A home where you are

by PlainJane

Summary

Sequel to "A house in the country."

John and Sherlock are settling into their bond and their impending parenthood. But the threat they thought had passed with Jim Moriarty's arrest has only just begun. Mycroft Holmes carries the burden of the threat, and the stress begins to threaten his health and his marriage to Greg.

Added: cover art

Notes

Yes, this is an mpreg fic, so of course do not read if the idea squicks you out. Also, PLEASE pay attention to the eating disorder tag! There will be frank depictions and discussions about disordered eating--be mindful of your triggers and take care of yourself.

There will be a really happy ending. Disgustingly happy. So hang in there :)
Prologue

“Sherlock, love, what have you done with the — never mind. Found them.”

John Watson was bustling about the large, airy green and gold Georgian bedroom and its en suite gathering their belongings for the trip back to London. It had been another lovely long weekend at Coventry Court.

After a relatively boring but time-consuming case involving a stolen patent, three days of fresh air and catching up on sleep had been welcome. Even Sherlock Holmes could admit it. He’d found recently that maintaining his preferred long periods of restless wakefulness during cases was becoming increasingly difficult.

Even so, they were both anxious to get back to town.

Sherlock sat on the edge of the eighteenth-century canopy bed staring out through the mullioned windows. One hand rested easily on his tummy. “I always put the razors in the bottom left drawer,” he said casually. “You should know that by now.”

Sherlock turned to watch his alpha walk to the large wooden chest at the foot of the bed. John began heedlessly stuffing their pants and socks into the black case that had been set there. Sherlock eased himself up, not without a little wobbling, and moved to relieve his mate of this task. “John, honestly. How can a military man be such a careless packer?”

“It’s laundry now, Sherlock. Doesn’t have to be neat just to get it back to 221B for washing.”

Sherlock harrumphed a little, carefully re-ordering the bag while John did another scan of the room for any left items.

“Okay, then. I think we’ve got everything,” John said pleasantly. He placed a gentle hand in the small of Sherlock’s back and massaged lightly.

This slightly possessive and oddly soothing gesture had become habit right after John found out about the baby. The thought made the detective smile in spite of himself.

“Ready?”

Sherlock nodded, allowing the shorter man to guide him out of the room and down the panelled corridor to the main staircase. He reached for the banister, not at all surprised when John took him firmly by his other elbow. This, too, had become habit recently. And not without reason.

Sherlock had found his centre of gravity somewhat compromised once he passed his fourth month. The more his belly grew, the less graceful he became. He hated it, and he was less than enthusiastic about some of the other aspects of pregnancy: he had despised being sick; he was thoroughly unimpressed with being awash in hormones; and he was mildly traumatized by the fact that he was growing out of his clothing.

Still, he could not deny the fascination the process held for him. While he had been prepared from the start to suffer whatever he must in order to have this experience with his alpha (whom he loved dearly, in defiance of all reason) he had discovered (much to his surprise) that he was quite taken with the idea of a new life inside him. A new life that would be the embodiment of the deep and profound connection he shared with John Watson — his partner, his mate and his best friend.

So to fill the time between the sporadic cases from the Met, commenting on John’s blog entries (ridiculously romanticized), his ongoing Moriarty project and increasingly less frequent private commissions, Sherlock had his research relating to what the foetus might be able to hear or sense. He had developed several charts to track the baby’s growth and development. He was performing experiments to test various old breeders’ tales about pregnancy (he had been particularly alarmed to hear about “baby brain” and was pleased to note that, thus far, he had exhibited none of the symptoms). He had even developed an experiment to test the territorial responses of an alpha during their omega’s gestation period (though he had not yet discussed this with John).

Thus, in spite of the irritating loss of some of the things he deemed most valuable in his “transport,” he did not complain when his mate moved to stabilize him on the steps.

“I still can’t believe you were originally planning to turn this whole place into a lab,” John remarked as they reached the bottom of the grand stairs. He set their case down and made his way across the marble-tiled entry hall to the small cloakroom near the entrance to the parlour.
“I don’t see why it surprises you,” Sherlock replied. “You know my tastes and habits. And I had no other use for a house in the country. At the time.”

John had returned from the cloakroom, his own jacket already on and Sherlock’s Belstaff (which now no longer fastened but with which Sherlock was not prepared to part, even in the cold weather) in hand. “I know, but it’s such a beautiful old pile! How could you even think about filling it with toxic chemicals and cadavers?”

Sherlock made an impatient noise as he allowed John to help him into his coat. “When my parents left this house to me and to my brother, I had little interest in it. Later, when my work became paramount, I could see the value in having a larger facility for carrying out my experiments. Mycroft had no need of this place. I’d hoped he might simply give it up if I could give him sound reasons for my needing it.”

“Remind me to buy your brother a bottle of single malt for refusing to let you turn the rose garden into a body farm.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes as John picked up their case. They made their way to the door.

“I suppose, in a way, we have a lot to thank Moriarty for,” John mused, punching the security code into the panel beside the door. He scooted them both through it and slammed the heavy oak slab shut behind him, swiftly turning to lock the deadbolt.

“That isn’t funny, John.”

“I don’t mean —” John sighed. “It’s just that you and I would never have met if those stupid laws hadn’t been passed. You’d never have asked Mycroft to come here for your heats. And he wouldn’t have gone looking for me. And we wouldn’t be bonded or expecting a baby or now enjoying this place as an occasional weekend retreat…instead of as a research facility.”

“We don’t know that.” Sherlock considered the laws of probability as he allowed John to usher him into their hired black Land Rover. “I was well-acquainted with your old friend, Stamford. You were struggling to make ends meet on your return from Afghanistan. And I was looking for a flatshare. Perhaps…”

John chuckled. “Yeah, all right. You win.” He closed the driver’s door and rounded the vehicle. Sherlock inserted the key into the ignition as his mate jumped into the passenger seat and secured his own door. “I still wish you would let me drive.”

The Land Rover rumbled to life and Sherlock smirked as he put it into gear. “Oh, I think we’re much safer this way, don’t you?” The gravel drive crunched beneath the tires as they pulled away from the house.

John took one last look before they rounded the corner out onto the long, tree-lined road to the edge of the property. “Maybe we should take Mycroft up on his offer of a car and driver for coming out here.”

“No.”

“Don’t be stubborn. It may get to the point where you won’t be comfortable behind the wheel.”

“I dislike being in my brother’s debt,” Sherlock said tersely.

“I know,” John replied gently. He patted Sherlock’s thigh. “Funny how often we are, though.” The alpha pondered this for a moment. “I guess, when you get down to it, it’s Mycroft we ought to be thanking, isn’t it?”
Mycroft Holmes stood on the tarmac, sheltered from the relentless drizzle by his trusty brolly. It was a miserable, wintry day to be standing outside, but needs must.

He watched passively as the small Gulfstream jet landed and taxied toward the unassuming, grey government hangar he had made certain would be deserted for the occasion. The airfield itself was secluded, but he did not intend that any unnecessary personnel should have access to the events about to take place — in addition to himself and his assistant, only an SAS advance team and four MI5 agents were present.

Ordinarily, he would not trouble himself to oversee a prisoner transfer, but this particular offender was special. And the crimes for which he was to answer in America had been very personal to Mycroft.

One simply could not allow such a thing to pass.

The Real Rape laws had been repealed just before New Year. Omegas (including his own wilful younger brother) — who had been threatened with forced bonding and breeding, as well as the loss of reproductive choice — were once again protected citizens under the law. Though seeing to the removal of the hideous legislation had proven to be a much easier task than the cleanup that followed.

“Sir?”

Mycroft turned to acknowledge the senior MI5 operative in attendance. “Yes, Agent Huang?”

She pressed her earpiece briefly, listening as further instructions were relayed, and then made eye contact once more. “They’re asking us to hold the prisoner inside. They’d like to escort him out.”

“Fine, fine,” Mycroft replied. He turned back to see the plane door opening. Three men and two women in dark suits exited as soon as the stairs were deployed.

One of the female agents (beta, single, east African descent, early forties, judo champion, smoker, command position by early thirties: Barker, team lead) offered a tense nod as she approached him.

“Mr. Holmes?”

“Agent Barker.”

“We appreciate your help in coordinating the transfer. My government would like to thank you for your cooperation in this matter.”

Mycroft’s chin tilted up. “As discussed with your superiors, our cooperation is contingent upon certain guarantees with regard to the prisoner.”

Agent Barker’s smile was forced. “Oh, don’t worry about him. No one will ever hear from James Moriarty again.”

“No public trial,” Mycroft said firmly. “Permanent incarceration.”

The American agent looked uncomfortable, but she nodded. “After an ugly impeachment and dozens of recalls in the Senate, my superiors are anxious to avoid any more televised coverage.”

Mycroft nodded, satisfied. “He’s inside, as requested.”

“Thank you, sir.”

As he watched Agent Barker remove her team to the hangar, Mycroft found himself craving a cigarette — something he had not done in more than eight years.
The whole omega plot business had placed a strain both on his office and his personal life. Ridiculously long hours, extreme secrecy and the worry about what might happen to Sherlock had merely added to his already stressful existence. And Moriarty’s capture had done little to alleviate the tension.

With the mad omega’s interrogation and the investigation of anyone who may have been involved in his plot, the coordination of the arrests of all conspirators and the purging of elected officials and bureaucrats alike, it was all Mycroft could do to manage three hours of sleep a night.

It had been months of hard work that — he hoped — were now coming to an end.

He had hardly seen Gregory in weeks, and their sex life had all but vanished. Even the vacation in Formentera he’d planned so carefully had been rudely interrupted by an emergency meeting in Washington. Now the very thought of his husband’s smiling eyes caused an ache in his gut. He pulled a small package of antacids from his pocket and popped another into his mouth. His PA had only just given him the package that morning and it was almost used up. He released a weary breath through his nose as he sucked on the chalky tablet and willed the burning in his belly and throat to dissipate.

Mycroft turned at the footsteps behind him. He watched without expression as Moriarty was led from the hangar and out onto the tarmac. He’d been wrapped in a cheap canvas jacket, though it had not been buttoned over his prison-issue grey trousers and shirt. The omega looked somewhat the worse for wear. His dark hair had grown long and somewhat shaggy, his dark eyes were bloodshot and his skin had grown pallid without access to sunlight.

He had been predictably uncooperative during his stay.

One thing had not changed. Moriarty’s smile — which evoked, for Mycroft, the evil lovechild of a shark and Carroll’s Cheshire Cat — was as lunatic as ever.

“Well, well,” he called, blinking the precipitation from his eyelashes as the American agents dragged him toward the plane. “Come to see me off, then, have you? I’m soooo honoured.”

“Don’t be,” Mycroft replied blandly. “I’m merely doing my job.”

Moriarty strained against the hold of his American escorts as he neared Mycroft’s position. Mycroft nodded at Agent Barker, who was now looking to him for direction. She in turn nodded at her team, who paused.

“Oh, no. This is so much more than your job, isn’t it?” Moriarty crooned. “This is payback, for the threat to your precious omega brother. And his pet ape.”

Mycroft tensed as the smaller man leaned in.

“But you’ve got me,” Moriarty whispered. “You’ve solved my little puzzle and now you’re going to lock me away. You must be so proud.”

“Not the word I would choose.”

“You think you’re very clever.”

“Only compared to some.”

“Oh, ho ho. I’m stung. Really. That was so very witty.”

Mycroft sighed. “Is there something you need to say before you depart? If so, I would advise you to make haste.”

Moriarty’s eyes gleamed. “Would you like to know a secret?” he whispered.

“I think we’ve learned from you everything we need to know.”

Moriarty cackled. “Poor dumb Alpha. You really have no idea what’s going on, do you?” The omega tsked, shaking his head. “Well, then. This is going to be so much more exciting for you. I don’t suppose you’re surprised any more often than Sherlock is.”

Mycroft scowled.

“Yes. Now you see, don’t you?”

“What I see is a man who is about to disappear.”
“A man might disappear, it’s true. But I think we both know I am so much more than a man,” Moriarty said softly. “This isn’t over, Mycroft Holmes.”

“Yes. It is.” Mycroft inclined his head in Agent Barker’s direction; her agents immediately resumed their progress to the private jet.

“No, it isn’t!” Moriarty ranted over his shoulder. “It’s not over, Holmes! Not for you! And not for your little brother!”

Mycroft waited until the plane had left the runway before he finally turned back to the car waiting at the side of the hangar. His PA, Juliet, was waiting with the door opened for him. She handed him his dossier.

“Sir, shall I…”

“If you would be so kind,” he replied brusquely.

She nodded. Rather than following him into the back of the black saloon, she waited until he was seated and closed the door behind him. Today she would ride up front.

Mycroft Holmes was not ordinarily given to fits of panic, but something about James Moriarty made his blood run cold. Not over. Not over? What did he mean?

His belly churned and he was reminded that he had not eaten in two days. He opened the small compartment cleverly hidden between the cushions of the back seat. He removed a large carton of fairy cakes and took a bottle of M&S luxury Belgian chocolate milk from the cooler. He started to close the cabinet, but reconsidered. He reached in and removed the handful of Flake bars near the bottom as well, and three packets of crisps.

Mycroft stared out the window, his hand and his mouth moving of their own accord as his mind pondered the new worrisome development.

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Gregory Lestrade hit “Send” on the last of a series of reports he’d been putting off when there was a knock at his office door.

He glanced up to see John Watson peeking through the gap.

“Greg. Is this a bad time?”

“No, you’re all right,” Greg leaned back in his chair, somewhat relieved to be distracted from dealing with his cluttered email inbox. He’d received three over quota notices this week. The IT area coordinator had sent him a very cross memo. “What can I do for you?”

John slipped into the office and pushed the door closed. “Same as usual, really.” He dropped into the seat across from Greg and undid his jacket. “We’re back from the country, as of yesterday, so I just thought I would check in.”

“Bored, is he?”

“Painfully,” John agreed with a grimace.

“Moriarty’s web not keeping him busy?”

“Well, having to rely on Mycroft’s agents for the legwork is frustrating for him,” John admitted. “It was fine the first bit, before the pregnancy, when we were out in the field ourselves, but now? The last report they sent had him tearing his hair out — he’d given detailed instructions about the suspect they were looking for and apparently they missed ‘everything of importance.’”

“Course they did,” Greg grinned. “Don’t we all.”

“Obviously.”

“Is he…okay? About the baby?”

John smiled sentimentally. “He is. I hate to say I’m surprised, but I am. A bit. I wouldn’t have pegged him for the type, but he is remarkably pleased about being a parent. Seems pretty excited, actually. Well, excited for Sherlock.” John crossed his legs. “I’ll admit at first I was a little worried — a very, very little — he might have decided to get pregnant on a whim. You know…”

“As an experiment,” Greg filled in.
“Feel awful about that now. Doubting him, even for a minute.”

“Does it help with the spare time?”

“The pregnancy? Yeah, some. It’s given him new puzzles to ponder. Unfortunately, though, it’s cost him more than just chasing Moriarty’s web — our private cases have dropped off since he started to show. The only one we’ve had since Devon wrapped up five days ago. He still gets tetchy with nothing to look forward to.”

“I suppose people would be less willing to employ a pregnant omega to investigate criminal activity for them,” Greg acknowledged. “Have you forgiven him yet for trying to drug you and locking you in that spooky lab?”

“Mostly,” John acknowledged reluctantly. “I’m still more upset about him climbing all over bloody rocks and traipsing off across the countryside and getting himself gassed — at night, mind you, and next to a bloody minefield — with Henry. The pair of idiots.”

“Baby’s okay?”

“Yeah, thank god,” John said roughly. “Sherlock wouldn’t say, but I know he was terrified about the effects of the drug. Fortunately, the Baskerville team assured us after the follow-up study that it wouldn’t cross the placenta.”

“Good. That’s good news.” Greg grinned, “Still, in spite of everything, I enjoyed the trip out there.”

“You were just looking for something to pass the time after Mycroft had to leave your Spanish vacation to go to America.”

“Little bit, yeah,” Greg acknowledged. “But honestly, I’ve been looking out for Sherlock for a few years now. It’s become a bit of a habit.”

John smiled. “And you have no idea how grateful I am for that. Takes all three of us just to keep him from getting himself killed.”

Greg chuckled. “He is a piece of work, all right.”

“Worth it, though,” John said happily.

Greg nodded. “But unfortunately I don’t have anything at the moment.”

John sighed. “And is there any chance they might let him back onto crime scenes anytime in the future?”

“I presented a proposal to the brass, with the letters of recommendation and all the information about Sherlock’s bonded status, but I haven’t heard. They were uncomfortable with a civilian consultant as it was, but an omega — and now a breeding omega — is a pretty big step.” Greg shrugged helplessly. “I think the only way forward at the moment is to go on as we have been, with you on site and Sherlock patched in remotely. I know it’s harder for him, but it’s all I’ve been able to negotiate…”

“No, no. It’s fine. It’s what we have and I’ll make it work. And I appreciate the risks you’ve taken. So does Sherlock.”

“But, in the meantime, he still needs something to keep him busy,” Greg chuckled.

“Really does,” John breathed, looking a bit relieved.

Greg reached for the stack of old file folders he’d tucked away for just such an occasion. He lifted them and dropped them back down in front of John. “Cold cases. This ought to hold him for a while.”

“Cheers. This is brilliant.” John picked them up and set them on his lap. “Unfortunately, he just does better with the distraction you lot offer.”

“I know. And, honestly, we do better with him, too. The higher-ups will figure that out. In time.”

“Thanks. That means a lot.”

“You’ve been worried about it.”
“Well, I promised him his life wouldn’t change if we bonded; that he’d still be Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective. I don’t want to let him down. He’s too important not to be working — using that great big brain to sort things for people.”

Greg nodded, thinking about the strain he’d been seeing on Mycroft’s face for the last several months.

“Greg? You okay?”

“Sorry, just thinking… I’m a bit worried about Mycroft, too.”

“Anything wrong?”

“No, well, I’m not sure. I mean we’re fine, I think, when we’re actually together. I’ve hardly seen him since this whole omega plot thing blew up. He’s looking so tired and I just —” Greg waved a hand. “I just need to talk to him about it. Make sure he’s all right.”

John nodded. “Tough job, being married to a Holmes.”

“The toughest.”

“You might have said.”

“Bastard,” Greg laughed. “As if anything I could have said would have stopped you from claiming that finicky, skinny pain in my arse.”

“Ah, well, that’s true. I was pretty much done right from the start.”

“Yeah, me as well,” Greg acknowledged. “Did I ever tell you how I met Mycroft?”

“Sherlock mentioned something. A trial, wasn’t it?”

Greg nodded. “I saw him from the box when I was testifying. He was sitting there in the gallery, all prim and proper in his three-piece suit, and he looked so severe. But dead fit. With those eyes and that mouth?” Greg shook his head. “Never been much for alphas, me, but he was something else. And when I caught him staring at me, his whole expression softened. I knew I had him. I had to sprint after him, though, just to fake bumping into the leggy git.”

John grinned. “Does he know?”

“Told him on our first anniversary. He didn’t say anything, but I know he was pleased to have been pursued.”

“Speaking of pursuit.” John’s brow had furrowed. “Any word on the last sniper from the pool?”

“No. Well, it’s out of my hands now. MI5 has it. Haven’t heard a thing, other than they’re sure it was just the one survivor and they did get away. I asked Mycroft about it, but you can imagine how that went.”

John was frowning. “I hate not knowing. Even with Moriarty locked up, I would feel more at ease about Sherlock’s safety knowing the last of the gunmen was in custody as well.”


John jumped to his feet and hastened to follow her from the office, Greg right behind him. “I’ll let you get to it. And thanks for these.” He patted the stack of cold cases. “It’ll help.”

Greg grabbed his coat as he passed the rack and started to pull it on. “Anytime. Take care of him.”

“I will,” John called after him. “You, too.”
A shadow falls on the Holmes/Lestrade household as Moriarty's threat takes its toll on Mycroft's recovery. Meanwhile, John and Sherlock meet a very interesting new client!

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Mycroft?”

Greg Lestrade slipped off his muddy shoes onto the sisal mat at the front door and strode through the dimly lit, Turkish-tiled entryway of the elegant townhouse he shared with his husband. He checked his watch again before tugging his suit jacket off. 4:08 — not exactly a reasonable time to come home from the office.

Fortunately, neither he nor Mycroft were used to banker’s hours.

As he passed through into the navy sitting room, he draped the jacket over the back of the big, ugly paisley chair Mycroft had insisted they buy the previous year. The lights were all off, including those inside My’s study at the rear of the main floor of the house.

Remarkably, it seemed he might just find his husband in bed. It would be the first time Greg had found the man there in almost a fortnight.

There was a trace of light coming from their bedroom at the top of the stairs as he rounded the corner back into the foyer. He stubbed his toe on the ugly silver art-deco-what’s-it table that was taking up space against the wall. Greg swore softly, thumping the mirror-topped useless piece of furniture for good measure as he limped around it. He absolutely hated the fucking thing, but Mycroft loved it so Greg continued to trip over it and say nothing.

He took the stairs two at a time, suddenly anxious to have Mycroft in his arms. He crossed the landing in two strides.

“My?” he said softly as he reached the open door. He poked his head around the corner and peered into the master suite. Mycroft was lying on his side on the king-sized bed, head propped at an awkward angle on a grey flannel pillow. His journal rested open against his chest. He had managed to remove his jacket, waistcoat, shoes, socks and trousers, so was stretched over their bed in only his shirt and pants. The reading glasses he refused to wear outside their home were perched at the end of his nose.

He was snoring softly.

