The Holmes Dilemna

by jdmcool

Summary

John finds himself faced with an impossible choice in the midst of a terrible realization.

Notes

Written for this prompt at the Sherlock BBC Kink Meme

Set after Scandal In Belgravia. Now with a vague semblance of a plot!
Walking into 221B Baker Street, John didn’t think that his night could actually get much worse. His latest girlfriend had broken up with him for the same reasons that the others tended to. He wasn’t around enough, he was more devoted to Sherlock than them. All those little things he wished he didn’t understand because at least then he could feel a bit more blameless than he actually did.

But no sooner did he walk into the kitchen, determined to make his night a bit better with a cup of tea did he hear a strange short of thump. Something smacking against the wall followed by an almost pained moan. Tensing, John tried to get a feel for the situation.

It was Sherlock’s room, which meant it could be nothing more than another foolish experiment or he could be in danger. Putting down the kettle, he slowly made his way toward the man’s door.

There were more soft thuds, someone else’s moan, which meant that the man wasn’t alone. And then the words that made John’s blood go cold.

“Fuck, Mycroft.”

Frowning, John couldn’t actually wrap his mind around the two men fighting it out. They were both too old and too mature for such childish antics. Certainly, Mycroft alone was a bit too lazy. But the sounds kept coming and if their little feud had actually boiled over into some sort of violence then John was going to put a stop to it straight away. Opening the door, John rushed in, fully intending on letting them both know what idiot’s they were being before he caught sight of them.

There was no way they were fighting. Not with the way Sherlock lay there, head thrown back as a litany of whimpers poured forth. Mycroft on top of him, being more active than John would’ve given the man credit for as he all but bent Sherlock in half as he fucked him because they were fucking. Headboard slamming against the wall fucking.

Sherlock with his nails clawing the sheets, moaning his brother’s name. Mycroft keeping a steady yet punishing rhythm as he sucked at Sherlock’s neck, certain to leave some kind of bruise.

“Oh God,” John said, unable to look away. But the moment the words were out of his mouth, their eyes were on him.

To his credit, Sherlock managed to look ashamed. Eyes wide, mouth struggling to form words instead of the garbled sounds Mycroft seemed to be tearing out of him.

“Evening doctor,” Mycroft said, never once losing tempo.

Gripping his brother’s shoulders, Sherlock pressed his face against Mycroft’s neck, obviously trying to hide the look of shame on it. Digging his nails into his brother’s shoulder’s he moaned out rather loudly, “John leave!”

And he certainly didn’t need to be told twice. Rushing out of the room, he slammed the door shut before pressing his back against the wall. Closing his eyes, he shook his head and tried to convince himself that that wasn’t right. There was no way that he could’ve seen Sherlock and Mycroft having sex. They were brothers for Christ sake. Covering his mouth, he shook his head again before moving away from the wall.

He couldn’t even think straight. The idea of Sherlock’s legs wrapped around Mycroft’s waist,
He couldn’t even think straight. The idea of Sherlock’s legs wrapped around Mycroft’s waist, getting that kind of pleasure from anyone was haunting his mind. After all, he knew Sherlock was strange and that neither of them seemed to care overly much for societal norms, but to have sex with each other?

When they finally came out, John was sitting on the sofa, sipping a cup of tea. He couldn’t bring himself to just leave. No, after what he saw he felt he was rather owed some kind of explanation because whatever their rationalization he knew it would be interesting to say the least. Not that it would make any sort of difference on how he felt. He swore to himself that there was no way the two brothers would alter his views on what they were doing.

Still, seeing Sherlock look so nervous because of him was rather new in an unpleasant way. He kept his head lowered, dark curls obscuring any view of his eyes. Every time he brushed against his brother, he seemed to jump as though he was scared. Nothing like Mycroft, who kept giving him the most sympathetic of looks. Little glances that were meant to comfort or apologize. John never could tell when it came to the two of them. Didn't want to now.

“You were fucking your brother,” John blurted out, having no other way of starting the conversation.

Nodding rather numbly, Sherlock looked at him with guarded eyes. “It happens from time to time.”

“He’s your brother.”

“Trust me, John, such facts have always been apparent,” Mycroft said, ever casual even in the face of this. No wonder the man ran the government. He not only had the mind of a machine, but he had all the moral conflicts of one as well.

“It wasn’t always like this,” Sherlock tried to explain. Stealing a quick glance at his brother, one that was all but pleading, he frowned. For once, even the great Sherlock Holmes was at a loss for words and John, sitting there with his arms crossed over his chest to purposefully looking defensive and judgmental, wasn’t going to help him sort it out. “It’s just… He understands me. He knows what it gets like and he’s all I ever had. It isn’t as though I was a popular boy.”

Which wasn’t hard to believe given the fact that he’d met Sebastian, the only person from Sherlock’s past that seemed to acknowledge him. The only thing more frightening than the thought that Sherlock may have always been the obnoxious git before him was the idea that he may have somehow improved to that point.

But looking at Mycroft, who remained ever calm and completely undisturbed by the situation, John knew that he couldn’t possibly have had an excuse for taking advantage of his little brother. He fit in. He socialized like a normal person and managed to maintain a normal life, even if it was running the entire government. There was no reason for him to actually need to take solace in his brother.

“I want him,” Mycroft said as casually as one would tell someone the time. “I knew back when Sherlock was a boy that we were playing at a dangerous game. He’d run to me instead of our parents, he’d stay in my room. He’d get jealous when he didn’t have my attention. Then there were the experiments and—” Stopping himself, Mycroft merely smiled in the way that meant he had said more than he was allowed to.

Rising from his seat, he looked at Sherlock with his usual caring brother stare, something that now made John’s stomach churn in disgust now that he knew the extent of the man’s caring. Running his hand through Sherlock’s hair, Mycroft bent down to kiss him. When Sherlock turned his head, that blush of shame colouring his cheeks yet again, Mycroft paused before kissing his cheek and
standing once again.

Moving to stand in front of John, his lips curled into a friendly smile while all emotion seemed to drain away from his eyes. “John, I’m certain we can keep this matter quiet, yes?”

Shrinking back into the couch, he couldn’t believe the man was threatening him. He was the one screwing around with his own family and somehow, Mycroft still felt he had every right to control the situation. To use that polite tone that meant he didn’t really have an option in the matter. Turning his head angrily, John nodded in agreement since it was all he could do.

“Wonderful. Well, this has been an interesting evening but I must be going. John. Sherlock,” he said, nodding at each of them before making his way out.

“I can’t stop,” Sherlock blurted out the moment the door closed. "And it’s not an addiction, he’s not taking advantage of me, there’s no real medical risk.”

“He’s your brother, Sherlock,” John said, not understanding how they could over look such a fact.

Sherlock took a breath and shook his head. Looking at John with a far more serious look in his eyes, he said, “I love him. I love him as much as I can love anyone, rather. There aren’t any expectations like with a normal person. Half the time he’s not even in the country.”

“And what? The other half he’s turning you into a moaning simpleton like tonight?”

“You were supposed to be gone at your girlfriend’s.”

“Yeah well…” The words died on John’s lips as he thought about that.

All the times he was out, staying the night at one of his girlfriend’s. That time he’d come home to find Mycroft and Sherlock just sitting there. Certainly that hadn’t been the only time. Simply the first and the idea that every time, each time he’d come home to find Sherlock on his own and watching the window like an anxious pet or with Mycroft meant that they’d been doing what he had seen tonight.

Getting up, he shook his head. “No. No. I can’t… No. You can’t have been… All this time? Are you serious?! What happened to being married to your work?”

“It’s what I say to keep people from trying anything. You can see how well saying that I’m shagging my brother goes over!” Covering his mouth, Sherlock took a moment to calm down before running a hand through his hair. He looked tired and scared and as much as John wanted to comfort him, he couldn’t. Not over this. “Look John, are you moving out?”

John clenched his jaw and shrugged helplessly. He should’ve. He really should’ve because what they were doing was wrong and he wasn’t just going to sit around and let it happen. Except he didn’t actually have much of a choice. Mycroft made it clear he wasn’t to tell a soul about their situation and John didn’t want to move out. He loved Baker Street and living with Sherlock. Or rather, he had before he’d caught the man doing things no person should with family.

Staring him down, he shrugged. “That’s my only option isn’t it? Give up my home or accept that you’re sleeping with your brother.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Yeah. Great comfort that is,” John said before walking off angrily.
Brighter Sides

Sherlock watched as John left the flat, nodding along half heartedly as the man muttered about going to work. He wasn’t particularly pleased as he said it nor did he manage to keep up eye contact as he did. But at least he was trying to look Sherlock in the eyes again and that was a start.

After all, he wasn’t an idiot. He knew that the other man hated him to some extent. Sure, they were still friends, or so Sherlock chose to believe, but John didn’t like the fact that his life depended on keeping Sherlock’s dirty secret. On staying at 221B because he simply didn’t have anywhere else to go while overlooking the glaring problem that was in front of them. Their own private elephant in the room.

Closing his eyes, he began to play his violin, stringing together notes until it became something soft and depressed, a song fit for a gloomy day spent in silence in his chair. Something that matched up well with the guilt that Sherlock happened to feel for his friend.

“If you felt guilt you would stop and make things right with him.”

Opening his eyes, he glared at his brother. The man looked so smug as he sat in the seat across from him, umbrella resting against the chair. Clearly he’d been using his CCTV access to watch the flat again, waiting for the perfect time to make his appearance there for one of their usual chats.

“One can feel guilt without giving up what they love,” he pointed out, resting the violin in his lap.

Mycroft raised his brows briefly before looking toward the mantle. “Guilt and love? This has certainly brought about your more pedestrian side, brother dear.”

Sherlock resisted the urge to sneer at that. “Looking for a quick lay over lunch?”

“It wasn’t my immediate objective.”

“I suppose I should give in. Certainly it’s the only exercise you’re likely to get this week,” he remarked, never one to resist a jibe at Mycroft’s weight.

Not that he didn’t know better. Certainly Mycroft’s diets worked to an extent, this one especially since the man was the thinnest Sherlock could ever remember his brother being. But out of the great multitude of things Mycroft controlled, his own body was somehow beyond that realm. And it was that one fault that gave Sherlock immense pleasure to poke at, like a child would the body of a dead animal.

Or perhaps that had just been his own wayward childhood.

Looking back at his brother, Mycroft managed to look mildly concerned. “How is the good doctor?”

“You should know. You have this place watched.”

“The outside, Sherlock. Considering what happened the last time I dropped by for lunch, it wouldn’t make sense to bug the inside.”

And oh, if that didn’t send a sick little jolt to his dick as he remembered the way that Mycroft had taken him on the desk, right on top of John’s papers, Sherlock’s arse sliding against the place usually reserved for John’s laptop when he worked.
Swallowing hard, he nodded in agreement. “I suppose it’s nice to know you don’t bug places you like to shag me. If I were more the exhibitionist I could get rid of those damn cameras one by one.”

“I would certainly enjoy helping you try,” Mycroft offered.

Fighting the urge to smile, he leaned back in his chair with a sigh. Looking Mycroft over, he could see that the man wasn’t expecting to stay very long. An hour or two at the most, which seemed like more time than he wanted to spend in his brother’s company either way.

That was part of the beauty of their relationship. It had always worked because of the simple fact that neither of them particularly cared to be around the other for too long. Even holidays spent visiting home ended with them both well fucked and thoroughly resentful of the other’s existence. They didn’t feel that need most couples did to spend as much time as possible together. Rather, they’d go days or even months without so much as a word to each other. Of course, part of that probably had something to do with the fact that Mycroft often knew where he was whether Sherlock told him or not.

“He’s coping. He still thinks we’re depraved and thoroughly hates you, a sentiment I can understand rather well at the moment,” Sherlock said, more interested in talking about John than anything else.

Mycroft steepled his fingers together beneath his chin as he listened. “But he isn’t leaving?”

“There’s nowhere else for him to go and he rather feels he shouldn’t be forced out of his home because we’re deviants.”

“An understandable feeling.”

“Yes,” Sherlock agreed. “He’s trying though, for the sake of our friendship, to see past what we do.”

“I assume he’s doing less than stunning?”

Thinking back to the first two weeks, where John did nothing but avoid him at every possible turn, Sherlock pursed his lips. If not for a case going spectacularly bad, ending with another near death experience and some rather gruesome cuts, he was certain John still wouldn’t be talking to him. But the man was always a doctor first and something about caring for Sherlock while Mycroft remained suspiciously absent had helped them start to mend whatever it was that the Holmes brothers had broken.

“We’re getting there.”

“I’m certain you’ll both be fine in the long run,” Mycroft said, not at all bothered by how the situation was affecting Sherlock.

After all, it wasn’t often that Sherlock felt upset about much of anything, but his relationship with John was an important one. Though he was loath to say it out loud, he and John did have a relationship more along the lines of a couple considering all that they tended to do together. It may not have been romantic, but it was more than Sherlock had ever known in a romantic relationship either way.

“You never take me out,” Sherlock stated rather bluntly.

Surprise briefly colouring his face, Mycroft slowly smiled, obviously amused with the statement. “I let you tie me up for your birthday.”
Meeting the other’s look, Sherlock couldn’t help but laugh at the comment. Putting his violin aside, he got up and crossed the small space to his brother. Watching the way the man stared at him expectantly, Sherlock saved the image before kissing the man.

Mycroft was quick to respond in kind, kissing back gentler than usual. Cupping the man’s cheek, he parted his lips, welcoming the invading tongue with his own and a stifled noise. Pressing closer, he rested a knee between Mycroft’s spread legs. Felt his heart begin to beat faster as his brother fisted his hands in Sherlo’s hair.

Hearing footsteps, Sherlock moved away, biting back a groan as Mycroft gently caught his lip between his teeth. Standing upright, he looked toward the door and swallowed nervously.

“Sherlock,” Mrs. Hudson said as she entered the room. “John’s outside, asked if you’ve seen his phone. Must’ve forgotten it.”

“On the sofa,” Mycroft said, looking over at Mrs. Hudson with a smile.

Grabbing it, Sherlock handed it to her. “Is that all?”

“Yes. Thank you. And you boys behave yourself,” she said, always warning them to be good little boys much like mummy used to when they were to be left to their own devices.

“My car is outside. Metaphorical tie on the doorknob, if you’d like,” Mycroft explained as he got up from the chair.

Going over to the window, Sherlock smirked at the obvious black car. Watching as John followed Mycroft’s assistant inside the vehicle, he couldn’t help but feel a small sense of relief. John may very well hate his brother, but Mycroft, in his own way, was trying to fix Sherlock’s relationship with the man, never the less.

Feeling a warm body press against his back, Sherlock leaned into the slightly taller man and gave him a quick kiss. “I suppose I owe you that sex now.”

“He’s a good man, Sherlock,” Mycroft said. “With the right conditioning good things can come from this.”

And for whatever reason, that thought went straight to his dick, his mind reeling with the possibilities as Mycroft began to nip at his neck. Moaning softly in approval as Mycroft’s hand drifted down his chest, Sherlock ground his arse back against the growing erection his brother was already sporting. If he played things perfectly, he could finally get rid of that camera he knew watched the windows of his flat as well.
Chapter Summary

John’s night manages to go from bad to strange to worse in the midst of a chat with Mycroft.

Chapter Notes

Honestly have no idea where this is going, but the ride is sure as hell nice.

He hadn’t actually meant to be out all night. Well, he hadn’t until he had. Until Harry had called talking about how they should really meet up and chat. It wasn’t the first thing that John wanted to do with his night, but then she had made him feel guilty and given him hope, so he went.

Big mistake that was, John decided as he got out of a cab in front of his flat. What had started off as a fairly nice evening had turned into something obnoxious and predictable. Both of them dancing around the topic of her drinking as she nursed a beer, about Clara because they simply couldn’t have that conversation any more. And then when it did all come out after he failed to bite back a comment about her having a third beer, well, that was just worse. Now all he wanted a good night’s sleep and something to snack on, since there hadn’t been much time for actually eating during the awkward night out.

Walking into the kitchen, John came to a standstill as he stared at the man hunched over and rummaging through his fridge. The soft light played along the pale skin of the man’s back, highlighting the odd freckles along his shoulders as he looked for something beyond the milk and a jar of eyes Sherlock was keeping. Standing up straight, Mycroft stared at him for a moment before nodding.

“Hello, John.”

Looking around nervously, John tried to figure out what would be the best excuse for making himself scarce around his own flat. “I was just getting... stuff. I’ll be going soon.”

“Stay? It’s rather late and certainly Sherlock and I aren’t doing you any harm in his room,” Mycroft pointed out diplomatically as he stood there in his pants.

Smiling, John ran his finger along his mouth as he shook his head. “You know... You can’t just do that. You can’t threaten to kill me if I tell anyone that you’re shagging your brother and then... act like everything is fine,” he laughed humourlessly.

After all, he knew that life with Sherlock wasn’t ever going to be normal. He had actually come to accept that occasionally there would be cops at the door, that people might want him or Sherlock dead and that his dating life was going to always come second to helping out his friend. He could honestly live with that kind of strange. But having Mycroft Holmes, the man in control of most of, if not the entire, government, standing there casually, attempting to casually brush off the fact that
he was sleeping with his own brother was too much.

“Sit. I’ll make us tea.”

“Yeah, sure. Just ignore everything I said,” he remarked rather sarcastically as he took his seat. “Where’s your brother?”

“Sleeping.”

John smirked as he tapped his thumb on the table in quick succession. “You must be good to get him to sleep.”

“It’s my one true gift in life,” Mycroft said dryly.

“And here I thought laser vision would be the best power.”

Mycroft made a noise to prove he was listening as he went about starting their tea. Drumming his fingers against the table, John stared at the exit, questioning himself for a logical reason as to why he was still sitting there listening to Mycroft putter about.

Glancing at the man, he watched him, watched as Mycroft searched the cabinets like he knew what should be there. John couldn’t say why it annoyed him so much to think that maybe Mycroft came over more than he noticed, no thought even given to the idea that the man may have merely deduced it from the way he and Sherlock lived. That just didn’t seem likely given the fact that anyone comfortable enough to wander around their brother’s flat in their pants had to have a reason for that level of ease.

Biting the inside of his cheek, John looked him over, trying to find some sort of logic in it all. It was the sort of turn of events he’d find funny, him caring more about logic than either Holmes, if not for the fact that there was a level of wrongness to it he just couldn’t stand. Couldn’t get how they managed to be so oblivious.

Of course, he wasn’t a Holmes. When he looked at Mycroft all he really saw was some middle aged bloke who didn’t seem to warrant the teasing he got from Sherlock. He was in no worse shape than most men his age, clearly a bit of a ginger judging by the hair on his chest that seemed to taper off into the neat line of it around his navel. And Christ, even the man’s body hair was starting to seem orderly to him.

“It’s not easy to understand because it’s not easy to explain,” Mycroft said as he handed John his cup. Sitting down across from him, the man smiled rather sadly before taking a sip of his tea and continuing. “Certainly there are rules against incest for a reason.”

“None of which apply to you two, much like most rules,” John shot back as he stared at the cup in his hands.

Letting out a soft huff of amusement, Mycroft nodded. “I should never have threatened you in that manner. It was... inappropriate.”

At that John let out a bark of laughter before quickly covering his mouth. Shaking his head at the irony of it all, he said, “Right. Catch you shagging your brother, you can’t be arsed to even pretend to be modest. You threatening to kill me after if I tell, that’s the inappropriate bit.”

“No. How I did it was inappropriate. I try not to be so... blunt, usually.”

“Right. Subtly is key,” he said with a roll of his eyes.
“He cares for you, my brother. Your... behaviour puts him in a rather delicate position.”

“And you would never do that.”

Mycroft’s eyes narrowed, as he tried to decipher something John couldn’t even begin to figure out. “You’re his friend. Best, worst, first, last. Likely the only real one he’s ever going to have and he doesn’t want to lose that.”

John sipped at his tea, not wanting to admit that he didn’t want to lose Sherlock either. Even with the dodgy situation they had manage to put him in, he still enjoyed the mad man. Still cared about him a lot more than was actually sane.

“But,” Mycroft said, clearly attempting to choose his words even more delicately than normal. “You know his secret now. And yes, he... We’ve both tried to...move past this, but it’s rather difficult.” Staring almost blindly at John, Mycroft smiled to himself. “People want to meet someone like them, someone with just enough differences to keep life interesting.”

“And what? Regular dating just didn’t work?”

“No because no one is like us, you know that. There was Miss Adler, but she let her emotions get the better of her. Moriarty, but... Well, sleeping with the enemy is best kept in a metaphorical sense, wouldn’t you agree?”

Biting his lip to hold back a smile, he nodded. “There are other people. You’re... You’re family.”

“Seven years difference.”

“So? Harry’s older than me, but I don’t see that as a reason to do her.”

“To be fair, I doubt even your sexual prowess could make her switch teams,” Mycroft said blandly.

And the man was making jokes. Honest to God jokes that John didn’t want to laugh at because it wasn’t really funny. There was nothing funny about the situation because he was sitting there having listening to Mycroft’s reasons, no, the man’s excuses for sleeping with his little brother. It wasn’t the time to be making wry little cracks.

“You being older isn’t a good reason to... do what you do.”

“Isn’t it? I was away at school for most of his life. Perfectly planned that way by mummy, since she never felt she could raise two children at once. Far too much work.”

“Nice to know where you get your work ethic.”

Purposefully ignoring the comment, Mycroft said, “Related by blood but with so little knowledge of each other. I suppose that’s my fault, never saw the point in calling home to talk to Sherlock. How interesting could a child be, after all?”

“He’s still your brother.”

“And I care deeply for him, as you know.”

“Not like a normal brother,” John pointed out, hoping that such a point might actually get through to him.

“Oh John, since when have Sherlock and I ever given you the impression we were normal?”
Which was probably the biggest problem in all of it. They weren’t normal and he desperately wanted them to be, just this once. Just to know that they understood the problem at hand and might try to fix it, but it was futile. Nothing short of a losing battle.

Watching Mycroft perk up as the sound of footsteps made their way to the room, John turned to see Sherlock make his way into the kitchen, wrapped up in his bed sheets like a little kid as he scowled at his older brother.

“Leaving bed for food? How very typical of you.”

“John and I were having a conversation.”

“About us,” Sherlock said before turning his attentions to John. “If you want, I can make him leave.”

Stunned by the casual way Sherlock offered to kick out, not just his brother, but the man he had to have slept with only a few hours earlier, John stared at him before remembering that he had to respond somehow.

“No, no. It’s... It’s fine. I was going to my room, saw your brother raiding the fridge.”

“It is the trouble of having him around. His stomach is not unlike a black hole,” Sherlock said, giving Mycroft a rather disapproving once over.

“Someone’s cranky his nap was interrupted. I really should get him back to bed,” Mycroft said as he stood. Pouring out the rest of his tea, he gave his cup a perfunctory rinse before moving to stand in front of his little brother. “Were we too loud or did little Sherlock have a bad dream?”

“Yes. I dreamt a monster gave up trying to smother me with its weight before deciding to eat me out of house and home.”

Watching the interaction, John wasn’t surprised when Mycroft didn’t say anything. He merely smirked as though he had the most witty reply, one brow arched rather smugly. He wouldn’t have thought much of it if not for the fact that Sherlock stood up a bit straighter, his face going flush as he stared at his brother like a deer in the headlights. The kind of look John had only ever seen on Sherlock’s face around Irene.

Letting out a choked breath, Sherlock said, “Next time you decide to wander my flat, try to be decent.”

“Says the man in nothing more than a bed sheet,” Mycroft said, resting a hand on Sherlock’s hip.

Getting up as well, John grabbed his cup and cleared his throat loudly. “Right. I’m going to bed. Try not to... in the kitchen,” he said before making for a hasty retreat.

Glancing back at them as he made his exit to make sure they had actually heard him, he tried to pretend that he didn’t see what he saw. Even has he moved a bit faster, taking two steps at a time as he made his way to his room, he tried to pretend he had imagined the way Mycroft’s hand slid between the sheet, causing a look of bliss on Sherlock’s face. If he could pretend it wasn’t real, it’d be one less snapshot to haunt him at every turn like the others.
When Sherlock came to him, just shy of sunrise with a case about a recently murdered woman, John had actually been happy. And a great deal of that was because the complete lack of strangeness in his life was starting to drive him mad. It was the one thing someone would’ve expected him to not want in the wake of finding out that his best mate was sleeping with his own brother or even after all the time he spent living with Sherlock. Normality was supposed to be his saving grace.

But anyone thinking that would’ve been entirely wrong. John was even willing to admit that he was too at first. When Sherlock had announced to him that Mycroft would be away on business for an undisclosed amount of time, John was happy. Hell, he’d been bloody ecstatic when, instead of reverting to old routines, Sherlock stuck to his new considerate behaviour. He kept his violin playing to a minimum after midnight, didn’t use the kitchen as body storage without warning. He was nothing if not the perfect flat mate.

And with no real cases, John could focus on his job and his lack of love life, since finding a girlfriend never seemed right. They would never understand his complex situation with Sherlock and, by proxy, Mycroft. When Sherlock asked him on a case, he went. And when Mycroft texted him to meet him somewhere or sent a sleek black car to take him away, he rather felt that it was his obligation to do so. Or, at least, he used to.

Still, it had been nearly ten days of not having to worry about catching the brothers together again and John was certain that if something didn’t happen soon, he was going to go on a massive killing spree just bring a bit of interest back to his life.

Thankfully, someone had been evil enough to kill a poor brunette woman, leaving body in some alley not too far off from her home, according to the husband, who seemed to be the prime suspect. Kneeling next to the woman to inspect her, per Sherlock’s request, John silently thanked whoever it was she had angered before feeling a bit guilty that he was happy for a woman’s death. God, he needed to spend less time around Sherlock, he decided as he tried to stifle a yawn.

“Bit too early for you?” Lestrade questioned.

Looking up at him, John forced a smile as he shook his head. “No. I was already up.”

At that, the DI smiled back, obviously impressed. “Long night then?”

“No for awhile, actually,” John laughed.

“No new girlfriend? Been awhile, hasn’t it?”

And while he hated to admitted, Lestrade was right. Not that John made a habit out of going after girls, but it had been a good month since his last relationship, which was kind of a long time for him. Normally, he would’ve accidentally wound up with a nice girl, since that seemed to happen a lot more often than he would actually care to admit.

Lifting the woman’s chin to get a better look at her throat, he frowned. “Sherlock tends to keep me busy.”

“Is he the one keeping you up at night as well?” Lestrade teased.

Quickly turning to look at him, he almost groaned when he caught sight of Sherlock next to the
man, looking far too curious.

“What are you two so chatty about?”

“I was just asking John if you were the reason he was up late last night,” Lestrade explained, obviously amused at the little joke that seemed to fill paper after paper.

As usual, it seemed to completely go over the detective’s head. Instead of answering, he knelt down next to John, cupping his face in his hands as he looked over his friend. Swatting at those freakishly long fingers when they pulled down at his eyelid, John scowled at him as best he could while rubbing at his eyes like a small child.

“Will you leave me alone?” John questioned angrily as he rose to his feet to try to escape Sherlock’s inspection.

“Something’s been keeping you up and it can’t be me. I haven’t done an experiment in days, well, none you would smell. My violin playing has been kept to my own room. Are you having night terrors again?”

And wasn’t that just an embarrassing question to have asked. Because the moment the words were out, everyone, even Donovan and Anderson seemed to be staring at him with interest and concern. Looking at the dead woman, he wanted to make a comment about how she was important, but clearly she wasn’t. Not when he might be having night terrors about war again.

So instead, he focused on Sherlock with his most earnest look as he stared him in the eyes and said, “No. It’s not that.”

Nodding in agreement, Sherlock furrowed his brows as he paused. “I know it couldn’t be the headboard slamming against the wall again. So was it—“

“I’m sorry. The what?” Lestrade asked before John could muster up the energy to do anything but look surprised.

Rolling his eyes, Sherlock sighed. “My headboard slams against the wall when my bed shakes.”

“Why would your bed be shaking?”

“Oh God,” Donovan cried out, looking positively disgusted. “Don’t tell me freak’s shagging someone?!”

“Ew. Who would want to sleep with him?” Anderson questioned quickly after.

Glaring at him, Sherlock scoffed. “I figured if two women are desperate enough to share a bed with you, finding someone really couldn’t be that complicated, Anderson.”

“No, hold on,” Lestrade said, trying to regain control of the situation before the sniping could get any worse. Letting out a breath, he furrowed his brows as he tried to piece together what Sherlock was so casually implying. “Do you have a girlfriend, then?”

“What? No. Don’t be an idiot.”

“Getting a little too rough with yourself?” Donovan asked smugly, clearly confident in the idea that no one would want Sherlock.

“No, though it’s nice to know that your lack of in depth thinking isn’t just saved for crime scenes,” Sherlock said as he shook his head. Standing up a bit straighter, he smirked as he said, “Just
because I’m not sleeping with a woman doesn’t mean I’m not sleeping with someone.”

“You’re gay?” Anderson immediately questioned.

“One man, does not a sexual preference make.”

Lestrade stood there, much like John, completely unable to think of anything to say to that. Hell, even Donovan and Anderson seemed to be thrown for a minor loop.

Clearing his throat nervously, John nodded to himself before pointing at the dead woman. “Right, uh... she was definitely strangled, though she doesn’t seem to have been uh... violated.”

“Of course she wasn’t. Whoever she came here to see, she knew. Judging by the proximity to her home and the lack of nails, it was her lover,” Sherlock said proudly as he dropped to his knees to point out the facts only he could see. “She wasn’t expecting to be long, hence the light jacket on a night that called for rain. I’d say that this was done when she complained to him of something.”

“They were splitting up,” a familiarly smooth voice called out.

And God, it was like the Christmas of complete strangeness. Not that Mycroft had never stopped by a crime scene before. Hell, John had practically met him at one. But he never felt the need to contribute to the matter. Although, he wasn’t often around when Sherlock was still working things out.

Rising to his feet, Sherlock looked over to where the man was leaning against his car, twirling that ubiquitous umbrella. “What are you doing here?”

“I came here for you,” Mycroft asked as he made his way over to them, casually using his umbrella to move Anderson out of his way. Moving to stand toe to toe with his younger brother, he smirked. “I stopped by Baker Street but you weren’t there.”

“I have a case.”

“I need you more than they do.”

“I’d beg to differ on that,” Lestrade interrupted.

Giving the DI a rather annoyed look, Mycroft merely said, “Sherlock, finish this quickly would you? It’s all so obvious.”

“She didn’t want her lover coming by any more after their split. Unwilling to let her go, he killed her in a fit of rage.”

“She,” Mycroft corrected. “The lipstick on her mouth is faint.”

“It could’ve worn off,” Lestrade pointed out, not seeing whatever it was the taller man did.

Smiling politely, Mycroft shook his head. “It’s not on her teeth.”

“Of course. Women don’t wear make up to impress their husband on a typical night in and it would’ve been more apparent if she was wearing it for a lover she cared for,” Sherlock said, filling in the information for the rest of them, since only the two Holmes brothers saw the ever so obvious clues.

And to see them work together was certainly something impressive when it wasn’t directed at him, John reasoned. It was like watch a chess match between grand masters or a really intense tennis
match. Leaving everyone with the strange feeling that, for all the things they were told, those two men still had something far more interesting going on in their heads only they knew about.

“Oral fixation. She bit her nails and the darkening around her mouth tells that she often bit at that too. Of course,” Sherlock pointed out.

“So you’re looking for a woman of above average height, brunette with darker roots, who wears that particular shade of lipstick. Ask the husband if there were any women that his wife spent a considerable amount of time with. Now may we leave, Sherlock?”

“This better be important, Mycroft,” he said as he made his way to the car.

Nodding to Lestrade, Mycroft said, “Pleasure to see you, detective. You too, John. If you want, I can try to keep Sherlock busy for a few hours to let you rest in peace, for lack of a better phrase.”

John shook his head quickly. “No need to do that. I’m fine.”

“Well, if you change your mind, text me,” he said before leaving, twirling the umbrella yet again.

John stood there, watching the car drive away as soon as Mycroft was inside. Eventually Sherlock would return home, where John would be waiting for him, since there was no point in staying at the crime scene. Everything seemed to be solved and without Sherlock, he didn’t hold much of a purpose. So, he merely nodded at Lestrade before making his way to the street to hail a cab or something.

Still, even standing at the curb of an increasingly busy street, there was no ignoring the conversation going on behind him.

“Is that his boyfriend? Not a particularly handsome fellow,” Anderson remarked.

“Really great sex can make up for a lack of looks,” Donovan replied.

“It’s his brother,” Lestrade informed them before Anderson could question the other detective. “Highly doubt any sex if great enough to make a person overlook something like that.”

Yet, thinking back on the way Sherlock seemed to be coming undone under the other man or the fact that they didn’t even stop when caught, taking the time to finish themselves off first, John began to doubt Lestrade’s claims. Certainly seemed like better sex John had ever had, since he didn’t think he’d be able to just keep going through getting caught in the act like they did.

Groaning, John tried to shake off that thought. Even without either of them around, he knew that he wouldn’t be getting any dreamless sleep. His dreams were likely to be filled with the same sick scenes as before: Sherlock and Mycroft casually having sex and the increasingly larger roles John found himself playing in that.

Such were the consequences of choosing to stay at 221B, it seemed.
There was a romantic notion fluttering about Mycroft’s mind that he should’ve been happy. After all, it had been almost two weeks since he had last seen his brother, not that Sherlock ever looked any different. No, for the most part, he was entirely the same. Even had on that black shirt that Mycroft had last seen lying on his floor, which was partially his fault.

Most people, though, would’ve been eager to be with the one they loved. To embrace each other in a tender moment and confess their love and absolutely misery at being apart. He had seen it enough times in airports all over the world. No matter where one happened to be, people tended to feel the same when it came to the person they loved. And yet, watching his brother all but sulk through the ride to his office, Mycroft felt that there was something rather wrong with the two of them, yet again. No room for grief or conventional love in their lives, although, perhaps that had more to do with the fact that there was little that was conventional in sleeping with one’s brother.

Taking his seat behind his desk, Mycroft looked over a nondescript sort of file that had been left on his desk on top of a series of papers. All matters that were, and would continue to be, passed over for at least another day, he decided as he did his best to ignore his brother.

After all, Sherlock had a sort of routine upon entering his office. Just like a child, he’d allow Mycroft peace and quiet while he handled only what was truly necessary by occupying himself with touching everything in sight, taking note of what was new and different.

“I’ve a box of rubber bands if you’d like to make yourself a ball,” Mycroft offered sarcastically as he placed the file down.

Looking over to him from where he was looking through one of Mycroft’s books, Sherlock put it back before moving to stand in front of the desk. “Why did you interrupt my case, Mycroft?”

“I missed you.”

“Sentimentalities don’t suit you.”

Nodding in agreement, Mycroft sighed. “I’ve a matter I’d rather wish to discuss with you.”

“That matter being?”

Tapping his ring finger on the desk, Mycroft furrowed his brows. “What do you know of James Moriarty?”

“Don’t you have people for this?” Sherlock questioned as he took a seat.

Somehow, his brother managed to make such a simple and natural action into a sort of smug mannerism. After all, the man knew that Mycroft had people for everything, leaving very little reason to actually talk to the other unless it was a far more delicate matter. Which, of course, meant that there was no way Sherlock was likely to give in easily.

Sitting up straighter in his seat, Mycroft stared at Sherlock in annoyance. “They have not had the pleasure of meeting him in the same way you have.”

“You intend to go after him because he helped the woman?”

“No, you helped her. He texted me afterwards, putting the final move in play.”
From the look of him, it would seem as though the little correction did quite a bit in quelling Sherlock’s smugness. After all, no matter what Mycroft said otherwise, he officially had quite the screw up to hold over his brother’s head, since that was bothered him most. It wasn’t that his brother briefly felt something for another, but rather that he would let his emotions get the better of him. If he couldn’t keep a level head in a relationship, well, he was of little use to anyone.

Steepling his fingers underneath his chin, Sherlock narrowed his eyes. “You have me here to talk about a five minute meeting over the fact that he texted you.”

“People don’t just text me. He wanted my attention and I’ve every intention of giving it to him.”

“He met me first. He was posing as Molly’s boyfriend.”

“Pity for her.”

“More or less,” Sherlock agreed with a shrug. “Left his number. Eventually kidnapped John, where I met him. I threatened to kill him, he threatened to kill me and John, I raised the stakes to killing us all and his phone rang.”

The next point held no real purpose in being said, since Mycroft could easily deduce just who it was that caused the man’s phone to ring. “He’s a consulting criminal.”

“Dear Jim, can you help me leave something for my kids for every person I kill? Dear Jim, can you help us get into the country? Dear Jim...”

Holding up a hand to silence his brother’s ramblings, Mycroft smiled tersely. “I get the gist. Anything else worth knowing?”

“He’s likely as clever as either of us.”

“But not both.”

“No one is as clever as both of us,” Sherlock shot back, smile slowly spreading across his lips. Leaning back in his seat, Mycroft gave a noise of agreement. Of course the idea that this Moriarty might be as clever as either one of them was nothing to laugh at given the fact that Sherlock didn’t easily hand out his compliments, but it was amusing to know that Sherlock thought that they worked well together. Especially considering the fact that they so rarely did anything together.

“Moriarty sticks to consulting then?”

Rising from his seat, Sherlock made his way around to the other side of the desk. Standing in front of his brother, he shook his head. “No. He had snipers. Very unstable, though, Moriarty. And you’re wearing a different aftershave.”

“I shaved on the plane. Focus.”

“I hate the smell of it,” Sherlock stated, no longer cooperating with his brother’s wishes. Leaning in, he ran his tongue along Mycroft’s jaw and frowned. “Tastes worse.”

“I suppose now would be a terrible time to ask what the problem with John is?”

“If you had any intention of not having sex, you wouldn’t have cleared your schedule,” Sherlock declared as he took off his scarf and jacket.

Mycroft’s only response was to smile as he scooted forward to sit at the edge of his seat. Running
his hand up his brother’s stomach, revelling in the cool feel of his shirt, he casually looked over toward the door.

“I locked it when I came in. Stop stalling.”

“And here I thought missing each other was far too sentimental,” Mycroft teased as he untucked his brother’s shirt.

If not for the slight smirk on Sherlock’s lips, it would almost appear as though he held no interest in the matter. He stood there, perfectly still, never once moving as Mycroft began to unbutton his shirt. Inch by lovely inch of skin exposed until the elder Holmes could no longer resist the urge to feel it.

Dragging his nails down Sherlock’s chest, he smirked at the shiver he could feel course through Sherlock’s body. There never was anything quite like the joys of knowing that he was the one to make Sherlock do that. The only one who made his brother moan and plead for more, since a Holmes did not beg.

Trailing kisses along Sherlock’s stomach, Mycroft rubbed at the bulge that was beginning to strain his brother’s trousers, feeling his prick stiffen against his hand. Kept at the gentle ministrations until he could feel Sherlock’s breath quicken before unbuttoning his trousers. Meeting his brother’s lust filled gaze, Mycroft hooked his thumb in the waistband of Sherlock’s pants, tugging them down along with his pants.

Just looking at Sherlock’s stiff prick was enough to make Mycroft’s mouth water. Something about an oral fixation from all that dieting, as Sherlock tended to say. Not that either of them had an issue with it. No, if anything, Sherlock appreciated the way Mycroft licked broad stripes along every inch of it, taking the time the slit before licking around the rest of the glans.

Cupping the back of his brother’s head as Mycroft went down on him, Sherlock tilted his head back as he tried to keep from thrusting down the man’s throat. It was only when faced with the warm heat did he ever remember just how much he tended to enjoy the way Mycroft sucked at him as he bobbed his head, taking more and more until his nose was pressed against the curly dark hairs.

It was a feeling that Mycroft would never admit to enjoying. The feeling of the stiff prick in his mouth, Sherlock’s fingers toying with his hair. Pressing the heel of his palm against his growing erection, he moaned, eyes drifting shut as Sherlock finally fisted his hair in order to control the situation.

Hearing the phone ring, though, Mycroft gave a groan of disappointment as he let his brother’s prick slip past his lips. Looking at it, he gave Sherlock's cock a quick lick before putting whoever was calling on speakerphone.

“Yes?”

“The Prime Minister has rescheduled your conference. He’ll be calling in five minutes.”

“What happened to this afternoon?”

“Apparently, he’ll be busy then. There’s a file blue file on your desk with all the information you’ll need sir.”

“Thank you,” he said before hanging up. Sitting back, Mycroft began to look through the files on his desk. “Afraid this will have to wait for another time. You understand,” he said, waving his brother off.
Sherlock nodded in agreement as he watched his brother. Of course he understood. After all, it wasn’t the first time Mycroft’s work had come at an inconvenient time for him. When Mycroft leaned back in his seat after picking up the phone, Sherlock gave a soft sigh as he finished removing his bunched up trousers and pants. Bending over his brother’s desk, he began to suck at his fingers, eyes locked on the busy politician.

Staring in shock, Mycroft continued his conversation with the Prime Minister as calmly as possible. He knew his brother could be petulant, but he didn’t think this was actually necessary. Having his little brother sprawled out over his desk, that perfect, pale arse all but framed by the edge of his shirt. Even the voice on the other line could do nothing to dispel his hard on.

When he finally tore his eyes away from Sherlock’s arse and all the thoughts of what he wanted to do to it, Mycroft covered the receiver and asked, “Why?”

Releasing the fingers from his mouth with a pop, Sherlock shrugged. “You lied.”

Mycroft watched as those spit slicked fingers began to circle his brother’s hole teasingly before one slowly pressed in. Found himself torn between the way Sherlock’s eyes fluttered shut and the finger he was so envious of as it sunk in deeper.

Going back to his conversation as best he could, Mycroft tried to turn his attention to the file on his desk instead of the way that his brother was fingering himself, carefully working that one finger in and out. Teasing himself as much as he was teasing Mycroft, if the way Sherlock pressed back against his own hand was anything to go by.

Of course, it was impossible to ignore Sherlock so desperate and needy. The fact that he cared was something Mycroft prided himself on. Opening his desk, he pulled out a small container of lube and placed it next to his brother.

Sherlock merely stared at it blindly. Carefully working a nearly dry second finger into himself, Sherlock bit his lip, the sting of it painted clearly across his face. For a few moments he remained perfectly still, eyes locked on a similar blue pair as Mycroft rubbed his back. Gently moving his hand yet again, Sherlock quickly relaxed into the feeling.

He was almost certain that his brother wouldn’t actually care if he hurt himself in the process of proving his point, whatever that was supposed to be, since Mycroft found his eyes more drawn in by the sluggish way his brother was fingering himself. The action was almost distracting enough to make him lose track of what was being said to him on the phone.

“Yes, of course I can hold,” Mycroft said, silently thankful for the pause. Scooting his chair behind Sherlock, he covered the receiver once again as he shook his head. “You always were stubborn when you didn’t get your way.”

Whatever witty retort his brother had ready was beaten out by the low moan that tore past his lips as Mycroft began to lick around his hole. Moving his hands to hold himself open, Sherlock panted noisily against the desk. Slowly working its way past his already loosened ring of muscles was a much better use for Mycroft’s mouth than sorting out national issues. The feel of his tongue, jabbing at him only to stop as Mycroft sucked at the sensitive skin was enough to make Sherlock grip the edge of the desk as though it was a lifeline.

Moaning in acknowledgement when he heard the voice on the phone, Mycroft slowly moved away, smirking as Sherlock tried to follow him with his hips. Taking pity on the poor soul, Mycroft cradled the phone against his shoulder as he grabbed the lube. He wasted no time coating his fingers before roughly thrusting two into Sherlock.
All composure seemed to leave the younger Holmes at that moment. It took all he had not to make a sound as he pushed back greedily as Mycroft set up a quick pace, fingers constantly brushing against his prostate until Sherlock had to grip his leaking erection to keep things from ending too soon. When a third finger was added, Sherlock bit down on his arm as a moan escaped him.

Clearing his throat, Mycroft watched his brother in amusement, trying his best to keep his tone level. “Yes, well let me look into that and I’ll get back to you on this. Good day, sir,” he said before quickly hanging up.

Rising up from his chair, he pressed himself against Sherlock back. “One day you’ll need to learn that certain matters are more important than your need for release, Sherlock,” he said in the most serious of tones against his brother’s jaw.

“You just put off national matters for it,” Sherlock declared proudly, rubbing his arse against the obvious bulge in his brother’s trousers.

Closing his eyes, Mycroft gave a soft sigh of pleasure before grabbing Sherlock’s hip to stop him. Undoing his belt and trousers, he pulled his straining cock out. Brushing it along his brother’s crack, he whispered to him, “A country for a boy’s arse. Wouldn’t be the first time.”

Thrusting into him, he stilled as Sherlock moaned freely. Digging his nails into his brother’s hip, he kissed along his brother’s neck, quickly setting about fucking his brother in earnest. Gentleness and patience had no place in that moment. Even if they would never admit to missing each other, there was no hiding how badly they wanted each other. Even knowing his office as he did, Mycroft worried that someone outside might hear Sherlock’s desperate moans.

Taking his brother’s cock in hand, Mycroft stroked him, panting heavily against Sherlock’s ear as he tried to bring them both to completion as quickly as possible after all the teasing that had been done. Of course it was Sherlock who came first. Hot, thick pulses coating Mycroft’s hand and desk as his body clenched around the elder Holmes. Thrusting through it, Mycroft buried himself deep inside Sherlock, shuddering through his release with a breathy moan.

For a long while, they stayed as they were, hunched over the desk, panting to catch their breaths. Sherlock was the first to grow tired, as usual, shifting restlessly until Mycroft moved away. Sitting back in his chair, Mycroft watched as Sherlock cleaned himself up, not bothering to redress. Instead, he merely grabbed a cigarette from his discarded jacket and lit it up before settling himself in Mycroft’s lap.

“So, how long has John been having troubles sleeping?” Mycroft asked, holding Sherlock as tightly as a child would a teddy bear.

Exhaling the smoke, Sherlock shook his head. “Not long. What are you going to do when you find Moriarty?”

“Talk, I presume. You know how it goes.”

Snorting derisively, Sherlock held the cigarette up to Mycroft’s mouth. “Don’t presume anything about Moriarty.”

Meeting his brother’s gaze, Mycroft let the smoke slowly flow out of his parted lips. Instead of answering his brother, he settled for capturing that mouth the moment the cigarette was out of the way. The exchange of lazy kisses and cigarettes were a better choice than continuing their conversation anyways.
John tries to avoid his dreams and finds the reality of things to be just as strange.

On some level, John felt that he should’ve been grateful that he had the flat to himself. Granted, the odd event of Mycroft appearing at the crime scene was... unexpected at best, but with Sherlock off to him, John knew that he could relax. He could sleep, he could watch telly in peace without Sherlock listing all the ways the show was painfully wrong. He could even wander about without a stitch of clothes on, not that it was nearly hot enough to warrant that, but it was the point of the matter.

He had all of 221B to himself and yet, after waffling about whether or not to update his blog with the non-case, which he didn’t, he simply sat around. Nothing seemed worth doing and he knew that sleep wasn’t likely to come from how awake he felt. So he went to get more jam, turning the jam run into an entire shopping thing. When he came back, he sat about with Mrs. Hudson until she left for her date, leaving him alone once again.

And that was really the worst part. It wasn’t as though he was afraid to be alone, but he found when he was everything seemed too quiet. Sitting on the couch, he had nearly managed to drift off before a fleeting thought he had him bolting upright, feeling around for the remote frantically. Turning it on, he settled for the first interesting thing, trying to keep his mind off his dreams and the Holmes family and anything else that wasn’t a talking rat puppet explaining to him how clever the Victorians were.

Thankfully John had become rather adept at losing himself in a show for the sake of his own sanity, given his bouts of unemployment. The sounds of someone making their way up the stairs nearly fell on deaf ears, given the fact that John had long since figured out the usual people to come to 221B. So, he continued to watch the rat until whoever it was walked in. When that person turned out to be Sherlock, he immediately perked up, as happy as an over excited puppy.

Smiling at his friend, he asked, “So, have a nice... meeting with Mycroft?”

“Hmm? Yes,” he said before stopping next to the television. Rolling his eyes at what was on, he asked, “Why do you watch this?”

Looking at the show, John shrugged. “You say that like I always watch this. I just... settled on it.”

“Settled on a children’s history show?”

“Mycroft. What did he want?” John asked, preferring to talk about the man’s incestuous behaviour to to getting mocked for his occasional viewing of a children’s show.

Sitting in his chair, Sherlock steepled his fingers underneath his chin. “Nothing of importance.”

“So, sex?”

“What? No. I mean, we had sex, but that wasn’t what he wanted.”
“...Did Mycroft miss you?” John questioned a bit nervously.

Not that he couldn’t understand the logic behind it. It couldn’t be easy for them to live such varying lives, what with Sherlock constantly busy with his cases and Mycroft keeping the country running or something of that nature. Certainly no amount of calls and texting could make up for the lack of physically being there, that much John knew all too well. Although, judging by the way Sherlock was smiling at him as he shook his head, John assumed he may have been giving them too much credit.

“Nothing of the sort. Mycroft doesn’t do fondness in that way.”

“Right. Leave the country for two weeks with no word to the person you’re dating or family, which in your case happens to be both, and he didn’t miss you?”

“Why would he?” Sherlock questioned.

“I don’t know, because you’re in love?”

“If we don’t have relationships like normal people, why would you expect us to do love like them? No. Mycroft wanted to discuss my knowledge of Moriarty.”

Trying to remain calm despite the sinking feeling in his stomach, John understood why Sherlock looked so perplexed. Given the complex relationship between the Holmes brothers, John didn’t bother to entertain the idea that Mycroft might actually be attempting to be a good brother and get rid of the man who seemed so very intent on killing his brother. No, Mycroft tended to let Sherlock handle himself and called in John when he was concerned for his brother’s safety.

Still, given the whole Irene fiasco, maybe the man had changed, or at least, saw the risk that Moriarty posed. Of course, given the fact that Moriarty turned down the missile plans and seemed more prone to helping the odd small time criminal as opposed to seeking world domination or something meant he couldn’t be that much of a threat to the government as a whole. He was more of the occasional nuisance.

“Why did he want to talk about that?” John asked, figuring Sherlock might be better fit for pondering the inner workings of his brother’s mind.

“I don’t know,” Sherlock said, obviously annoyed by that. “But he’s up to something.”

“Well that’s a comforting thought,” he muttered sarcastically.

