they were going but she wasn’t stupid, it must be something to do with one of Sherlock’s cases. There was no way that Sherlock would ever voluntarily spend an evening with Uncle Mycroft if he had the choice, and Dad in evening wear when most of the time he wouldn’t even wear a tie….. please.

Her father had stocked up on goodies and nibbles for the pair of them; including DVDs, popcorn and the kind of crap food he would normally throw a wobbly over. The only restrictions he had made were that they weren’t to disturb Mrs Hudson, and that they had better be asleep by the time he and Sherlock were home.
Then Sherlock had coolly informed her much to her father’s chagrin, that since their return was likely to be the very early hours of the morning they had enough time to watch all the DVDs twice over, and then he had winked at her behind her father’s back.

She did consider asking why she was suddenly allowed to have a friend over but her father had been almost distracted and given her some strange looks when he thought she wouldn’t notice since Stephi’s visit, enough that she thought maybe looking a gift horse in the mouth wasn’t such a good idea.
She nearly asked Sherlock once when her Dad’s strange behaviour had been rather more pronounced, but Sherlock had caught her eye, and almost sympathetically gave a tiny shake of his head. And if that wasn’t odd enough, as he had passed her on the way to the kitchen, he had patted her head as if in approval for following his advice and winked at her. Sometimes she really did not understand the men she lived with at all.

She’d been in the living room sitting there alternately reading and enjoying watching Sherlock flick off an imaginary spec here or straighten his collar there whilst also admiring himself in the mirror the utterly vain git while they waited for her Dad to appear, and then she had heard Sherlock’s indrawn breath.

It almost sounded as if something had hurt him and as she looked up at him with concern, she saw that although he was looking in the mirror, his gaze was focused behind him. She turned around,
and dropped her book without realising it. Wow.

Her father just looked amazing, incredible… extraordinary, just extraordinary.

John looked at her with surprise, as he adjusted the sleeves of his form fitting expensive black dinner jacket. Sherlock turned from the fireplace so he could see him in all his glory, not just through the reflection of mirror. Sherlock grinned, their Joss was right, John did look gorgeous.

“You don’t have to sound so surprised love” John huffed part amused part irritated as he moved towards Sherlock holding the black tie in his left hand and reached over with his right hand to ruffle her hair as he moved passed the sofa.

“Oh come on Dad, you always look cute in your jumpers” she winked cheekily at him and continued “but now you look …” she paused as if searching for the right word and went back to “gorgeous” and added with earnest honesty, “lush, and sexy, Sherlock is going to need Uncle Mycroft’s umbrella” she grinned at him.

“Why will I need Mycroft’s umbrella” Sherlock asked not really listening to Joss but letting his eyes roam over John with unashamed and obvious pleasure as the other man stood there and stared at his daughter with embarrassed amusement.

“Well unless you take Dad’s old walking stick, there aren’t that many random pieces of wood in this part of London are there? As in beat them off with a stick” She prompted as if he was being dull, which he was and then rolled her eyes as she saw the confusion crossing Sherlock’s face when he finally clued into what she was saying.

John couldn’t help it, he laughed. Then he laughed even harder when Joss crowed with delight. “Dad you’ve blown Sherlock’s brain, he can’t keep up with the conversation because you look so fantastic”

Sherlock scowled at the pair of them ferociously and Joss mimed zipping her lips with pretend fear but her father stalked towards Sherlock with determination.

He handed the bow tie to Sherlock and as he waited for him to put it on properly he smirked up at him. The scowl faded from Sherlock’s face and he smirked back at John.

“What about me Jocelyn Jayne?” Sherlock asked with mock indignation flicking her an assessing glance as he concentrated on John’s tie.

Joss turned one of her mother’s patented “How stupid do you think I am” looks on him and said sternly “Sherlock you always look gorgeous, lush and sexy and you know it” the unconscious pride in her voice took out any sting in her words, and Sherlock felt an odd combination of satisfaction and an unaccountable urge to blush at her words.

“I don’t think daughters are supposed to call their fathers Lush and Sexy” John muttered.

“Why not? The pair of you define lush and sexy” Joss tilted her head innocently at him as she raised her new phone to take a picture of them.

She didn’t notice the quick glance between the two men as she was fiddling with her phone. Sherlock had given her a new mobile which had replaced the one Moran had used to send those horrible messages and pictures when he had her captive. She had been oddly distressed at losing her mobile, because it was the first gift that Sherlock had ever given her. She had even demanded the return of the old phone which was with the Police as evidence but her father and Sherlock had vetoed that as there was no way she was ever going to have access to the horrible images that Moran had sent them.

John had had the irrational and intense desire to smash the thing to bits knowing it had been used to film and transmit his daughters fear and pain.
Sherlock had made sure the new mobile phone was the exact replica of her original but with all the latest features.

Both John and Sherlock wondered if she realised what she had said and what it revealed about the way she thought of their relationship. A gleam sparkled deep in Sherlock’s eyes and John felt a lump in his throat. It almost seemed as if he was being given everything he wanted. Did she really think of the two of them as her parents?

He wanted to ask but he didn’t want to jinx anything by bringing it out into the open.

He felt his shoulders stiffen instinctively and then deliberately relaxed them, his hand tightening on Sherlock’s arm so that Sherlock didn’t say anything stupid. Sherlock raised one eyebrow and grinned at him but remained obediently silent.

John cleared his throat and as he refocused his attention on her, he protested gruffly. “Joss what are you doing?” She looked up at him in surprise, and there was something in his face that suddenly made her feel a bit unsure.

“I just wanted a photo of you both Dad, you look fab together” and those eyes so like his own looked at him worriedly. “Is that ok?” Her uncertain gaze went from her father’s face to Sherlock’s. She didn’t understand why the mood had changed. Had she done something to upset them?

Surprisingly it was Sherlock who answered calmly “That’s fine Jocelyn, of course you can. Your father just forgot for a moment that you aren’t the press, that you are his daughter who naturally wants to take a picture of the first time she has seen her father make an effort with his clothes”

John’s thunderous expression made it look like he was about to rip into Sherlock but he caught sight of the worry and guilt on Joss’s face and suddenly he shot her an evil smirk, “Sherlock’s right as always Joss, but lets make this picture a good one shall we?” and swiftly grabbed hold of the taller man, dipped him in his arms in a perfect dance move, and then proceeded to snog him thoroughly to his daughters delighted embarrassment as she snapped numerous pictures.

She laughingly groaned, “I did want to see your faces Dad, not the back of your head and Sherlock’s nose” and took another quick picture when they both turned to look at her, Sherlock still hanging precariously in John’s arms and John grinning with satisfaction. Sherlock finally managed to struggle out of John’s embrace complaining about the potential creasing of his clothes and sniffing disdainfully as John just laughed at him, but Joss saw the amusement in his eyes and took another swift picture of the pair of them.

She tucked the phone away as her father helped Sherlock stand properly and straighten his clothes, dust him down and smooth the dishevelled curls with mischievous concern “Gorgeous Lush and Sexy” he muttered soft voiced in Sherlock’s ear, and missed seeing the exaggerated eye roll Joss gave Sherlock.

Sherlock couldn’t keep his disgruntled sulking pout a moment longer, he laughed.

“What time is Uncle Mycroft picking you up?” Joss asked even though she knew perfectly well. She just couldn’t cope with her father and Sherlock flirting in front of her for goodness sake. One comment about how nice they looked and they turned into bloody Romeo and er… Romeo. It was disgusting and embarrassing and outrageous and shouldn’t be allowed and yes okay sweet but they would have to pull her fingernails out one by one with a plastic pair of tweezers before she would ever admit it. It sort of gave her a warm feeling in her chest, especially since the sods had worried her with their ridiculous childish behaviour, not talking to each other properly, never seeming to be together, the distance between them growing after that thing with Mor.. that man.

So what if it felt good to see them behave as if they did actually like each other, or even love each
other. well maybe not “good” good but comforting good, part of being a family good and no, no that was enough of that or her brain was going to combust with horrible images. She had told them before, parents, responsible adult type parents, weren’t supposed to do that in front of their teenage daughters; it was a charter or a law or something and there would be justified retribution.

John smiled at her and repeated the time good naturally although now it was Sherlock’s turn for the exasperated eye roll.

“You sure you are ok with both of us going out Jocelyn” her father asked for about the hundredth time that day as he was tucking his wallet into his inside jacket pocket. Joss nearly very nearly groaned but instead a wicked gleam lit her blue eyes as she decided it was time for that justified retribution and she imitated a perfect Sherlock pout and used the whiniest baby voice she could manage, whilst fluttering her lashes over her big sad puppy dog’s eyes.

“But I don’t want you to go Daddy, don’t leave me” she wailed perfectly.

The two men looked at her in shock and she managed to keep the pitiful expression with even an impressive slight bottom lip wobble on her face for about 45 seconds before she reacted to their gobsmacked expressions and collapsed with giggles back on to the sofa out of sight. Serve them right!

“Jocelyn Jayne you are a little ,,” Her father began but she interrupted him with an unrepentant grin and scoffed

“Please Dad, Maisie and I have plans for our sleepover while you and Sherlock are off doing your boring old people’s stuff”

There was a considering silence and she only just stopped herself from sniggering at the success of her retribution when her eyes widened with alarm as she saw her father stalk around the sofa towards her with a menacing smirk on his face. She dived off the sofa and was back peddling away from him with one hand out to stop him as she laughingly pleaded

“I’m sorry I’m sorry I didn’t mean it, you’ll get your pretty suit messed up if you beat me up and Sherlock won’t want to take you out, and even if he does Uncle Mycroft won’t let you in his car”. Then she was grabbed from behind, lifted until her feet were no longer on the ground and held dangling there.

“Sherlock that is so not fair, two against one, you are bullies” she laughed even harder as she complained and swung her legs just to make things awkward for him whilst her father advanced until she felt like the one piece of cucumber left between two slices of bread.

“If you squish me you’ll only have yourselves to blame” she warned through bouts of giggles.

Her father dropped his face towards hers and asked with dramatic menace

“Blame for what you naughty brat”.

She grinned at him unrepentantly and said evilly “I need a wee” still wriggling in Sherlock’s arms.

She was dropped unceremoniously to her feet and the two men took an involuntary step away from her with alarmed expressions. She darted around them and waited until there was a safe distance between them until she blew them a kiss and crowed “Gotcha works every time”.

Before they could say anything, the front door bell rang and Jocelyn’s excited mutter of “Maisie” as she headed towards the stairs made Sherlock ask her with curiosity how she was so sure. She popped her head back round the door to look at him as if he was being dull and simply said “You know Uncle Mycroft never rings the bell, he always just walks in”

It was actually 5 minutes later that Mycroft arrived, when Joss and Maisie were still in Joss’s room
and she was correct he did just walk in. He looked at his brother and his partner critically and seemed satisfied with their appearance, but before Sherlock could rant at him for his damned impudence, they could hear the two chattering girls come back down the stairs.

The two of them stopped to at the doorway to get the full effect of the three men. “Wow” Maisie widened her eyes, and Joss nudged her in triumph, “Told you, all three of them much better looking than James Bond” and she grinned wickedly as she introduced Maisie to Mycroft. The elder Holmes smiled kindly at Jocelyn Jayne’s friend but was confused for a second about the James Bond remark until he saw the amused expression on John’s face, and the teasing glint in Jocelyn’s eyes. The child seemed happier than she had for some time which was pleasing, so he joined in and repeated disparagingly “James Bond Jocelyn Jayne”, as he looked down his nose with mock disdain.

“Daniel Craig in a dinner jacket made that film loads of money Uncle Mycroft” Jocelyn teased

“Do learn to accept compliments gracefully Mycroft” Sherlock snipped, happy to get some sort of dig at his brother as they prepared to leave. It was only John who recognised that the girls were humming the theme song to “Skyfall” as they left the flat. He turned back and winked at them and then to their delight and the complete and utter incomprehension of the Holmes brothers did the James Bond silhouette pose.

He could hear them laughing like loons as he shut the front door behind them.

As they pulled away from 221b Baker Street, all traces of light-hearted amusement were wiped from the expressions of the three men. Sherlock turned to his brother for final confirmation. “You are sure Sir Ronald Adair will be at this shindig tonight?”

At Mycroft’s nod, John’s grim face lit with predatory satisfaction “Good, then Moran won’t be far behind”

Chapter End Notes

Okay so I saw Skyfall and I thought John, Sherlock in dinner jackets (yum yummy and yummiest) and then I thought well Mycroft would also have to be in a dinner jacket too but I can't believe I left out Lestrade, can you imagine how gorgeous lush and sexy Lestrade would look in a dinner jacket... sigh.

By the way, I have just realised that this throws my timelines out so you have to pretend Skyfall opened in cinemas a month or so earlier than it did.. cos I said so.

Anyway this is fluff, pure and utter fluff just because I can, and because Skyfall was fabulous but the old guilt trip worked cos I did throw a bit of plot in... "Adair in the library with the wrench... " so next chapter will be more plot linked and is Harry meets ... or Harry gets her just deserts or Harry is misunderstood and wonderful.. snort.

Unless of course I have a funny five minutes and start to think about Mycroft as Gandalf, John as Bilbo, and Sherlock as a greedy gold obsessed winged flying dragon and Joss as a eleven princess.... well I saw that film too and really enjoyed it...
So hope you don't think its too fluffy but come on Daniel Craig was/is/ forever will be hot...and you have to mark the occasion somehow...hehehehe

Next chapter won't take so long promise, already started on Harry's comeuppance so more angst sorry.
Sleepover Secrets and Lies

Chapter Summary

Maisie and Joss enjoy their sleepover. Including talking about a certain "hot" class mate.
And then unfortunately Sherlock uses Joss's laptop. And Sherlock is a git.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Joss didn’t know what time her Dad and Sherlock had come home, but it must have been horribly early in the morning. She and Maisie hadn’t got to sleep until about 2.30am although they had kept a sharp ear out for returning male parental figures who were expecting them to be asleep, who were obviously way too old to remember the essential nature of sleepovers. The whole point of a sleepover was to eat delicious rubbish food that was bad for you, and have fun for as long as you could keep your eyes open.

And it was fun, the DVDs, the make up sessions, dancing and singing to My Chemical Romance, (until Mrs Hudson came up to check that they were not actually trying to create an escape hatch into her kitchen through the living room floor by jumping up and down and stayed to watch one of their films, the Star Trek movie because she said that lovely Mr Spock reminded her of her lovely Sherlock and happily scoffed popcorn and chocolates before she went back downstairs again), then they had tried on all her fabulous new clothes from Uncle Mycroft. The very ones that had caused Sherlock to laugh outright, and then gleefully smirk at her father whilst muttering something incomprehensible about his bum looking big. Sometimes Sherlock was so weird, wait what was she thinking, Sherlock was always weird. Fascinating, annoying, insane, sometimes cute but always, always weird.

Dad hadn’t seemed very happy when the numerous packages had been delivered later the same day that Uncle Mycroft had taken her out, and after Stephie and Bump had disappeared back to Cardiff leaving behind a really pissed off couple of adult males who had stared at her every so often as if she had grown giant floppy bunny ears and was nibbling a carrot.

So being the amazing wonderful incredible human being and savvy daughter that she was, she had offered to ask Uncle Mycroft to return them, for which she should have earned at least one “get out of jail free” card for her next big parental disaster by the way, because it had been really hard to make that offer. She’d already refused them the once when she had been actually out with Uncle Mycroft, and those clothes were so, so, so covetable (if that was even a word, she would ask Sherlock, he was better than Google at spelling) that Maisie the ever cool and unexcitable had turned into an embarrassing drooling monosyllabic airhead when she saw them and Joss was a teenage girl for heavens sake and it was not fair to have to refuse them a second time, even if she uneasily wondered whether her teasing words about being spoilt and indulged had thrown Uncle Mycroft into super competition mode, because hells bells there was a shit load of clothes.

But her Dad had sort of given himself a little shake and then grinned at her saying not to worry about it, it was fine, all fine and he was sure the clothes were amazing and she could give them a fashion show later. (Sherlock had grunted something that sounded like “Boring”, which made her evilly determined to find a way to make him sit through the whole thing, even if she had to superglue his arse to the sofa).

Her Dad continued that they would have to sort her bedroom out with another wardrobe, and
maybe redecorate it if she wanted? Okay so her Dad was acting really, really weird maybe he had caught the weird bug from Sherlock. Bugger did that mean she was going to get it too? Maybe she’d ask Sherlock to run an experiment to find out, maybe Sherlock was already performing an experiment where they all ended up weird. Maybe she had eaten way too much chocolate and digested too many e-numbers though she had deliberately avoided the blue Smarties.

She forced her brain back to its original train of thought. The conversation with her Dad about the clothes…

So she had thanked him for his offer, hiding the touch of disquiet and amazement because he was acting weird again and she gone to hide the clothes in her room so fast Usain Bolt couldn’t have caught her on a good day, before her Dad had changed his mind!

She and Maisie had enjoyed trying on the clothes and talking. Well duh, teenage girls, sleepover? Teenage girls + sleepover = Talking. She had always been good at maths.

Joss had told her about changing the baby’s nappy and the fact that the tiny little boy had tried to wee on her and Maisie had been as grossed out as she was, though she thought the picture of a gurgling Bump that Joss had on her phone was just too cute.

Maisie had asked her when she was coming back to school and Joss had shrugged and changed the subject. It wasn’t something she wanted to talk about yet, the first time she had gone out of the front door since she had come back from the hospital, was with Uncle Mycroft on that trip a couple of days earlier. She wasn’t sure; she didn’t think she would feel safe there because that’s where Mor… that Man had taken her and she was honest enough to admit she was just plain scared at the thought of being there without her Dad or Sherlock. And much as she would appreciate it, she was sure her Dad and Sherlock would not want to sit in her classes with her, even if the school would let them. Though it would be kind of fun to sic Sherlock on all her teachers, well except for her maths teacher, she liked maths.

Joss had seen the quick understanding frown which had crossed Maisie’s face, but Maisie hadn’t protested, just given her the latest news on their class, and grinned when she told Joss that Will Hunter had been asking about her in an incredibly irritating sing-songy voice. There was something about the way Maisie said it that brought a blush to Joss’s face and Maisie had giggled with satisfaction, the evil cow.

“*He checked your address with me; he said he knew it was Baker Street because that’s where he had walked with you on “wear your own clothes day”. But he couldn’t remember what number you lived in.”* She smirked teasingly “*You never told me Will Hunter had walked you home before?”* she accused Joss with a mock scowl.

“*He didn’t, not really*” Joss protested but Maisie’s smile got wider, “*There was a group of us going the same way, and he had to meet his Mum at Selfridges so we just ended walking the rest of the way together*”

Her friend’s eyebrow went higher and the smirk grew even wider “*Oh shut up*” Joss groaned with embarrassment, “*Didn’t say anything Joss*” Maisie teased wickedly.