Greg smiled fondly at the sight, leaning one shoulder against the doorframe. He loved to see Mycroft at rest, especially bathed in the soft light of their bedside lamp. The long freckled limbs, usually held so rigidly, became pliable and just a little clingy. The tension in the proud brow melted away and the mouth, so often drawn in a hard line, eased and became eminently kissable.

He approached the bed on cat feet, not wanting to risk disturbing his lovely man. He tugged at his trousers as he did so, letting them puddle at his feet and stepping out of them on the way. His shirt was quickly dispensed with, as were socks, pants and vest. He slid onto the bed, stretching out behind his husband and snaking an arm around the man’s waist.

“Mmmm.”

“Shhhh, pet. S’just me,” he breathed into the man’s hair. He snuggled closer to Mycroft’s warmth and burrowed his nose into the space behind the man’s ear.

“Gregory?” Mycroft settled into his embrace. He dropped his journal onto the mattress and wrapped his arms over Greg’s. “Finished at the scene already?”

“I am. Weird case — shooting outside the National Theatre. Broad daylight, no witnesses and one dead former cabinet minister. Gonna’ be a while for this one. Still, I’m home in time to join my lover in bed.”
“Lover? Mmmm…like the sound of that,” Mycroft purred. He removed his reading glasses and tossed them to the far side of the bed, wiggling his bottom against Greg’s stirring erection.

“Oh, pet, you’re going the right way to get shagged,” Greg mumbled, sucking an earlobe between his teeth and thanking whatever powers there might be for an alpha who actually consented to (and enjoyed) bottoming from time to time. He stroked over Mycroft’s sides, ricking up the bespoke button-down shirt and slipping a hand beneath. “You’re so lovely and warm.”

“Your fingers are like ice, darling.”

“Sorry, sorry. Should I —”

Mycroft twisted and rolled out of his husband’s arms, shifting to the centre of the bed and turning to face Greg. He opened his arms and beckoned the man to him. “Never, ever stop.”

Greg grinned, launching himself forward into the offered embrace and pinning the taller man beneath him. He kissed his husband with the pent-up longing of nearly two weeks without any real physical contact. He delved immediately with a teasing tongue, flicking and thrusting and…

Mycroft moaned and reached up to hold Greg’s nape with both hands. Greg sighed into his mouth as the long fingers caressed tense muscles and carded through the salt-and-pepper strands that were clearly in need of a trim.

Greg was working on his shirt buttons, chilly fingers a bit clumsy in haste, when Mycroft moved to help. The taller man flicked and teased and nipped at Greg’s lips as he undid and spread the shirt wide, exposing his chest and belly. Greg hummed his approval and dipped immediately to capture one pert, freckle-ringed nipple between his teeth. He tugged gently and then drew it into his mouth. He sucked firmly, twisting the other between thumb and finger.

Greg could feel his husband’s erection and the telltale pre-come against his belly. Ordinarily, he quite liked a bit of leisurely foreplay with deep, wet kisses and tender touches. However, it was clear neither of them would make it that long this time. He rubbed his own aching cock against Mycroft’s thigh as he switched to suck his other nipple.

He was making desperate noises in the back of his throat as he fumbled for the lube and condoms in his bedside table. Mycroft had grasped both his arms in his hands and was grinding their bodies together.

“Please. Oh, Gregory, please.”

“On my way, pet,” Greg growled. He covered the long expanse of Mycroft’s belly with kisses before sitting back a little. He tore at the foil packet and popped the condom free. Mycroft watched hungrily, drawing his knees up, as Greg slipped the prophylactic over the damp head of his cock and rolled it over his throbbing length. He kissed Mycroft’s pale thigh as he slathered his cock with lube and then probed his husband’s sweet, pink pucker with dampened fingers.

Mycroft arched into the touch, easily taking the two fingers Greg had slipped inside him.

“Now, Gregory. Please.”

“Not quite, pet. You’re still pretty tight. It’ll burn.”

“I. Don’t. CARE.”

Mycroft reached for him with insistent hands. He grasped Greg’s shoulders and tugged, easily convincing the shorter man to relinquish his task and slide up and over Mycroft’s body. Greg collapsed on top of his husband with a pleased chuckle. He accepted and returned the sloppy kiss Mycroft offered as he braced one hand above the man’s shoulder and used the other to guide himself in.

Mycroft lifted his knees higher, opening himself up even further as Greg’s slippery cock rubbed over his entrance.

“Fuck me, darling. Make me burn.”

Greg pushed in and immediately felt Mycroft’s greedy hole begin to pull him deeper. He groaned long and hard as he eased forward, relishing the heat and drag of his husband’s body.
“God, My, you were made for my cock,” he rasped into the man’s ear. He tongued the delicate shell as he began to move. “Made for me to fill you up and stretch you out.”

“Yes,” Mycroft panted. “Open me up…fuck me.”

Greg shifted up and back, catching Mycroft under his knees and arching his hips forward into a brutal thrust. The taller man gasped then groaned and dug his fingers into their soft duvet. Greg pounded into him, flesh slapping and sticking a little as they both began to perspire.

One of Mycroft’s hands drifted up to capture his own leaking cock. He begun to pump feverishly as he neared his own release. It had been far too long.

Greg eased a little, riding the edge of his own orgasm, and pulled back until only the tip of his cock was still inside Mycroft’s body. He pulsed gently, tucking his fingers under to rub the backs of his knuckles over Mycroft’s testicles. “Are you going to come for me, pet? Spill all over and tighten around me. Pull my load right out of me. Come on, My. Come for me.”

Mycroft began to twitch and buck as he screamed his husband’s name.

Greg buried himself inside the welcoming heat of his lover’s passage as it began to contract. “Fuck, yeah. Oh, that’s it, pet. Squeeze me. Oh, FUCK…”

Greg groaned as he thrust once more and came. He panted through the orgasm, finally opening his eyes to see a drowsy Mycroft smiling up at him. He grinned and eased the man’s legs back down to their bed. He pulled out slowly, removed and tied off the condom and binned it before rolling to his back. Mycroft rolled with him, wrapping one long arm and one long leg over Greg’s body.

“Hello,” the British Government said huskily.

“Hello, pet,” Greg chuckled. He smoothed a thumb over Mycroft’s cheek. “I’ve missed you.”

They kissed, slowly and tenderly. Greg enjoyed the soft curve of his husband’s bottom lip. Mycroft nuzzled into his stubbled cheek.

When they parted, Mycroft tugged at the silvery hair that had grown long enough to curl over Greg’s collar. “Time for a haircut,” he teased.

Greg chuckled. “That’s what happens when you’re not about to remind me.” He studied his husband’s features, frowning as he noted the dark circles under Mycroft’s eyes and the sunken cheeks. When had that happened? “You’ve been working too hard.”

“So have you,” Mycroft deflected with a tight smile. “It’s a busy time.

Greg couldn’t help it; he began a more detailed survey of his husband’s body than their hurried coupling had allowed for. He ran searching fingers over the lean belly and this time took note of the more-visible ribcage. “My?”

Greg knew his voice sounded frightened. He was frightened — he was scared out of his bloody mind.

“It’s nothing.” Mycroft’s voice had grown darker. “No need to fret.”

“What is it? Are you ill?”

Greg hesitated. He didn’t want to ask. He hated asking. He was not the hall monitor. Mycroft was a grown man. But… “Have you been eating? Properly?”

“Oh, for god’s sake,” Mycroft snapped suddenly. He jerked from Greg’s embrace. “I have been working like a fiend and you’re quizzing me about losing one or two pounds?”

“More than one or two. And you know I wouldn’t ask if…”

The air between them grew chilly.

“Don’t lie to me, My. Please. Don’t do that.”

Mycroft’s face grew stony as he withdrew and rolled off the far side of the bed. “I’m leaving for Prague in a matter of hours,” he said stiffly, pausing at the door to their bathroom. “I’ll be back in three days. We can discuss this then.”
John tromped up the stairs and onto the landing at 221B, arms full of their weekly shop. “Sherlock! I’ve got almost everything you asked for, but I couldn’t find the anchovy paste…”

He froze just outside the door to the flat, sniffing again — once, twice — just to be sure. No, there it was: a strange alpha was inside. With his pregnant mate. He’d scented something when he entered the flat, but it was not immediately identifiable as alpha and was slightly masked by something else.

John hastened through the door, his heart in his throat. Sherlock.

He swallowed hard against the onslaught of possessive instincts at the sight of his omega, clad only in a sheet, seated in his favourite leather chair across from the very attractive woman currently occupying John’s. The woman turned slowly to face John now, her bright red lips turning up in the semblance of a smile that did not reach the large, skilfully outlined eyes.

“Ah, John. There you are,” Sherlock said almost cheerfully. The omega’s dark curls were still tousled and he had apparently just managed to roll himself from their bed to greet the new… “Client,” Sherlock announced, gesturing toward the dark-haired woman across from him.

“Irene Adler,” she filled in, rising to face John and offering her hand.

John quickly set the shopping bags down and clasped the expertly manicured hand to shake it. His grip was firm; it was his first physical encounter with this alpha, and they were on John’s turf. The instinctual show of strength, defining John’s ability to protect his bondmate and their unborn child, felt entirely necessary. “John Watson.”

“Yes, I know. I recognize you from the papers,” she replied, smirking. “Though I haven’t seen either of you in some time…obviously.” She looked pointedly at the swell of Sherlock’s baby bump under the white bed sheet. She turned to address John. “I am sorry. I didn’t know or I’d never have had the cheek to ask a breeding omega to…”

“My client roster has been more focussed on larger, longer-term cases lately,” Sherlock interjected sharply, clearly annoyed. “I have no plans to quite working.”

“Oh?” Irene looked back at the pregnant detective and then regarded John quizzically. “How very modern.”

John cleared his throat. “Sherlock’s talents are far too valuable for him to quit working, though of course he will be slowing down some — ”

“You were saying that you’re being threatened?” Sherlock interrupted.

Irene pivoted gracefully and resumed her seat across from Sherlock. “I am, yes.” She watched out of the corners of her eyes as John pulled up Sherlock’s desk chair to join them. “I have some… information. I don’t know what it’s worth, but apparently there are some people who feel very strongly about that information not finding its way to the proper authorities.”

“Is it likely to do so?” Sherlock’s eyes narrowed.

Irene hummed her approval. “No. Not at all. However, there has been some interest of late.”

“Interest?”

“From the Palace.”

“Why?”

Irene slid forward in John’s chair, her hand landing artlessly on Sherlock’s bare knee. John jerked to his feet, barely suppressing the urge to step between them. Sherlock’s eyes flicked in his direction — the detective looked so excited. John reluctantly sat once more, watching their new client warily.

“What is it likely to do so?”

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“Have you ever heard of an Alpha Dom?”

Sherlock’s brow furrowed. “No. Should I have?”

John rolled his eyes, silently cursing his mate’s previous lack of interest in sex.

Irene’s eyes gleamed with renewed attention. “Oh, yes.” She inched closer, her fingernails threatening to graze Sherlock’s pale inner thigh through a narrow gap in the sheet shroud.
John’s fists clenched and he reminded himself to breathe. He crossed his arms over his chest.

“You see, some omegas — and, yes, the odd beta as well — crave the authority that only an alpha can provide. And sometimes they can’t get that at home.”

“Authority,” Sherlock repeated, looking puzzled.

“Call it…recreational scolding,” Irene continued. “Common enough among betas, for their own amusement, but it takes on special meaning when there’s an alpha behind the crop.”

“But — oh. Yes, I see. Bondage, and…of course.”

“You sweet, sweet thing,” Irene cooed. “You’re blushing!”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Sherlock growled.

“Oh, it’s all right,” the woman went on. “It’s fine. It’s all fine.” She waved a hand around her at the sitting room. She perused it, disdainfully John thought, before settling her gaze on him. “Some omegas can be content this way, I suppose.”

“What way?” John bit out. “What are you implying?”

“Well, just that you seem to be a very…progressive sort of alpha, aren’t you? I mean, you let your pregnant mate work — in a very dangerous field, I might add — and you do the shopping…” She gestured at his forgotten bags near the door. “You let him do most of the talking. And you let him sit this close to another alpha while he smells like a combination of wildflowers and honey.” She inhaled deeply, allowing her eyes to drift closed for effect.

John was on his feet instantly. “Right. That’s it. Get —”

“How do these omegas, and occasional betas, benefit from your…services?”

It was Sherlock’s curious voice. John knew the man probably hadn’t heard much of the conversation past “It’s all fine.”

“I give them what they need. And what they like.” Irene shrugged. “Each one is different, of course. Still, for as much as the particulars change, there are always some basics. Omegas instinctively want to be controlled. They need to submit. They love the feeling of safety they have when their alpha is in charge. Telling them what to do. Marking them. Putting them in their place, especially when they’re in heat. It isn’t enough to bind them or beat them; you have to know how to talk to them. To remind them of what they are. That they belong to you.”

Sherlock was looking down now to the spot where Irene was lazily caressing his thigh with her thumb.

“Doesn’t that sound nice?” she whispered.

Sherlock stared at her now. She smiled a bit, possibly thinking she had captured his imagination. John, though, had already relaxed — Irene was experiencing Clinical Sherlock. A fascinating new subject had presented itself and he was going to make the most of the opportunity to learn something. She had no way of knowing, John thought, that the man regarded her merely as a conduit of information.

“No,” Sherlock replied bluntly, at last. He shifted back in his chair and crossed his legs beneath the sheet, effectively shoving her hand away from him. “Sounds horrible. If I’d wanted to be someone’s pet, I could have chosen any one of the testosterone-encrusted Neanderthals I’ve encountered while unsuppressed. As for marking or any other forms of domination, omegas — alphas, too, I suppose — could have that, without the ridiculous biological baggage, with a beta…master.” Sherlock tested out the word, clearly retrieving it from some dark, dusty compartment in his mind palace.

Irene surprised John by not looking at all surprised herself. She, too, slid back in her chair with a very sly grin, and mirrored Sherlock’s action by crossing her own legs. The two of them watched each other. John sank into his chair, thoroughly amazed by the silent battle of wits he was witnessing.

“You want to be an alpha.”

“I want to be equal,” Sherlock corrected. “John has taught me many things, not the least of which is that neither of us is defined by our gender, primary or secondary. Our relationship is not based
on power derived from a genetic mutation. It is based on affection, mutual understanding, compatibility and passion.”

Irene’s brow shot up and she turned once more to John. “What about you?”

“Sorry?” John shook his head. “What about me, what?”

“Are you the one in need of discipline?” Irene hissed her “s” on the last word. “Is that why you chose such an unusual bondmate? An omega who can top from the bottom?”

John scowled. “Anything I need I wouldn’t be getting from someone like you. Whatever terms Sherlock and I set on our relationship are our own business.”

“Yes, sir,” Irene mocked.

“So what do you want from us?” John snapped. “From Sherlock?”

Irene made a very half-hearted attempt to look innocent. She looked up at Sherlock once more through lowered lashes. “I need to find out who wants me dead.”

“Besides the Palace?” Sherlock asked dryly.

“Oh, they don’t want to kill me,” she chuckled. “They just want to know my price.”


“Video — oh, I do like the way you think. But just photos in this case. Her Majesty has one omega grandchild. Lovely girl. Very…pliant.” Irene licked her lips. “I let them know about the photos because I need to be sure that I can obtain protection, should it become necessary.”

“Then why come to us?” John asked, his agitation still growing. Her scent, though still oddly somewhat masked, was becoming more than he could bear with Sherlock still in the room. He needed to get his mate away from her.

“I am loathe to part with my secrets just now. I have put together quite a collection of things from my clients over the years: government officials, politicians, members of the peerage, actors, writers, pop stars, footballers…”

“And they willingly hand over the information they’re privy to?”

“Well, not necessarily willingly. They’re often quite…tied up.”

“And some of the things you’ve collected have gained the attention of less ‘pliant’ individuals.”

“You really think we’re going to help you?” John’s voice was brittle. The need to separate his omega from the alpha threat was almost overwhelming. Even had she not been a rival and obviously a predator, John still wouldn’t have trusted her. Something wasn’t quite right, outside of the strange scent. Something about her posture. The way she held herself, moved her arms and hands…

“Look, I make my way in the world. I misbehave. I didn’t intend to cause anyone any trouble. I just wanted to be sure that I had friends when I needed them. It was never my intention to sell or reveal anything, to anyone.” Irene threw her hands up. “But now there are terrorists stalking me and I’m not sure what it is they’re after.”

“I’ll need to see your phone,” Sherlock said flatly. He’d retreated deeper into his chair and cocooned into his sheet.

Irene stared at him for a moment, her mouth agape. She looked at John for confirmation but he merely glared at her.

“Well,” she said wonderingly, looking back to the detective. “You really are the biggest brain in the country.”

“I’m really not, but the only person in England smarter than I am is likely already very much aware of you and making every effort to secure your incarceration.”

“How did you know?”

“Simple deduction. Your phone is in the left pocket of your coat; android, given the shape and size. You’ve touched that pocket and/or slipped your hand inside eight times since you arrived. It is precious to you. A phone would be unobtrusive and easy to keep on hand with your…clients…
and would provide the means for recording various forms of media.”

“I have copies, of course.”

“No you don’t,” Sherlock continued. “You’ll have permanently disabled any type of uplink or connection. Unless the contents of your phone can be proved to be unique, they are worthless.”

Irene shook her head. “I am impressed.” She gave the omega an appreciative once over. “Beautiful and so very, very clever.” Finally, reluctantly, she turned her attention to John. He was still seething. “You’re a very lucky man, doctor.”

“I know.” John rose to his feet.

Sherlock turned to face him, his expression suddenly a little lost. He was beginning to sense his mate’s unease. “John…”

“No, fine. Just — finish.”

“I have a list of potential people, groups, who might be behind the threats,” Irene started, producing an envelope. “Based on the little I do know about what’s on my phone.”

“I’m not a researcher,” Sherlock responded with derision.

“I know, but now I am absolutely certain that you will be able to narrow that list down far faster and more efficiently than anyone else could. At least give me an edge; tell me which country to hide in?”

Sherlock regarded the envelope and then took a moment to study their client once more. At length, he released a corner of the sheet and reached for the envelope. “I’ll have John notify you with my findings,” he said briskly.

Irene nodded, standing. “That’s all I ask. Thank you, Mr. Holmes.”

The detective nodded absent-mindedly, already opening the envelope and unfolding its contents.

“Dr. Watson. It’s been a pleasure.” Irene offered her hand again.

“Sorry, you need to…just go,” John said, his voice calmer than he felt.

“Oh. Of course. How insensitive of me,” she said smoothly, her voice dripping with faked sincerity. She made her way to the door. “I appreciate your patience.”

John nodded stiffly and closed the door behind her. He collapsed against it, dragging air into his lungs. He raised his hands — they were shaking. He scented the air. She was everywhere inside the flat, including…

He strode to the kitchen and opened the window. “Sherlock, sweetheart,” he called back over his shoulder. “I need you to shower.”

“Shower? Now? What on earth for?”

John crossed to the chair quickly and reached down to help the pregnant omega to his feet.

“John, I don’t want a shower now…”

John tugged gently, pulling the papers from Sherlock’s hands and setting them on the desk. “But you need to, Sherlock. Please. Don’t you understand?”

Sherlock rose to his feet slowly with John’s help, his puzzled expression returned. “You seemed so anxious before. I thought it was just because I wasn’t dressed…”

John slipped a hand beneath his mate’s elbow. “Well, that certainly didn’t help.”

“Oh! Yes I see — she’s an alpha!”

“Yes,” John breathed, guiding Sherlock into the bathroom. “An unbonded alpha who was alone in this flat with my pregnant omega mate. And a pregnant omega is very nearly irresistible.” He turned the shower on and then tugged at the sheet until Sherlock released it. “How exactly did you get her scent all over you?”

“I…” Sherlock considered this. “She kissed both my cheeks when Mrs. Hudson brought her in. And her hands were on my shoulders. Her breasts may have touched me — ”
“ENOUGH!” John closed his eyes and pressed his damp brow to the cold tiles. “Sorry. I’m so sorry. It’s just…this instinct thing…with you and the baby. I had no idea how strong it would be.”

Sherlock pressed into John’s back, dropping his cheek to the shorter man’s shoulder. “I-I didn’t think. I’m…sorry.” His long arms wrapped around John’s middle. “Help me rinse her off?”

John smiled to himself as he turned. Sherlock was unashamedly naked, shivering a little, but smiling quite invitingly. The taller man’s body had ripened considerably in recent weeks. In addition to the burgeoning belly, his chest had softened and grown slightly fuller, and his bottom…

Sherlock turned to step into the tub and John watched lasciviously. He’d always loved Sherlock’s bum, but now it was absolutely edible.

Sherlock moved beneath the warm spray and let the water run over him, eyes closed. He lifted his chin to tip his head back and dampen his hair, sighing a little as the water streamed over his face. He pushed his wet curls back and turned again in a slow circle until his back was once more facing John.

The doctor stripped quickly and followed his omega into the tub. He tugged impatiently at the shower curtain behind him then took the wand from the wall and directed the stream over Sherlock’s body.

“What warm enough?”

“Mmmm. Perfect.”

John used his free hand to rub gently — shoulders, neck, back, hips… “My god, you are so beautiful. Every inch of you.”

“I have stretch marks now,” Sherlock replied blandly, leaning into John’s touch.

“I know,” John rumbled, bending double to kiss the few silvery streaks that had appeared over the sides of Sherlock’s tummy.

Sherlock chuckled a little. “I’m not going to get very clean like this, Dr. Watson.”

John grunted, but straightened and reached for their body wash. He handed the shower wand to Sherlock as he gathered a handful of the bergamot-scented liquid. He lathered it quickly and began soaping his mate down.