Something about the idea of Mycroft getting up to something that Sherlock couldn’t figure out left a rather leaden feeling in his stomach. After all, unlike when Sherlock started being secretive and sneaky, Mycroft played some sort of part in the function on the country. For him to take up secrets could easily mean that the world was being attacked by alien robots. Or, perhaps, something more realistic, John reminded himself, making a silent vow to spend less time watching telly if he could help it.

Focusing on Sherlock, who was staring rather blindly at the smiley face on the wall, John furrowed his brows in thought. “So, you two just spent the day together at his place?”

“Of course not. He had work.”

“Wait... I thought you two uh... had...”

“Something that can actually be done just about anywhere,” Sherlock said as though he was explaining the concept to a child.
Shaking his head, John decided that he had to have heard that wrong. There was no way Sherlock, who was generally clueless on basic emotions when it came to cases was saying what John thought he was. “No, because that would mean you had sex in his office.”

“Yes?”

“Right. So you two spent all day talking in his office?” He asked, because really, he didn’t need to know any more than he already did.

“No. I was tracking down that murderous lover,” Sherlock said with a wave of his hand. “Lestrade and I found her at her home, she confessed to everything.”

“Wait, you finished up the case without me?”

“Mycroft already ruined the thrill of it, I doubt you’d’ve found much pleasure in finding out he’s as clever as I am.”

John turned his attention back toward the television, trying not to show how disappointed he was. Part of the reason he stayed with Sherlock was because he liked the mysteries that often came their way, regardless of how easy or difficult they were to figure out. Sherlock pointing out the obvious to potential cases in their living room was just as interesting as watching him piece it all together at a crime scene, something Sherlock had to know. Just because Mycroft had pointed out the basics didn’t mean John didn’t want to see it through.

Which was more than enough to make him pause as he sat up a bit straighter, turning his attention back to Sherlock with an amused grin.

“You were embarrassed.”

“I don’t get embarrassed,” Sherlock immediately countered.

“Do so. You were embarrassed because Mycroft figured it out before you. You don’t like me thinking he’s more clever than you.”

Sherlock scoffed. “That’s hardly the case.”

Chuckling, John nodded as he turned back toward the television. “Don’t worry Sherlock. You’ll always be my favourite sociopath.”

“I have an experiment to work on. Enjoy your children’s show,” the detective stated bitterly as he rose from his seat.

“It’s actually educational!”

Ignoring the snort he was nearly positive he heard come from the detective as he left the room, John grabbed the remote and frowned. Honestly, there was nothing wrong with the show. It was amusing, whether it was meant for children or not. The only problem was Sherlock and his general distaste for all things frivolous.

“He’s just pissy that he got shown up,” he muttered to himself, putting the remote back down.

The last thing he was going to let Sherlock do was ruin television for him along with everything else that John found he enjoyed a bit less with the man around. If he wanted to watch children’s telly, that was his problem. Not that it seemed as though he was going to get a chance to enjoy it, the sound of his phone ringing quickly filling the room.
Picking it up, he sighed before saying, “Hello?”

“I do hope I’m not interrupting your... program,” the predictably posh voice of the elder Holmes said, voiced rife with a condescending mirth.

“It’s educational,” he argued, rolling his eyes.

“Of course it is.”

“Look, Sherlock is in his room doing an experiment, so you can just text him instead of using me as your middle man.”

“And what would make you think that I didn’t ring to speak with you?” Mycroft questioned, almost managing to sound hurt.

“Why would you want to do that?” John shot back.

After all, he had known the man for some time and never once did Mycroft just call to shoot the breeze. He called to warn him to watch out for Sherlock, occasionally to pass along a message to the detective when Sherlock couldn’t be arsed to pay attention to anyone or thing that wasn’t his case. Pleasantries, making nice, those were the things Mycroft did, not calling up just for the sake of a chat.

“To ask you out Friday night, if you’re free.”

Suddenly wishing they were just going to talk about favourite teams and crap telly, John sat up a little straighter, looking toward Sherlock’s room to make sure he didn’t make a sudden appearance.

“You want to ask me out?” He whispered harshly.

“Yes.”

“Why not take Sherlock out, considering, you know, you’re dating him?”

“What Sherlock and I have is really nothing more than a brotherly relationship with sex,” Mycroft explained with the same interest he did anything else. “Besides, I want to see you.”

“You flatterer,” John said sarcastically. “I’m going to say no.”

“I’ll pick you up at... say eight?”

“Are you listening? I said no. I’m not going out with you,” he said, trying to keep his voice down as he watched the hallway for Sherlock’s sudden appearance.

“I merely want to talk with you. The fact that it’ll be over dinner is based on our shared need for food.”

“What about Sherlock?”

“His need for food is often outweighed by his lack of want,” Mycroft said, not that John was relaxed in the slightest bit by the joke. “Now, since I know you aren’t doing anything Friday evening, will eight work for you?”

“Well, considering how nicely you asked and the fact that I, apparently, have no choice, yes. It should be fine.”
“Good. And John, do me a favour?”

“What?”

“Don’t tell Sherlock. This really doesn’t concern him.”

John shook his head as he smiled to himself. “Not suspicious at all.”

“I’ll see you Friday, John.”

“Yeah. Bye,” he muttered before hanging up and placing the phone down next to him.

Leaning back in his chair, he rubbed his hands over his eyes with a heavy sigh. Being kidnapped for Mycroft’s random purposes was something he was used to, but being kidnapped for dinner? Especially a dinner that he couldn’t even tell Sherlock about. Not that he ever really had the chance to tell the other man. No, Mycroft simply had him taken away and left him to say whatever he wanted to after everything was said and done.

But John couldn’t shake the fact that he was essentially going on a date with Sherlock’s brother and he couldn’t tell the detective about it. Something that wouldn’t be such a problem if said brother hadn’t also been Sherlock’s lover, given that neither of the Holmes brothers could be arsed to term each other as lovers. Which was a completely different thing he didn’t even want to think about.

Getting up, he turned off the television and started to head to his room before stopping. The last thing he wanted to do was try to sleep with Sherlock and Mycroft on his mind. Those two were the reason he was already having trouble sleeping, not that it was really their fault, per se. But the larger cause was something John didn’t want to consider. So instead of sleep he grabbed his jacket and phone, figuring that a quick pint with Mike or Lestrade had to be better than another restless sleep.
Situational Irony

Chapter Summary

Much like everything else in his life, John's date with Mycroft doesn't even begin to go according to plan.

Chapter Notes

A bit earlier than 8, but it's Friday, so that has to count for something.

At least half his day had been spent frantically hoping that the Earth might split open and suck him into its pits in order to keep him from having to go out with Mycroft Holmes. Simply the idea of going out for a quaint meal with one of the most dangerous men he had ever met was enough to make his stomach twist itself into knots. Especially given hate fact that John would've given his left arm to be going out with Moriarty instead of the elder Holmes.

But he didn’t have the good luck to be swallowed alive by the ground and Sherlock had been locked away in his room, likely working out the finer points of some mystery, as usual. So he waited in the living room somewhat anxiously, doing everything he could think of. Cleaned the living room, changed his jumper since it seemed wrong to wear his white one for a night out with Mycroft when he was fairly certain he had worn the same thing when Sherlock took his out. Not that either were a date or romantic. He was merely serving a purpose that, once again, he couldn’t be informed of. It was enough to make a guy hate the entire Holmes family as a moral stance.

Of course, somewhere in between hating the Holmes family lineage and contemplating whether it would be too strange to at least wash off the fingers that Sherlock had in the icebox, he heard his phone go off. A simple text that he didn’t even bother to read. Instead he just looked out the window to check for the ubiquitous black car that meant Mycroft’s arrival.

“I’m going out,” he called out, not all that surprised when he didn’t get a response. Didn’t really matter all that much, he mused as he grabbed his coat. Sherlock wasn’t supposed to know anyways.

So, with no chance of escaping his fate, he did like he said he was going to and headed out to where the car was waiting. Getting into the car, John smiled somewhat nervously at Mycroft, who flashed one of his typical politician smiles. How anyone thought that kind of polite grin could make people trust them was beyond John since he felt as though he might vomit up his own stomach and this strange night out was only beginning.

“Pleasure to see you, John.”

“I wasn’t going to come, but then I thought about how you went well out of your way to force me into this, might as well come,” he said sarcastically as he rolled his eyes.

“I merely wanted to talk.”
“Without Sherlock knowing,” John pointed out. It wasn’t often that John had to keep dates secret and generally when he did it was always for a reason that John never liked. “I’ve been in a few relationships and I have to say, the communication issues between you two can’t be healthy.”

“I know my brother inside and out. Talking stopped being a necessity years ago.”

“That’s... more than I wanted to know.”

Choosing to ignore the comment, Mycroft only gave that too polite smile of his again and asked, “How do you feel about Italian?”

“I feel like Sherlock already took me to an Italian place.”

“Yes, but unlike him, I’ll actually allow you to eat instead of running you across London, hopping from building to building.”

“That is quite the improvement, actually,” he admitted a bit reluctantly.

“It tends to be.”

And catching the smug look on Mycroft’s face, John couldn’t help but smile, although he stopped himself the moment he realized it. He wasn’t there to do anything more than... Whatever it was Mycroft wanted from him. Idle conversation about Sherlock and pithy jokes was something Mycroft could share with anyone else who happened to know the guy. His whole purpose was to get the evening over with as quickly as possible.

Of course, Mycroft noticed his sudden change in mood. Looking as though he was a bit bothered, he asked, “We are allowed to get along, are we not?”

“Yeah, but... Not when you’re kidnapping me to some Italian place,” John said, knowing full well how idiotic that had to sound.

Thankfully, Mycroft nodded along as the silence started to fill the small space yet again. Part of John felt a bit bad for ruining the almost nice time they were starting to have, but he couldn’t just ignore the fact that he was forced into this by a man who had threatened to kill him.

“I’ll be sure to take you to a French restaurant next time,” Mycroft said as he busied himself with his phone.

Resisting the urge to laugh, John turned his attention toward to the window. He wasn’t going to indulge the man or even have a good time. He was merely going to do whatever it was Mycroft wanted and get it over with so he could go home and contemplate how bad his social life had to be if he was going out with his friend’s brother.

Not to say it was all bad, really. The restaurant they managed to find themselves in was certainly the kind of place he would’ve expected to be taken to by someone like Mycroft. Everything from the way they were led to Mycroft’s ‘usual’ table in the a private corner of the restaurant to the prompt, nearly doting service they received from a sweet girl who seemed to know the politician rather well. When they were finally left alone, orders having been placed, John was more than a little impressed.

“This is a very nice place,” he said, trying to be polite.

“I’m rather fond of it.”

“So, you were going to tell me why you forced me into this?”
Mycroft clenched his jaw at the word ‘forced’. Knowing him he likely had a very special phrase for these situations like ‘suggested’ or ‘convinced’. After all, words were the front line in the political sphere, everyone having a bloody code they lived by in order to pretend that they rarely, if ever did anything wrong. But given the fact that John didn’t much care for mincing words, Mycroft didn’t bother to continue with it. Instead, he merely rested his hands on the table, fingers intertwined and smiled.

“What can you tell me about Moriarty?”

“I thought you already had this conversation with Sherlock.”

“I did. But, from what I’ve heard, you’re the one that was kidnapped.”

“Right. Um... I don’t know. He’s my height? Head kind of moves around like a snake or lizard. He’s... barking.”

“How did he manage to kidnap you?”

“A lot like you, actually,” he said, not missing the look of annoyance on Mycroft’s face. “Except, instead of beautiful women, he used death threats. Kept taunting me while he had the explosives strapped to me. Rather intent to kill me and your brother.”

“Must’ve been a frightening experience.”

“I’ve been through worse,” he said.

“Does that make it any less terrifying?”

“I don’t know. Perhaps not.”

He did his best not to think about that night at the pool too much. Whatever happened happened and it didn’t require him to dwell on it after it was over. The fact that Moriarty was still out there somewhere wasn’t his concern, even if Sherlock and Mycroft had made it theirs. Instead he just focused on the food the waiter placed in front of him.

“Thank you,” he muttered as he grabbed his fork.

“Hmm. That’s a rather nice look on you. Perhaps I should be having you instead of the tortellini.”

“I’m sorry, what?” John asked, head bolting up.

Mycroft sat there, focused on their waiter, something John was more than ready to complain about until he noticed just who the man was. With his cover blown, Sherlock took a seat next to his brother, glaring at him.

“You stole my blogger,” Sherlock complained immediately.

“For dinner,” Mycroft countered.

“Something you purposely didn’t tell me about.”

Picking up his fork and inspecting it before wiping it off with his napkin, Mycroft tutted softly.

“Now why would I do that?”

“Hold on,” John interrupted. “How did you even know I was going to be here with Mycroft?”
“Simple. You marked down the fact that you had a date in your phone. Ten minutes prior to your leaving, Mycroft’s car pulled up and no one got out, implying that it was actually Mycroft and not his assistant.”


“It’s not,” he sneered, taking the fork from his brother. “Wasn’t even cleverly hidden because you wanted me here. You wanted me to find out that you kidnapped John for the sake of getting information about Moriarty.”

“If I wanted you here, I’m fairly certain I would’ve invited you.”

“If you didn’t want me here, you wouldn’t be hiding whatever it is you’re hiding,” Sherlock pointed out before taking a bite of Mycroft’s food.

“Oh, is this a sibling squabble or a domestic?” John asked wearily.

“Neither,” Mycroft said with a sigh. “I’m not hiding anything because I told you I wanted to know about Moriarty.”

“To chat with him about the Bond project.”

“Or the Bond movies. Whichever seems more relevant,” he said before snatching his fork back from him. “Now, if you’re going to stay, do behave for John’s sake. It’s his night you’re intruding on.”

“Of course. John, continue with your evening with my brother as though I’m not here.”

“It’s fine. At least with you here, there’s a fair chance Mycroft might get some at the end of the night,” he said, poking carelessly at his food.

Glancing at Sherlock, John did his best not to smile at the amused look in the man’s eyes. Not when Mycroft was at the table, clearly not the amused. But Sherlock had a sort of infectious joy about him and the moment Sherlock snickered, there was no way John could hold in his own laughter, though he did try in vain to keep it down.

Returning his attention back to his food with a sigh, Mycroft said, “Quaint. It’s like dining with children.”

John ignored him in favour of limiting his laughter to childish giggles as he did his best to see the meal the rest of the way through.

Somehow the entire evening seemed to flow a bit smoother with Sherlock there. He managed to commandeer the majority of the conversation, somehow changing every attempt at polite conversation to one about morgues and crime scenes. Mycroft gave up on stopping him long before he gave up on trying to stop Sherlock from stealing his food as well.

In a way, it was rather cute, the way the two men kindly annoyed each other. The familiarity and overall comradery of the meal rather put John in the mind of dinners with Harry and Clara. And for a moment, watching Sherlock share a dessert that had been Mycroft’s in the first place, John could almost allow himself to believe that the two men were just that. Simply two men who happened to be in the deep end of a rather amusing love/hate relationship.

It was a thought that lingered about in the back of his mind through the entire ride back to Baker Street as Sherlock sat practically cuddled up with his brother, making grand deductions of other drivers based on their cars. He knew what they had was wrong on a multitude of levels since
people didn’t simply reject incest without reason, but the harm they were doing to each other was limited.

Getting out of the car, John figured that he wasn’t going to worry about Sherlock’s sex life. It didn’t involve him so it wasn’t his concern. Instead, he merely headed inside, not paying any mind to the sound of footsteps behind him until they came to a stop. Looking behind him, he was more than a bit confused to see Sherlock merely standing on the steps while Mycroft hadn’t even moved from in front of the door.

“Aren’t you coming up?” Sherlock asked.

“Unfortunately, no. Business to attend to tomorrow,” Mycroft said with a helpless shrug.

“And I would be a distraction.”

“Well considering how that call with the PM went,” Mycroft teased.

Smiling rather proudly about something John was certain he didn’t want to know about, Sherlock made his way over to where Mycroft stood by the door. John half expected them to slip into one of their silent arguments and was about to continue on his way to their flat, when Sherlock kissed the corner of Mycroft’s mouth. Something so strangely simple and sweet, John wouldn’t have actually thought Sherlock capable of such an act if he hadn’t seen it with his own eyes.

Although, he started to have second thoughts about it when Mycroft caught Sherlock by the chin and kissed him. A proper kiss that became a lazy slide of mouths almost as soon as it began, Mycroft relaxed against the door while Sherlock pressed against him. Both of them heendless of the fact that John hadn’t left either, though he almost felt he should.

Watching them was very wrong, after all, but John was quite certain that he had never seen them kiss. He’d seen them have intimate moments, even having sex, but never this. Never the way Sherlock’s hand carded through Mycroft’s hair as the elder Holmes wrapped an arm around his waist.

“Great. He crashes another one of my dates and he gets the good night kiss,” John said a bit louder than usual.

If nothing else, it stopped them from staring at each other in that way they always did. No, instead, two pairs of curious blue eyes focused on him. Patting Sherlock’s side, Mycroft stayed pressed against door as Sherlock moved away, keeping a proper brotherly distance from him.

“My apologies,” Mycroft said, opening the door once he had the space. Nodding at them both, he smiled. “Goodnight, John. Sherlock.”

Lifting his hand in a brief goodbye, John finished making his way upstairs, Sherlock not far behind. It was habit that drove him into the living room instead of toward his own room, since he was more than a bit knackered. He’d been dreading dinner with Mycroft ever since they had agreed on it and Sherlock intruding on the evening, well, that certainly didn’t help ease his worries. Added up with his recent sleepless nights, well, he was exhausted.

“What do you mean another one of your dates?” Sherlock asked before he could make his getaway.

Even being as tired as he was, it was obvious from the confused look on the detective’s face that he wasn’t going to be getting away from this conversation. It was almost as though he was being punished for making the joke, or perhaps, not leaving when they began to kiss in the first place.
“Well, I was the one he asked out for dinner. And it’s amazing Sarah even wanted to see me again after the Blind Banker incident.”

“Don’t call it that.”

“It’s a good name for that case.”

“No one was blind in any of it,” Sherlock argued.

“Right. Not arguing this,” John said holding up his hands in surrender. If Sherlock wanted to argue about his titling skills once again, it would have to wait until morning. “I’m going to bed. Night Sherlock.”

Standing there for a moment, Sherlock stared at him with the same kind of rapt attention he tended to reserve for cases. And no matter how badly he wanted to sleep, John knew there was no point in moving if Sherlock was likely to realize some solution to some mystery or something.

When Sherlock moved closer to him, John stood up a bit straighter, not sure what to expect. The insistent press of lips against his own wasn’t even close to being on the list though. His mouth was still moist from snogging his brother and, Christ, John knew he should move away, but his body had different ideas, mouth falling open in what John tried to pretend was shock. The fact that Sherlock took it as an invitation, feverishly hot tongue sliding against his own, was a misunderstanding that John was set to correct.

As soon as Sherlock’s hand stopped cupping his cheek and John figured out how his hand wound up gripping Sherlock’s coat like it was the only thing keeping him steady, he’d end this. Stop standing in the middle of their living room, allowing himself to be kissed by his very taken flatmate.

A thought that Sherlock seemed to share as he broke the kiss, even though he didn’t move away. Instead, he just stood there, mouth temptingly close, John realized as he kissed the man again, managing to keep it chaste. Nothing more than a series of butterfly kisses as both of them tried to stop whatever it was that had overcome them.

“Good night John,” Sherlock muttered against his mouth.

Taking a step back, John stared at his flatmate, nodding dumbly. Flashing a brief smile, Sherlock slowly moved away, never once looking back at him as he made his way to his room. A fact that John greatly envied, given that the only movement he could manage was to press his hand to his lips, the gravity of the situation slowly settling into his mind.

No matter how often he might have thought about it in passing, he had never actually expected that there would be a day when Sherlock would actually kiss him. He wasn’t even sure that it was what he wanted until it happened. And damn it all if he didn’t want it to happen again. The idea of moving toward Sherlock’s room seemed so much simpler than going anywhere else which was wrong. Not that watching Sherlock snog his brother was much better. Rubbing at his eyes, John sat down on the couch with a sigh.

“Well, so much for sleeping tonight,” he grumbled bitterly as he flipped on the telly, intent to spend another night keeping his mind focused on anything that didn’t involve Sherlock or Mycroft.
Circular Conversations

How one man could last as long as Moriarty had was admittedly interesting. Standing in front of the two way mirror, Mycroft watched yet another interrogation session with rapt fascination. For weeks Moriarty had been here, silently watching them all in a way Mycroft had scarcely seen before. He wasn’t like most people who came into their good graces. There were no cries of pain, no bitter laments of his treatment when he was alone. The man was quiet as the dead, somewhere between the reality they had created for him and his own twisted mind.

Catching those bottomless eyes staring at him, as though Moriarty could see anything but his own reflection in the glass, Mycroft stood a bit straighter. The madman could think himself as clever as he wanted to, at the end of the day. No one left their good graces until he got exactly what it was he wanted from them.

Noting when the agent came to stand next to him, silently wiping his hands after another failed day of work, Mycroft figured it was time he started to handle the matter himself. Nodding at the agent, he made his way into the small room. It reeked of stale sweat and the coppery scent of blood as Moriarty sat there so patiently. If he had noticed the way his lip was bleeding, he didn’t make any move to correct the problem.

Taking his own seat at the table, Mycroft wiped at the perfectly clean surface before resting his hands on it.

“Hello, James. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

The man didn’t as much as move a muscle. He just continued to sit there, hands resting in his lap, eyes blindly staring through Mycroft more than at him. A look that Mycroft knew was meant to unnerve based on the way even his best people gave mention of feeling a bit leery around the genius. It was as though he was taking them apart piece by piece, somehow getting inside their heads, they’d confessed time and time again.

Seeming to perk up, Mycroft smiled a bit wider and asked, “May I get you anything?”

The only response he was given was the slow blink, those large, almost soulless eyes taking a moment’s break from boring holes into him.

“Continuing to say nothing won’t help get you out of here, you understand that, don’t you?” He asked, knowing that the man had to understand him. Still, Moriarty only sat there in silence. Rising from his seat, he was more than willing to write the entire situation off as the first of what would likely be many failed attempts. “Well, I suppose if you’ve nothing to say.”

Looking toward the glass, Moriarty licked his split lip. Standing in front of his seat, Mycroft watched as Moriarty leaned toward him, eyes firmly looked on his own reflection once again.

“They’re watching. Must keep quiet,” he whispered.

It was as though the man was letting him in on some secret he expected no one else to know. Looking toward the window himself, Mycroft knew that the chances of Moriarty actually seeing anyone on the other side was about as likely as his chances of truly being so mad as to think that Mycroft wasn’t one of the people that often lurked on the other side. It was nothing more than another game.

But, for the first time, Moriarty had spoken to anyone since they’d captured him. So, with his eyes
locked on the glass, as though him staring as well would help give him some kind of peace of mind, Mycroft asked, “Would you like them to go away?”

Moriarty didn’t respond. He merely looked away from the glass quickly, eyes focusing on the table top. Noting the curious behaviour of the man, Mycroft glanced back at the glass before pushing in his chair. He knew he was likely falling for Moriarty’s ploy, but he was certain that there was no risk. Whatever Moriarty had considered, Mycroft was certain he had thought of before hand.

So without another thought, he made his way out of the room and politely dismissed the agents there, watching over the proceedings for any sign of danger. He admired the way the concern for his safety, but it wasn’t even necessary. Moriarty was known for getting other people to do as he said rather than do anything himself. If anything, Mycroft felt he was more at risk with someone he didn’t have a clear eye on watching the entire proceedings, not that he didn’t trust his own people.

Thankfully, they left without a word, likely off to go watch the camera feed of the entire conversation from a safe distance. Still doing their jobs, like he would’ve expected, and appeasing the insane worries of the criminal consultant.

Looking back at the glass when the sounds of footsteps were gone, Mycroft wondered if he had made the right move as he watched the first signs of true madness in the man. Moriarty still sat in his chair, but his eyes were filled with a sort of manic glee as he smiled far too brightly at Mycroft, since it didn’t matter if Moriarty could actually see him or not. The man had a sixth sense for knowing just where to look somehow.

Moriarty certainly was nothing like anyone even Mycroft had encountered. Still, there was a plethora of necessary information that needed to be gotten from the depths of that brilliant mind and Mycroft had already come to the conclusion that he was the one who needed to get it.

Walking into the room, he smiled back at Moriarty as he took his seat, yet again. “They’re gone,” he announced with a gesture toward the glass.

Chuckling, Moriarty leaned back in his seat, rather than look at the glass again. “And yet the iceman remains. Hello.”

“Hello, James.”

“Sent all the mice scurrying away?” He asked, fists pressed to his face like an excited child. Giggling to himself, he began rocked back and forth. “You are powerful.”

“To some extent,” Mycroft agreed.

With a look of shock, Moriarty gasped. “And modest too. All the mums must just love you.”

“Thank you.”

“All sensible choices for when the kiddies learn that the mean, pretty boys aren’t reliable. That they never call back,” he said, the excitement slowly replaced by a look of anger.

Furrowing his brows, Mycroft managed to look moderately upset. “I’m wounded,” he said resting a hand over his heart. “You only ruined an international mission because Sherlock didn’t call back?”

“Why do we do anything?” Moriarty questioned with a careless shrug. “Why would you leave a willing body for the sake of seeing me? We both know I’ll always be home waiting for your
A look of disgust quickly falling over his features, whatever game they had been playing came to an immediate stop as the atmosphere around Moriarty seemed to grow cold. “Don’t do that,” he growled. “I already know you had the date on purpose. Because you would’ve noticed the bit of fabric caught in your watch, the way your own is still ruffled in the back. Dust from a tiramisu on the left side of your jacket. That your breath smells like mint in order to cover up the smell of it.”

“Could have—”

“Been staged? Yeah, it could’ve,” he agreed with a roll of his eyes. “But why would you fake a scuff on the instep on your left shoe? They’re not new, but they are nice. Very nice actually. I should get a pair.”

Mycroft stared at him, brows slightly creased as he played the evening over in his mind. It was easy to recall the moment when Sherlock pressed against him, knowing that it would’ve had to have happened then. But more than his own failure to notice such a fact was the way Moriarty’s mood seem to be lifted as he eyed Mycroft’s shoes curiously.

Looking back up at him, Moriarty lurched forward as he pointed at him. “And there,” he said wiggling his finger in front of the politician’s face. “I’ve surprised the Iceman again.” Pointing back at himself, he stared at his finger, eyes going a bit cross eyed as he added, “And look, you’ve surprised me by being more interested that I noticed a scuff than anything else.”

“The devil’s in the details.”

Following his finger tip, Moriarty held it up as he tilted his head to the side.

“You never answered me. I mean, I know they say familiarity breeds contempt, but I’d have figured a man willing to sleep with you would be tempting instead of contempting. Unless you’re... you know, that way inclined.”

Chuckling, Mycroft shook his head at the man’s insane immaturity. “Interested in women? I’d hate to inform you of this, but most men and a number of a woman tend to be that way inclined.”

“I know,” Moriarty agreed. “Little Harry Watson is that way inclined. Detective Lestrade, Miss Adler, even the abusive friend you’ve given me. Although I think he’s going to dump her soon. Commitment issues.”

“So, you know about the people in Sherlock’s life?” Mycroft questioned, feeling mildly concerned by the statement.

Not that he didn’t have reason to know of Irene, given that he was the one behind her failed plans. Even Lestrade could be rationally explained, since the man often went to Sherlock. But knowing about John’s sister had no purpose unless he was doing in depth research into the good doctor’s life, something that would only happen if he had thoroughly looked into everyone who found themselves in contact with Sherlock.

“Answer me, Iceman,” Moriarty said in a sing-song voice.

“You mean confirm your beliefs? Fine, I put my work before my love life.”

“I’m better than sex, Iceman?”
“No,” Mycroft said quickly.

“Liar!” Laughing as he shook his head at some joke only he knew of, Moriarty sighed happily. Gripping the edge of the table, he began to move his head back and forth like some sort of snake. “Sex is sex. All grinding and humping and putting fingers in naughty places. Piecing together a criminal mastermind? You’d always pick me over sex.”

Ignoring him, Mycroft chose to get to the crux of their meeting, rather than continue to let the man analyze him.

“You’re a consultant criminal that—“

“Don’t do that!” He yelled, that short fuse of his going off again. Pinching the bridge of his nose, he let out a heavy sigh. “Don’t... Don’t start with the work. We were having fun.”

Watching him with a vague sense of boredom, Mycroft waited for the man to calm himself. Told himself that the man before him was no more dangerous than Sherlock. They were both just overgrown children, although where Sherlock chose to sulk, Moriarty threw tantrums.

Resting an elbow on the table, the madman stared up at the ceiling. “Is he pretty? Your lover?”

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” Mycroft said, figuring it best to play along with his madness.

“I could cut out your eyes and have a look myself?” Moriarty offered

Nodding in acknowledgement, Mycroft returned to his point. “Works with everyone from petty thugs to terrorist cells. You come from—“

“It also helps that you don’t love him because your heart—“

“Is made of ice and I have no feelings. May I continue?” Mycroft asked, growing tired of the interruptions.

“No,” Moriarty shot back. “You know what the file tells you. Yes, I do that. No need to question. And honestly, I do it for the same reason a dog licks himself.”

“Because you can.”

“Because it’s fun,” he corrected him. “Kind of like dating really. So many people wanting you, but you just want that one person who will keep you amused for awhile.”

Smirking at that, Mycroft scoffed. “Rather more romantic than I would’ve expected.”

Faking a smile, Moriarty asked, “Are you tired of him? I mean, you put work before him. Getting a little too comfortable?”

“I don’t need to be interested at every turn.”

“It helps though. Sherlock likes being interested at every turn too.”

“Maybe when you get out I’ll set you up with him,” he offered sarcastically.

“Silly Iceman with his head full of frost. I told you, pretty things just break your heart.”

“Well, I don’t think John would care too much for you given that you strapped a bomb to his chest. Plus he would think you’re just using him to get to Sherlock.”
Opening his mouth to say something, Moriarty stopped himself. Making a great show thinking it over as he scratched as his jaw, he eventually nodded in agreement. “It’d be true. And how long have you been with him if he’s so boring I’m a wonderful alternative to sex?”

“But you said you weren’t. According to you being here is more interesting than sex is for me,” Mycroft corrected him smugly.

“It is, but you’re dating this man of your own accord. Must mean you’re willing to overlook a lack of intellectual stimulation for the thrill of putting your ice lolly in special places.”

“You’re really proud of your Iceman moniker aren’t you?”

Not that he cared much either way about it. After years of teasing as a child and at the hands of his brother, the jokes about his lack of feeling were nothing. If anything, he took it as a bit of a compliment, given how easily so many people let themselves be run by their emotions. But Moriarty wasn’t the type to admire that sort of behaviour, and underneath his mercurial emotions, he didn’t seem as though he was any more emotional than Mycroft allowed himself to be.

Looking around the room, obviously bored now, Moriarty made some non-committal noise. “Prick seemed a bit terse.”

“I see,” Mycroft said, not missing the implication behind that statement.

“And don’t bother denying that you date him for your own pleasure. There’s no shame in it.”

“Unlike dating someone for the sake of some greater scheme?”

And that had the man’s interest once again. Biting his lip, he continued to look around the room, head once again sway to something only he heard. “Turning the tables on me? Well, if we must go through my sexual escapades, I did.”

“Miss Hooper?”

Moriarty covered his mouth as he leaned back in his seat. Glancing to his left and right, he leaned forward, arms splayed across the table, hand resting on Mycroft’s wrist as he asked, “Did you just make a naughty joke about my ex-girlfriend? What a bad Iceman.”

Glancing at the hand that remained on his wrist, he decided to ignore it. If the man wanted to test what boundaries they were going to allow him, he was perfectly free to. Instead, Mycroft focused on that oh so amused face.

“You used her for the sake of what? Why go out with her when you didn’t even do anything to Sherlock?”

“Tsk tsk. You’re overlooking so very much I did,” Moriarty complained as he removed his hand. Sitting upright in his seat, he rubbed tiredly at his eyes before gesturing for Mycroft to continue speaking.

“No, I’m not,” he said, pleased when Moriarty seemed to regain some of his interest in their conversation. “You gave him your number and nothing more. You would’ve already known he was on that foolish Carl Powers case because you set it up for him. Which, if you really wanted him to call, you would’ve gave him your number after telling him you were behind that little mystery. After all, it’s been his white whale since it first happened.”

Not that Mycroft wasn’t privately thankful that Moriarty had brought an end to that particular
matter. He remembered all too well how crushed Sherlock had been as a boy when no one believed him, or cared about it, in the case of Mycroft’s own stance. A boy drowning in a pool was just that, regardless of whether or not it was intentional.

“Giving tips on how to get Sherlock? I don’t know whether that’s for my sake or his.”

“You became obsessed with him. Why?”

“No,” Moriarty snapped.

“What?”

“Wrong question. Don’t be dense now. I was almost enjoying this.”

“Why Molly?” Mycroft asked cautiously. The last thing he wanted was for the man to slip back into his trance like state after the unexpected progress that had come from the conversation so far.

“Are you asking me if that’s the right question or is that your question?”

“You could’ve gotten close to anyone,” Mycroft attempted more firmly. “Detective Lestrade, John, that Mike Stamford. Even Mrs. Hudson, if you wanted to get really close to him. But you chose Molly, the girl he treats with little more than indifference. Why?”

“You tell me, Iceman,” Moriarty challenged. “You don’t really care what I say. You just enjoy the puzzle.”

Racking his mind, Mycroft slowly lifted his head as the realization dawn on him. Mouth becoming slightly pinched as Moriarty arched a curious brow at him, he could’ve kicked himself for overlooking such a simple answer.

“He doesn’t notice her. He cares more about the men Detective Lestrade’s wife invites to her bed than Molly. And despite being a genius, or rather, because of it, you didn’t want to be in the centre of his attention. You just wanted to watch him work. Watch him tear you apart knowing he was falling into your trap. Getting it all wrong”

“I get nervous when meeting people I like like. My palms sweat,” he said, waving his hands in an effort to prove his point.

“You just wanted to watch him because you do like him. He’s everything you always wished for.”

And if that wasn’t a laughable thought, than Mycroft didn’t know what was. Moriarty liked Sherlock for the same reason Sherlock liked him. They were nothing more than a challenge that neither had ever had the benefit of meeting, since he wasn’t a challenge to his brother. He was merely a game to be played whenever he got bored. Certainly, some higher power had to have conceived two childish men with such opposing views for each other. Coincidences of that nature were near astronomical when considering the odds.

“Your lover loves you more than you do him,” Moriarty said without any sort of preamble. “That’s why you’re here. You’re waiting for him to get bored or for someone else to come along and ruin everything. You’re resigned to the relationship because you don’t want to enjoy it.”

“I’m a very out closeted man,” came Mycroft’s sarcastic reply.

Slamming his hands down on the table, Moriarty laughed. “Ha! I don’t even care that you’re trying to deflect because I’m right.”
“Oh? I was under the impression that—”

“Don’t care,” he said, waving his hand to make Mycroft shut up.

It was something Mycroft did more on habit than anything else, as he watched the madman expectantly. If the stars had aligned just a bit differently, he was positive that Jim and Sherlock could’ve made the best of friends, if they didn’t drive each other, or Mycroft himself, completely mad first.

“You here is making me miss the abusive one. So to end this now, I picked Molly because I wanted to meet Sherlock. I wanted to see him up close because he’s been ruining my hard work from a distance for a while now. More than that I wanted to be someone he would forget instantly and that’s easiest done when being the no one who dates the person he never thinks about.”

“Sherlock has known Miss Hooper for some time now, actually.”

“So? I’ve known my brother all my life. Doesn’t mean I was particularly concerned about his chances of coming home in a box.”

“I’m sure the Colonel must adore you.”

The statement seemed to mean nothing to Moriarty, who merely shrugged off the entire thing as though they were talking about some stranger instead of the man’s brother. It was actually rather fascinating, given how much he seemed to care about Sherlock, obsession or not. Sherlock’s behaviour may have had him hovering around the fringes of being a sociopath, but Moriarty was hovering around the fringes of what made a person human.

“Sherlock cares about Lestrade because no one wants a DI that might lose his calm or be upset that his wife is screwing everyone but him in the midst of a case,” Moriarty started in an effort to change the conversation from anything as boring as his own family, judging by the look on his face. “He cares about John because he has a poorly hidden stiffy for him and he cares about Mrs. Hudson because of his misplaced affections for your mum.”

“And yet you figure Molly means nothing?” Mycroft asked, interested in Moriarty’s view of his brother.

“No. She’s useful, like a hammer. You don’t have feelings for them, but eventually you might need it. That and she wasn’t clever enough to piece it together, unlike you.”

“Oh. You were going to pretend to be my gay boyfriend? Doubt it would’ve had the same affect.”

Glassy eyed look falling over his face again, Moriarty asked, “How did you wind up with someone you don’t really love? Because I know how and why I wound up with Molly.”

“I never said I don’t love him,” Mycroft corrected. “I said I put my work before him.”

“Same thing at the end of the day.”

Swallowing, as he feigned contemplation on such a comment, Mycroft tapped his finger on the table before answering as honestly as he could.

“He pursued me. I gave in.”

“So much for not giving into peer pressure,” Moriarty scoffed.

Which was as clear of a sign as any that nothing good was going to come from continuing with
him. Rising from his seat, Mycroft smiled politely and told him, “I believe we’re done for today.”

“How do you know it’s not the same?” He shot back.

“Because you would’ve said it was instead of deflecting. You really don’t love him.”

“Returning home? Or going to see him?”

“I truly value the interest you’ve taken in my sex life, but I must get going.”

“Poor little Iceman with his heart of snow,” he sang. “The joys of love, he’ll never know.”

“Goodbye James,” Mycroft said as he made his way to the door.

“Jim,” Moriarty called out, a touch of annoyance in his voice. Turning to look at him, Mycroft arched his brows while the rest of his face remained impassive. Moriarty only stared back, completely still and focused. “James is my father. And brother. I’m Jim. Jim Moriarty. Hi,” he said, wiggling his fingers in a rather meek wave.

It was perhaps the only honest thing that Moriarty had told him that wasn’t meant to annoy him. A brief moment of sanity and courtesy for no other reason than the fact that he likely knew they would be forced into more of these meetings. But, it was something that held some sort of meaning to the criminal mastermind, and that was a start.

Holding up his own hand in a greeting Mycroft nodded. “Hello.”

With that, he walked out the door. Someone would, no doubt, be along to take the man back to his cell before long. His only concern was looking over the video feed of their meeting and piecing together just what it was that Moriarty was playing at and how to get more useful information out of him before turning him loose.
Stuff of Dreams

Chapter Summary

John and Sherlock share a kind of evening that dreams are made of.

John was certain that he was the only man in the world who actually hated his luck with getting people. Half the time he didn’t even put forth an actual effort. People just found him attractive for some sort of reason, which worked out great since he usually enjoyed their interest in some way. After all, he didn’t get the nickname Three Continents Watson for nothing. But that was well before Sherlock kissed him for reasons that he didn’t even bother to explain.

Because, while most might be thrilled to have the detective’s attention, John couldn’t enjoy it. Sure the kiss was great, but the small fact that Sherlock was in a relationship with someone made John feel like some sort of relationship ruining berk. It probably went against his well earned nickname, but John didn’t like to find himself in the middle of someone else’s relationship unless it was consensual.

The fact that that relationship of Sherlock’s was with Mycroft made John worry that he might very well get himself killed for messing about with Sherlock if ever he did try something. Not that he had any intention of that. Sherlock and Mycroft were happy and it wasn’t his place to try and come between that. Of course, as he sat on the sofa, watching Sherlock a lot more than he was watching the telly, he realized that what was good in theory was much harder to put into practise.

“Why would people watch this? It’s obvious he’s going to die of cancer,” Sherlock complained from his place in his chair. With his knees pulled up to his chest, he watched the screen as though he might miss something if he blinked at the wrong moment.

Chuckling, John was happy he hadn’t invested himself in the plot of the movie too much, having learned to avoid that when Sherlock was around. Instead, he shrugged helplessly. “That’s what they want. They want to watch him die because it’s sad.”

“That’s idiotic. Why not just go to a hospital and watch those people?”

“Because... That... There are literally so many things wrong with that statement I don’t know where to begin,” John said, rather astounded that Sherlock would even ask that. Part of him wanted to believe that the man was just messing with him, but the way Sherlock stared back at him, so obviously oblivious to the problem, made it hard to hold out such hope. “Look, at this time there’s nothing but crap telly. So just... turn around and watch the nice man succumb to cancer, alright?”

“The only thing stupider than this movie is the idea that people like you watch it in an effort to cure their insomnia.”

“People like to be entertained when they can’t sleep. And, you know, I didn’t ask you to join in,” he pointed out, not quite sure when or why Sherlock had decided to join him.

The problem wasn’t long lasting as Sherlock rose to his feet. Going over to the telly, he turned it off, ignoring John’s complaints before turning toward him with that mischievous look in his eyes. Leaning back, John watched him carefully, waiting for whatever horrible idea Sherlock had
cooked up in his mind to come forth.

“T’m going to cure your insomnia.”

“I’m not going to be your guinea pig. I don’t care what you have cooked up, I’m not eating or drinking anything, alright? So just turn the telly back on and go away,” John said, taking a firm stance against Sherlock and his plans. Not that Sherlock ever actually asked for his consent on matters like this.

Typically he’d just dose the tea with a curious strain of some kind of virus, an experiment that had ended with them both curled up on the bathroom floor while Mrs. Hudson treated them like sick children. It was for that reason alone that John decided to oversee anything that Sherlock did in the kitchen that even came close to cooking.

Sherlock didn’t look particularly pleased with his refusal, not that he often did. Standing next to the telly, he rolled his eyes as he let out an exasperated sigh. “Oh get over that. I had to know the effects of that for the case.”

“Still not going unless you can explain to me what your cure is.”

“Heat can be soothing and added weight can lead to tiredness, two things that can easily be provided by me.”

Taking a moment to process Sherlock’s claims, John cocked his head to the side and chuckled softly. “You’re going cuddle me to sleep?”

“It releases oxytocin, which lowers stress levels, John.”

“It’s still cuddling.”

“Do you want to sleep or not? You’ve obviously been lacking and the last thing I need is for my blogger to become as useless during a case as Anderson,” Sherlock said, seeming a bit embarrassed by John’s phrasing of his obviously well thought out science experiment.

And while he didn’t like being compared to Anderson, given that he knew it was probably the grandest of insults in Sherlock’s mind, John couldn’t help but feel a bit touched that Sherlock was so worried about him. Granted, he was miserable at showing it, but John wasn’t about to complain when such an obvious effort was being put forth.

So, against all better judgement, he rose to his feet and nodded. “Alright. If you think cuddling will fix this, I’m willing to give it a go.”

“Good. We’ll do it in my room.”

Following along dutifully, John tried to keep himself from stressing out over that. After all, it was cuddling, but it was mostly in the name of science and unlike most of Sherlock’s other experiments, John understood the logic and merit involved in this one. It wasn’t sexual, it was Sherlock trying to help him out which was kind. The only problem was him and the strangely sexual dreams he’d been harbouring in regards to Sherlock.

Still, once in Sherlock’s room, things were different. Watching as Sherlock laid down on his bed, leaving space for John to join him, he couldn’t actually bring himself to do much more than stand by the edge of the bed. He knew that the logical thing was to lie down as well, but the way Sherlock laid there, staring up at him expectantly made his stomach drop.

“So... Um... H-How are we doing this?” He asked, not moving to lie down in the slightest.
“I would’ve figured you would know how to cuddle considering the number of girlfriends you tend to go through,” Sherlock said mockingly.

“Sherlock, I know how to cuddle. I’m not ... some weird, cuddling inept person.” That was something he would’ve expected from Sherlock, had the man not suggested this particular activity. “There’s just... methods. Like are you a cuddler or a cuddle-y? Do you prefer to lie on top of your... cuddle buddy? Next to them?”

“Honestly, John, I have never heard of anyone overanalyzing cuddling like that and I have sex with Mycroft.”

“Yeah, can we not mention that?” John asked as he forced himself to lay down next to his friend. “I don’t need to think about you and him... in here, doing ... things.”

He found that he did that all too often without Sherlock making references to specific moments. If this hair brained scheme was actually going to be anything more than a thinly veiled excuse to stay up all night in each other’s company like a childish sleepover, he needed to not have those kind of images playing through his mind.

Wrapping his arms around John, Sherlock snuggled up to him. He looked annoyed, a look that was rather typical for Sherlock, but something about his eyes gave John the impression that there was more to that than Sherlock would ever actually tell him. Not that John was going to ask. He drew the line at playing counsellor for their relationship issues, feeling that particular duty went beyond his duties as friend and blogger.

“Not as though that would be much of a problem. Haven’t seen him since your date,” Sherlock complained, absent mindedly tracing John’s hip with his thumb.

“My date? You’re the one who wound up sharing dessert and snogging him.”

“That had a purpose,” Sherlock argued.

“Yeah, I bet.”

Furrowing his brows like he tended to when piecing something together, Sherlock stared at him in a way that rather unsettled John, if his squirming was anything to go on. “You shouldn’t be jealous of him. He’s... Mycroft.”

“You... I’m not...” Sighing, John took a moment to collect his thoughts. “I’m not jealous of you or him or whatever weird incestuous thing you two have.”

“You’re not bothered by it either.”

“No. I’m not... It... It’s nothing. There’s nothing wrong here with me or ... Well, nothing more wrong than usual with you guys.”

And judging by the way that Sherlock continued to stare him, face at ease, John assumed that he had made the non-issue at hand perfectly clear. If Sherlock wanted to screw around with Mycroft, that was perfectly fine, really. Well, as fine as an incestuous relationship between two consenting adults could ever be. He wasn’t jealous of either of them for it and he didn’t mind it, any more at least. It was just another oddity that he was willing to attribute to them being them.

Feeling a mouth press against his own, John stared in shock at Sherlock because this still didn’t make sense. He could understand his own reasoning, the ones that lead him to kiss back nervously, afraid that it was all some game. But the hand resting against his back, fingers just
barely resting against his arse as Sherlock pressed himself closer, lips parting invitingly, that didn’t follow any sort of reason that John could comprehend, even as he gave into it all so eagerly, if only for a moment.

Pressing a hand to Sherlock’s chest, John licked his lips, eyes focused on the sheets instead of the man’s cupid bow lips or those lustful blue eyes for the sake of not falling into the same trap a third time.

“Sherlock, I think I should go.”

“I was kind of hoping you’d stay. If that won’t be an issue.”

John shook his head. “You only want...”

And while there were a myriad of endings to that sentence, there wasn’t one that John could force himself to say. The idea that Sherlock might just be after sex in Mycroft’s absence was as annoying a thought as the idea that Sherlock was just using him as some kind of experiment. There was no good answer to the sentence that John had left hanging between them.

Nuzzling at John’s neck, Sherlock left butterfly kisses along his throat. “I want a lot of things. At least three of them coincide with my desire to help you get some sleep.”

“And Mycroft?” John asked, no matter how badly he didn’t want to.

“I thought we weren’t talking about what I do with Mycroft here? Honestly, John, just relax.”

And while he knew it was a terrible idea, allowing himself to relax into the gentle way that Sherlock’s finger trailed down his spine and ignore the insistent need to close that hair’s breadth of space between their mouths, he couldn’t bring himself to think of the consequences as he gave in. The only thing that matter was the feel of Sherlock’s lips beneath his own.

Sherlock might not have been the type a person would call considerate, but the almost timid way he kissed John certainly qualified. Hands kept on the doctor’s hips, Sherlock seemed almost scared. As though any false move might scare John off. Frankly, John isn’t sure that pushing things along won’t, but he’s willing to risk it.

There’s no point in being cautiously suicidal and he knows that messing about with Sherlock, brother and lover of the most dangerous man he knows, is nothing short of a death sentence. Threading his fingers through Sherlock’s hair, he began to plunder Sherlock’s mouth. Cautiousness didn’t have a place in the desperate slide of lips.

Kneeling between his spread legs, Sherlock removed his shirt, an act that John quickly imitated before pulling him back down. Not that the detective offered up even the faintest show of protest. Moaning at the first heated touch of skin on skin, Sherlock quickly set about mapping out every inch of newly exposed skin with the sort of rapt attention that John had only ever seen him devote to cases. Every ticklish rib and slow drag of nails over his nipple, the quick swipe of his thumb over John’s navel, all of it seemed to be filed and catalogued before his eyes, leaving John feeling harder than he ever would’ve thought.

When those hands came to rest of the waist of John’s pyjama trousers, Sherlock stared at John. Lifting his hips to encourage those hands where he wanted them most, John gave a frustrated groan when Sherlock merely moved his hands to rest in his own lap.

“John, I need to know you really want this.”

And it was such a ridiculous statement, that John couldn’t help but laugh at it. Laugh at the idea
that Sherlock was asking for his consent now of all times. “Sherlock, you pillock, I want this. I want you. I don’t even care how it happens, it just needs to happen. Now.”

Nodding, Sherlock leaned over John to dig through his nightstand. For what, John didn’t really care about, given that he had the detective hovering over him. Running his hand along the inside of Sherlock’s thigh, he watched, utterly amused, as Sherlock came undone underneath his teasing caress, obviously having trouble on focusing on whatever it was he was after when John’s hand was a subtle shift away from his erection.

“Condom and lubricant,” Sherlock declared louder than necessary as he quickly moved back to kneeling between John’s legs, brandishing the two objects like a trophy.

“Bit overdressed for that step, wouldn’t you say?” John teased, glancing between his own pyjama trousers and Sherlock’s.

Placing his well sought after necessities on the bed, Sherlock didn’t bother to answer. Instead he merely made quickly work of his own trousers before leaning down. Nuzzling at the crook of his leg, Sherlock licked at the soft fabric, leaving a wet trail until he came to his goal. Eyes meeting John’s, he began to mouth at his cloth covered erection, not in the least bit deterred by the barrier. Feeling himself twitch helplessly in that too warm mouth, the faintest of moist heat slowly seeping into his trousers, John bit his lip to keep quiet as Sherlock licked and sucked as though it was an ice-lolly.

“Sherlock,” John moaned as the man gripped his erection to better suck at the tip, the unexpectedly arousing sensation of damp fabric sliding against it not helping anything. Gripping Sherlock hair, he tugged at it as he tried to speak again. “Seriously, we can... we can move on. Sex. Need you now.”

