M is for Mummy

by MoiraiThanatoio

Summary

John Watson, the Holmes clan, and national security - Oh my.
John Watson, enjoying a rare bit of London sunshine, sighed as the BMW swung a U-turn and pulled to the curb next to him. He glanced down at the Tesco bag hanging from his hand and shrugged. Nothing perishable, just the random requests of his mad flatmate. At least there was no milk to go off.

Some people would have been alarmed when the heavily tinted window rolled down and a blond man with hard features and flat eyes assessed him with a heavy stare. John simply waited.

“John Watson.”

It wasn’t a question and John didn’t pretend it was… he just dipped his head in a quick confirmatory nod.

“Get in the car.”

This was beginning to feel less like Mycroft’s usual involvement. His delay in complying was clearly not appreciated.

“Get in the car, or I will make you get in the car.”

John looked both ways down the street, sighed, met the single-point gaze of the CCTV camera across the street and raised an eyebrow.

Then he got in the car.

Before the door had finished closing, the car was moving. It swung through London traffic with a distinct disregard for health and safety. John was comforted that at least, in this kidnapping, there would be plenty of traffic camera results to track where he’d been taken.

“This isn’t quite up to the usual standard of Mercedes and driver.” His occasionally smartass brain apparently didn’t appreciate the driver’s silence. Sherlock’s influence kicked in when he didn’t get a reply. “And while that’s a rather crisp example of a Seville Row suit, you’re not quite the usual PA either.”

A quick flick of emotionless blue eyes in his direction had John smirking faintly.

“I wasn’t sent by Mycroft Holmes.”

Shifting in his seat, John pulled the belt a tad tighter and lost the smirk. Well, that wasn’t good. But he didn’t seem to be headed for a concussion and a Semtex vest either…

The day had just started.

John had barely opened his mouth to question his kidnapper when his attention was caught by the brick wall at the end of the alley that they were driving down at a very high rate of speed. Unwillingly, his muscles began to tense as he braced himself in the car. Just as he was starting to cry out in shock, the wall flipped up.

Blinking, John swung his head around. The brick wall was backed with steel. Closing just as swiftly as it had opened, lights in what was now revealed to be a tunnel flicking on to illuminate a very narrow track through brick, stone, and steel.
John let the tension flow out of his muscles, this kidnapping being quite exhausting so far, and concentrated on not getting dizzy as the walls flashed by the windows of the car.

When the car finally jerked to a stop, John was thoroughly lost. The driver took the keys, stepped out of the car, and let the door slam. A sound which seemed to echo in the not nearly well enough lit cavern.

John’s door opened just abruptly. And this time the driver had a gun in his hand, the silencer probably not necessary this far from any observers.

“Get out of the car.”

John complied, biding his time.

He was led, the man directing only with short gestures of the gun barrel, towards a door that opened onto a familiar sight - the frantic busy aspect of medical professionals outside an operating room.

“Get to work, Doctor Watson.”

John stared at the man but the bustling crowd had heard his name.

“Is that the surgeon?”

The woman had the sort of capable no-nonsense attitude John remembered from his Army days. She studied him in a quick up/down glance before gesturing sharply at two male orderlies.

John turned away, back to his kidnapper. “You’ve made a mistake. I can’t operate on anyone. I have…”

He was interrupted. “An intermittent tremor in your left hand. However, Dr. Watson, the demands of the situation must.”

“If you’re done posturing?” The nurse interrupted. “Nurse Chastain,” she said to John. She took his elbow and none-too-gently guided him to a set of x-rays and scans. The orderlies were tugging at his jacket and clothes, a surgical gown and scrubs waiting.

“Patient is a Caucasian female, sixty-two, one gunshot wound to the abdomen.”

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John was tired, bloody tired. He giggled as he washed the literal blood from his hands, head hanging with exhaustion. To hell with residency days, six hours of surgery after a kidnapping that was preceded by a day of absolute boredom locum work and that preceded by a night of no-sleep as a result of violin concertos, that was the definition of exhaustion.

When he looked up from the sink, his kidnapper was staring at him. The expectant, eyebrow lifted gaze was more irritating than anything, but John was well accustomed to living with irritation.

“She’ll live,” he answered the unspoken question. “The spleen isn’t quite necessary, but her GP will need to know… or the ward doctor if she’s headed for prison.”

That startled a chuckle out of the other man.

“For now, it’ll be a bit before she comes out from under the sedation. You’ve got a good team here. Don’t quite know why you needed me.”
“Because you can be trusted, Dr. Watson.”

John just stared, the opening of the door the only thing to break his gaze.