“Am I beginning to smell right now, John?” Sherlock purred, wiggling his bottom against John’s body.

John washed him quickly, suddenly rock hard and irrationally anxious to stake his claim on his mate. He grabbed the wand once more and hastily rinsed Sherlock’s body. He lingered over the swollen nipples and slid his fingers into the cleft of the man’s glorious bottom (not surprised to find that his mate was also aroused), but otherwise made quick work of the task. Finally he dropped the wand to the tub floor and grasped Sherlock’s face.

He drew his mate down into a heated and very possessive kiss. Sherlock melted against him, offering no resistance as John plundered his mouth. In fact, the omega wrapped both long arms around John’s shoulders and hung on.

John took advantage, backing Sherlock up as he shoved the shower curtain out of the way. He carefully helped Sherlock out of the tub, refusing to release the man’s lips.

“Not…here?” Sherlock panted against his mouth.

“Too slippery. Not safe,” John muttered, wrapping him in a towel. He turned back briefly to shut the water off and then proceeded to lead the man into the next room.

John stopped at the edge of their big bed — a generous affair, with a wooden headboard, that had once been Sherlock’s alone. Sherlock smiled down at him, looking very satisfied as John towelled them both dry as quickly as he could. John pulled the duvet up off the floor, to where Sherlock had obviously dispensed with it when their new “client” arrived. He laid it within reach at the end of the bed and made a half-hearted attempt to smooth the remaining bottom sheet.

“I went back to sleep after you left,” Sherlock said. “I didn’t get around to changing the bed.”

John snorted, grinning. “When do you ever?”
“Well…” Sherlock looked thoughtful.

“No. That was not a question. In. Now. Please.” John’s cock was throbbing and his inner alpha was scratching at the gates.

Sherlock kissed his lips lightly. “What’s in it for me?”

“I will fuck you however you want,” John promised. “Anything you want. Just…please. Sherlock, for the love of god…”

Sherlock immediately sat and pulled his legs up onto the bed that still carried the scent of their lovemaking the night before. He stretched out and draped one arm over his belly.

The pleased noise John made caused Sherlock to chuckle. “Come here,” he sighed, reaching for John.

The alpha came willingly, easing his weight down to the bed beside Sherlock. He pressed himself in next to the pale body and threw the heavy duvet up and over them, covering their heads as well. Sherlock nuzzled at his neck as John inhaled deeply, relishing the makeshift nest and being completely surrounded by their scents.

“Dark,” Sherlock remarked, in between teasing kisses to John’s jaw.

“S’good,” John muttered, rolling Sherlock over onto his back. John hovered over him, seeking his lover’s mouth. They kissed hungrily, John’s territorial instincts demanding a response from his bondmate, which Sherlock did not disappoint.

John allowed the hand that was not supporting his weight over Sherlock’s body to wander. His fingers sought one tender nipple and fondled it gently.

“Oh, yes. That’s g-good.” Sherlock’s voice cracked.

“More sensitive now,” John said wonderingly, loving that he had the privilege of caressing the lush body of the man he loved.

“So, so sensitive,” Sherlock agreed.

John bent and dropped his mouth to the swollen and peaked bud. He kissed it reverently first, then flicked at it repeatedly with tip of his tongue.

“Oh, god, John. That’s…nnnnnice.”

“Nice?” John repeated. “Just ‘nice’?”

Sherlock yelped with pleasure as John’s mouth closed over the nipple and the alpha began to suckle. Hard. Sherlock’s long fingers clenched into John’s short hair. “John, John, John, John…”

Sherlock moaned and gasped as his mate drew on him; he was quite certain Mrs. Hudson would be able to hear them, so loud were the wet, greedy noises the alpha was making. John’s fingers danced lightly over Sherlock’s heated body as he continued the delicious torture with his mouth. Sherlock began to rock into his alpha, seeking friction that was nearly impossible with his belly in the way. Ever attuned to his lover’s needs, John immediately shifted his thigh over Sherlock’s groin. Sherlock began to rut instantly, panting his pleasure at the contact.

John hummed as he finally released the tumescent flesh of Sherlock’s left nipple and kissed his way to its twin.

“You are mine, aren’t you?” John’s voice was hoarse with need and carefully controlled alpha jealousy. How dare the Adler woman kiss his mate? How dare she touch Sherlock’s body, swollen with their child? Could she not smell their bond all over him?

“Yes. Yours.” Sherlock moaned as John’s free hand slid over his hip. “Yours. And you are mine. My alpha.”

John growled his approval against Sherlock’s chest, shifting his leg out of the way and replacing it with his hand. He slipped into a gentle rhythm on Sherlock’s omega prick. The taller man’s pelvis jerked and he moaned again.

“My alpha,” Sherlock repeated gently. He grasped at John’s wrist and tugged his alpha’s hand from his dripping erection to the curve of his belly. He flattened John’s palm against the warm bump. “My mate. Her father.”
John’s alpha instincts settled almost instantly. His mate. Their child. Safe. His. Safe. He massaged Sherlock’s abdomen and dropped his mouth to press gentle kisses into the taught skin. “So beautiful. So strong. So very, very clever.”

Sherlock breathed out heavily, his fingers carding through John’s hair. “Make love to me, John.”

John smiled and stretched up for another deep, lingering kiss. He took his time now, enjoying the unique taste of his lover’s mouth and the softness of Sherlock’s plump lips. He allowed Sherlock to tease him with his tongue before finally kissing down over his cheek and jaw to nuzzle into the heavily scented spot on his mate’s neck.

John mouthed over the bond mark, allowing the taste and scent of his mate and of their bond to flood his system. His cock dribbled with the renewed scenting; Sherlock, too, began to writhe beneath him.

“John, please.”

“Yes, sweetheart. Yes,” he soothed. “What do you need?”

“Mmmmmmouth.”

John nodded against his cheek, offered one more tender kiss then began to taste his way down Sherlock’s body.

He sucked each nipple once more, plumping the firm flesh with his hand, before trailing over Sherlock’s swollen middle. John kissed lazy circles into his mate’s belly, murmuring as he did.

“What?”

“Talking to the baby,” John replied. “Like you said.”

“And what are you telling her?”

“That I love her daddy very, very much,” John whispered, flicking his tongue over Sherlock’s now-outie belly button and then nuzzling his way down into the thatch of dark hair below.

John wasted no time in sucking Sherlock’s cock into his mouth. He bobbed happily, quickly responding to breathy commands and broken pleas as he drove Sherlock to the edge. Fingers slid through the slick that covered Sherlock’s hole — not as much as when he was in heat, but more than usual thanks to his pregnancy and recently increased libido.

“John! No more. Please,” Sherlock begged finally, after several minutes. “I need you inside me.”

John released him with a wet ‘pop’ and lifted his head. He slid two fingers inside the rear passage that was more than ready for him. “How do you want me?”

“Like this,” Sherlock panted.

John made a growly noise of approval and swiftly shifted up to settle his hips between his omega’s thighs. He slid forward and began to guide himself in then caught his arms under Sherlock’s knees. He tilted his mate into position and buried himself to the hilt in one smooth stroke.

“FUCK!”

“Mine,” John said firmly, confidently.

“Yes!” Sherlock gasped. “Yours.” He dug his fingers into John’s biceps as the alpha pounded into him, repeatedly brushing over his sensitive spots. “Oh, GOD!!”

“Yes,” John growled.

“John!”

John slowed a little, straining so he could meet Sherlock halfway for a hungry kiss. Their tongues entwined briefly; Sherlock moved one hand to hold John’s forehead to his own. John resumed his pace, still feeling the effects of the alpha hormone surge. He drove relentlessly into Sherlock’s body. He knew he should be gentler, that he should take his time and give them both time to really enjoy it, but he couldn’t. There was still enough anxious edge to drive him to claim.

John held himself over Sherlock’s body, panting and dripping sweat. His arms began to shake.
with the strain as he sought Sherlock’s pleasure.

“Touch yourself,” he begged. “Please. Let me see you come.”

“Nnn-no. After. Please. After. Fill me first.”

The words seeped into John’s consciousness and found a deep-seated alpha trigger. His omega wanted to be claimed. His omega was clinging to him, begging to be filled with John’s seed. His rational mind completely short-circuited and John began to come.

“FUCK, FUCK, FUCK!” He buried his cock in the heat of Sherlock’s body and pulsed there as his load released. There would be no knot, but John’s orgasm would still produce enough ejaculate to keep him busy for a few minutes.

Sherlock was laughing — a light, somewhat weary, but very pleased laughter. He rubbed over John’s back and bottom, whispering soothing nonsense not even he completely understood.

John finally began to sag, drained in every sense, and dropped his damp brow back to Sherlock’s. “I love you, Sherlock. So much it hurts. And I am yours. Always.” He withdrew gently and slid sideways, snuggling in close to the side of Sherlock’s body. “How do you want to come?”

“Just touch me,” Sherlock rasped. “I’m close. So close.”

John obliged eagerly, wrapping his fingers around his mate’s dripping cock and pumping vigorously.

Sherlock clutched at his wrist. “God, yes. Oh John. JOHN!!!”

John kissed him as he came, gently stroking him through the aftershocks of his orgasm.

They lay in silence for a while, touching each other’s bodies and occasionally kissing. It was John’s favourite part of making love to Sherlock — when the genius slowed just long enough to wallow in feelings.

Of course, it never lasted for long.

“John?”

“Hmmm?”

“Would you be able to describe the sensations you experienced when you first entered the flat and encountered the rival alpha?”

“Probably. Why?”

“Oh, no particular reason. I simply found your response in the face of a potential threat very interesting. As was my body’s response to your possessive behaviour.”

“Z’at so. This wouldn’t be part of some kind of experiment, would it?” John tugged the duvet down.

Sherlock blinked in the bright sunlight coming through the window before meeting John’s steady gaze. “John...”

“Sherlock,” John started suspiciously. “You didn’t…you didn’t set this up, did you? Invite that woman here, into our home...”

“Don’t be absurd!” Sherlock replied. He shifted uncomfortably. “It was a…fortuitous coincidence.” He propped himself up and leaned over his mate, hand flattening on John’s chest. “But think of what we could learn from it! All the research I’ve found so far gives data only about the impact of omega pheromones on ‘unsuspecting’ alphas in triggering territorial rage. There have been virtually no studies on the alpha pheromones and their effects. There is nothing that looks at what happens to the omegas!”

John’s heart twisted. “Sherlock…”

“Please! I promise it won’t take long.”

John sighed.

“Please?”
John stared into the crystalline eyes and knew he could never say no. “Just so we’re clear: I am your mate, not a lab rat, right? We are going to get a point, someday, when you aren’t randomly slipping things into my tea or taking my blood?”

“Probably,” Sherlock grinned at him. “Possibly.”

“Oh, well, that’s very reassuring,” John grumbled good-naturedly. He stretched and smiled up at the man. “Go on, then.”

Sherlock bit his lip with barely contained glee. He started to slide from the bed. “Splendid. You just stay here. I’ll be right back.”

John turned to watch his naked mate as he padded out toward the kitchen.

“Oh, and John?”

“Hmm?”

Sherlock paused at the door and turned back, his eyes bright and his smile uncharacteristically shy. “Thank you.”

Chapter End Notes

So, yeah, canon divergence. Mixing up my episodes--I think you'll like the end result, though, so wait for it. Until then, enjoy the smut :D
Chapter Summary

Greg confronts Mycroft and it does not go well. Mycroft asks his brother for an unexpected favour.

Greg rolled the cigarette between his fingers. He wanted it. He really, really wanted it.

He’d slipped a few times since he’d quit, but he’d never started up again. He’d promised Mycroft and he’d done his best to stick to it. And as good as a fag would taste at the moment, he was grateful — they had enough to deal with.

He sat on the edge of the striped sofa in their main sitting room, waiting for Mycroft to come home. He was tired and feeling the effects of several long nights, as well as the burden of knowledge: after three seemingly random shootings in two weeks, Greg had finally been forced to conclude (after the most recent at the National) that all of the incidents were related.

London had a new serial killer.

The case was confusing, would eat up most of his time and was likely to result in either promotion or early retirement. He would have to bring Sherlock in. He knew there were similarities in the shootings, but he could not see the pattern in the clues.

For once, though, he wished the big case had fallen to someone else. He wanted to put it all aside so he could sort out what was going on at home.

He couldn’t figure out how he’d missed the signs, but Mycroft’s three-day trip had given him enough space to realize that it was very likely his husband had relapsed. The weight loss was too significant.

He’d replayed every minute of the time they’d spent in each other’s company over the preceding months. He had noticed Mycroft becoming strange about calories again (the thing with the bacon butty had been a red flag) and there had been a few skipped meals. But they’d talked about it. Loudly. Greg hadn’t seen any evidence of his husband’s usual binge foods anywhere. Mycroft had sworn he was fine. He’d promised to take care.

Greg had wanted to believe it. And he hadn’t seen…well, the truth was he hadn’t been paying close enough attention, particularly over Christmas at Coventry Court with John and Sherlock.

Thinking back now, he could see it all.

Mycroft had, very unusually, eaten more than heartily at every meal, prompting Sherlock to sneer that Mycroft was not the one eating for two. At the time, Greg had chalked it up to stress release: the election had gone as predicted in late November, and the Real Rape laws were on their way out. Better still the Americans had negotiated the extradition of James Moriarty, meaning the maniac would no longer be Mycroft’s problem.

Greg had foolishly believed his husband was merely celebrating the end of a black period in their lives. But now he could recall that his husband had been missing from the parlour after dinner. And that Greg had woken both nights they’d stayed over, shortly after they’d gone to bed, to find Mycroft gone.

The first night he’d found Mycroft in the kitchen. The second he’d found the man in their en suite. Brushing his teeth. Again.

Greg mentally kicked himself. How could he have been so stupid?

He shook his head, crushing the cigarette as he pounded both fists on the coffee table in front of him. He’d been blind. He should have recognized what Mycroft was doing. Should have been more aware. Should have spent less time working. Should have insisted Mycroft spend more time at home. Should have acted…

There was a rattling at the door. It opened to reveal two dark-coated members of Mycroft’s security detail. They nodded to Greg quickly before dispatching to sweep the house. Only two
minutes later, they returned to the front door. They allowed Mycroft to step inside and immediately departed, closing the door behind them.

Mycroft remained frozen in place, staring straight ahead at the staircase in front of him. “Been waiting long?” he asked.

“Long enough.” Greg watched Mycroft from the sofa. The open concept of their renovated flat had advantages.

“Apologies,” Mycroft said stiffly, sliding his arms out of his coat. He did not turn in Greg’s direction, but instead toward the small cloakroom on the other side of the entryway. He hung his overcoat inside and pivoted again, smoothing both hands over his suit jacket. He was staring at his shoes. “I had thought Juliet would have…”

“She did,” Greg interrupted. “She was vague about the exact arrival time. I wanted to be sure I was home.”

Mycroft nodded awkwardly. “You have questions.”

“How long?” Greg asked, his voice gruff.

Mycroft considered this. “October.”

“Jesus,” Greg breathed.

“It really isn’t that long,” Mycroft added. “Considering…”

“Considering how long you’ve been — yeah, great. Just…”

Mycroft released a heavy breath.

Greg stood now, approaching the man who still had not looked at him. “My, you have to talk to me. You have to tell me why. Is it just cleaning up after Moriarty? Is there something else?”

The taller man lifted his chin and turned his chin in Greg’s direction. “I can’t.”

“Damn it, Mycroft!”

Mycroft turned to face Greg as he drew near. They stood only inches apart. Greg seized his husband by his upper arms, barely resisting the urge to shake the man.

“Talk to me,” Greg rasped. “Please!”

“I CAN’T tell you!” Mycroft shouted at last. “You are not a simpleton — spare me the agony of watching you act like one!”

Greg blinked several times. “My, what…”

“Secrets are my JOB, Gregory. You know that better than anyone. I can’t tell you ANYTHING. Not now.”

“You have to get help,” Greg tried. He pulled the taller man into a fierce hug. “We did this once before, we can do it again. The way you helped me quit smoking. The way you helped Sherlock…”

Mycroft hadn’t moved. He did not lift his arms to return the embrace, and did not relax into Greg’s arms.

“I can’t,” he whispered brokenly, his lips brushing his husband’s ear. “Darling, please…I just can’t. Not now. There is no time. You have to trust me.”

“Trust you?” Greg pulled back, his eyes damp now. “My, you’ve been lying to me for months. Puking in secret; binge eating. Have you been going days without food, too?”

Mycroft’s cheeks tinted slightly.

Greg drew away, his hands raised in exasperation. “I just…I don’t know what to do here, pet, if you won’t get help. I can’t watch you risk your health and kill yourself one pound at a time.” Greg circled restlessly, finally ending up facing his husband once more. “You have to help me. What can I — .”

He jumped as Mycroft’s phone went off.

Mycroft ended the call and tucked the phone away. At length, he lifted his eyes to meet Greg’s once more.

“They have a lead on Moriarty’s last sniper,” he said. “Still in the country, apparently. Someone is talking, from the last batch of his people rounded up in France.” He shrugged. “I suppose we’ll see where that leads. Juliet is coming over now with the briefing…”

“Now?” Greg was incredulous. “Mycroft, my god…now?”

“I don’t see how it can wait. The sniper is a threat to my brother and to the investigation of Moriarty’s network.”

“We need to finish this,” Greg said desperately. “Please.”

“There is nothing more to say.”

“Tell me how to fix this,” Greg begged. “Damn it, My, tell me what I can do!”

Mycroft stared at him for what seemed like an age before dropping his gaze to the floor. Greg could hear the mantel clock ticking in the background. Outside, there was a distant siren and the sound of the rain.

Mycroft took a deep breath and lifted his chin. Greg thought he could see a tiny tremor in the man’s lips. It did not ease the sting of what his husband said next.

“Go.”

___________________________

“It’s just baby bok choy and Chinese broccoli. Some onions. Maybe a few carrots. No MSG.”

“But I don’t want vegetables.”

“You will eat them, though,” John replied evenly. “Because you know it’s good for you and good for the baby.”

Sherlock made a grumbling noise as he reached the top step. He rebalanced himself without John’s steadying hand and rubbed a hand over his lower back. “This child has given you far too much leverage over my behaviour.”

John chuckled. “It’s only leverage because you allow it to be, sweetheart.” He started to reach up and sneak a kiss when he realized that Sherlock was staring intently into their flat.

He followed the detective’s gaze to the spot where his brother-in-law sat waiting and watching in Sherlock’s favourite leather chair, his umbrella resting against the arm.

“Oh! Mycroft, uhm, this is a…surprise,” John started. He followed Sherlock into the flat, one hand on his mate’s back and the other still carrying their supper.

John set the bag of takeaway down on the coffee table and shook his jacket off. “Are you…did Sherlock give you a key?”

“Oh course I didn’t!” Sherlock said testily. “Don’t be ridiculous.” The detective approached his brother. “You didn’t do the knocker. And scent blockers? Really? Isn’t that beneath you?”

“You’re slipping,” Mycroft said blandly. He hesitated. “I didn’t want to alert you to my presence precipitously.”

Sherlock huffed. “How charming.” He eased himself down into John’s chair. “You wanted to surprise us with your housebreaking. Isn’t that lovely, John?”

“Sherlock…”

“Irene Adler,” Mycroft interjected. He raised his hand, now holding the list their new client had left with them.

“What about her?” Sherlock replied lightly.

“You will remove yourself from her case. Now.”
“Why?”

“She is dangerous, Sherlock. She is not your concern!”

“She’s fascinating.”

Mycroft rolled his eyes. “For god’s sake, little brother! You have more to think about now than
your own…entertainment!” He stared pointedly at the rounded belly that stretched the jumper
Sherlock had borrowed from John. “You are meddling in things you do not understand!”

“Then enlighten me!” Sherlock barked.

“You are in no condition to be —”

“Oh, please spare me the protective alpha routine!” Sherlock sneered. “I am the only person who
can discover what’s on that woman’s phone! THAT is the only condition at issue here!” Sherlock
shouted.

John took a step between the two seated men. “Okay, boys, if we could just — ”

“What is all the shouting about?” Mrs. Hudson’s distressed voice drifted in ahead of her from the
corridor. All three men regarded the floor as she entered.

“Sorry about that, Mrs. H,” John started. “Just a little misunderstanding.”

“A little — for heaven’s sake,” their landlady chastised. “It’s my bridge night. I had people at the
door!”

“Sorry,” Sherlock muttered grimly.

Mrs. Hudson scowled at Mycroft until he finally looked directly at her. She raised an eyebrow and
waited. He sighed and offered a tight smile.

“Apologies for the disturbance.”

She nodded and gave them all one last scathing look as she turned and left as quickly as she had
come.

John cleared his throat as the two Holmes men glared at each other.

“Why are you really here?” Sherlock asked sharply, his eyes narrowing at his older brother.

There was a long pause as Mycroft considered how to frame his request. “I wish — I need —”
His voice was far more broken than he had intended.

“Mycroft?” John turned toward him. “Are you all right?”

“Greg’s left him. Obvious.” Sherlock was staring intently at him now. Mycroft could not meet his
sibling’s eyes.

“Sherlock!” John scolded.

“Greg’s left him. Obvious.” Sherlock was staring intently at him now. Mycroft could not meet his
sibling’s eyes.

“Are you ill?” John stood once more, approaching Mycroft. “I had noticed the dark circles under
your eyes, but I just assumed it was all this Moriarty business.”

Mycroft shook his head. He looked up into Dr. John Watson’s concerned face and tried to force a
reassuring smile. Given the grim expression on John’s face, Mycroft could only assume he’d
failed.