Sighing heavily against the fabric, briefly warming the cooling material that clung to his cock, Sherlock nodded in agreement before hooking his fingers in the waist of his trousers. Lifting his hips as Sherlock began to tug them down; John almost couldn’t believe it was happening. There he was, in bed, with the one man he had always wanted.

“Have you ever done this before?”

Blushing, John nodded. “Once or twice. Nothing recent.”

Sherlock nodded, hopefully getting the answer he wanted. When the man gently smacked his hip, John lifted them again as Sherlock put a pillow beneath them before taking hold of the lube. At that point, everything seemed to narrow down to what they were both eagerly anticipating. Planting his feet on the bed, John spread his legs as wide as he could in invitation as Sherlock practically fucked his hand in an effort to coat his fingers in lube.

John was about ready to comment on it when Sherlock trailed his fingers from John’s balls to his hole. Circling the finger around the muscle, rubbing the slick substance to his skin, Sherlock gently began to press in, that laser like focus aimed solely at his task. It was enough to make John blush again as he attempted to steady his breathing as he was slowly filled. It was more uncomfortable than anything else, bringing back memories of feeling for his on prostate as a curious student for purely medical purposes.

Something Sherlock didn’t share in as that finger began to retreat, only to fill him again. A shallow sort of thrusting that likely had more to do with Sherlock’s inherent curiosity than anything else. Of course, given that he was dealing with Sherlock, it wasn’t long before one finger gave way to two, scissoring at some odd tempo and purposefully avoiding that spot John knew would have him a quivering mess. Not that Sherlock was having much trouble with that anyways, his free
hand carefully fondling John’s balls. Fisting his hands in the sheets, John tried to think of every patient with a gaping flesh wound or an infection he had ever had in an effort to keep this from ending when he was so close.

But the moment those fingers disappeared, John had to fight back the urge to complain, despite the sudden emptiness he felt. The too loud sound of the condom wrapper being opened was of little comfort to him. Only when Sherlock was over him once again, mouth on John’s as his cock pressed against the doctor’s waiting hole.

Not even the dull ache as he muscles stretched to accommodate Sherlock was enough to take away from the startling sense of accomplishment in John, though. Sure, he may have been John ‘Three Continents’ Watson, but even that didn’t compare to amount of joy having Sherlock inside him brought. Semi-important bed partners didn’t even stand a chance against the detective that had effectively ruined his life. If he had been forced to settle for nothing more than a kiss from the man, he easily would have.

Thankfully, he didn’t have to settle for a thing as Sherlock began to carefully move, his hips a complete juxtaposition of his mouth as he kissed John desperately. John couldn’t remember the last time anyone was so attentive to him, his past encounters with his own sex often being the product of too many drinks rather than any real connection. But Sherlock, with his fleeting touches to John’s erection and steady movements, acted as though he might break if he wasn’t careful.

Clinging to him, John moaned loudly, rocking his hips in the most obvious show that he could handle more. Sherlock’s sweetness may have been touching, but John wanted the man to fuck him like he kissed him. Something the detective was quick to pick up on. The gentleness gave way to an almost primal pace, heavy breathing and the sound of skin on skin filling the room. Whimpering as Sherlock hit that magical spot deep within him; John tossed his head back, biting down on his lip in an attempt to keep himself quiet as he wrapped his legs around Sherlock’s waist.

And once he found that perfect spot, he made a point to keep up his assault on it as John all but choked on the air he was trying so desperately to take in. When Sherlock finally took a hold of his leaking cock, it took no more than a few strokes from his hand before the tightness in John’s stomach gave way to a blinding orgasm, hot streams of spunk shooting across his stomach. He was only distantly aware of Sherlock fucking him through it all, hips moving in staccato thrusts until he stilled, mouth falling open in a silent cry as he came. Mustering up what little energy he had left, John kissed him, an almost innocent press of lips before lying back down against the sheets.

Staring at the ceiling, John waited for the world to start making sense once again, only vaguely aware of Sherlock somehow moving about, cleaning up the mess they’d made. Closing his eyes, John tried to focus on one thing at a time, starting with catching his breath again. He wasn’t quite sure when Sherlock laid back down, but he found himself held tightly in a firm embrace, face pressed against Sherlock’s shoulder not long before the world faded away into the brief darkness he always seemed to experience before waking up from that sort of dream.
John was certain that he had never felt so guilty and terrified in his life. The fact that such a mix of emotions might come from something related to Sherlock was only natural. Not that he could entirely blame the guy, no matter how hard he tried. And he was trying. Had been trying from the moment he had woken up in the other’s bed to find himself comfortably cuddled up to his best friend.

Not that it hadn’t be great to wake up tangled up with the man who had been dominating his fantasies for far longer than he would’ve liked to admit. It was wonderful, if he was to going to be honest with himself. But the more he seemed to take stock of the moment and the situation he was in, the more his happiness faded away into a sense of sickness because Sherlock was supposed to be in a relationship with Mycroft, and despite all that was wrong with that relationship, it wasn’t an excuse to fall into bed with the detective.

And while John had done all he could to stay away from Sherlock after beating a hasty retreat from the man’s bed, he couldn’t stop his mind from going over the fact that Sherlock had cheated on Mycroft with him. He had knowingly screwed over a guy who he at least respected for the sake of bedding his younger brother. Sitting at his computer, he banged his head on the keyboard, taking a moment to wallow in his own misery.

“You’ve been acting differently all day. Why?”

Bolting up, John looked at what he was certain had been an empty chair moments before, wondering when Sherlock had returned from his excursion to St. Bart’s. If he had even went, he thought, realizing that he was dealing with Sherlock, a man who frequently lied about his intentions when it he thought it might benefit him in some way.

Letting his racing heart, John stared at him; certain that not even Sherlock could be that much of idiot. “Why? Because we had sex.”

“So it’s normal for you to become panicky after a sexual encounter?” Sherlock questioned. Steepling his fingers beneath his chin, he shrugged, chalking the whole thing up to John being strange. “I mean, I can see the reason behind it when dealing with women. Condoms breaks, after all, but I happen to be a man and the chances of either of us becoming pregnant are rather slim. And I’m certain neither of us carry some sort of disease.”

“What about the chances of me mysteriously disappearing because of your brother?” John said, knowing how dramatic he must’ve sounded.

But even so, Mycroft’s reaction to this was something worth worrying about. The man had already threatened to kill him for mentioning the relationship he had with his brother to the greater public. John didn’t even want to consider what Mycroft might do when he found out that John had slept with Sherlock.
Not that he didn’t fear Mycroft might already know somehow and was currently planning the best way to get rid of him.

Judging by the confused look on his face, Sherlock still hadn’t considered Mycroft in any of this. “You’re concerned about Mycroft? Why?”

“I don’t know. Maybe because I happened to have sex with his... whatever you are to each other,” he said, waving his hand at Sherlock.

“Honestly, John. The last thing that Mycroft cares about who I bed when he isn’t around.”

“Oh thanks. I feel so much better,” he said sarcastically.

“It’s hardly as though you’re the first person I’ve slept with that wasn’t Mycroft,” Sherlock said. He even managed to sound fairly offended, although John was nearly positive that was due in part to John’s poor outlook on Sherlock’s sex life beyond his own brother.

“And it’s great to know that, really it is, but what happened was a mistake that never should’ve happened.”

“Are you saying you regret sleeping with me?”

“Yes. I mean... It’s not you, it’s just...”

Holding up a hand to silence him, Sherlock said, “Spare me your reasoning.”

And he shouldn’t have felt bad when Sherlock quickly rose from his seat, because Sherlock was part of the problem, but John really hadn’t meant to insult him. “Sherlock, I didn’t mean it as though you’re...”

“Bad in bed? A poor choice for a partner? Just a warm body in the middle of the night? Tell me John, how did you mean for it to come out?”

Feeling a sense of déjà vu, John scratched at his head as he tried to find the best words, instead of carelessly insulting the man once again. “Anything involving you would just be trouble and I don’t need that outside of what we already do,” he said, hoping that even Sherlock wouldn’t go out of his way to take offense to such a claim.

“Wonderful. So now I’d be a danger to you in and outside of bed. Well, you certainly have a way with words.”

“Hey, you’re the one sleeping with his brother,” John pointed out, sick of being the bad guy. “Why do you care about the fact that I don’t want to make a habit of bedding you?”

“I don’t,” Sherlock denied quickly. “Why should I care? You said so yourself, I have Mycroft.”

“You know, only you could be upset that I don’t want to be a complicit partner in some affair with you when you’re cheating on the man in charge of secretly running the country.”

“You think I should tell him about what we did,” Sherlock said, focusing on that, of all things.

Shaking his head in disbelief, John wondered if he should just give up on the conversation in general. Grabbing his laptop, he stood up and stared at Sherlock, racking his mind once more for the perfect word. “No. I just don’t think it’s... fair that you’re doing this to someone you claim to love.”
“He’s my brother.”

“That’s never been an issue before,” John shot back.

“I already told you, Mycroft won’t care.”

“Fine. If he won’t care, you shouldn’t care if I tell him.”

Meeting the challenging look in John’s eyes, Sherlock stared him down briefly before flopping back into his chair. Taking up his violin, he said, “Do whatever you must so long as you stop acting as though the world was ending.”

Which was good, John thought. Sherlock was either trying to call his bluff or really didn’t care if he told Mycroft, both being perfect incentives to clear his conscious and come clean to the politician. Putting his laptop in his room, he headed out to the pub, intent on finding a bit of liquid courage as the reality of what he had agreed to began to settle. He was going to confess to sleeping with Sherlock to Mycroft. Perhaps the man was right when he called bravery the kindest name for stupidity.

Of course, the wonderful thing about liquid courage was that it made all the frightening parts of a situation fade away. He was even looking forward to the entire thing, knowing that he would feel better, regardless of what happened since John ‘Three Continents’ Watson was not the type of bloke to be the other man in anyone’s relationship. Didn’t even matter that he was busy convincing himself that nothing was wrong at anywhere but his own bloody home, once again, because of Sherlock until he decided that getting pissed wasn’t his goal for the evening since he would have to call Mycroft and schedule some kind of meeting without sounding like a blithering idiot.

So, after giving himself sometime to clear his head, he made his way back to Baker Street, intent on following through on his claims to Sherlock. When he walked into their living room, he couldn’t say that he was all that surprised to find Mycroft already there. It actually made perfect sense considering the fact that Sherlock wanted everything to be back to normal given how inconvenient he apparently found John’s emotions regarding what they’d done.

But the fact that Mycroft was sitting with his back to the armrest, toying with Sherlock’s curls as the detective laid curled up between his legs was a bit startling. As though there was something fundamentally wrong with seeing a man in a three piece suit sans shoes.

“Hi,” he said, finally taking note of the matching set of blue eyes cataloguing him. “What are you doing here?”

Not that he was trying to be rude, but if Mycroft was here for a visit, then it didn’t involve him and he could easily walk away from it all. If the man was there because Sherlock had called him over and told him everything just to spite John, he could be sure to hit the man before leaving to lock himself in his room until he was certain it was safe to come out.

“I invited him,” Sherlock stated bluntly.

“I believe blackmailed would be the more accurate term,” Mycroft corrected, eyes focused on the way his hand moved through Sherlock’s hair.

Cuddling closer to his brother, Sherlock shrugged. What did he care if Mycroft came around willingly or not so long as he was there? “It amounts to the same thing.”

“Right, well, I’ll leave you two to your... spooning.” John said, trying not to use the word cuddling, considering what cuddling could lead to. Not that spooning and cuddling didn’t amount
to the same thing.

“Honestly, John. I would hardly think that our lying together would be enough to upset your
delicate sensibilities. Not after the last two times you saw Sherlock and myself together,” Mycroft
said.

And it wasn’t as though he was wrong. There was almost something brotherly about the way they
were lying together, if one was to ignore the way Sherlock’s hand was moving down Mycroft
spine, taking note of each vertebra, or how Mycroft would trace the shell of Sherlock’s ear before
going back to playing with those his hair. And even that could be passed off as part of the
strangeness that made them who they were.

Gesturing toward the chair, Mycroft said, “Please, sit down. Sherlock said you had something to
tell me.”

“Did he?” John asked, unable to hide the bitterness behind his false surprise.

“You seemed so eager this afternoon,” Sherlock said, his words muffled by the way he had his
face pressed to Mycroft’s chest.

And while he wasn’t quite sure if Sherlock was mocking him, John wasn’t going to allow to let
himself be bullied into something else by the two of them. It would’ve been better off when he
had the chance, but since that was behind him, all he could do was try to prevent those two from
getting the better of him like that again. So, looking at Mycroft with the most earnest look he could
manage, he lied.

“It was nothing.”

“Enough of nothing to cause a rift between yourself and my brother. Don’t tell me you are leaving
Baker Street,” Mycroft said, looking almost interested in the matter.

“No. I...” Shifting in his seat, John found himself feeling suddenly very uncomfortable. He was
suddenly the most interesting thing in the room if the way they stared at him was anything to go
by. And while John didn’t mind Sherlock’s usual morbid curiosity with bad situations, Mycroft
made him feel ill at ease. Not even a flicker of emotion in his face as he watched John with a
bored interest, internally gauging the honesty of every statement he made, most likely. It was
almost as though there wasn’t a point in bothering with it at all, something that shouldn’t have
been the relief that it was. “I had sex with Sherlock.”

“Oh?” He questioned, only vaguely surprised by the statement.

“It was the heat of the moment and it’ll never happen again,” John said, words pouring from his
mouth in a panic as Mycroft continued to stare at him.

When he finally turned his attention away from the doctor, it was to look at Sherlock, who was
more focused on the blank television screen than anything else. If he would’ve thought it possible,
John would’ve said that Mycroft was stunned by the confession. Glazed eyes watching his
cheating lover ignore the entire situation while John was forced to sit there and wait for some sort
of verdict.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Mycroft finally said, slowly gaining control of himself once again. “I
know Sherlock has been rather... fond of your for some time. And, what with you knowing of our
relationship, he could be with you without needing to frequently lie about his comings and
going.”

“I’m sorry. You’re upset that I don’t want sleep with your brother?” John questioned, certain that
he hadn’t heard that right. There was no way he could’ve possibly heard that right with how upset Mycroft had just looked.

“You make it sound as though I’m prostituting you both,” he scoffed.

“You’re just a kind hearted man trying to set up continued sexual encounters between two consenting adults for your own benefit,” Sherlock pointed out, flashing his brother a cheeky smile.

Rolling his eyes, Mycroft sighed as he held Sherlock a bit tighter. “John, I’m merely disappointed that things aren’t going to work between the two of you given your mutual regard for each other,” he said, attempting to dumb down his earlier statement.

“He’s not objecting because of our friendship. He’s objecting because he’s afraid of my jealous boyfriend,” Sherlock scoffed, making his opinion on the entire situation clear.

“Me? Why should I be the problem?”

“I just don’t want to come between you and Sherlock,” John said, feeling more and more lost with every passing moment. There was no way they could actually be this blasé about the entire matter.

“Mycroft wouldn’t even be involved, unless you actually find him attractive for some reason,” Sherlock said, eying Mycroft with a look of distaste, obviously unable to imagine what anyone would see in his brother.

“I think, what my brother meant is that you wouldn’t be interfering with our relationship,” Mycroft said, none too pleased with Sherlock jibe. “In fact, you’d be the first person to know about it. And, as I’m sure you can guess, Sherlock doesn’t simply fall into bed with just anyone. He cares for you and you mean a lot to him. So, if I’m really the only reason you don’t want to alter your friendship, all your problems are solved.”

Which was true, in a rather disconcerting manner. It wasn’t as though John didn’t like Sherlock and hadn’t been rather pleased with himself in the initial aftermath. It was only when Mycroft came to mind did John recall what a giant misstep he had just made. Except, now the man was giving the entire thing his blessing, like a father giving away daughter to marriage. All in all, he should’ve felt rather smashing about the entire matter, but a rather niggling part of him couldn’t.

Whether or not Sherlock wanted him or liked him wasn’t the problem. There was still the fact that he was being treated like some bloody stand in for Mycroft. A glorified babysitter, meant to put out when Mycroft was too busy to give Sherlock the constant attention he tended to need. Not to mention, he’d be throwing himself headfirst in the middle of whatever screwed up relationship they had.

“Wait,” John said, rubbing at his eyes in an effort to stave off the headache he was starting to get. “You’d be sleeping with Sherlock, who’d be sleeping with me.”

“That would be the gist of it.”

“What about me? What if I want someone else too?”

Not that he had anyone lined up, but John needed to know just how open this relationship was going to be if they were just going to treat him like some foregone conclusion.

“That is a discussion best had with Sherlock.”

Sighing as though they were disturbing one of his experiments, something that very well could’ve been the case with how he kept drawing intricate designs along Mycroft’s knee, Sherlock gave
him a quick once over before going back to what he was doing. “I suppose that you may have sex with whomever you wanted.”

“Whoever? Like, if I wanted to date a nice girl again, you wouldn’t run her off or make her feel unwelcome?”

“John, I barely try to make Mycroft feel welcome.”

“He hasn’t even offered me tea,” Mycroft added.

“Sherlock.”

“Don’t give me that look. I offered him something else that generally lasts about ten minutes,” he said, before turning his back toward John and focusing on Mycroft’s other knee.

It was almost amazing to think that this was the man he was considering actually trying to work out a relationship with. He was childish, dramatic and, taking note of the sympathetic look Mycroft was giving him, John would be horribly out of place to imagine that such behaviour might actually change simply because they were going to start dating.

“So, I get that you are in favour of me taking up with Sherlock, but... Why? What do you get out of it?” He asked, since he had still had the elder Holmes’s attention.

“I get to know Sherlock is happy. And that if bored, he’ll go to you first, rather than... Well, that doesn’t require details,” Mycroft said with a dismissive roll of his hand.

John smiled to himself as he shook his head. He might not have been some super genius like them, but even he was beginning to understand the blunt point behind Mycroft’s more delicate statements. “Right, so, instead of you paying me money to inform on him, you’re granting me sex to keep him out of your hair?” He questioned, figuring that was the main purpose. Christ, he was just a glorified babysitter.

“There’s also the part where Sherlock genuinely likes you,” Mycroft reminded him.

“Duly noted. I’ll uh... Just go order takeaway for dinner.”

“John, are you agreeing to this or not?” Sherlock asked, never turning back around.

Pausing in the doorway, John took a deep breath, letting it out in a huff of breath. Giving a brief nod, he didn’t look all that confident in his decision, but such reservations weren’t unfounded, given the situation. “I guess. I mean, it’s not like there’s a long list of people trying to take me out. Well, on a date.”

Waving him off, Sherlock waited until he could hear the sound of John’s footsteps stop somewhere in the hallway, replaced by the sound of him talking, before he went back to what he was doing, feeling a bit more relieved to know that John had agreed to stop panicking for Mycroft’s sake. Why that had to involve getting Mycroft to give his blessing, he didn’t know, although he was rather pleased to have him around for the evening as well.

“So you cheated on me?” Mycroft asked as he slid his hand beneath Sherlock’s shirt.

Shuddering at the feeling of cool fingers brushing along his ribs, Sherlock blinked rapidly before returning to the test of Mycroft’s nerves. “Seemed fair considering that you’re hiding something, Mycroft.”

Nodding in agreement, Mycroft said, “True.”
It was a convolute sense of honesty they had forged over the years, always admitting to something lurking just beneath the surface without ever addressing what the issue was. After all, to do that would be to ruin the puzzle and it wasn’t as though they were hurting anyone in the process. Sherlock was certain that, in due time, he’d piece his brother together. Still, there was something about the ever present distance to Mycroft’s demeanour that made Sherlock worry that Mycroft’s secrets wouldn’t be nearly as thrilling to learn.
Sherlock's Choice

Chapter Summary

Agreeing to a relationship is never the same as settling into it.

There was something so effortless about settling in with Sherlock that John almost wondered if all his previous miseries hadn’t been worth it in a way. Their seemingly eternal friendship had morphed into something more without so much as a hitch, the greatest change being that they tended to share one room at the end of the day rather than going to their own beds alone.

It was that particular luxury that John found himself enjoying most as he slowly came to, legs intertwined with Sherlock’s as he used the man’s chest for a pillow. Shutting his eyes as tightly as possible, he tried to ignore the seemingly sudden brightness of the room. After the night before all John wanted to do was lie in with Sherlock, given how hard it was to have a proper lie about with the guy. Sherlock always had to be up and off doing something when he was awake.

Thankfully the light didn’t seem to disturb Sherlock as much as it did John, since he continued to lie there, sleep. Kissing Sherlock’s shoulder, John rolled over, finding that, since he was awake, the combination of Sherlock and his blanket was a bit too warm for John’s liking. Of course, the idea that Mycroft was watching them sleep wasn’t any better.

Staring at him, John was certain that he had to be dreaming again. It certainly seemed like the sort of dream he’d have. Lying in bed with Sherlock while Mycroft casually stood in the corner sipping a cup of tea next to the blinds John was nearly positive had been opened with the intention of disturbing their rest.

“Hello, John.”

Checking under the blanket, John couldn’t actually decide whether or not his state of undress was further proof that he was dreaming or wasn’t. All signs seemed to point to the man being there, but the lack of logic surrounding the situation still made John wonder.

“Uh... Hi? Why are you here?” He asked, vaguely curious about what would lead to him waking up to the sight of Mycroft Holmes, short of a few drinks or some very bad choices.

“Meeting was cancelled, so I thought I would check in on you and Sherlock.”

“Great. Um... We’re doing fine?”

“I can tell,” Mycroft said, gaze travelling from John’s eyes down to where the duvet hid the lower half of his body.

Holding the duvet a bit closer to himself, John squeezed his eyes shut tightly. He kept telling himself that this had to be a dream. Hell, his entire living with Sherlock had to be one long fever dream and maybe he was in the hospital. Maybe Harry and Clara were there looking after him. Although, realizing that what he was wishing for was just as insane, he opened his eyes again to find Mycroft looking at him curiously over the edge of his cup.

Rolling over he began to shake Sherlock, knowing Mycroft might actually wait for the man to
wake up on his own if he didn’t. “Sherlock, wake up. Your brother is here.”

“No, no, no,” John said, yanking it away from Sherlock. Shaking him harder, he added, “If I have

to have a pantsless conversation with Mycroft, you do too.”

“If you want, I can hand you your pants,” Mycroft offered.

Mortified by not just that idea but the entire suggestion, John dug his nails into Sherlock’s side as

he shook him, not letting up until the man finally realized that his attempts to sleep weren’t going
to be allowed so long as Mycroft was there being polite.

Rubbing at his eyes, Sherlock yawned as he stared blearily at his brother, completely unfazed by

Mycroft’s presence in the room as he cuddled John. It was as though he didn’t even care about the

kind of message he was sending Mycroft or notice how uncomfortable John was under the

politician’s quiet gaze.

“What? Why is... Sherlock, your brother is—“

“Scoot over, John,” Sherlock said, letting go of him long enough to shove him toward the edge of

the bed.

Which wasn’t the most subtle of messages, but Jon wasn’t an idiot. Nodding, he looked around

for where it was that his pants had landed after being casually tossed aside the night before.

“Alright. I will... Leave you two to your... Yeah.”

“You honestly don’t have to,” Mycroft said, loosening his tie. “Sherlock and I don’t mind the

company.”

“I do. You two being affectionate, that’s great. I love when you two aren’t staging some Cold War

in the flat, but I also love those moments happening when I’m not next to you, completely naked.”

“I’m naked as well. You don’t see me complaining,” Sherlock pointed out.

Smiling sympathetically at John as he sat down on the opposite edge of the bed, Mycroft brushed

his thumb along Sherlock’s cheek. “Brother dear, you were at Buckingham Palace dressed in your

bed sheet. Your views on modesty are rather disheartening.”

“This isn’t anything he didn’t agree to,” Sherlock argued.

“He agreed to dating you, despite your relationship with me. If this makes him uncomfortable, it’s
best to respect his limits.”

Smacking Mycroft’s hand away, Sherlock turned his back toward him as he glared at John. “You’re both being so pedestrian and I don’t understand why.”

And even if he had wanted to stay in bed with Sherlock, he certainly didn’t want to do it when the man was acting like a spoiled little boy. Covering himself with a pillow he made his way over to his pants, putting them on as quickly as possible, a skill he was admittedly rather good at, not that he wanted to think of how that had come to be.

“Look, you two chat, cuddle, have sex. I’m going to go make breakfast,” he said, gesturing toward the door.

But Mycroft was quick to rise to his feet, straightening his tie as he looked about as apologetic as Mycroft ever did. “No. John, you appeared rather comfortable with Sherlock. I’ll just be off.”

“Both of you stay where you are,” Sherlock said as he sat up. Looking John over though, he quickly changed his mind. “No. John, make breakfast, then come back. I want pancakes.”

“I’m not your bloody servant.”

“Sherlock, stop being a nuisance,” Mycroft chastised. “John, stay. I’m certain that there are matters that I’d be better off attending to.”

“What is the point of having you both if neither of you do as I say?”

“Is that all we are to you? Servants who you keep around to get you off?” John asked, finding himself feeling a bit annoyed.

After all, his sole purpose wasn’t to serve the great Sherlock Holmes in whatever way possible, despite what so many people seemed to think. He had other interests beyond blogging and following Sherlock about. He was his own man, not that Sherlock seemed to recall that. Of course, considering that Sherlock had been treating him in such a way since they met, perhaps he was just the idiot for thinking that things might actually change for the better now that he was dating the man.

“That was a rather demeaning statement, even from you, Sherlock. I’m almost wounded,” Mycroft said, although it was impossible to tell if he really meant such a thing or not.

“Don’t join in on his anger,” Sherlock sneered. Sitting up, he glanced over them both, trying to figure out the best way to go about the situation. “Look, I’m seeing both of you, it’s best you get used to this fact now, rather than later.”

Wincing at how entitled Sherlock still managed to sound, even when he was trying his best to be considerate, John decided that it was for the best if he left the room. Putting on his shirt and trousers, he turned toward Mycroft and said, “I’m going to go make myself breakfast. Would you like another cup of tea?”

“Really, John, it’s fine. I’ll go. Sherlock,” he said, nodding toward his brother.

Sherlock crossed his arms over his chest as he stared down his brother. If looks could kill, John was certain Mycroft would have a hole through his head that would make most snipers envious.

“And when will I see you again? Sometime next month?”

“Well then pick, Sherlock. Do you want John here or myself? You can’t have both.”
“And why not? It’s only logical that way,” Sherlock argued.

“That’s only because you fail to take into the consideration that I don’t find your particular choice in men as fascinating.”

“Are you saying that you don’t find John attractive?”

“Can I leave the room before he answers that?” John asked, not quite sure that he wanted to know the answer. It was bad enough that he was having this conversation, feeling like little more than the other man, yet again. He didn’t need Mycroft pointing out what exactly made him so unattractive.

“Good day, Sherlock,” Mycroft said, more forcefully before going over to Sherlock’s closet to retrieve his belongings.

Looking between them both as though he was making the world’s hardest choice, Sherlock growled angrily to himself. “Stay. John, get out of my room,” he said, waving him off.

Stunned, John stood there. While he was fine with leaving, something about being dismissed like a cheap prostitute kept his feet grounded. When Sherlock followed Mycroft’s gaze toward him, both of them seeming so expectant, he nodded pathetically.

“I’m just... going to leave then. Nice seeing you, Mycroft,” he said, still feeling rather dumbstruck by the entire situation.

“A pleasure as always, John,” Mycroft said, ever polite.

Not that it meant anything. None of it did, really. Or that was what he found himself trying to believe as he made his way back to his own room. Just because Sherlock kicked him out of what had recently become their bed, since Sherlock didn’t see the convenience of going to John’s room since it was upstairs, didn’t mean that Sherlock didn’t like him. And to compare Sherlock’s feelings for him to how he felt about Mycroft was nothing short of mental since Mycroft was more than an absentee lover. It was just how Sherlock ruled his life because Sherlock wasn’t always the most socially talented man in the world.

Of course, John gave up on that line of thought not long after showering. Sherlock wasn’t tactful all the time, but it was nothing short of a calculated choice on his part since John had seen the man cry on cue. He knew that Sherlock felt a lot more than he would ever let on and that’s what was driving John mad as he sat in the living room, constantly finding reasons to look down the hallway toward Sherlock’s door. If Sherlock kicked him out like that, there was a reason for it, even if the answers John came up with on his own were driving him mad. He was nearly positive that things might be better off if he’d simply said no when offered the chance at being the other man Sherlock Holmes was seeing.

Finding himself looking toward Sherlock’s door again, he decided that he wasn’t going to wait around like some pet waiting to be let back into the room. Instead, he headed down to Mrs. Hudson’s, hoping to find her up and about as well as he knocked on her door.

“Hi, Mrs. Hudson,” he said, the moment the door opened. “Not bothering you am I?”

“Oh, hello John. You’re not bothering me at all. I was just about to have breakfast. Care to join?” She asked, opening the door a bit more for him to enter.

Nodding, he let her lead him to her kitchen, sitting himself down as she put on the kettle. If nothing else, he was certain that her company would mean a nice breakfast and a chance to kill
time until Mycroft and Sherlock stopped whatever it was they were up to, another thing John didn’t want to let his mind speculate about.

“Where’s Sherlock?”

“He’s having a chat with his brother,” he said, trying not to sound bitter about it.

“Something bothering you love?”

“I’m fine,” he lied.

“Sure? Because you do look a bit down and I’d hate to think that Sherlock had upset you so soon after you boys started seeing each other,” she said, placing a cup of tea in front of him.

Eyes widening, John sat up a bit straighter before giving her a confused look. “What? How do you know about that?”

“I’m not an idiot, you know,” She said, sounding a bit offended. Like when his mum or Harry would give him talk to him with that look that meant they had some strange womanly power that allowed them to know all. “Not to mention, you boys can tend to make quite a ruckus up there.”

Choking out his tea, John felt his cheeks go red. “Oh God,” he muttered before wincing over his choice of words.

Smiling, Mrs. Hudson patted him on the shoulder. “It’s nothing to be ashamed of dear. Frankly, I’m a bit pleased you two have each other. It’s a bit weird for man like him to keep to himself so much. If not for you and Mycroft, I’d worry about him.”

“Mycroft?”

“Well, yes. It’s rather nice that he comes around to check on him, even if they act like they don’t enjoy the other’s company. Family is an important thing to have,” she said as she started to make some eggs for their impromptu breakfast together.

“Right, of course,” he muttered, feeling a bit better knowing that Mrs. Hudson wasn’t on to their little secret, not that John was certain why he felt the need to protect it as well. “Family is pretty important.”

Startling at the sound of some large thump from upstairs, Mrs. Hudson stared at the ceiling for a moment before returning back to what she was doing with a shake of her head. “Oh. From the sounds of it they’re not having a nice visit, though,” she said, ever the mother figure to all them.

Smiling to himself, John got up and said, “I’ll go check on them. And uh... thanks for the advice.”

“Not a problem. And don’t let him ruin things between you two. You’re a good fit, if ever I saw one.”

Nodding, John made his way upstairs, feeling a bit better. If nothing else, knowing that Mrs. Hudson was in support of what he had with Sherlock made him feel a bit less worried about his choice. It was like getting a mother’s approval in his choice of bed partners, although he was certain she would change her mind if she knew who else Sherlock was sleeping with.

Knocking on Sherlock’s door, he cautiously opened the door, poking his head in just enough to see if both men were otherwise occupied. What he saw was even stranger than he ever would expected. Sherlock and Mycroft were just standing by Sherlock’s bed, Mycroft buttoning up his brother’s shirt. Dusting it off, he then help Sherlock put on his jacket, buttoning up that as well.
Looking his brother over, Mycroft let out a small, almost amused sound. “Your clothes seem rather... ill fitting,” Mycroft said, resting his hand against Sherlock’s stomach.

“As though you’re one to talk,” Sherlock shot back, hitting Mycroft’s hand away from him.

“I suppose there’s no real point in me telling you both to keep the noise down, is there?” John said, hating himself for interrupting their little moment.

Taking a step back from his brother, Sherlock scoffed. “Mycroft was just leaving. Weren’t you?”

“Apparently it’s my turn to be rudely kicked out,” Mycroft said, smiling in what was practically a friendly manner.

“Hmm?” Sherlock questioned, clearly a bit confused. Of course, the joke was quick to dawn on him, as he wasted little time turning toward John and saying, “Oh, yes. Sorry about that, John.”

“I do hope you two enjoy your time together in my absence.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” John asked, truly beginning to hate Mycroft and all his double meanings.

“Mycroft is apparently putting diplomatic relations before me, again.”

“American ambassador. About as self important as Sherlock, I’m afraid, and just as willing to forgo what he believes himself entitled to.”

“You really do seem to attract a certain type,” John teased.

Amusement quickly fading, Mycroft merely gave a brief nod. “How droll.”

“Why are you still here? I have John back, I don’t need you anymore,” Sherlock snapped at his brother. “Not to mention you take up half the room.”

“Enjoy your time with my brother, John,” he said, heading out like he was instructed.

“Will do. Bye Mycroft.”

“Good day, John. Sherlock.”

Sherlock only grunted in response, not even bothering to turn away from the container holding his tarantula. Trust Sherlock to not even play by the average rule book when it came to love. Although, John was glad to know that being rudely dismissed when one’s purpose had run out to Sherlock was just another aspect of dating Sherlock, rather than him genuinely enjoying Mycroft.

“Mrs. Hudson can apparently hear when we... Make too much noise,” John said, leaning against the wall, trying not to blush at the thought.

Putting the tarantula back quickly, Sherlock rushed over to his window. “Fine.”

“And, while I don’t actually appreciate watching you two squabble like children, I’d be rather pleased if you didn’t kick me out.”

“Uh huh,” Sherlock muttered.

“I mean, we’re supposed to be dating. The least you can do is treat me... I don’t know, nicely?”
“Yes, yes.”

“Of course. You’re too busy focusing on Mycroft to actually listen to me,” he said, not surprised in the slightest.

“You are upset that I kicked you out, despite claiming that you were going to leave anyways. Also strange considering I distinctly remember kicking you out of my room when you first found out about us.”

“I wasn’t dating you then and he was…”

“Making me quite happy before you ruined it,” Sherlock said, finally looking at John. Moving to stand right in front of him, he set about fixing his cuffs. “Either way, I already apologized and I meant it. This isn’t going to be a problem, is it?”

“What? You treating me like some disposable sex toy? Why would that be a problem?” John asked sarcastically, fighting the urge to hit Sherlock for acting like he was.

“I won’t do it again. I just needed to talk to Mycroft privately. Something that wouldn’t have been an issue if you two hadn’t been so intent on leaving for the other’s sake,” Sherlock said, waving it off as he made his was over to his phone. “Honestly, if you’re going to date me, you have to get used to his presence, regardless of what may be happening.”

“Pardon me if I’m not quite ready to watch you and Mycroft have it.”

“Easily fixed,” he said, throwing on his coat.

“What?” John asked, rather concerned with how quickly the man said that. The last thing he wanted was to find himself subject to one of Sherlock’s plans. No matter the result, they never seemed to go all that well for him. “Sherlock, this isn’t one of your experiments. You can’t just—“

“Lestrade’s got a case for us. Coming?”

“Sherlock, I’m pretty sure we were having a discussion about your behaviour in this relationship.”

“Quite right,” Sherlock agreed. “But that was before Lestrade called. Coming or not?”

Without much other options, John nodded as he forced himself to stand straight. “We’re not done with this conversation, for the record.”

“Yes, yes. Point taken. Now will you hurry up? We have a case,” Sherlock said as he rushed out of the room.

Grabbing his own jacket from under Sherlock’s bed, clueless as to how it got there in the first place, he set about after his friend, unable to do much else. After all, he knew that the conversation was unlikely to ever restart and, as usual, Sherlock would probably get his way in the end, but a bitter part of John couldn’t help but feel a bit annoyed that things seemed to only go swimmingly for Sherlock.
The Game

Chapter Summary

Mycroft plays a game with Jim, unsure of just what it is the man gets out of it.

There was something almost chilling about walking down the empty hall to where he knew Jim was waiting for him. An entire facility designed for an easy clean up, his own footsteps echoing in the silence. His only company were the cameras, somehow more comforting than the people locked in a room somewhere in the building, carefully watching over everyone, himself in particular since he refused to have anyone outside lurking about when visiting Jim.

Not that one could call it visiting. Whenever he wanted the man, Mycroft knew he could have him. It didn’t matter the hour or what Jim was doing, if he wanted to spend hours on end chatting with the psychopath, there was nothing Jim could do. It was the sort of power most would’ve abused, or preferred Mycroft to take more advantage of. But as he walked into the room he was certain that too much contact with Jim was bound to lead to madness.

Sitting up straight with his hands in his lap like some school boy, Jim looked positively thrilled to see him. Unblinking eyes watching his every move as he took his seat. Making a small noise of pleasure, Jim didn’t even twitch as he waited for something Mycroft could only guess at.

“Hello again, Jim.”

“Hi hi.”

“You seem rather pleased,” he said, unbuttoning his jacket as he leaned back in his seat.

Jim looked off at the mirror as he shrugged, a shy smile playing at his lips. “I thought you might not come back again. It’s been awhile.”

“Last time didn’t go so well.”

“I thought you did remarkably. Am I allowed to move around?”

“Yes, although I’d be careful about how you move,” Mycroft warned.

Watching Jim look off toward where a camera watched their every action, he nodded and stayed perfectly still for the time being. Mycroft was rather glad for that, given the fact that he didn’t want their conversation to end prematurely thanks to Jim moving a bit too quickly for some agent’s liking. It wouldn’t benefit anyone, since he had calculated all it was that Jim could do to him, something the man was reassessing judging by the way he was looking Mycroft over.

Tie and jacket could be used to choke him, given that he was certain Jim could have a rather difficult time doing it with his bare hands. Suffocating him with his pocket square would be the most effective way as he was certain that Jim wouldn’t mind if his hands came away a little bitten. Anything else on his person could take a bit of creative thinking to be turned into a weapon, but if anyone could manage that it would be Jim.

“I like you,” Jim blurted out quickly.
Nodding along with the forced awkwardness being projected, Mycroft straightened his tie with a sigh. “You like Sherlock. I’m just a substitute.”

“I could try to kill you right now if it’ll make you believe me.”

“There’s not a thing in the world you could do to make me believe you, Jim.”

“Then why are we talking?” Jim asked.

Staring at him, his face showing nothing but bored, Mycroft resisted the urge to point out that he knew very well why they were talking. If Jim had been more willing to talk to someone other than him, he was certain that he would’ve been happily occupying his time in the Diogenes Club, although the fact that Jim would likely be set free with nothing being gained on their part was also a minor factor in why he found himself in the same room with the disturbed genius.

Resting his chin against his fists, Jim rocked to and fro. “Let’s play a game.”

“Are you saying we haven’t been?”

“For every question I answer, I get to ask you one on anything I desire.”

“No.”

“Then this is going to be a very silent conversation, Iceman.”

Staring at him, Mycroft knew that he means it. Somehow, despite having all the pieces, Jim still manages to be in control of the games they play because, while he could easily leave the man in a cell until he loses the tenuous grasp he has on reality or have him killed, Mycroft knew it would be pointless. The entire purpose of keeping Jim was to figure out how the man worked.

With a tired sigh, he gestures for Jim to speak, something that caused a far too manic grin spread across the man’s lips. Sitting up a bit straighter, he placed his hands in his lap, practically vibrating with restrained energy. Mycroft couldn’t help but think that Jim and the world would’ve been better off if he had come into the world as a puppy.

“Shall I begin?” Jim asked eagerly.

“Yes. How did Ms. Adler come into contact with you?”

Snickering, Jim shook his finger disapprovingly at Mycroft, amused with the minor. “Phone call. How’re things with your gentleman friend?”

“Well,” he replied curtly. Jim narrowed his eyes, annoyed by Mycroft’s answer, not that he cared. Brow raising slightly, Mycroft stared at him with disinterest. “You only get as much depth as you give. Now, would you like to try this again or continue the way you’re going?”

Working his jaw, Jim nodded slowly, head moving side to side in a sort of figure eight motion. “An associate gave her my number and unlike your brother, she actually called me.”

“Things are well, considering that we’ve taken up a more... open aspect to our courtship,” Mycroft said, happy that things were running smoothly now.

“You really don’t love him anymore, do you?” Jim laughed.

“It’s not your turn,” Mycroft warned, intent on keeping the rules of the game as clear as possible. “What do you mean an associate gave her your number?”
Sighing, Jim gestured vaguely at nothing, rolling his wrist as he said, “Your brother has his
detectives, you have... snow men, I have... an underground network who keep my name alive as
the answer to all criminal escapades. From terrorist plots to stealing candy from babies.”

“And there’s a huge demand for you in the stealing candy from babes market?”

“It’s my turn,” Jim sneered. Lowering his head, he looked up at Mycroft with a smirk. “And yes,
there is.”

“You don’t get to ask twice,” Mycroft warned.

Of course, he also decided to try and refrain from rhetorical questions, given Jim’s willingness to
answer those, no matter how sarcastically. It wasn’t as though Jim was the only one being held to
these arbitrary rules he making for another man’s game. By participating, he would be expected to
follow the same terms of agreement, even if he was the only one doing so.

“You have to answer this honestly then. Why are you letting him sleep around?”

Blinking, Mycroft forced himself not to look at the camera. They weren’t listening in for his
responses, but they were listening. Perhaps that’s what Jim wanted though, to watch him bear
more personal information than he would usually dare in front of people who would never
actually ask if what he told the other man was true or not. Everything inside the facility was meant
to stay secret for everyone except those such as Jim.

“Because he cheated on me,” he said bluntly, no hint of emotion on his face. “It wasn’t the first
time he’s done it and it isn’t as though I have never cheated on him.”

“Sounds like grounds for divorce.”

“Our relationship has always been a complicated one, I’m afraid.”

“And there I watched snow and ice melt, the day I learned the iceman felt,” Jim said in an
obnoxious sing song voice.

Balking at the statement, Mycroft said, “You have the poetic talents of Blake.”

“My tyger tyger wouldn’t like that remark,” he said, frowning like an upset child as he crossed his
arms over his chest.

“Getting back on track...”

“Boring!”

Resting his head on the table, arms splayed out in front of him, Jim looked like a toy someone
forgot to wind up. Just sitting there, muttering to himself about God only knew what. Lacing his
fingers on the table top, Mycroft kept the conversation going.

“How do your associates, so to speak, know what ... cases to give you?”

“I threaten them on pain of death not to bore me,” Jim said into the table. “They know the
consequences of giving me the wrong request.”

“Is that all?” Mycroft questioned, unwilling to believe it could that simple.

“You want semantics?” Jim asked, sitting upright again. “A step by step guide to pleasing me?
Well, first off, you buy me a drink.”
“I can always have Peters come in and... chat with you again, if you prefer?”

Pressing a finger to his lips, Jim said, “Shush. I’m thinking. Next question has to be so very good.”

“Any particular reason?” Mycroft asked, not bothered in the least by Jim’s mercurial moods.

“Turn stealer,” Jim said, half heartedly glaring. “Ooh! Jimmy’s got a question for the Iceman.”

“What?”

“We always hurt the ones we love. It’s why I was willing to blow up your brother into itty bitty pieces,” Jim said, looking rather regretful that he hadn’t done as he wanted.

Rolling his eyes, Mycroft sat up straighter before fixing Jim with a firm stare. “I think you’re confusing statements with questions, Jim.”

“But does he know how you feel about his side piece?” Jim asked, undeterred.

“I happen to think they’re a rather good fit, to be perfectly honest.”

John and Sherlock worked rather well together; far better than he had ever managed to get along with his own brother, although he would never admit that out loud. It wasn’t necessary given that he wasn’t threatened by what they had. He enjoyed when his brother was happy and John was curiously likeable man. They were a good fit, if Mycroft had ever seen one.

Staring at him as though he could see right into Mycroft’s mind, Jim shook his head, clicking his tongue disapprovingly. “I don’t think I avoided your question.”

“You told me to buy you a drink first,” Mycroft pointed out.

“You wanted to know how to please me. An aged whisky is a pretty good start.”

“He knows,” Mycroft admitted. “I encouraged the relationship from the start. They’re meant for each other.”

Reaching across the table, Jim wiggle his finger in Mycroft’s face before flicking his nose. “Such a selfless poppet. Next question?”

“You chose to involve yourself with Ms. Adler, why?” Mycroft asked, smacking Jim’s hand away.

“She was sitting on a gold mine that would get me what I wanted.”

“A small government cell? Jim, you really should’ve just come to me first,” he said sarcastically.

Drumming his fingers on the table, Jim stared up at him through his eye lashes, everything about his appearance looking a bit more sinister rather than innocent like one would expect.

“Your little Coventry scheme was rather cute. Especially when you tried it on the German flight.”

“Oh?” Mycroft asked, genuinely interested in what the man had to say.

But Jim let the matter drop as quickly as he had started it up. Looking Mycroft over carefully, Jim pursed his lips as he thought of his next question.

“Does he please you sexually? I find that’s always a crucial factor in a long term relationship.”
And why he didn’t expect such a question from a man such as Jim, Mycroft couldn’t say. But there was no hiding the slight widening of his eyes when it was asked. Straightening his tie as he did his best to regain his composure, Mycroft took a steadying breath.

“We are not discussing intimate details of my sex life,” he said firmly.

“Intimate would be if I asked just what else you use that mouth for when he’s around,” Jim pointed out as he rose to his feet. Hands planted on the table, he leaned toward Mycroft, faces little more than a few inches away from touching. “Intimate would be asking why you don’t let him be on top, because I know you don’t. What I asked is a simple question of if you enjoy what he does to you.”

Keeping his breathing even despite the man in his space, Mycroft glanced at the camera in the room, narrowing his eyes in warning at anyone who might be watching. There would be no getting this moment back if someone barged into the room to make Jim behave. It was best for all involved to let him do as he pleased, even if Mycroft wanted to move away from the stale smell of sweat and filth that clung to Jim.

“Yes. I enjoy all my time spent with him,” Mycroft said hoping it would get him to move away. Instead, Jim just sat on the edge of the table, resting his foot against the edge of Mycroft’s chair. “It’s hard taking bodies.”

“I didn’t ask a question,” Mycroft pointed out.

“Be relevantly honest then. Tell me what you think I want to hear,” Jim said, obviously bored of their game.

Frowning, lips pressed together in a thin line, Mycroft looked away from him. “We haven’t had sex because I don’t have the time. Matters such as yourself crop up or he’s busy when I’m free. It’s why I don’t fight his dalliances. He needs a great deal of attention I can’t always provide.”

“Nothing you’re not used to, I’m certain.”

Head snapping back to look at Jim, Mycroft ran his thumb along his knuckles. “Why did you make that comment on bodies?” He asked curtly.

“Because you were all taking so very many and expecting it to be a secret. Now, Sherlock may be completely oblivious, but I’m not. I notice when one too many men come back with the same sort of comment,” Jim said as though it was the clearest thing in the world.

In an ideal world perhaps it would’ve been easier to find enough dead people with no ties to the world to throw on a plane, but there weren’t. People had parents who cared about them and families who tended to get suspicious, in the end. Even those who were bought off couldn’t always be trusted to keep their silence on the matter. And while Mycroft had factored in the odds of someone noticing, he had manage to avoid considering that one of those few might be someone like Jim Moriarty.

“You were readying to pull the wool over someone’s eyes” he explained. “Terrorists were the only choice and I find that they tend to be my best customers.”

“You knew all along?” Mycroft asked, curious about how it was Jim had pieced it together.

Whether or not he worked with terrorists, he didn’t think that they had been so obvious. Not that he wanted to hold Jim in comparison with Sherlock, but the fact that even his brother had spent so
much time hovering around the edges and never getting it until it was too late meant something. Or at least he thought it had at the time.

“I’m not a twat. The fact that Irene had information about some member of the Royal family was nothing more than a way for me to get your attention after that German attempt.”

“Should’ve called. You apparently have my number,” he said, unwilling to let that go.

“Yes, well, what can I say? I’m old fashioned enough to think a boy should call me if he’s really interested.”

Letting out an amused sound, Mycroft smiled politely. “I did have you picked up.”

“That you did, you charmer, you,” Jim said as he winked at him.

“Treasure Island is his favourite book because he once wanted to be a pirate when he was younger,” Mycroft said after wracking his mind for the most inconsequential thing he could possibly come up with that would amuse Jim. Sherlock’s life was a veritable minefield of sensitive details, but his taste in books was so very trite and telling at the same time. “He was... strangely committed to the idea and, for reasons I never understood, he’d always have me read him the book every summer. He still has me do it from time to time, when we’re both in the country and together.”

“Favourite character?” Jim asked, seeming genuinely curious, all bravado gone as he sat there like any other person might, if not a bit more bruised.

“Long John Silver. He always found Jim to be too...”

“Moral?”

Unable to resist the small smile tugging at his lips, Mycroft nodded. “Something of that nature, yes.”

“I told her the best choice was to send the phone to Sherlock because if he couldn’t get into it she could have whatever she wanted, and you were something she needed, I’m afraid,” Jim said rather wistfully as he leaned back, staring at the ceiling as though he could see stars or clouds passing over his head. “Me, I only needed her for the simple matter of getting to you. I needed her to figure out the right plane. After that, everything fell into place.”

“I do love him, despite what you may think. Yes, work keeps me busy and yes, I allow for his dalliances in our relationship, but I don’t think that makes us terrible together. I’ve been with him longer than I’ve been with anyone. I don’t think I would know how to go on without him because my life has become so... centred on his well being,” Mycroft confessed.

That was the only real word it, if he was honest with himself. He was confessing things he would never tell a soul, not even Sherlock most days, to a criminal mastermind to get information. Trading his own little thought of feelings about his brother for a glimpse into the mind of Jim Moriarty. Certainly there was a lot that could be said about him to that regard, but Mycroft didn’t care. Being privy to part of a secret didn’t matter if Jim didn’t know who it involved.

Looking from the ceiling to his fingernails, Jim didn’t even appear as though he'd been listening despite his mumbled, “Touching.”

“I’ve just one more question for you,” Mycroft said, rising from his seat as he redid the buttons of his jacket.
“Yes?”

“Yes?”

“Your interest in my relationship is... curious. You could’ve asked me anything about Sherlock or
the people he cares for most, but you didn’t.”

Rolling his eyes, Jim sat up a bit straighter, imitating Mycroft as he said, “I think you’re confusing
statements with questions, Jim.”