“*But Hunter is cute, and he’s not got a girlfriend, always been more interested in playing sports, I should know I went to Primary school with him and that cow Jenny Clay has been chasing him since year 8 but he won’t have anything to do with her*”

She paused as if she had given the next sentence some serious thought “*I think he likes you Jocelyn Jayne and he did have a go at the red headed cow for you didn’t he?”* Maisie was gleefully unrepentant at the Jocelyn’s disgusted expression and she roared with laughter and made kissy faces at Joss when Joss had pointed out that Maisie had also had a go at the red headed cow and did that mean Maisie “liked” Joss as well?
So Joss had pretended to be indifferent to the topic of Will Hunter until Maisie had given up on it. She would think about it later, much, much later, like next year later. Oh God she had used him to tease her Dad and Sherlock. It had only been a wind up, a joke. Dad and Sherlock and a prospective boyfriend? She felt queasy just thinking about it. She wasn’t sure it was worth the trouble, and boy would it be trouble. She honestly didn’t think she had the energy at the moment to even think about it, although Hunter was kind of hot, er cute, she meant cute, no way was she even going to think the word hot about any boy within twenty miles of Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes thank you very much, not unless she really didn’t like the guy and she wanted revenge for something because once they figured it out, they would tell Dad and her kind thoughtful laid back Daddy was a doctor and an ex soldier, who knew loads of different ways to kill people, especially when he had one of his “bad days”.

And not forgetting the Prince of Darkness who could hide bodies where no-one would ever find them. Sherlock could be a total shit, a complete and utter git and really nasty to people when he felt like it. God he could be when he didn’t feel like it. And Sherlock manipulated scary Detective Inspectors of New Scotland Yard to get what he wanted, so what would he do to poor Will Hunter. Sherlock and her Dad would go absolutely loopy and then there was Uncle Mycroft who knew everything about everyone and that damned horrible, horrible black car. Oh for the love of …. Nope. Not going to think about it, not now. She wasn’t going to borrow trouble, there was enough crap going on in her life anyway and Maisie must have made a mistake, she was sure it was a mistake. Though it was a rather nice feeling thinking that he sort of, might be, interested in her like that. …. No it would be better if she actually became a nun. Dad had looked far too comfortable with that 007 pose with a pretend gun.

If she’d said it once, she must have said it a million times; there was way too much testosterone in this household!

Maisie had gone to sleep first, the total lightweight, in the middle of a discussion about the likely chances of conning respective parents into buying tickets for the My Chemical Romance gig in London in the New Year, she had dropped off halfway through Gerard Way’s name which had been hysterically funny but Joss had lain there for some time afterwards, more stupid unsettling thoughts rolling around her head.

Maisie hadn’t asked about what had happened when she had been abducted, just sort of held her tight and breathed over her, which was fine cos she didn’t want to talk about it with anyone else anyway. Telling Dad, Sherlock and DI Lestrade had been really, really hard. She was still surprised that Uncle Mycroft hadn’t asked her about it but he had probably read Mr Lestrade’s report anyway.

She didn’t want to think about it now, because she was bound to have a stupid nightmare and frighten Maisie half to death, so her eyes roamed the darkened room as an attempt at distraction until it came to the last unopened packing box Stephanie had brought with her from Cardiff. She had deliberately not opened that one; she wasn’t ready for what was in it yet. It was the box with all the family stuff, like the photos and birthday cards and her school reports and everything Mum thought was important, the history of their life together and the box she had thought had been lost because that stupid replacement Social worker had told her so. Stephie had apologised over and over for that because she knew just how important that box had been to her, but she was just grateful the box had been found and was safe. She just couldn’t open it yet. Not yet.

She finally drifted off to sleep and if she had weird dreams about a terrified and struggling Will Hunter being hauled in slow motion out of one of Uncle Mycroft’s big black cars in handcuffs by Detective Inspector Scary twirling a big Victorian handlebar moustache, with a giant Sherlock striding beside the pair of them peering into Will’s ear with an enormous magnifying glass,
muttering “no evidence of thought processes or even a brain” and her Dad still dressed in his dinner jacket holding open the door to a dungeon where Mrs Hudson waiting with a mega nappy and Stephi’s voice reverberated through out saying “You have to be careful because little boys tend to wee on you when you change their nappies”, then there was no way in hell was she admitting to it. They could use thumb racks and she wouldn’t say a bloody word. Good grief she must have eaten too many marshmallows with that chocolate dip.

By the time, she and Maisie had woken up the next morning, er well nearly afternoon, Dad and Sherlock must have still be asleep in their room. She and Maisie had crept round the living room so as not to disturb them and had eaten the left over pizza for breakfast. Though there were a couple more pieces missing than there had been, Dad must have wanted a snack when they got home. It wasn’t likely to be Sherlock.

It was delicious and her Dad wouldn’t be pleased if he knew but it was nearly lunchtime after all, and technically still the sleepover because they were still in their pyjamas and she did dig out two healthy yoghurts for desert from the fridge, shielding the interior of the fridge from Maisie in case there was something in there that would scare her friend half to death. Joss had developed a coping technique for looking in the fridge these days, eyes half slits and nearly closed, a deep indrawn breath so she couldn’t smell anything and the gradual opening of the door so she could slam it shut quickly if there was anything remotely gross and then a disgusted scream at Sherlock, which he ignored completely and Dad would just sigh and shake his head.

Luckily enough, Maisie was too busy watching the TV and polishing off the pizza so she didn’t see Joss’s freaky fridge behaviour. There was no way that Joss was going to explain to Maisie that Sherlock kept body part in the fridge.

Unusually Dad and Sherlock were still asleep when Mrs Ross turned up to collect Maisie. Mrs Hudson had come out to say bye to Maisie and chat amiably with her Mum. Joss felt relieved because she wasn’t quite sure what to say if Mrs Ross asked for her Dad, but Mrs Hudson seemed to handle it like a pro. Almost as if she was used to making excuses for the pair of them!

Joss had got back to the living room and sat in front of the TV, she had decided that as soon as she heard her father or Sherlock start to get up she would make them a bacon roll and a cup of tea. Sherlock did at least eat those sometimes. So she waited.

The next thing she knew she was waking up from her doze on the floor, her head on one of the sofa cushions, and a fleece blanket wrapped round her, and she was staring at a pair of shoes that belonged to Sherlock, he had larger feet than her Dad and her Dad would never wear those Yves Saint Laurent shoes, then she looked up and saw that Sherlock was sitting at the desk, working on a laptop …a pink laptop… he was using her laptop the git, she had left it in her room under her bed.

“Sherlock, why are you using my laptop, how do you do that, I changed the password” she grumbled at him sleepily and heard her Dad’s snort of laughter from behind her. Sherlock ignored her, so she swung her leg and gently kicked his chair. “Git” she complained grumpily, as she struggled clumsily to get up. Sherlock just sniggered.

“So Jocelyn Jayne, you and Maisie had a nice early night did you?” her father’s wry voice came out of the kitchen.

She turned to face him with a tired smile “Well technically it was early Dad” she fudged hopefully, then tried to change the subject as John came out of the kitchen with three mugs of tea “So did you have a good time and when did you get home?”

“It was a very productive evening Jocelyn” Sherlock responded a bit absentmindedly
Joss raised her eyebrows at her father and muttered “productive?” as he handed her a mug. He just grinned at her, and she stared at his face for a second and before she said “Dad, is that a black eye? What were you doing? Are you ok?” And suddenly the two men could hear the fear in her voice.

For a second something that closely resembled panic seem to cross her Dad’s face but before he said anything, Sherlock’s smooth rich baritone asked her in a very curious tone “So Jocelyn Jayne, Maisie’s facebook account says you were talking about a hot boy last night. Care to share? Who would that be exactly?”

Joss swung round to stare at Sherlock with a horrified look on her face, her cheeks turning a very pretty pink colour. She was going to wipe Maisie off the face of the earth the stupid cow, why the hell did she use Joss’s laptop to access her facebook account last night, and why did she have to mention that out of all the things they had talked about last night and why.. Oh bloody hell, and now she was going to have to murder Sherlock in his bed too. And she was going to make it bloody painful.

She didn’t see the expression of gratitude her father sent to Sherlock, or the flicker of amused understanding Sherlock sent her father’s way.

To her complete and utter horror, she heard her father ask with mock sincerity “Jocelyn darling do we need to have a chat about the birds and the bees?”

She opened her mouth, but nothing would come out, she wasn't even sure if she was breathing, she had to stop this now before it got even worse. But what the hell could she say, no a strategic retreat and regroup was best. Running away was good, running away was very, very good, she was going to run away now and then think of some vile and beautiful retribution which would teach them to mess with her. But first things first, she grabbed her laptop from the desk, and glared at Sherlock “I’m using that Jocelyn” he glared right back at her, “Its mine and I don’t care because you Sir are an arse!” Jocelyn hissed vengefully, and then headed off to her bedroom with her back as stiff as a board.

Sherlock grinned at John, “She does have a rather nice turn of phrase when she’s riled doesn’t she?” John laughed “Well she is right, you are an arse sometimes but that was nicely done, I must be more tired than I thought, I forgot about this blasted eye I can’t exactly tell her I walked into a door can I?”

Sherlock’s grin became even more evil.

“Just tell her I had to beat them off with Mycroft’s umbrella John and you were caught in the crossfire. ”

Chapter End Notes

So I had a change of heart, no Harry in this chapter, I was writing it honestly and have over 500 words written already but Joss’ sleepover kept on intruding until I gave in because Joss could do with some proper teenage fun for a change.

So Harry next… When Harry met… maybe.
Reflections on Honesty

Chapter Summary

John tries to be honest with himself but doesn't pay Joss the same courtesy. Joss is tired, and out of sorts and it takes awhile for her to catch on to the underhanded distraction techniques employed against her. She has an epiphany at her knicker drawer.

Joss tells Mycroft off, she gives John and Sherlock a lesson in honesty and decides that Mrs Hudson is definitely welsh, doesn't matter where she was born, her welshness has been proven by the awesome cwtchs (cuddles) she doles out.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The evening before

Sherlock settled back against the leather car seat and stared at his brother with imperturbable calm. John was too tense to relax, no tense was the wrong word, he was wired for action, his body thrummed with anticipation and excitement. This had been going on since Mycroft had come to them with the information about Adair and then this opportunity had arrived. Mycroft had insisted that they do this his way, and even sent John an evening suit which had pissed him off somewhat, but the reactions of both Joss and Sherlock had soothed his wounded pride, and definitely boosted his ego.

Sherlock’s intriguing visceral reaction had stirred things that had nothing to do with vanity, and if the evening hadn’t been so important to their plans then he would have given the worlds only Consulting Detective a run for his money and “investigated” that reaction thoroughly. Of course Jocelyn would be conveniently staying with Mrs Hudson for that particular case.

He suppressed an urge to give an unmanly giggle at his own puns and the thought of the bewildered expressions on the faces of the Holmes brothers if he did start to laugh made it nearly impossible to restrain a snort. He tried to distract himself with thinking about Joss’s comments in the flat.

His daughter’s honest appreciation had warmed his heart, and he admitted it in a quiet small corner of his mind that was trying to hide from Sherlock, made him preen a little. He could almost understand Sherlock’s addiction to that kind of reaction. “Gorgeous, lush and Sexy” for goodness’s sake.

The child had almost made him blush, and there weren’t many situations that could cause John Watson to blush these days, not even Irene Adler’s outrageous and completely naked entrance into their lives had sparked more than honest male appreciative lust.

In fact the last time he had actually blushed was that one time when Sherlock seemed to have turned into an amorous octopus, being bloody impossible and downright indifferent to the proprieties and the lurking presence of the damn Press not far from the Old Bailey when the libel case against the Reilly woman was upheld and the Judge let rip in his opinions about hack journalists, irresponsible newspapers and his fervent hope that the Levinson enquiry would also take this disgraceful example of journalistic malpractice into account before presenting its findings to Parliament, and the Judge’s vitriolic summing up with a vindictive smirk on his face that had
informed the relevant defence lawyers of the newspapers’ involved that they had better be ready to write substantial cheques to Mr Holmes and his partner Dr Watson as part of their reparations for the enormous reputational damage they had inflicted on the two men, had seemed to flick a switch on Sherlock’s libido that had proved the opposite of boring.. Well yes never mind.

He did not need to remember that right now, not in a confined space with the blasted mind reading Holmes brothers each of whom he would have to mercilessly destroy and dump their bodies in one of Mycroft’s many convenient empty warehouses, if they actually saw him blush and realised what he was thinking about, well maybe he would spare Sherlock until he had served his penance as his sex slave for a few years. Oh God he was blushing, he was actually blushing. Stop it, He had to focus.

Thank the Lord neither of them were looking at him right now. He took a deep steadying breath as he looked out of the window in the opposite direction to the brothers, and refused to acknowledge Sherlock’s quick concerned glance. He couldn’t look at either of them yet. He could still feel a faint flush on his cheeks.

Mycroft’s smooth voice broke into John’s musings. “Please don’t worry about returning the suit John, it was designed and made especially for you, and you may find you need it for other… adventures”

Bloody man wasn’t even looking at him but John would hear the knowing amusement in his voice. The unexpected and almost vulnerable hitch in Sherlock’s breath made John’s fists clenched for just a second then suddenly wicked laughter lit his face as he made himself relax and turn towards his lover and his lover’s brother, “Why thank you Mycroft, an excellent idea”, he all but purred then reached across to Sherlock and pulled him into the kind of kiss that was normally reserved for their locked bedroom. John broke it off reluctantly and winked wickedly at Sherlock’s stunned expression.

John watched in fascination as he could actually see the struggle in Sherlock’s eyes that he had to throw off the effects of that kiss, and when comprehension dawned the faint discomfort on Mycroft’s face pleased the pair of them. Sherlock crowed with delight “Serves you right Mycroft, never underestimate John’s talent for retribution”

Mycroft cleared his throat with irritation.

John sat back and returned his gaze to the view outside. This bloody suit seemed to have a mind of its own and was influencing his behaviour. What was that bloody old saying “Clothes maketh the man”? Heaven knows what this suit was turning him into.

But he couldn’t refute the fact that so far it had been fun.

Playing the fool for the kids before they had left had helped relieve some of the tension and hearing Joss’s bubbling unrestrained laughter for what seemed the first time in ages had reminded him (as if he bloody needed it) why this little outing with Mycroft and Sherlock was so important, the only sounds reverberating through his mind and his heart since she had been recovered from that car, had been his daughters terror, caused by Moran, before and after her ordeal and now Moran was within his grasp. The evil bastard would not be a threat to their daughter ever again. He would not be a threat to their family ever again. John’s intense blue eyes met the focused determined blaze in Sherlock’s wonderful silvery eyes and it was like looking in the mirror because he could see exactly the same expression cross that beautiful fascinating face. Moran really didn’t know what was coming for him, he thought with calm determination.

“Tell us about Adair Mycroft” Sherlock asked shortly. Mycroft handed them each a boring innocuous beige file, and ignored the irritated glare from his little brother. Mycroft began to speak, “I had my people review everyone in the country with the name Adair and the most logical choice
for Moran’s next victim is Sir Ronald Adair, eldest son of the Earl of Maynooth, primary residence 427 Park Lane, owner of the largest opal and diamond mines in Australia, inveterate gambler, contributor to political party funds, any and every party funds, he likes to cover his bases, and now, after the phone hacking scandal and the Levinson Inquiry not so open friend to media moguls.”

There was an amused condescension in Mycroft’s tone as if the man were a rank amateur attempting to play in the big leagues.

“Why is he the most logical choice?” John interrupted without courtesy, and ignored the exasperated looks from the two Holmes brothers. He didn’t give a shit, this had to be right, this was the closest they had been to catching that rat bastard who had hurt his daughter and he needed Sherlock and Mycroft to convince him that they were on the right track.

He refused to acknowledge that maybe, perhaps he still hadn’t forgiven either of them completely for not finding Joss sooner, the ever omniscient power behind the government and his genius detective brother hadn’t pulled the rabbit out of the hat then, it had been Lestrade who had found his baby girl and now, now they had to prove to him that they were on the right track. It was too damn important to get wrong and if that meant they had to justify themselves to him, well too bad that’s what they were going to do. They had just better suck it up and get on with it.

“Well I seriously doubt that a 12 year old boy from Northumberland, a retired policewoman from Fyfe or the owners of a bakery in Devon would have the same kind of contacts, influence or wealth as Sir Ronald Adair”

Mycroft’s snippy sarcastic answer was just short of amusing if John was in the mood to be amused.

John leant forward and glared at the pair of them, in complete no nonsense don’t bullshit me, strict army officer, “don’t fuck with me or you’ll be cleaning the toilet block with a one toothbrush and your tongue” mode.

“This is Moriarty’s legacy we are talking about, since when did logic have anything to do with that evil twisted psychopath. Do you two happen to remember Carl Powers? That 12 year old lad from Northumberland might be the nephew of the Moriarty’s hated nanny, the one who made him eat his peas at meal times, and clean behind his ears when he didn’t want to, the retired policewoman might have pipped him to the post for a parking space in ASDA, and the Baker might have refused to sell him a bloody Bakewell tart, who the fuck knows? I am just reminding you that this has to be right, we already have one practical example of what happens when we underestimate this utter shit”

The intense glare and growled words he emitted made Mycroft’s eyes widen with surprised approval. Sherlock looked at him with a strange mixture of fascination and irritation, and even a touch of lust again that he didn’t bother to hide from his older brother.

“Read the file John” Mycroft soothed before Sherlock could open his mouth and put his foot in it.

John sent one more glare at the pair of them, and then bent his head to the open file in his hands.

Mycroft quirked one eyebrow at Sherlock’s grim face and the silent exchange of views finally saw Sherlock also duck his head to read. Mycroft gave them five minutes but they were getting close to the venue, he had to make sure that the pair of them were on board with this before they arrived.

“Ronald Adair purchased all the non state owned mines in Australia and brought them into the Adair Mining Corporation, there was a hostile takeover attempt on the mining operation seven months ago which failed because Adair got wind of it and bought out enough shares so that he
had controlling majority. It was just before the Australian Government closed the state owned mines so that now the only source of Diamond and Opals in Australia is the Adair Mining Corporation. As they have 67% of the world’s legal market, it made Adair incredibly wealthy personally, it also makes the Corporation very powerful in that hemisphere with enough clout to change Government policies, and enter markets in more sensitive areas”

Mycroft’s succinct summary of the pertinent details in the file made the two men raise their heads again.

John said slowly “If Adair is this powerful, why is Moran going after him? Isn’t it more trouble than its worth?”

Mycroft nodded in approval, “That would appear to be the case would it not?”

Sherlock interrupted calmly “But you are forgetting John, Moran has a deep need for revenge if he has been beaten at something, especially if that revenge will gain him what he was so desperate to get in the first place, the mining rights.”

Mycroft continued serenely as if Sherlock had not spoken

“Its not trouble, if it is all inherited by his younger sister Adele, Adair is not married and is unlikely to be. Adele is his heir and she seems to have gained herself a new ‘suitor’ over the last few months. Our Colonel Moran seems to have quite the effect on impressionable young ladies”

Mycroft finished coldly, a menacing undertone to the calm words and John and Sherlock both knew that he was not referring to Adele.


“Well technically I suppose a diamond and opal digger John but we won’t quibble” Sherlock grinned with mocking amusement. John and Mycroft looked at him with disbelief “Did you just make a .. joke Sherlock?” his brother asked with fake awe

“Shut up Mycroft” was the response from the two other men.