“Doctor, she’s coming around.”

John blinked. “Already?”

They moved into the operating room that had, by necessity, been used for recovery. His patient was indeed stirring vaguely. Looking about grumpily, taking in the surroundings, and letting one of the orderlies offer her a drink of water from a glass with a straw. Her hand, thankfully the one without the IV, shook slightly as she raised it to scratch at her short white hair. She flapped it vaguely at the orderly who took this as a distinct command, clearing from the room with the otherwise silent Nurse Chastain.

John stepped forward to take her pulse and check her vitals. “I’m John Watson,” he began only to be interrupted immediately.

“I know who you are.”

Her voice was weak, but gruff, deeper than he’d expected and accompanied by the sharp stare of a pair of pale eyes. She watched him with the glaze of sedation and the acuity of someone with power.

Her stare flicked to his kidnapper. “Determined to make every situation a complete clusterfuck, aren’t you?”

The man actually had the presence of mind to drop his gaze for an instant before answering her. “You needed a surgeon of whom there was no doubt.”

“And the usual?”

“You were shot by your own security detail. The on call was in question.”

Her gaze flicked back to John, standing by in confusion. “Well, John Watson, I presume I shall live?”

Cheeky, impossible, stubborn, grumpy woman. John liked her, his lips quirking just slightly as he answered. “As long as you weren’t too attached to having a spleen, you likely won’t notice much difference after the healing is done.”

Her lips pursed as if to repress a smile and she looked once more to John’s kidnapper. “You might want to let them in before he gets destructive.”

His expression was affronted. “No one could locate…”

The sharp series of raps on the exterior door had him falling into silence. With a serious air of frustration, the man exited the room. But when he opened the exterior door, John truly relaxed.

“Seven,” Sherlock’s voice proclaimed with disdain. “I insist that you return my blogger.”

“In here,” John answered the non-existent question.

A couple of quick footsteps and then Sherlock paused in the door. His gaze flicked a quick examination of John even as his coat finished settling around him. Then, in a complete absence of concern, Sherlock’s attention turned to the bed that he approached with something resembling…
Dare John even think it? Humility.

Sherlock didn’t speak, just stood next to the bed gazing at its occupant who stared back for a long moment before flapping her hand at him.

“Don’t fret so, I’m fine,” she grumbled irritably. A state belied by the sheer presence of herself in an operating theatre.

Sherlock didn’t respond, didn’t nod, just turned on his heel and strode for John’s kidnapper.

“You,” he declared with venom, pinning his subject with a glare, “are seriously incompetent. The newest addition to the detail was obviously a Romanian mercenary, if you had even bothered to look at his nail beds with the vaguest of glances. I do hate to repeat myself, but you are clearly the least qualified Seven I have ever had the misfortune to meet.”

Seeming to shiver with repressed rage, Sherlock’s mouth twisted into a scornful grimace. “You might seriously consider the hormone supplements if a testosterone deficiency is affecting your thought processes so severely.”

John was lost, as usual, but his kidnapper was showing signs of imminent rage.

“Sherlock!” His patient barked the single name in a voice of command. It had the clearly desired effect of bringing the consulting detective to silence. Then she turned her venom to the subject of his deductions. “And you,” the pause was ominous, “should you ever raise a hand to my son, I will have you killed.”

John’s mind was circling around ‘son’ and he barely noticed the fist, tightly clenched, hovering at his kidnapper’s side.

“Mycroft take Sherlock and John home. This is not conducive to rest.”

Having the vague suspicion that his jaw was hanging open; John hadn’t noticed Mycroft joining them. But, yes, there he was leaning casually against the door jamb watching them all as if at the theatre and straightening with the aspect of a naughty schoolboy. “Of course, Mummy,” was the mild reply as Mycroft gestured to the exit.

John was fairly certain his brain still hadn’t caught up as he was settled into the much more familiar Mercedes, his Tesco bag already waiting for him. Sherlock had entered the car first and was curled into the far side of the seat, scowling out the window at the tunnel wall.

“I operated on…”

Mycroft answered John’s conclusive thoughts, a hand on the car’s door as he leaned over. “Our mother - quite adeptly so according to the initial report. We have a typical surgeon’s fee in these situations. I’ll have that deposited to your account.” His focus shifted off John, “Sherlock, do try and not antagonize the driver this time.”
Chapter Summary

John finds himself drawn deeper into the Holmes web as he's the most convenient individual to terminate a rather irritatingly slippery terrorist.

(Or, Mummy totally did not like that BS Skyfall plot....)

Chapter Notes

While I completely respect that Judi Densch is probably looking to retire from action movies, I cannot accept Mummy's retirement or death so easily...