“So, who is out there waiting for your return? Or are you just fascinated by what you have no
knowledge of?”

Looking up at him, Jim tapped his finger against one of the buttons of his jacket. “Tyger Tyger.
Burning bright, in the forests of the night. What immortal hand or eye, Could frame thy fearful
symmetry.”

“That’s not an answer.”

“It is so,” Jim argued. “You just haven’t figured it out yet.”

And while he may have been curious about Jim’s motives, he wasn’t going to waste any more
time than he felt absolutely necessary in the man’s presence. His little meanings could remain a
secret as far as Mycroft was concerned.

Nodding at him, he said, “I believe we’re done for the day.”

“Tell him I say hello,” Jim called after his retreating form.

Turning back toward him, Mycroft lifted his chin slightly. “Who?”

“Who else?”

Taking a moment, Mycroft eventually nodded in agreement, catching Jim’s familiar grin as he
headed out. He didn’t care if Jim thought he was going to tell Sherlock or his lover or was simply
agreeing to appease him. The moment the door shut behind him, Mycroft knew that anything that
was said was over and unlikely to be broached again by anyone, which was exactly how Mycroft
wanted it.
Pyrrhic Victory

Chapter Summary

John’s fairly certain that he should be happy, but it’s rather hard to be when he’s certain this isn’t what he wanted.

Looking up from the television the moment Mycroft walked in through the door, John was a bit put off by the way he didn’t so much as say a word. Instead, Mycroft nodded at him and Sherlock before placing his umbrella in its holder. Watching as the man sat down in the chair near the sofa, John wondered how it was Sherlock could simply sit there, head resting against John’s shoulder, and continue on as though Mycroft wasn’t watching them like animals on display at the zoo.

“May I ask why you’re in my home?”

“Baker Street is uninhabitable for the evening,” Sherlock said, eyes glued to the television screen.

Brows raising slightly, Mycroft settled into his chair more comfortably. “I’m assuming you’ve something to do with that.”

“I was testing a drug. It worked,” Sherlock said bluntly.

Scoffing, John nodded in agreement as he pinched the man’s side. “Sherlock nearly killed himself, it worked so well.”

Because, while he could live with the odd experiment going wrong, Sherlock nearly killing them both in the process was the type of thing John would’ve preferred to avoid, if at all possible. Not that he was going to complain to Sherlock about it again, feeling rather tired from the hours he’d spent since the botched experiment doing just that.

Smiling slightly, Mycroft briefly raised his brows in quiet understanding. “Have you both eaten?”

“Yes,” Sherlock said, already annoyed with his brother’s caring. “How was your dinner with the Lord Chancellor?”

“Well. Although, next time, if you could perhaps recall what I’ve told you about breaking into my home?”

“You weren’t home and we weren’t going to wait outside.”

“I told him we should’ve just gone to Greg’s or something,” John said nervously, since he hadn’t actually wanted to break into Mycroft’s place.

“No. I suppose it’s only for the best that you stay here. The guest room is—“

“I’m not staying in there, Mycroft,” Sherlock said as he sat up.

“Sherlock.”

“Your bed is far more comfortable and large enough to fit myself and John.”
“You can’t kick your brother out of his own room,” John reminded him, shocked by Sherlock’s gall.

“He isn’t trying to,” Mycroft said, sounding nothing if not amused.

Which didn’t make sense since John was fairly certain that Sherlock didn’t include his brother in the equation of just who would be sleeping in Mycroft’s bed. Of course, Sherlock and Mycroft always seemed to have something going on between the two of them that he didn’t really understand at first. Looking between the Holmes brothers, John’s eyes slowly widened as Sherlock’s intent dawned on him.

“You mean... I...Sherlock, no. Just no. That’s intrusive.”

“And your shared need to give each other adequate space is inconvenient. Not to mention you said you don’t like being cast aside in favour of Mycroft,” Sherlock said, as though it was all so obvious.

“Yeah, out of a room I share with you. Not...” Pausing, John shrugged helplessly as he struggled to find a way to make Sherlock understand. “This is different.”

“I hardly think so. It’s just boring. So you two can sort it out yourselves. I’m going to go lie down.”

Watching him, John couldn’t believe that Sherlock was just walking away. Mouth agape as he watched the man’s retreating form, John turned to Mycroft, hoping that he might do something. Of course, Mycroft was merely sitting there, looking thoughtfully at him.

“He can’t be serious,” John said, hoping that might stir Mycroft into some form of action.

“You’d be surprised.”

Blinking, John looked back at the hallways that Sherlock had disappeared down before shaking his head with a sigh. “I guess I’ll sleep in the guest room,” he said, still stunned by Sherlock’s behaviour.

“That’s unnecessary, John,” Mycroft said, drumming his fingers on the arm of his chair. “As much as I loathe to admit it, Sherlock does make a good point. We already share him, as it were, and a bed isn’t much worse.”

“Yeah, except it’s a bed with you, me and Sherlock,” John pointed out, fairly surprised that he was having to point out such facts to Mycroft.

“What is it about the three of us sharing a bed that bothers you? I would think that you were used to sharing... close quarters, as it were, with far more men.”

Chuckling humourlessly, John couldn’t believe what he was hearing. Even worse was the fact that Mycroft seemed to mean every word, truly trying to win him around to Sherlock’s way of thinking as well.

“Somehow they never really wound up in the same bed with me.”

“You want to be with Sherlock. I can live without that, but I refuse to let him keep me from my bed,” Mycroft said, ever the diplomat.

“You’re a real romantic.”
“The novelty of sleeping beside him wore off some time ago.”

Which may have made sense to Mycroft, a man who scarcely seemed to even let anyone near him, but John didn’t see how that could be. Sleeping in the same bed as Sherlock was a pleasant experience, if only for the fact that he liked to have the other man close to him. They lived together, they worked cases together. There was scarcely a moment that they weren’t in each other’s company and the joy he got from that wasn’t a mere novelty.

Still, the idea of being in the same bed as Mycroft and Sherlock still made him feel uncomfortable for reasons he didn’t want to think of about. “It just seems strange,” he confessed quietly, hating how the words sounded as they came out. “I mean, I sleep in his room now. I’m used to him and I like it, but you...”

“Unfamiliar territories.”

“Something like that,” he muttered. “It would just be too weird, you know?”

Nodding, Mycroft looked off toward the hallway, brows furrowing in thought. Looking down at his hands as he fiddled with them nervously, John almost felt a bit bad that he was the only one preventing what had to seem like such a simple thing from happening. Unlike Sherlock, though, Mycroft didn’t seem annoyed with his rather ‘boring’ societal hang ups as he continued to look away.

“Oh.”

Following his gaze, John gave Sherlock a curious look, wondering when he returned from Mycroft’s bedroom or if he’d simply been standing in the doorway watching them the entire time. Likely waiting on an answer John just didn’t feel like agreeing to. He wasn’t going to put any out for Sherlock’s sake. If that meant sleeping in the guest room, he was more than willing to do just that.

Turning back to Mycroft he was stunned to find himself face to face with the man. When he had even moved from his chair to the spot next to him, John didn’t know, but he did know he didn’t like. Didn’t like the woefully faint smell of the man’s cologne or the body heat he could practically feel rolling off him in waves.

Licking his lips nervously, John wanted to tell him to move or that he’d take the guest room. What came out was a rather pathetic noise as Mycroft cupped his jaw, lips hovering a hair’s breadth from John’s.

“I don’t care what it is my brother claims. If you want, I will move away now. You and he can go to bed and we can pretend this never happened...”

“Yeah,” John said, nodding like an idiot. “Yeah, no.”

“No?” Mycroft questioned. “Well, what would you have me do then?”

“I don’t know.”

“Pity,” Mycroft said, sounding genuinely sorry.

Blinking, John couldn’t help but feel as though he had failed at something when Mycroft moved away. When he started to stand, John grabbed his hand, unsure what he was trying to accomplish. He could practically feel Sherlock watching silently as though they were some experiment, and maybe he was. He didn’t really care to be honest. All John wanted was for Mycroft not to leave, not matter how bad he knew that was. Thankfully Mycroft seemed to understand what it was that
John was after, even if he didn’t understand himself.

Smiling, Mycroft tugged at John’s hand as he nodded toward his bedroom. “It is so late, don’t you agree? I feel a bit of rest would do us all good.”

“Yeah,” he said glancing over at Sherlock.

Leading John to where Sherlock stood in the hallway, arms cross over his chest like some petulant child, Mycroft glanced between the two of them. “It would seem as though you get your wish. You must be overjoyed.”

“More than you know,” Sherlock said haughtily.

Shaking his head, Mycroft looked more than a bit pleased, even if he was trying not to be. All in all, John could understand such a feeling since if they managed to share a bed together; there was no telling what Sherlock might want next. Although, when Mycroft cupped the back of Sherlock’s neck, amusement fading as their lips met, John had a feeling he would find out before the night was over.

And that alone was a terrible idea, given that he hadn’t even been asked about the matter at hand, let alone agreed. But neither brother seemed to care as Sherlock gripped Mycroft by his hips, pulling him closer as their kiss deepened into something John knew he didn’t want to watch. Even if he was starting to feel hot under the collar, mouth suddenly dry as he watched Sherlock slowly undo the buttons of Mycroft’s waistcoat.

Moving away as Sherlock ran his hand up Mycroft’s chest; the elder Holmes looked at John with an unreadable expression, as though he couldn’t figure out what to do with the man whose hand he was still holding. A problem Sherlock obviously didn’t have; he moved to stand behind John, arms wrapping around his flatmate’s waist as he started to suck at his neck. Leaning back against him, John idly thought that he wasn’t going to be distracted from the fact that this wasn’t what he agreed to.

A resolve that meant nothing when Mycroft cupped his jaw, thumb tracing along John’s lips until they fell open without so much as a second thought. Looking far too pleased with himself, Mycroft tentatively leaned in and kissed him. There wasn’t a single fantasy that John had thought up regarding Mycroft that could honestly compare to the gently demanding way that the man kissed. Where Sherlock tried to force his way past a person’s defensive, Mycroft took the time to unravel them thoroughly before moving on. Although, with the way Sherlock let his hand drift down John’s side to fondle his growing erection, he couldn’t say that Sherlock’s more direct method didn’t have its advantages.

“Bedroom. I think I’ve waited long enough for this,” Sherlock said, gently tugging John out of Mycroft’s reach like a toy to be fought after.

It was exactly the sort of thing he both expected and didn’t want happening given the fact that he would’ve happily let both of them do whatever they wanted to each other while he slept if Sherlock hadn’t been so stubborn and Mycroft so willing to go along with it all.

Taking a calming breath, Mycroft nodded quietly before leading his way to his bedroom. With Sherlock pressed against him, John didn’t even have a choice about whether or not he wanted to follow, not that he would’ve considered doing anything else. Given how long the idea of having both of them, Mycroft and Sherlock, had haunted his dreams, the last thing he would’ve done was turn them down. Even if he had wanted to, he doubted it would’ve been possible with the way Sherlock continued nip at his neck.
The moment they entered Mycroft’s room, Sherlock went straight to Mycroft, clearly having troubles deciding which one of them he wanted most at the moment. Smirking as he looked his brother over in a way that spoke to every filthy thought possibly running through his mind, Sherlock said, “See? This is far more interesting than you two trying to avoid each other.”

“You’re overdressed.”

“You’re one to talk,” Sherlock shot back.

“God, even your little rivalry is a form of foreplay?” John asked, a bit exasperated with their behaviour.

“Terribly sorry, John. I suppose we could try harder to... behave,” Mycroft said, taking his brother with indifference.

And really, John shouldn’t have found the idea of them being on their best behaviour for his sake as attractive as he did. Not when Mycroft was undressing Sherlock with just a bit too much care, somehow having elevated undoing buttons to a perverse art form as Sherlock kept himself pressed against Mycroft, grinding slowly against his leg. Licking his lips, John tried to look away, knowing he was all but damned anyways for enjoy it like he did.

Not watching seemed just as bad though, trying to focus on a wall or something innocuous only to be left with the flicker of motion in the corner of his eye and the sounds of Sherlock’s frustrated panting. The sounds were almost worst, leaving his mind to fill in vision of Sherlock’s shirt pooled around his feet while he tried desperately to get more of Mycroft. Something that forced John to look at them again as Sherlock hastily removed Mycroft’s tie.

“John, I do believe that Sherlock’s intentions rather require your participation,” Mycroft said, somehow sounding no different than if they were having a casual chat. Something that shouldn’t have been possible with his brother half naked and pressed against him. “Do join in.”

“Yes. You can undress Mycroft. He rarely let’s me do it,” Sherlock said as he tossed aside the tie, likely just to annoy his brother.

“You get rather eager and I do hate having to replace the buttons.”

“Both of you, stop talking,” John ordered as he made his way over to Mycroft.

Moving out of his way, Sherlock sat on the edge of the bed, watching far too intently for John’s liking as he stood in front of Mycroft. Flexing his hands at his side, it wasn’t that hard to figure out where to begin. They were just buttons and he’d seen Mycroft undressed before, not that he wanted to think of that now. Closing his eyes, he tried to control his breathing.

“You don’t have to worry. He doesn’t actually bite until after the clothes are gone,” Sherlock said as he rose to his feet again.

Standing behind him, Sherlock took John’s hand and pressed it against Mycroft’s chest, slowly guiding it down to the edge of his waistcoat. When John still didn’t make a move to undress Mycroft, Sherlock forced his hand lower, the unmistakable feeling of Mycroft’s erection causing John to blush. Smiling against John’s ear, Sherlock chuckled as Mycroft let out a near shuddering breath. “See? He wants out of that suit just as badly as we want him out of it.”

Letting Sherlock guide him as he rubbed at Mycroft through his trousers, John nodded dumbly. Taking back control of his hand, he did his best to undress Mycroft as quickly as possible, fingers fumbling with all those damn buttons. He could understand why Sherlock would be impatient when it came to Mycroft’s clothes. The thought of just tugging at the fabric until the buttons
popped and scattered across the floor was nothing if not a tempting idea.

Feeling himself sandwiched more firmly between the two of them, John nearly choked on his own breath. Sherlock wasted no time in trying to get him out of his own clothes, something that made undressing Mycroft all the more difficult, even without the man in question taking claim of his mouth again. Mycroft’s hand bumping against his back as he tried to get Sherlock out of his trousers even as Sherlock contented himself with grinding against John.

The fact that their combined efforts actually ended with all of them out of their clothes was nothing short of a miracle. Not that John had much time to revel in such a feat as Sherlock moved away from John to force himself between him and Mycroft.

“On your back,” Sherlock demanded as he pushed at Mycroft until he complied and lay down on the bed.

Reaching out for John, Mycroft arched a brow at him as he let his legs fall open, feet planted on the bed as Sherlock took his position between them. And as much as he wanted to watch just what Sherlock was going to do to his brother, John couldn’t rightfully resist Mycroft. Straddling his waist, John bent down and kissed him, quietly pleased when Mycroft’s hand found its way into his hair. While he wouldn’t give Sherlock up for the world, he couldn’t say that he wouldn’t give his left arm to have another chance at Mycroft.

Gripping Mycroft’s erection, he began to stroke him, knowing that while he may have caused the moan that spilled forth into their kiss, when Mycroft turned his head to gasp that was all Sherlock’s doing. Looking back at him, John bit back a groan of his own as he watched Sherlock prepare his brother. He knew the feeling all too well, Sherlock’s erratic rhythm as he tried to be thorough as quick as possible, blindly hitting at Mycroft’s prostate judging by the way the elder Holmes’ hand seemed to randomly clench at his hair.

Turning his attention back toward Mycroft, John was certain that he had some sort of intention, but instead, he merely found himself with his face pressed against Mycroft’s shoulder as Sherlock used his free hand to spread him open as best he could as he tongued his hole. Pushing his arse back toward Sherlock, he swore bitterly against Mycroft’s shoulder as Sherlock clumsily swiped at the tight ring of muscle. Christ, if Sherlock’s entire plan was to try and take both of them apart at the same time, he was doing a damn good job of it.

Just as quickly as he had started, though, Sherlock moved away from both of them, seating himself next to Mycroft. Running his hand through his brother’s hair, Sherlock said, “I want to fuck John.”

Blinking, Mycroft stared at him as though the words didn’t actually make sense before releasing his grip on John’s hair. “Oh.”

“Yes, and—“

“Of course.”

“I’m sorry,” John said, staring at Sherlock as well now that he was having one of his vague little chats with his brother instead of putting his mouth towards a task John had found much more interesting mere moment ago. “What are you two talking about?”

“Sherlock wants to have sex with you.”

“Yeah, I got that part,” John said, rolling his eyes. Looking at Sherlock, he pinched at the bridge of his nose. “So all that prepping Mycroft and then, what you just change your mind?”
“No quite,” Mycroft said far too calmly.

“I’m going to fuck you while you fuck my brother. Try not to be predictably scandalized and boring about it,” Sherlock said as he patted John’s back.

Looking down at Mycroft, it didn’t seem as though he was likely to make any sort of complaint on the matter, although that could’ve just been the need Sherlock had managed to instil in both of them before just stopping.

“Sooner would be better, John,” Mycroft said calmly, trying to fuck John’s hand as Sherlock curled that comma of Mycroft’s hair around his finger.

Unable to form words, John merely nodded, settling himself between Mycroft’s legs as the man breathed against Sherlock’s hip. And he wanted it, Mycroft, really he did. His cock was practically flush against his belly at the thought, but he wanted Mycroft to want it, not just be condescending to Sherlock’s whims. Opening his mouth, John stayed quiet as Sherlock kissed him, slowly sliding a condom onto his leaking cock.

“Mycroft tends to be so careful the first time out,” Sherlock muttered against his mouth as he helped line him up. “Don’t feel you need to be gentle with him. He quite likes it bit rough in these situations.”

“Sherlock, please stop distracting John,” Mycroft ground out as he pressed himself against John. Swallowing, John tried to ignore the fact that he was getting sex advice from Sherlock on how to please his brother and slowly began to thrust into him. Kept going as slowly as he could, more for his own sake than Mycroft’s. The sudden realization of his most farfetched of fantasies was enough to make even his control waiver just a bit what with Mycroft lying there, lips parted as Sherlock whispered filth in his ear as he lay next to his brother, running his fingers through Mycroft’s chest hair.

“You can move, you know,” Sherlock said, circling his thumb around Mycroft’s nipple. “I want to see you two together.”

Which was wrong on a number of levels. Everything about the situation was wrong, simply because of who was involved. And yet John still found himself entering Mycroft, painfully slow, in an effort to keep control of his fraying resolve because it was all so surreal. Even watching himself, his cock slowly disappearing into Mycroft didn’t seem right, no matter how Mycroft pushed back against him. Licking his lips, John stared down at him, unsure of the rules of the situation as he stared into Mycroft’s lust filled eyes.

Mycroft seemed to know exactly what he was supposed to do, nipping at John’s jaw only to lick at the spot in apology before moving to the next as John began to move, woefully careful of his actions despite Sherlock’s claims. In his position, the most Mycroft could do to correct that was rock into each thrust, clenching around John as he did. It didn’t take long for John to catch onto Mycroft’s point, maintaining his slow speed as he slammed into the other man hard enough to draw the softest of moans from Mycroft’s far too quiet throat.

Sherlock seemed to take that as a sign of sort, kneeling behind John as he watched his blogger fuck his brother. Resting his hand against John’s pelvis, Sherlock enjoyed the feel of John’s body moving before letting his hand drift to the man’s thigh and digging his nails into sensitive skin. Wincing, John glared at him as he came to an unwilling halt, thinking that words would’ve been a much preferred alternative to that.

Kissing him briefly in a sort of apology, Sherlock slowly began to enter him, not stopping until he
completely filled him, a sensation that was only compounded by the feeling of Mycroft around him. Leaning forward, John let out a broken noise, unable to control the abortive motions made by his hips. He couldn’t decide whether he wanted to move forward or back.

Not the decision was in his control for much longer. Sherlock was quick to start moving, slamming into John hard enough to drive him into Mycroft. It was as though he was having sex with Mycroft, John posing as nothing more than a conduit for his fevered pace as he let Sherlock do as he pleased, one hand digging into John’s hip while the other jerked off his brother.

When Mycroft came with a choked gasped as he streaks of cum covered his stomach and Sherlock’s hand, the resulting reaction was almost immediate. Between Sherlock’s frantic thrusting inside him and Mycroft spasming around him, John didn’t even try to hold on his own release, letting the feeling overtake him as Sherlock sought his own end, something that didn’t take all that long.

Gently gripping his cock, Sherlock carefully eased John out of his brother, even removing the used condom before letting him lie down next to Mycroft. With his eyes closed, John tried to ignore the gentle movements that had to be Sherlock, ever the perfect scientist, cleaning up the results of his latest experiment.

Looking over at Mycroft, John stared at him, doing his best to commit the peaceful look on Mycroft’s face to memory, even as the man stared back at him. Raising his eyebrows curiously, Mycroft didn’t say a word as he waited for John to make some sort of move. Licking his lips, John leaned in towards him before stopping short.

“Right. I’m knackered.”

“I wish you the best of dreams, then,” Mycroft said, pulling the blanket over them both.

Smiling, John nodded to himself as Sherlock came back and forced himself between the two of them, looking like the cat that got the canary. Prodding Mycroft’s chest, he said, “I was right.”

“You must be so very proud.”

“I want to hear you say it.”

“I hope you enjoyed yourself,” Mycroft said to John, ignoring Sherlock’s childish behaviour. When he did turn his attention back to his brother it was merely to tell him, “I expect you to be gone by time I return home tomorrow.”

“As though I’d want to spend excess time here,” Sherlock said with a roll of his eyes.

“Perfect,” Mycroft said as he wrapped his arm around Sherlock, spooning him as he closed his eyes. “Goodnight John. Sherlock.”

Sherlock’s reply was nothing more than a grunt as he lazily kissed John goodnight, leaving John unable to do much more than give a small salute to prove that he had heard Mycroft. And really, it wasn’t long before Sherlock was drifting off as well, pulling away from John with a poorly stifled yawn.

Staring at Mycroft’s arm slung over Sherlock’s waist, John did his best to try and get some sleep, but he couldn’t seem to manage it. His body may have been worn out, but his mind certainly wasn’t tired. No, his mind was focused on how he let himself get sucked into their chaos. Sure, to look at them, Mycroft pressed against Sherlock’s back, face hidden against his shoulder as they both slept, the danger was hardly apparent. John was even certain that most might find no problem with being sucked into a threesome with the Holmes brothers.
But John could still vaguely remember when he was supposed to be sickened by the idea of them. He still had a small voice in the back of his head that positively hated Mycroft, even as he lay there, pretending to connect the odd freckles on Mycroft’s arm. Sherlock and Mycroft together was still as much a pain to see now as it was then. The only difference being, that where John had once been so certain of his outrage that they would use each other in such a manner, he was now filled with a hatred for the fact that the only reason had gotten even the smallest bit of Mycroft’s attention was because the man would do anything to please Sherlock.
John is fairly certain that understanding Mycroft should come with some sort of handbook.

Hearing steps making their way up the stairs, John stayed as he was, eyes glued to his computer screen since it was either Mrs. Hudson or Sherlock, finally back from whatever it was he’d been up to in Chiswick, given that’s where he had said he would be on the note John had woken up to find taped to his forehead. It was a new one, even for Sherlock but given that he had been purposefully ignoring Sherlock over that experiment that had left 221B uninhabitable for a night and everything that came from it, he couldn’t say it wasn’t expected.

When whoever it was walked into the room, and stopped to stand just to the side of the doorway, he took a deep breath and sighed. Doing his best to ignore it, John stuck to his typing. Even he could see it was a male out of the corner of his eye, but whoever the person was, they were far too quiet. Too patient as they waited for a reaction from him, which meant that it wasn’t a killer, client or Sherlock since he would’ve thrown himself dramatically onto the sofa or chair. He would’ve plucked incessantly at his violin. He would’ve done a million different things that John quietly wished for because the only answer left was one he wasn’t particularly fond of.

Clenching his jaw, he gave up on replying to his email knowing that would never be able to focus on it with the other person in the room. Taking a deep breath, he braced himself for the inevitable as he turned to face the last person he wanted to have to deal with ever again.

“Hello, John,” Mycroft said, conjuring up that ever polite smile of his.

John nodded back, not trusting his own abilities to say words since making pleasantries seemed a bit odd after being used as a sexual conduit for him and Sherlock. Exiting his browser, John looked around nervously as he told him, “Sherlock’s not here at the moment.”

“That’s perfectly fine,” Mycroft said, rarely bothered by Sherlock’s ability to be gone at all the wrong times, like how John was at the moment. Instead, Mycroft merely made his way over to the chair he usually claimed when visiting and sat down. “I’m willing to wait.”

“Of course you are,” John muttered under his breath, shaking his head.

Sure, at the end of the day, he understood just what Mycroft was up to since one of the most observant men he knew couldn’t be that thick. If he could tell that John had slept on a couch from the way he held himself, the bastard had to have caught onto the fact that John didn’t want to him around 221B, let alone in the same room. The remedy was nothing if not simple, though. Closing his laptop, John tucked it under his arm.

“What can I get you anything?” He asked as he stood up.

“I’m fine.”

“Sure? We have tea, coffee, biscuits.”
Shaking his head, Mycroft declined once again. “I’m fine, really.”

Which was enough to satisfy John. Shrugging it off, he nodded toward the door and said, “Alright. Well, in that case, I’m just going to go upstairs.”

Watching Mycroft for some sort of comment while he counted to five in his head, John nodded to himself as the man just sat there, far more interested in the mantle than John. And while such an idea stung, John knew that it was more than a bit irrational given that he wanted to be ignored and left to retreat. So with nothing left, he turned toward the door to leave.

“John, about the other night?” Mycroft called out before he could even get a few steps into his retreat.

Turning around quickly, John shook his head, determined to end the conversation before it even started. “We really don’t have to talk about it,” he said, waving it off as though it was nothing despite the almost upset tone of his voice. “It was just a case of three blokes in a bed. I promise I’m not going to tell anyone I saw you naked.”

Not amused at the poor attempt at a joke, Mycroft waved John off as he told him, “You’re hardly the first, although I’m flattered, never the less.” Rising from his seat, he kept the distance between them. With the way John stood, tense and more than ready to make a hasty retreat if need be, Mycroft appeared to be at a small loss of options as he clasped his hands together behind his back. “I just wanted to make sure you didn’t feel... uncomfortable around me because of that.”

John let out a soft chuckle that bordered on the edge of hysterical as he pointed to himself. “Why would I? I mean, you were taking one for the team, so to speak. Your brother wanted a threesome and you... accommodated.”

“Oh?”

And how Mycroft could make one word seem so disastrous, John didn’t know, but everything about Mycroft’s tone, insulted and surprised, said that he had made some misstep. Placing down his laptop on the sofa, John struggled to find the right words, Mycroft watching him like a judgmental parent waiting for some explanation about why the vase was broken. Something he had no right to given that that was all that night was from what John could tell. If it hadn’t been for Mycroft giving into Sherlock, it wouldn’t have even happened, really.

“Well, fine, you... Whatever you consider a decent synonym for accommodated,” he said, feeling a bit emboldened by the spark of anger he felt since he really was spot on, even if Mycroft didn’t agree to the phrasing. “Either way, I get it. We don’t have to talk about it.”

“I think you’re wrong given that you seem to be rather... upset about the other night,” Mycroft said, slowly moving toward him, as though he was trying to sneak up on a scared animal.

“I’m not upset,” John said quickly, fighting the urge to back up. “I had sex with Sherlock, you had sex with Sherlock. We all had—“

“Sex with my brother, yes. I got that.”

“I was going to say a good time. Don’t get cheeky.”

And what kind of world was he living in where he had to tell Mycroft Holmes that sort of thing? Pressing his palms against his eyes, John tried to get a grip on himself, still as a statue as Mycroft’s footsteps moved him closer to John, the faint scent of his cologne a clear sign of his proximity.

“I may accommodate my brother on a number of levels,” Mycroft started off in that same offended
tone as he gently tugged John’s hands away from his eyes. “But giving into his need for... theesomes isn’t one of them. Especially not when such actions take place in my home, in my bed. As I’m sure you can understand.”

Clenching his jaw, John jerked his wrists from Mycroft’s grip as he took a step back. “Fine. You didn’t accommodate him. You just... I don’t know.” Frowning, he waved his hand around vaguely, trying to force his mouth and mind to cooperate given that he already knew that he was floundering in front of the elder Holmes. “Whatever you want to call it. It all adds up to the same thing at the end of the day.”

“You’re hesitant to believe that I would willingly involve myself with my brother as well as you,” Mycroft stated with a faint smirk.

Yet another thing that made John hate him just a bit more because Mycroft could even understand his mind better than John could himself. Taking a deep breath as he clenched his hand by his side, John nodded in agreement. After all, to say otherwise was nothing short of useless when the man wasn’t wrong.

“But it isn’t as though you like me,” he muttered, feeling pathetic for it.

There he was, a grown man, and yet he couldn’t keep his emotions for his boyfriend’s brother from reducing him to the likes of a teenager, so very concerned with what that particular person thought of him. It was just another thing the Holmes brothers seemed to have a special knack for, given that John used to feel the same way about Sherlock, although that had been a lot easier to ignore until Sherlock had kissed him, and even then, kissing tended to be a sign of even the smallest interest for most people.

Mycroft, on the other hand, was a complete mystery. They’d had sex due to Sherlock and the man didn’t seem as though he was any more interested in him than he was before. Not that John had expected that night to lead to any great change. It was just how much such a simple like that hurt that had caught him off guard, leaving him feeling annoyed with both of the Holmes brothers as he tried to avoid the searching look Mycroft was giving him.

“Where would you get that impression?” Mycroft asked. “I’ve been nothing if not civil to you, ignoring the one death threat I may have let slip.”

“Civil isn’t the same as...” John looked toward the ceiling, bitter smile plastered on his face as he laughed over just how unfunny the entire situation was. “I don’t mean that you don’t like me as a person. You just don’t find me...”

“Physically attractive?”

“Yeah,” he said, ignoring the twinge in his stomach hearing him say it caused. “Which is fine. I don’t expect everyone to like me that way. You probably have a specific type and judging by Sherlock, I’m not it.”

“And judging by me, you would’ve assumed you were Sherlock’s type?”

John dug his nails into his palms as he glared at Mycroft. Whether or not the question was intended to be insulting didn’t matter. There was just something in the way that Mycroft had said it that made John feel more on edge than he already was.

“That’s... Look, you don’t have to explain yourself to me.”

“I enjoyed the other night, John. It was a... pleasant change from the norm.”
“Seriously, I don’t want to hear this,” John warned him.

“And, yes, if not for Sherlock, I would have never allowed what happened to take place,” Mycroft continued as though he hadn’t heard a word John had said.

Poking the other in the chest, John clenched his jaw. “Mycroft, shut up.”

Looking down at the offending finger, Mycroft grabbed hold of John’s hand, yet made no move to force it away. “But that doesn’t mean I don’t... see what it is my brother finds so fascinating in your regard,” he said, sounding as though he should’ve been talking politics rather than romance.

Still John got the point. The sudden loss of his anger leaving him feeling rather deflated, John looked away from Mycroft. Regardless of their proximity, the last thing he wanted was for the other man to see how hurt he was. “Of course. It’s just not for you.”

“I believe if I had meant that, I’d have said such a thing,” he said, feigning a look of confusion. Patting John’s hand gently, he cocked his head to the side as he took the man in. “No, what I find more fascinating is why you care about whether or not I find you attractive.”

Head snapping to look at Mycroft, John was more than ready to give him a piece of his mind once and for all, but something about the small smile playing at the corner of Mycroft’s mouth stopped him dead in his tracks. Frowning, John did his best impression of a goldfish, mouth opening and closing at odd intervals as he tried force some kind of sound from his mouth. Giving up, he shrugged helplessly.

“It’s nice to be liked.”

“People only care about being liked by people they respect or like in return. Which, I’m going to assume, means that you like me. Have you told Sherlock?”

“No. Because I don’t like you,” he shot back instinctively. And he shouldn’t have liked him. Not when the man had just made a game of running John through just about every emotion he had. But something in the genuinely shocked look on Mycroft face, the way he seemed poised to apologize for his assumption made John feel bad for his hasty statement. “I mean, I don’t... It’s all just fleeting thoughts.”

“I’m certain that I don’t actually want to know the specifics of those thoughts,” Mycroft said modestly.

“Look, you’re the one that said you didn’t find me attractive before and that’s fine. I don’t mind if you don’t, but I... I can’t do things like that threesome knowing that it’s all for Sherlock’s benefit. I don’t want to find myself feeling things that won’t be reciprocated,” John explained, hoping that would be good enough to make Mycroft understand.

“Oh that is quaint,” Mycroft laughed.

“Yeah, alright. You can piss off. I’m going upstairs,” he said as he shoved his way past Mycroft to head towards the doorway. “Wait for your brother wherever you bloody well like.”

“John, stop.” Grabbing John by the arm, Mycroft pressed his lip together as he tried to think of the best way to phrase his words. “I wasn’t laughing at you, per se.”

“Just the idea that I might not want to find myself pining after you? Yeah, I can see the humour in that.”

“I never said you weren’t attractive,” he said, releasing his grip on John’s arm. “If I recall the
situation correctly, I said it was unwise of him to assume that I do find you attractive. That isn’t to say he was wrong. You’re a handsome man with some admirable traits. It’s easy to understand how one might find themselves... interested in you.”

“Stop it. Stop with the big words and double speak. Just tell me what you mean.”

Brows knit together as he stared at John, it looked as though it took an actual effort from Mycroft to put things as simply as possible. “I’m interested in you. Not because you sleep with my brother, not because of the other night, but because you’re a good man who looks pleasant undressed.”

“Nice to know you aren’t shallow,” John scoffed.

“I assumed putting things bluntly was what you wanted.”

“It was.”

Honestly he just rather enjoyed the look of worry on Mycroft’s face, feeling as though the man had earned a bit of revenge. Why Sherlock would do his best to annoy Mycroft never made more sense than it did in that moment.

Rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet, he couldn’t help but ask, “So, you think I’m attractive?”

“Yes. And I also enjoy your company, so if you don’t mind, please sit down, John,” Mycroft said gesturing to the seat John had been happily occupying before Mycroft had arrived.

Trying not to grin like an idiot over how wrong he had been in regards to Mycroft’s opinion of him, John couldn’t help but ask, “So, if you find me attractive, does that mean you’re going to be asking me out as well?”

“John, I’ve already taken you on a date and know what you look like when you climax,” Mycroft said, sitting in his seat again as well. “I would think anything continuing between the two of us would be a given.”

“Still want to hear you ask.”

Rolling his eyes, Mycroft sighed. “John Watson, would you care to date me?”

“I don’t know,” John said, rubbing at the back of his neck. “Got this younger bloke who might get a bit jealous. Not to mention that I try not to date men who have threatened to kill me.”

“I refuse to beg.”

“I’d have to talk it over it over with Sherlock, as well,” he said, a bit more serious about it. “Trying to keep things open and honest with him.”

“John,” Mycroft warned.

“What? This is an important decision.”

And it was. One of the most dangerous men he knew was asking to date him, something that was probably less weird than the idea that John was considering such an offer in the first place. Mycroft was the same guy who had threatened to kill him if he ever told anyone about his relationship with his brother, although that was nothing short of a moot point considering John’s own involvement with them.
The fact that he had to consider how Sherlock would feel was just another issue since, while he may have had feelings for Mycroft, he was more than willing to cast them aside in favour of his ones for Sherlock. He was happy with the other man and, more importantly, he lived with him, making the idea of upsetting Sherlock even less desirable.

Hearing the sound of the door downstairs slam shut, Mycroft leaned back in his seat, hands resting patiently in his lap. “Well, I believe you’ll be getting your chance very soon.”

Because, as usual, they seemed to work together in making John uncomfortable. Glaring at Mycroft, he wouldn’t have put it past him to have orchestrated the entire thing to work out like it was as Sherlock came bounding up the stairs, obviously in a hurry.

It didn’t even appear as though he had even noticed them there until he came to a sudden halt and stared at Mycroft. Taking in the situation, Sherlock quickly turned his attention to John, asking him, “Why is my brother here?”

“He’s asking me to date him.”

“Have you told him yes?”

“No,” Mycroft interrupted, staring accusingly at John. “He wanted to talk it over with you first.”

There was no doubt about the fact that Sherlock was more than a bit pleased with such facts as he smiled to himself. Looking between the two of them once more, he waved off the entire matter before heading back to his room. “I don’t care what you do with Mycroft. Just return him in the condition you got him,” he called out from the hallway.

“Will I be fined if I don’t?” John questioned sarcastically as he shared an exasperated look with Mycroft.

Walking back into the room, Sherlock groaned. “Honestly. If you feel you can’t do any better than sleeping with Mycroft when you already have me, I’m not going to try to stop you. If anything, it’s more convenient for me this way.”

“I really do love when everything in my life works out for you.”

Rising to his feet, Mycroft dusted off his trousers, obviously done with his latest visit to 221B. “John, if you want, we can always discuss your decision over dinner.”

“Just me, you and Sherlock?” John questioned.

After their last meal together, John didn’t think that Mycroft would actually want to spend time with the both of them in a restaurant any time soon, if he ever undertook such a task again. And even if he thought otherwise, the fleetingly appalled look Mycroft gave him would’ve quickly set him straight.

“I doubt Sherlock would want to come along,” Mycroft said, sparing a tentative glance at Sherlock.

“Go, both of you. I only came back for my prosthetic.”

Standing up as well, John gave Sherlock a concerned look as he grabbed his coat. “Prosthetic what?”

“I find that questions such as that are best left unasked,” Mycroft said, ushering him toward the door. “Now, what would you prefer for dinner?”
“Fish and chips.”

Purposefully not meeting the man’s gaze when Mycroft suddenly stopped dead in his tracks, John clenched his jaw as he tried not to smile as Sherlock snickered. Giving him a stern look as he could muster in the situation, John was really quite pleased when Sherlock went back to his room to find whatever it was he was after.

After all, it was nothing more than a straightforward question about what he wanted to eat and his stomach was firmly set on that particular choice. It wasn’t as though he was intentionally trying to make Mycroft suffer through such common fare. Of course, to look at Mycroft, it was clear that he would’ve disagreed with such a view, no matter how nobly he cast aside his own reluctance on the subject.

“You honestly have no intention of making this easy for me, do you?”

Thinking about the emotional rollercoaster he’d been sent through since Mycroft’s arrival, John shook his head. “Not in the slightest.”

Walking back into the room, Sherlock made his way over to John, a bag slung over his shoulder as he inspected him. Putting on his coat slowly, John could only hope that Sherlock hadn’t changed his mind about the rules of their strange little relationship. Sure, if they were all to settle for seeing each other, it was more convenient, but that hardly meant that things would be any easier because of it.

“I can understand why Mycroft might want to date you, despite your flaws,” Sherlock finally said as he came to a halt by John’s side. Giving his brother a once over, Sherlock furrowed his brows before giving up on whatever it was he was searching him for. “But you want to be with him? I suppose some things aren’t meant to make sense.”

Choosing not to put in the effort it would take to analyze Sherlock’s opinion of them both while he blatantly ignored the comment about his flaws, since Sherlock was no saint himself, John only patted him on the back. If that was Sherlock’s idea of a blessing, he’d settle for it.

“Let’s go before he changes his mind about joining us,” John said, nodding toward the door.

“With pleasure,” Mycroft said, gesturing for him to lead the way out.

Stopping at the doorway, John glanced back at his other Holmes, who had yet to move from where he was thinking about anything from the change in their relationship to whatever case it was he was working at the moment. “Bye Sherlock,” he called out, hoping that he wouldn’t come home to find him still standing there.

“Yes, bye,” Sherlock said, waving them off. “And don’t feed him too much. He’s not nearly as handsome when the weight starts piling on.”

Snickering, John merely nodded in agreement, not that Sherlock saw, and headed out with Mycroft. If this was the end result of catching the two of them together once, he figured his life could be worse. They both had their own strange charm and, really, there was a certain convenience about it all that made him think that things just might work out for the better in the long run. All in all, it was nothing short of a win in his books.
Chapter Summary

Lestrade finds out about the boys and their relationship, John gets left to explain.

Chapter Notes

So, three chapters in a day. This entirely to make up for the lack of posting last week and the lack of posting that will be going on for (at least) the next two weeks given that school and homework make finding writing time a lot harder.

John had always known the risks of going out to solve cases with Sherlock. How could he not when he had been pressed to kill a man the first time that they met? He had seen Sherlock get hurt a few times and had pulled the occasional muscle or had been held hostage and really, he could chalk that up life as well. It wasn’t as though he was going to top following Sherlock around. It was just an occupational hazard that he was more than willing to accept.

It was why he wasn’t bothered about the fact that he had received a minor concussion in their latest outing. The guy had made his way down a split path, so Sherlock and he had each taken one, hoping to catch the guy. Which they did, in the end. The fact that John had been knocked out from behind in the process was nothing more than an unfortunate, but rather expected affair. Honestly, he could hardly think of too many cases that Sherlock had had that didn’t involve him getting hurt in some way.

A fact that wasn’t caused by his concussion, despite what Sherlock had claimed when Mycroft had come over to check up on them both. Sherlock was fine as ever and, honestly, he was too. They just didn’t listen to him. Something John couldn’t help but remind them both as he lay on the sofa resting his head on Mycroft’s lap while the man massaged his scalp.

“You know, you don’t have to worry about me,” he pointed out, blinking a bit rapidly to try and keep himself awake. “I’m fine.”

“You have a concussion,” Mycroft argued.

“A mild one. I’ll be good as new in a few days. A week tops.”

“A mild concussion is still a concussion.”

Closing his eyes, John chose not to argue with Mycroft given that it rarely seemed to end in his favour. It certainly had nothing to do with him being right. Because, while he may have been correct about a minor concussion still being a concussion, the whole premise was on par with the fact that water pistol was still a pistol. It was completely ignoring the qualifier that made John’s concussion nothing more than a particularly bad headache in the world of medicine.

“I’d be more worried about the bloke who did it,” he muttered tiredly. “Sherlock seemed ready to murder him.”
“Something I didn’t do,” Sherlock called out from the kitchen.

“Yeah, because Lestrade wouldn’t let you near the guy,” shot back as loudly as he could without causing himself any undo pain.

Walking into the room with a mug in one hands and pills in the other, Sherlock sat down on the floor in front of John. “No one hurts my blogger,” he said, sounding deadly serious about the matter as he held out what was in his hands. “Now take this.”

“What is it?” John questioned.

After all, while he may have trusted Sherlock to protect him no matter what, a cup of something warm and pills were on his list of things never to blindy accept from the other man. It was how far too many experiments tended to start and the last thing John needed was to find himself in some study of human capacities while mildly concussed. That is if he wasn’t already.

Rolling his eyes, Sherlock nodded toward the pills. “Those are for your headache and the mug is filled with warm water.”

Scrunching up his nose in distaste, John shook his head as best he could without actually moving much at all. “I think I’d rather stick to Mycroft.”

“John, take your medicine or else I’m going to stop,” Mycroft threatened fingers going still.

“Fine.”

“Good. When it starts to take effect I’m moving you to my room,” Sherlock said as John took the pills.

The idea of moving wasn’t all that thrilling, but so long as he had Sherlock and Mycroft, he was fairly certain that he could put up with it. It wasn’t as though they were going to let anything happen to him, given the way they were all but hovering about, fretting over his health.

“You know, if I’d have known that getting a concussion would get me this kind of attention, I would’ve done this ages ago,” he joked, since it felt as though it was fairly rare for him to get the comforting. He was a doctor, after all. His whole career hinged on making others feel better.

Going back to carefully massaging his scalp, Mycroft said, “You can’t possibly be surprised that we’re concerned for your well being.”

“No, but it is nice having you both here. What do I get for getting shot?”

“An evening alone while Mycroft and I torture that person to death,” Sherlock said far too quickly.

“Right. Won’t get shot then.”

Because, given Sherlock’s reaction to him getting a concussion, he was fairly sure that the man meant every word he had just said. And given Mycroft’s position in the government, they would likely get away with it, which was something he certainly didn’t want to dwell on. As contradictory as it may have been, he didn’t want others dying just because they hurt him.

“You shouldn’t be hurt at all,” Sherlock muttered.

Smiling, John awkwardly patted Sherlock’s shoulder since he really was trying to move as little as
possible. “It’s not your fault, you know. I mean... this isn’t any worse than being kidnapped by the Black Lotus or Moriarty.”

“That isn’t the point.”

“I really am going to be just fine.”

Looking at him, Sherlock still seemed to be in doubt of that opinion. Why? John couldn’t actually fathom since it was just a mild concussion and he would be perfectly fine in a few days. Even guilt didn’t make sense since they had randomly chosen which direction to take and he happened to pull the short straw on that one.

Still, to see his favourite sociopath so obviously upset, made John feel like he had to do something. Beckoning for Sherlock to lean closer, John did the only thing that seemed fitting and kissed him. Sure, a simple press of lips wasn’t going to prove any of the points he’d been trying to convince the two Holmes of, but it wasn’t as though Sherlock needed proof for that. What he needed was good old fashioned assurance that everything was going to be fine and, from the way he kissed John back desperately, hand clenching at his arm, Sherlock clearly needed that.

Knocking on the doorjamb as he entered the room, Lestrade said, “Thought I’d stop by and say that the bloke... What the hell is going on?”

Pulling away from Sherlock, John looked at the detective, his mind rapidly trying to find an explanation for everything as everything in his body told him to flee as quickly as possible. Blinking, he looked from Sherlock to Lestrade, mouth open as he tried to think of anything worth saying.

“Pleasure to see again, Detective Lestrade,” Mycroft said, never stopping what he was doing. Not that John really expected him to given the fact that the man had a tolerance for embarrassing moments, a skill John was rather envious of as his face started to feel a bit warmer. Gesturing between Sherlock and himself, he winced as he tried to force out his words.

“This... I... It wasn’t...”

“I believe what John means to say is that he’s in a relationship with Sherlock, hence the kiss,” Mycroft stated helpfully.

“Right. And he has his head in your lap because you’re just that kind?” Lestrade questioned sarcastically.

Giving him a rather terse smile as he narrowed his eyes, Mycroft said, “Your behaviour seems rather uncalled for, Detective.”

“Look...” John said, sitting up a bit too quickly, as he held his head in his hands. “Oh. I’m... I’m seeing Sherlock and Mycroft.”

“You’re shagging both of them?” Lestrade looked as though his eyes might fall out of his head if they were to get any larger. Running a hand through his hair, he shook his head, trying to make sense of that before looking between Sherlock and Mycroft “And you’re all perfectly alright with that? Christ! I’ve heard of people sharing everything, but this is a bit much.”

“Volume, Detective,” Mycroft warned. “John has a headache from his concussion.”

“Yes. Now what were you saying about the man responsible for that?” Sherlock asked, obviously concerned with that above all else.
When Lestrade gave a nervous laugh at Sherlock’s poor attempt to change the topic, John couldn’t say that he blamed him. After all, he knew what it was like to walk in on a situation that had no logical reason for happening.

“No. You don’t get to mention that you’re all one big happy threesome and then expect me to go along with it,” Lestrade pointed out, though he seemed to be trying harder to keep his voice level for John’s sake.

“We’re not a threesome,” Sherlock corrected.

“No. You and your brother are just messing about with the same bloke. So much of a difference.”

“You know, I could understand the problem if I was inviting Mycroft to my bed, but who John sleeps with besides me isn’t a matter that involves you unless he happens to take up with you as well.”

“You look here—“

“All of you, shut up!” Groaning as his head throbbed in protest of his attempts to quell the situation before it got too far out of hand, John gave the elder Holmes a pleading look, praying that he would help keep things from escalating. “Mycrof—“

“Yes.” Standing up, Mycroft looked at his brother with a far too pleasant smile as he gestured toward the door. “Sherlock, why don’t we go and fetch dinner while John and Detective Lestrade talk?”

“You can get it yourself.”

“And yet your company would be most appreciated,” he said, the hardened edge of his tone leaving no room for an argument.

Staring him down, Sherlock didn’t seem as though he was going to move. Arching a brow expectantly, Mycroft lifted his chin, staring down his nose at his brother. Another subtle move in their silent war. Clenching his jaw as he rose to his feet, Sherlock glanced at John as he made his way out of the room, thankfully avoiding meeting Lestrade’s gaze as the detective watched them both leave.

“You’re really seeing both of them?” Lestrade asked the moment they were both well away from them.

“Yes. Why is that a problem? Everyone already thinks I’m seeing Sherlock. How is that being true so bad?”

“It’s not.” Sighing, Lestrade began to pace the room. The fact that he didn’t want to say the wrong thing was more than apparent, but, as John already knew, that wasn’t always as easily done as one might think. “You dating Sherlock and his brother might raise more than a few eyebrows. I mean, how did that even happen?”

Thinking back to the moment he liked to hold as the source of his current life problems, John shook his head, knowing that mentioning them wasn’t likely to make things any easier for Lestrade to understand. “I’m not sure,” he lied. “I’m not even sure how I wound up with Sherlock, but I’m with both of them. They’re like night and day.”

“And brothers.”
“The only one they’re interested in touching is me and it rarely happens at the same time,” John offered, a bit helplessly.

Coming to a halt, Lestrade stood there gawking at him. “Rarely?”

“I mean... Like what you walked in on,” he said, trying desperately to clarify. "It’s not I’m having them both on the kitchen table.”

Not that he ever would given the experiments that Sherlock tended to conduct on that table. He was probably tempting fate by eating there day after day. Of course, Lestrade likely wouldn’t care about that either way. Watching as the detective collapsed into one of the chairs, looking as though he had the weight of the world on his shoulders, John was torn between pitying him and feeling a bit annoyed that he was being judged on who he decided to carry on with, the irony of it all never once being lost on him.

“What happened to dating girls?” Lestrade asked, sounding like a disappointed father.

Shrugging, John said, “Nothing. I like girls, but I also like guys. I’m also fond of the colour yellow. Going to hold it against me if I wear green?”

“Yeah,” Lestrade shot back childishly. Looking John over, he rolled his eyes. “How long has this been going on?”

“I don’t know. A while,” John said, too tired to pinpoint a specific date. “Started with Sherlock before Mycroft though and I like it. Mycroft’s not around as much as Sherlock, but he’s... He’s more reserved, doesn’t make me want to bash his head against a wall as often as Sherlock does.”