“My brother has an eating disorder, John.”
“What?” John’s head snapped around at the sound of Sherlock’s voice. “Since when?”

“Since he was 15,” Sherlock replied solemnly.

Mycroft felt some relief at his brother’s tone. Mercifully, there was no hint of the sarcasm he usually directed Mycroft’s way.

“Have you sought treatment?” John asked, sliding easily into clinical mode. “What kind of disordered eating is it?”

“Bulimia,” Sherlock said quickly. “Coupled with periods of starvation.”

Mycroft knew he should be irritated with the younger man’s interference, but he was too weary to make a fuss.

John lifted Mycroft’s dominant hand and inspected it. There was no way to disguise the calluses that had begun to form again on his first two fingers. John set the hand down, his expression very serious.

“Are you under a physician’s care, Mycroft?” the alpha doctor asked gently.

“I have not had time. There is far too much at stake —”

“The current excuse,” Sherlock cut in. “When you were 15, it was to end the bullying of your peers because of your weight. And when you were 22, it was because of the long hours required by your new government position. And when you were 30, it was…”

“Sherlock!” John sounded exasperated. He shot his mate a chastening look before regarding Mycroft once more. “Greg knows, then?”

Mycroft nodded sadly. “We rowed. I suggested a…separation.”

“This is not uncommon,” John started sympathetically. “In a situation like this, loved ones can feel quite helpless. Often, they fear enabling the behaviour.”

Mycroft nodded again, not trusting himself to speak. He could feel a tightness in his throat he had not experienced since his first year at Cambridge…which was absurd. He was no longer a friendless, chubby, spotty 15 year old trying to get on with older classmates and flatmates. He would not weep. He would not.

John sat back on the arm of his own chair. “What would you like us to do, Mycroft?”

Mycroft took a steadying breath. “He will come to you,” he began. “And when he does, I would consider it a personal favour if you would allow him to stay at 221B.”

“Of course.”

Both men turned to stare at Sherlock. He looked at them, nonplussed.

“What? He’s family. He’s not objectionable. Of course he should stay here.”

Relief surged through Mycroft’s system. He sagged into his brother’s chair. “Thank you.”

Sherlock inclined his head. “On one condition.”

“Oh, god.”

“I have watched this go on for years, and I have stayed out of it at your insistence. Many times, I was far too steeped in my addiction to…” Sherlock sighed, rubbing his bump. “But the time has come, Mycroft. You must get help, once and for all.”

Mycroft stood, rallying his strength and tugging at his waistcoat. “I will seek assistance when I can. There is a matter of some urgency I must see to first. So, for now, I would ask only that you look after Gregory.”

“Mycroft, don’t.” John started. “Don’t put this off. If you’re ill or weak, how can you do what needs to be done? You’re no good to anyone like this. You’re probably anaemic and clearly dehydrated — severely, I would guess. Your electrolytes will be a mess. The acid damage to your throat is probably relatively serious by now, and I know you know it can lead to oesophageal cancer. The periods of not eating at all will leave you light-headed and cognitively compromised. Your hands are shaking and it’s clear by the way you’re squinting that you’re suffering from headaches.”
Sherlock was smiling at his mate’s back with unconcealed pride. Mycroft’s heart twinged and he felt a powerful urge to give in. He could feel his body and mind relenting to the need to be tended.

“You don’t understand the urgency of…” Mycroft began. How could he make them understand without revealing the threat? “I cannot turn my attention now. No one else can do this. No one. And I will not take chances with….this. It is far too important.”

“Mycroft.” Sherlock’s voice was perhaps far kinder than it had ever been. In some ways it only made matters worse.

“No,” Mycroft said firmly. “I will be in touch. Sherlock, I will look forward to your next update on Moriarty’s network.” He strode to the door and hesitated there. “I appreciate your…support.” He bolted for the stairs, not looking back as Sherlock called his name once more.

He was halfway down the steps when he heard his brother’s voice, addressing his mate.

“He’s going to kill himself this time, John.”

Mycroft fled the flat before he could overhear any more.
Greg thumped down the steps from the second bedroom in 221B, still yawning from a night of interrupted sleep. He’d been at the flat for almost two weeks, and he still hadn’t figured out how to rest without some part of Mycroft somewhere nearby.

He hadn’t wanted to leave, but his husband’s cold dismissal had been pretty final. He’d packed a small bag, gone and sat in the pub for four hours and then finally ended up at Baker Street.

It wasn’t home, but at least it was family.

John and Sherlock had very kindly refrained from asking any questions. Well, John had; Sherlock was likely under threat not to start anything. Greg knew he would have to discuss it with them at some point, but he was grateful for the space. Falling into a comfortable routine — someone else’s routine — helped him forget his own problems, even if only for a moment.

He ruffled his greying hair as he rounded the corner into the kitchen and scratched at his scalp, eager for any kind of circulation.

“Morning,” he mumbled.

“Morning.” John replied pleasantly. He was sitting at the table, eating egg and soldiers and reading the paper.

Greg was reaching for a mug for coffee when he heard the first bang.

“Was that the closet door slamming?” He glanced around in the direction of John and Sherlock’s bedroom, only just noticing that the door was closed.

“Yep.” John didn’t look up.

There was another loud bang, followed by a series of muffled thuds.

“Wardrobe,” John muttered.

“What the hell is he doing in there?” Greg asked.

“Looking for something to wear,” John replied. He dunked a soldier and took a bite. “We’re supposed to meet a client this afternoon.”

“That dominatrix?”

“The very same,” John agreed. “For some reason Sherlock is very fussed about what he should wear — I think she flusters him a little. Unfortunately, his old favourites don’t fit at the moment. He’s been putting off the shop, but…”

Greg jumped at the shout of rage that erupted from the bedroom as he switched the kettle on. “I don’t think he’s finding anything,” he said wryly. “How long has he been at it?”

“Half an hour, give or take.” John checked his watch.

“Are you going to help him?”

John finally looked up from his breakfast. “I’ve been banned from his presence already.” He gestured in the direction of his bedroom. “Door’s locked.”

“Oh. What did you do?”

The doctor shrugged and returned to his paper. “I made the mistake of using the word ‘round.’ I absolutely meant it as a compliment. He’s just so incredibly lovely like this, but he’s also a little…”
“Sensitive?” Greg offered. “He always was a bit of a…”

“Peacock,” John anticipated, grinning. “A little bit, yeah. Well, he’s a lovely man with a lovely body and he loves his clothes.” He shrugged again. “The physical changes are just throwing him off a bit. And then there’s the hormones — he’s been up and down much more than normal lately. S’fine, though. It’ll blow over in about 15 minutes. Usually does, anyway.”

There was another series of thumps followed by a crash.

“That’ll be the mirror,” John said blandly. He took another bite of toast and turned the page.

Greg felt a bit paralysed by the awkwardness of being in the midst of another couple’s relationship stuff. He contemplated knocking and trying to comfort his brother-in-law, but quickly reconsidered. He’d always had relatively good rapport with Sherlock, but he had no experience with pregnant omegas.

“Is he going to be all right?”

John smiled up at him. “Not to worry. I’ll rub his back while he has a bit of a rant, and then I’ll try to get him to go shopping for some new togs. He should be right as rain by lunchtime.”

The kettle snapped off and Greg turned away to stir the hot water into his instant coffee. He sipped it, immediately burning his tongue, and slipped down into the chair across from John.

“How do you do it?”

“Do what?”

“I love Sherlock like a brother, but he can be bloody hard work,” Greg rumbled. “And with mood swings?” He shook his head, taking another sip of coffee. “Don’t know how you’ll manage for another…what is it, four months?”

“Three now.” John beamed. He shook his head. “I dunno. I haven’t thought about it. Even before he was pregnant he could be so difficult sometimes…well, you know all about that. But I don’t mind it, you know? It’s just part of who he is and I love all of him.” He paused, chuckling. “God, that sounded a bit precious, didn’t it?” He took a sip of tea. “Anyway, I know this bit is temporary. Just a bump in the road and, of course, we’ll have a baby at the end of it. Can you imagine? Little round face with Sherlock’s hair and his eyes?”

Greg stared at the younger man, amazed again at the depth of love the good doctor held for Mycroft’s brother. Greg had spent many nights (and days) trying to help Mycroft with Sherlock in the past. He’d missed most of the worst of the addiction, but there were still ‘danger nights.’ And Sherlock couldn’t ever seem to stay out of trouble.

When he’d first invited the younger Holmes to consult on a case, it had been a favour to Mycroft. They’d been in the early stages of dating and Greg had been eager to impress. Also, Mycroft’s first recovery had only just begun — Sherlock’s boredom had been taking a toll.

Greg had become used to Sherlock’s sharp tongue in the short time he and Mycroft had been friends, and he soon came to grips with the younger man’s lack of respect for authority. Or people’s feelings. Or social constructs. Or the law.

He was a piece of work, was Sherlock Holmes.

And the luckiest omega on earth because of the alpha now sitting across from Greg, happily dipping strips of toast into his boiled egg.

They both turned as the bedroom door slowly opened. Sherlock peered through it, eyes a bit red-rimmed. He was trying hard not to look sheepish, Greg thought.

“John?” The usually confident and resonant voice was a little tremulous. Sherlock hesitated in the doorway.

John stood immediately and went straight to his mate. He wrapped his arms around the pregnant omega’s swollen middle and pulled him in close, rubbing his back.

“Shh, love.”

Sherlock curled down around the shorter man, melting into his alpha’s embrace and burying his face in John’s neck.
“Sorry,” he muttered.

“Me, too,” John said softly. “It’s all fine.”

Greg felt a bit of a lump in his throat as he watched them, trying very hard not to think about his own mate — at their home, alone.

God, he missed Mycroft.

He looked away from the intimate moment, suddenly feeling like an intruder. He swallowed his coffee in one gulp and stood. He snuck from the room as quietly as he could, anxious not to interrupt.

“I hate being like this, John,” he heard Sherlock say. “All these feelings; I can’t control them!”

“I know, love. This is so hard for you and you are being so brave. Just a little while longer…”

Greg crept back up the stairs, smiling to himself. His phone was buzzing by the time he reached his room.

Time to go to work.

“I don’t know how you expect me to reply, Henry,” Mycroft said coolly, addressing the hands-free call to Langley, Virginia. “I realize you are concerned about the success of Bond Air, but I cannot have your people randomly attacking British citizens on British soil!”

“The Adler woman could have information that will jeopardize the entire operation!” Mycroft’s CIA counterpart railed on the other end of the line. “You haven’t done anything about her — you can’t expect me to sit on my hands and wait.”

“She may have a great deal of sensitive material she could make public. However we have only her word for that. There is no evidence…”

“Since when do you care about evidence?” Henry Jackson laughed bitterly. “You’re getting soft, Holmes. Is this about your brother? What the hell was a pregnant omega doing with Adler anyway?”

“My brother was hired by Irene Adler to help her determine who is trying to kill her. He now knows the CIA is at the top of the list. Bravo.”

“Get this shit sorted out,” the other man barked. “Bad enough I have to deal with your little Irish friend — I’m not prepared to risk months of undercover work and preparation just so your queen and her weird family can avoid a little embarrassment.”

Mycroft ground his teeth. “Rein in your people, Henry. I will not ask politely next time.”

Mycroft punched the button to end the call a little more firmly, perhaps, than was necessary. He dropped his head into his hands and sighed. “Sherlock…”

The door to his office opened and Juliet appeared. “Sir? I have the photos you asked for.”

Mycroft motioned her in. Juliet set a new folder on the edge of desk and hesitated.

“Yes?” Mycroft asked, grabbing the folder without meeting her eyes. “What is it?”

“Should I have Sheena order something for your lunch? You missed breakfast.”

“No need.”

“Perhaps just some soup?”

“No, thank you.” Mycroft waited, but his PA stayed where she was. He could see the concern on her face when he finally looked up.

“I have an orange in my desk, if you’d like…”

“Thank you, no. I do have some things here if need be.”

Juliet bit her lip.

“Problem?”
“I just thought you might fancy something…”

“Fruity?”

“Healthy.”

Mycroft scowled. “Have you been speaking with my husband?”

The shrewd beta huffed at her long-time employer. “Do you really think I needed him to tell me?”

“We are not having this conversation,” Mycroft snapped.

“I realize you think this is a bit of a cheek,” she started. “But sometimes you forget that part of my job is to make sure you can still do yours.”

“I’m fine!”

Juliet shifted, studying him for a moment before turning on her heel. “We’ll see.”

Mycroft frowned at his PA’s back and seriously began to reconsider the illustrious course he had plotted for her career once she left his office.

He snatched up the photos and began to sift through them. He’d asked for surveillance on Gregory to be upgraded — it was selfish, he knew, but necessary if he were to endure their time apart.

The first photos were of his husband coming and going from 221B. This made Mycroft unreasonably happy. If Gregory could not be with him in their home, this was the most agreeable alternative. He looked at them all before shuffling them back into a pile and turning to the next batch.

These were taken in and around his husband’s most recent crime scene. He leaned back in his chair and studied the long shots of Gregory at work. Next, he flipped through a set of copies of the forensic photos. He hadn’t paid too much attention to the case thus far. But this…

Oh.

Mycroft smiled to himself as he picked up his mobile. He tapped out the text to his brother and hit send with a smirk:

Miss something? Your killer is getting sloppy.

He set the phone back down and was about to reach for another antacid when his intercom buzzed.

“Burroughs from Domestic on your secure line,” Sheena, the receptionist, said.

“Thank you.”

Mycroft pressed the button to answer his landline once more. “Holmes.”

“Burroughs, sir. Sorry to disturb, but you asked to be informed immediately if there was any chatter related to the incident at Baskerville.”

Mycroft’s brow furrowed. “And?”

“We traced a conversation last week — it looks like someone has the formula, sir. Or at least they’re claiming to. It’s just hit the black market.”
There are puzzles galore for Sherlock, but Mycroft’s illness finally comes to a head.

“And you’re sure the killer is a woman?” John asked. He set Sherlock’s tea down beside the man’s elbow on the desk.

“Footprint,” Sherlock snapped.

“Are you sure you’re warm enough?”

Sherlock glared at him.

“All right, all right.” John returned to his own chair and sat. “Don’t have to be stroppy with me just because Mycroft found the print.”

“Well I would have found it if I had been allowed anywhere near the crime scene!” Sherlock complained. “Just because Greg didn’t take you that far from where the body was found…”

“Easy, sweetheart,” John soothed. “I know. And I’m sorry. This isn’t fair.”

“Don’t patronize me.”

“Sorry,” John said again. “Can I make you something to eat?”

“For the love of — John, will you please stop fussing?”

John chuckled. “I’m trying. It’s just…” He stood and made his way to where Sherlock was sitting, dropping to his knees at the man’s feet. He turned his mate to face him and slid between Sherlock’s legs. He rubbed at the muscular thighs, smiling adoringly up at the taller man. “Right now everything in me is telling me to drag you into our bedroom, lock and barricade the door, build a nest, and keep you in it until you give birth. Preferably with my cock buried in your lovely, warm hole.”

Sherlock blinked at him, his pupils dilating. “But…”

“I know,” John continued, curling forward to nuzzle into Sherlock’s belly. “I know I can’t — you’d never let me even if I tried. I know that. I’m just saying…” He looked up at Sherlock with soft eyes. “Let me do these things for you? Please?”

Sherlock swallowed hard. He nodded, letting his fingers sift through John’s hair. His alpha beamed at him.

“So tell me about the footprint,” John continued, sliding Sherlock’s soft jersey top up to press kisses into the smooth, taut skin of the man’s abdomen. “I thought the CID said the shoeprint was inconclusive?”

“It would be. To them,” Sherlock sighed, his prick beginning to twitch with John’s nearness and caresses. “They are pursuing the boot itself, but the tread pattern matches that of three different styles of boot made by the same popular manufacturer. It will take ages to isolate and try to track sales. And while the style of boot and the size could, technically, belong to a man or a woman, the gait and the weight distribution in the print tells us that Lestrade’s killer is most likely female.”

“Huh,” John said, looking up to Sherlock for consent as he allowed one hand to stray from thigh to groin.

Sherlock gaped, but nodded. John palmed the omega’s burgeoning prick through the flannel pyjama bottoms. “Oh, John…”

“We’ve never found anything at the killer’s location before. Why did she leave that kind of evidence now?” John continued, holding the man’s gaze even as he slid his hand into the waistband of the pyjamas and wrapped his fingers around Sherlock’s cock.

Sherlock released a ragged breath as John began to stroke. “Sh-she probably wants to be c-
caught,” he stammered. His hips began to rock in time with John’s fist. “John. John, please.”

John continued stroking, even as he was pushing Sherlock’s top up enough to...

“FUCK!” Sherlock arched into the sensation as John began to suck his nipple. “Still not used to...
oh, god!”

John drew off briefly, licking his lips. “Mmmm. And we’re going to catch her, aren’t we?”

Sherlock’s brow furrowed. “Catch…who? Oh, Joookkooohn…” The dark head fell back helplessly...

The pregnant omega was a writhing mess when he finally groaned his release, spilling over John’s...
hand inside his pyjamas. He was still panting when John drew him down for a deep, wet kiss.

“I love you,” John murmured against his cheek. “I will always be…whatever you need.”

Neither man had heard the footfalls on the stairs, so both were caught off-guard when the door to...
the sitting room was flung open.

“Hey — oh, shit!” Greg immediately retreated, slamming the door closed behind him. “SORRY!”...
he shouted through the door. “Should have knocked!”

John was laughing heartily when — having helped Sherlock wipe up and straighten his clothes, and having nipped into the loo to wash his hands — he finally let Greg into the flat.

The copper was a little pink as he joined them.

“Uh, sorry about that,” he said sheepishly.

“Not a problem,” Sherlock said blandly. “You couldn’t possibly have known my randy alpha was planning to pleasure me in our sitting room in the middle of the day.”

Greg snickered. “Uh, no. Right.”

“What’s up?” John asked amiably. Sherlock had moved to his leather chair, and John sat in the desk chair beside it, clearly not feeling even the slightest embarrassment in being caught making love to his mate.

“Well, you know how we’ve never found any shells at the scenes before?”

“And what are they?” Sherlock asked, anticipating.

Greg held out the evidence bag. “Military. Standard issue. Used by army snipers. There was one partial print — we’re running it now.”

Sherlock’s brow furrowed. “Sniper…”

John was frowning. “But…there’s something…”

“What is it?” Greg asked.

John’s eyes widened. “Adler!”


“She’s — god, why didn’t I make that connection before!” John cried. “Of course! I thought there was something weird about her the first time we met. The way she moves. Her posture…she’s a shooter. Has to be. My guess would be military. Probably retired.”

Sherlock was scowling. “Why didn’t I see that? I should have seen that!”

“You told me at the time you were having trouble getting a read on her,” John explained, grasping Sherlock’s hand reassuringly. “It was probably her pheromones messing with you.”

“So what are you telling me?” Greg asked, looking bewildered. “That Irene Adler — missing and thought dead — is my serial killer?”

“No, I…” John puzzled over this. “I don’t know. Maybe? I can’t imagine why, but it’s too big a coincidence…”
“The universe — ” Sherlock started.

John’s mobile rang. He stood and fetched it from the coffee table. “Hello? Yes…oh, jesus. Yeah, I’ll bring him. We’ll be there right away.”

“Mycroft?” Sherlock asked, his voice strangely uneven.

John nodded, glancing at Greg. “He’s been taken to hospital. He’s okay!” John reached a steadying hand to the copper who’d teetered on his feet and gone very pale. He helped lower Greg into his own red chair. “He’s okay, Greg. He’s conscious. We’ll go right now…”

“I can’t go with you,” the man said weakly.

“What? Why not?”

“Because I’m too…invested. Too compromised. He needs treatment and I won’t be able to make him see that. Not when I’m this worried about him.” He turned dark eyes in Sherlock’s direction. “Please — I don’t care how tough you have to be with him. Make him see that he needs help.”

Sherlock watched his brother-in-law carefully. Finally he stood and nodded at John.

“Not to worry,” Sherlock said briskly. He patted Greg’s hand and gave him a strangely kind smile. “John and I will take care of everything.”

________________

It was humiliating. Appalling. Mortifying. Mycroft stared out the window from his hospital bed, refusing to meet John’s eyes.

“Look, Mycroft,” John started. “You can continue to ignore me, but this isn’t going to go away.”

“You needn’t stay. There is no cause for concern. You should get Sherlock home before he —”

“IDIOTS!” the detective roared, bursting through Mycroft’s hospital room door, coat swirling around him. “These doctors are all complete morons!”

“— gets himself into some sort of trouble,” Mycroft finished wearily.

“Sherlock, please.” John turned to his mate. “This is not helping.”

Sherlock flapped an arm in the direction of the hallway. “They are planning to release him — RELEASE him, John! The man is admitted vomiting blood, clearly exhibiting all the signs of a severe eating disorder and they are going to just send him home!”

“I am discharging myself, against their wishes.” Mycroft interrupted. “If that restores your faith in our suspect health care system. I’d have gone private, if anyone had asked me. No offence, John.”


Sherlock opened his mouth to speak, but John raised a finger in his direction.

“Before you start, let me ask: Is what you are about to say even remotely supportive?”

The taller man considered this for some time. Finally he squared his chin. “No.”

“Then shut it,” John said abruptly. He turned now to the man in the bed. “And you — your husband is not here because when I told him about your collapse he nearly had one himself.”

“Gregory?” Mycroft propped himself onto his elbows. “But…is he…what happened?”

John waved him off. “No need to get excited. He was just overtired and emotionally drained. He’s been working stupid hours on this case and he’s been worried sick about you.”