For once Mycroft’s grin was totally natural and not manufactured, but then his next words removed any lingering desire to smile from the three men.

“I seriously doubt it will be anticlimactic for Ronald Adair as soon as Moran has secured his sister’s affections John, it is most probable that Adair will be dead within 24 hours of their official engagement”

“And tonight is the official engagement party of the aforementioned Miss Adele Adair” Sherlock murmured with predatory satisfaction.

Jocelyn hid her laptop in her knickers drawer, underneath her pretty flowery shorts. He’d have to
dig through all her underwear to find it, she thought with a nasty smirk, but then again it wasn’t likely to stop him. Personal boundaries and Sherlock Holmes weren’t even on nodding acquaintance most of the time. She was pretty sure if she kept a diary he knew anything about, he would have already read it, and given it back to her with her spelling corrected and marks out of ten for her use of grammar.

But if Sherlock went through her underwear drawer to find the laptop, then she would have her revenge. She would so tell her Dad and Mrs Hudson, and let him try to squirm/charm/offend/ignore his way out of that one. Even if her Dad didn’t go ballistic, and he would, the right level of shocked teenage girl embarrassment in her voice and he would definitely give Sherlock the “parental responsibilities and boundaries” talk again, the one he had given him when Joss had woken up with a frightened squeal one morning, smacking her head against the bedside cabinet as she had opened her eyes to see Sherlock in her room, on his knees next to her bed, with his curly haired head resting on her pillow within inches of face and staring so intently at her that she had thought she had grown an extra pair of eyes, and when her father had bolted into the room in his t-shirt and boxer shorts, waving his old walking stick like a weapon, Sherlock had muttered indifferently about the theory behind circadian rhythms, phase delay and teenage sleeping patterns and meandered out again whilst totally ignoring Joss who was a gibbering wreck in the bed and her father who looked absolutely furious. The sound of the furious scolding and raised voices from the living room meant that Jocelyn had sneaked downstairs for breakfast with Mrs Hudson; she was so not getting caught in the middle of that little discussion.

Another “boundaries discussion” would so serve him right after that crack about hot boys. Hot boys! it was alright for Maisie, she wasn’t suffering from cringing toes syndrome right now, oh no she was with her oblivious parents who weren’t teasing her in a menacing way about so called hot boys and she didn’t have to worry about how was she supposed to go back into the living room and look them in the face ever again, and bugger it the heat in her cheeks from that comment still hadn’t dissipated.

And honest to god, if her Dad didn’t tell him off, then that’s all she had to do would be tell Mrs Hudson about how embarrassed she felt and his goose would be so cooked, his shit would be shovelled and his neck stuck in the noose.

Dear God how many more metaphors could she come up with for Sherlock bloody Holmes being given his just deserts.

And then there was that comment from her Dad about the “birds and bees”, the pair of comedians thought they were so funny didn’t they, making her run from the room in such complete and utter embarrassment so that she wouldn’t even notice if My Chemical Romance staged an impromptu serenade to her right outside on the street below but at least Sherlock was being deprived of her laptop, she thought vengefully.

Joss had shut the drawer carefully before the light bulb moment happened and realisation finally dawned. The pair of them had deliberately made her run from the room, oh yes they had, they had ensured that her focus was redirected from that question she had asked her Dad, the sneaky cunning underhanded pesky gits.

They had only got away with it because she was still shattered and she had had that mini freak out about even thinking about boys around them the night before. Very clever, so they didn’t want her to know what had happened to Dad’s eye did they.

She had fallen for their distraction technique and now they would have some lovely made up excuse ready for her. Her stomach plunged and she felt cold for a second at the thought it could be Moran, but she knew it was unlikely. Logic told her it was unlikely because it wouldn’t be anything as easy or as simple as a black eye if it was him, but logic and reason couldn’t stop the fear flooding her body and speed up her heart. She wanted to cry but she wouldn’t. And she had
to tell them that keeping secrets from her was not good, a lot not good. So even if it wasn’t Moran and she was 99.99% sure it wasn’t, she would bloody well make them tell her the truth., and they were going to know that she wasn’t happy about their behaviour.

Grim determination made her exit her room and run lightly downstairs. She stood in the living room doorway and stared at them, Sherlock still in the chair at the desk, and her Dad on the sofa, skimming the newspaper and both sipping their tea, looking like butter wouldn’t melt. She stood patiently and waited for them to pay her some attention, her expression totally unimpressed; she knew they had heard her run down the stairs.

Finally Sherlock raise his head and smirked at her, a wicked glint in his eye

“You didn’t answer our questions Jocelyn Jayne” he pointed out gleefully, back in full on tease mode.

There was a distinct chill in the air and dead silence as she stood there and stared at him not reacting to his words in any way, then as her father took his attention away from the daily news, and he did seem to be looking for something in that newspaper, he raised his head to smile at her, but the careful blankness on her face caused him to frown slightly in puzzlement.

“Joss?” he queried softly. She didn’t take her gaze away from that beautiful black eye on her fathers face as she finally answered Sherlock “I asked a question before you asked yours, and I didn’t get an answer to mine either” her tone was calm and quiet, but the frown in her eyes were a different matter.

Her father just shrugged his shoulders dismissively and forced a larger smile “Nothing for you to worry about love really” and then dropped his head deliberately to the newspaper again, so he missed the anger that sparked in those pretty blue eyes so identical to his own. But Sherlock didn’t. He watched her carefully.

John looked up again as he heard the sound of the buttons on a mobile phone being pressed. Joss was still staring at him, but her hand had taken her phone to her ear as she refused to take her attention away from him.

“Uncle Mycroft, what happened to my father’s face last night?” she demanded without any preamble.

“Jocelyn” her father’s outraged snarl seemed to have no appreciable effect on the girl except for a flash of anger in her blue eyes.

“Dad and Sherlock are playing mind games with me and won’t tell me” She responded coolly to whatever Mycroft said to her. “Oh really, so you split up from them early in the evening and you don’t know either, the Mycroft Holmes doesn’t know what happened to his brother and his partner on the same night out, in the same venue when they travelled together in the same car” she repeated with faint mockery, the disbelief evident in her voice, then the mockery was gone.

“So now that’s three of you that think it’s perfectly fine to lie to me when I ask a question. I’m really rather disappointed in you Uncle Mycroft” she finished softly as she cut off the call without leaving him any time to respond.

The disbelieving anger on her father’s face was palpable; Sherlock stared at her as if she was a strange new specimen under his microscope.

“How dare you do that?” her father was furious. Jocelyn’s stubborn expression didn’t change, but she didn’t react to the anger by shouting back at him. Before he could launch into a full blown rant, she continued in the same soft but implacable tone she had used to Mycroft.
“William Hunter is 15, he’s a couple of months older than me and in my class at school, apparently he likes me. I quite like him too. That’s who Maisie and I were talking about last night. He’s nice, bit sporty not that stupid, but he’s a teenage boy,” the shoulder shrug was expressive of her opinion of teenage boys, “he had a go at Reilly when she was picking on me. He’s taller than me, has curly dark hair, not as curly as Sherlock’s, and really, really nice green eyes. Maisie thinks he’s fit, I haven’t quite made my mind up about that yet, I know he’s cute and he will probably be the first boy I ever kiss properly.”

She drew a deep shuddering breath, angry tears suddenly glinting in her eyes. John and Sherlock were staring at her in stunned silence

“That’s called honesty Dad, maybe you and Sherlock could try it with me sometime, when you aren’t too busy. I’m going to go and see Mrs Hudson now because I really don’t want to talk to either of you at the moment”

She ended the conversation by running down the stairs and knocking on Mrs Hudson’s door.

Twenty minutes later she was curled up on the sofa in Mrs Hudson’s living room in front of the glowing fire, wrapped in a soft blue cosy throw, slowly sipping from the huge mug of hot chocolate and nibbling at the delicious buttery toast. When Mrs Hudson repeated in awe, “Darling, you told Mycroft Holmes you were disappointed in him, and then told your father and Sherlock that you were going to properly kiss this cute boy and you actually gave them the poor young man’s real name?” her voice rose with disbelief.

Joss looked up into those kind laughing eyes and began to giggle helplessly until the giggles turned to weary sobs as finally the tears began to fall.

Jocelyn Jayne was probably going to have to confer honorary Welshness on Mrs Hudson because she really knew how to give a proper cwtch.

Chapter End Notes

Nope, not the Harry episode yet, sorry but this is necessary first, its all about honesty you see, well no you don’t yet but you will do. Some more angst for poor Joss and John, but he is being an idiot and that’s enough of that. Bit more of a back story to come about the engagement party and Moran so that will be up before Harry turns up and then Stephi’s back with a vengeance. I just love being able to write this. But the length of time each chapter is taking, my planned Interlude for Valentines Day will take place next year.. oh well it will happen. Gives my baby girl something to look forward to...

Please let me know what you think and thank you to all you wonderful people who have already commented and given Kudos or subscribed or bookmarked the story.
Interlude. Mrs Hudson

Chapter Summary

Interlude.

Mrs Hudson has had enough. Time for a few home truths and then tea and a bit of Strictly Come Dancing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Mrs Hudson stared down at the sleeping girl on her sofa. There were still traces of tears on her cheeks and her mouth was turned down. Even in her sleep she looked sad, and it was not on. This was not the young girl who had enjoyed her first noisy sleepover in her new home. This was not the young girl who had danced and sang with her friend and then giggled her way through the most ridiculous films and stuffed her face with popcorn and chocolate.

This was the face of that distraught and frightened young girl who had stepped through the door to 221 Baker Street for the first time not even knowing that she was with her own father and wanting nothing more than to go back home to Cardiff.

She tucked the throw a little closer under Jocelyn’s chin, gently smoothed the remaining tears away with her handkerchief, and took the empty mug back into the kitchen to give it a quick swill in the sink. She didn’t have a dishwasher, didn’t see the point, there was only her for the most part and she actually enjoyed washing up, the simple practised movements allowed her brain to percolate any irritations or problems and come up with her solution.

What was that boy thinking? She shook her head in disapproval. What were any of those boys thinking? She thought John Watson had more sense but it seemed like one step forward and two steps back in his relationship with his daughter, and it was hurting the girl unnecessarily. She had tried not to interfere with their lives, well not too much, but she loved her boys. She had seen how much John had suffered while Sherlock had been “gone”, and how much Sherlock had suffered whilst he had been away. The pair of them hadn’t made it easy on themselves when he had come back again, but for goodness sake they were supposed to be adults and for all their investigative skills, neither of them could see the wood for the trees with this one.

She had heard the sound of someone arrive and go upstairs whilst Joss had been sobbing on her shoulder. She would bet a pound to a penny it was Mycroft. It was amusing just how smitten he was with his non-niece, the child could wrap him round her little finger.

Of course he would deny it until the cows came home and not that Joss was really aware of it, she just treated him like he was family and she got away with it.

Mrs Hudson smiled with wry amusement, one Jocelyn Jayne Morstan tells the Mycroft Holmes that she is disappointed in him and the man who runs the British Government turns up not even a full hour later, no doubt full of reasons why she can still trust him, and why he wasn’t really hiding anything from her. Oh yes caring is so not an advantage young man!

She dried her hands and put away the mug, she peeped through the living room door but the child was out for the count, utterly shattered and wasn’t going to wake up anytime soon. Very well that gave her the opportunity to go upstairs and have a word with the unholy trinity of idiots, so that
they had thinking time before the child had to show her face to them again.

As she closed her door quietly behind her, so as not to disturb Jocelyn, she turned and saw John and Sherlock donning their jackets as they head down the stairs.

The surge of anger inside her surprised her, she wasn’t there to be angry, she just wanted to try to help. But this, this was outrageous. She didn’t care if the dear Queen herself had summoned them because of a poor little kidnapped corgi, they were not going to disappear on that child whilst she was upset again and leave her to stew in her own uncertainties and fears.

“And where do you think you are going?” it was amazing how a voice that was normally cheerful and chirpy could take a tone that was low and dangerous and so full of maternal command that the two men stopped instinctively and turned to look at the irate elderly woman staring up at them.

“Out Mrs Hudson” Sherlock began with confused haughtiness, not understanding how the frown she turned on him almost made him flinch.

“Is Mycroft upstairs?” she asked sharply

“I was just leaving also Mrs Hudson” came the calm response from the man with the umbrella standing at the top of the stairs.

“Oh I think you boys can spare me ten minutes of your time before you pop out, I’ll follow you up, don’t want to disturb Jocelyn now do we? Well not any more than she has been today already” there was something oddly stern about her tone of voice and the determination in her face.

The three men looked at her with surprise and before they could even respond, the elderly woman had come to stand at the bottom of the stairs blocking their exit. They would damn well have to remove her bodily before they could get out. Not that she wouldn’t put it past Sherlock to try, but John at least would stay and that would rein in Sherlock’s attempt to leave.

She raised an eyebrow and started to mount the stairs towards them. Sherlock began in irritation “Mrs Hudson, this is important..”

Mrs Hudson’s smile was literally a baring of her teeth, and the sweet voice held a barely restrained anger as she asked dangerously “And Jocelyn isn’t Sherlock dear?” whilst she continued to move up the stairs in front of them, forcing them to back up the stairs away from her

John flung back his head and he started to get angry too, “Of course she ..” he began but Mrs Hudson put her finger to her lips and shushed him then proceeded to speak to him as if he was an irritating toddler.

“Perhaps you didn’t hear me the first time John dear, Jocelyn is sleeping and I don’t want to disturb her, we will speak about this upstairs.”

She followed the three men into the living room and ignored the range of irritated, angry and disbelieving stares she was receiving from Sherlock and John. Mycroft studied her with a bland but intrigued expression on his face.

She looked at the three of them and shook her head slightly; they never made things easy for themselves did they? Well fine they were supposed to be adults but their behaviour was upsetting that child and enough was enough.

She raised an eyebrow and glared at them “Sit” and to her mild surprise they did.

Sherlock flung himself down on the sofa like a teenager in a strop which nearly made her smile, John sat beside him as if he had been ordered to do so by his commanding officer and Mycroft
eased himself elegantly into Sherlock’s chair as if he was watching an intriguing and entertaining floor show.

“This is not going to be a conversation, you will sit and you will listen and then you will go away and think about what I’ve said.”

“Mrs Hudson…” Sherlock was outraged
“Be quiet Sherlock” John said before Mrs Hudson could reply. Sherlock looked at him with surprised affront but John’s gaze was on Mrs Hudson even though his jaw was rigid with anger.

Mrs Hudson gave him a short nod in acknowledgement

“Jocelyn is a young woman, she has not been a child since she took on primary caring responsibilities for her mother. She has not been a child since she was told her mother was dying and had to watch that happen day in and day out. John you might know the medical effects of cancer but do you understand the personal cost to the families?” She shook her head sadly at him

"Do you seriously think Jocelyn doesn't know the difference between a truthful answer and a platitude? She told me once the worst part of looking after her Mum was the fact that whilst she was good enough to do the physical stuff, no-one would tell her the truth, they kept fobbing her off.” She paused as if considering her next words, mindful of the angry strain on John’s face.

“Jocelyn couldn't take it any more, she ran away from home. She was gone for three days which actually made those idiot adults think about what they were doing to her and finally her Mum told her the truth.”

John’s face had gone blank, even the anger in his eyes had disappeared. More things he didn’t know about his daughter and he should have.

There was a growing uncomfortable silence as Mrs Hudson studied John with sadness in her eyes, and John turned in on himself. Sherlock was oddly quiet watching John until Mycroft broke the silence by asked softly “Why are you telling us now Mrs Hudson?”

Mrs Hudson blinked and turned away from John, her attention now on the three of them as she responded

“Don’t do that to her again, you don’t have to tell her everything, she wouldn't expect you to but if she is worried enough to ask you a question don’t lie to her. It just frightens her more because she is not stupid, and she knows what happened the last time adults wouldn't tell her the truth. She found out that her mother was dying.”

She sighed slightly, she really hoped this was getting through those thick stubborn overprotective skulls

“I’m not just saying this to John because she loves you all, and God help her, she actually trusts you all. She wants to trust you.”

She didn’t wait for a response as she moved with determination towards the door.

“Joss can stay with me while you are out, I suggest you all think about whether lying to her because of some misplaced idiotic idea of protection is worth losing her respect and trust, and even god forbid, potentially losing her because in a few years she could walk out of that door and not bother to come back”

The silence in the room was overwhelming, three pairs of slightly stunned eyes staring at her, then
a wicked twinkle lit her eyes and she observed fondly.

“One last thing boys” Sherlock felt an odd sort of relief that she was referring to them that way again. Almost as if they had been forgiven, but of course there was nothing to forgive. Seriously this was a bit much, she was their landlady not their mot... Then he really looked at her and felt that odd warm wave of puzzling affection he had rarely felt for anyone else and paid her the courtesy of actually listening to her.

Mycroft was mildly irritated but he didn’t remark upon it.

“You do know that forbidding a teenager to do something makes it almost irresistible don’t you?” She considered Sherlock carefully “Well not the just teenager in this household” she muttered with badly concealed amusement and then her small smile turned into a wry chuckle as she saw Sherlock’s pout, Mycroft’s sly smile and John choke back a surprised snort.

“Just a little bit of advice from an old woman. If you make a fuss about Joss dating or kissing that young lad, it will just make it more of a temptation” and she headed off downstairs with an evil satisfied smile to the sound of Mycroft coldly demanding to know what John thought he was doing allowing Jocelyn to date, Sherlock telling Mycroft not to be such a fat fool and to sod off and mind his own business and John thrusting his head into his hands growling angrily that he had a bloody Holmes generated headache and why was this his bloody life where everybody thought they had the right to tell him how to raise his own bloody daughter.

As Mrs Hudson put the kettle on for a nice cup of tea, she heard the front door open and close quietly. Well it was up to them now, they weren’t stupid just stubborn. But seriously if she had to raise it again she would die their entire laundry pink and put laxative in their tea.

She would leave Joss sleep for a little longer then she would wake her up in time for an evening meal before they could sit down and watch “Strictly come dancing”.

She and Joss did so enjoy discussing the costumes.

Chapter End Notes

Interlude time.

Mrs H was getting restless, and wouldn’t let me continue with the next chapter until she had her say. There is still the theme of honesty running through this, but its still Mrs Hudson kicking bottom because she has had enough of her boys foolish behaviour.

Hope you enjoy.

Chapter Summary

Joss sat on the floor, leaning forward against her raised knees in front of the silent blank faced TV, twirling the plain plastic case of the DVD in her hands with indecision.

She wasn't sure she actually wanted to see what was on it. No that was a fib, she knew she wanted to see what was on it, she just didn't think she had the courage to watch it alone, and after the last few days, the strained atmosphere between them all, but especially with her Dad, she didn't think it was a good idea to ask, she didn't want to stir things up again, and she just knew in her bones that it would kick something off.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Chapter 34 “Tissues, hug, blow nose, hug, chocolate, hug”

Joss sat on the floor, leaning forward against her raised knees in front of the silent blank faced TV, twirling the plain plastic case of the DVD in her hands with indecision.