“And both of them are alright that they’re sharing you?”

“I don’t know if you noticed this about them, but they can be rather pragmatic when they want to be.”

Which was true enough, in John’s book. They did share him as much as they share each other with him. But Lestrade was still staring at him with that concerned parent look that made John think that maybe he was wasting his time trying to make the other man understand the hows and whys behind, not just his switch in gender preferences, but also his need to have a multiple partners, two things he had never planned to undertake in the beginning.

“I don’t know,” Lestrade muttered as he leaned forward. Resting his elbows on his lap, he ran his hands along his face before looking at John again. “I know it’s none of my business, but I also know that, odds are, one of you is going to get hurt in the long run.”

“We’re all adults and we all know what we’ve gotten ourselves into.”

Laughing bitterly, Lestrade shook his head. “People can be pragmatic about sex, maybe even dating. But all logic goes out the window the moment you fall in love and those two never seemed to have gotten along all that well before you all agreed on... your relationship.”

“They get along better than you think,” John said, wishing he could explain that fact without making things worse.

Thankfully Lestrade seemed willing to believe at least that much as he said, “Clearly if they’re willing to share you.”

“I’m going to be ok, Greg. I’m not worried about what might happen in the long run. I already trust both of them with my life.”
“I just don’t want you getting hurt by either of them.”

“That’s... rather touching actually,” John said, not having expected that.

One of the drawbacks of their relationship was that there really was a limited number of people either of them could turn to. They just had to trust that they weren’t going to screw each other over in the end, something that had to be a lot easier for Mycroft and Sherlock given that, no matter what happened, they were always going to be family. John, on the other hand, was rather far into the deep end without a life preserve if things went to hell. Or, rather, that’s how it tended to feel since it was often easy to overlook the fact that people like Mrs. Hudson and even Lestrade cared about his best interests as much as Sherlock and Mycroft did.

Shrugging off the comment, Lestrade didn’t even seem as though he’d done more than state the obvious. As though wanting John’s best interest was only natural as he said, “Yeah, well, you’re a good man. Strange interest in those two, but nothing that I’d hold against you. Donovan and Anderson might though.”

“They already think I’m barking for living here. Probably try to have me committed if they knew about this,” John chuckled.

“Yeah, well, I can’t say I’d stop them. Still, it’s your life and you seem happy enough.”

Feeling a sense of dread, John had to ask, “You won’t tell them, will you?”

“Not my place. Should probably apologize to Sherlock though.” Leaning back in his chair, he stared at the window, dread written all over his face as he said, “Christ that’s not going to be easy.”

“I’ll make sure he’s not a completely insufferable prat about it.”

“Like I said, you’re a good man, John Watson,” Lestrade laughed, a bit more genuinely.

Laughing as well, John allowed himself to settle into a light conversation with Lestrade, trying to keep it strictly focused on safe topics such as football and what pub was the best. Simple little things he never got a chance at talking about with Mycroft or Sherlock, given their mutual lack of interest in such trivial matters. The fact that neither he or Lestrade seemed particularly keen on continuing to analyze the changes in his sex life also played its part. By time Sherlock and Mycroft returned, the latter bearing the food they’d gone out for, the mood in 221B was downright jolly, all previous ire forgotten.

“I hope we haven’t returned too soon,” Mycroft teased.

Smiling, John shook his head happily. “Nope. Everything is fine and Lestrade even has something he’d like to say.”

Rising to his feet quickly, Lestrade made his way over to Sherlock. He was nothing short of nervous as he rubbed at his neck awkwardly, but since there was really no easy way to admit to being wrong to Sherlock, it wasn’t unexpected. “Yeah. Sorry for the way I reacted. Just seemed a bit... strange, you both dating John. But it’s not my place to judge what you three do in your private lives.”

Watching as Sherlock only nodded in agreement, John stared at him expectantly. “Sherlock.”

Looking over at John, Sherlock rolled his eyes as he grumbled, “Yes, well, thank you.”
“Anyway, I just came to say that the bloke who banged you up a bit is our guy, so he’s not going anywhere for a long time,” Lestrade said, since that was all he really had to offer.

Nodding along, Sherlock smirked. “Good.”

“And I don't want you and Mycroft pulling any sort of strings to get back at him for what he did to me, got it? Promise me that,” John said, deciding that he ought to throw that bit in just to be safe.

“You have our word, John,” Mycroft said as he re-entered the room.

“Good. Lestrade, care to stay for dinner?” He offered, feeling the need to treat things as normally as possible.

He didn’t want Lestrade to think that suddenly 221B was some off limit zone that required specialized clearance. They were all still mates, in some strange way and e didn’t want the man leaving thinking that somehow that would have to change. John just felt that he had to do whatever it took to keep things as normal as possible, since he would’ve loved for that kind of reassurance before.

Of course, Lestrade wasn’t nearly as upset as he had been. If anything he just seemed a bit awkward, with the way he stood there with his hands shoved into the pockets of his coat. “No thanks. I’ll leave you lot to your meal. Have a nice night.”

Standing up when Lestrade left, John glared at Sherlock, who blatantly ignore him as he went to the kitchen as though everything was alright. Walking over to Mycroft, John stared him down, happy to see that, at least he understood John’s problem, even if he did look a bit too amused for John’s liking.

Resting his head against Mycroft’s chest, he said, “Now Lestrade is going to think I’ve some fetish for abuse from morally dubious geniuses.”

“It’s better than him think you willingly joined into an incestuous relationship on your own accord,” Mycroft pointed out, rubbing his back.

Smiling, John looked up at him. “Maybe he’s right. Maybe I should be committed.”

“The food is getting cold. Stop talking and come eat,” Sherlock called from the kitchen.

And if he wanted normal, there was scarcely anything more normal than that. They would all sit down and eat together like most couples. Sherlock would either devour his own food before starting to pick at his and Mycroft’s food or would ignore food altogether while making sure John ate properly. There would light conversation and casual mocking and, maybe, depending on his morning, Mycroft would stay the night. Everything would carry on, much like it always did except for the fact that, in some vague way, Lestrade knew about their little arrangement and was alright with it, leaving them with just a bit more than they had before, in John’s opinion, since it was always nice when one’s mates liked the people they dated.
End Game

Chapter Summary

Mycroft and Jim come to the end of the game and the outcome is one that worries even the Iceman.

Chapter Notes

So it's not Wednesday, but whatever. Final 15 chapters begin now.

When he walked into the room, Mycroft could almost tell that something wasn’t right. Jim was staring at him like he usually did, but it wasn’t the thrilled look of a cat anxious to toy with the mouse it caught before killing it, nor was it the vacant stare that had so many of his people rather reluctant to deal with the criminal mastermind. It was the sort of look that Mycroft couldn’t quite place a name to, no matter how hard it was that he tried as he sat there, quietly trying to piece together the man before him.

“Do you ever think about how it is we got here, Iceman?” Jim asked after nearly fifteen minutes of silence.

Shaking his head, Mycroft said, “Not particularly.”

“Come on. You never think about that cold frosty day you came to be?”

“My birthday is in October.”

Chuckling quietly to himself, Jim’s head swayed back and forth in that reptilian way of his, eyes shut as though he might be tired. “You never wonder how about a guy could find himself at the centre of a criminal web? How two people come to be together?”

“Are we playing this game again?”

Not that he didn’t know that they were. That the little game that Jim had devised never really ended and never would. So long as they were talking, there would always be something to divine from the other’s words as though they were trying to crack each other’s codes or see the next move in an endless chess match.

Opening his eyes again, Jim smiled at him before running his hands over his face with a heavy sigh. Watching him, Mycroft didn’t see any reason for the man to be tired, even though so many of his bodily cues seemed to point in that direction. And while the idea that the game Jim had instigated was boring him was likely, it still left a large question as to how their game would end.

“We’re telling stories,” Jim muttered into his arm. Looking up at Mycroft with half lidded eyes, he let out a small huff of air. “I don’t have telly, but I do have you. Care to start?”

“I don’t know what it is you want me to say.”
“Cop out,” Jim complained too loudly, like he always did. Drumming his fingers on the table top, he frowned at his hand before grabbing it with his other, like a cat trying to pounce on its own paw. “Stop making things complicated. I want a love story. Or, a ‘we-made-a-decision-to-have-mutually-beneficial-sex-for-an-unspecified-amount-of-time’ story.”

“Because you think I don’t believe love,” Mycroft said, rolling his eyes at the well repeated suggestion.

“No. Because that’s what all relationships boil down to whether you love them or not.”

“Oh don’t tell me we’ve broken your spirit,” he teased, even if there appeared to be some truth to his words at the moment. “What happen to the poetry quoting man I started off with?”

“I only quoted Tyger Tyger because of the awful rhyme scheme,” Jim said, sulking like a small child.

It was a pity to think that they may have actually broken the man’s spirit. A pity and a mistake that Mycroft wasn’t about to make. Whatever Jim was up to, he was perfectly committed and while he was certain some concern ought to be given towards the man’s change in mental state, Mycroft wasn’t about to let Jim into his mind any more than he already was. If there was truly something wrong, it could wait for someone else to deal with.

“He was a boy—“

“She was a girl. Can I make it any more obvious?” Waving him off when Mycroft looked at him curiously, Jim smiled to himself. “Sorry. Avril Lavigne.”

“I heard you had an interesting taste in music.”

Rolling his eyes, Jim gripped the edge of his seat and noisily scooted it over to sit in front of Mycroft. Resting his head in his hands, he nodded for Mycroft to continue with his story. “He was a boy. Does that mean you were a paedophile?”

“I was twenty-three when we first kissed, he was sixteen,” Mycroft explained, glaring half heartedly at Jim. “It was New Year’s. Or rather, New Year’s Eve. I was looking for him and he was avoiding the party downstairs. When I found him, we sat around sharing a bottle of champagne I had borrowed.”

“Stolen from the party,” Jim said, waving his finger judgementally.

Ignoring him, Mycroft leaned back in his seat, relishing the almost fond memory as much as he could allow himself with Jim watching him. “We had been circling around the subject of our mutual attraction for some time before then. It was just that night he decided to kiss me.”

“As the clock stuck midnight?”

“Heavens no. Twenty-six minutes too early because he was always so impatient,” he said with a slight laugh to his voice. Not that midnight hadn’t been the intention, but Sherlock rarely saw the point in delaying his gratification when he didn’t have to. “By time midnight came around I had a teenage boy writhing under me.”

Looking toward the mirror with a secretive smile, Jim laughed. Not at the story, but as though he was sharing a joke with someone that Mycroft couldn’t see. Another one of Jim’s little habits that Mycroft had grown long used to.
“Carl Powers hated me,” Jim stated once he calmed himself down. Staring through Mycroft, he even shrugged it off as he shook his head. “Not always. We used to be mates, but… You know how kids grow up.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. Because, we weren’t friends, but he liked me well enough. I was…” Sighing as he tried to find the right words, Jim looked upset sitting there hunched in on himself. “Small? Weird? Too smart for a boy my age and no one got it. Not even him, but he didn’t hold it against me.”

“Until he did.”

Because certainly Mycroft understood that. That moment when being the smartest of the bunch took a turn for the worse. When the people who valued such a clever little mind turned against it in a fit of rage because no one wanted be out done in anything, a constant when spending time with someone who wasn’t just smarter, but didn’t know not to show off such a skill. A symptom of whatever it was that made Jim and Sherlock the type of people they were.

Head lolling back, Jim stared at the ceiling, hands resting uselessly at his side like a corpse. “I always thought it was his friends that ruined him. They hated me too,” he said thoughtfully as he continued to sit in that strange position. “But only Carl yelled at me.”

Quickly sitting upright again, he scooted to the edge of his seat as he leaned in toward Mycroft. With only hardly a hair’s breadth between the Jim sneered viciously as he prodded Mycroft’s chest, saying, “Right in front of everyone he told me nasty little things. I remember being very upset. Sulked in my room, all alone.”

Blue eyes locked on Jim’s near manic brown ones, Mycroft nodded slowly. “When did you decide to kill him?”

Cocking his head to the side Jim suddenly broke out into a smile as he chuckled softly. Shaking his head far too quickly, he sat back in his seat, once again amused with something Mycroft couldn’t place.

“I didn’t. I decided that I was never going to give him another chance to belittle me again. That I never wanted to hear him say anything ever again.”

“Ironic. The gravity of your own decision being lost on a mind like yours.”

“Everyone was in mourning after that. Myself included since I had just murdered the only kid that was really nice to me,” Jim said, ignoring the statement. “But in the wake of his death my brother got me the snake. The only one in Ireland, he said. I knew it was rubbish, but… I had a snake.”

“That’s touching. Is it true?” Mycroft asked.

The idea that Jim would value just about all life on an equally low level was something he could easily believe, but the idea that even Jim might feel something over a boy he killed didn’t fit. It didn’t seem right. It was a realistic position for Mycroft given that he couldn’t even imagine Jim feeling too cut up over Sherlock if ever he was to succeed in killing his brother. Partly because, as narcissistic as it seemed, he knew Jim would simply turn his sights toward him in the end.

“Of course it’s true,” Jim scoffed. “Snake lasted all of month before my mum decided she couldn’t stand the thing. Had to give it up. Had to make friends instead. Didn’t like them as much as the snake.”

Nodding, having expected nothing less of the man, Mycroft smirked. It was the same sort of logic
that led Sherlock to keeping around a skull rather than people in the past. Not that Sherlock had always been that way. Sure, he had been different from everyone else, but that had never been too much of a problem. It was something they shared.

Of course, much like Jim and his snake, Sherlock’s skull only seemed to follow in the footsteps of losing far too much he held dear over such a short period of time. A difficult time for Sherlock that Mycroft had noted as a warning without doing a single thing about it. How could he when he had been partly responsible for it?

Furrowing his brows, he realized that he’d let a sort of silence descend upon them. Jim just sitting there patiently as he waited for the continuation of the conversation since it was his turn. Trying to think of something, he found himself thinking back to the same point over and over again.

“I recall him being so very upset when we broke up the first time,” he said, unable to get his mind to deviate from such a point. Toying with the ring on his finger briefly, he furrowed his brows. “His life was miserable enough, struggling through his first year at university, always the big fish in the little pond, and there I was adding to it. Career move on my part. I thought it for the best. He thought I was abandoning him.”

“You were,” Jim said casually, as though he had been there to witness it all. “Probably wound up with some boring stuffed shirt within the year.”

“Twenty-seven months and he was a soldier.”

“Is that a fetish in your family?”

Arching a brow, Mycroft nodded. “Yes. Something about men willing to die for their country reduces my entire family to mush. Heaven only knows why.”

“The appeal is… clear, I suppose,” Jim said, ducking his head as he smiled to himself.

And while part of him wanted to question it, Mycroft decided to chalk it up to another one of Jim’s strange little behaviours rather than try to dig for an answer he’d never get. Instead, he focused on his own past relationship, unable to prevent the near pensive look as he spoke.

“It didn’t last all that long. We parted on good terms and are still friends, but…”

“He wasn’t the one. You wanted the sweet boy you’d left behind,” Jim offered. A rare moment of kindness immediately broken by the way he rolled his eyes in disgust as he scoffed. “Oh that is terribly cliché, you know.”

“It’s how it work between us. We’re in a constant flux of being together and pining for one another. And given that we’ve been together for the better part of the past decade, it always feels like it’s only a matter of time before the other shoe drops.”

Looking at him curiously, Jim said, “Something you don’t think his little boyfriend is.”

“Exactly,” Mycroft said, not surprised in the least that Jim managed to follow his thoughts. Somewhere along the lines, he began to be less than careful when it came to intentions with the other man. He let his thoughts and school boy confessions come a bit too freely, not that it wasn’t without purpose. After all, there was little risk in mentioning Sherlock’s favourite book or how they wound up together when Moriarty was confessing to murder.

“I’ve always been a miserable git,” Jim said without prompting, face oddly blank as he spoke. “Murdering classmates, pressing chemistry students into making drugs that I could sell. Eventually
things began to snowball out of control. Suddenly I had connections and my name was the best known secret in all the wrong crowds."

Pointing at Mycroft, he leaned forward again for a moment before relaxing in his seat yet again. Shaking his head, he instead ran his hand through his hair and said, “I remember being somewhere, business and hearing two idiot thugs speaking about Moriarty like I was a god. You can understand that feeling.”

“Can I?”

Slowly rearing back, Jim nodded as though Mycroft had missed the point of a joke he was telling. Invading Mycroft’s personal space again as he poked his knee, Jim bit his lip in some feeble attempt to contain his joy.

“You see, Sherlock has a job that’s really quite easy to figure out. One day he helped one of those coppers or the right people and then reputation for that got him to where he is.”

“Accurate enough,” Mycroft agreed.

“But how do you explain one man becoming a criminal consultant? Crime isn’t like the law. There’s no one thing you can do to impress everyone and not to specialized degree I have. You have to be clever enough to get this Renaissance man reputation while never once letting anyone know who you are because you can’t trust criminals not to sell you out.”

“And this relates to me how?”

Gripping Mycroft’s thighs, nails digging in uncomfortably, Jim glared at him. To his credit, Mycroft didn’t even flinch, not wanting Jim or those watching to know about the jolt of pain that was radiating from where Jim’s too long nails seemed intent to cut through his trousers.

“Well, you are essentially the British government. See, I know these thing,” Jim growled out, gripping tighter when Mycroft opened his mouth to argue such a point. “Your file lists some minor number crunching position but no information is given. Your higher ups are all the wrong people and the government doesn’t send number crunchers to deal with criminal masterminds or let them come up with brilliant solutions to terrorist plots. It takes work to get a job like ours, but… There’s no specific method that gets you there.”

Quickly rising to his feet, Jim stared up at him, still hunched over, hands resting at his sides yet again. His eyes looked almost dead to the rest of the world; reverting back to that same look that had lurked in them when they had first began to have their conversations.

Dusting himself off, Mycroft stated quite simply, “We’re done here.”

“What do you mean, done?” Jim asked, anger and shock quickly colouring those ever changing features of his.

“I have no further use for you. You’ve told me about the Bond Air plan, Ms. Adler, why you’re targeting Sherlock, more or less, and how you wound up here. What else do you have to offer me James?”

For all the calm that Mycroft stated such a fact with, he couldn’t help but be worried that Jim might try to do something irrational. That he might try to attack him or, even worse, mention something far worse that he had done just to continue their weird little meetings. Because while they knew of a great deal about the crimes that Jim had committed, Mycroft knew that they would never know them all, no matter how much they might try. Settling for the information that they had, no matter how dubious the source was, was something that they would just have to settle for.
But in the blink of an eye, all the fury that seemed to plague Jim was gone. Body relaxing, he nodded like a disappointed child as he pulled his legs up to his chest, chin resting on his knees as he genuinely sulked.

“Damn,” he muttered bitterly. “And here I was hoping I could get more information about my Iceman’s romance.”

Looking him over, Mycroft reluctantly began to move away from him, not quite sure why it was that Jim was giving in so easily. Sure, it could’ve been another move in their game, but what the point behind it could’ve been was entirely lost on him. One didn’t just sacrifice a king at the end of a match just because and it was more than clear that Jim didn’t forfeit without knowing he was getting something out of it. Taking a deep breath, Mycroft took in the wide eyed man staring at him once again before making his way toward the door.

“Good day, Jim,” he said without looking back at him.

“It was a lover’s tryst, was never clear or descript. We kept it safe and slow, the quiet things that no one ever knows,” Jim said softly.

If there had been anyone but them in the room, it might have never been heard, but in the concrete walled room between the two of them, it seemed to echo. Stilling at the door, Mycroft didn’t look back at him. He didn’t have to know that Jim was probably grinning, that final move clear as day to no one but himself while Mycroft tried to decipher his point and plan a response.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” He asked as casually as he could to the door.

When no comment came, Mycroft clenched his jaw doing his best not to ball his fists. The last thing he needed was to give Jim more ammunition than he already had, whatever it may have been. Pinching the bridge of his nose, Mycroft turned back toward Jim, not at all surprised to find the man looking just like he expected.

Rising from his seat, Jim walked up to him and shrugged. Shrugged off the entire comment as though it was nothing before wiping off a speck of nothing from Mycroft’s shoulder.

“Do tell Sherlock I’ll be seeing him since I’m sure you didn’t tell him I said hello.”

Giving Jim a terse smile, Mycroft gestured for him to move back, something that the man did far too easily as he took his seat again. Walking out of the room once he had, Mycroft tried not to let Jim’s comments bother him. It really didn’t matter when held against the notion that he had missed a seemingly obvious fact that he knew he’d never be able to correct.
Sherlock Holmes practically has a degree in being a distraction, from John's point of view. And clearly he learned from the best.

Flat cleaning was one of those shared tasks, much like getting groceries that John often found himself handling on his own. Not that he was just that much of a clean freak, because he wasn’t. He merely didn’t like the idea of Mrs. Hudson cleaning up after them since they were capable men and she really wasn’t their housekeeper. So when things got a bit too messy, even for him, or they were having a guest over, he’d do his best to ensure that things at least looked remotely decent.

A logical bit of reasoning that Sherlock felt didn’t apply to people who frequented Baker Street more than once a month. Hence why, while John cleaned up the living room, Sherlock sat with his knees pulled up to his chest, watching with a sort of look of disdain.

“You really don’t have to do this,” Sherlock complained, for what seemed like the millionth time. “He’s just one man. Even if he has been known to occupy the space of two.”

“None of that when he gets here. You’re going to be sickly sweet, understood?” John warned him.

Rolling his eyes, Sherlock smiled to himself as he said, “He’s going to think I’m dying.”

And even if that was the case, John didn’t care because at the very least he’d have still managed to get the two Holmes brothers to behave themselves outside of a bedroom. Not that they behaved all that better inside the bedroom, but at least then John could allow himself to be easily distracted by other things. Things that had him blushing as he cleared his throat nervously and went back to his cleaning.

If Sherlock had anything he wanted to say about John’s illicit thoughts, he never got the chance as Mrs. Hudson walked into the room. Taking in the scene of Sherlock sitting about while John tried to clean everything in sight, she shook her head with a sigh.

“Look at you puttering about,” she said as she walked over to him. Taking the pillow from his hands, she finished fluffing it before placing it back on the chair. “You shouldn’t let him bully you into cleaning up his messes.”

“What? No. Mycroft’s coming by and I just want things to be nice and...”

Allowing the rest of the sentence to die in his mouth, John looked away, knowing that he had to be blushing even more now, something that was nearly as bad as confessing that he was sleeping with both Sherlock and Mycroft to his landlady.

“Mycrof?” She asked, looking a bit surprised by his answer.

Letting out a sigh of his own John said, “He’s been out of town on business and...”

And there was really nothing John could bring himself to say that would make the situation seem...
even a bit more normal. Not to mention that the nearly stunned look in her eyes certainly wasn’t helping one bit. Looking toward Sherlock for help, John rolled his eyes, know that was a bad idea.

“John’s sleeping with Mycroft as well as me,” Sherlock said, confirming John’s suspicions as he rose from his seat. “Well, I say sleeping, but that’s not really the case. Mycroft provides... stability, I suppose? Horribly fatty dinners at overpriced restaurants. While I—“

“I think Mrs. Hudson gets your point,” John said, not wanting to know what Sherlock thought he provided their strange ménage a trois.

“Oh. So you’re...”

“It’s complicated and they both know,” he tried to explain. “They’re both far more alright with it than me and...Yeah.”

Turning away from her, John began to intently wipe at an invisible spot on the table. Because, if he didn’t acknowledge her presence in the room, he wouldn’t have to put up with that same awkward feeling he’d gotten when he had tried to explain his situation to Lestrade.

“Well, as long as they both know, I suppose. It’s the secret keeping that gets people hurt,” Mrs. Hudson said, as though it was no big deal. Shaking her head, she stared wistfully at the window. “Not to mention it can be a right headache remembering things yourself, I’ll have you know.”

Looking up at her, John was certain that he had heard something wrong. Turning to Sherlock, who was busying himself with his skull, John turned his attention back to her with furrowed brows. “I’m sorry. What?”

“I’ve seen you with your girlfriends, forgetting which is which one at a time. And I know dating two people at once can be a bigger mess. Used to always mix up these two guys. Of course, that was partly because—“

“Mrs. Hudson!”

Giving him a disappointed look, Mrs. Hudson said, “Don’t you give me that tone. Sometimes you just don’t want to be forced to pick between apples and oranges, as the case would be. Now, if you don’t mind, I have a date tonight myself.”

“Oh yes. Mr. Chatterjee from the cafe. I do hope he’s the only one for the night,” Sherlock said with a teasing smirk.

“You behave yourself,” she said, shaking her finger at him. A fair enough warning given that when she left it would just be John and Mycroft around, two things that practically guaranteed Sherlock being on less than his best behaviour. “And John, don’t let them ruin your evening for you.”

“Yeah. Bye,” John muttered, still entirely unsure of what it was he was supposed to feel about the situation.

Sighing, he looked at Sherlock and said, “Mrs. Hudson understands the trouble of dating two men at the same time.”

“I don’t see why you wouldn’t expect her to,” Sherlock scoffed. Of course the fact that John had expected him of all people to see the issue at hand was a mistake on his part. Instead, Sherlock merely put down his skull and said, “I find her to be entirely understanding on most matters.”
Which was a fair enough point. She had been positively lovely over the fact that he and Sherlock were a couple. Had been lovely about him moving in back when she just assumed that Sherlock might bring some random shag home to live with him. All in all, he was fairly certain that there was hardly a thing in the world, body parts excluded, that might actually bother her.

“She doesn’t know about you and Mycroft, does she?” John asked, the sudden question of how understanding Mrs. Hudson really was plaguing his mind.

Sherlock shrugged off the question as though it was nothing. “I don’t ask, she doesn’t issue any sort of complaint when he’s around.”

“Christ. I thought telling Lestrade was awkward.”

“If you want I can take your mind off it,” Sherlock offered, casually making his way over to him.

And even though most would probably think him mad for the mere thought, John thought there was something undeniably charming about Sherlock hinting at what he was after rather than just bluntly stating his needs and expecting them to be met.

“Look at you. Getting rather good at this subtly thing,” John teased as he looked Sherlock over.

“The flat is clean,” Sherlock complained grabbing John’s hand to keep him from any more mindless tidying. “My room is clean and you’ve binned all my old experiments.”

“There’s still the matter of dinner, mind you.”

“Order in.”

“We always order in and Mycroft is getting back from... some far off country, or something,” John said, jerking his hand away from Sherlock as he began to make his way to the kitchen, very much intent on cooking rather than upping the stakes of their little cat and mouse game.

Of course, to Sherlock it all appeared to be the same thing. Moving to block the kitchen door way, Sherlock stared him down, not even the least bit concerned with John’s half-hearted excuse.

“He was in America.”

“Still need to work on dinner,” John pointed out.

“It can wait. Trust me,” Sherlock argued.

“That’s how most of my problems start, thank you.” Because if not for trusting Sherlock, and Mike, he wouldn’t be living at Baker Street. He wouldn’t have been making a career out of playing sidekick while Sherlock solved cases. Frowning at the seemingly endless amount of bad situations that seemed to be caused by trusting Sherlock Holmes, John scoffed to himself. “In fact, trusting you is what got me in this situation to begin with.”

“I promise it’ll be quick and I won’t dirty a thing.”


“John.”

“He’s going to come here and catch us and—“

“He can watch,” Sherlock said as he waved off the entire thing, likely finding it to be a non-issue.
“That’s a bit rude.”

Smiling at him as though he was a child that had said something adorably flawed, Sherlock said, “My brother controls the CCTV. If that’s not a clear sign of voyeurism, I don’t know what is.”

“I worry about how you know that.”

“It doesn’t even have to be sex,” Sherlock bartered.

Laughing, John shifted from foot to foot. “Getting me off with magic?”

Moving closer to him, Sherlock nodded. “Something like that.”

Back ing away from him until he fell onto the sofa, John couldn’t help but smile. He knew that he most definitely had to start on dinner given that Mycroft’s flight was bound to be arriving soon, if it hadn’t already come in, but no matter how his brain repeated the fact to him, his body seemed far more intent on the way Sherlock leaned down to kiss him.

Grabbing at the collar of Sherlock’s shirt, John held him close as he laid down on the couch, making himself as comfortable as possible with the lanky body that was hovering over him, given that Sherlock seemed far more concerned with making good with his promise. Slow slide of lips against each other, bodies pressed close in the cramped space.

To the outside world they must’ve looked like two randy teenagers having a good snog while they had the time with the way Sherlock’s hands seemed to be everywhere. Caressing his chest with all the attention of a blind man, torturously slow as they slid up John’s thighs. And while John was only too willing to give as good as he got, fingers making quick work of the buttons on Sherlock’s shirt, the shrill sound of a phone seemed to cut through Sherlock’s usually laser like focus.

“You answer that,” he said as he got up.

Staring at him, dumbfounded, since it was Sherlock that had suggested the quick romp he seemed so willing to ignore, John fumbled for words.

“What?”

“It’s your phone. Answer it,” Sherlock said, grabbing the mobile from the table and handing it to him, before kneeling between John’s legs.

“Why couldn’t you?”

Pushing up John’s jumper to expose his chest, Sherlock smirked. “I’m busy,” he said before occupying his mouth with the newly exposed skin.

And really, with an argument like that, who was John to contradict him? Taking a deep breath while Sherlock sucked at his collarbone, John tried to keep his voice as level as possible as he said, “Hello?”

“I thought I would call and inform you I’m on my way,” came Mycroft’s voice across the line.

Closing his eyes, fairly certain that Sherlock had known as much when he had handed over the phone, John took a deep breath as he tried to keep all comments about how he really hope Mycroft might hurry up off his tongue.

Instead he ran a hand through his hair, giving Sherlock a curious look over the jumper bunched up around his armpits. “Great. Great. I’ll..”
“No need to stop Sherlock from... kissing down your chest?”

Watching as Sherlock began to do just that, John looked around the room nervously. “Are you watching us?”

“Despite my brother’s views of me, I am not a voyeur.”

“Psychic? Omniscient?”

Because certainly he couldn’t have just deduced what Sherlock was doing over the phone. Although, thinking it over again, John wondered if he might not be just a little bit wrong on that front since the things Sherlock and Mycroft noticed tended to baffle him until explained, something he wasn’t actually looking for from him at the moment.

“The flick of a tongue along your navel, hint of teeth against your hip. You’re enjoying him almost as much as you’re enjoying this.”

Catching the mischievous look in Sherlock’s eyes as he gently sucked at his pelvis, John didn’t bother trying to hide the soft moan that it elicited. While he would’ve loved not to be the battlefield for one of their little games, with Mycroft dictating Sherlock’s every action as though he was there to watch, John was willing to accept that he just might have to settle for letting them play their games.

Taking a deep breath to calm himself as Sherlock nuzzled at the trail of hair leading to his ultimate destination, John tried to keep himself together. “What make you think I’m enjoying this?”

“You’re still on the phone. Likely staring at the ceiling rather than him. A pity since he wants your attention.”

Looking down at Sherlock, John wasn’t sure why the pair of blue eyes staring up at him was shocking. Gripping his mobile a bit tighter as he licked his lips, John said, “You both are sick twisted sadists, I hope you know.”

“You’re lucky Sherlock’s so eager to do this,” Mycroft laughed in his ear.

As if on cue, Sherlock gripped his erection, thumb trailing up and down a vein slowly before taking the head into his mouth without any hesitation. Letting out a choked breath, John tried to remember that he still had Mycroft on the phone for reasons he refused to consider as Sherlock’s face took on a look of pleasure that should not have merely come about from John’s cock in his mouth.

Gripping the back of the sofa with his free hand as Sherlock ran the tip of his tongue along the slit, John tried to think of how exactly he was meant to respond to Mycroft. When his mind offered him little else, he settled on, “This is perverse.”

“There’s nothing perverse about oral sex. If I was there I’d prove as much too you.”

“I only have one prick,” John reminded him, feeling rather proud of himself for the level head he was keeping.

Letting out a low noise somewhere between amusement and pleasure, Mycroft tutted at him. “Very true. Of course, I find, with you on your knees, a rear and frontal assault could be enacted.”

He didn’t know whether it was the idea of Mycroft sitting in the back of some car, casually having a filthy conversation or him talking about sex as though getting him off was equivalent to World War II, but something about the entire situation had a shiver running down spine. The fact that
Sherlock chose that moment to take the rest of his cock in one smooth motion was just adding to
the mess they were making of his mind.

“Oh God,” John whimpered, not sure which of them he was talking to with one hand suddenly in
Sherlock’s hair and the other gripping his mobile as though his life depended on it. “You... How
long until you get here?”

“I always did like Sherlock’s mouth. He had a natural finess about these things. Never too much
tongue, just the barest threat of teeth as he lifted his head after burying his nose in your pubic
hair.”

“Stop. Just... You aren’t helping, Mycroft,” John muttered, trying not to focus on how Sherlock
was doing everything the man said. Whether they just knew each other that well or had planned
this wonderfully twisted stunt in advance, he didn’t care. He just wanted for it to stop and never
end all at once.

“I can almost picture you both. You on your back, trousers on the floor because you chose to
fordo pants in favour of my visit. Something I promise you’ll benefit from later,” Mycroft said, his
voice a silky promise while Sherlock let his hand drift up John’s chest.

Hips jerking of their own accord when Sherlock dragged a nail across his nipple, eyes locked on
his face in an obvious attempt at eavesdropping, John was certain that, planned or not, he really
didn’t care.

“Lucky guess,” he panted, trying to egg Mycroft on.

With a downright filthy chuckle, Mycroft said, “Sherlock is kneeling between your legs. Only one
hand fondling your chest, because, well, why ruin the surprise.”

John barely had a chance to wonder at what the surprise might be before he felt the finger just
barely circling at his hole before pushing in. Dry, it shouldn’t have been the most pleasurable of
feelings, but nothing about that stopped John from biting down on his lip to keep relatively silent
out of spite for the two men practically tearing him apart.

“Honestly John, don’t feel you have to respond to me,” Mycroft told him calmly, as though it was
perfectly normal to have conversations with those his brother happened to be going down on. “I
know you must be quite distracted and I’m perfectly capable of holding up the conversation on my
own.”

“Oh yeah?” John gasped, caught between thrusting into Sherlock’s mouth and that wholly
unsatisfying singular finger.

“Of course. Because you’re already lying there, little more than a puddle of frenzied nerve endings
as that tension in your stomach builds. Thankfully, Sherlock’s not the sadist you seem to think we
are and is only too happy to give you a little more.”

Feeling another dry finger start to press into him, John let out a breathless laugh, since he would
definitely have to get Mycroft’s definition of sadist if the man didn’t think this was pure torture. Of
course, the thought of being tied up by Mycroft was hardly the most unbearable of thoughts, John
mused as he began to fuck Sherlock’s mouth in earnest, unable and unwilling to let this assault
continue for much longer.

“So eager John. He wouldn’t have drawn it out. If anything, that’s part of the reason he complied
to your needs. Gently rocking his hand back and forth as you practically bury yourself down his
throat. Quite the dichotomy. Of course, I believe this conversation is about to end. So, whose
name is it you’re going to call out? Mine or his?”

Nearly ready to correct the man for being off on his disturbingly precise statements, John could practically feel his brain come to a halt as Sherlock began to tease his prostate. With the edge of his phone digging into his palm as roughly as he was gripping Sherlock’s hair, John came with a wordless groan, the feeling of Sherlock swallowing with each pulse until there was nothing left, leaving him well spent and tired.

Blinking as Sherlock took the phone from him and stood up, John watched him, unable to force himself to care enough about it to move.

Putting the conversation on speaker phone, Sherlock picked up John’s trousers and tossed them at him. “Where are you?”

“In a car. And must you have me on speaker phone?” Mycroft complained in a rather exasperated tone.

“Yes, when you choose to play third party to our sexual escapades.”

“Considering I’m headed to Baker Street to see you both, I hardly think I crossed any lines.”

“How long?” Sherlock asked, pacing back and forth as he talked.

Biting his lip to hide his smile, John began to put his trousers back on. Sherlock hated when he commented on him being eager to see Mycroft, but it didn’t change the fact that he wasn’t the only one in their flat who was rather fond of the ever busy civil servant.

“That depends. Will we be ordering in when I get there or should I stop off to pick up something to eat?”

“I’ll cook,” Sherlock said before John could answer. Judging by the glare he was giving him, Sherlock obviously knew and disliked what John was about to say. “You get here immediately.”

“A home cooked meal from Sherlock Holmes?” Mycroft questioned, voice laced in amusement.

Not that it wasn’t warranted since Sherlock didn’t even offer to make John cereal in the morning, let alone cook an entire dinner. If he were the jealous type, he would’ve been offended, but given the fact that it felt like weeks since either of them had seen the other Holmes, John was willing to let it go as Sherlock rolled his eyes in disgust at his brother.

“It’s hardly anything more than—“

“You missed him,” John called out, unwilling to let Sherlock try to get away with one of his little excuses on convenience.

“John, go back to your post-coital daze,” Sherlock shot back half heartedly.

“Be nice to John, Sherlock,” Mycroft chimed in, much to Sherlock’s annoyance. And as though he could sense the change in the man’s temper, he added “If it makes you feel less human, I missed you for more than sexual reasons as well.”

Sherlock’s response was to simply scoffed at them. “Both of you are being idiots.”

“Oh,” John teased as he forced himself up from the sofa. “Sherlock’s in love with Mycroft.”

“John, shut up.”
Prodding Sherlock in the chest lightly, he said, “You love your brother.”

“John, do stop teasing Sherlock,” Mycroft said, taking that warning tone with him. “We’ve been together for nearly twenty years and I can still count all the times he’s expressed such... common notions to me on both hands.”

Taking in the near smug look on Sherlock’s face and the phone, since his voice was the only part of Mycroft present, John couldn’t help but be disappointed. “That is depressing for the record. You two need to seriously revaluate your relationship. Seek couples therapy. No... Well, yes, but... You get the point.”

“I’ll be around soon, Sherlock. Traffic,” Mycroft said, as though he hadn’t spoken at all.

Nodding, Sherlock said, “Good enough, I suppose.”

“Goodbye John.”

“Bye Mycroft. Can’t wait for you to get here,” he said, giving a small half wave at the mobile out of instinct. “Hopefully I can teach you both how to express your feelings to each other.”

“He’s not going to let that go is he?” Mycroft question.

“No.” Meeting the disapproving look in John’s eyes, Sherlock sighed and added, “But I do... love you. To an extent, for the record.”

“Peer pressure is an awful thing, Sherlock. I told you never to give into it.”

“Mycroft,” Sherlock said, giving their usual parting as a cue to end the conversation.

“Goodbye, Sherlock. I suppose I love you as well. Happy John?”

“Chuffed,” John said, unable to keep from smiling even as Sherlock hung up the phone with an annoyed groan. Crossing his arms over his chest, he didn’t even care if he looked a bit smug over the entire thing as he asked, “Now was that so hard?”

“I feel disgusted with him and myself,” Sherlock said as he made his way to the kitchen.

“But you love each other.”

“I love you as well, but I don’t tell you that at every turn.”

Pausing for a moment, John followed after him. Grabbing Sherlock’s arm, he waited until he had the genius’s undivided attention. “You’ve... never told me that before.”

“See?” Sherlock asked, as he jerked his arm out of John’s grasp and went back to searching the fridge for something only privy to him.

“Oi. Wait. Hold on.”

“What?” Sherlock asked turning towards him again.

Rolling his eyes, John wondered why it was he chose to put up with Sherlock in the first place. The man was absolutely impossible and deserved to be hit a lot more than he was. Still, reaching up to cup the back of his neck, John pulled Sherlock down into a brief kiss, muttering against his lips, “I love you too.”

“Noted. May I cook now?”
“Go right ahead,” John said as he walked back into the living room, determined to figure out a way to make both of the Holmes brothers have normal human responses in a normal human way for after he and Sherlock had properly welcomed Mycroft home.
Sherlock knows how his body reacts to kicking an addiction. That doesn't mean he knows how to control it.

When John had brought up Mycroft’s small habit of smoking after sex, Sherlock had been only too happy to join in on the topic, since it really did make the man seem like even more of an indolent git than he already was. The fact that the man often shared his cigarettes with Sherlock was merely their way of quietly bonding while Sherlock ensured that whatever damage their painfully civil civil servant did to himself smoking, it wasn’t likely to lead him to an early grave.

Not that John saw it like that once Mycroft pointed out that his smoking habit was somehow less damaging than what Sherlock did. A purely preposterous idea given that Sherlock rarely smoked, thanks to those annoying laws. It was far more practical to wear patches, something John didn’t seem to understand as he turned his doctoral concern toward Sherlock. And really, John’s concern was something he was both used to and happened to enjoy from time to time. When being accused of being an addict unable to quit smoking wasn’t one of those times.

So, in order to prove his point, he swore to give up smoking and patches, since he didn’t really need them. They were nothing more than a distraction and he had cases for that, as well. He had went through the painstaking effort of making certain that no one would sell him any cigarettes while John cleaned out any that might be lingering around the flat with Mycroft’s aid.

Of course, what was supposed to be a simple affair to prove that he could easily give up smoking since he wasn’t really addicted to it or those patches ad become a bit more complicated when Lestrade failed to have any cases. Standing near the window, watching the street like a hawk, he didn’t bother looking away when he heard John walk into the kitchen, back from getting dinner, lest he miss some kind of mystery that might choose that moment to develop.

“Alright, what have you done with the milk?” John said as he poked his head into the living room.

There was little point in looking over at John, given the accusatory tone of voice and a likely perplexed look on his face. For them to run out of milk was normal, if not the natural course of things. But, apparently, something about the fact that John had just bought the milk the other morning made him a bit testy. A rather amusing, if not ultimately useless tidbit in Sherlock’s eyes.

“I drank it,” he said, before turning toward John.

Furrowing his brows as he gave him a quizzical look, John shook his head as though there was something inherently wrong with Sherlock’s statement. “You drank an entire thing of milk? Alone?”

“Yes,” Sherlock said, not fully understanding the dilemma. “I was seeing if I might be able to get a chemical reaction based on the casein.”

Nodding slowly as he processed the information, John retreated back into the kitchen. The last thing he wanted to deal with were Sherlock’s insane sounding ideas, but Sherlock knew he wouldn’t hold out for long. Mentally counting off in his head, he nearly smirked when it only took
four seconds for John to reappear looking a bit more determined to figure out his issue.

“You were trying to get high off milk?” John asked, obviously trying to clarify the situation. When Sherlock nodded calmly, he let out a disbelieving laugh. “You were trying to get high off milk and yet you don’t have an addiction problem?”

“I ate twenty pounds worth of candy the other day but the effect doesn’t last long enough.”

“Sugar high,” John pointed out with a roll of his eyes. Looking back into the kitchen, John turned his attention back to him with a heavy sigh. “Sherlock, am I going to have to keep you away from... food?”

“Don’t be irrational, John. I needed something to take my mind off the lack of smoking.”

“So your solution was enough candy to rot your teeth and milk?”

“It was a perfectly rational test. And the effects of the candy would be outweighed by the milk.”

Not that Sherlock was particularly concerned about whether or not he gave himself a cavity when the effects had been joyously wonderful. His brain in a brief hyper drive, taking in everything in a sort of crystal clear focus, something that more than made up for how jittery it made him. For the duration. Still, it was better than the milk, which had turned out to be a complete and rather unpleasant let down.

“Should I worry about you taking up running to see if you can get a runner’s high?” John asked, crossing his arms over his chest.

Scoffing at the very idea, Sherlock threw himself onto the sofa with his usual flair. “No. I’m not insane.”

“I’d say that’s still up for debate. I mean, twenty quid worth of candy? How are you not sick?”

“There needs to something else. Something to take my mind off this,” Sherlock said to himself. John’s complaints were boring and the feeling of his mind practically picking itself apart was all but maddening. If he didn’t find something to do with himself, he was certain it would be more than a wall that would come to suffer. “It’s hardly a fair agreement if I don’t have a case to work on when I can’t smoke.”

“You do need to learn how to cope with no cases and no addictions, you know,” John pointed out as, always being so damn practical about everything. Heading back into the kitchen once again, he added, “And to be fair, you suggested this.”

Bolting up, Sherlock marched into the kitchen, cornering John against the refrigerator. Prodding the smaller man in the chest with his finger, he said, “You likely set this entire matter up on purpose to ruin everything.”

“Right,” John agreed, nonplussed by the finger pressing against his sternum. “I’m like the anti-Moriarty. Just convincing criminals not to commit any crimes to drive you insane.”

It was clear to anyone with eyes that despite the concerned crease to his mouth, John’s eyes and clenching fist spoke of a growing annoyance, but Sherlock didn’t bother moving. Instead he let his mind drift to the very good point that John likely didn’t even know he had made. Moving away, he rushed to his laptop, immediately setting about searching every online paper he could find.

“Moriarty! Where is he? He’s been far too secretive as of late,” he complained as he tried to find some sort of crime that seemed like it could have involved the mastermind.
Leaning against the doorjamb, John closed his eyes as he cocked his head to the side, likely hoping that he had somehow misheard everything that Sherlock had said.

“You... No. You can’t be hoping for Moriarty to show up and try to kill us just so you can have something to do.”

“It’d be perfect,” he argued.

After all, he needed a case and someone had to handle Moriarty. If both of those things could be achieved at the same moment, he didn’t understand why John wouldn’t be for it on the sole basis of a possible attempt on their lives.

“Sherlock... I’m not having this conversation.” Making his way back into the kitchen, likely for the final time, John called out, “And I’m not having sex with you either. The last thing I need is for you to use sex as a replacement addiction.”

And while he was more than willing to argue why John’s stance on sex was a poorly chosen one, the sight of a black sedan through the window caught his eye. Smiling to himself, Sherlock quickly jumped out of his seat.

“Mycroft is here. He just got out of a meeting with Germans.”

“Good for him. Why don’t you go and greet him,” John called out.

Smirking to himself, Sherlock nodded in agreement.

“Happily,” he said, leaving the room before John could have a chance to question his intentions.

After all, Mycroft didn’t just have cars waiting outside without telling anyone. Mycroft would either text John or actually call him. An idle car meant that his brother had every intention of coming inside, but was lingering about outside the door for reasons. And given what he knew of his brother, he was fairly certain he knew the exact reason it was Mycroft was outside rather than in their flat, bothering them.

Stepping outside, Sherlock felt a bit weak at the sight of his brother. Long coat to fight against the chill in the air, leather gloves designed to fit only his brother’s hands as he stood next to the step smoking a cigarette. It was a bit of a paradox, to be more affected by the sight of Mycroft fully clothed and smoking than he was when they were both sweating and naked in some bed, but Sherlock didn’t question it.

Instead he merely stood as close to his brother as he could without breaking any societal conventions. When Mycroft went to put out his cigarette, Sherlock quickly grabbed his wrist.

“Don’t stop. John’s upstairs setting up for dinner.”

“He’ll be upset if he knew I was indulging your addictions,” Mycroft said, looking as though he was concerned while his tone remained dripping with amusement.

Because, while John may not have noticed, Sherlock was only quietly attuned to the fact that Mycroft had taken up smoking a bit more. The way his voice sounded a bit rougher when he visited, the sound of smoke being exhaled as he spoke on the phone. After so many petty comments about the man’s weight, it seemed as though Mycroft had finally found his way of seeking his revenge.

“I’m not smoking. You are. He has no issue with that.”
“A wilful blindness toward his stance on smoking and your little agreement,” Mycroft said as he carefully released his wrist from Sherlock’s hold. Taking a deep, slow drag of his cigarette, he smiled coyly as he exhaled in Sherlock’s direction. “You are rather desperate.”

Breathing in the second hand smoke deeply, Sherlock could hardly control the shudder than went down his spine at the smell of the German brand cigarettes. Eyes closing in pleasure, he said, “It was always the best part of sex with you. The smoke afterwards. God only knows what we’ll do now.”

“I think our sharing of John is a good replacement for our singular shared vice. And because you’re being rude, I rather think I’m done.”

Eyes snapping open in time to see Mycroft stub out the cigarette beneath the toe of his shoe, Sherlock watched on in horror.

“You had nearly half of it left.”

“I’ve spent the last four hours discussing matters with some Austrians, not Germans, and I’ve already smoked through the entire pack. Well, the six I had in the pack.”

“I can tell. You reek of smoke,” he said, unable to resist running his thumb along the lapel of Mycroft’s coat.

Staring him down, Mycroft didn’t say a word, merely gestured for him to lead the way inside. And while he never took kindly to his brother’s attempts force him into doing as he was told, Sherlock felt that, for once, playing along actually was the best choice.

Making his way to the door, Sherlock opened it and let Mycroft walk in before doing the same. Closing the door behind him, he grabbed the of Mycroft’s coat and pressed him back against the door, mouth firmly attached to his brother’s, whether Mycroft wanted it or not. Honestly, it didn’t matter as Sherlock forced his tongue into the man’s mouth.

He tasted of cigarettes and aged liquor, something that meant that whatever arduous meeting Mycroft had, it ended well. Not that Sherlock actually cared beyond the intoxicating taste of smoke on Mycroft’s tongue and the smell of it coming off his clothes. Certainly it had been ages since he had last been so desperate to be near Mycroft.

Yet, despite the fact that he was only too happy to kiss back, wilfully breaking the agreement that they’d made with John, Mycroft eventually broke the kiss. His usual lack of exercise and recent increase in smoking leaving him a bit breathless as he attempted to gently push Sherlock away.

“Sherlock, Mrs. Hudson might catch us.”

“Don’t care,” he muttered against Mycroft’s mouth, fighting against the hands trying to push him away.

The idea that Mrs. Hudson didn’t know was already a debateable one and, despite how it may have looked, he wasn’t just snogging Mycroft for the fun of it. He was carefully and painstakingly trying to lick the very taste of cigarettes out of every corner of his mouth. Cupping Mycroft’s jaw when he felt the man tense up at the sound of footsteps, Sherlock decided to take his chances rather than let Mycroft move away.

Sighing, John calmly walked over to them, looking them over with a vague sort of amusement before turning his attention towards Mycroft. “I’m going to assume that Sherlock’s attachment to your mouth has something to do with the fact that you smell like smoke?”
Groaning into the kiss, Mycroft turned his head toward John, lips pressed firmly together as Sherlock growled angrily at him. When the detective settled on sucking at his throat as though he could clean him of the smell with his mouth, Mycroft gave John an apologetic look.

“I was accosted.”

“Great. Questioned answered. You can stop talking now,” Sherlock said before forcing Mycroft into another kiss.