Mycroft lay back, clenching a fist over the tight ball of pain in his midsection.

“Thing is,” John continued. “He didn’t think his being here in that state would help us get to what we need to.”

“And what is that?” Mycroft asked, trying his best to maintain a superior tone.

“You need help,” John said sharply. “Whatever it is that has you so worried, you are in no fit state
to deal with it right now. Your body is in crisis, Mycroft. And the people who love you…”

There was a soft snort from Sherlock’s general direction.

“Who love you,” John repeated, glaring at his mate. “Desperately want you to get help.”

Mycroft refused to answer.

“And you should know,” John added. “Juliet spoke to us when we arrived. Whether you discharge yourself today or not, you won’t be going back to work. She has already discussed your medical leave with the prime minister and the senior members of the cabinet.”

“Oh, I do like her,” Sherlock chimed in.

“Oh, you — what did I say?” John said firmly.

Sherlock rolled his eyes and made a spectacularly pouty face.

“I have a colleague who specializes in disordered eating,” John directed this to Mycroft. “I’d be happy to contact her, confidentially.”

Mycroft swallowed hard against the lump in his throat. “I can’t —”

“Bollocks,” Sherlock interrupted impatiently. “You can, you must and you will. You’ll make the time or you will lose the best thing that has ever happened to you.”

John sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose with thumb and forefinger. “Yes, thank you, sweetheart. Very supportive.”

Mycroft studied them — his brother and his brother’s mate. Had anyone told him even two years ago that he would see Sherlock bonded and genuinely content, he’d have had them sectioned. But the connection between the two men in front of him was obvious to anyone with eyes, the bond aside. They fit together like the last two pieces of a jigsaw.

And they were his family.

“I want to, but…”

“It’s okay to ask, Mycroft,” John said kindly. “Let us help.”

The pressure that had been grinding down into his shoulders, compressing his spine, pinching his nerves and making him ache to his very bones suddenly seemed overwhelming.

It was weak. It was selfish. It was dangerous. But he could no longer resist. He could not risk losing Gregory. It was unthinkable.

“Please.”
“It’s HER, John!” the voice from the laptop growled. “It has to be!”

“She’s DEAD, Sherlock,” John reminded him. “Remember? We saw her. On a slab. At the morgue. You identified her from the pattern of moles on her thigh…” John cast a quick glance at the DI standing beside him. “Don’t ask,” he muttered.

Greg raised both hands and shook his head, grinning.

“I don’t know how, John, but it’s her. She is the sniper.”

“If she’s not dead, then why did she send her phone to you?” John asked. “And why haven’t you sent that to Juliet, by the way?”

“I can get in. I know I can.” The voice on the laptop was indignant. “Never mind that! I can’t see the pattern right this minute, but this is all connected, John. It has to be.”

“Well, let me finish up here and we can discuss it when I get home,” John said.

“Fine.”

The connection went dead. John closed the laptop and set it on the nearby park bench.

“He’s edgy,” Greg commented.

“Eight months. He’s pretty uncomfortable now. Plus we had a weird run-in yesterday,” John said, frowning. “Reporter from the Telegraph. She cornered us on the way home from Angelo’s. Started asking all sorts of questions about Sherlock working for the Met — which I thought…”

He cast a quizzical glance at Greg.

“No, mate. No one is supposed to know. It’s never been official, and though the brass are aware of it now, it’s never been made public.”

John looked at Greg’s team thoughtfully. “You don’t suppose Donovan…”

Greg frowned. “No way. Not my team. They wouldn’t do that to me,” Greg insisted. “Besides, they know how much we owe him.”

John shrugged. “Anyway, she was asking all sorts of questions about that, and then she started asking about Moriarty, which was weird because Sherlock’s part in all that was kept under wraps. And then she just…”

“What?”

“She made some comments about Sherlock not being fit to have a baby.”

“Shit!”

“Yeah.”

“Wow. Well, obviously you didn’t kill her,” Greg said. “Or you’d have called me.”


“Ah.”

“Anyway, Sherlock blew it off, but I know it’s bothering him.” John sighed. “And I do think — in spite of what he says — that he’s worried about Mycroft.”

“How is he?”

John flinched a little at the brokenness of the DI’s voice. “He’s better. The residential treatment
facility is a nice one."

Greg nodded, sniffing as he glanced back out at his crime scene. Ronald Adair, Ministry of Defence — the latest sniper victim. “I hate being back at home without him. Not knowing…”

“I’m sure he knows that,” John offered.

“I just couldn’t watch, you know?”

“He says there’s something big going on and that’s what has had him so wound up.”

“I know. I figured it had to be bad to trigger a relapse after all these years.” Greg sat heavily on the bench, hands clenched into fists where they rested on his thighs. “I knew about it, you know. Pretty much right from the start. Figured it out right after we’d started dating. You should have seen him then — fuck, he was skinny. I mean, still the handsomest man I’d ever met, but he really needed to be fed up.” He took a deep breath. “Eventually I confronted him and he denied it. God, he was angry. I’ve never seen him that angry, before or since. He stormed out and I-I didn’t think I’d ever see him again.”

John pushed the laptop out of the way and sat beside the man. He clasped his hands in his lap and settled in to listen. Clearly the man needed a friend and who better than family?

“Four days later, he turned up outside work. Just waiting for me. He looked absolutely terrified.” Greg’s laugh was bitter. “He came back to mine and he just…he just fell apart. Told me how long it had been going on and how it started. Why he’d tried to quit but just couldn’t. And then, well, everything changed. He told me he wanted it to stop.” Greg’s voice broke. “It was the night he told me he was in love with me.”

John laid a reassuring hand on the man’s shoulder. “And you know he still is. That’s what’s given him the strength to go into treatment.”

“No, no. Easy, soldier. He’s still locked up. Your family is safe.” The man’s shoulders sagged. “I just think — whatever this threat is that’s had My so worried — it has something to do with Moriarty. And it’s wearing on him.”

John’s brow furrowed. “He’ll tell me. I’ll make him tell me. There is no way I will allow anything to happen to —”

Greg smiled fondly and slapped John on the back. “S’all right, mate. Nothing is going to happen to Sherlock or the baby. They’ve got a good strong alpha. And they’ve got me, as well. Uncle Greg may not have your biological instincts to protect them, but I will do everything in my power to keep them safe. Promise.”

Sir?

Greg’s head came up at the sound of his junior officer’s voice. “What is it, Turner?”

“We’re done, sir. Is there anything else?”

“No, you’re all right. Tell DS Donovan to get the wrap up under way. I’ll be back in a tick.”

The two men stood and John retrieved the laptop from the bench.

“Look, Greg, Sherlock is going to visit his brother on the weekend. Is there anything you want him to — I don’t know — pass along, or…?”

Greg started to reply then hesitated. He stuffed a hand into his pocket and pulled out a slightly wrinkled, sealed white envelope with several folded pages inside. “Just give him this. Ask him to write back. And tell him I love him. Always will.” He squared his shoulders. “That’s all I can do for now.”

“Right.” John nodded. “Good. Well, I’d better be off home. See if I can’t get Sherlock to cheer up.”

____________________

“Come in if you’re stopping,” Mycroft said sharply. He was seated at the small desk facing the window that overlooked the nearby lake.

Sherlock could hear the scritch, scritch, scritch of an expensive fountain pen over high-quality, linen-finish stationery.

He stepped into the bright room, a little surprised at the space and cheerful décor — though it did stand to reason, given how much his brother was paying for the private treatment facility. The soft green of the walls was de-institutionalised by the chocolate colour of the rich leather wingback chair and the frames surrounding original watercolours by local artists. The walnut desk at which Mycroft was working was clearly an antique piece rather than a reproduction, as was the Louis XV chair in which he now turned to regard Sherlock.

“John didn’t bring you?” Mycroft asked, glancing into the hallway beyond before Sherlock closed the door behind him.

“He’s waiting — ”

“Downstairs. Of course.”

Sherlock made his way to the wingback and settled into it with a little less grace than usual. He wiggled out of his coat and slid down into the seat. One hand stroked over his growing belly. “He insisted I spend time with you. Alone.”

Mycroft looked puzzled. “How odd.”

Sherlock shrugged. “He has very sentimental, if entirely misguided, notions as to how siblings ought to behave,” he drawled.

“I suppose…” Mycroft began.

“Because of his sister,” they finished together.

“Obviously,” Sherlock continued, sounding bored. He continued to peruse the room. “This is… nice.”

“It is not as bad as it could have been. Oakhill is by far the best of its kind.”

“Nicer than the one you sent me to,” Sherlock muttered.

“I am not a drug addict, Sherlock. I don’t need lockdown and detox.”

“No, you just — ” Sherlock bit off the end of the pithy comment. John had spent the duration of the train ride to Yorkshire cautioning his mate about trying to avoid antagonising Mycroft during his recovery.

“Yes?”

“Nothing.”
There was an uncomfortable silence as Mycroft moved from the chair by the desk to sit on the edge of the double bed, nearer his younger brother.

“Tea?” Mycroft asked finally.

“Oh, god, yes please,” Sherlock agreed readily.

Mycroft reached for the in-house telephone on the bedside table. “I’ll make sure they bring something herbal or decaffeinated. Biscuits? Or perhaps a sandwich?”

“I…” Sherlock debated the wisdom of eating in front of his brother.

“It’s fine,” the older man said blandly. “I’m due for a petite repast soon anyway. I’m learning to eat six small meals a day.” He dialled, glancing back at Sherlock’s swollen form. “And you must be hungry. Lunch on the train is never satisfactory.”

Sherlock turned his attention to the paper on Mycroft’s desk while his brother was speaking with the facility’s staff. He twisted to see if he could make out what the man had been scribbling away at. Sherlock knew Mycroft was not really allowed to work, though Juliet provided a report for him each morning. So it must be…

“It is a letter to Gregory, as you’ve no doubt surmised,” Mycroft quipped, standing and moving to shuffle the papers together and tuck them away into his desk drawer. “I will thank you to respect my privacy.”

“Have you sent — ?”

“No.” Mycroft returned to the bed and sat heavily. The lines on his face seemed a little deeper, though the dark circles under his eyes were improving and his cheeks were looking a little less hollow. But he still looked…sad.

Sherlock struggled to think of an appropriate response. “He’s, uhm, been very busy. This sniper business has been quite…” Sherlock broke off at Mycroft’s slightly widened eyes. Perhaps not. “I think there is a good chance he may manage to convince his superiors to allow me to advise on cases in person again. Once the baby is born. He’s suggested a probationary period. The fact that my bondmate works with me will probably help.” Sherlock shifted, rubbing at the spot the baby’s head (or possibly her bottom) was currently pushing against. “It will be a relief not to have to continue putting the onus on John. And, frankly, most of the few private cases we’ve had bored me to tears. Although the Baskerville thing wasn’t bad. And Adler was — ”

“Is it moving?” Mycroft cut in, his eyes fixed on Sherlock’s hand.

“Hmmm?” Sherlock glanced down. “Oh, yes. She’s quite active at the moment.”

“She?”

“It’s a girl,” Sherlock said, trying not to smile. “John’s been pretending to go along with me, but I know he questioned my instincts. I was right, though — I could see at the last scan. He’s made me promise not to tell him. He wants to be surprised.”

Mycroft nodded a little absently. “I remember…” He hesitated for a moment. “I remember when Mummy was carrying you. She was very ill for most of it. Her morning sickness lasted well into her third trimester. She was hospitalized in the end. Very nearly lost you once.” He shifted forward a little. “And I remember when you were born. Father took me to the hospital and I looked through the window at all the babies. I knew immediately which one you were.”

“Naturally.”

“You were small, being a little early. Skinny, too, even then. But you had a little tuft of dark hair sticking up on the top of your head. I had seen my own baby photos — you looked just like them. It was the first time…”

“What?”

Mycroft looked his brother in the eye now. “It was the first time I’d felt kinship for someone.”

Sherlock was puzzled. “But you had Mummy and Father to yourself for seven years before I came along.”

“Ah, yes, but I was not the child they’d hoped for. I was chunky and plain and quiet…other than when I unnerved them by exhibiting intellectual gifts beyond my years. I spent too much time
watching people and not enough time playing out of doors.” Mycroft shook his head. “They were only as attentive as they needed to be. Nanny Fairburn made up for the rest. And her solution to everything generally involved cake.” Mycroft sighed heavily. “But you were my little brother. I vowed that I would always watch over you. And I hoped…well, I suppose I just assumed you and I would share a connection of some kind or — ” He waved a hand at the idea. “Never mind. Mawkish nonsense. Clearly I’ve spent too much time in group therapy.”

Sherlock stared at Mycroft, realizing for the first time that while he knew a great deal about his brother, he really didn’t know the man at all. He panicked a little as the hormones he’d been fighting since discovering he was pregnant flooded his system. He felt an irresistible urge to comfort his brother. “Would you…would you like to feel?” he offered, lifting his hand away from the spot against which his daughter was still resting.

A strange light entered Mycroft’s eyes. “Are you quite certain?”

“I wouldn’t have offered if I wasn’t.”

“No. Of course not. Then yes. I would.” He extended a hand, cautiously at first, leaning in a little more.

Sherlock rolled his eyes, grabbing at the hand and dragging it to the hard mound of his abdomen. He pressed Mycroft’s palm into the likely spot and held it there. “She’s…oh, yes. There. She’s moving again now. Can you feel her?”

Mycroft’s eyes widened. “Oh. That is extraordinary. Is it like that all the time?”

“Most of the time, yes. Sadly, her sleep patterns rarely coincide with my own. Or John’s. I’ve been forced to nap whenever possible, which is not usually in my bed with my mate.”

“Does John mind?”

“John has been quite nonsensical about the whole pregnancy. Almost nothing bothers him,” Sherlock confessed, still perplexed by the situation. “He smiles at me constantly and kisses the end of my nose. He ignores me when I am horrible and fetches whatever I demand and won’t let me do anything strenuous. He rubs my feet and runs my bath and tells me I’m…” Sherlock’s cheeks coloured slightly. “He finds me very desirable in my current state.”

Mycroft smirked. “He did find you so before, brother. That is what led to your current state.”

“What I’m trying to say is that I can’t seem to…I haven’t managed to alienate him. Yet.”

Mycroft retracted his hand and sat back. “Alienate him? For heaven’s sake, Sherlock…”

“No! I don’t mean that I’m trying to. But you will admit it does tend to happen. Eventually.”

“But John Watson is different,” Mycroft said quietly. “He genuinely loves you. As you are.”

Sherlock nodded, gazing fondly at the evidence of that affection. “He certainly seems to. I may never understand why.”

“Perhaps, in relationships, it really is a matter of simply finding your match,” Mycroft said solemnly. “And you have found yours.”

“Ah, but I didn’t find him. You did.”

Mycroft cleared his throat. “Well, yes…”

“And I have never thanked you for it. Properly.”

Mycroft stared at him. “There is no need, Sherlock.”

“There is. I — ” He rubbed his belly once more. “I am happier than I deserve to be and that is because of you.” Sherlock huffed, looking entirely uncomfortable. “There. I’ve said it. So, now we can just…move on.”

“Thank you,” Mycroft said quietly.

Sherlock nodded awkwardly. He tugged on the edge of his discarded coat until he reached the pocket. “And now, speaking of matches.” He withdrew a fat envelope and handed it to his brother. “I come bearing gifts from yours.”

“From…Gregory?” Mycroft’s voice was disbelieving.
“Of course.”

“But I thought he wasn’t speaking to me.”

“He has expressed to John that he would like it if you were to communicate this way. At least for now.” Sherlock nodded in the direction of the desk and Mycroft’s abandoned letter within. “No reason not to send that, then.”

Mycrof ran fingers over the plain white envelope with the Metropolitan Police logo.

“He also made John promise to make me promise to tell you that he loves you. And always will.” Sherlock made every effort to deliver these words without a “tone,” as his loving bondmate called it. He’d promised that, as well.

Mycroft was silent, staring at the letter from his husband. Sherlock could not be certain, but he thought he could detect a little dampness in his older brother’s eyes.

A perfunctory knock at the door and the appearance of a very cheerful woman with a tea tray meant he would never know for sure.
We all fall down

Chapter Summary

All the cases come home to roost, but Sherlock's mind is elsewhere.

“All right, if we could just keep this moving along.”

Greg bit back a sigh of resignation. Press conferences were probably his least favourite part of the job. Donovan sat stiffly beside him. Normally she took the lead with the journos, but she was giving him nothing today — likely still stinging from the dressing down he’d given her earlier. He hated doing it, but her personal biases were threatening his investigation and his team. And his brother-in-law.

“Go ahead, Lucy.” He pointed at the Evening Standard reporter.

“So this is definitely a sniper we’re dealing with, then, is it?”

“Yes,” Greg said shortly. Well, he had already given them the release. “Andrew?”

The young man from The Times stood. “What can people do to protect themselves?”

“At the moment, there is no reason for panic. We know that the killer is targeting specific people. These are NOT random attacks. The sniper is not sitting outside Charing Cross tube station during peak hours picking off commuters.”

“But how do we know who’s next? What if an innocent bystander gets caught in the crossfire?”

“We have some excellent leads and we feel very certain that we should have this wrapped up shortly.”

“What leads — ”

“You know better than to ask me that, Raj! Come on!” Greg’s temper was fraying. “Look, the only reason I am telling you anything at all is because we were notified that one of you has got hold of an interview with an ‘insider’ and is planning to publish tomorrow. We wanted to get ahead of the story and try to prevent hysteria. Help me out, would ya’?”

There was a grumbling and shuffling of feet as the reporters all looked around at each other, trying to figure out who had the scoop. Finally, a voice called out from the back of the crowded room.

“Who is Sherlock Holmes?”

Greg’s brows knit together. “Who’s asking?”

A redhead beta woman emerged from the pack. “Kitty Reilly. Telegraph.”

Greg froze. “I don’t know you. Do you usually cover — ?”

“No. I’m an investigative journalist,” Kitty replied coldly. “Who is Sherlock Holmes?”

The other reporters turned to Greg expectantly. He watched them all, still caught off guard.

“Where did you get that name?”

“I have a source. A source that tells me you are using Sherlock Holmes — a civilian and an OMEGA — as a consultant on major investigations, including this one. That you’ve been using his services for years. And that Mr. Holmes is now pregnant, but you continue to seek his input and put him in harm’s way.”

“Wait, wait…” Greg waved his hands to try to quell the rising tide of outrage in the room. “Mr. Holmes is a gifted detective and has been invaluable to us on a number of cases. He no longer attends crime scenes in person, and until very recently he was suppressed — ”

“He used illegal suppressants in order to provide his civilian input into police investigations?”

There was more grumbling now. Greg looked to Sally for help, but quickly realized none would
be coming. She looked angry, yes, but determined. She’d always resented Sherlock. Clearly he had underestimated how much.

“Exactly how much influence did Mr. Holmes have over the investigation into James Moriarty?” Reilly continued, shouting now to be heard above the din in the room.

Greg turned back to Sally, stunned. She looked down at her folded arms.

“Wasn’t me,” she muttered under her breath. “But I warned you: if I could see something was off with the Moriarty investigation, someone else was going to figure it out.”

“Figure WHAT out?” Greg asked helplessly, his hand over the mic. There was another wave of murmuring through the assembled pack; Greg turned to see their Chief Superintendent entering the room. “Sally, what have you done?”

“What you should have,” she replied evenly. “Greg, I know you feel some sort of loyalty to The Freak because of your husband, but you have to see….”

“I see that I’ve been betrayed by a colleague I trusted,” Greg said, his voice cracking a little. He stood, nodded to the CS and departed without another word.

The letter informing him of his suspension was waiting on his desk when he returned.

Sherlock was stretched out on their bed. His back was sore and his ankles were swollen. After their journey to visit Mycroft on the weekend, John had prescribed some bed rest.

He counted John’s footsteps as the alpha approached their bedroom. “Are you still thinking about last week?” John asked gently.

Sherlock sighed heavily, his hand moving to cover John’s where it rested now on the omega’s abdomen. “No.”

“Sherlock…”

“Maybe. A bit.”

The bed sagged as John settled beside him. The alpha turned on his side and moulded himself to Sherlock’s body, one arm draped loosely over his middle and his forehead pressed against Sherlock’s temple. “It was stupid. That woman was stupid. She’s a journalist, for god’s sake! And a beta! What the hell does she know about it anyway?”

“She knows me,” Sherlock shrugged. “Kitty Reilly’s been following my website and your blog religiously — almost pathologically, it would seem — since the beginning. She knows my methods and has witnessed my behaviour. And she simply wondered aloud how someone like —”

“Don’t say it like that.”

“Like me,” Sherlock repeated. “Could possibly be a loving and responsible omega parent?”

“And as I told you last night: Bollocks to her and everyone like her!” John huffed, his temper clearly riled. “I don’t know what she wants from us, but she interrupted our dinner to ask a few questions about you and Scotland Yard. Instead, she starts insulting you and casting aspersions. She’s a bitch…”

“She’s a journalist,” Sherlock interrupted. “And she is trying to make a name for herself. Like I said.”

“Exactly. This is all just to get a rise out of you. And me, I suppose. That photo her friend took of me reaching for her will probably sell some papers.” John snickered. “Still, kind of flattering in a way: Former soldier defends pregnant mate.”

“Yes, John. You’re very butch.”

“All right, all right.”

Sherlock smirk faded quickly. “But she’s not entirely wrong. I am not like other omegas, John. I am cold, thoughtless, selfish, completely absorbed with my work. I can be self-destructive and I do have a tendency to put others in danger as well. Not really the best CV for parenthood.”
“Well, what the hell is?” John asked. “No one ever knows what they’re getting into when they have kids. My parents weren’t…well, my old man was a complete screw up, but we loved him. He wasn’t like other alpha parents, but we were his and we knew he loved us.”