I reject your reality and happily substitute my own!

Interview room his arse…

John rattled the handcuffs that secured him to the chair. He was starting to wonder if he’d lost his mind. He’d shot a man in a police uniform. He was damn lucky he hadn’t received a beating in addition to being arrested on the spot.

The door slammed open and a smug look preceded the Chief Superintendent into the room. His portly form settled into the chair across the table from John with a superior look. John should have done more than break his nose back when the bastard had arrested Sherlock and him.

“Oh, we have you now, Watson. The murder of an officer? You’ll be staring at the inside of a cell for a long time over this… Just like that mad bastard Holmes deserved.”

John swallowed down the ire that rose at the mention of his dead friend. He focused on the detail that would, if not exonerate him, at least ease the resentment.

“He wasn’t an officer. Unless you’re now taking applicants with cyanotic lesions and active addiction problems.”

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John glanced down at the picture on his phone. A set of GPS coordinates and the face of a man with white blond hair and intense eyes.

What was he doing?

On the strength of a series of text messages, he’d grabbed his very illegal firearm and come here. The place was crawling with security, with police, and John shook his head. This was madness.

But he didn’t turn around.
An expensive sedan was parked on the side street that corresponded to the coordinates. He walked down the short length of pavement and watched the dots on his phone line up. As he looked up, the door in front of him was opening.

It was him.

The face matched the picture, but the scent of gunpowder was something no photo could convey. John feared he was too late yet again, failing once more to save a Holmes…

But he’d be damned if this one was going to walk away from it.

Three shots and the man was down, bleeding out on the marble while lifeless eyes stared at the ceiling. A police uniform, John noted, but immediately discounted as a ruse. Too damn long spent with Sherlock, he could see the signs around the nail beds, in the whites of the eyes – so many clues that denied his clothing.

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“You were arrested standing over the body with a firearm in your hand, Watson. Do you deny this?”

John met the Superintendent’s gaze calmly. “No, of course not. I received instruction to be there and had reason to believe the man was dangerous.”

“Oh yes, these text messages… from the British government?” He scoffed. “Yet when we go to check it, your phone doesn’t seem to show any such messages.”

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John leaned against the door to the outside world, praying that there wouldn’t be any gawkers standing around this time. He didn’t know how much longer he’d be able to stay in 221B between the harassment and the expense. Oh, Mrs. Hudson hadn’t made any sign about throwing him out or needing more money, but John wasn’t a fool.

London was an expensive city… That’s how he’d ended up here in the first place.

His phone chimed an incoming message before he could even open the door. Then a second and a third immediately afterwards.

John cursed, the damn news agents had gotten ahold of his new number hadn’t they? He almost didn’t check the messages. Then, once he had, nearly dropped the phone in his scramble to get back upstairs.

Assassin targeting Mummy – MH

Come at once – MH

Shoot to kill authorized, all consequences will be handled. – MH

Then, as he slid his Sig Sauer under his coat, a face and a location in a final message, John didn’t know why Mycroft was contacting him about this… But he would not fail another Holmes.

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There was a knock at the door to the interview room. As the Superintendent looked up, the door opened to admit a slender young man in a cardigan looking ridiculously like a lost puppy. The
expression cleared when the new arrival laid eyes on John, shifting immediately into incredibly satisfied.

“My apologies for the delay, Dr. Watson, traffic is a bit of a nightmare at the moment.”

“And who the bloody hell are you?” The Superintendent interrupted, clearly outraged.

“Quartermaster, MI6,” was the cold response. “Perhaps you can explain why you are detaining one of my agents?”

John kept his face blank. He’d been fairly confident that Mycroft was going to get him out of this… but this was hardly what he’d expected.

For an instant, the Superintendent lost his confidence. Then, scoffing, he replied, “Watson? You must be joking.”

“Hardly,” he drawled. “I don’t consider this a joking matter,” the Quartermaster continued with the lift of an eyebrow.

John felt a chill skate down his skin at the inflection of the words. Could this be? He looked closely at the man, but he was clearly not Sherlock… A wrong shape of the chin, of the eyes, but damn. Cursing the false hope, knowing his friend was dead, John sighed.

The Quartermaster shot him a glance, having heard even the slight exhalation, and rolled his shoulders. “We shan’t be tolerating your tedious bullying any further.”

He removed a folded sheaf of papers from inside his cardigan. “Dr. Watson’s authorizations, for activity and firearms. Should your ballistics department find any additional matches to his weapon, please note the date… Dr. Watson has been under Her Majesty’s protection since his return from Afghanistan.”