She wasn’t sure she actually wanted to see what was on it. No that was a fib, she knew she wanted to see what was on it, she just didn’t think she had the courage to watch it alone, and after the last few days, the strained atmosphere between them all, but especially with her Dad, she didn’t think it was a good idea to ask, she didn’t want to stir things up again, and she just knew in her bones that it would kick something off.

Her father’s explanation for his black eye, that Sherlock had managed to insult someone who was boring him, and her Dad had got in the way of the punch which had been thrown, had enough truth in it that she had made no further fuss. But there was a small, teeny, tiny part of her that still wondered if they had told her everything. She hadn’t asked what Sherlock had said, or what happened after her Dad had been clobbered in the cause of Sherlock’s aggravating genius, or why they couldn’t have just told her the truth straight out if it had been that simple. But she thought it, and sometimes she caught her Dad or Sherlock watching her, as if they were waiting for more.

And if sometimes they caught her watching them too, well none of them mentioned it.

Mrs Hudson saw all and refused to comment, but her sunny smile seemed to become more determined and forced instead of natural.

Uncle Mycroft had hovered, there was no other word for it really. He seemed to appear out of thin air when she actually left her room and made it to the living room. He would appear when her Dad or Sherlock had gone out, but she wasn’t even sure what to say to him any more.

She finally realised how upset he was when he came in one day with a MacDonald’s meal. He had thrust it into her hands with a such a long suffering martyred face that she had burst out
laughing. Mycroft had done his best to look offended but she could see the minute signs of amusement on his face, the mini twitches of his lips, the laughter lurking in his eyes.

She grinned up at him “Ok, apology accepted”

Mycroft’s air of outrage became stronger “I simply don’t know what you mean young lady” he objected smoothly, but before he could continue, she grinned wickedly at him, grabbed his beautifully expensive tie and pulled his head towards her, where she planted a sloppy smacking kiss on his smooth cheek and staged whispered “I love you too” in his ear, then released his tie and sweetly offered him the box of French fries.

He stared down at her teasing face with a discomforted expression, muttered “Extraordinary, just extraordinary” as he brushed his thumb across her cheek, and then turned and left without another word.

Joss called out after his disappearing figure “Bye Uncle Mycroft, thanks for my lunch”, shrugged her shoulders and turned round to see her father still in his pjs, leaning against the entrance from his and Sherlock’s bedroom, who had been an astounded witness to the whole thing.

“Wanna fry?” she offered cordially, her mouth full as she munched on her treat

Her father looked at the food and then looked back down the stairs “We have to alert the Government, there’s an imposter masquerading as Mycroft Holmes “he stated. “Oh haha Daddy” Joss said unimpressed, refusing to allow her father to distract her from the delish fries.

“No seriously love that just can’t have been Mycroft, its inconceivable”

Joss frowned at him “Why do you say that?”

“Mycroft Holmes doesn’t even know what a MacDonald fast food meal is. He does not do that sort of thing. He wouldn’t be seen dead carrying a takeaway meal to bribe a teenager with food”

“Dad, don’t pick on Uncle Mycroft, its not nice, and he’s lovely” Joss told him off sternly. As her father swung incredulous eyes towards his scolding daughter, she continued with a cheeky grin “ ’sides, one of Uncle Myc’s minions probably got it, but it’s the thought that counts, and he did carry it into Baker Street himself”

She headed off to the room with her precious meal.

“Hey, I thought you were sharing?” her father called.

“That was before you dissed Uncle Mycroft” his daughter responded loftily, doing an excellent imitation of the man himself as she stalked from the room with her nose in the air.

John’s phone buzzed “That will teach you to diss me, and what does that mean precisely?”

John snorted with irritation “Damn it Mycroft, when are you getting rid of those blasted bugs?”

His phone buzzed again “When you get rid of Moran” followed by a second text “Probably”.

Uncle Mycroft’s visit had been two days ago and Joss had been left alone again. She had decided to empty her last box from Cardiff. The one with all the pictures of her Mum, all her stuff from their life together, including the brightly coloured certificate awards from her primary school for being the best at colouring in, or making welsh cakes or saying please and thank you, or winning
the egg and spoon race, or refraining from punching Nialls Roberts for being a whiny bullying little creep, well no she hadn’t received an award for that because unfortunately she had punched him because he had been mean to Layla, but she still reckoned she should have had an award for only throwing one punch. She remembered her mum and her teacher Mrs Lloyd hadn’t been too impressed when she had mentioned that salient fact to them. It had made perfect sense to her six year old mind. That silly memory made her smile as she sorted through more of the stuff piled in the box. A pair of dinky baby boots, had her feet ever really been that small, the softest pink and yellow baby shawl, two battered Barbie dolls which had definitely seen better days, especially since she had tried being a hairdresser with one and she had given her a Mohawk, and the other was decorated with the most tasteful tattoos of flowers. Her mum had been surprisingly understanding about the Barbie’s, muttering something about them looking more like normal females now.

Then there were her favourite books, she and her mum had read over and over, like Little Rabbit Frou Frou and We’re going on a Bear Hunt. The older books she had read to her Mum, the Roald Dahl books.

She had cried a little looking through the photo albums but that was okay because not all of it was sadness, some of it was relief that she actually had them again. It had hurt when she thought she had lost them. Hurt so much because there were so many happy memories as well as sad ones.

She pulled out one picture, she couldn’t remember who had taken it, it had been Layla’s seventh birthday, and she and her Mum had been invited to the family party. There were Layla’s brothers and Dad messing about with a cricket bat and ball, her Mum and Aunt Nighina chattering away in the background while she and Layla were receiving dance lessons from Layla’s gran both dressed in identical Salwar Kameez outfits especially made by Layla’s mum as a birthday surprise because for the last month the pair of them had been insisting on wearing the same clothes all the time. They had adored those outfits, even wearing them to school much to everyone else’s amusement.

It had been such a happy, happy day and Joss needed to remember that there had been happy days. She texted Layla to remind her of the Salwar Kameez and Layla send her a big smiley face, asking if she had watched the DVD yet. She didn’t respond to that. She wasn’t sure how to, she didn’t want Layla to nag her to watch it because the DVD was different. In the little clear plastic case there was a note in her Mum’s really shaky handwriting. It must have been written near the end and it bloody hurt to even see her handwriting like that. But she read the note anyway

“Hey Sweetpea,

This Dvd is for you. I asked Vimal to pull this compilation together for you. He did a great job Joss Darling, its all the videos I took from when you were a baby and he has added some stuff they had of you and Layla.

I left you a message at the end, I wanted you to have something to remember us by and to show your own kids one day. I love you so much baby girl, but you must only watch this when you feel you can. Don’t force yourself before you are ready.

All my love forever and ever and ever

Mummy xxx”

Joss had felt the tears flood her eyes at the words on the note, she wasn’t sure she was brave enough to actually watch the DVD, where she would see her Mum moving, speaking and smiling.
She was so lost in thought she didn’t hear Sherlock come in and stand behind her, staring down at her curiously.

“Are you going to play that DVD Jocelyn Jayne?” he asked calmly and she nearly jumped out of her skin with fright. “God Sherlock, I am going to sew bells on your shoes” she griped at him when her pounding heart had settled down.

He actually grinned at her, the sadistic sod and held out his hand demandingly

“No Sherlock, it’s mine” she refused firmly

One eyebrow went up and the curiosity intensified in his gleaming eyes, but he didn’t remove his hand.

“Your point is?” he queried as he made grabby fingers at the DVD.

Joss hastily pulled it out of his reach and shoved it under her bum, eyes daring him to do anything about it as she repeated grumpily “Mine Sherlock”, but she hadn’t thought about the note, which he swooped down and appropriated before she could reach it.

“Sherlock don’t “she asked quietly and this time there were tears in her voice not anger.

He paused, looking at her down bent head and at the note in his hand. He stifled his curiosity (he would find it and read it later) and handed it back to her. “Your mother” he stated almost gently. She knew it wasn’t a question but nodded her head anyway.

There were a few moments of silence and she added softly, “The DV, it’s got film from when I was small and… and a message from Mum”

Sherlock didn’t say anything just waited and her voice became quieter as she continued, gently folding and unfolding the note “I don’t know if I can watch it yet, seeing Mum alive and talking to me…”

She felt him move and sit down beside her, close besides her, his warmth relaxing muscles she hadn’t known she had tensed, and her breathing didn’t feel so constricted.

“Do you want to watch it?” he asked bluntly.

“I don’t …” he overrode her rudely “Yes or No Joss”

She nudged his shoulder with irritation, “Yes Sherlock” she uttered unwillingly

“With John?”

“No Sherlock, not yet, he’s still really mad at her though he pretends he’s not”

“With me?”

She paused at the unexpected offer and looked at him with calculated consideration. He looked like he was being serious

She was just as blunt back to him “You won’t know what to do with yourself or me when I cry, because I will cry Sherlock” she stated honestly.

He stared straight back at her, one eyebrow again raised as he said perfectly seriously

“Tissues, hug, blow nose, hug, chocolate, hug”
She laughed unwillingly “You are such a git, but that would probably work” she sighed.

“With me?” he repeated unperturbed

He waited as she seemed to move even closer to him for comfort before she almost whispered

“Yes please”

He took the DVD and slotted it into the player, settled back besides her and put one arm awkwardly around her shoulders. He could feel the fine trembling in her body and threw a bar of chocolate into her lap.

She raised her gobsmacked face to his and asked “Do you carry emergency chocolate bars now in case of crying teenagers?” she asked incredulously.

He shrugged dismissively “I bought it for you” he mentioned as if it was the most normal thing in the world for him to do and before she could ask why, he threw a box of tissues at her. She couldn’t help it, she giggled and then muttered “git” affectionately. Sherlock didn’t actually smile at her but she could see the amusement in his eyes.

Then he pressed the remote control into her right hand whilst she took his free hand in her left and clung to his fingers with almost painful pressure as she pressed play.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, humblest apologies for the delay, but had a mega block on this one and worked on other stories instead. It has not been abandoned I was just stuck because Joss wasn't talking to me ... Anyway, this is maybe not as good as it should be but wanted to get over my "hump" and post something so that I could take the story forward. Hoping to get next chapter up in a weeks time.

Enjoy
When Harry met John Part I

Chapter Summary

Part the first:

Angelo's, frozen fish fingers, plots to dispose of body parts, nice cups of tea, a weird text from Sherlock that's actually normal, will Joss have multi coloured facial hair by the time John is back at the flat? And references to the Waltons.

Harriet Isobel Watson does not do punctuality but she does turn up, eventually

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Harriet Isobel Watson wouldn't know punctual if it was painted red and hanging on to her arse by its teeth. John thought with rising irritation as he tried to wait patiently, wondering if his sister would even show up, and if she did would she even be sober. She had always been the same. No self-discipline, no awareness of how her actions affected others, self-centred selfish cow. Clara, kind, gorgeous genuinely nice Clara being a case in point!

No, no he had to ignore the usual triggers that turned their interactions into a bitterer battlefield than the physical ones he had left behind years ago.

John and his sister hadn't spoken since the day after Sherlock's violent disagreement with the concrete pavement outside St Bart's, John always refused to call it "The Fall" like it was some sort of mystical allegory. The stupid bastard had deliberately jumped and left John grieving for three years while Sherlock played masked hero and saved everyone and their bloody dog.

Dear Harriet had been horrified when her brother wouldn't denounce his best friend and flat mate, when John's reputation had been dragged through the mud as well as Sherlock's. How could she possibly be related to someone who believed in that Fake Sherlock Holmes?

Christ the state of his relationship with his sister was telling when it hadn't even occurred to him to contact her and inform her about her niece. Though he knew he should have. Suddenly the disquieting thought dawned on him that Harry was his official next of kin, and if something happened to him then she would be Jocelyn's next of kin too. Hell no, no way was that going to happen, he would have to sort something out with Sherlock, and if Sherlock couldn't look after her then, damn it Mycroft would bloody just have to live up to his title of Uncle. There was not a snowball's chance in Hell that his daughter was going to end up under the guardianship of his sister. He would make that official as soon as possible.

He had forced himself to wait before arranging this meeting on neutral ground, he had thought he would have to forcibly remove Sherlock from the area as he didn't want him to interfere, Sherlock would have enjoyed himself too much provoking Harry, and they might get the truth out of her faster and John didn't think he could cope with the drama sure to be generated by the pair of them without doing some damage to something, if not someone, but he had received a slightly weird text from Sherlock ordering him not to come home before Six o'clock because he and Jocelyn were busy, but not to worry because he had the tissues and chocolate. He had debated ringing to find out what was going on, but decided discretion was the better part of valour in this instance.
He was damn sure Sherlock knew he was meeting Harry although John deliberately had not told him, and for a few seconds he was worried about Joss, if Sherlock was making the effort to be with her instead of sticking his beak into John's business then something had to be wrong, but he forced himself to relax because Sherlock would have told him if it was something bad. He probably had his poor daughter taking part in some obscure experiment which would turn her eyebrows purple and her eyelashes orange.

John had needed to calm down after the revelations from that blasted Social worker, he could still feel the rage fizzing through his blood as he remembered her words and he needed to be rational, he couldn't prejudge the situation, he had to take all the emotion out of it. Well hell he needed to be more like Sherlock so that he could get the information without first resorting to wringing his sister's neck. No there might be mitigating circumstances, it might all be completely wrong. So he was going to give her a chance to explain and talk about the situation… before he wrung her blasted neck, gave Sherlock all the body parts he wanted for his experiments as an extra special present and then take Sherlock's advice on the best place to dump the rest of her body in London.

Christ if Harry had known about Joss all along, he was going to fucking kill her. It was bad enough that the woman he had loved, Mary with the blonde curls and wicked laugh, had betrayed him and hidden his daughter away for so many years but if his only living relative, his sister had known and deliberately kept that knowledge from him, well God knew what he was capable of doing to her.

He had missed everything, every fucking thing with Joss. Holding his baby daughter in his arms, hearing her first words, seeing her first steps, taking her to school, making her eat her vegetables, taking her to a blasted Disney movie, helping her with her sums, even the dreaded end of term Christmas shows in her primary school, listening to her prepare for her audition and then practising her singing and dancing for weeks until the big show. He hadn't stood there with the rest of the proud parents, filming her performance as if he was some big Hollywood Director of a blockbuster movie and being proud enough to burst. Jocelyn Jayne Moreston didn't even have his surname. His own daughter didn't have his surname

Fuck it he was getting maudlin as well as angry and right now he couldn't afford to be angry, he had to stay calm and get to the bottom of this. He had to have to facts before he could decide on a plan of action. He was as soldier, he could do this.

He looked at his watch again and thought longingly of getting a proper drink, but he wasn't going to give Harry any excuse to start, if by some miracle she actually turned up sober. She was twenty minutes late already. How much alcohol could she have downed in twenty minutes? How many brain cells had she destroyed?
He caught Angelo's eyes and with a wry twist to his lips, tilted his head towards the tea cup and silently asked for another one. Angelo grinned and sent one of his waiters scurrying off to oblige.

It was the quiet period of the afternoon, which was why he had picked it. Too late for lunch and too early for dinner, only a few other people in the restaurant, a business man on his laptop and his mobile phone, sipping at a large coffee, a student wearing those mad earphones, the ones that looked like a cyberman's ear muffs, messing around with his tablet on some idiotic game and a young mum with a dark haired little lad who was munching happily on fish fingers that John knew were not part of the normal menu but Angelo was a sucker for kids and when the little boy had stubbornly refused the offerings on the child menu, much to the helpless dismay of his exhausted mum, and just stubbornly chanted "fingers", when asked what he wanted to eat, Angelo had grinned at the young mother, said "The customer is always right, fish fingers for the young gentleman it is then".
Entertained, John had watched Angelo whisper into Billy's ear, and saw the young waiter race out of the back door, leg it to the Tesco convenience shop on the corner and then race back to Kitchen with something that looked suspiciously like a frozen packet of Captain Bird's Eye's finest.

Within ten minutes the disgruntled whiny little kid had a plate of fish fingers, a dipping bowl of tomato sauce and a huge grin on his face. The young mum had beamed at Angelo as if he was actually an angel sent down from heaven, and tucked into her own meal with renewed energy.

John watched the little boy eat with a wistful longing that he was almost unaware of. Angelo frowned uneasily, John had told him he was meeting family and Angelo had been overjoyed. Family was everything to Angelo, the ones you were stuck with and the ones you found for yourself.

He had met John's daughter once, she was a nice kid, bit unsure of her father and Sherlock, but that was not surprising given the circumstances. Angelo had been a little upset that John had not brought her back but then he had found out about the kidnapping so he understood why the anxious Papa didn't want his little girl out of the house for a while. Now, now there was this little puzzle, John being pleasant and saying nothing whilst looking at the door as if it was his mortal enemy.

Sherlock had been most adamant when he had spoken to Angelo before John had made his odd reservation, that if Angelo saw anything which upset John, he was to text Sherlock immediately.

Angelo was a little surprised that the great man himself was not already in a seat in the shadows so that he could watch the scene first hand, but Sherlock wasn't and he had left Angelo in charge, so he would take his responsibility seriously and since he had Sherlock on speed dial, then he only had to stay vigilant. Angelo watched while the new part time waiter, a good boy, cousin of a cousin, working hard for his degree, served John his fresh pot of tea with a few of the home-made biscuits John liked.

John was distracted, pouring his tea and didn't hear the Restaurant door open, he was pouring milk into his cup when a familiar voice mocked "Is that for me John Boy, that's way too much milk"

John Watson raised his head and looked up at the redhead with clear dark blue eyes standing beside the table. For a second he could see his sister as she had been before life, the bottle and being her own worst enemy had dimmed that vivid promise. Now despite the expensive clothes, artfully styled hair, and beautifully applied make-up, Harry looked as if she was carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders. His mouth firmed and he refused to react to her provocation. He kept his voice calm and collected as he stared into her eyes until she looked away first.

"We were never the bloody Waltons Harriet, please don't call me that stupid nickname, take a seat sis, we've got a lot to talk about."

Chapter End Notes

AN:

And so it starts... Was going to make this a super long chapter but as I hadn't updated in a while thought this might be a nice little taster for what's to follow... yes I am evil but its a Weds and Weds are boring so that I would try to make it less boring. Next
chapter up by the end of the week... oh Harry! Enjoy xxx

P.S Bonus virtual cwtches for anyone that caught the reference to a certain film starring Martin Freeman. :-) xx
Sherlock gets emotional, Joss gets emotional, John gets cool, calm and collected and Klingon (as in "Revenge is a dish best served cold"….)

Harry is confusing and infuriating and sitting on a precipice.

There are tears, and hard questions. Questions no one wants to ask and no one wants the answers to.

“Why did your mother never speak to you about your father Joss?” Sherlock asked softly as he stared at the final paused picture on the TV screen. Mary Morstan, her once pretty face lined and aged through pain, her blue eyes washed out, her head wrapped a colourful scarf which only made her face even paler by comparison, but the loving smile she wore for the camera seemed to breathe life into that frail delicate pitiful figure.