“How?” Sherlock asked.

“What?”

“How?” Sherlock turned his head on the pillow to look into John’s eyes. “How did you know he loved you?”

John stared at him for long moments. “Because when the police came for Harry, my father nearly killed one of them trying to keep them from taking her away. He never forgave himself for not being able to protect her.”

Sherlock’s brow furrowed.

“Love doesn’t look the same on everyone, Sherlock, and it doesn’t always have to be spoken,” John said softly. “Maybe you don’t feel or react the way everyone else does, but I know with everything I am that you are going to be a great dad. The same way I knew you would be the best bondmate an alpha could ask for.”

“John,” Sherlock started wearily, turning to face the ceiling.

“No. Just hear me out. Again.” John shifted a little, removing his arm from Sherlock’s belly and moving instead to grasp both of the detective’s hands. “Now look at me.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes but shifted his chin enough so he could see his mate.

“You are the best man I have ever known. Brilliant. Heroic. Exciting. Loyal.”

“Really. And will any of that help with changing nappies? Or midnight feedings? Or singing lullabies? Or patching boo-boos?”

“Sherlock, babies are as much science as they are art. You take care of the measurement of food intake, faecal analysis and neural development and I promise you I will sing as many lullabies as you like. And buy the soft toys. And play peek-a-boo. And I will continue to treat all the injuries — our child’s and yours. I will take care of both of you.”

Sherlock felt the tension leave his body. He smiled a little as he stretched forward to kiss his mate. John met him halfway, capturing his lips firmly and caressing his jaw with one thumb.

When they parted, John was looking very soppy indeed. His dark blue eyes were full of feeling. Sherlock still didn’t understand what he had done to deserve this alpha, but he was exceedingly glad to be bonded to Dr. John Watson.

“Better now?” John whispered.

Sherlock nodded gamely. “Always better with you.”

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I don’t know if you remember our first night the way I do. I can’t think of a time when I was more turned on. You picked me up in your own car, remember? The silver Aston Martin. God, that was sexy. And then you stepped out of the car and you were wearing that black jumper and the leather jacket. Just about came in my trousers, right then.

I could see how uncomfortable that outfit made you; it was so far outside what you knew and liked. But you’d tried it anyway, because you thought I might like it. And I really did.

Liked you even better out of it, though.

We got back to my place about 1, after the concert (how did you know I liked Mark Knopfler, anyway?) and we were kissing on the pavement.

I loved the way you kissed me. Like you were asking me a question or permission or something. I knew how badly you wanted me, and I’d wanted you since the day I’d first seen you. But you were so sweet, so earnest. Your tongue just lightly teasing my bottom lip.
You wanted me to make the first move, so I did.

I coaxed your mouth open and lapped at your tongue. You moaned. I sucked on your bottom lip while I rubbed your back. I was working my way down to grabbing your arse. But you knew that. You got harder and harder the closer I came.

Finally I just dug my fingers into that lovely bum and ground my cock into you. I was losing it a little by then.

I don’t remember how we got inside. I don’t even remember opening the door. Somehow we were standing in my lounge and I was peeling that leather jacket off you and tugging that black jumper over your head. You were protesting a bit — you didn’t want to be the first one without clothes. I think you started unbuttoning my shirt. I was kissing your neck and your shoulders.

Have I told you how much I love your freckles?

I really, really do.

I think I had your jeans undone by then. I couldn’t wait anymore. Next thing I knew I was on my knees at your feet, your cock half the way down my throat. You tasted like expensive soap and musk and salt. You were already a little wet for me.

I don’t think I ever told you this (not that I usually need to tell you anything), but I had dated two men before you. Betas, like me. I’d had a couple of girlfriends, but it never took. I like cock. I like your cock. The way it curves up and to the right. How long and sleek it is — like you. I wish I were sucking you off right now.

I have my hand down my pants, Mycroft. I want you so badly that I’m jacking off writing a letter.

You started to leak into my mouth. Little droplets on my tongue. My own prick was aching by then. I needed more.

We got to the sofa; don’t remember how. I’d lost my trousers and pants then, too. We stared at each other for a moment, just sort of taking in the whole picture. I remember worrying that I’d be found wanting (I’ve been more fit). But you just gazed at me with those bedroom eyes and touched me as though you couldn’t believe I was real.

I had lube but I have no idea when I fetched it.

I loved straddling you while you worked me open for the first time. Getting to watch your face as you prepared me for your cock. I was pretty tight; I hadn’t been fucked in a while. And every time you hit my sweet spot and made me shout, you blinked in surprise. God, that was hot.

And the moment when your cock slid inside me…

Mycroft was stretched out on his bed, just about to reach inside his trousers to find some relief, when his mobile went. Phones were contraband for other patients, but allowed for Mycroft Holmes owing to his position. He dug it out of the desk drawer where he’d stored it and answered it, puzzled.

“Holmes.”

“Mycroft? Jackson here. Sorry to disturb you on your vacation. Your PA insisted I could speak to her about this, but I think you’ll understand why I couldn’t.”

“What is it, Henry?” Mycroft half expected another lecture on Irene Adler, regardless that she’d turned up dead.

“I have some news on Moriarty.”

Mycroft felt a deep chill descending as he swung his legs from the bed and sat up. He’d been expecting it, of course; preparing for it. But he could not take anything for granted. “Tell me.”

The alpha listened intently as his American colleague spoke, slumping a little further by the minute.

Finally, the man on the other end of the line stopped speaking. Mycroft did not respond
“Still there, Holmes?”

“Still here, Henry, thank you. Explain this to me again. James Moriarty…”

“Doesn’t exist,” his old friend repeated, his voice far more temperate than the last time they’d spoken. “He’s just a creation — someone took this idiot actor, Richard Brook, and had him pose as the criminal behind all these cases. But we’ve interrogated Brook. Extensively. And we’ve verified his sources.” There was a crackling pause on the line. “Mycroft, Richard Brook is legitimate. He was paid to be James Moriarty. The real culprit is still out there.”

“Surely we can all agree this is a ruse,” Mycroft began. “An eleventh hour attempt to avoid a lifetime in prison. Or worse.”

“All of it checks out. I don’t how your guys missed this, but they did.”

“But this is utterly absurd!” Mycroft insisted, standing to pace the small room. “Why is he doing this now? Why not tell us immediately when he was arrested and spare himself months of interrogation? And how does he explain the vast network of his criminal compatriots Interpol and my people have been rounding up since his arrest?”

There was another hesitation from his CIA counterpart. “To answer the first two, he feared for his life,” Henry said frankly.

“He could have been shot on the scene and he wasn’t. Why would he fear for his life in custody?”

“Because of who was holding him. And because of who he says put him up to all of this. If you want to know the truth about the ‘network’ you’ve been tracking, perhaps you should talk to the person who’s been feeding you your information.”

Mycroft left a long pause. “No…”

“Yeah. Brook claims Sherlock Holmes paid him to be James Moriarty. That your kid brother set all these crimes in motion not only to build his own reputation as a genius detective but to take revenge on alpha society by controlling omegas in positions of influence. Brook says he began to panic when the whole pool thing went down. Apparently, he thought Holmes was going to leave with him and disappear — the cops and the arrest weren’t part of the plan he’d been told about. He didn’t know the explosives were real and he had no idea about the snipers.” Henry cleared his throat. “I know how this sounds, Mycroft. I do. If I hadn’t seen the evidence, I’d agree that this was a load of shit. I am sorry. Of course, I don’t believe you were involved…”


And now they were all trapped.

“I’m the only one who knows, Mycroft,” Henry continued sympathetically. “I interviewed him alone and I’ve confiscated the recordings. But I don’t have much time. Brook’s been meeting with a British journalist and a new lawyer. I didn’t have a legitimate reason to deny it. I won’t be able to hold this off forever.”

“No. Of course not.” Mycroft’s mind whirled with next steps. He would refute it all, of course, but for now he should get Sherlock out of the country. John would have to go, too — a pregnant omega could die without their mate. “How long can you give me?”

“Twelve hours. I think the journalist’s story is due to go out in the morning edition.”

“Thank you, Henry.”

“I am sorry about this. I know he’s your brother, but he’s just an omega. Sometimes they get confused if they don’t have the right sort of guidance.”

Mycroft ground his teeth together. “My brother isn’t ‘just’ anything,” he said firmly. “But I do appreciate the warning. I will have this cleared up very shortly.”
“I don’t see how.”

“Well, you wouldn’t.” He ended the call abruptly. And immediately began a call to John Watson.

The line was engaged. Mycroft began tossing clothing out of his wardrobe and this time dialled his PA.

“Juliet? I need a car. Immediately. No. Scratch that. Send the helicopter. NOW!”

He ended the call and almost immediately received a text. He clicked on it. The private number was blocked, but he had no doubt who it was from.

*Jumbo Jet. Dear me Mr Holmes, dear me.*
Chapter Summary

Everything becomes clear to Sherlock, and it is more deadly than he could have imagined. But Mycroft? Well, he's been a busy boy.

Sherlock shifted on the sofa, trying to find a position that wouldn’t put quite so much pressure on his bladder. He hissed as another Braxton Hicks contraction tugged at him.

When it passed, he sighed wearily. He was desperately tired, but sleep would not come. And not just because of the baby.

His daughter delivered one spectacular thump to his innards and Sherlock groaned.

“What? What is it?” he asked softly.

He tapped at his bump thoughtfully.

“Why don’t we try some more names, hmmm? I know your papa and I have sort of agreed, but it’s still an entertaining exercise.” He rested his head against the back of the sofa as he slid down a little more. “Where were we last time…oh, yes. Margaret? No. All right. Nadia? Ow. Fine. Take that right off the list, then. Ophelia?”

There was a long pause. “Possibility. Good. Patience — no, sorry. I forgot. Your papa’s nixed that one already. Somewhere he doesn’t think any child of mine is likely to be able to live up to it. Uhhhhm, let me see. P. P. Persephone? No. Well, I suppose that might be a bit unwieldy. I should know. Nothing wrong with an uncommon name in the end, though, if it’s a nice one. Sets you apart. Q. What about Quinn?”

Sherlock closed his eyes for a moment as the baby began to settle a bit.

“Oh, that is better. Thank you.”

He pushed himself back up and considered the other element of his insomnia where it rested on the coffee table.

A month. He’d had the phone for a month and he couldn’t work out the password. He knew he should be able to see it, but nothing at all about Irene Adler or her case had made sense.

Something about her alpha scent had thrown him right from the beginning. He’d never seen her clearly.

What was he missing?

He’d tried a couple of things to get past the lock, like his address and the counter on John’s blog — he’d really thought there was a message there. She was very clever. And she did like to play games.

He was well aware that John and Lestrade thought he was mad. The woman was legally dead, after all. But he was no longer convinced. Somehow he knew she was out there somewhere, hiding just out of sight…


So this was all about him. All of it. He stared at the phone. Not protection. No. Part of the game. A game just for…

Sherlock regarded the screen once more. Carefully he typed in the four fateful letters.

I AM S H E R LOCKED

The phone sighed at him as the lock screen dissolved.

Sherlock flipped through folders and files, his mind reeling at the information contained there: state secrets, personal humiliations, proprietary technology, and stolen intellectual property —
Irene had a veritable treasure trove with which she could control her pawns. Including, apparently, his brother and the CIA.

But why?

He was about to go and wake John when he spotted the small app icon that looked like a skull and crossbones. He clicked on it. The screen spun to reveal a series of graphics illustrating a chemical formula. It was the formula for the H.O.U.N.D. experiments at Baskerville.

“Of course. Adair…”

As he closed that, he noticed the small icon for a file with his own name on it. It was a PDF of a newspaper story that, going by the date, was about to be published by Kitty Reilly. He skimmed it, a little shocked, and yet not at all.

He dropped the phone for a moment, steepling his fingers beneath his chin. He allowed the enormity of what he’d just read to sink in.

Moriarty had promised to burn him and the fire had been set.

Sherlock retrieved his own mobile now. Only one thing to do, under the circumstances.

He was just finishing his task when Adler’s phone sighed again at an incoming text. Curious, Sherlock clicked on it.

About time. Like what you see?

Very interesting. What is it all for, Irene? – SWH

Come and play. I’ll tell you everything. Or everything you haven’t figured out by then. Battersea. Immediately. Do I need to tell you to come alone?

Sherlock felt a vague sense of panic at the cramps that had resumed.

“Shhhh,” he whispered, attempting to soothe his daughter. He needed to stay calm. Stay focussed. “I’m sorry,” he said softly, choking down unshed tears. “I’m sorry. I’m so, so sorry. I will try and find another way. But if I can’t…I will finish this and then your papa will be safe. And Uncle Mycroft and Uncle Greg. I’ll make sure of it.”

He padded softly to collect some clothes from the hamper. He could not go back into their room, could not risk waking John now.

When he was dressed, he pulled his coat on. It no longer fit at all, but he felt safer — stronger — with it on. With a wry smile, he turned the collar up. John would like that.

He took one last look around 221B before making his way down the stairs.

So this was how it would end.

__________________________

It was near midnight and Greg was nursing another lager when Mycroft burst through the front door of their townhouse.

“GREGORY!”

“My, what the hell…” Greg jumped up from the ugly paisley chair, but hadn’t braced himself for the full body weight of his husband barrelling into him and engulfing him in a desperate hug. He stumbled, grasping the taller man for balance. “My?”

Mycroft retreated, smoothing a palm over Greg’s cheek and searching his face like he’d been starved for the sight of it. “Gregory. I have missed you — so very, very much. I wish…but there is no time to explain. Not now. I need you to fetch John and my brother. Sherlock is in danger.”

“What?” Greg was already following his husband to the door. He grabbed a jacket.

“Do you have access to a weapon?” Mycroft asked watching from the doorway.

“No. I’ve been — ”

“Suspended. Of course,” Mycroft ground his teeth. “There will be something in the car.” They were out on the pavement and Mycroft was hastily pushing his husband into a black saloon. Greg
climbed in and quickly budged over so the man could join him. One of Mycroft’s minions closed the car door behind them. “It’s Moriarty.”

“I KNEW it!” Greg shouted, thumping his fist into the armrest on the door beside him. He narrowed his eyes at his husband. “And you’ve been carrying this all by yourself.”

“I could not say anything to anyone…” Mycroft sighed. “There was a threat. Before he left, Moriarty promised me the game was not over. I had no way of knowing what he meant. What move he would make next. We interrogated every member of his network as we caught them. All betas. Nothing. Well, nothing outside of that relatively useless tidbit about where to find Moriarty’s last sniper. Ended up figuring that out on my own, though not nearly as quickly as I should.”

“Does this have something to do with Irene Adler? And my case?” Greg asked, glancing out the window.

“Yes. I’m sorry — John and Sherlock are quite right. I wish I had seen the connection sooner. I would have intervened. I was…distracted.”

Greg squeezed his knee with a silent nod of understanding.

“I waited for weeks, plotting various scenarios and countermoves,” Mycroft continued. “But finally, finally we caught an omega. Suppressed; I don’t think any of the others even knew. Denied access to his meds, he responded very well to gender manipulation. Once he turned, it was easy to begin with the others. Each one of them only knew one small piece of their respective operations, but there was one thing they all shared: my brother.”

“Come again?”

“They all identified my brother’s face as that of the man they worked for.”

“My god. But how?”

“A double. A very good one, but a double nonetheless.”

“But…”

“From that point, there were several possibilities; I designed responses for each.”

“And now you know.”

Mycroft’s smile was soft and genuine. “Indeed I do.” He reached across and squeezed his husband’s hand. “I will share everything with you, in detail, as soon as Sherlock is safe. Can you trust me?”

Greg shook his head at the man. “You are as big an idiot as your brother,” he said fondly. “I trust you with absolutely everything. Everything except your own well being. For that you need a little help.”

“Yes. I-I am much better,” Mycroft started. “And I will complete the treatment. Clearly Moriarty was waiting for a moment of weakness on my part…”

“You’re not weak,” Greg interrupted, sliding closer. “You’re human. I know you’ll finish the program. And I know you’ll get healthy again. I also know that Moriarty and Irene Adler are about to — ”

Mycroft kissed him. Hard. Greg sank into the kiss, digging his fingers into the front of the…

“Mycroft?” His voice was a little gruff as he pulled back. “Oh, my god.”

“I kept it. Just in case I ever needed it again.”

Greg stroked over the leather jacket with unconcealed desire. “I didn’t even notice,” he said wonderingly. “When this is over, you and I will be — ”

“Yes,” Mycroft agreed readily. “Always yes. But right now, I have a game to finish.”

Greg dropped his forehead to Mycroft’s. “Go. I’ll get John and Sherlock.”

“And I will contact you as soon as I know where we will meet. You’ll…take care of my brother, of course.”
Greg kissed him again, lingering for a moment. “You bet. And I’ll keep John from killing anyone unnecessarily.”

Mycroft looked thoughtful. “No need to work too hard on that last one,” he teased. “Not on my account.”

He opened his door and slipped back out of the saloon.
A more permanent destination

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Adler meet for the final showdown.

Greg wasted no time with knocking when he arrived at 221B. Not that it would have mattered.

John Watson was awake, fully dressed and on the edge of an alpha rage.

“Where the FUCK have you been?” he snarled as Greg entered the sitting room where the man had clearly been pacing. “I’ve been calling you for twenty minutes!”

“John, I need you to calm down.”

“CALM DOWN? CALM DOWN?” the alpha ranted, drawing up to his full height in front of Greg. “Sherlock is MISSING, Greg!! My pregnant omega is MISSING!!”

“John, breathe. You have to breathe, mate. You need to hold it together so we can find him, all right?”

John sucked air into his lungs, nodding stiffly.

“Now, when did he go?” Greg said calmly, both hands on John’s shoulders.

“I don’t — I’m not exactly sure,” John panted. “He was having trouble sleeping. Said he wanted to sit up for a while. I didn’t hear…anything. I got up to take a piss and he was gone.” He dug all ten fingers into his scalp. “Jesus! How could I let this happen!”

“It’s going to be okay. Mycroft — ”

“That fucking phone!”

Greg’s brow furrowed. “What phone?”

“Adler’s phone! She sent it to him when she…died. He’s been obsessed with trying to get into it!”

“Is it still here?”

“No, that’s his phone,” John waved helplessly at the mobile sitting on the coffee table. He froze. “Wait. He never goes anywhere without his phone. Why would he take hers and leave this behind?”

John dove at it, swearing with relief to find it turned on and…

“It’s running something. He’s set something up here. It’s tracking,” John muttered turning the screen to show Greg. “Oh, my god! My mad, brilliant darling! He’s tracking the location of Irene Adler’s phone!”

“Car’s waiting. Let’s go!” Greg herded John to the door, hesitating only when his own mobile rang. “Mycroft? Yeah, I know. We’ve got him. We’re on our way.” He listened for a moment and smiled. “I love you, too. Hurry, pet. We need you.”

_______________________________________

“Well?” Sherlock made his way out into the centre of the floor.

The old Battersea power station was in poor repair, but a few of the levels remained relatively intact. Here they were surrounded by partially demolished walls and crumbling brick, including the wall that would have separated them from the central vent that extended through all floors of the building. It was a long drop. She’d chosen well.

There was a clip-clip-clip of high heels on the old concrete and then she appeared from behind an old control panel. Immaculately turned out, as always. She paused by a shabby green desk and set her purse, her weapon and a newspaper down on it.

“Sherlock Holmes,” she said smoothly.
“Sherlock Holmes,” she said smoothly. “Irene Adler,” he replied coldly. “Or is there another name I should use?”

“Irene Adler,” he replied coldly. “I used to go by Captain Sabrina Moran. Though, technically, I was dishonourably discharged. And I never liked ‘Sabrina.’ Not an Audrey Hepburn fan.”

Sherlock looked puzzled.

“Not your area, is it?” Irene chuckled and stalked toward him.

Sherlock stood his ground, resisting the urge to cover his belly protectively or retreat. John. Greg. Mycroft. He had to think of them, now.

“So you’ve figured it all out,” she stated positively. She closed in until she was pressed in close to his side.

Sherlock tried not to flinch. “Of course.”

“Go on, then,” she whispered, leaning in to lick at his ear. “Impress a girl.”

“You are James Moriarty’s alpha. That’s why your scent was so strange. You were masking the bond.”

“Very good. And?”

“You were there, that night. At the pool. The last sniper.”

“I was wondering when someone was going to put that together. Honestly, I even fed your brother some intel about me through some of Jimmy’s playmates.”

Sherlock ignored this and continued. “As a highly trained assassin, you were invaluable to Moriarty’s work. Your lack of moral awareness clearly fit very nicely with his own. Your interest in gender manipulation and alpha dominance — which puzzled me, given his vehement hatred of alphas — added another level to your usefulness,” Sherlock started, speeding up quickly. “You found a way to transform consensual BDSM play into something quite different. It became the means to oppress other genders and to capture information from clients…not to secure some kind of future protection, but to blackmail them for Moriarty’s purposes. Adair was the last. You photographed the email about my brother’s ‘flight of the dead’ and held it hostage until you’d secured access to the information about the H.O.U.N.D. experiments at Baskerville.”

“Excellent. And?”

“I don’t understand why.”

“Why what?”

“Why Moriarty would have an alpha, particularly one like you.”

Irene laughed. “Oh, Sexy, you didn’t really buy all that ‘omega revolution’ stuff did you? Of course he hates most alphas. You all do. All omegas hate that they are slaves to biology. But as much as you all protest, when the right alpha comes along…” She looked pointedly at Sherlock’s pregnant belly. “Look, I love Jimmy. I nurture him. I encourage him. I let him push back at the alpha world because it suits us both. We both want the same thing.”