Straightening, the Quartermaster continued, “And I can assure you, his actions in combat are well outside of your jurisdiction. Now, you will release Dr. Watson and we shall be leaving immediately.”

The Superintendent continued spluttering as he flipped through the few pages. Then, at whatever he was reading, the bluster began to fade. By the time he’d reached the bottom of the relatively short stack, his face was darkening into an alarming shade of maroon but he was pulling the keys from his pocket.

“Our apologies, Dr. Watson,” was practically snarled in his ear as John was released.

He stood, rubbing at his wrists, and followed when the Quartermaster gestured to the door. They stepped through, continuing down a short hallway, and John kept his eyes focused ahead in an attempt to ignore the accusing glances.

Only once they’d cleared the building and were approaching a sleek black town car did John speak again.

“I’m not a government agent.”

The Quartermaster scoffed. “You regularly act in deference to Queen and Country, Dr. Watson. Precisely how would you define the position?”

John stopped at the door to the car, turning to look the other man in the eye. “You can tell Mycroft…”
“Mycroft didn’t send me,” was the quick interruption. “This,” a fey smile that lightened serious features, “was a personal debt.”

There was a tapping behind the closed car door and they both startled. John’s companion huffed a heavy sigh and then opened the car door with a sharp jerk. The source of the tapping was instantly revealed as Mycroft sat there with umbrella still raised staring at them with impatience.

The Quartermaster snapped out, “Really, Mycroft?!” and quickly fell silent.

John realized why when Mrs. Holmes slid forward on the seat next to Mycroft, becoming visible where she had previously been hidden behind her oldest son. Her mouth was pursed as she considered them.

Then, with a jerk of the head, she said simply, “John, Q, get in the car.”

They complied, John sliding across the seat until he was opposite the woman whose life he had started all this to save. For the second time, since he had first met her over a scalpel and a bullet wound. They were silent as Q pulled the door shut.

A voice from the front seat interrupted. “The estate in Sussex, Ma’am?”

Mrs. Holmes growled, it was the closest approximation John could think of to the noise of irritation. “The estate of which you are supposed to be unaware? That will be acceptable, Bond. I suppose there is no point in telling you not to eavesdrop.”

There was no reply.

John spoke up. “You can just drop me off on Baker Street.”

The other occupants of the car simply stared at him. It was dually unnerving and made him miss Sherlock all anew. It was also quite obvious that he would be allowed out of the car only when they were ready to permit.

“What do you know of the man you killed this morning, Dr. Watson?”

John directed his attention to Mrs. Holmes. “That was the first I’d seen or heard of him. Mycroft said it was an assassination attempt.”

“Mycroft personally informed you of this?”

John turned to look at Mycroft who was considering him with a steady stare. “No, it was a text message from Sherlock’s old number. I assumed…”

“You assumed,” Mrs. Holmes bit off with clear disapproval.

He turned back to her with iron creeping into his spine. He had killed to save this woman, but she was not his mother to berate him. “I have never been misled by a Holmes. I did not believe my trust was misplaced… Or was I incorrect?”

She didn’t answer the question. Instead she directed her attention to the man sitting next to him. “And what do you have to say for yourself?”

Q pushed his glasses up and folded his hands in his lap. “My projections indicated that without MI6 interference, the task was going to take upwards of two years. This would have resulted in unacceptable parameters at conclusion.”
“So you decided to utilize government resources, subvert our internal security, release a dangerous fugitive, purely on the off chance that said individual would be killed publicly in the attempt? Do you truly believe that I am not aware that you intentionally circumvented protocols to allow his virus, which you previously identified, into our systems?”

“You’ve been very naughty, Sherrinford,” came the interjection from the front seat of the car.

“Oh, shut up, Bond,” Mrs. Holmes said at the same time as Q bit off, “Bond, stuff it.”

John’s gaze caught back and forth before he stumbled. “Wait, Sherrinford?”

The Quartermaster, as he’d identified himself, Q, as Mrs. Holmes identified him, sighed. Mrs. Holmes stared at him for a moment, waiting for him to speak. Her sense of irritation outpaced his remorse, apparently.

“My youngest son, Dr. Watson. A menace, it seems, despite previously not indicating the tendencies his brothers have expressed.”

Mycroft finally spoke up. “In Sherrinford’s defense, the tactic was quite successful. Collapse of the remaining network was immediate and he should arrive at the estate shortly before us.”

Mrs. Holmes closed her eyes for a moment. John couldn’t imagine the depth of patience required to deal with her children, he’d only ever been partially responsible for one.