Resting his hands on his hips, John scoffed at Mycroft or him or the both of them, given the sight they must’ve made. “So much for that I don’t smoke bit you told me,” he complained.

Forcing Sherlock away with a bit more force, Mycroft quickly turned to John, resting his hands the man’s sides, likely just to keep himself from being accosted once again with John standing there, watching them like a disapproving parent.

“I didn’t lie to you,” Mycroft stated, “It was a diplomatic meeting.”

Undeterred by the fact that he had lost access to Mycroft’s mouth, Sherlock settled for pressing against his brother’s back, sandwiching him between the two of them as Sherlock inhaled the lingering smell of smoke wafting off his coat.

“Mycroft smokes for business and pleasure, just not often,” he muttered, mouth teasing along the thing sliver of skin between the collar of the coat and Mycroft’s hair. “He prefers drinking as his personal vice.”

Rolling his eyes, Mycroft pulled John closer and gave him a rather chaste kiss. “Hello, John.”

Nodding his greeting, John pushed him away, nose wrinkled up in distaste. “Even your clothes smell like smoke.”

“It was a very long meeting. I hope you don’t mind.”

“You should’ve changed before coming here,” John said. Because, while he personally didn’t mind, there was no doubt where his concerns on the matter rested. Cupping Mycroft’s jaw, he smiled. “You don’t know the great lengths your brother is going through to find a replacement addiction.”


“Pain?” John questioned, standing a little straighter to glance at Sherlock over Mycroft’s shoulder.

Thankfully, Mycroft seemed willing to answer that for him, rather than force Sherlock to break away from his interest in Mycroft’s neck. “Releases endorphins. It was a short lived habit that he’s attempted again, with little success. Nothing to worry about,” Mycroft assured him.

Of course, the worried look on John’s face meant that he was anything but satisfied with such an answer as he asked, “He’s tried to get high off pain?”

“He owns a riding crop. Haven’t you ever wondered why?”

And like with so many other times John was confronted with new information he wasn’t ready to process, he shook his head as he raised his hands, wilfully trying to block out any and all ideas that stemmed from Mycroft’s comment.

“Upstairs,” he ordered as he finally did a good enough job of repressing the unwanted
information. “We should all go upstairs. And Sherlock, keep two paces from Mycroft. You’re like an eager puppy trying to hump his leg.”

Sneering at John and Mycroft, who shot back a rather cheeky smile, Sherlock made an overt show of moving away from Mycroft as the man began to make his way up the stairs. Moving to follow after him, he found himself cut off by John, who pointed a warning finger at him, as though he couldn’t be trusted not to jump Mycroft on the stairs.

“You’re being childish,” he muttered as soon as John started to make his way up the stairs as well.

“Don’t care,” John said, glancing back at him. “And you’re one to talk considering you looked about ready to have Mycroft against the front door.”

“He’d never allow that. Mrs. Hudson might hear.”

“I take it we’re having Thai food? Something obscenely spicy?” Mycroft questioned too loudly as he made his way into the living room. It wasn’t the most subtle of topic changes, but given the look he was giving them both, Mycroft’s only interest was in stopping the conversation they were having.

From the way he shook it off, John was probably grateful for the change in topics. Pointing off towards the kitchen, he said. “Sherlock suggested Thai.”

(Of course he did,” Mycroft said with a soft chuckle. Turning to Sherlock, he tutted disapprovingly. “Getting high off spicy foods? You certainly are getting creative. Hopefully Lestrade will come up with something of interest soon. If only for John’s sake.”

“Bloody hell,” John complained. “Is there anything else I should worry about him trying?”

Mycroft nodded. “Tickling.”

“Mycroft shut up,” Sherlock said as he made his way over to his chair.

Looking between the two of them for some kind of joke, John shook his head. “You can’t be serious.”

“It is a way of releasing endorphins, but Sherlock’s not fond of it. Being out of control in such a way bothers him. Although, how cocaine is a better alternative to tickling is beyond my reasoning skills.”

“I’m not at the mercy of someone else, Mycroft,” he explained, pulling his knees up to his chest as he glared at the two of them.

Tickling meant literally being at the submission of someone with no control over himself. It was a horrifying prospect, the rapid intake of breath as his body forced out laugh after laugh. And while he wasn’t all that ticklish to begin with, it didn’t take much more than luck for someone to find the few chinks in his armour.

Still, the comment was more than enough to illicit the slight rise of Mycroft’s eyebrow and as he told him, “I’ve met most of your former dealers, Sherlock.”

“Alright,” John cut in before Sherlock could respond. “So... beware of spicy foods, candy, milk, him hurting himself and tickling. Great. At least when you finally kick your little smoking habit you’ll be done with this nonsense.”

“This wouldn’t even be a problem if Lestrade would merely give me an interesting case.”
Because he wouldn’t have even had to try to find other ways to occupy his time and brain if not for Lestrade and the insane lack of crime. How the world could possibly want such painfully boring peace at all times was beyond him. No murders, no fighting, just a disturbing silence to the entire planet. Sherlock hoped that such a day would never come to pass.

“You know, you both could always try having more sex,” Mycroft suggested.

“John already vetoed that idea.”

“I missed two days of work going that route,” John said in that accusatory tone of his. “Was fun at first, but then even sex gets a bit boring.”

Furrowing his brows, Sherlock muttered, “I suggested ways around that.”

“And it doesn’t help when he decides he wants it at the wrong time.”

“I hardly think it was the wrong time,” he said, not understanding John’s nonsensical argument.

Clenching his fist as he closed his eyes, likely trying to think of the best way to explain his point, John took a deep breath before saying, “Any time we’re out to dinner is the wrong time.”

“John, if you really believed that, you would’ve turned him down instead of getting off in the men’s,” Mycroft pointed out.

Jaw dropping as he looked toward Mycroft in shock and confusion, it was clear that John didn’t expect Mycroft to know about that, for some reason. “You... No. This is... You two aren’t ganging up on me. And if you want to use sex as a distraction go to your brother.”

“Trust me when I say that isn’t a solution,” Mycroft said with a small frown. Shaking his head at the memory, he added, “You could only imagine the sort of things that went wrong when he first gave up cocaine.”

“It was only bad in your opinion. I thought things went rather well,” Sherlock argued.

After all, it wasn’t as though anything major happened that Mycroft couldn’t control. Not to mention, it actually did help to have his brother around to keep his mind off cocaine. If nothing else, Mycroft knew how to be a fairly decent distraction. Of course, Mycroft always had to fail to see it in the same light that he did. A fact made abundantly clear by the repetition of his usual arguments.

“That’s because you had sex and the Ipswich killings.”

“Yeah, alright. How about we don’t talk about this, yeah?” John suggested, snapped out of the daze he seemed to fall into when the two of them argued by the mention of murders. “Sherlock will find a more normal way to deal with his cravings and... You didn’t cause the Ipswich murders for Sherlock, did you?”

“Heavens no,” Mycroft said, not the least bit offended that John would think such a thing about him. “Although we did have a lovely holiday in there that year.”

Thinking back on it, Sherlock smiled to himself. Other than the murder cases, which had been fun to piece together with Mycroft, the fact that they had had a chance to simply be themselves away from the worry of anyone they knew finding out. A rather lovely opportunity that was rarely afforded to them.

“It was a rather pleasant time, wasn’t it?” He questioned Mycroft, happy to see a similarly pleased
look on his brother’s face.

“You’re both insane. Just...” Going over to Mycroft, John stripped the man of his coat and held it out for Sherlock. “Here. Lick it, breathe it, whatever it is you want to do, just keep off your brother, yeah? I want to have something passing for a normal meal for once.”

Taking it, Sherlock breathed in the smell, smoke and Mycroft’s cologne, before getting up. If John wanted a normal meal, he was only too happy to play along with such a simple thing. Especially when he was using Mycroft’s coat as though it was some sort of bribe.

Watching as Sherlock made his way to the kitchen without a word, holding onto the coat like a small child with safety blanket, John sighed.

“I’m certain he’ll be well over his addiction soon enough,” Mycroft assured him. Wrapping his arms around John’s waist, he pressed a brief kiss to the man’s head. “Just give him time.”

“Says the man who’s going to leave in the morning to God only knows where,” John said as he leaned back against Mycroft.

Looking down at him, Mycroft frowned. “John, don’t act as though I’m not suffering as well. Lord only knows when I’ll get that coat back.”

Snickering, John moved away from Mycroft and made his way to the kitchen, leaving the elder Holmes to follow along for yet another uniquely domestic evening at 221B.
Chapter Summary

After saving Henry, Sherlock finds it hard to enjoy his success.

Chapter Notes

Set after Baskerville and... yes. It took 19 chapters to get from Scandal to Baskerville.

Everything was finished and settled, Sherlock mused as he sat in front of the fireplace, toying with his brother’s ID badge. The case of the Baskerville hound was as much of a cruel hoax as it was a calculated strike against one man who had never done anything to deserve it. Still, somehow, Henry seemed satisfied with the solution and Sherlock wasn’t one to fault him for that. He had his peace and that was good enough for some, even if Sherlock never understood such an idea himself.

Taking a deep breath, he looked over the badge, sneering at the rather poor image of Mycroft before turning his attention back toward the flames blazing away. In the morning, he would be on his way back to Baker Street, where everything would go back to normal and a number of people would be more than pleased to know that his craving for cigarettes died away somewhere between going to the military facility and being drugged without his knowledge.

Really, there were a number of brilliant things that had come from the entire ordeal, yet Sherlock continued to sit in front of a fire on his own, leg bouncing up and down restlessly even though the high of the case had worn off along with the effects of the drug, as far as he could tell.

“Do you ever sleep?”

Looking toward the voice as he sat up a little straighter, he gave Lestrade a curious look as he settled himself into the seat next to him. Quickly pocketing the badge, Sherlock asked, “What are you doing here?”

Lestrade, or Greg, as his name apparently happened to be, rubbed at his jaw as he shook his head a bit tiredly. “Just got back from talking with the local police, checking in on Henry and the sort.”

Nodding, Sherlock turned his attention back to the fireplace. It was just the sort of thing one would expect from the detective inspector. He was a dependable enough fellow, committed to what he did. Despite not having any real involvement in the case, he somehow felt it was his job to make sure everyone got the right information and that Henry was coping, like anyone overcoming a traumatic ordeal such as his. With a dedication like that it was no real surprise that Mycroft would call him in after surmising what it was Sherlock and John were up to.

“Why aren’t you sleep?” Greg questioned, not even trying to hide the concern in his voice as he leaned forward in his seat.

“Not tired.”
“Care for company?”

“Not particularly, but I doubt you honestly care,” Sherlock said, glancing at the detective out of the corner of his eye.

Sitting back, Greg raised his hands in surrender before starting to get up. “Look, if you want me gone—“

“No,” Sherlock said quickly. Taking a deep breath, he looked away from Greg nervously, wondering if he had been wrong about the effects of the drugs having worn off entirely. “I’m sorry. Apparently I’m running off everyone.”

Watching as Greg stood there, hovering in front of his seat, Sherlock was nearly certain that the man was going to leave anyways, which would’ve been fitting. Not that he would’ve ever considered himself self pitying, but between the drugs and the fact that he had become especially adept at upsetting those around him, he wouldn’t have blamed Greg for walking away.

Of course, if anyone had experience with Sherlock being a right prat at times, it was him. So, with a tired sigh, Greg sat back down and stared at him with a sort of pitying look.

“Want to talk about it?”

“No,” Sherlock snapped. “I already apologized to him, anyways.”

“Right then.” Looking around at the few stragglers in the room, Greg frowned as he asked, “Do they serve a good pint here? I was thinking I could use one.”

“I don’t know. You’d have to ask John and he’s...”

“Upstairs, in that room you’re avoiding. Got that when you said you didn’t want to talk about it,” Greg said, shrugging it off rather glibly.

“Don’t judge me,” Sherlock snapped back at him. “You’re the one who’s apparently given up on wearing that wedding ring, finally.”

“You really comparing the end of my marriage to the fact that you apparently pushed John a bit too far this time?”

Leaning back in his seat, Sherlock didn’t bother to answer the question. At the very best, it would make him seem immature and childish for trying to compare the situations. In the worst case, Greg would try to make some piss poor Freudian connection about how he had made the comment because he was afraid of losing John, not that such a thing was likely. The other man just wasn’t talking to him, which was fine. He spent days on end not actually speaking to John and that had never caused any sort of problem.

Glancing at the ceiling though, Sherlock really wished that that vile drug would make its way out of his system once and for all. If not for the drug, he would’ve been able to keep his mind from dwelling on the idea that perhaps John being upset with him might have consequences that he wouldn’t be able to force the man to stick around through. That he just might lose him over something as petty as a comment he apologized for.

Shaking his head, Sherlock returned his attention to the fireplace, frantically trying to focus on anything but the myriad of useless emotions he felt.

“Look Sherlock,” Greg started, resting a hand on his shoulder, “I like you and him and you’re
both nice blokes, but if you don’t want to talk about it, that’s fine. We’ll sit and talk cases or
football.”

Sherlock merely stared at him in disbelief at such a thought, although he didn’t move out of the
man’s reach.

“Well, cases,” Greg conceded with a slight smile. “But, if you do need a mate to listen, I’m here
for that as well, because I don’t want you ruining things with him.”

“Afraid you’ll lose the man who keeps me in line?” Sherlock scoffed.

He meant it to be nothing more than a sarcastic comment, but he knew that was how most
everyone viewed his relationship with John from the very beginning. John brought out his
‘humanity’, a term that brought up a level of disgust in Sherlock for varying reasons.

“No,” Greg said, rolling his eyes as he sat back in his seat. “Worried you’ll do something stupid
considering that John leaving you doesn’t mean he’d leave your brother. And heaven help us if
we have to deal with you being heartbroken and in a rage over that.”

“I never considered that.”

“Yeah. Well, I figured as much.”

Furrowing his brows, Sherlock licked his lips as he worked through everything. Gripping the edge
of his seat, he let out a soft sigh. “I didn’t... I only told him that I did have any friends.”

“Rather obvious fact. No need to tell him that.”

“Is this how you help other people?” Sherlock questioned angrily.

Holding up his hands in apology, Greg did his best to hide the small smile playing at his lips.
“Sorry. All jokes will be kept to myself from now on.”

Watching him carefully, Sherlock cautiously continued on. “It was after I’d been dosed with that
drug the first time. I was... upset,” he said, something about the word leaving a bitter taste in his
mouth. “It’s not something I’m used to so... I may have lashed out at him when he tried to help
me. I apologized, but...”

“Somehow sorry just doesn’t cover it for some reason, yeah? Well, it can’t really come as that
much of a surprise to you. Probably hurt him.”

“I apologized.”

“And? Apologizing isn’t some magic cure all, especially not the piss poor way you do it,” Greg
snorted. Sitting on the edge of his seat, he chuckled to himself as he said, “Like Molly at the
Christmas party. Embarrass the girl and then expect it to be alright with a sorry and a kiss on the
cheek?”

“She accepted my apology,” Sherlock shot back.

“Date her then.”

Sitting up straighter, Sherlock wasn’t sure how it was he was meant to respond to that. “I thought
you were meant to be helping me?”

“Part of being a mate is telling someone when they’re being an entitled prat. And God help John
An entirely unnecessary reaction given that Sherlock was certain that he and Mycroft weren’t that bad together or separately. They both treated John a great deal better than they treated each other, something John often claimed was unhealthy.

Smiling at the thought of all the complaints John seemed to lobby against him and Mycroft, Sherlock just as quickly found himself overcome with the idea that he might be very well on his way to putting an end to even John’s more meddlesome behaviour simply with how he had happened to treat him.

“I want to fix it, but I can’t think of how to go about doing so. I said sorry. What more could he expect from me?”

After all, even something as simple as admitting that he had been wrong was something that Sherlock rarely did when dealing with his own brother. He and Mycroft tried to stir the pot with one another for fun and when it came to actual rows, well, certainly they never ended in a direct apology. For that not to be enough with John was disconcerting at best, especially given that Sherlock wasn’t sure what else there was for him to do.

“Maybe you ought to go and ask him that?” Greg suggested.

Looking toward the stairs, Sherlock shook his head. “He’s likely sleep already.”

“Very true,” Greg agreed. “Go wake him up and talk to him.”

“Hardly seems like sound advice, waking him up from his slumber.”

“He’s not a bear. He won’t kill you for it. But I might if you don’t go. I’m a cop, you know. Could make someone like you disappear real easy,” Greg said, somehow managing to keep a straight face despite the laughable claim he was making.

Scoffing, Sherlock merely said, “Oh please.”

“I’m serious. Go talk to him or else I’ll... tell your brother or something,” he said, trying to come up with something that would inspire Sherlock to move.

Looking towards the stairs, Sherlock debated what to do. No matter what Lestrade said about telling Mycroft, he wasn’t afraid of his brother knowing that he and John had some spat. Mycroft would never really involve himself in it unless he absolutely had to, either way. But Sherlock had been avoiding his room since they had returned to the inn and to give up and suddenly do the opposite wasn’t the most appealing of thoughts.

Tapping his finger along the arm of the chair though, Sherlock forced himself to his feet. Hands clenched nervously at his side, he gave a brief nod towards Greg.

“Good night, Lestrade.”

“Night,” Greg said with a wave. Sherlock had barely made it two steps away before the man was out of his seat, grabbing him by the arm. Indifferent to the look of confusion on Sherlock’s face, Greg added, “And, you know, for the record, you do have friends. You’ve got John and myself and probably a lot more than you care to admit, so he has every right to be upset with you.”

“Thank you.” His usually calm demeanour wavering slightly at the kindness of Greg’s words, he nodded and softly said, “Thank you.”
With that he quickly made his way to his room, stopping outside the door to simply stare at it. On the one hand, John being there was actually exactly what he wanted but something about the idea left a sort of leaden feeling in his stomach. Still, standing outside of the room was making him look like an idiot, so with a deep breath, he swallowed down his nervousness and made his way inside.

Despite the hour, John was still wide awake, sitting on his bed as he typed away furiously. Whether he was attempting to write up the case or just trying to give the illusion of working, it was hard to tell, but from the tension in his shoulders, he really wasn’t pleased to have Sherlock around.

“John. You’re up,” he said closing the door behind him.

Without looking up, John shrugged. “Yeah. I am.”

“I uh... About what I said—”

“It really doesn’t matter, alright? You said it. You’re sorry about that. It’s done with.”

“Except you’re still upset.” When John turned his attentions back toward his laptop, the awful clicking sound filling the room once again, Sherlock shook his head. “John, I don’t understand. I said sorry.”

“I know. I get it. You said sorry about yelling at me and that’s grand. Really. But...” Putting aside his laptop, John rested his head in his hands for a long moment. When he finally looked up at him again, there was a sad smile playing at his lips. “You don’t even get it.”

“Get what? What is there to get?”

“I love you,” he stated far too calmly, none of the usual romance and reverence in his voice as he spoke. It was almost as though it was nothing more than a boring fact in the man’s life. Something that could never be the case given the way John pushed for some sort of emotional transparency in their relationship. “I love you and yet I’m nothing to you, aren’t I? You don’t actually care.”

“John, don’t be dense,” Sherlock scoffed.

Wincing at the words, John shook his head, his smile growing a bit more bitter as he did. Continuing on as though Sherlock had never spoke, he said, “And I could expect that from Mycroft, but I live with you. Stupid as it sounds, I kind of thought that might make a difference. Yet the first time something starts to freak you out, I’m not wanted. I’m completely useless in your eyes for an actual emergency. Good shag, decent enough bloke to talk to but... There’s no depth to our relationship in your mind, is there?”

“You’re upset I didn’t want your help,” Sherlock stated, not having much else to offer.

The urge to deny everything based on the fact that he was under some sort of drug effect hung in the air like a forbidden fruit given that he could never utter such a thing and get away with it. John had been under the effects of the same drug and yet his first instinct had been to call Sherlock, as though that would’ve made being alone in some laboratory bearable. It was enough to make Sherlock feel even more ashamed, a feeling he was starting to believe wasn’t entirely due in part to the effects of the drug.

Letting out a frustrated huff, John rose to stand, staring him down like he was some sort of threat. “Yeah. I am. What good am I if you can’t even... If you won’t trust me, huh?”

“I do trust you,” he said, not needing to spend even a fraction of a second thinking over such a
thing. “I sent you to talk to Henry’s doctor.”

“Because she was attractive.”

“In spite of that. Unless you also believe I’d have you sleep with some woman for the sake of a case.”

Crossing his arms over his chest, John didn’t seem particularly amused by the comment. “I wouldn’t have done that. I love you, even if you don’t understand how that works.”

“You wanted to be there for me,” clarified yet again, not sure what it was he was supposed to be gleaning from that fact.

“Yeah. Because I’ve never seen you like that before and if it’s enough to worry you, it’s enough to worry me. Something, I’m assuming you don’t get from Mycroft by the look on your face.”

Looking away to hide the sudden warmth that seemed to be colouring his cheeks, Sherlock tried to get rid of the look of shock on his face as well. Although he would never dream of criticizing the admittedly distant way he and Mycroft handled their relationship, John’s compulsion to bring the complete opposite of that to their lives was always most startling when presented so bluntly by the man himself.

Licking his lips, Sherlock muttered softly, “Mycroft and I care for each other from afar.”

“I’ve noticed.” Taking a deep breath, John closed the distance between them and cupped Sherlock’s cheek. For the first time since the other night, John seemed to be a bit happier with Sherlock. “But I’m not like you two. I intend to be there to care for you both in person until the very end.”

And even if he hadn’t used that painfully earnest tone, Sherlock was certain that he would’ve believed John based entirely on the fact that the man didn’t make claims like that. He was loyal to a fault and certainly Sherlock seemed to be determined to find the seemingly nonexistent limits to such a loyalty.

“I’m sorry,” he said again, albeit a bit more genuinely. “I didn’t know.”

Smiling, John patted his cheek, the last of his anger fading away like smoke in the wind. “Apology accepted since you know what you’re apologizing for this time.”

“I love you and having you... around. I don’t want to lose that,” he said softly.

Wrapping his arms around Sherlock’s waist, John shrugged it off as though it was no big deal, even though the amused glint in his eyes betrayed him. “Yeah, well, I’m rather used to the idea that you’re quite possibly the smartest idiot in England, so you don’t have to worry about that.”

“Thank you.”

“What you will have to worry about is whatever Mycroft intends to do about you stealing his ID badge,” John pointed out since Sherlock had already done everything short of promising his first born for unsupervised access to Baskerville.

Not to say that he wouldn’t have easily done as much for the chance at that kind of free reign, but they all knew that the odds of either Holmes having children was nothing more than a rather mental pipedream. If anything, the lot of them would grow old and die together somewhere in Sussex, to the pleasure of no one except Sherlock himself.
Snorting, Sherlock waved off the entire notion as he said, “We’ve... made agreements on that front and others already.”

The look on John’s face immediately changed from amusement to worry as he stared up at Sherlock. Opening his mouth, he failed to say a single word, his brows merely dropping as his mind likely ran itself in circles around when they had come to such an agreement and what it was.

Deciding to let the matter go, like he often did, he moved away from Sherlock and nodded toward his bed. “We’re going to sleep now and definitely not talking about whatever it is you two are up to.”

“Certain?” Sherlock teased as he took off his scarf.

Closing his eyes, John shook his head. “Not really, but even if I change my mind, we’re still getting in bed.”

“Fair enough,” he agreed.

After a day filled with emotions, experiments and a mad scientist getting blown up by his own choice, Sherlock found that, for once, the idea of crawling into bed for sleep seemed rather pleasant. Even if they weren’t otherwise preceded by the one activity that typically found him in a bed for an extended period of time to begin with.
Coventry

Chapter Summary

Mycroft learns the gravity that comes with Coventry conundrums.

“Hi honey. Dinner’s ready.”

Never once looking toward the playfully lilting voice, Mycroft didn’t even pause as he walked into the room. Undisturbed, he put away his umbrella before taking off his coat and hanging it up. Running his hand along the front of his jacket, he looked toward the lock on the door, eying it carefully before sealing himself in his own home with Jim Moriarty.

Taking in the room and finding nothing immediately out of place, aside from the man sitting on his sofa as though he belonged there. A strange fact given that he was certain that he would’ve been one of the last people that Moriarty wanted to see after his release. It had been some time since the man had started to retreat back into his shell, something that Mycroft assumed might have been in retaliation to the fact that he admitted to just wanting to get information out of the man.

Because if anyone was to grow upset over a specific brand of honesty, it was the man seated before him in looking far too decadent in his suit and tie, ankle resting on his leg as he stared back at Mycroft with the unfaltering smile of a shark.

“What are you doing in here?” Mycroft asked as he made his way to his chair. Unbuttoning his jacket as he sat down, he tried not to think anything of the half empty glass of wine sitting on the table. The last thing he wanted to do was get caught up in the subtle mines Moriarty had planted for him. Instead, he narrowed his eye at the man. “How did you get in?”

Ignoring the question, Jim picked up his glass. Swirling the contents around with a practised ease, he breathed in the aroma before downing the last of its contents. He didn’t even seem the least bit concerned with the cold blue eyes watching his every action as he placed the glass back on the coffee table before leaning back, foot bouncing restlessly as he frowned.

“I was kind of hoping you’d be around to send me off after my release but you were nowhere to be seen,” Jim said, sounding every bit the jilted lover. Resting his chin in his hands, he pouted at Mycroft like an upset child piecing together a puzzle. “Why was that? I thought we hit it off rather well.”

Sneering, Mycroft rose from his seat and made his way over to Jim. Staring down at him, he stated smoothly, “You have thirty seconds to leave before I have you removed. From my home and from existence.”

“You didn’t seem particularly chatty before your release.”

Pointing at him, Jim did his best to look wounded. “That one chat of ours hurt my feelings. Telling
me I’m useless to you? That was just cruel.”

Something Jim had likely known at the time, perhaps even long before they had come to that point. The fact of the matter was that eventually Jim was going to be useless since he could never be trusted to be helpful, so the every meeting became centred around getting as much information as possible from him. A task that Mycroft had felt he had done rather competently, even if he had let his own emotions get the better of him in the end.

Still, there was no time to dwell on that or anything else concerning their talks given that Moriarty wasn’t merely free, but he was sitting a bit too comfortably in Mycroft’s home. A matter that he had managed to achieve in the same way that Sherlock did given that there had been no notice on the fact that someone had broken into his home. It left nearly everything accounted for, except for one question that Mycroft couldn’t actually avoid asking.

“Why are you here?”

Stunned by the question, a smile slowly spread across Jim’s face. Turning towards Mycroft, he opened his mouth to speak only to pause as something caught his eyes. Watching as the man looked around the room with a sort of perplexed on his face, Mycroft kept his hands loose at his side, determined not to let the man manipulate him into showing any emotion. The man already thought of him as the iceman; for him to present himself as anything but would be giving Jim more than he deserved.

“You know you lack any sort of photos around here,” Jim eventually said, using that same concerned tone that Mrs. Hudson tended to take with Sherlock. “None of yourself, none of your family. Don’t even have a photo of that lover of yours. Makes it very hard to look for someone when you don’t know what they look like that.”

“It would be cruel to mention that it was merely a lie, wouldn’t it?” Mycroft questioned. Grimacing, Jim shook his head as he rolled his wrist in front of his chest, as though he could magically summon the words to his mouth. “Is cruel a synonym for a lie? Because, if so, yeah, it would be.”

And honestly, the blind conviction of the man would’ve been quaint if not for how pathetic it seemed. Cocking his head to the side slightly as he took in the upset visage of Jim, Mycroft crossed his arms over his chest, officially bored with the man’s madness.

“You really believe that I would tell you about an actual person I was sleeping with in trade for information? James, certainly you of all people can’t be that gullible.”

Visibly crushed, Jim nodded a bit reluctantly. “Nah. I suppose your right. It could’ve been a lie, except for that bit where I’m not some idiot, Iceman,” he snapped, voice rising. Eyes wild with fury, he smiled politely, making him seem even more threatening as he sat there, hands folded in his lap. “So let’s not pretend I’m one starting now, alright? I know you were telling the truth.”

With a steady breath, Mycroft licked his lips, far more wary of the man than he should’ve been in his own home as he asked, “Based on my honest face?”

After all, even an idiot could tell that whatever they were playing at, it wasn’t a game. It may have been his home, but Moriarty was still a mad man who could’ve done anything in the time he had been waiting for Mycroft’s return. There was no advantage if the man was to strike out against him like he might Sherlock. And yet, despite that, Mycroft knew that giving in to whatever it was the man was after would be just as bad, if not worse, for him.
The mad look in Jim’s eyes faded slightly as he ducked his head. Looking up through his eyelashes, he muttered nervously, “I went looking for him.”

“A failure by your own words, James.”

“Jim. Don’t…” Clenching his jaw, Jim held his hand close to his face as he pointed at Mycroft angrily. “Don’t start getting quaint, alright?”

“You’re in my home,” Mycroft reminded him.

The fact that Jim laughed at the comment was far more of a warning than his statement. “All the more reason not to mess about, isn’t it? God only knows how long I’ve been sitting here waiting for you.”

Watching as Jim looked toward the window, Mycroft hesitantly followed his gaze, his own mind doing Jim’s work and calculating angles and odds of someone firing a successful shot into the room. Certainly with him standing, he wasn’t helping his own odds. If Jim hadn’t simply hidden some type of explosive in the room, set to go off no matter the outcome of their chat.


“Now…” Pausing, Jim furrowed his brows as he tried to recapture whatever moment he had been in before. Failing, he sighed, meeting Mycroft’s patient gaze with a look of apology. “What was I talking about?”

“My imaginary lover that you couldn’t find,” he offered helpfully. “Although, I wonder why you were after him.”

“Little things,” Jim said, waving it off. “Chat about you, find out where you get your clothes, kill him.”

“Terribly sorry to cost you such an interesting evening.”

Flashing a genuine smile, Jim made some noncommittal noise. “I was too, at first, but then I went home and I made myself a nice big bowl of cereal and I settled in for a bit of work. Guess what I found?”

“That cereal makes a piss poor meal to work to?” Mycroft offered. “Eventually you drop milk on the papers and it can be a right pain.”

Ready to make some comment, Jim paused for a long moment before fitfully waving away whatever ideas lingered about his mind.

“Other than that.”

“Not a clue,” he said, the faintest hint of annoyance colouring his voice.

Standing in front of one of the few people who might have been as dangerous as him, if not more, was growing tiresome. If all Moriarty wanted to do was play at the same silly games with no end in sight, Mycroft was more than willing to take his chances in ending them then and there.

Everything about the way his eyes lit up with excitement as he began to rock back and forth seemed specifically designed to grate Mycroft’s nerves and even though he didn’t often consider taking such actions on his own, Mycroft found himself growing more and more tempted to handle Moriarty on his own.
“Really? Because I think you’re just playing hard to get this time around,” Jim teased.

Fighting the urge to clench his jaw, Mycroft merely said, “To be fair, you did break into my home.”

“Quibbles.” Rubbing at the side of his nose, Jim looked around him before settling on a plain manila folder. Picking it up, he flicked through its contents carefully. “No. I found some fun surveillance footage of John Watson and that brother of yours. You didn’t tell me they’d become a couple, Iceman. I was really quite hurt by that.”

Raising his chin slightly as Jim held out the image to him, Mycroft felt his stomach drop at the sight of it. Where and when it was taken hardly mattered when it showed something that a growing number of papers might’ve killed for. The great Sherlock Holmes kissing his cherished blogger in what was obviously meant to be a private moment between the two of them.

Of course, there was nothing he could do about it except hand the photo back to Jim as he told him, “It must have slipped my notice.”

“I don’t think so. You notice everything.”

Faking a polite smile at that, Mycroft brushed his thumb along the corner of his mouth. “Unfortunately, there’s the matter of Ms. Adler that would speak against that.”

“Yeah, but you were never as concerned about her as you are these two. I mean, after all, they have a criminal mastermind after them.”

“And I’m meant to care about that?” Mycroft questioned boredly.

Chuckling as he turned his attention back to the content of his folder, Jim ran his finger along the picture of Sherlock and John wistfully before pulling out another photo and handing it Mycroft. “Well that would make for quite the strange dichotomy. You don’t care one way or another about who your brother and his pet sleep with, but you do care about the quality of John’s dental work? I could see that.”

Pressing his lips together, Mycroft stared at the photo offered to him with a growing sense of dread as he mentally placed the date and time of the photo. If he wanted to, he could’ve easily explained why he was kissing the same person who seemed to be dating his brother. Certainly the reasons for such a case could be made until the end of time and no one would care one way or another.

It was just something about Jim knowing that made him worry. The man had been willing to blow John up as a move to get at Sherlock, there was no telling what he might do with the evidence that John Watson was important to both of them. Not that John would care one way or the other about the risk at the end of the day, but Mycroft wasn’t about to make the mistake of underestimating the man again.

“How did you get this?” He asked, trying to keep his voice neutral. Whether or not he succeeded didn’t matter when his hand betrayed him by clenching at the picture too tightly.

With a small shrug of his shoulders, Jim let out a long, drawn out sigh. “You’re not the only one who enjoys watching people. I can’t believe you thought that I wouldn’t have them watched just because I was gone. That would be careless.”

Nodding in agreement, Mycroft handed the picture back to him, the mere source of such a photo corroding the edges of what he wanted to keep as a pleasant memory. Giving Moriarty the power to ruin his memories would be allowing him into a space that Mycroft could tell he was trying to
“So you didn’t fail as much as you thought. You’ve found out about John and myself,” he said, refocusing his efforts on getting to the bottom of Moriarty’s plan as soon as possible so that he could start to prevent it. “I hope you’re happy.”

“More than you could possibly imagine.” Tossing the folder aside, he picked up the remote and began to fiddle with it. Just the epitome of nervous energy being focused on anything that might help to distract him. “I mean, that’s quite the web you seem to have gotten yourself tangled up in. Sharing the man you love like that. Not that you don’t love the other but—”

“But the love I feel for my brother is different from how I feel about John.”

Stilling, Jim stared at him in confusion before snickering. “Oh. Oh you’re still at it.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“You really think I believe that you’ve been in some long term relationship with John Watson? I mean, it fits, but it doesn’t. He’s not the man that you spoke of and you know that I know that.”

“I know you think that,” Mycroft said patronizingly. “Mostly because you happened to have told me as much, just now, Jim.”

Shaking the remote at him, the man shook his head frantically. “You know, I’m going to let you get away with it this time because if I was presented with the idea that I was fucking my brother I’d... Well, I wouldn’t care, but I think you do. Lots to lose.”

“You think I’m having an affair with Sherlock because of some photos of us with John at two different times?” Mycroft said, practically laughing off the idea.

“That and your comments when we talked.”

And while maintained an amused grin, Jim only continued to sit there, a calm juxtaposition to what most would consider a rather mad claim. Dating the same man could easily fall into a number of categories that someone would justify and rationalize, but for two men, two geniuses to willingly take up a relationship with each other despite the fact that they were related was something that would never be understood. It was the modern equivalent of accusing someone of being a witch, something Mycroft knew Moriarty could make seem just as rational and dangerous.

Emotion fading from his steely blue eyes, Mycroft stood up straighter as he sneered at him. “You’re less clever than I thought.”

“And you can read minds,” Jim said as he rose to his feet. “Saying what I was about to tell you.”

“I understand that this is your grand attempt to bring me down out of vengeance or what have you, but I’m afraid to say this is the worst attempt against me I’ve ever endured.”

“How about this one?” Jim questioned as he pressed a button on the remote.

Television blinking to life as the most debauched of noises came from the screen, Mycroft could only stare at it in horror. His mind was in a haze, trying to rationalize and place the footage before him; fighting valiantly to reconcile the images of himself on top of his brother in a tangle of limbs as they had sex on the sofa of 221B.

It was the first time he had ever felt sickened by the thought of what he and Sherlock did together. Of course, where most would focus on the fact that they were brothers, Mycroft could only hate
them for being so careless, more interested in the way their mouths slid against each other as their bodies slotted together than the dangers that dominated both of their lives.

Unable to turn away from the screen, Mycroft’s mouth struggled to form the words necessary to deny it all. “That’s...”

“You. Fucking your brother,” Jim stated bluntly from Mycroft’s side. He hadn’t even notice that the man had move, much less that he could practically feel the heat radiating off Jim as the man mocked him. “No John. No one else but the two of you.”

Quickly turning towards him, Mycroft pressed his finger against Jim’s chest roughly as he demanded, “How did you come across this?”

“I’m better than you give me credit for. I’ve been watching your brother since the whole thing with Irene. Wanted to keep an eye on him since I had a feeling I’d be taking a rather long holiday,” he said as he slowly turned his attention from the fully clothed civil servant in front of him to his naked counterpart on the television. Smiling, he said, “You know you have a strange amount of freckles?”

“This could easily be fake,” Mycroft pointed out, mind working as quick as possible to find a solution.

“And pigs could easily fly if they had wings. But they don’t and this isn’t. I’m a genius, Mr. Holmes. Do you really think I didn’t consider everything you might be ready to say?” Jim asked, disgusted by the thought that he would just rush into something as cunning as what he had just laid out.

It was a justified feeling given that Mycroft knew that he was right. Whether Moriarty had only recently planned out such a scheme or had known from the very beginning, a question Mycroft didn’t have time to ask himself, the man obviously put a great amount of care into every piece of his sick little plan. It would’ve been admirable if not for the fact that he was the one who found himself trapped in the man’s twisted little web.

“Now, when you’ve gotten that erection of yours under control and are ready to give into my demands, I’ll just be sitting here, admiring how flexible your brother really is,” Jim said, patting Mycroft’s crotch before taking his seat yet again.

“Turn that off,” he ordered, unwilling to make eye contact with Jim or the screen.

“Oh come on! That was way too fast for you to do either thing I said.”

Ignoring him, Mycroft made his way over to the television, stilling slightly as the Sherlock on the video whimpered as he reached for the power button. Looking up at the screen, Mycroft paled before angrily turning it off before standing up straight again. Taking a deep breath, Mycroft fought for control over his entire being for what felt like an endless number of minutes as he could feel the walls of his mind and emotions beginning to crumble like a sandcastle in a storm.


Whipping around to face him, Mycroft could only stare in shock because of course Moriarty watched the entire film. He had seen it and whoever had notified him of such a thing had seen it as well. It was the sort of idea that left his barriers falling all the quicker as Jim continued to taunt him.

“You certainly know how to make him moan. Your parents must be proud.”
“What do you want?” Mycroft growled, giving up on controlling his anger. “To ruin Sherlock and myself? Drag John down with us?”

“No. I mean, I do, but I don’t.” Wincing as he struggled to find the right words, Jim leaned forward, resting his arms on his thighs. “See, doing that would be quick and far too easy with this. But there was another option I came up with.”

“What is it?”

Jim rolled his eyes as he sighed. “See, you’re ruining this by being so angry.”

“Get to the point,” Mycroft demanded.

“Fine. It’s your fault anyways. You made me remember what fun it was to have a pet when I was a boy and I thought that instead of killing you, I could just make you mine. I’ll walk you and feed you and dress you up because you’re mine now. And in exchange for you being an obedient boy, I let you carry on your sick affair.”

Mycroft smiled humourlessly. “Being judged by a sociopath. Quaint.”

“I’m not the one sleeping with my brother,” Jim shot back, as though he had some kind of moral high ground.

If not for the fact that so many would believe it was somehow better for Jim to play a large part in so many deaths than it was for Mycroft to be in a relationship with his own brother, he would’ve called him on it. But instead, Mycroft merely opened his mouth to speak, only to be cut off.

“And can you just say yes now? I really don’t have time to keep sitting here while you pretend you can find a way around this. You can’t.”

Licking his lips, Mycroft ignored Jim’s claims because they both knew he had already come to that conclusion on his own. The fact that he felt the need to explicitly state as much was just a testament to the fact that Moriarty wanted to rub in his success as a sort of insult to go along with the injuries he’d inflicted.

“A pet,” he muttered, trying to wrap his mind around that.

“A good pet. You’ll have fun. Or rather, I’ll have fun watching you suffer. Call it pay back for making me bend to your every whim. Or... cosmic punishment for bending Sherlock to your more carnal ones,” Jim said as he stood up. Straightening his tie, he smiled kindly at him, as though they’d been having a casual chat between mates. “And, you know, you could always say no. But if you do, or if you come after me over this, I’m leaking that tape everywhere. And I do mean everywhere.”

“You learned rather well from Ms. Adler,” he mused as he leaned against the wall.

“More or less. So, are we agreed?”

Pinching at the bridge of his nose, Mycroft shrugged helplessly as he said, “I was under the impression I didn’t actually have a choice in the matter.”

“You don’t,” Jim said. Walking over to Mycroft, he smiled a little brighter before ruffling Mycroft’s hair like one would a puppy as he added, “But I’m a good owner.”

Smacking his hand away, Mycroft glared at him. Hands clenched into fists, he felt sorely tempted to take the risk and take care of the scrawny nuisance himself, but the fact that Jim was still
smiling like a pleased child told him that no matter what he did, Jim would be happy. Agreeing meant that the man had one of the most powerful men in Britain at his beck and call while the other meant destroying the Holmes brothers, if not the family name entirely, and dragging John down as well.

Waving him off, he said, “You may leave now, Jim. The footage stays and I want whatever cameras you used to get it gone or else I’ll happily risk everything to kill you myself.”

“Aww. Iceman’s all upset. Since I’m feeling nice, I’ll let you call this one last shot. You can keep the video. Camera stays though. No touching or else.” With that Jim made his way toward the door, a cocky little saunter to his every step as he called out, “Be seeing you, Mr. Holmes.”

Waiting until he heard the door close after him, Mycroft slid to the ground, his mind working on a myriad of questions as he fought the urge to be sick. Whatever anyone might have thought of him, Mycroft knew that he had never sold his soul for anything before Jim Moriarty came into the fray.
Mycroft and John try to avoid each other's conversations with varying levels of success.

Staring out the window of his car, Mycroft stared at the front door of 221B. It had been nearly a week since Sherlock and John had returned from Baskerville and even longer since he had seen them. It was the sort of variables that should’ve added up to him rushing inside the near infamous flat to see the two men his life had been painfully devoid of. And under any other occasion, that might have been true, but even looking at the door through the tinted window made him feel hesitant.

It was almost amusing, Moriarty’s plan. The man had him trapped in a situation where no answer would ever be the right one, yet Mycroft couldn’t help but try to find the proper course of action to take. It took him days to convince himself that avoiding his brother and John was just as bad as any other choice before he could honestly believe that it would be alright to see them.

Taking a deep breath, Mycroft exited the vehicle and made his way to the front door and knocking on it. Looking around at the various buildings, he couldn’t help but frown as he idly wondered how many of Moriarty’s people might be watching at any given moment. Furrowing his brows when he noted someone closing their blinds, he made note to upgrade the intel coming from Baker Street. After swapping out a number of agents he found himself looking into out of paranoia, expecting a more comprehensive amount of intelligence from the area was hardly any more questionable.

“Something caught your eye?”

Looking toward John, Mycroft forced a terse smile before letting himself in. It wasn’t until John closed the door behind him did Mycroft pay the man any attention. “Hello, John.”

“Sherlock’s not here, just so you know.”

“He’s out with detective Lestrade getting information on a rather simple case.”

Smiling, John nodded. “Right. I should just expect you to know everything.”

“Not everything,” Mycroft said, pleased that it was only John with him. For all that the soldier was
good at, observation wasn’t his strong suit, meaning that the brief twitch in Mycroft’s jaw went unnoticed. Resting a hand on John’s hip, he added, “I don’t know how your trip to Baskerville went.”

Grimacing slightly, John shook his head. “It was what you would expect. Giant dog, evil scientists, nutter losing his grip on reality. Oh and Henry was drugged as well.”

And if John truly expected him not to take note of the half hearted attempt at deflecting the question, the man clearly had suffered some kind of untoward effect at Baskerville as well. Frowning at him, Mycroft pursed his lips as he looked John over, noting a number of details that didn’t leave him all that pleased.

“Stop,” John said, covering Mycroft’s eyes with his hand. “Look... Can we at least go upstairs? I kind of want to be sitting when you take me apart.”

“Fine,” he agreed, against his better judgement.

Following John to the living room, Mycroft did his best to remain as calm as possible as he looked over the surroundings. The idea that there was a camera somewhere in the room was something he hadn’t forgotten, nor was the fact that he couldn’t tell John or Sherlock outright. Not if he wanted to protect them for the moment. Letting out a breath, Mycroft sat next to John on the sofa.

Staring back at him, John sat there, waiting for Mycroft to start a conversation that he clearly didn’t want to have. Whatever it was that happened in Baskerville, John was trying his best to put it behind him for one reason or another, something that made Mycroft wonder if he truly wanted to question it since anything John said seemed likely to become the knowledge of Moriarty, which was the last thing Mycroft wanted.

But something about the look in John’s eyes told him he couldn’t just let this go ignored. Sitting up a bit straighter as he clasped his hand over his knee, Mycroft said, “So... Baskerville.”

“Nice area. Great holiday spot,” he said, voice full of fake enthusiasm.

Canting his head to the side slightly, Mycroft stared at him, not in the least bit impressed with John behaviour as he said, “Very nice military facility as well.”

Deflating a bit at that, John nodded. “Right. Should I worry that you have the clearance that get you into places like that?” He asked with a look of faux concern.

Rolling his eyes as he sighed, Mycroft tried to cast aside the fact that he knew they were being watched. Without John being in on such a secret, he would continue to talk far too freely about everything and Mycroft’s own reaction had to be perfectly normal. So, forcing himself to keep his eyes trained on John, he shook his head.

“I’d be more concerned about the type of people who can sneak their way in such as my brother.”

“He has your badge still, if you want it back,” John offered.

“I’m afraid I might need it back eventually.”

“Yeah. Although, if it helps, he didn’t tell me about that deal he struck with you for access to the labs.”

“Yes, well, he didn’t tell me what he intended to do with that access beyond telling me he wanted to look into something case related.”
“That’s... Something, I guess,” John muttered.

And while he knew their sense of humour only rarely matched up, John usually getting hung up on the fact that Mycroft could muster up a joke every now and again while Mycroft found John’s rather cheeky behaviour poorly timed every so often, it never led to the subdued reaction he was receiving from him. It was the sort of characteristic he didn’t like to relate to the smaller man.

“Perhaps you ought to tell me what happened since I can’t help but feel whatever it was has something to do with the fact that you’ve been sleeping in your own bedroom again.”

“And here I thought after a week of not being around, you wouldn’t have noticed that,” John teased, giving Mycroft a pointed look.

If he was the type to blush, he was nearly certain that he would’ve under the man’s near judgmental scrutiny. As it was, he merely let out a sigh as he shrugged somewhat helplessly. “I’ve been busy. Work.”

“You look it.” Leaning closer, John cupped his cheek, thumb brushing along it as he frowned to himself. “Starting to get circles under your eyes. Weird, given that you seem the type to start World War III and still sleep like a baby.”

“You’ve a faulty view of me, apparently,” he said, resting his hand over John’s briefly before moving it to rest in his lap.

They made quite the pair, holding hands on the sofa as they both tried to deflect their own problem for the glaring fault they saw in each other. Mycroft’s well honed skills versus a level of stubbornness one could only find in a soldier. Taking a deep breath, he decided to drop all pretences and simply asked, “So, are you going to mention it or are we going to talk of the lovely weather there this time of year?”

“Sherlock... Alright,” John said, rubbing at his eyes with his free hand. Frowning at Mycroft, he seemed reluctant to continue on. In fact, Mycroft was nearly positive that he would be getting updates on the weather for a brief moment before John pointed at him. “You can’t get upset.”

“I don’t like statements that begin that way. It tends to precede bad news like I burned your files or I’m in jail due to a drugs bust.”

“Mycrof.”

“I... I will do my very best not to get upset. That’s the most I can offer.”

It wasn’t a concession he was particularly thrilled to make, but if it was the only way he would find out what it was that had happened on John and Sherlock’s little holiday, he could live with it if John could.

“Alright.” Nodding to himself, John tapped his foot a bit restlessly, struggling to find a place to start. “Uh... Really, it... Dr. Frankland... The moor was rigged to leak this drug into the air. Hallucinogenic. Sherlock got drugged with Henry when I got separated from them. It... It freaked Sherlock out because it made him feel fear.”

Judging by the derisive tone used and the way John practically spat out the word, Mycroft could tell that such a reaction in Sherlock hadn’t gone anywhere close to well. Something he could understand given the fact that he had known Sherlock all his life.

“I can only imagine how well that must’ve gone over. He was a terror when upset as a child. Always climbing into my bed over every scary noise and then kicking me every time I suggested
he might be scared.”

“At the very least he’s out grown the kicking,” John mused. “He just snapped at me. Gave some almighty speech about how he doesn’t feel fear or... have friends when I suggested I was one of them. Anyways, that’s not the point.”

“It isn’t?”

“No. We handled that bit later. It was just...” Shaking his head, John let go of Mycroft’s hand. Leaning back against the sofa, he stared at the ceiling. “At the labs, to figure out what was wrong with him, he... He drugged me and... Christ. I thought I was going to die. Again. It was... It happened and I don’t know. We talked about it.”

“So you’re sleeping in separate rooms because of that?”

“I don’t know. I was hoping to be past this. I want to be over it but...”

“You’re not.”

“I...” Looking back toward Mycroft, John sat up a bit straighter before prodding him in the shoulder. “Anyways, you’ve been working too hard.”

“Something you can’t fix,” Mycroft stated pointedly.

“No. But I can tell you that Baskerville wasn’t the same without you.”

And while he knew John was just switching tactics in his effort to change the topic, he also knew that John meant what he said, a fact that left Mycroft rather pleased. No matter how much John happened to declare such sentimental ideas, something about hearing them always left Mycroft a little stunned. It was a pleasant strangeness that he didn’t want to lose, he realized as he looked around the room.

Focusing his attention back on John, he tried to force all thoughts of Moriarty out of his mind before even John noticed how distracted he was. So, forcing a smile, he said, “I try to avoid trips where I know I’ll be drugged. It’s why Sherlock and I rarely travel together.”

Of course, the hard glint to John’s eyes at the statement was less than expected. “Even if you two never tell it to each other, he missed you and do you know why?”

“John, perhaps we should focus on the fact that you’re sleeping in a different room from Sherlock. Lord knows you have a hard time moving on. Hence the therapist.”

“I... Alright. First off, I did stop seeing her.”

“Yet her number is still in your phone,” Mycroft shot back.