Sherlock was uncomfortable, not with the girl’s upset. She had been honest about her reactions beforehand and she had reacted as she had said she was going to. The tears, some laughter, some bitter sweet smiles and more tears. He couldn’t blame Joss for his discomfort, even though he didn’t like to see her distress, but this disturbed uncomfortable mess of emotions, frustration, anger, jealousy, pity and even shame was all because of blasted Mary Morstan and he needed to understand why he was feeling that mess, before he could delete it or lock it away in an insignificant corner of his mind palace.

Previously he could dismiss Mary Morstan as a nuisance who had inconveniently died and therefore dumped a burden on his John, his partner, his lover. John was not hers, hadn’t been hers for a very long time and she had no right to do that. Not after Sherlock had fought so hard to come back to him and fought so hard to make him understand and then this situation happened just when Sherlock should have been enjoying his reward with John, his John and now he had to deal with this woman’s daughter and damn it all why did she have to be John’s daughter and why did she have to be a sneaky little brat who wormed her way into affections that shouldn’t have been hers and why did she have to matter? Because Jocelyn Jayne Morstan mattered both to her Father and him, the unflappable, unemotional, uncaring Sherlock Holmes and how had the sneaky little brat done that and now she was upset and he would have to comfort her when she should be answering his questions so that he could resolve this stupid puzzle without his head exploding from all these unwanted emotions.

Jocelyn’s head was buried in a cushion she had appropriated from the sofa, she was still trembling slightly, as she rested against him and Sherlock’s left hand was idly stroking through her curls at the back of her neck, although he was ignoring that hand as if it did not belong to him.

“Jocelyn Jayne?” he prompted softly, he was determined to get an answer to this especially as he knew exactly where John was and who he was with this afternoon.
“Do you remember Mary Harry?” John asked conversationally after his sister had been served with her tea and the young waiter had disappeared. Harry looked at him in surprise “Mary?” she queried and John’s gut tightened at her dismissive tone but he continued calmly “Mary Morstan, you know, the girl I was engaged to, the girl I was going to marry who was pregnant with my child but who miscarried the baby and then I went to join the Army, you know the one?” his voice was gently mocking at his sister’s seeming weak memory.

“That Mary” Harry’s tone was strangely flat and almost resentful as if John had no right to bring her name into the conversation, as if he had somehow managed to offend her by mentioning her. John’s eyes narrowed but his tone was still gentle and calm as he mused “Sometimes I think about them. How things could have been if the baby had lived. The child would have been fifteen this year” and then sat back and waited. After all the years he had worked with Sherlock, he would have had to be totally stupid not to pick up some of his techniques and John had never been a stupid man.

He watched his sister’s reactions like a hawk, the genuine sorrow on her face when the baby had been mentioned had eased some of the rage and incipient hurt lurking in his chest but her anger at the use of Mary’s name had been unmistakable. The anger was cold and clear and buried deeply but it was there. Which surprised John, his sister used to be a creature of impulse, of flash and fury and quickly forgotten if not forgiven insult. It was her impulse control which got her into trouble when she was at least trying to stop drinking, she used to find it hard to bear a grudge mainly because the alcohol blurred the offence enough that she couldn’t remember what she had become angry about, but this was different, this was resentment on a scale that he hadn’t seen before, although thinking about it, her reaction to his defence of Sherlock had been a really good example of grudge bearing when he had originally thought it was her ironic and inappropriate need for propriety in her life.

Jocelyn raised her head and looked at Sherlock, the marks of her tears visible on her face. She glanced at the screen, at the beautiful but painful picture of her mother, stopped in mid-sentence, just waiting to continue to speak and smiling at her with all the love Jocelyn had known in her life before she had met her father and Sherlock.

“I miss her so much Sherlock” she murmured, curling in slightly towards him, but hugging the cushion too as if she was aware she mustn’t expect too much from the man sitting beside her.

The hand in her hair tightened for a second and then resumed its soothing ministrations, he saw no reason to reply to her words, he couldn’t ease that pain for her and he wasn’t even sure she would want him to, so he repeated his question again, and finally Joss gave him her attention properly.

“I don’t know, I asked her about him but she was so afraid, and she never answered me. That’s why…” she hesitated and then continued, it wasn’t as if what she was going to say next was any surprise to Sherlock “that’s why I was so scared when I came here. I didn’t know why Mum was afraid of Dad”.

There was a long pause as they both studied the picture on the screen. “Sherlock” Joss whispered, refusing to look away from the image of her mother, “Sherlock” and then she stopped as if she
couldn’t get the words past her lips. He could feel the fine trembling begin again and he waited patiently. There was something she needed to ask but could hardly bring herself to. Unpleasant comprehension hit him and he could feel his anger rise at her, how dare she even think it let alone try to ask him, but then he looked at her and saw… her defensive shamed body language, the sound of her breathing and the slow trickle of tears down her face. His voice was impossibly gentle as he prompted “Ask me Jocelyn Jayne.”

“If I ask it makes it real, it means that I believe it’s possible” she couldn’t look at him as she responded. “No Jocelyn Jayne, if you ask it means that we can deal with all the variables, because if you don’t it will fester at the back of your mind and it will affect your relationship from now on” the words were calm and even impersonal and it gave her the courage to smile a little “When did you get to be so wise?” she murmured and grinned slightly at the raised eyebrow directed her way.

They both ignored the vibrating smartphone on the desk.

She drew a deep shuddering breath and looked into those clear intense clever silver eyes. “Sherlock, would Dad, did he, oh god, did my Dad hurt my Mum?” She could barely see him now because of the tears in her eyes, but his calm voice was clear above the thudding of her heart “I have no doubt your parents hurt each other Jocelyn Jayne”.

Damn him, he was being deliberately thick, he knew what she meant, and suddenly she was angry, angry at everyone but especially Sherlock, he knew what she needed but he was going to make her say it, well fine, she would spell it out to the great git. “You know what I mean Sherlock” she hissed angrily, “Did Dad, Did he physically hurt my Mum, could he hurt someone physically weaker than him, could he hurt, hit a woman?”

Harry stiffened, “Why are we talking about ancient History? Why aren’t we catching up properly? I admit I was wrong about Sherlock, well so were most of the rest of the world, we mere mortals just believed what the newspapers said, but I am pleased that things have worked out for the pair of you.” John was surprised. She was actually speaking the truth, once that might have made a difference and he might have made an effort to rebuild some sort of relationship with her but this was too little too late, especially when there was a five foot four blonde haired blue eyed teenage barrier waiting at home for him.

John smiled but it wasn’t nice and Harry looked at him with wary surprise. He ignored her words and continued as if she hadn’t spoken, voice still silky and un-eerily calm “Did you ever wonder what happened to Mary after I left Harry?”

Harry was watching him now, she had never been stupid and the air between them was tense.

“No John, I never wondered what happened to Mary Morstan” she stated coldly and waited, her face as unreadable as John’s.

She wasn’t lying but John knew why. Because his bloody bitch of a sister knew what had happened to her. Resolve tightened in his gut and stiffened his spine. His smile was as friendly and false as his sister’s.

“I learnt a few months ago that she died of cancer” John watched the shocked surprise cross his sister’s face. There was a mixture of other emotions there that he couldn’t quite decipher but at least a part of that was relief and John could feel his anger rise to the surface. He pushed it back, there was too much at stake for him to lose his temper right now, but Harry was within his sights
and he was going to have the whole truth before he dealt with her betrayal and pulled the trigger.

“ I’m sorry” Harry responded but the words were polite convention only, it was then that John knew what he was going to do. A cold calm certainty settled his mind as he made his plans.

His smile at his sister was warmer as he said “Let’s talk about more pleasant things, you’re right, it was ancient history, and then you can come back to the flat to say hello to Sherlock”

Satisfaction flooded him as Harry relaxed with relief and returned his smile with a genuine one of her own. “I’d like that” she offered tentatively “I’d like to meet Sherlock again”

Chapter End Notes

Seasons Greetings All,

Part II took a little (cough) longer than I thought, and now there is actually a Part III to come to this as well. Damn I hate myself sometimes but thought I should post this as a little Christmas present.

Enjoy, the next one is where Harry comes face to face with Joss. Now was that a good idea John????

P,S. New series starts on New years day..... sooooooo excited. ;-) xx
When Harry Met Joss

Chapter Summary

Sherlock makes a cup of tea and shocks Jocelyn. Jocelyn says two little words and shocks Sherlock.
John is an idiot trying to be clever
Harry is a cow
John is an even bigger idiot trying to be clever.
John is such an idiot (bears repeating)
Sherlock looks at him as if he had pissed in the living room fireplace.

Joss has another shock, not nice this time. And John is an idiot....

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You made me a cup of tea as well as a buying me a bar of chocolate” Joss mock gasped, her smile was affectionate and teasing. “Is the world coming to an end? Who are you and what have you done with the real Sherlock Holmes?”

He narrowed his eyes at her, the glare imperious and cutting and swung back around taking the mug back towards the kitchen. She whined pleadingly “No, no, I was only teasing, gimme my tea please, pretty please, darling, dearest, handsomest, most wonderful, amazing, generous, genius of the universe” she made grabby hands at the mug and Sherlock smirked, one eyebrow raised, waiting for more. as she scrambled hastily into the kitchen to bar his way to the sink and stand in front of him. “You are the king of consulting detectives, you have impeccable dress sense, you have the curliest hair, and the sexiest cheekbones of the entire world, your website is a veritable fountain of knowledge and so easy to read, you are kind to kittens, puppies and small furry animals and especially thirsty, tea deprived, sad so very sad teenage girls,”

She wobbled her bottom lip at him so much he was reminded of a jelly on a plate, and opened her blue eyes as wide as possible, her eye lashes fluttering ridiculously. He snorted, refusing to accede, and not letting any amusement show on his face whilst still eyeing the sink contemplatively.

There was a pause as she stared up hopefully at him “You are a tough nut to crack Sherlock” she groaned but he could hear the admiration in her tone, “Okay, big guns time…I will sing your praises to Dad and tell him how absolutely wonderful you have been, and won’t even mention the fact that there were big toes mixed in with the carton of eggs this morning, won’t mention it at all, ever, never. My lips will be sealed by the delicious mug of fragrant tea you have so generously made for me”

The innocent grin transformed into the very same gloating smirk that he had been wearing. It was almost identical in every respect.

They moved back into the living room, his face not showing the satisfaction that he had successfully taken her mind of that damn DVD, and all the uncomfortable, even painful questions that it had generated. There was still evidence of her distress on her face, her eyes were still rather red rimmed, but her body posture had relaxed and she had returned to her usual teasing behaviour around him, albeit a rather watered down version. The threat of the big toe revelation had
comforted him that she was feeling marginally better. Blackmail had become the perfect barometer of normalcy in their household.

By the time John returned, she would be more emotionally comfortable and less likely to sob into her father’s shoulder. Well he presumed so, emotions had never been his strong point unless they related to a case, or he needed to put on a character to further his investigations.

He held out the mug to her, exaggerating the lift of his eyebrow and the line of his nose, and no it was not to make her smile again, he was still play acting to soothe her previous distress and make life easier for him.

He refused to consider exactly why Jocelyn Jayne’s comfort level would make life easier for him but it still could surprise him, (which was completely annoying), that the girl could do something he wasn’t expecting. She had moved past the mug floating in mid-air and into his personal space, whereupon she proceeded to wrap her arms around him and then rested her head on his chest for what seemed like an interminable amount of time, but was probably merely seconds. She whispered a muffled “Love you” against his chest, then stepped back and away, taking the mug from his hand and moving to the sofa to sit down as if she hadn’t done it and had not just said those damn words to him.

He stood there immobile, his breath caught in his chest, starring at the blonde curls at the back of her head as she began to ask him inane questions about a trashy TV programme as if she hadn’t just opened her mouth and uttered something that was tearing through him with the force of a pile driver. She’d said it before and he had managed to ignore it, pretend it hadn’t happened, pretend the words hadn’t lodged themselves inside his brain where he couldn’t delete or overwrite them, where he had tucked them away inside his mind palace, in the dingy little room he had allocated to the damn intrusive rug rat, the room which for some reason was turning into a fascinating maze with clues and puzzles he was determined to solve, a maze that held a gentle ambient comfortable warmth that he recognised from John’s part of his mind palace.

“Sherlock” she pleaded, suddenly shy and unsure, her attention still focused on the TV as if she was deliberately not looking at him, “Don’t get mad please, I didn’t mean to upset you, I just needed to say it, especially today, after watching Mum, life’s too short not to tell the people you love that you love them” She stopped abruptly, as her voice thickened up, and her head lowered for a second before she drew a deep calming breath. But he could see the tension in her body, as if she feared his rejection again.

For a few seconds he studied the figure on the sofa, then his frown cleared and his instinctive immobility ended, he moved forward completely in command of his body, mind and instincts again.

“Drink your tea Joss” Sherlock advised calmly as he sat on his chair, refusing to look back at her when she peeped over at him, her lips curled up in a small smile, but he could feel his quirk in response. Damn intrusive ankle biter. He ignored the madly vibrating phone in his pocket. Bloody meddling Mycroft could wait. This had nothing to do with him.

Sherlock was just giving his very loud and perfectly correct opinion on the adulterous nature of the father of ten from Norfolk proclaiming his innocence on the Jeremy Kyle show before the results of the obligatory polygraph test was announced and Joss had casually drifted to sit on the floor beside his chair, her side resting against his legs which they had both ignored as if it wasn’t happening when they heard the front door open.

“Dad” Joss murmured, her voice pleased, as she made to get up, but Sherlock’s reaction was different as he suddenly looked towards the door, his face stern, “Jocelyn Jayne please go to your room” he ordered abruptly. Joss looked up at him with concerned bewilderment, “Sherlock, what?
What’s the matter?” She asked uncertainly, wondering what had happened to the peaceful
contentment they had both been enjoying.

“Please do as I say now” Sherlock’s next words were even harsher and there was a tone of
urgency that had Joss almost standing to attention and after another searching glance at him and
the living room door as she heard more than one pair of footsteps mount the stairs, she obeyed him
without any further argument. She didn’t see him rise from the chair and go to stand by the
fireplace, his face bland but his right hand, the one behind his back was clenched into a white
knuckled fist and anger lurked deep in those silver eyes.

At the top of the stairs, John ushered his sister before him into the living room. He was rather
surprised to see that only Sherlock was in attendance, looking remote, unforgiving and somehow
hard as ice standing next to the fireplace. Then he thought her current absence would do nicely.
John raised one eyebrow to ask where Jocelyn was without mentioning her by name yet, because
he had a plan for dealing with Harry, a plan which had seemed to spring fully formed from his
mind so he was honestly confused at the glare he received from Sherlock. John had thought
Sherlock would have approved of this little reveal, and the opportunity to tear a strip of Harry.

The bland words falling from his partner’s lips “Is this wise John?” dripped with ice and took John
by surprise. He frowned at his partner, what had burrowed up his backside this time?

Harry took the words personally and tried to smooth things over “John and I met up and we
thought it was time we mended fences and that includes you Sherlock” she offered her hand in a
gesture of peace, a placating smile on her face although her eyes were assessing and trying to
calculate the best way of winning over the rude, insufferable git. How her brother
put up with him she utterly failed to understand.

“I owe you an apology for…” Sherlock cut her off rudely, “I said do you really think this is wise
John, such games really aren’t your forte and I don’t think you have considered all the
consequences” he growled with increasing irritation, Harriet was not even a consideration at this
point.

Harry’s hand hung in mid-air for a few seconds before she dropped it as it was clear Sherlock
wasn’t remotely interested in shaking her hand. She looked uncertainly back at her brother for a
moment and saw the strangest expression on his face, then he turned to smile at her but it never
reached his eyes and she began to feel uncomfortable again. What the hell was going on with
these two?

“Take a seat Harry” John said coolly, and to his sister it almost sounded like an order, she
switched her gaze between the two men and saw how Holmes’s lips tightened, and then he
seemed to abandon his objections and turned to focus back on her as she sat down.

“I have no interest in any attempts to mend fences as you so eloquently put it Harriet” he spoke
bluntly and unequivocally and then turned his back to the pair of them. The intention to ignore
them was obvious. They didn’t see his fingers fly over his phone as he sent the message.

“I understand Sherlock” Harry tried again, staying calm in face of his provocation, because she
had missed her little brother even though they fought like cats and dogs, and she didn’t want to
lose this opportunity. “But we are practically family now and surely some allowances can be made
for that” she continued smoothly, she would be damned if she looked like the villain of the piece,
John would see she was trying her best to appease the surly son of a bitch.

It was John who responded in that odd tone of voice again “And of course that’s something you
believe in wholeheartedly isn’t it Sis? Family obligations” Harry frowned at him, finally allowing
her suspicions to play across her face. She stood up to face him “If you have a problem with me
John, just spit it out and get it over with, after all you were the one who requested this meeting”
her voice and eyes now as hard as his.

He stared at her for what seemed like hours and then seemed to make up his mind, but before he could open his mouth, Holmes once again interrupted, “She will be hurt John, you have to stop this now”. Harry looked at him in surprise, first the man tells her in no uncertain terms that he won’t have anything to do with her and then he tries to protect her from John. She knew he was eccentric to say the least but was he actually insane as well? No matter, if his words gave John pause then she would accept the olive branch and try to find out what bug had crawled up her brother’s arse this time. With Holmes as a rather surprising ally maybe John could be brought to see reason quicker than he normally did.

Jocelyn stood pale and unnoticed in the entrance to the living room, they hadn’t heard her come down the stairs, pop into Mrs Hudson’s place and then make her way back up the stairs. In truth she hadn’t meant to eavesdrop, she had been happy to obey Sherlock and stay in her room but even after the almost biblical flood of tears, she needed to wee. She couldn’t use their loo because it would be obvious that someone else was in the flat. So she had slipped sneakily downstairs to Mrs Hudson’s flat to use the toilet and have a cuppa with her, maybe even a biscuit or two. But Mrs Hudson had been on her way out so once she had availed herself of the facilities, she only got a hug for her troubles and sent back upstairs. Joss tried to ignore the fact that she was starting to get hungry and made her way just as stealthily back up the stairs intending to go to her room.

Sherlock obviously didn’t want the client whoever that was, to be aware of her presence and it didn’t bother her because she needed some time alone after the emotional roller coaster, no not that, it had been a bloody bumper car extravaganza she had been riding. And she didn’t know how much longer the client was going to be there. She knew she had to speak to her Dad about what she had seen in the DVD but she wasn’t sure she could go through that again today. She felt exhausted, drained and she really badly just wanted to sit on the sofa with her Dad and have a cwtch after something to eat. To be honest, the cuddle was more important to her right now.

Sherlock had been very un-Sherlock-like in a typical Sherlock manner. Well she knew what she meant, maybe. He had been thoughtfully thoughtless, caring in his own self-centred way, kind and cruel and a right bloody softie as long as she wasn’t looking at him. He was such an absolute git, and she loved him for it. Not very long ago she would have just walked away as fast as her little legs could carry her, muttering curses and very, very bad names under her breath, loud enough for him to hear but not her father, trying to work out a way to get even with the git unobtrusively. She really, really, really didn’t ever want her father to be angry with her the same way he had been when she had accidently broken Sherlock’s bow. He had been absolutely terrifying.