“John,” when she finally spoke, her voice was softened. “I am going to make you an offer, based on the extraordinary services you have provided your country. If you take it, I will have Bond stop the car and you will exit. After that moment, you will never again be faced with the special challenges that come from association with our manner of individual. MI6 will arrange to have you resettled in the country of your choice and the profession of your choosing. However, should you decide to remain in the vehicle and continue with us to the Holmes estate, you will be listed as a consultant and be called upon as necessary.”

The car began to slow and John looked out the window to the type of nondescript lay by that occurred throughout the motorway system.

“I will need you to make a decision now, of course.”

John met Mrs. Holmes calm stare and leaned back into the leather seat. “I made my decision the day I met your son and I have never regretted it.”

“Never?” she asked, impeccable and cold in the seat across from him.

John looked away, gazing out the window as the car resumed movement. “Never.”

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The Holmes estate was almost exactly what John had always expected. No one swanned about in designer suits and bespoke shirts with so little care for their belongings as Sherlock had… without growing up with money. They passed through artfully dilapidated stone gates that concealed multiple cameras. The car continued past a photographic copse of woods and over a smallish river.

The final approach to the house revealed it to be set on a rise, surrounded entirely by the river that branched around the enclosing lawns, with no cover at all in the form of trees or shrubbery. There was a section of gardens just visible at the ear, complete with what appeared to be a hedge maze, well beyond the more secured house.
Mycroft interrupted John’s reverie, commenting, “It’s a lovely property, isn’t it, Dr. Watson?”

John met his look flatly, pursing his lips. “It explains quite a lot, actually.”

They all chose to ignore the snort from the front of the car.

“The house has been added onto over the years, of course. The early Holmes were granted the land by the first King William.”

John simply ignored Mycroft, rolling his eyes at the pretension but impressed all the same. The view was even better when they stepped out of the car, looking up at the façade and noting all the modern security precautions hidden so neatly in shadows and crevices. This was a family manor, yes, but it was also a fortress.

Mrs. Holmes ushered them into the front hall, though she gave Bond a heavy stare when he lingered near Sherrinford. The servant who had opened the door upon their arrival was quickly dismissed with instructions to deliver a tea service and she led them further down the hall into a front parlor.

Their odd little group spread out around the room and John went for the windows. Staring out over the grounds, he wondered exactly why he was so determined to remain with them. He could have started over, gotten away from all this.

His hand shook at the very idea.

Shoving his hands into his trouser pockets, John hunched his shoulders against a perceived. There was the quiet snick of a door latch in the room behind him, vaguely audible over the patches of low voiced conversation occurring between the others.

Mrs. Holmes’ voice was clear as she spoke up, “You couldn’t have waited for the tea to be served?”

But John only turned when he heard his name spoken by a voice he hadn’t expected to ever hear again.

“John.”

It was Sherlock.

Standing awkwardly near a side door, clad in one of his suits that hung poorly. His friend had clearly lost at least a few stone, probably weight that his thin form could barely afford. His hair was cropped shorter than John had ever seen and dyed a sallow golden color.

John didn’t remember even considering walking closer, but he found himself a pace away from Sherlock in the next breath.

The smile Sherlock bestowed on him was one of those rare genuine articles, lightening his features from the heavy weight that was bearing on him. “John,” he breathed out on the faint air of a sigh.

Before even considering the idea, John had drawn back his left arm and punched him in the face. He gasped for breath, staring down at his friend sprawled on the floor. John’s aching fist was clutched close to his stomach.

Sherlock simply closed his eyes and slumped into the hardwood. “I daresay I deserved that.”

“You certainly did,” his mother commented from across the room.
John felt a tap at his shoulder. Moving his gaze, he noted that Bond had carried a scotch over to him in a short heavy glass. As much as it appealed, he’d flirted too closely with the family curse after the funeral. Taking it with a nod of thanks, John leaned down and offered his hand to Sherlock.

“All right then, up with you.”

Handing over the scotch as soon as Sherlock as standing, John ushered his friend to a chair and noticed the staff bringing the tea service into the room. The older man who’d originally opened the front door to them approached him with an ice pack in hand.

“Knowing Sherlock as we do, sir, I thought this might be required.”

John accepted it with a chuckle, “Thanks.”

When Sherlock moved as if to stand from where he’d been placed, John placed the ice pack against his face none too gently and sat himself on the arm of the chair. He looked around the room – Mycroft playing Mummy at the tea service, Mrs. Holmes glaring at how close her youngest was seated to her agent, and Sherlock mumbling to himself beside him.

“Bloody Holmeses,” John muttered to himself, not wishing a single thing different.

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