“Yeah, well... Piss off,” John muttered, unable to fight against what they both knew to be true. Not letting it distract him, he merely prodded Mycroft’s shoulder again as he continued with his point. “Secondly, maybe I ought to be giving that number to you two since the idea of having someone love you seems so terrifying.”

“I’m not terrified of love,” he said quickly. “I know how Sherlock feels for me and he knows how I feel for him.”

“It makes it awkward though. Being with two people who never talk about how they feel for each other. I mean, your brother announced he loved me in some sort of off handed comment.”
“And you were expecting something else?”

“Romance is not bad.” Resting his hand on Mycroft’s leg, John stared at him helplessly as he said, “Sometimes it’s... nice to sit down, look someone in the eye and say I love you.”

Arching a brow at him, Mycroft nodded quietly. “Perhaps there are... benefits to such an approach. But it’s not something you’ll ever get from Sherlock.”

“Yeah. Great,” John said, dropping his hand away.

Hating the hurt look in his eyes, Mycroft tried not to let his concern show. “For some, actions speak louder than words,” he said, brushing his hand along John’s.

“Syllables govern the world,” John shot back, practically challenging him to argue against it.

“And yet there’s something indecent in words.” Wincing at the rather poetic turn their conversation had taken, Mycroft let out a small laugh as he looked toward the door. “You know, I don’t actually recall ever spending time in your bedroom.”

“Subtle,” John laughed. Still, as his eyes followed Mycroft’s to look at the stairs, he said, “Although, that seems like something worth correcting.”

“It does, doesn’t it?”

Smiling as he rose to his feet, John gestured for him to follow along, something Mycroft didn’t hesitate to do. The last place he wanted to spend his time was in the living room under the constant watch of a mad man’s camera, the irony of which wasn’t entirely lost on him.

Walking into the room, Mycroft looked over it, noting the stark difference it posed to Sherlock’s room. It wasn’t all that tidier, but it did have a rather noticeable John like quality to it that he was a bit disheartened to know he’d been missing out on given that Sherlock had deemed his own bedroom the most convenient and before taking up with them, there was never any particular reason to find himself in the room.

Watching as he ran his finger along the dresser, John chuckled. “You know, it is clean. No weird smell from experiments either.”

“Your room is... Very you.”

“Yeah. I tried to make it more Anderson, but Sherlock didn’t like it.”

Ducking his head, Mycroft winced slightly at the idiotic statement to come from his own mouth since he had never been one for blushing. Still, perhaps due to all the time they spent in each other’s company, John wasted little time making his way over to him, fingers casually undoing his jacket and waistcoat.

“You’re nervous,” he said, far too smug at the idea.

Rolling his eyes, Mycroft brushed his thumb along the button of John’s jeans. “I don’t get nervous.”

“Course not. Don’t get nervous or scared or any of those other pedestrian emotions.” Pushing Mycroft’s jacket and waistcoat off his shoulders, John smirked as the civil servant’s eyes shut as his clothes fell to the ground. Running his hands up Mycroft’s braces, he said, “You know, I’m starting to think you’re as human as the rest of us.”
“You’re grossly overdressed and paying for my dry cleaning.”

Instead of answering, John only flashed him a boyish smile before removing his jumper, tossing it across the room carelessly before making his way over to his bed. Lying down with his hands behind his head, he stared at Mycroft, one brow arched in a silent dare that he couldn’t ignore.

Sliding his braces off his shoulders, he removed his shirt before climbing onto the bed, pulling John into a lazy kiss as he laid down next to him. And for the first time since his arrival, he could honestly ignore the nagging voices in his head that never stopped calculating and forget that Moriarty even existed. Nothing beyond the firm press of John’s body against his, tongue and teeth laying claim to each other’s mouths, mattered as they silently showed how much they had actually missed each other with increasing urgency.

Hands caressing every available inch of skin as John pushed him onto his back so that he could straddle his hips. It doesn’t take much longer for trousers and pants to be kicked aside, John’s hand fisted in his hair while he cupped the man’s arse, shamelessly sliding their cocks along each other as they snogged like boys too blinded by some long craved touch to remember sex.

Of course, Mycroft had never been the type of person to forget something he decided he wanted. Tilting his head to the side, he kissed along John’s jaw, muttering against his skin, “On all fours, soldier.”

Shuddering, John nods dumbly before moving away from Mycroft. Grabbing the lube from his nightstand, he tossed it to him before moving to kneel on his hands and knees like he was told. To say he was eager was nothing short of an understatement as he kept looking back at Mycroft, shivering with anticipation as he did.

“I take it Baskerville didn’t involve much in the way of sex,” he remarked as he ran his hand down John’s back.

John glared over his shoulder at him. “You know, I can kick you out and just have a nice long wank.”

Opening the bottle, he poured some onto his hand, taking his time coating his fingers as John waited miserably. If he wasn’t almost as desperate as John, he likely would’ve dragged out every moment for as long as he could, but Mycroft hated any punishments that affected him as well. Pressing himself against John’s back, he laid a gentle kiss between his shoulder blades as he circled the man’s hole teasingly with a finger before pressing in, eliciting a needy groan from John as he pressed his face against his arms.

It was the sort of noise Mycroft would’ve taken a great deal of pleasure causing again and again until he had properly reduced John to nothing more than a begging, whimpering mess had he the patience for it. But after the misery John had been put through at Baskerville, the last thing he needed was another Holmes toying with him. Lining himself up as soon as he was certain John was ready, Mycroft lubed himself up before slowly pressed in, revelling in the feeling of the tightness around him while John let out a muttered swear.

Not that John seemed overly fond of savouring the feel as he began to rock his hips in a quiet request for movement. Running his hands down John’s sides, Mycroft gripped his hips as he began to move. A slow slide, pulling nearly all the way out before snapping his hips back, burying himself in John again and again until the gentle slowness gave way to something faster and desperate. The only noise in the room the sound of flesh against flesh and John’s moans, no matter how he tried to bury them against his arms and bed sheets.

Even the sound of the door opening went unheard by the two of them, unlike the voice that
followed.

“John, I need your assistance with—“

Glancing toward the door as the sentence died off, Mycroft relaxed when he noticed it was merely Sherlock standing in the doorway like a statue as he stared at them with darkening eyes. Sliding his hand up John’s back to his neck, Mycroft gripped his hair, tugging at it until John caught on and sat up straight, back pressed against Mycroft’s chest.

“Afternoon, Sherlock,” Mycroft said, finally acknowledging his brother’s presence.

Eyes staring almost blindly at Sherlock, John somehow managed to look equal parts shocked and embarrassed as he watched the other man simply stand there. Struggling for words, John dug his nails into Mycroft’s thigh, caught between trying to stop him and riding out the way he kept going in that same steady pace.

Closing the door behind him, Sherlock tossed his coat and scarf on the floor as he gave a simple, “Mycroft.”

Kneeling on the bed in front of them, he looked them over with darkened eyes, he wedged his leg between John’s spread thighs, sandwiching him between them as he leaned forward to meet Mycroft in a rough slide of lips.

It was everything necessary to make the moment truly perfect, Sherlock being there, all slights and problems forgotten in a moment of John’s hands clinging to him, silencing himself against Sherlock’s shoulder as he rutted against the man’s trousers. Mycroft’s breathless gasps against his brother’s mouth as the tightening feeling in the pit of his stomach left him out of control over his own body’s actions as his thrusts grew erratic. The way Sherlock grabbed Mycroft’s arse, doing his best to force the elder Holmes deeper with each thrust as he stroked John’s cock, using his precome to ease the way until John finally came with a choked noise over his hand and shirt, clenching body forcing Mycroft to follow suit.

For a never ending moment, they all stayed where they were, fighting to catch their breaths before Sherlock moved away as Mycroft laid down on the bed, forcing John to stick to close to him as he did. Given the rather obvious bulge in his trousers, asking Sherlock to join in their post coital moment was pointless. Not that Sherlock seemed particularly interested in the state of his body or clothes. His eyes were as locked on the two of them as they had been when he entered the room, although Mycroft could see the hint of worry as John focused on his brother in return.

Sitting next to them, Sherlock ran his hand through John’s hair. “So, does this mean we’re...”

“Still upset,” John mumbled tiredly. Slowly opening his eyes, he looked up at Sherlock with a lazy smile as he added, “But I love you.”

It clearly wasn’t the reaction that Sherlock was expecting, but after a moment of thought, he seemed to accept it. Giving John a quick kiss, he nodded. “OK. I love you as well. And Mycroft, I suppose.”

“The expression of your affection is hardly necessary Sherlock.” Sitting up just enough to look at his brother, he added, “Tea would be nice though. After you change... shirts.”

“Actually, tea sounds brilliant,” John agreed before Sherlock could complain. Nodding toward the door, he said, “We’ll meet you downstairs?”

Glaring at the two of them, Sherlock scoffed before rising to his feet. Resting his hands on his hips, he stared at them expectantly, like a child waiting for their parents to get up on Christmas
morning. He might’ve even done such a thing if not for what had to be the uncomfortable feeling of John’s semen cooling on his shirt. Growling softly when it became too much to ignore, he made his way towards the door, unbuttoning his shirt as he went.

“I’m not your errand boy,” he called out as he left, shutting the door harder than necessary.

Smiling against John’s hair, Mycroft knew that despite his complaining, there would in fact be tea waiting for them when they finally made their way downstairs. At the very least it would be a vague sort of peace offering put forth in an effort to mend his relations with John, the idea of which left a bad feeling in the pit of Mycroft’s stomach.

“Right,” John said as he rolled over in Mycroft’s arms to face him. Brushing aside the stray piece of hair in Mycroft’s face, he sighed happily. “Shower, get dressed, and then tea.”

“Yes.” It certainly seemed like a simple enough plan, even if the idea of moving wasn’t one Mycroft was particularly fond of. Still, when John pulled away to sit up, he did the same as well, catching the man’s arm when he moved to leave the bed. “And John, about what you were saying earlier. About declaring love to people? I do love you, as well.”

“What?” John questioned.

Closing his eyes, Mycroft shook his head, the bad feeling morphing into something that felt like nervousness as he tried to explain himself. “I’m not an idiot. I never thought you were talking of Sherlock. It’s just... dangerous to be in love. Especially with me.”

Moving to straddle his waist, John cupped his cheeks, forcing Mycroft to look at him as he laughed. “I was nearly killed multiple times because of Sherlock before we started dating. Do you really think us being love is going to be worse than that?”

“No. But you being involved with Sherlock and myself is asking for trouble.”

“I like a bit danger, according to someone.”

And while he knew there was nothing enjoyable about the threat he was hiding from them, Mycroft didn’t argue with him. Didn’t want to when John seemed so assured that everything would be alright. The man had a strange and genuine faith that nothing would ever come between the three of them and Mycroft desperately wanted to believe that as well. That even with all that Moriarty had against him, he’d always have John and Sherlock.

So with a small nod, he patted John’s side, trying to delude himself into trusting John. Whether or not John bought into his agreement was questionable, but when he got out of bed, he didn’t seem as though he was going to question it.

Instead, he put on a dressing gown before gathering up Mycroft’s clothes and handing them to him, saying, “Now, we going to shower? Or wait for Sherlock to start complaining first?”

“Yes. Shower.”

Getting up, he put on his pants before letting John lead him out of the room, silently repeating to himself that everything would be fine. He had John and Sherlock and would figure out a way to deal with Moriarty. And as long as he was in 221B, he could believe such a childish fantasy for as long as he wanted.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock's visit to Mycroft's doesn't go exactly as he would've planned.

“You should’ve been home hours ago,” he said the moment Mycroft walked through the door. Smiling as he halted by the door, shoulders tensing as he closed his eyes for a brief moment, trying to collect himself, Sherlock felt rather proud that he could catch his brother so off guard.

“Preventing or causing an international incident?”

“How did you get in here?” Mycroft asked as he regained his composure.

“Most people tell their brother hello, Mycroft”

“I’m certain most people don’t have siblings that break into their homes.” Hanging up his coat, he didn’t sit down next to Sherlock on the sofa. Rather he stood in front of him, arms crossed over his chest as he stared down at him. “Now, how did you get in?”

“The same way I always do,” Sherlock spat back, not liking the way Mycroft was standing over him.

Something about being at any sort of disadvantage causing him to feel uncomfortable, not that he bothered standing up. Mycroft would never do anything to him, he was simply annoyed. So leaning forward, Sherlock narrowed his eyes at his brother, suddenly fascinated with figuring out just what was bothering him. “Why? Does this have anything to do with the fact that you’ve changed your locks or are you purposefully trying to keep me out?”

Giving a rather terse smile, Mycroft lowered his brows, as he said sarcastically, “I know it may seem insane to you, but despite your hurt tone, preventing you from breaking into my home wouldn’t be a terrible thing.”

“Are you trying to keep me away?” Sherlock asked, tone laced in a false sense of hurt.

“No, but would you actually keeping a key to my flat be such a bother to you? You seem to like taking my things as of late.”

Leaning back in his seat, Sherlock rolled his eyes. “You left the key card in that coat you gave me. Hardly my fault if it gets used every now and again.”

Uncrossing his arms, Mycroft looked away briefly, more than likely a lot angrier than he was letting on. Not that he would ever admit to such a thing, in words or actions, because when he looked back at Sherlock, he seemed perfectly calm. Certainly if not for the tension that seemed to run through his body, he would’ve been the very pinnacle of serenity as he sat down next to Sherlock on the sofa.

“John gave you that coat to prevent you from attacking me during your withdrawals and it is entirely your fault when you happen to be the one using it, Sherlock,” he said in a patronising voice as though Sherlock was some naughty school boy that needed to be convinced to behave. “Not to mention I’ve still yet to get it back.”
Scoffing, Sherlock sneered at him as he asked mockingly, “The badge or the coat?”

“Both,” Mycroft said firmly. “I want them both back.”

Focusing on the sofa cushions as though they were the most interesting thing in the world, Sherlock brushed away a stray hair before looking around the living room. He didn’t care one bit about the set of cold blue eyes staring at him as though Mycroft could will him to care. Instead he merely took a deep breath and shook his head bitterly.

“You’re oddly upset over me breaking in. Strange given that I’ve been doing this since Uni.”

Not that Mycroft didn’t have his moments of ire over Sherlock’s comings and goings in regards to his home, but there were reasons for those times. Reasons that he knew couldn’t apply to them now because they didn’t make sense. The odds of Mycroft returning with a guest was slim because he wasn’t the sort to keep the type of friends that one brought home. That was reserved for lovers and Sherlock knew exactly who it was his brother was inviting to his bed as of late. Especially since the bed in question happened to belong to Sherlock more often than not.

Sighing, Mycroft pinched at the bridge of his nose, looking more than a bit tired. “I’ve become a lot more important since you were in school.”


Rising to his feet with a growl, Mycroft brushed past him, kicking his legs out of the way as he made his way over to the liquor bar. Pouring himself a glass of something painfully aged and expensive, Mycroft downed it as though it was nothing more than a shot of some kind of cheap swill, a small twinge in his face giving away the burn that had to come with such an action. Thoughtfully focused on the glass, Mycroft said, “By the end of the week I want both my badge and my coat back.”

“What’s going on with you?” Sherlock said as he cautiously made his way over to Mycroft.

While the snide comments and glares could pass as anything from hate to foreplay between the two of them, he knew his brother’s drinking habits as well as Mycroft knew his drug addiction and something about watching the man gulp down his drinks meant something was going on that he wasn’t talking about.

Standing toe to toe with the taller man, Sherlock frowned. “What aren’t you telling me?”

“Nothing,” Mycroft said, putting down his glass. Licking his lips, he tilted is head as he looked over Sherlock somewhat fondly. “I simply have a nuisance for a brother and nothing more.”

“Yes, but you’ve always had that,” Sherlock said, not about to let him get away with ignoring the problem at hand to avoid help he was too proud to ask for.

“And I quite recall taking umbrage with mummy over such facts many times in our lives, starting with when you ate my book.”

“I was teething,” Sherlock said, mildly embarrassed by most of the childish antics he got up to as a small child.

Giving a self-satisfied smirk, Mycroft chuckled at either the memory or the annoyed look on Sherlock’s face. “You were worse than a having a dog. Always piddling places, chewing on books and shoes.”

“How exactly is that worse than a dog?” He questioned.
After all, they might not have been allowed pets since Mummy always thought he was too young for such responsibility and Mycroft simply didn’t care for things that he had to walk given that he was apparently born a lazy git, but Sherlock was fairly certain that messes and chewing things were something most dogs did at some point or another.

“I couldn’t smack you on the nose and leave you outside to think about what you did until you were an adult,” Mycroft stated, giving him a pointed look before making his way back over to the sofa.

“You’ve always loved me,” Sherlock shot back, merely turning to face his brother rather than follow him. “You know it’s true, so don’t both saying otherwise.”

Arching a brow, Mycroft looked far too amused as he took his seat on the sofa yet again. “John really is making you sentimental, claiming that I love you,” he teased, making himself comfortable, resting his arms on the back of the sofa. “Try not to hide such facts from him in the future. It makes him worry.”

“I’m not sentimental and John knows how I feel about him.”

“Yes. Told him as much in a rather off handed manner the first time from what I’ve heard.”

“Criticising my relationship skills to avoid the topic?” Sherlock questioned as he made his way over to his brother, taking the chance to stand over him out of vengeance.

Not that it seemed to have the same effect on him. Sitting up straight, Mycroft gave him the same sort of attention one might a superior or a child, disinterest colouring his every feature. “No. I’m merely criticising your lack of interpersonal skills to make the point that you’re going to ruin things with him despite the fact that he’s rather wormed his way into your heart. There’s no other topic to avoid.”

“The locks,” he reminded him.

Looking as though he was shocked that Sherlock was still on that topic, Mycroft rolled his eyes. “That have been changed to keep you from breaking in, since if you can do it, others can as well and I rather like my privacy. Even though that less than subtle hint didn’t keep you out.”

“Fine,” Sherlock said, letting it drop now that he had an answer. Looking over at the television, he muttered, “Although your one to talk when it comes to how I am with John. Where do you think I learned how to be in a relationship?”

“Are you blaming me?” Mycroft questioned incredulously. “Because I rather think I was the one forced into this relationship.”

At that, Sherlock couldn’t help but scoff, unsurprised that Mycroft was laying the blame at his feet. “Oh it must’ve been so hard for you to outsmart a teenage boy. I wish I had my violin. I’d play you a sad song. Something by Mozart.”

“Charming. Very charming,” Mycroft said, glaring at him yet again as both their tempers began to make a reappearance. “But I do believe you’re forgetting the fact that you were intending to tell Mummy about New Year’s if I didn’t give into you. What was I supposed to do?”

“I don’t know but don’t act like I forced you into this. You wanted me long before I forced your hand or New Year’s. It was as obvious in the way you watched me, the way you acted. The only thing I did was want you as well.”
“And I told you then it was wrong but you’ve never cared,” Mycroft argued as he rose to his feet. Standing at his full height, he stood well within Sherlock’s personal space, a show of physical intimidation for all the damage he could do without doing much more than placing a call. “Far too smart to ever just settle for someone else like—“

“What? The rest of the world?” he asked, voice just loud enough to tip the scales from a heated conversation to a row. “Like you with your passing boyfriends? I know you don’t care to remember what with you being so far up on your high horse, but I did try that, Mycroft.”

“Oh yes. Trevor, who’s father you practically pushed into suicide and that Wilkes, who was more of a self important arse than you are,” Mycroft scoffed.

Balling his hands into fists, Sherlock dug his nails into the palms of his hands to keep from actually taking a swing at his brother. Instead he merely narrowed his eyes at him as he asked in far too calm a tone, “Do you really want to talk about lovers, Mycroft?”

It was enough to get his brother to back down. Running his finger along the corner of his mouth as he ducked his head, Mycroft took a step back. “No. Why are you even here?”

“No. You’re right.” Smiling to himself as he looked at anything but Sherlock, Mycroft said, “You live with him and work with him and sleep with him. You’re practically attached at the hip.”

It was something that was meant to annoy him. Something so painfully obvious that anyone would’ve seen it. It was Mycroft’s way of talking down to him because they both knew that while Sherlock had many advantages over his brother, intelligence wasn’t one of those things. The fact that he was being condescending about his relationship with John was nothing more than Mycroft adding fodder to the flames.

And despite all that, Sherlock couldn’t help but take the bait. To willingly allow himself to fall into Mycroft’s trap because he wasn’t going to simply stand around and be insulted and there was hardly a person around who could even accuse Sherlock of being the bigger person when it came to his relationship with his brother.

So, with a sickening feeling in the pit of his stomach, Sherlock smirked at him and said, “It’d be so much better to be a non-entity in this relationship like you. Just hovering on the fringes, only around to get a quick shag.”

“Time spent with you and John is rarely quick and seems to be rather costly given all that you continue to end up with,” Mycroft laughed derisively.
“You’re right,” Sherlock agreed too quickly given the confused look Mycroft gave him. “I was wrong to think that you love me or John. Caring is not an advantage, after all.”

“Sherlock, don’t use my words against me. That was an entirely different situation.”

“How?” Sherlock demanded, voice rising yet again.

“Because she was some idiotic woman playing at your heartstrings so well you didn’t even notice,” Mycroft shouted back at him. Running hand through his hair, he winced at his own actions before turning to walk away. He scarcely made it a step away before he rounded back towards Sherlock, viciously prodding him in the chest as he said, “If you had been any blinder about what she was doing it would’ve cost me more than a bloody mission.”

Smacking his hand away, Sherlock sneered. “I still cared for her and you weren’t around.”

“I wasn’t...” Pausing as the realization dawned on him, Mycroft nodded slowly. “Yes. My relationship with Harry is what led to that entire situation. Terribly sorry. My fault.”

“Sod off,” he spat. The last thing he needed was Mycroft’s sarcasm on top of his mocking. Not after he had been the one to ruin everything only to wind up with a friend from Uni, to be the same prat he had been at the palace as he was right before him. “You end things just so you screw about with a married man? Or did you just think I wouldn’t notice despite your quaint matching ties?”

Ever sensible, Mycroft moved away from him as though that would remove every threat of the situation escalating even further than it had. The only thing that made it worse was the fact that Sherlock was so certain that he was only doing it because he never liked to discuss his own bad choices, despite his flair for bringing up Sherlock’s.

“Go home,” he said after he had calmed his down, yet again. Pointing toward the door, he let out a drawn breath before saying, “Go wait for John to come back because I can’t deal with you being so pathetically emotional over the fact that when I end things with you I actually try to lead a life that doesn’t involve screwing my brother. Something I’d still be doing if not for you.”

Opening his mouth to make some sort of comment, Sherlock stopped when he noticed the look in his brother’s eyes. Clenching his jaw, he paced back and forth before nodding erratically. “Well, if I’m such a nuisance to you, fine.” Putting on his coat and scarf with a barely contained rage, he made his way over to Mycroft and pressed the man’s bloody ID badge against his chest with more force than necessary, relishing the wince on his brother’s face as the metal clip into his flesh through his shirt. “Go back to leading that lovely life of yours.”

Grasping the badge, Mycroft looked it over before taking in his brother with something nearly approaching regret. “Sherlock, don’t be petty.”

“No. According to you I’m childish and practically prostituting myself and John for your favour. I’m a deviant who forced you into this terrible life you lead with two people you claim to love so the least I can do is end things for you,” he practically yelled, their proximity meaning nothing to the flood of emotions he felt. Pursing his lips, he swallowed down the tight feeling in his throat before adding quietly, “Let you be like everyone else.”

“I’m not playing along with your dramatics,” Mycroft warned as he pocketed the ID.

Staring at him in shock, Sherlock could hardly believe his brother. Something about having his actions invalidated as nothing more than a tantrum, than him being an upset child made him confident in what he was doing, even if he still felt as though he might be sick if he had to drag it
out any longer.

“I’m not being dramatic, damn it. Stop trying to pass this off as anything other than me ending our relationship.”

That being said, he made for the door, only to be stopped by his brother. Looking at the hand gripping his arm and then at the cold rage in Mycroft’s eyes, Sherlock clenched his fist once again as the man told him “Sherlock, I’m not going to follow after you. If you intend to leave I’ll happily let you.”

“Good.” Jerking his arm away, he moved far enough from his brother to create what felt like a chasm in the few feet that lay between them. Looking him over one last time, he closed his eyes briefly. “Now you can lead your perfectly normal life with whatever married man strikes your fancy next and I’ll stay with John, since I’m probably better off with him anyways.”

And with nothing else to say, he left, trying to delete as many memories of his brother as he could, even as he seemed to be flooded with every word and action that led to their many break ups, bitter that even he got back to 221B, the very most he could expect for the evening was time spent alone in his flat, trying to get rid of all the unwanted feelings only ending things with Mycroft brought forth.
John creates a dilemma of his own for the Holmes brothers.

Picking up his shirt, John looked it over, checking for any stains before deciding to put it on. It was a little wrinkled, but certainly nothing that he couldn’t live with. Not to mention, he doubted it would even matter to Mycroft. Well, it would but he would never say anything about it. Just give him some mildly annoyed look and carry on with his life. Frowning, John took the shirt off and grabbed another one from the dresser.

“You’re really going?”

Looking over to where Sherlock laid sprawled out on the bed, legs still tangled up in the sheets, John tried not to pay him much mind as he put on a shirt he was certain Mycroft might appreciate a little bit more.

“Yes,” he said, scanning the floor for his coat. “I’m really going to see him. You could come as well.”

“I’ve better things to do with my time,” Sherlock scoffed as he rolled over, back to John as he buried his clung to his pillow a little bit tighter.

It was the sort of childishness, John was more than a bit tired of. While he might have felt bad for the man when it came to finding out about the news that Mycroft had casually agreed to end the vastly complex relationship between him and his brother, John had long since lost such feelings of sympathy over the days following. Their sibling rivalry was nothing compared to the seemingly genuine hatred that arose from their split.

Sherlock’s attempts to monopolize even more of John’s time than he already did, the fact that he could scarcely mention either of them to each other because Sherlock tended to go off at the mention of his brother while Mycroft seemed uncomfortable when John brought up Sherlock. It made him long for the days when he was back in Afghanistan, knowing just who wanted him dead and why. Certainly that was better than being in caught the Holmes brothers’ no-man’s-land.

So, ignoring how Sherlock watched him out of the corner of his eye, John merely grabbed his coat and put it on, saying, “Yeah. That’s great. I’ll be back some time tomorrow.”

At that, he headed out, knowing that he was going to be more than a bit late to his and Mycroft’s evening in.

Sitting up, Sherlock scowled at him. “I hope you know this isn’t fair. Everything you’re doing, it’s just...Wrong and idiotic,” he spat vehemently.

Flashing him a sarcastic smile, John nodded. “Yup, that’s me, Sherlock. Wrong and idiotic. Anything else you want to say?”
“Go,” Sherlock barked. “Have fun with Mycroft.”

“Thanks for that.”

If he slammed the door on his way out, it only served Sherlock right for being such an insufferable prat. Rubbing tiredly at his eyes, John checked the time on his phone, swearing when he saw that he would, in fact, be late. And while part of him wanted to blame Sherlock for that as well as he headed out, he knew he had no one else to blame but himself. He was the one who felt that he had to indulge Sherlock, at least one last time.

Thankfully, someone seemed to be on his side, as he made it to Mycroft’s without being too late, everything else in the world working out for him, even if his love life wasn’t. Standing in front of his door, John nervously straightened his shirt, running a hand through his hair as well for good measurement, before knocking on the door.

Opening it, Mycroft looked surprised to see him for a brief moment before moving aside to let him in. “Hello John. I was starting to think you weren’t going to show.”

“Yeah, well, it was a pretty damn tempting thought when you and Sherlock are acting like prats,” he said as he walked inside. Watching Mycroft close the door, John frowned. “How long are you planning to keep this up for?”

“He’s the one who ended things with me,” Mycroft said, as though that absolved him of any liability in it.

Staring at him as though he was insane, John couldn’t help but think that it wasn’t just Sherlock who was being childish. Mycroft was clearly just as bad, if not a lot better at hiding it. A realization that was more than enough to push John well past his limits of patience.

Laughing bitterly about it, John pointed angrily at the taller man. “Because you let him, you arse. Why would you do that? I mean I thought everything was perfect between you two. Between all of us, really.”

Grimacing, Mycroft gave him an apologetic look as he shrugged helplessly. “I told you we were prone to this sort of thing.”

“Really? Because all I remember is you telling me how you two were damn near destined to be together because there was no one else like you two,” John shot back angrily, letting out the fury he felt toward both of them after days of trying to be the one level head in the situation. “Or did you forget about that fact?”

“It doesn’t matter and I’d actually prefer not to have another row with someone I’m seeing. That’s not why I invite you over tonight.”

“You invited me over because you’re pretty much a coward when it comes to visiting Baker Street these days.”

After all, even if he wasn’t dating Sherlock any more, Mycroft was still suppose to be with him and he happened to live at 221B as well, not that it mattered. Even getting the man to meet him outside the flat was nothing short of an impossible chore that John couldn’t bring himself to keep fighting for.

Mycroft pinched the bridge of his nose, a soft sigh escaping him as he looked back at John, blue eyes practically pleading for him to take pity on him as he said, “John, he doesn’t want me there. And while it may be your flat as well you know how well behaved he tends to be around those
you date that he dislikes and me.”

“He only treats you like shite because you fucking let him leave when you know he wanted you
to stop him and just say you were sorry for being a prat,” John shot back, unwilling to back down.
Not when their little feud had such a major effect on his life again.

“He’s the one who broke into my flat,” Mycroft said, voice a bit too firm as he tried to hold back
his own frustrations.

Frankly, John didn’t give a damn what he felt like because he was the one who let Sherlock get
away with damn near everything, from slipping his way into secret facilities, working major
political case to screwing up all their lives by ending things over something no sane person would
do in the first place. For Mycroft to complain about the behaviour of Sherlock was absolutely
hypocritical when he let the man get away with damn near murder on any other day. It just didn’t
make sense.

“Sherlock breaks into everything,” he said, fairly certain that one of them had gone mad since
there was no other excuse for why he was explaining the behaviours of Sherlock to Mycroft of all
people. “He actually fails to grasp that locked doors and heavily guarded military bases mean that
someone might not want him to be there just then.”

“Well then it’s good for him to learn not to do that.”

“Don’t give me that. Last time he broke into your flat you got a threesome and didn’t seem the
least bit concerned about his more criminal habits,” he said, voice lowering to a near threatening
tone. “This is about you not being man enough to apologize rather than let him walk out like he
wanted.”

“Despite your view of me, I’m not a mind reader and when people say things like they want to
end a relationship, I’m often inclined to believe they mean that,” Mycroft said, giving him a
fleeting glare before looking away.

Taking a deep breath, John let it out with a heavy sigh. “You’ve been fucking him since he was a
teenager. Don’t act like you know nothing about him. You ought to understand him better than
me.”

“I do,” Mycroft muttered. Looking back at John, he opened his mouth to speak only to stop and
frown at him instead. Arms crossed over his chest, he actually looked rather defeated as he said,
“Trust me when I say he wanted to leave John. We had a pleasant few months together but we've
never been the type to work out long term.”

Perhaps if he had been in a more caring mood, he might’ve taken pity on Mycroft. As it was, John
couldn’t bring himself to feel anything but disgust at everything he said.

“Wow. Never would've thought you the type to give in so bloody easily.”

“Is there a reason you're yelling at me specifically?” Mycroft snapped. “Because I was rather
under the impression that the man who gets dumped gets the sympathy.

“That person does when that man isn't you,” John said, heedless of how awful it must’ve sounded.

Straightening, Mycroft smiled at him, although it didn’t even come close to reaching the poorly
hidden mix of bitterness and hurt in his eyes. “Great. So Sherlock gets your sympathy and I get
the anger. Perfect. Thank you for coming around just to inform me of that,” he said, opening the
doors again before gesturing for John to leave.
Moving past him to close the door, John stared up at Mycroft, honestly exhausted with all the petty Holmes dramatics he’d been subjected to as of late. “Do you really think that’s why I’m here?”

“I’d be rather pressed to think of another reason what with your starting some row with me without so much as a hello.”

“Terribly sorry about that. Hi Mycroft,” he said, flashing a polite smile before going back to his look of annoyance. “Now that I’ve cleared up that, Sherlock didn’t get any better treatment from me. He’s an idiot for letting a stupid row ruin things for all of us right after we were finally moving past that stupid stunt he pulled at Baskerville.”

“He only ruined things between himself and me. I would never ask you to leave him. Not when you love him.

Grinding his teeth angrily, John tried to remain in control of himself in the face of such sincere pragmatism because he knew Mycroft meant everything he said. He believed that despite their little feud, John’s life wouldn’t be in the least bit affected by the sudden split aside from the lack of threesomes. It was so painfully unfunny that he could scarcely think of where he would even start in telling Mycroft off for how absolutely wrong he was.

Running his hand down his face, John paced back and forth, coming to a stop back in front of Mycroft. “Piss off, alright? Just because you say it in a more caring manner doesn’t mean I’m listening to you either.”

“I’m sorry. Sherlock...” Pausing as he likely thought through it all, deducing why John was so furious by the statement, Mycroft gave him a quizzical look. “He didn't demand you leave me?”

“No. The one time he decides to act mature about you and it's over this of all things,” he all but laughed, unable to do anything else at the sheer irony of it all. Shaking his head, he shrugged. “No fat jokes, no questioning my sanity. Just him saying he wasn't going to let you monopolize my time.”

“Seems fair enough.”

“Yeah except I'm not your damn pet and I'm not doing it,” he yelled.

The fact that Mycroft seemed stunned by his outburst was hardly a surprise to John, given that neither Holmes ever seemed to give much thought to him and his feeling in the run of their own plans. It was the sort of thing that, while it would just go overlooked most days, only served to infuriate him even more.

“What?”

“You heard me,” John growled. “I'm not going to get caught in the middle of your split.”

Stunned or processing, Mycroft fell silent as he dropped his gaze to the floor. Whatever internal battle he was going through played across his face as he lowered his brows, lips pursed together even as he looked at John again, somewhat resigned to whatever it was he intended to say next.

“So you're picking him over me then? Or is it the other way around due to his little experiment on you?”
Fighting the urge to punch the git for bringing that up, almost sounding smug despite his defeat, John took another calming breath before shaking his head again. “Neither. I was happy with both of you when you two loved each other as much as you did me. We all work together.”

“We also work as couples, mind you,” Mycroft said, suddenly a bit more concerned with the situation he and Sherlock had created.

“You really think that would continue when you won’t even visit me at mine? When he can’t even tolerate me mentioning you?”

“It would work itself out eventually,” he argued, confident in that when he scarcely seemed confident in anything else involving them. Resting a hand on John’s shoulder, he stared at him with his usual look of brotherly concern and said, “He's simply upset.”

“I don’t want to wait for eventually though, Mycroft.

He didn’t want to find himself living in some vain hope that everything might work itself. They’d already put him through that once and he already knew that, while accepting their relationship for what it was might’ve had some kind of amazing result, that wasn’t going to happen again. Nothing good would come of him letting them play divide and conquer with his life, so he wasn’t going to let them, even if the idea of losing both of them left him feeling just as upset as he had been when first confronted with their relationship.

Looking at him imploringly, whatever he found in John’s eyes put an end to Mycroft’s brief bout of confidence in anything involving them. Shoulders slumping, he swallowed, lips pressed into a thin line before nodding in agreement. “So you're here to end things with me as well?” He practically stated.

It was enough to cause John to be the one to look away, nervously tugging at is shirtsleeve as the weight of his decision settled heavily in the pit of his stomach. “Yeah. I already told Sherlock that I want both of you, not you both individually.”

“Well this certainly isn’t the evening in I had hoped for,’ Mycroft said in a poor attempt at humour. “Getting dumped by you because Sherlock left me.”

John stepped away from him, hating the way Mycroft’s hand simply slid off his shoulder as he looked back at him, actually hating the show emotion he’d once longed to see in Mycroft’s eyes. It was enough to kill anything he was intending to say, tongue moving uselessly behind his teeth for far too long of a moment before he finally convinced his tongue to move.

“If you two want to call it quits, that’s fine, but I'm not going to stick around and be like some cookie you don't want to share.”

Giving him a rather pleading look, Mycroft said, “That's never what we intended.”

“And yet that's how I feel,” John argued, anger flaring yet again. Clenching his jaw, he pressed his fist to his forehead, words failing him yet again. “I didn’t get a say in any of this. You both are just such impossible pricks you just assumed I’d be alright with it. Not to mention ...”

The sting behind his eyes only served to make things worse as he shut them too tightly, happy that Mycroft wouldn’t be able to see much of the anguished look on his face. Not that it mattered when the man could tell so much from the briefest flicker of feeling, but it made John feel like he wasn’t entirely out of his depth. As though, if he could just hide that one moment of pain, he’d be fine.
Of course, the feeling didn’t seem to want to pass, so looking up, John swallowed past his restricting throat and simply said, “I don’t want you to be over. I mean if you two would just sit down and talk we could all move past this.

It was a foolish hope, but John rather felt that he was entitled to those. Christ, he had been completely against the both of them before one too many talks, before too many private moments he’d seen between the two of them. If he could simply get them together, get Mycroft to agree to it, he knew that they would be alright and none of them would have to suffer.

Such vain hoping was futile in the face of Mycroft’s pointless stubbornness. Cupping John’s cheek, he made him look at him, sad brown eyes locked on sympathetic blue ones as he told him, “Nothing is that simple between Sherlock and myself.”

“Which is shite because you both fully expected me to get over being drugged and rejected, your entire fucking relationship and yet you can't get over a row,” John shot back petulantly.

“I’m sorry. I... It's something Sherlock decided on.”

“Well change his mind because until you do I'm not having anything to do with either of you. Understood?”

It was a weak threat, proven by the fact that Mycroft only smiled at him, as though he was a little boy asking for someone to bring back a loved one from the dead. A fair enough thing given that it was exactly how John felt before him.

“You realize there's a rather large risk we'll all wind up alone? Or rather, you'll go back to dating whomever and I'll move on while Sherlock commits himself to his work again,” Mycroft pointed out.

Nodding, John sniffled, doing is best to reign in wayward emotions. “Yeah. But I'm willing to take that risk because I trust you both to get this right.”

“Well, if that's all, I assume you'll be leaving,” Mycroft said, moving away.

Reaching out, John grabbed his arm. “No. If this is it for us I want to at least have this evening with you to remember.”

Once again he had managed to catch Mycroft off guard, given the surprise on his face. But instead of fighting it, he agreed far too easily.

“Fair enough.” Throwing an arm around John’s shoulders, he made his way to the kitchen as he said, “Follow me. I made pasta.”

It was a rather fitting sort of comfort food that John had come to relate to both Holmes men. For it to be his last meal with Mycroft, well, it certainly worked as a sort of irony or kismet. He didn’t really know which as he leaned into Mycroft, hating the fact that just maybe, it would the last time he got to do so.
Chapter Summary

Mycroft and Jim take their usual games to a whole different level.

Chapter Notes

First time I've broken 5,000 words since the first chapter. Makes sense.

It wasn’t so much a party as it was a chance for people with too much money and party to gather and talk about said money and power, something Mycroft was rather ambivalent too most days. After all, he rather enjoyed being overlooked by the grand majority of people as a simple civil servant, but he had the misfortune of knowing the host far too well, given that the man considered him to be an old chum from uni and they’d been running in the same circles since then. Still, it was better than nothing since the idea of spending the night alone at home seemed worse than any droll party.

And really, even the most boring of conversation did its part to make him forget the holes left in his life by Sherlock and John’s absences. After all, time healed all wounds and while, even near weeks after, he still felt the sting as sharply as he did the morning John left his home, quiet desperation filling the room, being around others created a brief salve for his pain.

So, smiling along dutifully as he listened to Harry ramble on about some incident that happened at the palace involving Queen’s corgis, he couldn’t help but be secretly relieve when the tale wound to an end, Harry furrowing his brows as he said, “It was a rather unfortunate event, I’m afraid.”

“Certainly not something that’s likely to happen twice,” Mycroft offered half heartedly.

“I hope not. Still, it seems as though someone else might ant you attention at the moment. Perhaps it wasn’t such a bad decision on your part to come here alone,” he mused, taking a sip of his drink.

Nearly positive that the man had lost his mind, Mycroft fought the urge to look around the room. Instead he finished off his own before asking, “I beg your pardon?”

Ever discreet, Harry casually lifted his chin in a subtle nod at the person. “Slight man over there in the suit. He’s been watching you for some time now.”

And while Mycroft had hoped that maybe, by some stroke of luck it might be his brother or even John, for whatever reason, when he finally turned to look at who it was Harry was talking about, he felt his stomach drop.

“Jim.”

“You know him?”

“Yes,” Mycroft said, momentarily floundering. Flashing the equerry a smile, he added, “And if
you don’t mind, I think I will go talk to him. I’ll be back though.”

“No need to rush on my account,” Harry said salaciously. “Take your time. Maybe you can start bringing him to these types of things instead of that brother of yours.”

“Perhaps,” Mycroft said with a roll of his eyes.

He knew Harry meant no harm in what he said and, perhaps, had the best interest for him at heart, but something about the school boy teasing grated his nerves as he made his way over to Moriarty. Not that he wasn’t already annoyed to find the man in the same room as him to begin with, given that Mycroft knew that Moriarty’s timing likely had everything to with his recent relationship troubles.

Perking up the moment he noticed Mycroft, though, Moriarty smiled brightly at him, lifting his flute of champagne in salute. “Hello Mr. Holmes.”

“What are you doing here?” He whispered harshly.

Jim gave him an upset look, bottom lip just jutting out just so. “I thought I might visit you what with you being all alone now. I hear misery likes company.”

“Company. Not some sadist who intends to make them more miserable,” Mycroft growled under his breath. And even with such an adage at hand, Mycroft still preferred the company of people like Harry or the other party goers to Jim’s. Looking around the room as he put forth his best calm demeanour, he asked, “How did you even get in? This is a private event.”

“My name carries a lot of weight in this world.” Frowning as he looked to his side, Jim shook his head in displeasure before correcting himself. “Well, it carries a lot of weight when you threaten the right people, but you get the point.”

“I want you gone. Now.”

Snickering at the order, Jim only finished off the rest of his champagne. “Oh come on. I put on my best clothes for this and even got a haircut.”

“Best clothes?” Looking him over, Mycroft scoffed. “You’re an Irishman in an English suit and a French cologne.”

“I’m trying to be more multinational,” Jim argued, albeit briefly. Any offense he took at the comment died away as he smiled to himself, muttering, “Although, I’m a bit touched you noticed the cologne that’s just... really nice, actually. I thought it might be a bit too subtle, but I love the bergamot in it.”

“Leave.”

“No.” Laughing at him, Jim crossed his arms over his chest as he stared up at Mycroft, completely unbothered by his drastically shorter height. “You do realize that I can ruin your life right?”

“Do you really think I’m that concerned with anything you might blackmail me about in regards to two failed relationships?”

Though he knew that his relationship with Sherlock coming out could have a serious effect on the two of them, they were scarcely talking. Excuses could be made much easier given the fact that he didn’t have to worry about protecting his relationship with either man. If he was willing to risk the displeasure that was bound to come from his higher ups, he knew that he could allow Moriarty to do whatever he pleased.
Something that Jim seemed to realize as he stood there. Brows lowered in thought, he nodded. “No,” he said in a defeated tone. “But I’m fairly certain you don’t want me to kill them either. Or the people in here. I could kill them too.” Placing his glass down on the nearest surface, he clapped his hands joyfully as rocked back and forth on the balls of his feet. “Oh! It’ll be like the Dark Knight! I always loved the Joker.”

“You certainly seem to share his sense of sanity,” Mycroft said, gripping Jim’s wrists to keep him from making any more of scene.

“Hurtful. You are being purposefully hurtful and I didn’t even do anything.” Jerking his hands away, Jim shrugged as he thought over what he said with a wry grin. “Well... Nothing that you haven’t had time to get used to. Honestly, it’s alright to be upset with both of them for leaving you, but please, don’t misplace your anger at me.”

“I’m not in the mood for your little games, Jim.”

“And yet I’m not giving you an option about playing. Try me,” he said, gesturing over his shoulder to the door. “You want me gone, I will leave and I will ruin you the moment I step out of that door. So what do you say?”

Being a master of issuing demands and ultimatums, Mycroft didn’t bother trying to challenge Jim. The people in the room were alright, if not slightly boring, some of them even being something akin to friends in Mycroft’s world, and frankly, even though he wasn’t seeing either of them, Mycroft refused to risk his brother and John unnecessarily. Not when he had done so much to keep them safe already.

“Stay,” he said with a heavy sigh.

Straitening his tie, Jim said, “I’d love to.”

And even though it wasn’t the ideal situation, the fact that he had Moriarty with him meant that he could at least keep an eye on the man. He had every intention of interacting with absolutely no one unless he had to in order to make the night painfully dull for both of them, but even those were ruined when someone clapped a hand on Mycroft’s shoulder. Looking towards the man, he was almost disappointed that he knew the man well enough to be forced into carrying on some kind of conversation.

“Mr. Holmes,” the man said, far too happy for Mycroft’s liking. “Surprise seeing you here without that brother of yours. Who’s your friend?”

“Oh... This is...”

“Jim Moriarty,” Jim said holding out his hand. “Pleasure to meet you.”

Watching as they made nice, Mycroft knew it was his duty to make introductions between Moriarty and the couple ruining his plans for the evening. “Jim, this is William Mawson, an invaluable executive with the Bank of England, and this is Jeanette Mawson.”

Taking her hand in his, he kissed the back of it like a perfect gentleman. “You must be his daughter,” Jim said.

“You’re as terrible a flirt as you are a liar,” Jeanette laughed.

“Very true. Sorry,” Jim apologized, looking every bit the scolded school boy as he held up his hands in surrender. Straitening, he shook his head before letting out a soft sigh. “My name isn’t
Jim, it’s James. I think that’s the only lie I’ve told tonight,” he said, looking up at Mycroft with a flirtatious grin.

“Behave,” he warned.

Biting at the corner of his lip, Jim looked him over before glancing around the room. “Whatever you say, love.”

Glaring playfully at him, Jeanette clicked her tongue angrily. “It’s more than fine, actually. Perhaps it’s for the better that you couldn’t bring Sherlock along.”

“Yes, well, one should always try to make the best out of a bad situation,” he said, pointedly looking at Jim.

Mouth falling open in surprise, Jim pinched his side quickly. Turning away with a roll of his eyes, he complained, “Well that certainly makes me feel loved.”

And god how he didn’t want to play along with Jim’s antics, but as thing stood, one would have to be blind and deaf to not come to the conclusion that they had something going on between them, so, in an effort to save face, Mycroft rested a hand on Jim’s hip, muttering against his hair, “You know I would never say anything to hurt you purposefully.”

Looking up at him, breathing in each other’s air, Jim appeared to be satisfied with his answer. “No. You wouldn’t. You’re far too kind a man for that, I think.”

“Look at that, Bill. Mycroft here has himself a wonderfully attractive young thing,” Jeanette said, sounding positively overjoyed for such a fact.

“Young? I’m still half sure I’m actually older than you,” Jim shot back.

“Oh, he is a terrible little flirt with everyone,” she laughed. “Bill, do something.”

Letting out a bark of laughter, the man merely raised his hands in surrender as he took a step away from his wife. “I’m not getting involved in this.” Turning towards Mycroft he asked, “Mycroft would you care to join me in getting us some drinks?”

“Actually, I was just talking to Jim about—“

“Don’t worry about it, love. We can always talk of that again later.” Shoving his toward William, he made his way over to Jeanette, slinging a teasingly possessive arm around her. “Right now, you just go get drinks while I do my best to entertain this enchantress Mr. Mawson has been so fortunate to marry.”

“Ease up on that,” William warned, hard tone underscored by the look of amusement in his eyes. “I’m the one who’s going to have to deal with her complaints that I’m not some flirtatious young Irishman and I hear enough of that already.”

Giving him a filthy look, Jeanette waved them off. “Oh yes, do go with Bill, Mycroft. I’m certain I’m more than safe with Jim around.”

“You hear that Mycroft? She’s safe with me.”

It was a statement that didn’t sit with him in the slightest, but given the amusement being had by everyone but him, all he could do was nodded along, saying “Yes. Remember to behave yourself.”
“I wouldn’t dream of doing anything else,” Jim all but purred.

Leaving with Mawson, Mycroft couldn’t help but keep a wary eye on Jim. Lord only knew what the man would do with the man’s wife or what it was he was after. Of course, neither Mawson seemed to notice the danger in the man, nor did anyone else at the party, for that matter. Everyone found Jim to be rather charming and sweet. He was playful and funny. Knew just what to say to amuse everyone around him, Mycroft noticed as the night went on. He was perfectly changeable, sliding from conversations with wives and girlfriends to ladder climbers from both the executive and political world.

After a time, even Mycroft found himself feeling less weary and more comfortable with everyone’s adoration of Jim. Given that the worst part of the evening happened to be the fact that Jim took his role as Mycroft’s date unbearably seriously, it was hard not to. He had already learned firsthand that, no matter how fake, Jim knew how to get people to drop their barriers and when it was others bearing themselves, well, Mycroft couldn’t help but take advantage of their relaxed state.

By time the evening came to an end, Mycroft was actually smiling as he made his way over to Jim, who had apparently settled down away from everyone with a slice of cheesecake, given that he found the man paused in midbite when he walked over to him.

Flashing a brief smile, Jim ate the bite quickly. “I enjoyed the people at this party a great deal.”

“Yes, well, we’re leaving now. So, if you don’t mind...” Mycroft said, gesturing toward the door.

Jim didn’t move an inch. Instead he scooped up another forkful of the dessert and held it out toward Mycroft. “Eat.”

“What?”

“You didn’t try the dessert and it really is lovely. Eat it.”

Mycroft gave a slight chuckle at that. “I’m supposed to trust you with food?”

“If I wanted you dead, don’t you think that you would be by now?” Jim questioned, holding the fork closer to Mycroft’s mouth.

Looking away, he waved his hand. “I’m on a diet.”

“That’s wonderful. Eat it,” he insisted, moving the fork around in a small circle, careful not to drop any. “It’s... like this light, fruity, creamy... sex.”

Arching his brows, Mycroft couldn’t help but be amused as he asked, “It’s creamy sex?”

“In your mouth, yes. Now, are you going to mock me or try it?”

“I’m actually quite fond of the former, to be —“

Slipping the fork into his mouth, Jim giggle impishly. “And?” He asked, obviously expecting good news.