But Sherlock the big idiot fascinated her, as much as he outraged her, she had never known anyone like him. He had bought her a chocolate bar damn him, a bloody bar of chocolate, and that was before he had found out about the DVD. Caring was not an advantage her wicked welsh backside!

So if Sherlock wanted her out of the way for some reason of his own, she would oblige him. He had more than earned her trust and affection today.

She was heading silently towards the stairs to her bedroom, concentrating on her stealthy ninja act. “So there Sherlock Cartoons are educational,” she muttered under her breath with a grin. Maybe she should introduce him to the adventures of SpongeBob and Patrick. She had after all developed her stealth ninja capability after crushing on Sandy the Squirrel in that show, because that girl really, really knew how to “ninj”. Was that even a word let alone a verb?
Now she had a silly grin on her face because she felt ridiculous, she was actually starting to relax, and tiredness was creeping up on her, she just wanted to get back to her bedroom, curl up on her bed and have a little nap until Dad called her for dinner. She rubbed her eyes and suppressed a yawn still trying to be mega quiet and focused on getting to her room when she heard the Voice. She froze, she was still in the shadows of the unlit upper staircase and she didn’t want to turn round. She had imagined it, it was because she had been watching the DVD, it wasn’t real, just her mind playing tricks on her, but she couldn’t move from the spot. She opened her mouth, she needed her Dad, she needed Sherlock, she needed them to ground her back into reality. It was just a stupid bad memory that was all.

Before she could utter a word, she heard her Dad speak, and the relief was so great it left her weak at the knees, and so distracted she didn’t hear what he said. What was the matter with her? Of course it was her imagination, she was so stupid. Then she heard someone respond to her father, not Sherlock, it wasn’t Sherlock talking to him, it couldn’t be Sherlock because she heard that Voice again, she heard the Voice in the living room talking to her Dad, the Voice invading her home, invading her safe place once again. The Voice was talking to her Dad. But it was calm and nice. It wasn’t the same venomous Voice that despoiled the places she had lived in the past with her mother.

How could she have forgotten? How could she have dismissed the Voice from her mind as if it didn’t matter? Sometimes it had hissed words on a phone call and her mum had told her never to answer the phone again, her Mum had even gotten rid of the landline and just kept a small cheap mobile she used for emergencies. But when the Voice couldn’t reach down the phone line and spew poison into their ears, then it would turn up in person.

Her insides clenched with instinctive fear, she was seven again and hiding under her mum’s bed, listening to that cold hateful voice spill nasty words at her lovely mum, knowing that they had to move again because the Voice wouldn’t leave them be, that after the Voice left they would either have a visit from the Landlord demanding more money or that they leave, or Social Services or the police wanting a chat with her mum about neglecting her, or about complaints from the neighbours or reports of men coming to the flat at all hours. They were all such awful lies, her Mum had never neglected her, never, and she had never even had a boyfriend. Suddenly Joss understood why, she had been too young to understand before and she hadn’t thought about it for years but hearing that voice had assembled the jigsaw pieces until she had the whole picture. The Voice had hounded them and spread nasty lies about her Mum. Oh God her Mum had been afraid that they would take Joss away if there had been anyone, any man in their lives. It was only when her mum was ill that the Voice had stopped tormenting them.

Her social worker Stephie had asked her outright once if her mum had any enemies, Joss had been exhausted and upset from visiting her Mum in hospital and staying at another new set of foster parents that she didn’t really answer her. She also didn’t have the energy to ask Stephie why she wanted to know. Joss didn’t know who the Voice was and she didn’t care anymore, she just wanted her mum to get better.

She stood in the darkness of the hallway listening to the Voice speaking with what seemed like affection to her father, and she felt sick. She wanted to run into the room and warn him, she wanted to scream but her feet wouldn’t move. The Voice had scared her for so long, she was such a coward, she couldn’t move from the spot. She was going to throw up right there if she didn’t move. She could feel the muscles in her chest tighten and her heart beat pounding like she had run all the way home from school. The sound of her pulse was pumping through her ears and drowned out the words they were speaking. Then her mum was mentioned and everything stilled, she couldn’t even hear her own breathing anymore, but she could hear every single word uttered in the living room.
“Dear Harry, always so loyal and protective. I always relied on you looking after my interests while I was away and you did didn’t you? You took care of things for me?” John’s words were smooth and calm.

What? Her Dad knew the Voice? Joss stood there unable to understand what was going on. Cold creeping through her body that had nothing to do with the temperature in the building.

“Of course I did John” the smug Voice replied, “I made sure you weren’t bothered by stupid meaningless things, you could always trust me to do that”

Her father continued still calm, still smooth as if his words meant nothing, almost a tone of admiration “And you dealt with Mary Morstan for me didn’t you Sis?”

“Sis”, the Voice was his sister and he knew what she had done? Her Dad knew what the Voice had done to them. Perhaps even asked her to do it? Joss could feel her legs want to give way beneath her but she fought it. She stubbornly swayed on her weak legs, and continued to listen

“I did it for you John, to protect you. Mary Morstan was a lying slut, who wanted to foist some other man’s bastard on to you when you were fighting for our country and your life. I wasn’t going to let the bitch deceive you and hurt you again. She was a thief, she even went to prison for it. How could you even think of trusting someone like that? Of course the child wasn’t yours, it was a con trick” The woman’s voice was smooth, sympathetic, understanding and totally, totally believable to someone who didn’t know Mary Morstan.

Joss was going to puke. This was her Aunt and her father knew what she had done. She needed to get away, she needed to leave, and she couldn’t stay here.

John was savagely pleased, his bloody sister had admitted that she had hounded Mary and Joss, now she was going to find out what she had done and then he was going to destroy the bitch. He risked a glance at Sherlock, who was glaring at him as if he had just pissed in the fireplace in front of him. What the hell was his problem? Harriet was getting her just deserts, he only needed Joss’s presence to finish this.

John turned back to his sister and grinned maliciously “There is someone I would like you to meet Harry”. His sister looked at him in surprise, he hadn’t responded to her words and seemed to have changed the subject.

“Joss would you come to the living room please” he called, not taking his eyes from his sister who was beginning to fidget in her chair, not liking the expression in his eyes one bit and who the hell was this boy he was calling for?

Just as John was about to call for the second time, when the lad seemed to stumble into the living room out of nowhere, she hadn’t heard him arrive, had he been lurking on the stairwell. No not a lad, a teenage girl, blonde haired, blue eyes, face as pale as milk. Joss, he’d called her. Dear God he didn’t mean that Morstan brat Jocelyn did he? Harriet stared at the kid in astonishment, what the bloody hell was her brother playing at? She hadn’t realised that she had said it aloud. But it was the Holmes creature who answered her, not John.

“John is introducing his daughter to you Harriet, but I believe you already know her” Sherlock spat.

John had finally looked at Joss’s face instead of his sister’s and he was shocked. There was fear in her face as she stared at him.
“She’s your sister” she whispered the words as if saying them any louder would make them true. “You knew what she did and she’s your sister” her voice was dead, no inflection as if they were inconsequential and not ripping through her with poisonous burning claws.

John’s attention was taken from Joss when Harriet began to berate him for a fool for taking in the kid of the Morstan bitch.

Joss couldn’t take any more, she backed away from the living room and her father as if she was breathing in poison and simply ran.

Sherlock watched her leave, John was too engrossed in tearing a strip off his sister to hear the slam of the front door, too intent on getting his revenge, instead of realising what he had done to their Joss.
He ignored the pair of them and pulled out his mobile phone. His fingers flew over the keypad, tapping the words “Comfort her” and he sent the message.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, finally got the showdown scene down... took blood sweat and tears this one, Couldn’t seem to get the right balance especially as personally I wanted Joss to batter her with the any large pieces of body Sherlock had lying round, but instead poor Joss just gets more angst thrown at her. ... the child is going to be in therapy for centuries, I am an evil person but there will be nice things happening soon.

Enjoy, let me know what you think, no infringement etc.
Joss ran. She just took to her heels and ran, she didn’t want to think, she didn’t want to talk to anyone, and she didn’t want to feel. She wasn’t crying again damn it, she was running. If she thought about her father’s betrayal it would destroy her, because it would mean that Sherlock knew too. No thinking, no thinking, no thinking, just the steady pound of her feet on the concrete pavement.

She got as far as half a mile from Baker Street, dodging the late night shoppers, feet pounding the pavement, not realising how fast she was running because even though her body was moving forward, her mind, her thoughts, were stuck back in Baker street, listening to her father talk to his sister, his bloody sister, before the large, suited figure stepped out in front of her. She skidded, barely stopping herself from landing on her arse, backpedalling like some idiot cartoon character and then in total panic, she tried to swerve out of his way, she tried to dodge him but he managed to anticipate every move she made as if he seen them all before and knew what she was going to do before she did.

Her heart beat and her mind were frantic, locked into flight mode. She wanted, no she needed to be away from everyone. She couldn’t let him stop her. For the love of God she couldn’t even throw a wobbly in peace without her Uncle’s bloody hulking great guard dogs stopping her.

There was a stunned silence and then her human obstruction had the gall to laugh, to chuckle as if she amused him. Shit had she said that out loud? She stopped and stared at him in confused angry despair. Why couldn’t they all just leave her alone?

When she finally figured out that she could run back the way she had come to get away from him, he had already taken hold of her hands and was pulling her inexorably towards him. He had lots of experience dealing with unwilling struggling captives after all.

“I haven’t done anything wrong, let me go” she demanded angrily, she wouldn’t cry, she wouldn’t, and he had no bloody call to hang on to her like this. She had rights, she hadn’t done anything wrong. He couldn’t stop her like this.

He raised an eyebrow and frowned sympathetically down at the furious emotional youngster. Jesus did this kid ever catch a break? She was very near to tears, and shivering without being
Jesus did this kid ever catch a break? She was very near to tears, and shivering without being aware of it. He waited calmly for the dam to break, whilst he pulled her close enough to tuck her against his suit underneath his thick black overcoat, and block out the worst of the bitter wind that was whistling around them.

He had a driver waiting with the silver BMW for the pair of them to get in, but she would really freak out if he tried to get her into it right now.

Her body started to shake when it was out of the wind, and close enough to him to be warmed by his body heat. Her reaction was both physical and emotional.

“I won’t go back there and you can’t make me do it.” There it was, the barely hidden sob in the angry tirade, it was starting. The shivering got worse.

“I don’t want to…” she hiccupped her distress as she leant against him, “please Inspector don’t take me back there”, her face was muffled against his suit jacket but he could make out her words.

“It’s alright love, we are just going for a nice cup of something hot, and to get you out of this cold, okay?”

She tried to pull away, angry distress in her voice when she hissed at him “I don’t want to bloody talk about it, I don’t need anyone’s bloody advice and I just want you all to leave me alone”

Instinctively his large hand reached up to gently cup her face and pull her back towards his shoulder, tucking her away from the cold because the kid was cold and upset but those words were the proverbial last straw.

Gregory Lestrade was sodding knackered and totally pissed off, he’d had a long unsuccessful frustrating day at court, had bitterly watched one of the scumbags of London walk free despite all the evidence they had painstakingly gathered. He should have been drowning his sorrors at the pub with his team, instead of which yet another text from a Holmes boy had interrupted his day to try to solve their family problems involving this kid, which meant that he was out in the cold and dark trying to stop her from doing something stupid, probably triggered by someone else in that mad little family. He was bloody irritated now and sometime soon, he, Sherlock and John were going to have a long overdue informal little chat about the meaning of parental responsibility. If he had to use his old police issue truncheon as a demonstration aid well there had to be some perks to the distasteful job.

As for this lippy little madam, she was going to be given a few home truths as well. Much as he liked the kid, if he wanted to deal with teenage angst outside of office hours, (he had enough of that idiocy in office hours to contend with when Donovan and Anderson got together) he had his own nearly teenage boys to be as weak as warm butter over, and right now unfortunately for her, his not unlimited store of patience had already been nearly drained by the day he had already had to endure, she was not going to be getting the same coddling she normally received from the Holmes contingent. Damn the boys from Baker street, he could be sinking his first pint of the good stuff right now.

“I don’t want to talk about it either Sweetheart, that’s all I am offering is a cup of hot chocolate in a warm place, we are not going to have a heart to heart, you can sort that out with your father, and or Sherlock in any combination thereof you want, but you know very well that you are not supposed to be out of the flat alone until we have caught Moran don’t you?” and the kind patient voice had become irritated, stern and scolding.

She stiffened against him but didn’t look up at his face. “Jocelyn?” he prompted relentlessly, and suddenly she was back in the interview room with six feet of scary policeman focused solely on how angry she had made him by interrupting his important work. Being subjected to his no nonsense irritated Detective Inspector voice was not something she wanted to happen again. The
first time he had scared her spit less, she did not need to see the same expression right now, when she could barely cope with her own see-sawing emotions. She gulped.

“Please Mr Lestrade, I am sorry, I didn’t think about that, I was upset when I ran out” she whispered. She really didn’t want a repeat performance of their first meeting and it might make her a big coward but she still couldn’t raise her head to look him in the eye when he had that tone of voice. He was just downright scary when he was mad. She felt the tension drain from his shoulders at her apology and breathed a sigh of relief herself.

Suddenly she was so tired, she ached all over, first there had been the pain of watching her mother, watching happier times and hearing her mother’ voice and it had hurt like someone had raked a spikey wire brush over her heart, but Sherlock had made it bearable and even allowed her to smile with remembered happiness, then more memories, painful, vicious scary memories resurrected by someone she had thought she would never see or hear again and now it seemed likely that she would never be rid of because she was her bloody Aunt. Her Dad knew what that evil old hag had done and betrayal burned through her veins like acid.

She had tried so hard to forget that her mother had been afraid of him, she had even begged Sherlock earlier in the evening in the evening for reassurance that she was doing the right thing in discarding her own mother’s fears and in trusting her father. How could she have been so wrong? How could she have let her mother down so easily just so that she could have the chance of being part of a family again? She was so ashamed of herself for trusting any of them.

She closed her eyes with her face still buried against his shoulder, taking in his oddly comforting scent. She just wanted to stop thinking, just for a little while, thinking hurt and she didn’t want to hurt any more.

“Come on Joss, let’s go get that hot chocolate shall we?” Lestrade murmured softly as he began to direct her gently to the waiting unmarked police car.

Oddly enough, once she was inside the car, and out of the bitter wind, her shivering seemed to increase. Lestrade had taken his overcoat off and tucked it around her when she had gotten in the car, then sat beside her in the back, an arm holding her close to his side again.

“Ryan, get the heating on full” he ordered calmly as the driver pulled smoothly out into the rush hour traffic, after one warning flash of a blue light. Londoners weren’t stupid, an unmarked police car at that time of night, too right they would be letting it weave its way through the almost traffic standstill, no-one with any sense wanted to be in front of a frustrated copper in a car which could barely move. God knew what kind of mischief the police would get up to behind them.

It always amused Lestrade just how law abiding and careful the capital’s drivers became with a police car behind them. Lestrade didn’t need to tell his driver where their destination was, he had already informed him when he had received the first text message. Besides he didn’t want to raise the subject with the kid, she was too upset and not in any mood for family.

Joss fell into a light dose once the car had warmed up, curled carefully up against the Inspector. She knew this wasn’t going to end well for her tonight, worst case scenario having to go back and speak to her Dad while that evil hag was still there. But there were variations on the theme.

She didn’t know where she thought she had been going with no money, no warm clothes, and literally no bloody idea really. Stupid, she had been stupid. When she had reacted like a scared mouse, she honestly hadn’t thought about that creep Moran and she knew the Inspector was totally serious about his earlier comments. Well at least she would get something warm to drink
before he dragged her back to the flat. Perhaps she could just stay downstairs with Mrs Hudson. That would be best, she wasn’t going to be running loose around London now the grumpy long arm of the law had stopped her in her tracks. It always surprised her how scary the Inspector could be when he had such a kind sweet face unlike Uncle Mycroft who’s professionally scary face just covered his unfailing kindness to her.

She heaved a tired, miserable sigh, and the Inspector reacted with a comforting rub through her curls.

“It will work out love” he murmured consolingly. She didn’t respond just decided to rest her eyes for a little while, in the peaceful safety and neutrality of the car. The barely audible low purr of the BMW engine also seemed to provide an odd kind of comfort. It definitely did not sound like one of Uncle Mycroft’s horrible big black cars.

Joss startled awake when the car came to a full stop, a strong arm around her shoulders, her head resting against a solid chest. “Dad?” she grumbled softly before her brain was actually back in the land of the living and she bit her lip viciously hoping the policeman hadn’t heard her. No such luck, “I can take you home to your Dad Joss?” that deep kind voice offered gently, but she shook her head stubbornly refusing to answer him verbally.

There was a pause as if he was waiting for her to say something else and she could feel his gaze on the top of her head, but she wasn’t going to look at him. She thought she heard a sigh but she couldn’t be sure, then his voice firmed up again and he told her “Come on then young lady, let’s get inside and have that cup of something hot”, and he slid open the passenger door. A chill ran through her body when the cold air hit the warmth of the car interior.

She followed him out rather more slowly, trying to retain what was left of the heat. But when she finally stood beside him her confusion made her forgot the temperature for a few moments.

Why had they pulled up at what looked like the tradesman’s entrance to an enormous hotel?

Before she could open her mouth and ask, the Inspector tucked her against his side again and moved through the opened door. She was so fascinated by her surroundings that she missed the softly grumbled words “Of course it would be here wouldn’t it you irritating posh git!” and when she raised her face to look at him, he just smiled tiredly at her and offered softly “Let’s get you settled okay Love, oh just one thing, until we get to the room we are supposed to be in, you mustn’t speak, you have to be quiet”. His apologetic shrug was the only response to her disbelieving expression.

They both turned as a servant loomed silently up beside them and Joss nearly uttered a startled shriek but the frown she received from the uniformed man wearing carpet slippers made her tighten her lips and reach for Lestrade’s hand like a little girl about to cross the road with a parent. He squeezed her hand tight enough for her to be grateful and she refused to let go of him as they followed the silent impassive servant into the depths of the building.

Joss wanted to ask if this wasn’t all rather excessive for a cup of hot chocolate, as she tried to even keep her breathing quiet in the silent ominous passageways, but finally they were led into a small sitting room, with a large fireplace, the fire cheerfully crackling away, two sofas facing each other and a large comfy chair beside a table where a covered tray was resting.

The solemn faced servant suddenly smiled gently and said “Well done Miss. Not a sound, I wish some of my gentlemen were that conscientious about the rules. Now my name is Deacon and you and the Inspector just make yourselves comfy. I will make your hot chocolate with all the trimmings. Growing girl like you needs all the marshmallows, cream and chocolate flakes in a proper hot chocolate she can get doesn’t she? If you want to take the big chair by the table Miss, I will serve you your supper too” and not waiting for an answer he ushered her into the big chair,
took the cover off the tray and Joss was staring down in disbelief at beans on toast with grated cheese and a dash of Worcester sauce.

She inhaled the comforting aroma and her tummy rumbled. “There now, you tuck right in and I will bring you and the Inspector your hot chocolate” Deacon smiled indulgently and moved off as soon as she had picked up her knife and fork.