“And what’s that?”

“To watch the world burn. And to make a profit while it does,” Irene backed away so she could hold his chin in her hand. “And you are just going to get in the way.”

“So all of this, this whole game, has been leading up to me. Destroying me.”

“Yes, yes it has,” Irene confirmed.

“At our last meeting, Moriarty wanted me,” Sherlock puzzled, watching as Irene paced around him like a cat. “He wanted me to come with him, work with him. Why destroy me?”

“Well, you did break his heart,” Irene admonished. “He’d finally found someone just like him. He was so excited. Like a schoolboy.”

“Oh. I see.”

“I thought you might.”
“This was your idea. Good old-fashioned jealousy.”

“Don’t flatter yourself,” Irene sneered. “I was more than willing to take you on when Jimmy asked to keep you. I’m perfectly happy to have more than one omega. But you’re spoiled now. Marked and bred. And I’m not even remotely interested in offspring — my own or anyone else’s.”

“Ah,” Sherlock blinked. “So Moriarty was the mastermind…”

“But I am the Master,” Irene finished. “It’s sad, really. I think we all could have got on really well together. Imagine all the fun things we might have come up with!” Irene spun, arms wide. “Did you enjoy my game, with the phone?”

“Yes,” Sherlock admittedly frankly. “It was a brilliant stroke, to get me to hold on to the information that toppled a secret Anglo-American anti-terrorism operation.”

“I knew you’d never turn my mobile over. How could you resist a puzzle like that? Of course, Jimmy had already figured out the email. Sorry about that. Left you holding the bag.”

“Oh, and not just in that.”

“No,” Irene stopped and crossed her arms. “No, you were only way Jimmy and I were going to secure his release. Everyone believes you did, it Sherlock. I know you’ve seen the preview, but have you seen the morning edition?” Irene returned to the green desk and retrieved the paper. She held it up so he could see the lurid headline. “I think Kitty’s done a very nice job of painting the picture of a brilliant, but deeply disturbed, omega who conned one of his own kind into taking the fall for him. My sweet boy should be back here within the week.”

Irene glanced up, following Sherlock’s gaze to the old desk, where her gun lay undefended. She shook her head sadly and tutted. “Poor thing.” She moved closer once more and caressed his tummy, dragging blood-red nails over the hard flesh. “You’d never get there before me. Not like this.” She grinned. “Besides, you won’t kill me. You need me.”

“Need you…” Sherlock trailed off. “John.”

“Oh, not just your alpha.” She began circling Sherlock once more.

“Mycroft.”

“Of course. He’s harder to do, but then that’s what makes this so much fun.”

“Lestrade.”

“Three frames, three victims. Shooting them would be fun, don’t get me wrong,” she said waving a hand dismissively. “But this is much, much more satisfying.”

“The sniper case…”

“Every piece of evidence left at the scenes can be traced to one John Watson, former army doctor and accomplished marksman.”

“Mycroft. Mycroft went after Moriarty. He knows the network. We have people in custody…”

“All betas. No one is susceptible and they will all testify under oath that they were working for you. Mycroft Holmes was very nearly responsible for letting the greatest criminal in a century get away. And all because it’s his baby brother.”

“And Greg,” Sherlock said wearily. “You used me to get him out of the way so John would go down for the sniper case. You need a sympathetic ear on the force — that will be Donovan, of course. You turned Greg into the duped law enforcement officer who was manipulated by a civilian breeder. Was I having an affair with him as well?”

“Well, I couldn’t resist that bit. He’s a handsome devil,” Irene raised a brow. “Seriously — never tempted?”

Sherlock grimaced, though only in part because of Adler’s words. He was beginning to sweat and his abdomen was cramping more insistently now. He couldn’t tell if that was from stress or if — worst case — he might be in labour. He had been feeling a bit strange all day, and he’d been having what he’d thought were prodromal labour pains. It was possible he’d been in labour for hours.
“So I have to die in disgrace.”

“Well, I don’t suppose you have to. I mean, I could wait for the Americans to come for you and we could go through all the motions of a trial, but Jimmy has such a short attention span. This is certainly easier for everyone.”

“Not everyone.”

“Well, no. Of course not.” Irene agreed, nodding with mock solemnity.

Sherlock marvelled at how many mannerisms the woman shared with her mate. He wondered briefly if he and John…

“So you go down in flames alone or everyone you love burns instead. If you jump like a good little cock-slut, the evidence against John will ‘disappear.’ And a senior cabinet member will learn that Mycroft Holmes began working with Richard Brook as soon as he learned the truth and that this has all been an elaborate ruse to catch you and all your conspirators.”

“Mycroft will never agree —”

“You’d be surprised what people will agree to when their lives are at stake. What else does Mycroft Holmes have besides his job?” Irene smirked. “Well, that and the DI.”

“You’ll use Greg.”

“Of course I will, silly boy. Mycroft plays along or Greg’s career goes up in smoke, all because of you. And likely their marriage with it. With you dead, Mycroft Holmes would have nothing else to live for.”

Sherlock struggled to control a wince, waiting until Irene’s back had turned. He took a deep breath and tried to modulate his voice. “I would say ‘this will never work.’ but then you’ll feel obligated to keep talking some more and outline how you managed it all. Frankly, I’ve already deduced most — well, to be fair, ALL — of the rest, so can we just skip to the end?”

“Aren’t you eager!” Irene clapped her hands together. “You’re right. No point wasting more time on talk. Off you pop.”

Sherlock walked calmly, and as steadily as he could manage, to the edge of the vent.

Irene paced behind him. “That’s it. Lovely. Have a care; there’s a bit of a breeze blowing through this old place. Don’t want you to go over before you’re ready.”

Sherlock balanced uncertainly on the edge, staring into the abyss.

“It’ll be quick, I promise,” Irene said mildly. “It’s high enough. You won’t linger at the bottom.”

“It isn’t me I’m worried about,” Sherlock answered brokenly. There were tears on his cheeks. He held his belly unreservedly now. The pain was increasing; a gruesome irony given the act before him.

“Oh, yes,” Irene replied, almost surprised. “I’d almost forgotten it was a two-for-one. But honestly…Sherlock Holmes? Getting all misty over a baby? We’ve been watching you for years. This just doesn’t sound like you. Jimmy will be disappointed to be right. He said right from the start that John Watson would ruin you.”

“John has not ruined me.”

“He’s made you just like all the other breeders. You’re boring. Jimmy wanted me to help him break you and we went to such trouble. But here you are, whimpering like the useless cunt you are. Such a disappointment.”

Sherlock took two steps back from the ledge and turned to face her. Irene looked panicked momentarily.

“What are you doing?”

“John Watson did not ruin me,” Sherlock repeated, barely able to suppress a grunt of pain. “What he did was prove to me that I could be every bit as brilliant as I’d always believed myself to be, but I didn’t have to be a sociopath.”

Irene huffed. “Jimmy’s not a sociopath.”
“No, he’s a lunatic. But we’re not talking about James Moriarty. We’re talking about me. I don’t have to despise my biology because it is not who I am. And I don’t have to be lonely because I’m different; I don’t have to be isolated to be true to myself. That does not protect me. John taught me I can care about others. It’s a risk, but it’s a risk worth taking.”

Irene’s brow furrowed as Sherlock took another step forward.

“You’ve miscalculated, Ms Adler,” Sherlock growled, stumbling a little as another wave of pain washed over him. “You should have threatened to shoot them. I’d have done anything — and I do mean anything — to prevent that from happening. But this?”

Sherlock towered over Irene as he backed her up another few feet.

“How can you be so very clever and not understand that any one of the three people you have threatened to ‘ruin’ would gladly suffer anything — would gladly give their lives — to protect me and my child?”

There were noises outside. Cars. A helicopter — thank god for Mycroft and his bloody helicopters. Irene lunged for the desk, scrabbling for the Nighthawk T4 and backing towards one of the remaining brick pillars.

Sherlock was staggering now. “They’re coming for you, Sabrina. It’s over!”

“Oh, I’ve seen worse!” Irene shouted back over the din as the assault on the building began. “See you again, Sexy!”

She bolted for one of the empty window frames and jumped. Only then did Sherlock notice the ropes that were draped over the outside of the building, coming from another floor or perhaps from the roof.

Irene grabbed one, clipped a carabiner on to the concealed harness around her waist and waved as she slid from Sherlock’s view.
But a soft landing

Chapter Summary

Sherlock had never imagined bonding or parenthood. He'd certainly never spent much time pondering childbirth. Particularly not with his brother-in-law in the room.

Chapter Notes

Here be male omega childbirth. It really isn't very graphic, but if this is not your thing, well, you've been warned. P.S. I wrote all the baby bits for this story almost as soon as I'd finished A House in the Country. Took me ages to fill in the rest of the story :D
But, yes, my baby was a girl before S3!

“Sherlock!” John shouted. He began another scan of what may at one time have been offices on the ground floor. He and Greg had split upon arrival. Mycroft’s men were not far behind, but their mandate was to capture Irene Adler.

John was more than all right with that. He would take care his own.

There was a strange noise behind him, one John identified more quickly than he would have liked.

He ducked behind a broken wall and watched as Irene Adler dropped into view. He waited until her hands were occupied with the harness she wore before he stepped out.

“Going somewhere?”

The woman started, quickly reaching for her weapon.

“No. Don’t,” John said firmly, his gun drawn before she could get to her own. He’d always been fast. He loved being fast.

He used the same deep, level voice he’d always employed for insurgents. And for murderers, after he’d met Sherlock. It was the voice of a mild-mannered doctor who doesn’t want to kill you, but will do so without hesitation if he must.

Irene smiled at him. “You’re too late. He’s dead.”

“No, he isn’t,” John said with more confidence than he felt. “If he was, I’d know. I would feel it.”

“Oh, please. You don’t really believe in all that psychic bond bullshit?” Irene scoffed. “For god’s sake — you’re a doctor!”

“Where is he?”


“Jimmy…Moriarty? So I was right. You work for that maniac.”

“I control that maniac,” Irene corrected. “And I’ve just finished eliminating the one person who could ruin all of our plans. So if you’ll excuse me…”

“Move again and I will kill you.”

Irene studied him, eyes narrowed. “No. You won’t. This is my area of expertise, Dr. Watson. This is what I do. I know what people are; I know what they like. And I can see right through you. You have an excellent hand — very steady, even with your injury. But you are not a killer.”

“No, you’re right. I’m not,” John agreed.

Irene smiled at him and turned to sprint from the building. The bullet caught her and propelled her forward, face down, into a pile of rubble.
“I’m just an angry alpha,” John finished quietly.

He turned and began to run for the stairs. She’d come from the floor directly above him. It was the best place to start.

“Sherlock!”

Sherlock groaned in reply, unable to form words as another contraction hit. He’d collapsed onto his hands and knees as his labour began in earnest. The pains were coming quickly now. Too quickly. There wouldn’t be enough time…

“I’m here!” John shouted again. Sherlock could hear his running gait echoing through the empty corridors. “Make more noise for me, sweetheart! Where are you??”

“Jo-John!” Sherlock gasped his mate’s name, sliding to the floor and rolling to one side as the pain peaked. Please hurry. Please find me. I need you.

“I hear you. I’m almost there. Hang on!”

There were footsteps on the steel stairs. Sherlock struggled to keep a grasp on his thoughts, trying to count the footfalls as the wave of pain began to ebb. Sherlock tried to draw deep breaths through the recovery period between contractions, one hand cradling his belly. Fifteen, sixteen…

John.

“Oh, christ! Love, are you all right?”

And John was there, kneeling beside him, hands quickly skimming his body in search of injury. Sherlock relaxed instantly as John surrounded him. The tension in his body began to uncoil as he drew John’s wrist to his face and greedily inhaled the familiar scent. Almost immediately, his body instinctively responded to the safety of his alpha’s presence: he was going into active labour — oh god, it felt like he needed to push. But he couldn’t, not until they were sure…

“Oh, god,” John said, swiftly assessing his mate’s condition as his hand skimmed over the abdominal muscles already beginning to contract again.

“John!” Sherlock gasped. The pain washed over him and he curled around it. “I can’t. Too soon. Hurts.”

“I know, sweetheart.” John held tightly to Sherlock’s hand until the contraction passed a few minutes later. Then the doctor was shedding his jacket and rolling up his sleeves. Once done, he began pulling the clothes from Sherlock’s body.

Sherlock was shaking as the feeling of needing to push overwhelmed him. “I have to…have to…”

“I know this isn’t what we planned, and it isn’t ideal, but it looks like we’re going to have to do this here.”

Sherlock nodded, gritting his teeth as a contraction seized him.

Sherlock stroked one pale thigh. “Don’t hold it in, love. Shout if you need to. It’s okay.”

Sherlock howled as the pain washed over him. John was moving, shuffling around to settle behind him, rubbing his back. Sherlock needed his mate’s touch, craved it, yet at the same time wanted nothing more than to slap the man’s hands away.

John mumbled nonsense as Sherlock rode out the contraction, waiting until Sherlock’s breathing changed to begin an examination. He eased Sherlock’s top leg forward and parted his cheeks, gently sliding his fingers inside the loosened passage. Sherlock clenched and hissed. “Easy….I know this isn’t fun. I just need to see where we are.”

After a few minutes, John removed his hand, and resumed stroking his mate’s body. “You’re fully dilated. If you need to push with the next contraction, it’s okay.”

Sherlock nearly sobbed with relief, though he was beginning to have a very difficult time holding on to concrete thoughts. His body was a mass of sensation, of feeling, and his mind was becoming fuzzy in the wake of biological imperatives. It should have terrified him, but the loss of control
didn’t seem quite so daunting with John nearby. It never did.

As though sensing Sherlock’s thoughts, John ran a hand over the matted, damp curls. “I’m right here. It’ll be okay.”

“Too soon,” Sherlock panted as another contraction approached.

“Only a bit,” John assured him. “The baby’s lungs should be developed enough. Might need to spend a few days in the incubator once we get to hospital, though.”

Sherlock groaned into the contraction then gasped as a rush of fluid was expelled from his body. His cheeks flamed; he strained to look over his shoulder and was instantly mortified at the presence of a bit of faecal matter. “Sorry, John, so sorry…I…”

“Nothing to be sorry for, my love,” John said softly, reaching for Sherlock’s discarded trousers to clean up the mess. “This is perfectly normal. Your body is just clearing the way, that’s all. Don’t worry about anything — this won’t be the first baby I’ve delivered.”

They were both startled by the sound of another voice. “Sherlock!”

“Greg?” John called back. “We’re here! Sherlock’s in labour. We need an ambulance.”

Shortly, a second set of footsteps brought Sherlock’s brother-in-law into view at the top of the stairs. “Shit!” the man froze where he was, not wanting to intrude on such an intimate moment.

John turned. “Are they coming?”

“Uh, yeah,” Greg acknowledged. “Should be here in less than ten. Look, should I just…” he pointed back down the stairs.

“Nope,” John answered sharply. “Not unless you really can’t handle this. Sherlock needs help and I’ll be busy. Come on.”

Greg approached cautiously; Sherlock ignored him, trying to concentrate on breathing during the brief respite from pain.

“You’re sure it’s okay — you won’t…?”

John chuckled. “You’re a beta, mate. I won’t growl at you, I promise.” John shifted back up onto his knees. “I need you at Sherlock’s head. We need to help him up onto his hands and knees. You are going to be his brace.”

Greg discarded his jacket and knelt at Sherlock’s head. “Hey, little brother,” he said fondly. Greg had never called him that before. Granted, Sherlock probably wouldn’t have allowed it now if he wasn’t too preoccupied to make a fuss.

Sherlock started to shift, knowing he would have to push soon and he needed to be in position. With John’s hands on his hips and Greg’s hands for leverage, he managed to manoeuvre up onto his hands and knees. He looked into Greg’s somewhat panicked face. “Imagine how I feel,” he deadpanned, wincing as the edge of the contraction bit.

Greg’s eyes widened and he leaned in. “What should I…”

“Hook your arms under his and around his shoulders,” John instructed from his position at the other end. “Sherlock, when Greg has you, I want you to let him bear your weight. You concentrate everything you have on pushing, all right?”

Sherlock tried to respond but it came out as a whimper. He allowed Greg’s arms to enfold him and collapsed gratefully into the support, his knees spread wide and his head coming to rest against the copper’s right bicep.

“Now, push!” John demanded.

Sherlock groaned long and low as he focused every ounce of energy on forcing their child from his body. He clutched at Greg’s supporting limbs, rolling with the contraction. He eased off, sucking air into his lungs for a moment.

“Again, love. That’s it.”

Sherlock bore down. He had no idea how much time passed — it seemed like hours — before he heard John’s voice again. “Good! Brilliant! You’re doing really well. Just a little more!”
The contraction ebbed, and Sherlock sagged into Greg’s arms. He could feel John’s gentle hands below.

“The head is right here, sweetheart,” John said. “This is going pretty quickly. Won’t be long now.”

Sherlock hummed an acknowledgement, already too weary to speak. He sucked in a sharp breath as another contraction dragged him down.

“Push for me — no WAIT!” John said suddenly. “Sherlock, I need you to stop pushing now.”

“What?” Sherlock panted. “God, what’s wrong?”

“Easy. Just stay calm.”

Sherlock grunted as his mate’s hand delved and there was tugging. “What is it?” he begged, tears beginning to form. “John, please!”

“The cord was wrapped around the baby’s neck,” John said calmly. “I had to shift it.”

“Is — is…?”

“Worked like a charm,” John soothed. “Next time, push like you mean it.”

And so Sherlock did, again and again. Time seemed to fold in on itself as the wracking pain came and went. He was aware of very little else, save the sound of John’s steady voice and the secure strength of Greg’s arms.

What seemed like ages later, dripping with sweat and shaking with exertion, Sherlock yelled as the great pressure peaked and then somewhat eased.

“That’s it! The head’s out!” John shouted. “Just give me a moment and then, next wave, give me one more big push. We’re almost there, love. You are so brave, so strong…”


Sherlock started as Greg’s lips pressed into the top of his head. He looked up to find the man’s eyes full of tears. “You can do this,” Greg said solemnly, his deep voice almost a whisper. “You’re stronger than anyone I know. Come on, now.”

Sherlock took a deep breath as the next contraction struck. He summoned every scrap of strength he had left and pushed.

“That’s it, sweetheart!” John cheered. “Just the shoulders and you will be holding this beautiful baby in your arms. Come on, Sherlock!”

He bellowed again at the last assault on his body as their child slipped free. There was an agonizing moment of silence — as John cleared the baby’s airway, he would remember later — and then a reedy wail pierced the air.

John was shouting, sobbing, calling his mate’s name over and over. Greg was laughing, great guffaws of relief and joy. Sherlock slid to his belly, his legs no longer able to hold him. Greg eased him down and then supported him as he pushed up enough to turn and see.

John was kneeling behind him, a small, pink body cradled in his arms. “It’s a girl. A perfect, healthy little girl.”

Sherlock’s eyes overflowed at the sight of his beloved mate gently folding their infant into his own jacket. The baby’s angry cries surrounded them, and Sherlock could see one tiny hand flailing as John tried to get her warm.

“Please,” he begged, rolling to his side and extending his arms. He ached for this — he’d never known how much until just now.

John shuffled forward on his knees until he was at Sherlock’s side. He bent and gently laid their baby in her daddy’s waiting arms.

Sherlock curled around their daughter, quickly examining every inch of the small body and counting fingers and toes. He smoothed a hand over the baby’s head, knowing that once she’d been cleaned up they would be able to clearly see the downy covering of dark hair. The scrunched up face softened and the cries settled to weak whimpers as Sherlock drew the baby in, close to his own throat where his scent was strongest.
Greg jumped as he heard multiple sirens approaching. “That will be your brother,” he muttered affectionately, patting Sherlock’s arm as he stood. “I called for one ambulance — he’s probably intercepted and sent the bloody marines.”

Greg looked down once more with a tender smile before departing, leaving the family to bond. John reached for Sherlock’s discarded coat and pulled it over his mate’s bare lower half before sliding down to lay on his side facing them. He scooted in close, one arm draped possessively over Sherlock’s waist, allowing their scents to mingle and surround the baby.

“I love you.”

“And I you,” Sherlock replied, still a bit teary. “She’s beautiful, John. Look at her. She’s remarkable.”

“Just like you,” John said softly, leaning in to place a kiss on his mate’s brow. “Daddy.”

“Hmmm.” Sherlock nuzzled one soft baby cheek. “She looks like you.”

“Poor thing.”

“Lucky girl,” Sherlock said, his tone very serious as he reached out to wipe away the tears streaking John’s weathered cheeks. John smiled and kissed his lips. Sherlock held him there a moment, breathing his mate in and allowing his weary body to be surrounded by the security of their bond.

When they parted, John looked down at the baby and stroked one tiny hand. “She may be hungry soon,” he mused. “Have you decided…you don’t have to, you know. It’s fairly uncommon for male omegas these days.”

Sherlock stared in wonder at his daughter, memorizing every tiny feature (that would be John’s nose, he was quite certain), and smiled. “Help me, John.”

John didn’t ask. He simply reached in and began unbuttoning Sherlock’s shirt. When it was completely undone, Sherlock pushed it aside and nestled their daughter close to his chest. The development was small, of course, as it was for all male omegas (most of whom had abandoned the idea of breastfeeding all together decades before). Still, it was enough to indicate the mammary tissue that was dormant in male betas (and nonexistent in alphas) was fully functioning in a breeding male omega. The baby began to root and Sherlock guided her to his waiting nipple.