Greg had flung himself down on one of the sofas with a tired sigh but he had been fascinated by the expressions on the kid’s face. She looked longingly at the meal in front of her but raised her face to him again to get confirmation of something before attempting to eat.

“Uncle Mycroft” she murmured, not even expecting a denial. Greg smiled wryly at her, she was a smart kid, she’d been given Sherlock the runaround for months. This would not have caused her a problem as she knew her Uncle's MO as well.

Damn that beans on toast smelt so good, he wondered if he could convince her to share.

Chapter End Notes

So 7 straight days in bed with influenza and that's all i craved was beans on toast with grated cheese and Worcester sauce. So I had to make sure my favourite girl had it too.

Just a little holding chapter cos If I was cold my Joss was cold and she deserves nice things. So her supper and hot chocolate in the Diogenes club courtesy of Uncle Mycroft and a disgruntled Inspector Greg. He's a no nonsense copper and a Dad and he is not going to take any teenage shit.

So hope you enjoy and when my brain has returned from the land of mush, I will push the plot forward xx
Chapter Summary

Jocelyn Jayne learns Lestrade's first name. Lestrade thinks she spends too much time with Sherlock.
John is an idiot and everyone tells him so.
Lestrade uses Mycroft's first name and is taking no sh*t.
John is an idiot and everyone tells him so.
Sherlock tells John off for being an idiot and then leaves.
Joss sleeps. There is a mention of the International Space station.

John finds the DVD.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 38. The Sword of Diogenes

Lestrade hadn’t needed to persuade Joss to share her supper, because as soon as that nice older waiter Deacon came back with the hot chocolate, he had also brought another plate of beans on toast. Damn how did this place make even a plate of beans on toast look like a gourmet meal? The waiter had smiled with understanding at the Inspector and murmured conspiratorially, “It smelt absolutely delicious and I really fancied it too as soon as the young lady lifted the plate cover, thought you looked like you could do with a bite to eat yourself sir”

Lestrade had grinned up at the cheerful older man with gratitude. He would have to remember to leave Deacon a big tip.

There was a contented companionable silence in the room as the policeman and teenager tucked into their food, and as soon as they were finished Deacon whisked the fine china plates away and left them to drink the ridiculously adorned and decorated comforting hot chocolate drinks.

Lestrade practically inhaled the mini marshmallows and fluffy cream from the top of his mug, but Joss had licked delicately at the chocolate flakes sprinkled on top of the cream, and then looked shyly over at the Inspector from underneath her lashes. She could see the fatigue on his face and a large dose of guilt made her speak softly.

“You look tired” Lestrade raised one eyebrow at her but didn’t say anything. Joss winced and looked away again “I am sorry that you were caught up in this Mr Lestrade” She swallowed hard. The lump in her throat making it hard for her to speak.

Lestrade’s assessing eyes didn’t leave her face, but she refused to look up at him again. Shit was that a lip wobble? Yeah a definite lip wobble. No he wasn’t having any of that. He had just managed to get the kid calm again there were not going to be any more tears before bedtime on his watch thank you very much. So distraction it was then. “I think someone who is brave enough to call Mycroft Holmes Uncle, you know “he who shall be obeyed”, the one and only Mr British Government himself, can summon up the courage to call a simple copper by his first name, don’t
Lestrade grinned wickedly at the kid’s surprised face. Yeah that had worked. Mission accomplished. The threatened lip wobble had been averted and the kid successfully distracted. Then Lestrade saw an intrigued spark in those limpid blue eyes as they regarded him steadily. It was slightly unnerving as she had John’s colour eyes but that gleam in them at the moment was pure Sherlock when he was about to be especially outrageous the git. So what now?

The kid’s smile turned into the kind of shit eating grin he was sure a baby shark wore as it saw its first ever meal swimming right up to it, as she remarked softly “Yes Graham, I think I can manage to call you by your first name George as long as you are okay with it Gareth?” and then she actually began to giggle helplessly at the look on his face before he closed his dropped jaw and he mock glared at her.

“Oh ha, ha, hardy ha” he snorted. “You spend way too much time with Sherlock young lady. My name is Greg and you know it” he growled but she saw the smirk on his face. There was a long pause and the relaxed atmosphere was fading until finally she spoke again, her face turned away from him, and her hands gripping each other tightly, her knuckles almost wide in the dim light “Please Greg, don’t make me go back to B…Baker Street tonight” the simple stutter was very revealing, as was the way her shoulders tensed as she hunched forward.

God he hated dealing with distraught kids. She had to go back to her father even if she didn’t want to hear it. She had taken off once already this evening. he didn’t want her to do it again, but if she kicked up a real fuss he couldn’t ignore his duty and he would have to get Social Services involved. And that little scenario was likely to get him shot by John, dissected in the morgue by Sherlock and his ears (if not anything more precious) hung as trophies on Mycroft bloody Holmes’s wall. But the kid’s welfare came first and its time those idiots realised it.

“Jocelyn” He began carefully, but the swift miserable glance from the wet blue eyes stopped whatever platitude and protest he had been about to utter. He raised one eyebrow at her, and with a long suffering sigh told her to finish off her hot chocolate or Deacon would be upset. Damn it all to hell, well she wasn’t going to be spending the night in the Diogenes Club, bloody Holmes had better hurry up and get there soon so that he could talk some sense into her. The kid adored her idiot father and that long streak of chaos Sherlock, even if she didn’t like them very much at the moment.

A small smile passed fleetingly over her tense face, and they continue slurping away at their delicious hot chocolates in silence.

Sherlock’s glare could have stripped paint as he watched his oblivious partner stride around the living room. He didn’t take his eyes of John even though he was unsympathetic to John’s increasingly distressed demeanour. To think Sherlock was always being told he was too self-absorbed to understand the feelings of others around him!

John Hamish Watson was going to be very uncomfortable the time he had the audacity to mention Sherlock doing something ”not good”, as Sherlock would happily remind him of this epic piece of cretinous idiocy in no uncertain terms. What the hell had John been thinking, had he considered his daughter at all in this bizarre fantastical mimicry of show and tell? To bring that vile woman into his child’s home after everything she had gone through. Was the man losing his marbles? Sherlock knew he had a ruthless streak when it came to solving his cases, he relished in it, especially if it gave him the result he was looking for. He supposed that if Jocelyn hadn’t been his Joss then he could have dragged Harriet into Baker Street to get to the bottom of the mystery involving her life pre Baker street, but Jocelyn was his Joss, she had become his Joss over the months she had been living with them in Baker Street and she had suffered enough. What did
John thought he was going to get out of this exceptional example of utter stupidity except a severely distressed teenager, and pissed off partner? Without mentioning the way Mycroft was going to rain down his righteous wrath upon him? Sherlock actually smirked at the thought, not that Mycroft’s interference in their lives was any less irritating but Sherlock could find it in his heart to acknowledge he could have some fellow feeling with Mycroft over this one. Serve John right.

“How can you just stand there when we don’t know where Joss is?” John snarled at him, Sherlock raised an unimpressed eyebrow. “Jocelyn left her home because you brought that woman into it” Sherlock retaliated without compunction and watched his partner flinch and pale. “I know where she is and who she is with, and she is less distressed with them than she would be with you at the moment” he finished off bluntly. Then Sherlock proceeded to ignore him as he went to get his coat and scarf.

John stared at him open mouthed, “Sherlock?” he questioned quietly. But his words were ignored “In the spirit of our agreement, I am informing you that I will be out this evening and not likely to be back for the next two days. I think you can be assured that Joss will not be returning tonight” Sherlock spoke coldly with his back towards his partner.

John grabbed his arm and swung him around furiously “You can’t keep my daughter from me, who the hell do you think you are?”  Sherlock raised one eyebrow at John as he spoke cuttingly “I am not keeping your daughter away from you John, it’s you she ran from, it’s you she doesn’t want to see, it’s you who hurt her. And I had thought you knew who I was, who we were” Sherlock’s last sentence was quieter, almost hurt, before he tore his arm away from John and strode out of the door.

John stared after him in disbelief, and then his eyes roamed the deserted living room, before collapsing down onto his chair, his head buried in his hands. What the hell had just happened? What the hell had he done?

Detective Inspector Greg Lestrade was sipping the excellent whisky Deacon had provided earlier. Its slow burn as it made its way down his throat was comforting, as comforting as the warmth of the gently crackling flames and scent of cedar wood smoke from the fire place. He hadn’t realised how long he had been staring into the soft orange red glow of the fire or how his muscles had unwound in the peace of the quiet room ensconced in the leather deep winged arm chair as he kept the sleeping young girl company. She had murmured in her sleep, once even a whimper had broken through but it hadn’t disturbed the child enough to wake her from her rest on the large dark green coloured leather sofa, covered by the delicate but warm pure wool blanket Deacon had gently laid over her once Joss had succumbed to the emotional and physical exhaustion of the day. She had curled herself into a ball and unwillingly fallen asleep. Lestrade had settled once more into the chair after instinctively getting to his feet and moving towards her when the sound of the whimper had broken the silence but she didn’t make any further sounds or movements, just resumed the soft breathing of a deep sleep.

Lestrade wasn’t sure how long Mycroft Holmes had been standing in the darkened doorway before he became aware of his presence. God, he must have been nearly as wiped out as the kid to allow anyone to sneak up on him like that. He glared at the tall suited man. Angrier at himself than Mycroft if the truth be told, but the fact that the elegant git looked as pristine and well put together at the end of the day as he probably had at the start just irritated Greg like hell. Sodding Holmes brothers. There was also the fact that bloody Mycroft had dragged him into another mess this mad family had created yet again.

Mycroft had stood in the entrance for a long time, uncharacteristically uncertain, his eyes not leaving the sleeping young girl’s troubled face and defensive posture. He could throttle John
Watson, after all the trauma and distress the child had suffered what in the name of sanity had possesses the moronic man to drag up even more in the form of the abominable sister.

He had a damn good mind to return the idiot to the middle of the desert naked with one bottle of water and a map in mandarin Chinese and leave natural selection do its best to rid Mycroft of the cretin. The only problem was that Sherlock would turn up with an industrial size bottle of sun screen and a land cruiser and they would be back where they started in no time at all. Perhaps he should speak to the European Space agency about sending them a couple of “Volunteers” who would not need a return ticket.

“Are you gracing us with your presence or not Mr Holmes?” the deep irritated voice of the Detective Inspector interrupted his reverie

“You could have left her here Detective Inspector, she would have been well cared for” Mycroft murmured in that polite bland voice that lulled those who didn’t know him into a false sense of security. Greg had dealt with him too long to be fooled, but he simply didn’t care at the moment so for once Mycroft was going to be on the receiving end of Greg’s non diplomatic tongue.

“No Mr Holmes, I couldn’t, I really couldn’t” his answer was dry and he continued sternly, this idiocy had gone on long enough. She was a kid for Christ sake, she deserved to be looked after properly and he was way past the point of being ready to knock heads together or even dust off his police issue truncheon from the back of the kitchen drawer to make sure it happened.

“She has had the kind of shit day that normally gets criminals a slap on the wrist instead of jail time, there is no way in hell she was going to wake up alone in a strange place surrounded by strangers, well-meaning or otherwise”, the growl in his voice was audible.

To Lestrade’s surprise, the imperturbable proficient professional politician standing in front of him, winced and moved towards the opposite armchair. He sank into it as if he was a puppet and his strings had been cut. Lestrade’s eyebrows shot up as he heard the unmistakeable frustrated groan issue from Mycroft’s mouth.

“Would you do me the favour of pouring me a glass of that whisky please” Mycroft asked, his voice warmer and in a strange way almost vulnerable. As Lestrade lifted the decanter and began to pour a generous amount of the liquid into the spare glass, Mycroft continued almost as if he was speaking to himself.

“I want to take that child away from that pair of incompetents so badly, I am seriously considering having them packed up and deposited as space debris outside the international space station.”

Lestrade snorted inelegantly, the whisky he had just sipped making its burning way unerringly up his nose. “For the love of God Mycroft give a guy some warning” he spluttered with helpless laughter.

“Gregory, I have been trying to get you to call me Mycroft for the last ten years, why now?” Mycroft asked with amusement. “I don’t know, maybe because you do actually have a sense of humour and more importantly, with that little girl you are not an insensitive, cold machine of a man who is so bound up in duty he doesn’t see people as human beings.” came the blunt amused response.

Mycroft glared at him, one unimpressed eyebrow trying to intimidate the silver haired police man, but Greg just laughed “Hot chocolate and beans on toast Mycroft” he mocked gently, and to his surprise he could swear there was a slight flush on Holmes’ cheeks before his usual impassive expression returned like a well-worn mask.
Greg smirked and turned to face the fire again. “So what’s the plan? The kid really does not want to see her father tonight, she was bloody adamant about it. I am not going to ask what’s happened this time because I shall probably need to smack one of them if I find out right now”

Before Mycroft could respond there was the shrill sound of a mobile ringing. Joss began to stir uncomfortably and Lestrade was frowning at him again, as if he was deliberately trying to wake the child. Mycroft checked the blackberry and one eyebrow went up. Predatory satisfaction lit his face as he answered the call. Lestrade almost laughed aloud. He had a damn good idea who the caller was, so he settled back to enjoy the one sided conversation, as Mycroft kept his gaze on the sleeping teenager on the sofa.

“How may I be of assistance to you this evening my dear John?” the polite insincere query caused a sudden silence on the other end of the line before Lestrade could hear John’s voice demanding something.

“I am afraid that’s not possible at the moment John, Jocelyn Jayne is sleeping and she had already expressed her unequivocal desire not to be near Baker Street tonight. Can you blame her John?” Mycroft did not allow John time to even breathe before he continued “Jocelyn will be staying with me overnight and depending upon how she feels in the morning, possibly for a few days”

“Jesus wept Mycroft she is my daughter and you have no right...” John began in fury, but Mycroft cut him off coldly “Perhaps you should try to remember she is your Daughter John before you traumatise her by bringing home the woman who tormented the child and her mother for most of her short life, now unless you wish me to involve Child Services in this unpleasant situation, I suggest you allow Jocelyn Jayne time to calm down and wait until she actually wants to speak to you herself.”

Mycroft waited for a response but John seemed to have been struck silent. Very well “I take your silence as permission for Jocelyn Jayne to stay with me John. I will be in touch when she is ready to speak to you again. Good evening” Mycroft disconnected without waiting for anything more.

Lestrade raised his glass to him in respectful salute and then took another long delicious swallow.

John stared at this phone with anger and despair. He had just been handed his arse by Mycroft bloody Holmes and god damn it he was right, Sherlock was right. Had he just destroyed his relationship with his daughter? Had he destroyed his relationship with Sherlock? Was Mycroft going to have him bundled on the next plane to outer bloody Mongolia?

He collapsed back on to the sofa, nearly giving himself a dead leg in the process by sitting on the TV remote. He picked it up, fingers brushing over the buttons and he must have pressed one hard enough as the TV came to life. Oh for God’s sake, he didn’t need the fucking TV to be blaring uselessly in the bankrupt to the fucking soap opera his own life had become, and he turned to point the remote to switch it off and came face to face with the paused picture of Mary Morstan, lips open as if stopped in mid-sentence. The remote dropped to the floor ignored as John stared at the screen in shock.

Chapter End Notes
No infringement intended.

Hope you like this chapter. Sorry for the delay I have had most of it written for a while but lost the plot literally with it. Couldn't even bare to read it for ages because it felt like it was going nowhere. Then did some angsty writing for another Fandom and suddenly the cast of AT3 were speaking to me again. Yay. There will be more on Harriet's just deserts I promise. And now Joss's gets to stay with Uncle Mycroft big Yay.

Enjoy. xx
Interlude: Uncle

Chapter Summary

Joss opened her eyes with a start. She wasn't sure what noise had woken her up, but as she blearily tried to wipe the sleep grit from her eyes, she became aware that she wasn't in her own bedroom. It was too dim to see much. Panicked, her heart pounding, she started to struggle up from the heavy luxurious bedclothes.

A large hand covered her own, making her nearly scream with fright until a familiar voice tutted at her with faint irritation and spoke quietly but the words were crisp and clear enough to cut through her sleep fogged brain.

"Jocelyn Jayne what are you doing? It is much too early for you to be awake, I would suggest that you return to the horizontal position and go back to sleep"

Joss turned her head towards the voice and blinked "Uncle Mycroft?" her questioning voice was young and vulnerable as she stared at the figure in the large armchair besides the bed. There was enough light from the small bedside table lamp for her to see him.

"What…” she wasn't sure what she wanted to ask precisely because her brain was too caught up in trying to understand what her eyes were showing her. It looked like Uncle Mycroft, even sounded like him but this was a Mycroft Holmes she didn't know existed. Her eyes widened a little more as she took in the picture before her.

Uncle Mycroft wasn't wearing a suit jacket, well she had never seen him without one before, but she supposed that in theory it was more than possible. Like the Big Bang was possible or landing a space ship on Mars was possible or eating three Weetabix for breakfast.

Even if at the back of her mind, she had an image of him emerging from the depths of his secret den or bat cave , wherever he went when he actually stopped working, if he ever stopped working, fully clothed in his fine Saville row suit and ready to face the day. But with cold hard reality making her brain wake up, she acknowledged that he had to physically put his clothes on, so logically he would have to take them off. Action and reaction. Cause and effect. He didn't actually sleep in his three piece suits did he? Or they would be horrendously crushed, and Uncle Mycroft never had so much as a hint of a wrinkle in his clothes. But there was more. His waist coat was unbuttoned and open, lying limply at his sides. His shirt sleeves were rolled up, though Joss wasn't sure that the precise folds of the pristine cloth up to his elbows lent themselves to the term rolling, Uncle Mycroft had probably used a laser ruler to get them just so, and showing off
his arms which were surprisingly muscular and even had light gingery hair dotted over his forearms. Then, she drew in a surprised breath and gulped, then there was the fact that he wasn't wearing shoes. Uncle Mycroft was not wearing shoes, had the world come to an end? His shoeless feet in black silk socks were resting on the side of the bed she was currently ensconced in, as his long legs propped up a rather slim and very expensive looking tablet on his raised knees, where his long fingers were paused as he seemed to be surveying her with amusement, lots of amusement, in fact he could almost be at a major comedy event. Was he even going to outright laugh at her?

Oh God, she had said it all out loud hadn't she? The alien pretending to be her favourite Uncle raised one eyebrow at her with a soft smirk on his relaxed face, he failed to subdue the wicked chuckles that left his mouth and broke the calm silence in the bedroom with not even a hint of remorse.

"Who are you and what have you done with my Uncle Myc?" Joss's patience snapped, glaring in what she hoped was a ferocious way at the impossible imposter in front of her.

The alien faker had the bloody gall to laugh outright at her even after he had scowled at the name Myc. This was serious, she had to call Sherlock and her Da… Suddenly Joss didn't feel like teasing any more, the bubbling laughter drained away as she looked into that familiar fake bland face with the kind eyes and her own eyes widened, became wet and filled with pain.

She watched as the expensive piece of technological wonder was tossed to the floor with scant regard, and that long body unfurled from the chair, making a beeline straight for her. She watched but she didn't actually see anything because she was listening once again to the sound of that hated voice threatening her mother, threatening her and then speaking to her Dad in their home, where Joss was supposed to be safe, speaking to her Dad, as if he knew all about it, the years of torment, the awful words and actions as if he should have been proud of what she had done because it was all for his benefit.

An arm slid around her shoulders, and she was tucked up against that pristine cream soft shirt, head against a broad shoulder, and before she could say a word, she was told to close her eyes and go back to sleep in that no nonsense voice that expected total obedience. Tears were forgotten for a moment as she stiffened and spluttered in indignation. "You can't just order me to go back to sleep you know, I could be hungry or thirsty or even need a wee" she objected.

The snort wasn't that loud but she felt it through his shoulders. "Well are you hungry or thirsty or do you need to go to the bathroom" Mycroft responded with calm politeness, the last part of the question edged with distaste as if he dared her to use the word wee again. Joss wasn't sure if she wanted to rant at him or cry all over him. It would serve him right for being always having to be right, even when he was right.

"Why are you in here anyway?" Joss changed the subject grumpily, but shifting a little so she was more comfortable. He needn't think he was allowed to move anytime soon so there.

There was a strange pause as if she had caught him off guard, and then his answer was soft and considering "Because someone very wise told me that you shouldn't wake up in a strange place without a familiar face". Joss tilted her head to try to see the expression on his face, but Uncle Mycroft was having none of it. He tucked her right back against him underneath his chin again, and then in his usual "Do not try to argue with me, I am Mycroft Holmes" voice he firmly reiterated

"Now go back to sleep young lady, you are safe, and we will talk about everything tomorrow."

Joss was too exhausted to argue with him anymore, but as she lay listening to the calm beat of his
heart against her ear, she frowned, there was something missing before she could sleep peacefully again, it was silly she was a teenager for goodness sake but it still didn't stop her muttering almost shamefacedly against Mycroft's chest "Uncle Myc, I don't have…" before she could finish she found herself with an armful of white fluffy toy sheep. Joss gave a startled giggle and murmured softly "You are amazing Uncle Mycroft"

She was relaxing again, almost asleep, comforted by both the silly toy and his presence. He wasn't going to distract and upset her now with the truth. He would mention it tomorrow if it came up in conversation and of course he remembered. He was not so petty that he would withhold the truth from her, even if he did rather enjoy being her omnipotent Uncle Mycroft. But it was Sherlock who had dropped off the ridiculous soft toy at his house. Sherlock who had traipsed with determination through London with the soft fluffy white thing under his arm, oblivious and uncaring of the stares of any passer-by. Sherlock who had considered the feelings of someone other than John for once. So he would not hide the truth from Jocelyn Jayne, his little brother deserved the recognition for his actions. Even if his partner, her father was a blithering idiot. Mycroft smirked at the image of Sherlock regally handing over the soft toy once he had arrived at Mycroft's townhouse, and then leaving again as if providing an explanation was beneath him. His man servant's face must have been a picture.

Chapter End Notes

A little interlude before the plot progresses. Some fluff between Mycroft and Joss. After Lestrade's words, I could see Mycroft hovering near her whilst she slept.

She has never been to his home before, so he didn't want her to wake up afraid.

Hope you enjoy, let me know what you think. x
Interlude: Comfort and Cliches

Chapter Summary

Jocelyn Jayne wakes up and she is still upset

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Joss woke the second time to morning sunlight and an empty room. Still drowsy, she drew a deep breath and the faint hint of lavender swirled through her nose. She felt boneless, and almost content. The bed was so comfortable, she just wanted to snuggle back down and fall asleep again. Dad would call her as soon as breakfast was ready but Sherlock was bound to have used up all the hot water for the shower, so she’d have to wait for the boiler to heat it up anyway. That was her excuse for staying where she was and Dad would just grin at her before mock frowning and barking out an order in his silly officer’s voice. Her stomach rumbled in protest at her laziness, and she yawned widely. She wanted breakfast but she really, really wanted to stay in bed too. Her bottom lip thrust up in a pout as she whined into her pillow. Perhaps if she asked Dad with her pathetic patented “poor me” face on, he could be conned, er persuaded to bring her brekkie in bed.

Nah, that so wasn’t going to work. She giggled at the thought of the look on his face though, it would be so worth the fall out just to see his expression. She yawned again and rubbed the grit from her eyes, her slowly awakening brain puzzled, why was the sunlight lighting up her room from the wrong direction?

She blinked in surprise at the huge bay window with pretty flower patterned daffodil yellow curtains. Her eyes travelled around the room with curiosity, but she wasn’t alarmed. Nothing bad could come from a room with the kind of bed she was lying on. She was going to kidnap said bed and take it with her on all her travels. The bed was hers now and she would defend it with tooth and claw. Her bed, hers. She giggled softly again, she knew she really should be more curious about where she was but she didn’t want to be, not right now. She just wanted to relax in this amazing wonderful bed until her Dad…

Her wandering thoughts just stopped as she stared at the chair next to the bed. Uncle Mycroft had sat in that chair. Unease hit her stomach and she frowned at the offending piece of furniture. Why had Uncle Mycroft been sitting in the chair? Why couldn’t she remember properly? Why didn’t she know where she was? Oh God had she been kidnapped again! Oh God, Oh God. She didn’t realise that she was whimpering underneath her breath. Bloody hell why couldn’t she remember. Just as she was descending into a panic attack, flashes of disjointed muddled memories came flitting through her mind as she stared at the damn chair.

Shoeless sock covered feet, crying on Sherlock, beans on toast, watching Mum on the DVD, hot chocolate, Uncle Mycroft giving her a cwtch and her sheep, Detective Inspector Scary, Mum’s voice, God she missed her voice so much, Dad, Dad bringing home that utterly evil old hag. Dad, Dad, Daddy, why Daddy why?

Tears flooded her eyes and she turned her face to bury it in the softness of her pillow. The soft fluffy sheep tucked into her neck. She wasn’t going to cry, she wasn’t. She had done enough of that yesterday. Damn it she wasn’t going to cry she promised herself as she felt the tears soak into
the pillow. She couldn’t hold back the sobs and she missed the sound of the door opening until the mattress gave way as the weight of another person came to sit beside her.

She refused to turn around even as a large slim hand gently stroked her hair. No words were exchanged but the hand stayed with her until she finally stopped sobbing.

There was silence in the sunny room, Joss tried to calm down and actually breath through her nose, her head was throbbing and she didn’t want to turn round to face him. The hand was still in her hair, gently massaging her scalp.

“Papa why?” she whispered. Sherlock’s hand didn’t stop the soothing caress. “Because your father is an idiot, an utter moron and completely thick, right now he couldn’t conduct light if he was wrapped in tin foil, and strapped to a solar panel” he spoke briskly, totally at odds with the slow calm motion of his hand.

There was a stunned silence at Sherlock’s words. Ever so slowly, Joss twisted her head leaving her body in the same position, until one bleary disbelieving eye blinked up at him from beneath the mess of bedhead blonde curls. Sherlock was actually impressed at the display of physical dexterity, one would almost think the child was part owl. The eye considered him and then crinkled in the way that Sherlock knew the girl was trying to resist laughter. That piece of resistance did appear to be spectacularly futile as Joss succumbed. She sniggered even if the sound was wet and gross. She couldn’t help it. Sherlock didn’t normally unleash his wrath upon John, but he didn’t sound impressed with her Dad at all.

Joss felt an odd warmth in the area of her heart. She had never considered that Sherlock would ever actually take her side against her father’s. Then thinking about it he probably wasn’t taking sides, he just hated stupidity and her Dad had been spectacularly stupid dragging that harpy hag of hell into the flat. Trying to think about it objectively, which was so not going to last because she wanted to hurt someone, preferably with a cricket bat until there was actual red blood, but before she got all worked up about it again, she tried to focus on the expression on Sherlock’s face when her Dad had brought that snake into the flat. He had been absolutely outraged.

Joss closed her eyes, she really didn’t want to think about it because it made her want to cry again, so she buried her face in the soft pillows once more but before she could say anything else, Sherlock made an odd sort of noise as if he was clearing his throat. Joss began to raise her head in response but felt him push her back down again. “Sherlock” she complained bitterly face first in the pillow, but he spoke over the top of her.

“Jocelyn Jayne, you are to stay here with Mycroft for a few days, he will no doubt go to absurd lengths to spoil you and you should embrace this opportunity whole heartedly”

“Sherlock” Joss tried again but the man continued to ignore her

“I have ensured that Mycroft has your passport as he will probably insist on taking you to Milan for new clothes and possibly for a stopover at New York so that you can see a show, if he asks you which one make sure you choose “Mamma Mia” he utterly despises it”

“Sherlock!” The girl practically shrieked at him to make him shut up. He quirked his head and raised one eyebrow forbiddingly at her.

“Papa please, I just want to come home and see Dad” she whispered miserably

Sherlock stared at the tousled curls, Joss still hadn’t really turned around to look at him.

“No, my Joss” his voice was softer but still as adamant, “There are matters to be resolved” the words sounded rather ominous to Joss but before she could interrupt he continued “I have been
told repeatedly by fatuous people that time is a great healer” he snorted with disdain “In addition to allowing tempers to cool, and wiser minds to prevail” Sherlock spat out the clichés like they tasted of vomit on his tongue. “I will seriously make you suffer if you do not heed my shamefully spouted utter drivel clichéd words”

Joss had finally turned to stare at him as if he had completely lost his marbles, then a knowing little smirk crossed her lips and lightened her sad face

“You totally lost a bet with Uncle Mycroft didn’t you, he made you say those words.”

Chapter End Notes

Short little interlude, this time with Sherlock and Joss. Trying to give the Muse a cuddlicious cwtch to get the old creative stuff jumping, so its a bit of a nonentity but this will be the second chapter I have written for a story in two days.... yay go me. Hope you enjoy, not forgotten the plot ( could be the motto for my life at the moment!) but needed something smooth and easy to write. xx Hope its not utter rubbish.
Chapter 41

Chapter Summary

John watches the DVD of Mary and Joss.
Mycroft and Joss have a heart to heart or at least the Iceman listens whilst Joss talks.
Joss is determined to beat Mycroft at Bioshock.
Mycroft sends Joss home.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

John stared at the picture of Mary. An old long ignored ache in his heart made him rub his chest as he saw the physical clinical evidence of the disease which had killed her. The picture told him that she was very near to her death when this video had been made. She would have had about a month left if she had been lucky. Sometimes, just sometimes he hated the fact that he couldn’t turn his professional knowledge and experience off and be as unaware as the next punter of the bloody facts of life.

He stared at her, at the woman he had come to hate, at the woman who had kept his daughter from him, at the woman he did not want to forgive for any of it, but most importantly for leaving him in the first place when he had loved her so much, and when she was carrying his baby, his surviving baby and he could feel his eyes blur. This wasn’t the image he had carried in his mind for so long. The love in her eyes when she was speaking to Joss loosened some of that old anger and resentment. He still wasn’t sure that he could ever forgive her for keeping Joss away from him but he couldn’t bring himself to actively hate her anymore.

He had watched the DVD. It had felt like his necessary penance for hurting Joss. He knew he had hurt her and he knew he had a long way to go to make it up to her but something told him that the start of that journey was right there in front of him on the TV screen. So he had sat in the darkened living room and listened to Mary’s voice and her words and watched the snapshots of his daughter’s young life in front of him and allowed the tears to trail down his face even when he was smiling at Joss and Layla’s antics.

He was suddenly glad that he was alone to watch the DVD. There might be surveillance cameras in the room after the last sweep but John didn’t give a shit. He was almost used to Mycroft as big brother in both senses of the words. It was the thought of either Sherlock or Joss seeing him in such a state that made his stomach twist with nauseous anxiety.

He knelt in front of the screen and slowly raised his hand to tentatively touch the too pale and fragile face of the last image of Mary on the recording. He stroked his forefinger tenderly across her cheek and smiled through his tears. For the first and last time in nearly fifteen years, he spoke to Mary Morstan “You did her proud Love, she’s a beautiful kid inside and out. Thank you”

His voice was hoarse with the host of emotions running riot through his body but he gave her one last smile before switching the player off. The room was plunged into darkness again.

John didn’t bother to make his way to the bedroom. He didn’t want to spend the night in the bed that belonged to both he and Sherlock. Not until they were both in the same bed at the same time at any rate. If he went to sleep there and Sherlock wasn’t with him when he woke up because of
his own damn fault, well that was a bit too much on the side of hair short and whip self punishment. It would hurt too damn much. No, living room, couch, mantelpiece skull and the luminous yellow smiley face on the wall would suit him fine. He had slept in worse places, at least no one was shooting at him. Though the mood Sherlock left in and Mycroft’s tone of voice when he had called him could indicate that he needed to add yet to the previous sentence. He toed off his shoes, loosened his belt and lay on the couch. If it was a good enough resting place for now. How much sleep he was going to get with the events of the evening and the images from the DVD running through his brain was debatable.

“Come home Joss, please.” Her father’s words echoed in her head, she couldn’t stop thinking about them. She had been thinking about them all afternoon since she had actually called her Dad and now it was nearly time for Uncle Mycroft to be home for the evening. She was in Uncle Mycroft’s living room, or one of them. The one where she was convinced that he had the entertainment system installed whilst she had been sleeping the first night there. It looked too new and sparkly and pristine to have been touched before. Besides which, there was no way she could see her Uncle Myc playing on any of the games consoles by himself, even with the huge flat TV screen. He had been intrigued with the “Bioshock” games though after he had confiscated them because of the mature rating. He had liked the world building which was a pain because so had she and she could hear him mutter about power hungry fools who missed all the proper opportunities and couldn’t govern their way out of a paper bag.

She was convinced that Uncle Mycroft would have had Rapture licked into shape within days if he had ever got there.

It was really fun staying with Uncle Myc, and he had stopped giving her the frown of death every time she called him that, only a long suffering sigh and roll of the eyes which was startling enough on the face of the most impassive man in the Country. But she always called him Uncle Mycroft in front of his hordes of minions, except for Andrea, because she was Andrea and she knew everything anyway. Joss had a sneaking suspicion that Andrea could be even scarier than Uncle Myc if she put her mind to it, not that she wanted to find out. Ever.

Uncle Mycroft had said that it would be best to wait a while before speaking to her Dad, that they both needed time to calm down. He hadn’t outright ordered her not to contact her father but she wasn’t sure he was going to be impressed that she had called her Dad without telling him she was going to do it first. Maybe telling was the wrong verb, the way Uncle Myc was still really cross about Dad, not that he showed her he was angry but there was a certain look in his eyes when she mentioned him or talked about going home. Maybe the verb was asking, maybe she should have used her common sense and asked Uncle Myc. Not that he wouldn’t know she had called him. It was just that she didn’t want him to think she had gone behind his back, even though she had. Shit she was so confused, she had needed to speak to her Dad but she didn’t want to upset Uncle Myc.

Where the hell was Sherlock? He hadn’t been back and it sounded like he hadn’t been home after speaking to her Dad. Sherlock normally cut straight through the emotional crap because he couldn’t handle it. She smiled faintly, then tensed up as she heard the front door open and Uncle Myc greet Thomas the Butler slash bodyguard slash Cook person. She was never very sure what he actually did. But he always looked professional.

She wasn’t scared of Uncle Myc, not since their heart to heart in MacDonald’s but she was just nervous about upsetting him. She looked up at him with a small smile as he came through the door looking as immaculate as when he had left after breakfast in the morning.

Before she could tease him about it, he told her coolly “Come along Jocelyn Jayne, Andrea is waiting to take you back to Baker Street. Your clothes and other belongings will be dropped off
later”

Joss stared at him in shock, “Uncle Myc” she started to ask but he shook his head gently “I have to a small task which will take me away for a few days my dear and now that you are speaking to your father again” Joss winced but he continued on as if he hadn’t noticed “then you really should return to Baker Street”. He turned stiffly away from her and she stared at his tense shoulders and neck.

She moved until she stood behind him, close enough to touch but not so close that he would feel uncomfortable. She didn’t know why everyone else even her Dad and Sherlock had a hard time understanding him. She knew exactly what he was feeling now, even if he tried the uninterested cold act on her. She reached forward and slid her hand into his. She felt his grip tighten for a second and then start to release her but she tightened her fingers around his stubbornly.

“Uncle Mycroft” she insisted and he finally turned to look down at her. “Thank you” She tugged at his hand as he was about to interrupt her again.

“Please don’t Uncle Myc, I need to tell you this please” She widened her eyes and tilted her head as she looked up at him, he paused and allowed her to continue, a small smirk on his lips that let her know he knew that she was trying to manipulate him and that he was allowing her to do so. She grinned back at him but then her lips thinned as she tried to explain what she needed him to know.

“I love Dad and Sherlock and they are my home now. But you have to know that I love you too, and you make me feel safe” She could almost see the words forming before they came out of his mouth, she continued hurriedly. Damn it he wasn’t going to stop her mid flow. She didn’t know if she had the words to make him understand but she had to try.

“Not because of what you do, where you work or your gadgets or minions or your horrible, horrible big black cars” She grinned wickedly at him when his eyebrow rose in that distinctive Holmes way, but she saw the amusement in his eyes, then she sobered again, her voice quieter but no less earnest. “You make me feel safe because of you Mycroft Holmes the person. I, I haven’t felt safe since Mum was diagnosed, felt like I was walking on a tightrope most days, with sharks underneath waiting for me to fall and just gobble me up.” She paused and then her solemn eyes met his. “Dad and Sherlock and you are my family. You all mean everything to me. They are important in so many ways but they can’t make me feel safe the same way you do. Do you understand Uncle Myc? So I wanted to tell you how much I love you and appreciate you before you chuck me out of your house”

The last sentence wobbled a little but she tried valiantly to smile her way through it. She moved into his personal space and hugged him tightly. He didn’t say anything just put a hand on her head and stroked her hair, before finally pushing her away gently. “Andrea is waiting for you my dear” he prompted calmly though his smooth voice was slightly uneven but she knew better than to look at his face. “Okay” she muttered and moved towards the door, trying to hide the fact that she was wiping her eyes.

She stopped at the door, half turned back towards him, face solemn as she asked quietly “Uncle Myc, I can come and stay with you again right?” She looked up at him with anxious expectation.

“You may come and stay here whenever you like even if I am out of the country at the time. This will always be a haven for you Jocelyn Jayne” His prompt unswerving response brought a relieved smile to her lips but as he began to smile back at her, he saw her sweet relieved expression change into a wicked challenging grin “ Soooooo, does that mean I get to beat you at Bioshock Uncle Myc?”

He scowled at her and raised an imperious arm towards the door, “Out you brat” he ordered and managed to keep the laughter in until he heard the front door close behind her naughty giggles.
Chapter End Notes

A year since the previous update, doesn't time fly when you are having fun and believe me Joss was having fun with Uncle Mycroft. He spoilt her rotten. Who am I to stop that?
Anyway Joss nagged me and made me write this even though I am coming close to finishing Second Chances, so have some Joss and Uncle Mycroft fluffy interaction and enjoy. it shouldn't be a year til the next update but I am not guaranteeing that. ;0)
xx

End Notes

Disclaimer: No infringement intended, just playing in the wonderful world of BBC Sherlock.

Works inspired by this one: Impossible Equation by Grovehove

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