There was a sound of scuffling at the door and just the tiniest bit of shouting.

John peeked up to see Mycroft Holmes at the top of the stairs, only barely being restrained by his shorter husband.

“But is he all right!!” the cultured voice demanded.

“They’re all fine, pet,” Greg assured him, still holding him fast. “You know you can’t go any closer. You’re an alpha and they’re bonding. Don’t make me cuff you.”

Sherlock saw John lean up and nod an acknowledgement of his mate’s brother, and bare enough of his teeth to remind him that John was still an alpha with a family to protect.

The possessive display might have offended and disgusted Sherlock in the past, but now it made him feel protected. Cherished. He stroked a finger over their daughter’s cheek. Yes, her papa would always look after them both.

There was little need for extended displays of dominance, though, as the all-beta medical rescue team arrived on the scene. In less than fifteen minutes, John was striding beside the gurney on its way to the ambulance, still holding Sherlock’s hand.
“So, how’re we doing?”

Mycroft glanced up to see Gregory standing only a few feet from where he was consulting with Juliet. He stifled a smile as he nodded at his PA. Juliet turned to leave immediately, hurrying to catch up with the last of the clean-up crew.

Greg moved in closer. “Well?”

Mycroft smiled at him now, feeling more relaxed than he had in a year. “It’s all over.”

“You got everything you needed?”

“Fortunately, my brother can be very useful when he wants to be. The connection he established between Irene’s phone and his own was also recording their conversation. I had the phone from John before they left for the hospital. It’s a full confession. Spares me the trouble of implementing phase two.”

“Phase two?”

“Trust me — you don’t want to know,” Mycroft chuckled. “Also, I’ve just spoken with the CIA and we’ve had nothing but luck on that score as well. Moriarty was informed his alpha had been killed and he…well, he fell apart. Retracted his entire statement. I wouldn’t have expected it to be that easy, but then he was suffering a broken bond.”

“So there’s just Reilly left, then.”

“Tomorrow’s headline has been pulled. Kitty Reilly and I will be having a chat. And I have to undo the damage Irene caused with her bloody blackmail…also there is the rest of Moriarty’s network to clean up. Undoubtedly we will find enough of them who can identify Irene, at least, that it will completely eliminate any suspicion about Sherlock. And I expect to find the body of my brother’s double very soon. I’ve got people on it.”

The two men began walking in the direction of the car Greg and John had arrived in.

“I’ll be reinstated, I suppose,” Greg mused. “Although I was thinking…”

“Yes?”

Greg opened the car door with a grin. “Maybe I’m due for a good, long leave of absence.”

Mycroft’s eyes widened. “But you wouldn’t want that, would you?”

“I think I have some things I need to fix at home,” Greg replied.

Mycroft stepped in close, one hand on Greg’s chest. “My illness is not your fault, my darling.”

“I know that,” Greg said, clasping his husband’s hand over his heart. “But not seeing how sick you were? That was my fault. We were too busy with stuff. Important stuff, but still.” Greg glanced out at the very beginnings of the sunrise. “So — you have a program to finish, and then I want us to go away. For at least a month.”

Mycroft was gaping now. “A-a month? After Oakhill? But Gregory…”

“Have I ever told you how much I like Juliet?” Greg said cheerfully. “Cracking girl. Smart, talented and just a little bit scary. I never did find out what happened to that beta bloke who pinched her bum at Lord Haver’s New Year’s Eve party.” Greg shook his head. “Anyway, sometimes I think she could almost do your job without you.”

Mycroft frowned. “Now just a minute —”
“She’s completely trustworthy, too. And loyal. Incredibly loyal.”

Mycroft was huffing as Greg shoved him into the back of the saloon. “This is blackmail.”

“No, it isn’t,” Greg chuckled, sliding into the car beside his husband and slamming the door behind him.

“Well, it’s emotional blackmail, anyway.”

“Mycroft?”

“What?”

“Take me home.”

They stood outside the door to their house, waiting for the security detail to give them permission to go in. Greg was grinning like an idiot, staring at Mycroft’s leather jacket. Mycroft, for his part, was blushing and desperately trying to retain his composure in front of his people with a growing hard-on.

The security team finally emerged, nodded the all clear and departed without a word. Mycroft rushed inside, dragging his husband behind him.

There was no time to breathe or prepare — as the door clicked closed behind them, Greg had him pinned to the wall and was claiming his mouth.

It was like being eaten alive, in the best possible sense. Greg was making greedy little noises in the back of his throat as he sucked on Mycroft’s tongue. The copper’s hands were everywhere, kneading and pulling close as he toed his muddy shoes off.

“Mycroft…”

“I got your letter,” Mycroft panted. “I was reading it earlier.”

Greg ground his cock into his husband’s body. “I came twice when I was writing it. Our first night was…” He laved the just-bristly skin of Mycroft’s jaw line. “Incredible.”

“So you like the jacket?” Mycroft had both hands full of Gregory’s arse.

Greg pulled back briefly. “To be clear: I would want you if you wearing a bin bag.” He smirked. “But, yeah, the leather is fucking hot.” He moved lower to suck a mark into the pale column of his husband’s throat.

“Oh, my darling…time to move this somewhere more comfortable. Please.”

“Sofa’s closest,” Greg mumbled.

“That will do,” Mycroft agreed. He nudged Greg backward trying to direct them toward the sitting room. Greg soon took over, turning them and reclaiming Mycroft’s mouth as he shuffled them along. Until…

“SON OF A BITCH!”

Mycroft froze as Greg released him and doubled over. The shorter man grabbed at his unshod foot and continued cursing.

“What is it? Gregory, what happened?”

“THAT FUCKING TABLE…THING!” Greg roared. He waved his free hand at the small art-deco piece beside them in the foyer. “Every fucking time…”

“Well, why don’t you just move it?” Mycroft asked, genuinely puzzled.

Greg stared at him. “You wouldn’t be…offended?”

“Of course not,” Mycroft replied. “Why would I be? It’s just a table. We can put it in my study, if you like. Or give it to Sherlock for the country house.”

Greg shook his head, laughing. “Oh, god. All this time,” he wheezed. “All this time I thought you loved it and would be devastated if I didn’t love it too.”
Mycroft rolled his eyes. “Gregory, honestly.”

Greg stopped rubbing his wounded toe and returned his hands to his husband’s body. He leaned in for a sweet kiss. “Thanks.”

“Mmm…you know how you could show me your appreciation —”

Greg resumed their path to the sofa, narrowly missing the ugly paisley chair as well.

“I hate this chair, too.”

“Chair stays,” Mycroft said swiftly, followed by a very wet kiss.

“Fine.”

“Fine.”

Mycroft’s calves bumped into the sofa and they stopped. Greg was stripping his own clothing at an alarming rate; Mycroft move to undo his trousers.

“Let me,” Greg breathed. He undid the fastenings and slid the fine wool to the floor followed swiftly by Mycroft’s pants. Mycroft reached up to start removing the jacket. “NO!”

Mycroft raised a brow. “No?”

Greg licked his lips. “Jacket stays.” He slid his hands beneath Mycroft’s jumper and caressed the soft dusting of hair on his husband’s lower abdomen. He leaned in to suck at the tender spot below Mycroft’s ear. “Please,” he whispered.


In short order, Greg was completely naked and pushing his husband down into the overstuffed sofa. Mycroft settled, his cock rising hopefully from the nest of auburn curls at his groin.

“Well, well,” Greg purred. “Look what’s waiting for me.” He straddled his husband’s thighs and wrapped both arms around the man’s neck. He explored Mycroft’s mouth leisurely, taking his time as he rocked his hips to allow their hard pricks to graze over one another.

Mycroft began to moan into his husband’s mouth. Greg pulled back to regard him, eyes heavy-lidded and lips ruby-red from kissing.

“Lube,” Mycroft gasped, sliding his hand between them to grasp Greg’s cock.

Greg sighed, head thrown back, as Mycroft stroked him.

“Lube, my darling. Please.”

“Yeah…just, oh, god,” Greg groaned. He shifted back and then leaned over to open the drawer in the end table beside them. He produced the bottle of lube with a wicked grin.

“Why is that down here?”

“Where do you think I wrote the letter?”

“Condom?”

Greg’s grin became a little sheepish. “Nah. You know I don’t mind the clean-up.”

Mycroft kissed him again and Greg shoved the bottle into Mycroft’s hands. The copper busied himself with shoving his husband’s jumper up to play with his nipples.

Mycroft was grunting with impatience as he dispensed some of the clear liquid into his hand and reached between Greg’s spread thighs. He slid one finger into the cleft and stroked over him. Greg hummed his appreciation and rocked his hips into the pressure. Mycroft gasped as Greg pinched one of his nipples.

“Sorry — too hard?”

“No,” Mycroft croaked. “God, no.”

Greg chuckled and kissed him again.
Mycroft teased at the soft folds around Greg’s hole, finally sliding the tip of his middle finger within.

“Oh, pet, fuck yeah…”

Mycroft tipped his head back so he could watch his husband’s face as the man writhed on his finger. He pumped gently, pressing against Greg’s inner walls, and easing the tightness of the rings of muscle.

“More. Another. Please.”

Mycroft smiled up at the man. Greg’s eyes had drifted shut and he was biting his bottom lip as Mycroft curled the finger to brush over his prostate.

“Oh, god! Fuck! Mycroft, please. You’ve gotta hurry or I won’t make it until you’re inside me.”

Mycroft instantly replaced one finger with two. “Better now?”


His own cock now dribbling, Mycroft withdrew. “Can you take me now?”

“Fuck yeah,” Greg said brokenly, bending to capture his lover’s mouth in a filthy kiss. “Fuck me, baby. My…fuck me.”

Mycroft held himself in place as Greg slowly dropped into his lap. They both sighed as he bottomed out. Greg lapped at his mouth as he lifted off once more.

“Jesus,” he panted. “You feel so good. It’s been too long. I’ve missed you so much.” He punctuated each with a kiss as he built a rhythm. He held onto Mycroft’s shoulders, his fingertips squeaking as they dug into the leather; Mycroft allowed himself to sink back into the sofa and held his husband’s hips as the man rode him.

“So lovely. My Gregory…”

“My….oh, fuck yeah. Right…” Greg shifted forward as Mycroft tilted his hips up to meet the downward thrust. He keened. “There! Right fucking there. Oh, god…”

The soft, sticky, wet noise of the lube and the slap of flesh became the only sounds in the room. Mycroft slipped his hands up and over Greg’s back as the man moved to tweak his own nipples.

“Gorgeous!”

Greg leaned forward for another deep snog then dropped his forehead against Mycroft’s.

“Are you close, pet? I’m on the edge…”

“Yes, darling, oh, yes…” Mycroft sped up the pace and reached for his husband’s cock. He pulsed firmly in time with his thrusts.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah….OH, OH, MYCROFT!!!!”

Greg shot his load, streaking Mycroft’s chest and belly. He held on as Mycroft thrust up into him several more times.

“Oh, god, Gregory,” Mycroft moaned. “Yes!!!” He slammed his hips home once more, burying his cock deep inside his lover’s body as he came and came and came.

At length, Greg collapsed into him; they nuzzled and kissed for a few more minutes.

“I have missed you,” Greg rumbled. “This isn’t home without you here.”

“I felt the same,” Mycroft acknowledged. “I love you, Gregory.”

“And I love you.”
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

A very, very happy ending. With pictures.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“She’s just perfect,” Mrs. Hudson cooed, leaning over the bassinet. She reached in and allowed one tiny fist to wrap around her finger with a chuckle. “And so strong, too.”

“I’m quite certain her development is consistent with that of any two-week-old premature infant,” Sherlock sighed. He was trying hard to sound bored, but John was not fooled — the man’s unschooled expression and soft eyes gave away how mad he was for their baby girl.

John poured their tea, watching Sherlock as he worked on John’s laptop on the sofa and occasionally looked up to where Mrs. Hudson sat in his chair. It was their landlady’s third visit upstairs on this their first day home from the hospital. Sherlock had decided to stay in while the baby was in neonatal intensive care. She had been very healthy for the most part, but a bit small; the doctors had decided not to take any chances.

“And this is lovely,” Mrs. H continued, running a hand over the gilt frame of the antique bassinet. “Was it yours, Sherlock?”

“I slept in it, yes,” Sherlock replied. “As did my brother, who felt the need to have it moved here in spite of the fact that we already have a brand-new cot for the bedroom.”

“Your brother thought we could use this in the sitting room, during the day,” John supplied moderately, strolling through the room to take a seat next to his mate. “It doesn’t really meet modern safety standards, but it’s fine for when we’re out here. And it is kind of nice to have a link to the past, and all that.”

Sherlock set the laptop beside him and took the offered tea from John. He drew his knees up and nestled into John’s side.

“So, have you decided, then?” Mrs. Hudson prompted with a broad smile.

John chuckled to himself — she’d been bothering them about this subject since the day the baby was born. “Yes, we have,” John replied.

“My brother and Greg are on their way here,” Sherlock said blandly. “We’d like to tell all of you together.”

Mrs. Hudson crinkled up with pleasure. “Oooo, I can’t wait!”

Sherlock let his head droop to John’s shoulder. “Tired, sweetheart?”

“Hmmm,” the taller man responded. “Only going to get worse.”

“Probably,” John agreed with an affectionate pat. “We’ll be all right.”

The bell rang; John started to move to answer it, but Mrs. Hudson waved him off. “You save your strength. You’re going to need it,” she chucked.

Minutes later, she returned with Mycroft and Lestrade in tow, the former carrying the biggest stuffed bear John had ever seen.

“Good lord, Mycroft,” John chuckled.

“I know,” Greg chimed in with a broad grin. “I tried to talk him into the little yellow bunny, but he wasn’t having it.”

“That is ridiculous.”
Fortunately, it isn’t for you,” Mycroft replied to his brother’s snide remark. He strode across the room and set the bear in John’s chair, immediately turning his attention to the bassinet. “And how is she?” He stared down at the baby, the ghost of a smile on his face.

“She is healthy,” Sherlock replied. He stood and walked over to join his brother. He reached in and drew the baby from her bed and easily slid her into the crook of his arm. “You haven’t held her yet.”

The question was not asked, but the implication was fully understood. Mycroft swiftly unhooked the umbrella from his arm and dropped into Sherlock’s chair, reaching up for his niece. Sherlock gently transferred her into Mycroft’s arms, tucking the receiving blanket around her legs. Mycroft settled back into the chair, staring down at her. His lips tugged up at the corners. “She’s trying very hard to suss me out, I think.”

“Yeah, she’s looking around a lot already, though she isn’t really seeing much but a big blur,” John offered. “But she’ll learn your voice and your scent.”

Greg crossed the room to lean over his husband’s shoulder. He reached out with one finger and tickled the baby under her chin, instantly rewarded with a pleased gurgling noise. And a little bit of spit-up.

“Oh, oh,” he said casually. Sherlock handed him a flannel and he dabbed at the baby’s chin, and his husband’s suit sleeve. “Sorry about that, pet.”

“Perfectly all right,” Mycroft said gently, never taking his eyes from the baby’s face. “She meant it as a compliment, I’m sure.”

“Well?” Mrs. Hudson had settled onto the sofa, but was now leaning forward in anticipation of the news she had been promised.

Sherlock regarded her quizzically before recalling the previous conversation. “Oh, yes, John?”

“Right, yeah,” he answered, setting his tea down. “So we’ve discussed names. Well, we’ve been discussing them for months, actually.”

“And on no account was I going to name my daughter Anastasia,” Sherlock said imperiously, “What’s wrong with grandmama’s name?” Mycroft scowled at his brother. “It is very traditional — seven generations of her family…”

“Yes. And I, for one, am grateful that neither you nor I were born female.”

“Said the man named Sherlock,” John teased.

“Shut up.” Sherlock’s rebuke held no sting.

“Anyway,” John chuckled. “We had some front-runners, but now we’ve finally settled on things. We’ve decided to call her Elizabeth,”

“For John’s sister,” Sherlock supplied.

“Her middle name. She always hated the name Harriet.”

“And Elizabeth’s middle name will be Madeleine,” Sherlock continued.


“Mummy would have been very pleased.” Mycroft cleared his throat. “Elizabeth Madeleine.” He looked down at his niece, considering. “Yes, I think it suits her very well.”

“What do you think Mrs. H?” John turned to their landlady beside him.

She was dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief produced from her sleeve. “Such a lovely name. Oh, I’m just so happy for you.” She reached across and patted John’s hand. “You know, the moment I met you I knew that you and Sherlock were meant to be. I love a happy ending.”

“Is that was this is?” Sherlock asked, puzzled.

John watched as Mycroft looked around the room with a cynical eye, trying to imagine what the shuttered bureaucrat might be thinking. His eyes lit upon his baby brother: once the black sheep of the Holmes family, now gainfully employed, respected and settled with a family of his own. Then there was Greg: Mycroft’s husband, strength and — John now knew — his one great weakness.
Mycroft met John’s gaze next. They regarded each other for a moment before Mycroft offered a
nod of approval. He glanced at his brother’s landlady, who had become the mother figure
Sherlock had been missing for more than a decade. Then he dropped his chin to smile down at the
little girl in his arms.

“Yes,” Mycroft said finally. “I think that’s exactly what this is.”

221Bs - Private blog of the Watson-Holmes family

Hi everyone!

Sorry about the confusion. I know lots of you were visiting the public blog asking about photos
and that. As that blog has really become more about our cases than anything, we decided to create
something a little more personal. And private, for obvious reasons. If you’re here, clearly you got
my directions!

So, some photos:

Lizzie’s first visit to the nursery at Coventry Court! Thanks, Uncle Mycroft. The ducks are
splendid.
I’m going to assume all of you received this, but I love it so I’m posting here, too. Just look at that face — isn’t she the most beautiful baby you’ve ever seen? Her eyes have changed colour some, since this was taken. Pretty sure they’re going to be more like Sherlock’s. And Lizzie, if somehow you manage to see this when you’re older, I am sorry about the Watson nose. I think it looks adorable on you, of course, but I know it may not be exactly what a girl might want. With any luck, yours will have turned into something a bit more like your daddy’s by then.

Lizzie’s favourite place in the world to sleep is her daddy’s chest, listening to the soothing sound of his voice. Even if that voice is talking about fingerprints and blood spatter patterns. Yes, we’ve had a discussion about appropriate topics for children. I think when I snuck down to take this he was expounding on identifying different types of tobacco ash.

35 comments:

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Geese.

*Sherlock Watson-Holmes*, July 3, 18:42

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What?

*John Watson*, July 3, 18:44

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Geese. The birds suspended from the ceiling in our daughter’s nursery are geese.

*Sherlock Watson-Holmes*, July 3, 18:45

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Is that important?

*John Watson*, July 3, 18:47

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Geese, ducks, swans. What difference? Photos are lovely, BTW. My niece is beautiful. She’ll have Sherlock’s hair, looks like. Dark with just a hint of red.
G Lestrade, July 3, 18:52

My hair is NOT red. And why would you want our daughter to begin her life unable to correctly identify domestic waterfowl?

Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 18:53

The geese may not be important, as she’ll be able to identify 243 types of tobacco ash.

John Watson, July 3, 18:55

Your hair does have a hint of red in it, sweetheart.

John Watson, July 3, 18:56

G Lestrade, July 3, 18:57

Sherlock, don’t you know any nursery rhymes or fairy tales?

MH, July 3, 19:03

But tobacco ash?
Exactly! I mean, it’s probably all right at the moment, but eventually she is going to start retaining these things. Not sure I want smoking to be top of mind for our three-year-old.

John Watson, July 3, 19:06

I love the auburn.

John Watson, July 3, 19:07

She was fussy and I was in the middle of dealing with the evidence from the Hamilton affair. It’s what I happened to be thinking about at the time. She fell asleep, didn’t she?

Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:08

Fine. A HINT of Auburn. Only because you like it.

Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:09

Yes, quite right. She did fall straight to sleep. We’ll figure out a plan of action for going forward.

John Watson, July 3, 19:10

When I have her, I always sing her Teddy Bear’s Picnic. She loves that. This is Mrs. Hudson, by the way.

Marie Turner, July 3, 19:15

That’s a good ‘un. I used to sing it to my sister’s kids.

G Lestrade, July 3, 19:20

Perhaps you could teach it to me. We will have Elizabeth for a few days in about a
month.
MH, July 3, 19:22

G Lestrade, July 3, 19:24

Do shut up.
Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:25

Testy, aren’t you? Never mind — John will sort you out ;)
G Lestrade, July 3, 19:27

WE ARE NOT DISCUSSING OUR SEX LIFE ON THIS BLOG!
John Watson, July 3, 19:30

Don’t tease them, Gregory. You know how Sherlock gets. Will you teach me the song for Lizzie?
MH, July 3, 19:32

As soon as I get home. Just about done here :D
G Lestrade, July 3, 19:35

ELIZABETH
Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:36

I like Lizzie. Suits her sweet little face. (This is still Mrs. Hudson.)
Marie Turner, July 3, 19:40
Our daughter’s name is Elizabeth.

Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:42

Sherlock, please come upstairs.

John Watson, July 3, 19:44

Why?

Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:47

ELIZABETH needs her nappy changed and I have to leave for the surgery.

John Watson, July 3, 19:48

Coming. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with your nose.

Sherlock Watson-Holmes, July 3, 19:50

Fine. But only because you like it.

John Watson, July 3, 19:51

Chapter End Notes

I did say a happy ending, right? Hopefully this one will rot your teeth :D Please ignore the poor quality of the manips--they are just for fun. (And before anyone complains--I spliced a stock photo baby head overtop of Ben's friend’s baby).

As always--I do not own the characters, etc., and my only profit is pleasure.

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