Moving away, Mycroft chewed tried not to be disgusted with the fact that Jim was nothing more than an overgrown child and quite right about the cake. Swallowing, he gave him an annoyed look and said, “It’s... pleasant.”

Brushing his thumb along the corner of Mycroft’s mouth, Jim wiped away a stray bit of it with his
thumb as he smirked, very much pleased with himself. “It is oral sex and you know it.”

“I don’t know how you enjoy oral sex but for most it involves more than simply eating good food.”

“Good thing we aren’t most people. Or are you on a dieting because all the other girls in the government said it would make the Prime Minister think you’re cool?”

Choosing to ignore the mocking of his diet, Mycroft gestured toward the door again. “May we leave now?”

“But of course,” Jim said, imitating his action.

Making his way outside, Mycroft made a beeline for where his car was waiting for him, his chauffer’s timing as impeccable as ever. Opening the door, he nodded his goodbye toward Moriarty, hoping that he had finished with whatever it was he was after. The fact that Jim got in after him, silently daring him to say something about was nothing more than a testament to the fact that Mycroft’s luck was terribly against him.

Meeting his chauffer’s concerned gaze, he motioned for him to drive, sighing as the glass rose as the man did as he was told. Staring out the window, he took comfort in the fact that, as the very least, Moriarty would never be able to do him any harm on his own in the back of a car. It was all just a matter of waiting to get to his home and work out a plan for what he would do about Jim. Something that was hardly easy what with Jim’s incessant moving.

Restless as ever, tapping his foot as he looked around the rather mundane car, it was no great surprise when Jim finally grew tired of the silence between them. “You know, tonight was a lot more fun than I thought it would be.”

“I’m pleased to know you enjoyed yourself,” Mycroft said, doing his best not to pay the man any mind.

Of course, it was near impossible when Moriarty was so very childlike. Making of show out of scooting closer to him, Jim stared at Mycroft for a long moment, poking him when the other man didn’t pay him any mind.

“You enjoyed it too. You enjoyed my company,” he taunted like someone who was simply overjoyed to be right.

Taking a breath, Mycroft let it out with a soft sigh, grabbing Jim’s prodding finger as he looked at him. With a pout, Jim began to try and tug it back, Mycroft only releasing it after he heard the crack of a knuckle. He knew that, like a dog with stitches, the man would easily do himself more harm than necessary and didn’t want to have to deal with any deranged reaction that might cause.

Instead he merely leaned back against his seat and told him, “Making the best of a piss poor situation is does not mean I like you Jim. You being here was better than listening to people question why I was alone given that Anthea had a previous engagement and Sherlock wasn’t an option.”

“You really shouldn’t use your PA as your date. It’s sad.”

Snorting at such advise, Mycroft couldn’t help but think that using his blackmailer as a date couldn’t be much better. Closing his eyes as he slowly licked his lips, he smiled politely at Jim when he reopened them. “People have the same view of me bringing Sherlock as well.”

“But you aren’t screwing her. She’s all the wrong gender,” Jim explained, making some vague
“Regardless, even with your sword of Damocles resting over my head, it was... beneficial to me, nevertheless.”

He had in fact learned a few useful things about people because of Jim’s disarming personality when it came to the party goers, all reservations about the strange man Mycroft found himself forced into calling his date dying away as Jim did what every good date should’ve. The fact that Jim was privy to the same information hardly meant as much given that he was certain he wouldn’t be interested or know how to use half of it, given that it merely related to people that even Mycroft only scarcely regarded as mutual associates.

Jim smirked, eyes focused on the seat as he muttered softly, “That was almost sweet, Mr. Holmes. I’m touched.”

Turning towards him, Mycroft gave him a dubious look. Words to deny Moriarty’s claims of emotion formed and died behind his lips as Jim kissed him. Stunned, Mycroft’s mind raced with seemingly endless number of thoughts, trying to figure out every aspect of the situation and the moments that had led up to it.

“You know, most people would kiss back,” Jim mumbled against Mycroft’s lips.

Shoving the other man away, Mycroft dragged his thumb along his bottom lip, inspecting it as though he expected to find the cause for Moriarty’s actions that way. “What are you playing at?”

Rearing back, Jim laughed at his question, far too amused by it all for Mycroft’s liking. “I know you know what kissing is. Know what snogging and fucking is too.”

“Funny,” Mycroft said dryly. “I’m not playing along with your game this time.”

“Who says I’m playing?” Glancing out the window, Jim drummed his fingers on the edge of the seat, a slight frown tugging at his lips. Ducking his head briefly, Jim said, “Look, it was just a kiss.”

“From the man who is blackmailing me about my life.”

Because, while Jim could easily overlook that, Mycroft found himself having a difficult time believing that the man next to him might be so willing to cast such a thing aside. Not to mention the fact that he knew that everything was a game to him. Just because he didn’t outwardly claim to be playing at something didn’t mean that he wasn’t.

Still, Jim only seemed to waiver at the statement, head lolling from side to side as he made a show of thinking it all over. Stopping the motion with a quick shake of his head, he shrugged. “I’m bored. You noticed my cologne... Stuff. Have I really been that subtle?” he asked, obviously fighting to keep his voice in check for once. Biting his lip, he searched Mycroft’s eyes for something only he knew before saying, “This isn’t part of anything. It’s just... a nightcap. Two people, base needs, the fact that your new lover happens to be your right hand.”

Giving a defeated, nervous chuckle when Mycroft only continued to stare emotionless at him, he ducked his head once again, looking up at Mycroft through his lashes coyly, “Besides, I’m better than sex, remember?” Jim said, sounding rather hopeful.

Not that Mycroft could easily forget the conversations he’d had with the other man in that cement room. He also remembered the other part of that view, telling Jim in a rather matter of fact tone, “But I like sex. All the repetitive motions, trading of bodily fluids.”
“So do the math.”

Turning away from him, Mycroft gave up on the conversation at hand. Staring out the window, watching the city pass by outside, he knew he could never trust Jim, no matter what it was the man said. If not for him, everything in Mycroft’s life might have still been going along the path that it had been with Sherlock and John, a thought that always left a bitter feeling in his gut.

Even if Jim was being completely serious and honest for once, it didn’t change the fact that even the man’s niceties were mocking. Offering something like sex on the simple basis that he wasn’t having any with the two people he happened to love thanks to Jim’s unfathomable need to make him suffer some sort of hidden agony. Stealing a glance at Jim, whose eyes never seem to stray from him, Mycroft couldn’t help but wonder if the man even knew how absolutely insane he seemed to be.


Nodding in agreement, Mycroft cautiously pressed his lips against Jim’s, the gentleness or the action itself causing the criminal mastermind to hesitate before kissing him back just as tentatively. The feeling of a cautious hand on his thigh was as surreal as the idea that he was willingly playing along with another of Moriarty’s games given how well those went for him or anyone else involved. And yet, after their admittedly nice evening together, it felt as though the moment should’ve felt nice. Should’ve been something that their knowledge of each other would never allow it to be.

It was a conundrum that plagued his mind as he coaxed Jim’s lips open with his tongue, far too enticed by the fact that the man tasted of champagne and cheesecake, that he looked so innocent pretending to have dropped his defences. And, of course, Jim didn’t help matters, sickeningly tentative in slide of his tongue against Mycroft’s as his hand nervously clenched at his trousers. Even the kiss was so obviously a game, despite what the man said.

Not that Mycroft was in anyway surprised by that, or so he told himself as he buried a fleeting moment of shame in himself for trusting the man. Nevertheless, if it was a game Moriarty wanted, well then it was only fair that Mycroft do everything in his power to win the round, rather than let Moriarty get everything he wanted, whatever that might’ve been besides the feel of Mycroft’s body against his own.

Fisting the front of Moriarty’s suit, Mycroft slammed him against the door, suddenly set on claiming his mouth and body with little regard for the man they belonged to. Limp as a rag doll at the initial change, all gentleness from the criminal mastermind died in the beat of a heart. All nervousness suddenly gone as their kiss devolved into a vicious war of mouths, more biting and gasped breaths. His hands still fisted in Jim’s jacket as the man pulled at his hair, preventing him from pulling away, not that it was ever his intent.

Body pressing Jim further into the small space between the seat and the door, he was the one in control and the fact that Moriarty wasn’t even trying to fight it seemed to bypass any sort of moral victory and go straight to his cock. The most Jim did was move to rest one leg on the seat, the other planted on the ground, allowing Mycroft to settle between his legs. Bucking up against him, Jim caught Mycroft’s lip between his teeth, smiling joyfully as he muttered, “Do you treat your brother this way or am I just special?”

Biting back a growl, Mycroft pressed his face against Jim’s neck and breathed in the darkly sweet smell of his cologne, sparing a brief moment to run his tongue along his neck before biting down hard enough to force a startled gasp from the man as he tensed under him. Please, Mycroft worked his mouth from Jim’s neck, along his jaw to his ear, lips moving soundlessly against soft skin. Running his tongue along the shell of Jim’s ear, he whispered, “Mention my brother again and
you’ll find yourself intimately acquainted with the feeling of your tie cutting off your oxygen as I use it to strangle you.”

“Christ,” Jim said, shuddering beneath him out of lust more than fear.

Doing his best to grind himself against Mycroft, Jim didn’t bother to hide his whimpers as he held his hips out of reach, even as he tried to force the civil servant closer. The desperation in him was enough to make Mycroft’s cock twitch, just as eager as Jim was to be pressed against the man, to find release in the man that had set out to ruin his life.

“I will not be getting off in my trousers like some excited school boy, Jim,” Mycroft told him, glancing down at his jacket expectantly.

Whether it was a part of whatever it was they were doing then or genuine, Jim pursed his lips in anger for a brief moment before setting about unbuttoning Mycroft’s jacket, wide doe like eyes focused on him the entire time. It made Mycroft feel every bit the prat he was when he slid his hands down the lapels of Moriarty’s suits and gripping at it when his fingers hit the first button and roughly pull it open, satisfaction on his face at the fact that at least one button popped under such force.

“This was Westwood,” Jim said in shocked disgust.

Taking his time to undo Jim’s belt and trousers, Mycroft feigned sympathy as he told him, “I’m sure you get it fixed.”

Rolling his eyes angrily, Jim only growled in response, his brain briefly limited to only noises as Mycroft’s hand snaked its way into his trousers to rub at him through his pants. Completely reduced to tilting his head back as his breathed softly, it was a wonder that Jim managed to find the coordination to untuck Mycroft’s shirt from his trousers, hands immediately slipping beneath the barrier to slide across his chest.

Stilling momentarily, Mycroft swallowed before pressing his lips to Jim’s again, forcing his way into the man’s mouth as he pulled Jim’s pants and trousers down around his thighs. If the other man happened to notice the pause, he didn’t try to say or do anything about it. He merely undid Mycroft’s trousers before reaching in his hand, carefully fondly his testicles through his pants before pulling his cock out through his slit.

At that he broke the kiss with a vicious smile, spitting into his hand before lining himself up with Mycroft and stroking them both, the feeling causing both their eyes to fall shut at the sensation as Jim let out a low groan. Wrapping his hand around Jim’s he guided the man through it, the tighter grip and faster pace made almost uncomfortable due to the fact that spit and precome were hardly the best lubricant. Still, it didn’t stop them any more than their relationship with each other had, mouths finding their way back to each other as Jim’s free hand clawed at his back.

It was rough and on an almost uncomfortable level of painful, but somehow, with Jim it seemed right. Cramped together in the back of a car, thrusting alongside each other into a warm fist as with about much qualms over that that they had in regards to killing each other at any other moment. Everything about it was wrong on a multitude of levels, but when he came, gasping into Jim’s mouth as violent shudders ran down his spine, Jim milking him for every drop he had to offer until his own orgasm ripped through him, Mycroft felt that everything wrong about it was perfectly alright.

Of course, the moment was nothing if not fleeting. Tucking himself back into his trousers, doing his best to make himself look as though he hadn’t just gotten off in the back of a car, he looked at Jim to say tell him something, the likes of which Mycroft couldn’t remember as Jim lazily licked
their fluids off his hand.

Looking away, Mycroft cleared his throat. “Get cleaned up.”

“Oh don’t tell me you’re still upset. That’s not even possible,” Jim said as he began to do as he was told. Looking down at his stained shirt and jacket, he merely picked up the popped button from the floor with a sigh. “When did the car stop moving?”

“I don’t know,” Mycroft muttered.

At some point they had arrived at his home, something he would’ve worried about if not for the fact that Moriarty already knew where he lived and how to get in. Instead, he settled for fixing his hair, the compulsion to look as presentable as possible despite his acts as strong as ever.

“I guess this is the end of the night then?” Moriarty asked teasingly.

Looking at him in shock, Mycroft knew of a million things he could say in response to that. Opening his door, he got out of the vehicle, never even giving Moriarty a passing glance as he told him, “Yes. If you choose not to come inside, that is.”

That being said, he didn’t bother to look back to see if Jim was shocked by the comment or anything. He didn’t actually care about how the other man felt or if would take the offer. Still, hearing the sound of footsteps following him as he entered his home wasn’t unexpected in the slightest.
Entente Cordiale

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Mycroft finally have a talk about their lack of relationship.

Chapter Notes

Six months ago I started this and now I'm posting the final six chapters. What a maudlin thought.

It took a surprisingly short amount of time for the knocking at the door to grow tiresome. At first he had ignored it for the simple fact that he was nearly certain that Mrs. Hudson would answer it, but apparently she was out. As was John, but Sherlock didn’t really either way about that given that aside from cases, they weren’t even really talking, something he had learned to accept after testing how far John was willing to take his little silent treatment. After nearly destroying the kitchen and creating a rather unpleasant, but relatively small fire, he came to the conclusion that John had a grand gift for silence.

Of course, whoever was at the door didn’t have any sort of gift for talent given the incessant knocking. After a few minutes, Sherlock gave in, rationalizing that it could very well be a client or someone in need. Not that he wanted to deal with any sort of case at the moment, but he did want to make the person stop bothering him when he was in the middle of an experiment.

The very moment he opened it, though, he wished he’d been able to ignore incessant knocking better than he had. Familiar blue eyes staring him down, the faint smell of liquor and cigarettes on his breath, dishevelled hair. Whatever it was that was wrong with the man, it was the sort of problem that ran all the way to his core.

“Sherlock,” Mycroft muttered, head cast down, as though he was afraid to make eye contact.

Turning away from the door, Sherlock made his way back upstairs, pointedly ignore the sounds of footsteps that followed along behind him as he made his way back over to his experiment. Sitting down, he went back to work, ignoring the towering presence watching his every action.

“Sherlock,” he said again, more forcefully than before. When Sherlock continued to sit there, working silently, he let out an annoyed sort of growl, slamming his hand down on the table. “Will you at least acknowledge me?”

“If you’re here looking for John, he’s out,” he said, eyes glued to his microscope.

Mycroft let out a tired breath as he stayed right where he was. “Sherlock, that’s not why I’m here and you know that.”

“Well, Mrs. Hudson is likely out given that I had to answer the door myself. Never doing that again,” he said, muttering the latter bit to himself, not that he had any doubt that Mycroft heard.
Jerking the microscope out of Sherlock’s reach, Mycroft looked at him with pleading eyes when Sherlock glared at him. Releasing his grip on it, Mycroft said in far too soft a voice, “I just wanted to speak to you.”

“Well, considering you’ve achieved that, you can leave now, Mycroft.”

Lips pressed into a thin line, Sherlock grabbed his microscope again, pulling it back into its usual place. Staring blindly at the smeared slide, he didn’t even bother to fix it. He wanted to make sure that Mycroft knew even the most ruined of data took precedence over anything he could have to say given that Sherlock was fairly certain that he had made it perfectly clear that anything between them was over weeks ago. For Mycroft to show up in some questionable state of intoxication for the same of talking only made him more determined to stick to his decision.

Fidgeting with his ring as he waited, Mycroft eventually let out a frustrated noise. “Will you stop being so childish?” He all but demanded.

Head snapping up, Sherlock looked at him in disgust, unable to keep from rising to his feet as he spoke. “No. It’s my flat and I believe I have the right to act any way I damn well please.”

Not that either of them were all that good at respecting limitations or boundaries, but Sherlock was more than willing to remind his brother that any power that the man may hold in life stopped the moment he walked into 221B with any intention of speaking to him. If nothing else, he got a rather sick thrill out of such a fact, if only for the moment.

Turning away slightly, Mycroft seemed as though he might actually leave. Fingers sliding along the desk as he wavered between giving up and continuing to annoy Sherlock with his presence. Staring at Sherlock, he sighed. “Why are you so intent on making this difficult?”

At that Sherlock shrugged. Tapping his chin as he looked up in thought, he said, “I don’t know. It’s odd isn’t it? Almost as if I want you gone because I no longer want anything to do with you.” Letting out a confusing sound, Sherlock pursed his lips. “Hmm. Whatever could that mean?”

“Do you have to be so sarcastic?” Mycroft questioned as he rolled his eyes. “All I wanted to do was apologize but you have to make even that difficult, don’t you?”

“Even that?” He asked in shock. “I wasn’t the one that...”

Catching himself, Sherlock reared back slightly. Out of all the skills that Mycroft possessed, his ability to start annoying little rows with nothing more than a carelessly thrown out comment was probably the most carefully honed. Years of practise transforming it from something most said by accident into purposeful tool designed to force some kind of emotion from Sherlock. Taking a deep breath, he crossed his arms over his chest, determined not to let his brother get the best of him again.

“I’m not having this conversation with you,” Sherlock said, as calmly as he could. “Get out and don’t come back. I don’t care if you want to chat with Mrs. Hudson or John, have a case or if all of London is going down in flames. I never want to see you again, understood?”

“You don’t mean that,” Mycroft said, sounding so self assured.

“Piss off! You don’t get to tell me what I do or do not mean, Mycroft,” Sherlock snapped. Even if he wanted to play it calm, it was nearly impossible to do so against a man who knew him inside and out. The man who insisted on being so patronizing towards him and the choices he made. So instead, he let his emotions run their course as he told Mycroft, “I’m making a very adult decision not to waste any more time with you as a couple or a sibling. What is there not to understand
“Sherlock, you’ve rarely been the one to end things and never been the one to actually move on. You don’t know how to walk away from this... thing we have. You just sulk about until we wind up together again?”

“Did it ever occur to you, even once, that just maybe I’m finally tired of being the one to always wait around for you?” He asked bitterly. “Always waiting to be acknowledged, to have your attention, to be left all over again? Do you really just go about your life with the comfort of knowing that I’m always going to be there whenever you decide you want me again like some discarded toy?”

Letting out a soft breath, Mycroft looked away from him. If Sherlock didn’t know any better, he’d have taken the look for one of shame, but that was always the thing about Mycroft. For him to feel bad about his own actions was rare enough, let alone feeling shame. And with a row like the one they found themselves having, the same old lines and actions taking place for what felt like the millionth time, he knew that no matter how genuine, Mycroft’s words all held a certain amount of falseness to them.

Still, it didn’t stop the man from frowning at the ground, too nervous and cowardly to look Sherlock in the eyes as he spoke. “I don’t think of you in that way.”

“And yet that’s how you treat me. What you told me at the morgue was more than some pithy line of banality that you’d been saving up.” Looking at the table that stood between them, Sherlock hesitated before walking around it, stopping just out of his brother’s reach. He waited until a similar set of blue eyes focused on him, staring him down as he said, “That’s truly how you see things. You honestly think that if you can just stop caring everything would be fine and you live that way.”

“I care about you,” came the half hearted argument. But everything about Mycroft looked so broken and far off, even if the words carried the conviction they should’ve it still would’ve been off.

Furrowing his brows, Sherlock shook his head, turning himself away from his brother slightly. “That’s like a psychopath admitting that they love someone. It’s not real; it’s a reaction to someone else’s feelings.”

“That isn’t true and you know that,” he shot back as though he was hurt by the claim. At the very least Mycroft was emboldened by it, moving close enough to Sherlock to lift a hand to his cheek before dropping it back at his side as Sherlock tensed at the idea of being touch. Running a hand along his mouth, Mycroft muttered, “Yes, caring isn’t an advantage, but it’s not voluntary either. If I could stop feeling anything but faintest of regard for you I would because you make absolutely nothing easy on anyone.”

“So this is my fault again?”

“No, but you don’t help.” Smiling fondly at the floor, Mycroft’s normally unwavering facade cracked. “The drugs, the need to put your life at risk in order to be entertained, this thing we have because you just couldn’t leave it be.”

Shoving him, Sherlock glared at Mycroft when the man looked at him in shock as he stumbled backwards. “Do you really hate being with me that much? Was my wanting you back really so horrible?”

Dusting himself off, Mycroft nodded. “I’m not like you Sherlock. I can’t just ignore every social
convention that doesn’t suit my needs.”

Scoffing, Sherlock looked off toward the door, praying for anything. Lestrade to come around with a case, John simply returning home. Even the end of the world would’ve been better than listening to Mycroft lay the blame at his feet again as he listed those same flimsy reasons for why everything between them was flawed and evil.

“Taking up with you was and always be the most dangerous decision I’ve ever made because it was nothing short of a trifecta of... wrong. Being with a boy, an underage one at that was questionable enough long before taking into considering the fact you’re my brother,” he continued, heedless of whether or not Sherlock showed any interest in a word he had said.

Sneering at that, Sherlock bit his tongue until he was certain he wouldn’t shout as he told Mycroft, “It’s not as though you seduced me when I was a child. I was sixteen, Mycroft. I knew what I was doing.”

“How could you have if I didn’t?” Mycroft questioned imploringly. Raising a trembling hand to his mouth quickly, he stared at Sherlock, looking for all the world as though he truly did want an answer to that impossible question. “Any faith you had in us wasn’t based in knowledge, it was based on delusions all teenagers have. The idea that they’re invincible and that nothing will ever hurt them.”

“Well you’ve been more than helpful than showing off how hurtful a relationship can be. I thank you for that,” Sherlock snapped.

Being with his brother scarcely seemed to be anything more than an ongoing course in emotional pain. As though Mycroft wanted to prove to him that caring was for the weak in the most traumatic way possible. Because, while Sherlock knew physical and mental anguish all too well from his own doing, none of it ever compared to the damage Mycroft could inflict with his mere presence. How him even standing in front of Sherlock made the detective’s throat tighten while the pain behind his eyes burned at his brain, spreading like a wild fire. If the feeling was ever mutual, Sherlock certainly never knew of it.

The only thing he ever got out of Mycroft was carefully coaxed displays of emotions that came and went like fireworks as he stood there, a rock that would never be moved. Even to look at him, a person would be hard pressed to know how badly Sherlock hurt him if they couldn’t stared into those oddly emotional eyes.

“That was never my intention I...” Pausing, he let out a pained noise as he looked to his brother beseeingly. “For heaven’s sake, Sherlock I came here to apologize for how I acted. Not drudge up the past.”

“They aren’t mutually exclusive, though. This is just another piece of the pattern.” Sitting on the edge of the table, Sherlock rubbed at his eyes tiredly. “We break up, we get back together and we break up again and again likely until one of us dies. It’s all emotional blackmail and affairs. We’ve never been good together, so why would that be any different?”

It only took one look at his brother, slowly lifting his head from his hands to stare at the smartest man he knew, to see that even Mycroft didn’t have an answer. He just stood there, lips parted as he tried to come up with an answer that would please both of them, although everything about his body spoke of defeat.

Letting out an aborted phrase, Mycroft swallowed, brows furrowed in thought before he conceded with a small shake of his head. “I don’t know.”
Quickly turning his head away to hide the odd amount of hurt he felt, Sherlock nodded to himself quietly. Hand thoughtlessly adjusting the magnitude of his microscope lens, likely blurring the botched experiment even more out of focus, he let out a breath he didn’t even realize he’d been holding. “Fine,” he said softly. Clearing his throat, he added a bit louder, “You know the way out.”

“Sherlock, what do you want me to say? I’m not psychic.” Standing in front of him, Mycroft rested a hand on either side of him, effectively trapping him there where he’d be forced to listen. “I spend hours a day planning for any foreseeable problem, but I still get things wrongs. For every break up, I’ve tried to change, I’ve tried moving on and ignoring you. I don’t know how to make this... us together or apart, work.”

“So why are you here? Why apologize?” Sherlock asked helplessly. “Why keep fighting for this when it doesn’t work? It doesn’t make any sense for two rational people to keep on like we do when we both know it’s only a matter of time before... we break down into... this.”

The sheer insanity that rest in the idea of trying things over again would be enough to scare off most people, far less rational people who lived their entire lives guided by their emotions never once truly noticing the world around them. The kind of people Sherlock fought so very hard not to be like since he knew better. Yet, trapped between the metaphorical rock and a hard place, Sherlock couldn’t distance himself from the well known trap before him as Mycroft looked away with a wry smile tugging at his lips.

“I suppose because misery loves company and I love you. I don’t...” Biting at the corner of his lip, Mycroft blinked as he stared at his own hand for a moment before looking back at Sherlock. “I don’t want to be without you. I don’t want to be without John. You both are so childish and annoying, like a crime against decent living, to be honest.”

“Not helping.”

Drawing back slightly, Mycroft nodded in agreement. Moving to rest his hip against the table next to Sherlock, he let out a soft sigh before he tried again, saying, “But being with the two of you just... I can live without you easily. I could probably even live without John, if the situation was reversed, but not having either of you... I don’t want to do that. I don’t like where that led.”

And he couldn’t help it. Looking over at his brother as if he’d been stricken, Sherlock stared bitterly at him, unsure as to whether he was annoyed Mycroft clearly thought him some sentimental idiot or if he was upset because he hadn’t expected it in the slightest.

Eyes turning toward the ceiling, Sherlock struggled to keep his mind focus as he forced out the question, “Was it anyone I know this time?”

Eyes falling shut, Mycroft winced. “Don’t. Just... Just let us move on past this. Please. I’m... I am begging you, Sherlock. Don’t make me tell you.”

Sherlock let out a miserable bark of laughter at what was nothing short of a selfish request. “This isn’t fair. Making me do this when you... You...”

Cupping his cheeks, Mycroft stared at him with pleading eyes, everything in him honestly begging for Sherlock to do as he said. “Just trust me. Please. Just give me that much.”

It was a stupid thing to do, a terrible sign for them to restart their relationship over on the same old secrets, but even with that in mind, he still nodded along far too eagerly. “Fine. I trust you.”

“Thank you.”
“I just want John back and he won’t play along unless we make up,” Sherlock said angrily.

The fact that his words were undermined by his own hand carefully running through Mycroft’s hair wasn’t mentioned by either them. Instead, Mycroft merely leaned closer to him, fingers gliding up and down his side, each revelling the moment for what it was since words were never necessary to their understanding of each other.

Unbuttoning his brother’s jacket, Sherlock ran his hands up Mycroft’s chest, gently pushing the jacket off his shoulders as he closed the distance between them. Watching the man’s face for a brief moment, Sherlock raised a questioning brow, to which Mycroft acquiesced to with nothing more than a gentle kiss that didn’t last long. Not when Mycroft gave into a sort of desperation the moment Sherlock kissed back, hand fisted in Sherlock’s hair as though he was worried about the detective going anywhere.

As though there was anywhere Sherlock wanted to be aside from pressed against his brother, providing the odd lazy swipe of tongue to Mycroft’s urgent need to devour his mouth. It would’ve been comical if not for everything that had led them to such a moment. Something about making up almost always left them both a little off kilter, never quite syncing up beyond the base need for one another.

“Stop,” Sherlock said as he backed away from his brother. Catching the confused look on the man’s face, he gave a small smile as he unbuttoned his brother’s waistcoat just so he could wrap the man’s tie around his fingers. Tugging him off down the hallway, he taunted his brother, merely telling him, “Just trust me.”

Without much more than a brief nod, Mycroft did as he was told, allowing Sherlock to lead him along like an obedient pet to his room. Once inside, he looked over his brother, wondering just how much faith Mycroft had in him. How far he was willing to let whatever they were playing at for the moment go.

Backing away from him, he looked over the other man with pursed lips. “You trust me, right?”

“More than I should,” Mycroft said, watching him warily.

Nodding to himself, Sherlock gestured vaguely at his clothes. “Clothes off, lie on your back on the bed.”

Pausing to stare at him with a questioning brow raised a bit higher than usual, Mycroft didn’t say a word. Instead, after a moment’s pause, he began to do exactly as he was told, tie and waistcoat meticulously laid on Sherlock’s dresser, before being joined with his shirt and trousers, every article of clothing being neatly folded beforehand. When he was done, he laid on Sherlock’s bed just as quietly, legs spread wide enough for Sherlock to settle between them even though he hadn’t even asked for that. It was nothing more than a show of the man’s quiet need, of Mycroft’s open want for him in that moment.

And while the idea of keeping his brother waiting was tempting, Sherlock didn’t like delaying his own gratification. Not to mention there were better ways of driving the man mad. Kneeling on the bed, he looked Mycroft over, hand following along the same path from his neck to his chest, continuing down until his hand came rest on Mycroft’s shin, his brother’s skin pink with a growing flush.

Noting the way Mycroft watched him as though he was the one on display, Sherlock rested a hand on his brother’s hip before leaning forward, making that same path down Mycroft’s body with his lips as he brother tried his best to remain still under the onslaught. Not that Sherlock had any intention of making it easy on him. No, he took his sweet time dragging his tongue along the
growing stubble on Mycroft’s jaw, enjoying the sharp feel of it. Worried the skin of the crook of
the man’s neck with tongue and teeth, nipping his way down to Mycroft’s collarbone after leaving
a trail of slick, reddened skin in his wake.

With hands and lips, he made his way down his brother’s body, feeling ever shudder and sharp
intake of breath as Sherlock bit and licked at his nipples, lavishing careful attention on one before
moving on to the next, his hands stroking along Mycroft’s spread thighs, careful not to touch him
where he wanted it most. Sherlock was nearly positive that he could’ve spent hours remapping his
brother’s prone body if not for the faint groans of frustration coming from him.

Swiping his tongue along his brother’s naval as he stared up innocently at him, Sherlock stared at
him curiously. “Something wrong, Mycroft?” He asked, nothing in his voice giving away his
amusement.

Mycroft closed his eyes, taking a few calming breaths before opening them to look at Sherlock.
“No. Not at all.”

Brushing his thumb along Mycroft’s woefully needy cock, from the base to the slit, swiping at the
droplet of precome there, he sucked at his finger for a moment as he shook his head fondly.
“Don’t lie to me. Not now.”

“I just want you. On me, in me, I... I need you,” he said, cheeks growing redder at the confession.

It was the sort of thing only Mycroft would be embarrassed to admit, a fact that made Sherlock all
too happy. After all, he knew it wasn’t nerves at the fine line of dirty talk such a confession
walked. It was simply because his brother, who had made a living of keeping his emotions in
check and his secrets secret, was trying to be as open as he could before him, under him, entirely
at his mercy.

Absent mindedly caressing Mycroft’s stomach, noting that the man had lost weight in the few
weeks they were feuding, Sherlock decided to take pity on Mycroft for both their sakes. Sitting
back, he tossed aside his own clothes, not caring about how wrinkled they’d be later before
reaching across Mycroft to grab the lube from his nightstand.

In a rare show of eagerness, Mycroft planted his feet on the bed, leaving him displayed for
Sherlock’s viewing. As a show of fairness, or so he told himself, Sherlock quickly coated his
fingers, trailing them down along Mycroft’s twitching cock to his balls and lower, only stopping to
run the tip of his finger along that tight ring of muscles with only enough pressure to frustrate
Mycroft further.

Pressing his cheek into the pillow, Mycroft let out a broken, angry noise as he said, “Sherlock,
just... God. Just... Do something. Do anything.”

And with a plea like that, he could hardly resist pressing against the muscles until his finger sunk
into his brother’s body. Swearing softly to himself, Sherlock decided that even teasing wasn’t
worth the effort necessary to keep denying himself what he wanted. Instead he made quick work
of loosening his brother, his motions nothing more than shallow aborted thrusts after he got
worked a third finger into that tight heat, before quickly coating his cock with lube for what he
wanted most.

Stroking himself with far too loose a grip, he watched as Mycroft rocked his hip, a silent plea for
something to fill him. It was the kind of request Sherlock was only too thrilled to fill as he lined
himself up against his brother’s hole, one hand gripping Mycroft’s hip to keep him from moving.
Thrusting into him, he was certain that Mycroft let out a breathless gasp, although it was drowned
out by Sherlock’s own swearing.
Closing his eyes, Sherlock rested his forehead against Mycroft’s, going along with it as he was kissed, savouring the feel of a familiar hand in his hair as he began to move. Something about their recent reunion kept their actions slow, each of them taking the time to savour the seemingly endless amount of time the world was narrowed down to just the two of them. Narrowed into Sherlock’s slow, hard thrusts that seemed to force soft gasps out of Mycroft’s mouth as he found that spot inside his brother. Lazy kisses that spoke more of the love and faith they had in each other given that doing so in words could be a challenge for them both.

Of course, it was never meant to last as when Sherlock’s steady motions began to give way to something more desperate, he took Mycroft’s leaking cock in hand, stroking him with a quick efficiency, needing see him give in first. Something Mycroft didn’t disappoint him on, coming in thick streaks, body tightening around Sherlock with a soft groan, all but dragging Sherlock’s own climax out of him.

Moving to lie next to his brother, Sherlock looked over his utterly debauched older brother with a certain sense of satisfaction knowing he had reduced the dangerous man to that. Picking up his pants from the floor, Sherlock cleaned them both up with it before cuddling up to Mycroft, who lazily wrapped his arms around him.

“I take it you two have made up then,” John said from the doorway.

Looking between him and Mycroft, Sherlock chose to forgo explaining the obvious and instead asked him, “How did you know we were in here?”

Holding up Mycroft jacket, John placed it near the rest of his clothes with a fond smile. “Found that on the floor. Figured stripping wouldn’t happen unless you had made up.”

“You underestimate Sherlock and myself. Although, I suppose you’re right this time. Isn’t he, Sherlock?” Mycroft asked, looking to him with a worried look.

Sitting up, Sherlock nodded a bit reluctantly. While he still may have had his uncertainty about Mycroft, he couldn’t say no with the two of them staring him down like they were. “I suppose so.”

“So... Uh...”

“Oh for goodness sake’s, John. Strip and get in the bed,” Sherlock demanded, rolling his eyes as he tried not to smile.

An effort that was completely ruined when John took off his jumper and tossed it at him with a laugh. “Behave, or I’ll steal your brother away and leave you to sleep in here alone.”

“As though he would go with you,” Sherlock taunted.

Rolling over onto to his side to face John, Mycroft let out a weary sigh. “John, what have I told you about encouraging him?”

“Not to,” John said as he finished taking off his clothes. Climbing into the bed, he kissed Mycroft briefly, muttering against his mouth. “But I figured by now you knew I didn’t listen to you.”

Ignoring the way Mycroft kissed John in earnest, his flatmate giving in easily, Sherlock focused on the four healing lines running down Mycroft’s shoulder. Sliding his finger along the scratches, Sherlock didn’t miss the way his brother tensed for a brief moment. While Mycroft had all but admitted to the fact that he had taken their brief break to sleep with someone else, Sherlock knew by the cuts alone that such acts couldn’t have ceased to happen more than a couple of days prior.
“Sherlock?” John questioned.

Looking up from his brother’s back, Sherlock smiled at John, pointedly overlooking the concerned look in Mycroft’s eyes. Instead he leaned across his brother and kissed John, focusing on how much he had missed having them both in his bed instead of whatever it was Mycroft refused to tell him still.
Double Down

Chapter Summary

The boys make the most of their limited time together on holiday in Sussex.

It didn’t actually matter where Sherlock Holmes was, he was always someone John occasionally just had to walk away from. And perhaps it was the strange onslaught of cases that had begun to come their way after Sherlock and his recent fame, but John knew that if he spent one more minute trying to talk the man out of one of his ridiculous ideas, he might just drown the man. After all, that’s what holidays by the beach were for, to some extent; killing people in open water with no one noticing.

Of course, as he made his way back to their hotel room, John recalled that there was at least one person who might notice Sherlock’s absence as quickly as he’d figure out John’s crime, so he figure that, perhaps it was best to just leave the detective on his own, but still breathing.

“You’re back early,” Mycroft commented as he walked into the room. Lifting his eyes from the book he was reading, he frowned. “Where’s Sherlock?”

Flopping down on the bed with a slight bounce, John gave Mycroft a perplexed look before trying to figure out just what it was that he was reading. Grabbing the book from his hands, John said as he flipped through the pages, “I left him poking at a dying jellyfish.”

Taking his book back, Mycroft turned back to the page he was reading. “I do hope he doesn’t try to get samples from it then.”

Mycroft managed to get through a good two pages before he took note of the way John was staring at him with wide eyes. Whether that was due to the speed to which the man read of the fact that John’s mind seemed to come up with a near endless list of troubles that could easily arise from Sherlock being left alone with a jellyfish, it hardly mattered. As soon as Mycroft noticed the look of horror in John’s eyes, he placed his book aside before patting John’s thigh comfortingly.

“I’m certain he won’t. Honestly, it’s nothing to worry about,” he said, flashing one of his politician smiles.

It did nothing to soothe John’s worries, and while he was certain that they were both well aware of that fact, he still forced himself to nod in agreement as he tried to cast aside all thoughts pertaining to Sherlock and the strange sort of things he might drag back to their hotel room.

“She does make a rather efficient form of birth control from what I’ve found,” he laughed.

“You used to want kids?” John asked, more than a bit surprised.

After all, relationship with his brother aside, Mycroft seemed like he could’ve been a rather average father type figure. Certainly he seemed to know how to handle tantrums and the occasional dead thing being brought inside and shown off. Even for him to be a rather mundane,
absentee uncle would’ve been fitting for the man, but both option would require that Sherlock not be in the picture and John had long since come to the conclusion that children were not in the cards for any of them and was more than a little alright with that.

Not that he could say it was an agreed upon feeling given that it wasn’t something that they talked about. It was hard enough just to find time to be with each other what with Mycroft’s new bout of cancelling on them, something Sherlock assured him was more than a bit normal, and the onslaught of cases that had started to come their way as of late. And after the brief end of their little ménage a trois, it all felt too weird to start bringing up the future.

Something John almost regretted as he watched Mycroft look wistfully at the spot Sherlock had claimed as his part of the bed. Closing his eyes briefly, smiling about some memory only he was privy to, Mycroft shook his head. “No. I used to want a brother, but then mummy gave me one and somewhere along the line I decided never to test my luck in such a manner again.”

Curling up against Mycroft’s side, John rested his head against the man’s chest, a hand over his heart as Mycroft wrapped an arm around his waist. Playfully nudging Mycroft’s leg with his foot, he said, “And yet you still seem to have no problem what so ever falling in to bed with him.”

“Does sex with Sherlock really make up for having to deal with his eccentricities?” Mycroft mused, as though it was some grand philosophical question. Something that fell in line with ponderings of the meaning of life and what was existence.

“You know, you say that, but you wouldn’t know what to do without him. You, my dear Mycroft, would be rather lost without Sherlock to mock and tease,” John reminded him. While it was all fun and games when it came to mocking each other with the Holmes brothers, anyone who truly knew them would be hard pressed to deny the fact that they really did love each other. “It’s kind of the catch-22 of family. Can’t live with them, can’t live without them.”

“The same logic applies to my feelings for you, but you feel less of a need to pester me about that. Why?”

Ducking his head, John chuckled to himself and shrugged. “Because it doesn’t make you as uncomfortable when I pester you about that.”

Chancing a glance at his face, Mycroft pretended to be bothered by him, rolling his eyes like he did when John and Sherlock were being childish before giving him that serious scowl that typically followed it. And much like every other time, John couldn’t help but giggle about it.

“Remind me to avoid dating men who feel the need to lord things over me next time,” Mycroft complained jokingly.

Sitting up a bit straighter, John still felt the need to frown over that. Pointing a finger at him, not caring one bit about the fact that he was nearly poking Mycroft in the face, John told him in a semi-serious tone, “There’s not going to be a next time. You’re rather stuck with Sherlock and me. No one is leaving this... relationship again.”

That month apart had John nearly convinced that he would eventually find himself searching for someone else, that Sherlock and Mycroft were never going to get their act together. Sure, in a sense, he still had Sherlock, but forcing himself to go to his own room at night instead of the detective’s was a challenge and the fact that he had begun to worry about how he looked or acted in front of those damn CCTV cameras was a problem all on its own. No matter how juvenile it seemed, if he could help it, Sherlock and Mycroft were never allowed to break up again.

Grabbing his wrist, Mycroft pinned it to the bed as he rolled John onto his back. Straddling his
hips, Mycroft trailed his hand down the length of John’s arm to his side. Resting his hand there casually, he let out a heavy sigh, eyes turned toward the window, looking forlorn. “A cruel and unusual fate to subject someone to, but I suppose it could be worse.”

“I truly admire your apathetic optimism. That... That is just amazing,” John said genuinely as he fingered the buttons of Mycroft’s waistcoat.

It was as though the man didn’t know how to dress like a normal person, even if there was something inherently more relaxed about the tan waistcoat with Mycroft’s shirtsleeves neatly rolled up just above his elbow and everything but the chain on his waistcoat missing. Catching Mycroft’s curious gaze, John shook his head, brushing his fingers along the patch of hair unhidden by the man’s open collar.

Moving John’s hand back down to his side, Mycroft leant forward, lips meeting in a lazy way that only a holiday could provide, mouths falling open of their own accord. Even the distinct sound of the door opening didn’t actually matter because, well, there was really only one person that could be and the worst Sherlock could do was join in. Or not join in. John wasn’t sure which he would’ve preferred as he continued to kiss Mycroft.

Either way, it was quite clear that neither of them were Sherlock’s concern. He was busy searching the suite for something that only he knew about. He was about half way through tearing through the place when he finally noticed the two of them.

Placing his hands on his hips, Sherlock asked, “What are you two doing?”

If he had been expecting an immediate answer, it didn’t come. Hell, John would’ve left him to use his considerable deductive powers to figure out that they were snogging, but despite his best efforts to prevent it, Mycroft broke the kiss with a smirk as he sat up, still straddling John. Propping himself up on his elbows, John followed Mycroft’s gaze to Sherlock, half-heartedly glaring at him as he did.

“John is mocking my apathy,” Mycroft explained. “Something I feel entirely apathetic toward, oddly enough.”

“Hmm.” Waving them off to go back to what they were doing, Sherlock began to look through John’s suitcase. Frowning when it failed to meet his needs, he crossed his arms over his chest and said, “I need container. Mycroft, do you have a suitcase with you that you don’t need about the size of a small dog? I’ll give it back when I have time to find something more... appropriate”

“Sherlock, we’re not taking home anything from the beach, so whatever you’ve planned, I’d suggest you forget it altogether,” Mycroft said as he got up, likely to prevent Sherlock from going through anymore of their things.

Something John was entirely displeased with as he continued to lie on the bed, certain that he wished Sherlock had just joined in rather than come in spouting off ridiculous needs. Forcing himself to sit on the edge of the bed, he figured that at the very least he could enjoy whatever reasoning Sherlock had for the oddest thing he had asked for since he tried to bring along his harpoon on their little holiday.

“I’m not a child and it’s only a few tentacles,” Sherlock said, rolling his eyes dramatically as Mycroft forced him to sit on the bed next to John. “I’m even being careful. I have everything planned for, as it were.”

“I’m sorry, what?” John couldn’t help but ask.
For a moment, Mycroft looked the tiniest bit unsettled while Sherlock stared on triumphantly. Clearing his throat, he said, “His odd consumptions of fluids this afternoon had a purpose.”

“Oh,” John said with a nod. Looking toward Sherlock as his mind began to unravel what Mycroft was saying, his eyes widened. “Oh! No! Sherlock... No. You’re willingness to piss on yourself does not help in any way at all, so just sit down and we’ll go do something. See a movie, something. Anything. Just... No.”

“Vinegar would require someone else around and it’s a small pond of water away from the sea, making salt water as inconvenient. Urine is the best option. Immediate, readily available and if stung, I could go back to what I was doing.”

“Which would be what got you stung in the first place,” John pointed out, used to Sherlock’s wilful blindness towards certain things.

“Hmm. I suppose I could test to see what kind of urine would be best in the case of jellyfish sting,” Sherlock said with a shrug.

Looking at Mycroft for help, or at least an explanation as to why Sherlock was so insane, John wasn’t surprised to see him pinching the bridge of his nose with a small scowl.

“It’s that holiday to Loch Ness all over again,” Mycroft muttered.

Wincing, John nervously asked, “Do I want to know?”

Mouth open to answer, Mycroft stopped, a thoughtful look on his face before he tried again, saying, “In all fairness, Sherlock was only eight and was out to prove that monsters didn’t exist.”

“Which your parents yelled at him for?”

“Heavens no. He wouldn’t have even gotten in trouble had he not chosen the middle of the night to sneak off and nearly drown,” he said, glaring at Sherlock as though the man had plans to do that again. Not that the plans he did have were all that much better. “Even then he was rather miserable at noting his body’s signs of fatigue.”

“I was on a mission,” Sherlock said firmly.

And the idea of a little Sherlock, the same boy that wanted to be a pirate, going out to into the dead of night to prove that monsters didn’t exist in the most foolhardy way possible was enough to make John duck his head, fighting the desperate urge to laugh and hug him. Of course the insanity wasn’t Sherlock suddenly came across, no, he had carefully cultivated it since he was a boy.

Wiping at the tears that were forming in his eyes from the sheer restraint it took not to laugh, John took a few calming breaths before looking up at Mycroft. “I’m just going to assume you were the one to save him?”

“Yes. Couldn’t shake the nagging feeling that mummy might blame me if her youngest child died searching for monsters.”

“Oh do shut up, Mycroft,” Sherlock snapped, obviously tired of being the subject of conversation for once. “It’s not as though I was the sole cause of Mummy’s anxieties or should I mention that incident with that tree?”

Perking up at the thought of Mycroft being just as bad as Sherlock, John nodded eagerly. “I think you should mention that.”
“I’ll stop if you don’t start, Sherlock,” Mycroft said, grimacing about whatever the ‘tree incident’ entailed. “After all, I have more stories about you than you do me.”

“Fine.”

“Oh come on,” John groaned. “This was getting to be rather fun.”

“I’m afraid you’ll have to live without any more tales of our fairly wayward youth, John. Terribly sorry about that,” Mycroft said sarcastically as he leaned against the wall.

Scoffing, John nodded in agreement. “Yeah. I can just tell.”

“You know, it is rather unfair, Mycroft,” Sherlock said.

“Oh?”

“Yes. John is constantly hearing tales from you about my childhood and the occasional story about you, but we never get to hear any about John.”

“That’s because I know how to keep my embarrassing moments to myself, thank you,” John said proudly.

“But you do have a sister we’d love to have a chat with, from what I recall.”

Looking over at Mycroft as the far too pleased look he had about him, John made a mental note not to ever let Mycroft and Sherlock have a chat with Harry. Not that he didn’t love his sister, but the odd teasing that went on between siblings that was at its best when it wasn’t about him.

“Alright.” Clearing his throat in an unsubtle attempt to change the topic, John said, “So, I think we were talking about where we were going to eat dinner? Mycroft’s treat since we did solve that Reichenbach case and have become rather popular since then, if I recall that correctly.”

“You do realize that for most, the holiday to Eastbourne would be gift enough,” Mycroft said, trying to sound bothered and failing on purpose, given that Mycroft could be as convincing as he wanted to be under the right circumstances.

But, not to be swayed by even the falsest of complaints, John merely shrugged as he leaned back on his forearms. “Yeah, well, I’m not Sherlock and poking at dying sea animals doesn’t give me the same thrill it does him.”

“A thrill that is entirely ruined when certain people refuse to help out my sample collecting. After all, it isn’t as though a Lion’s Mane sting is deadly,” Sherlock scoffed.

“Merely painful and…” Clenching his jaw, John shook his head. “Right. Not arguing why you should have the common sense not to poke around with a jellyfish.”

If nothing else, it was a waste of his breath since he was half sure that Sherlock would not only ignore him, but somehow trick him into believing that some benefit might actually come from it like some four year old jedi master.

So instead, he just turned his attention back to the more rational of the Holmes men and said, “Mycroft, the holiday is lovely, as is the room, but I want something that benefits me now.”

“If it involves fish and chips, I’m afraid I’m going to have decline,” he teased, even though there was a large hint of seriousness to his words.
“No. I’ll spare you such a horrible torture this time around.” Even though the date hadn’t been the
disaster it should’ve been given how they all started out, John found that there was something he
wanted a bit more than making Mycroft suffer. “Actually, I want to do the whole wining and
dining thing. Dinner, a show, come back here and see where the night takes the three of us.”

“That sounds entirely boring,” Sherlock said, lying back on the bed.

Smiling, Mycroft shrugged. “I think it sounds rather pleasant.”

“Of course you would. It’s an evening of eating and sitting around and you’ve always been prone
to moving as little as possible, when you could.”

Shoving Sherlock, who responded by knocking his knee against his, John told Mycroft, “You
know, we don’t even have to bring Sherlock.”

“If we didn’t, we’d likely come back to a dissected jellyfish laid out somewhere in the room with a
rather stung Sherlock pondering what to do with his new findings.”

“I’m not a child, Mycroft,” Sherlock complained.

Staring at him, even if Sherlock seemed to be more focused on the ceiling, Mycroft said, “No,
you’re so much worse.”

Which was a fair enough assessment given that children typically didn’t hide dead bodies in the
kitchen or set the counter on fire in some experiment gone wrong. Or in the process of making
pop-tarts, although John knew that Mycroft would claim that it was both John and Sherlock’s
fault.

“All right, well, we’ll bring him along and gag him if he starts complaining too loudly.” Shrugging
it off as though it was nothing, John muttered, “I just want a nice night out, is all.”

Relaxing a bit, Mycroft looked at his brother. “Sherlock?”

“I guess I could... suffer through an entire evening of the two of you making boring small talk
about politics and terrible Bond movies,” Sherlock said as he forced himself into a sitting position
yet again.

It was clear that Sherlock was only playing along for his benefit, but John couldn’t say that he was
all that bothered by the idea. Compromise was something he and Sherlock had down to an art
form of sorts. Although there were certain things even John couldn’t help but be bothered by.

Staring at Sherlock as though he was some strange confused subhuman, John said, “How you can
consider Bond movies terrible continues to baffle me, by the way.”

“Factually inaccurate or impossible,” Sherlock said, given that was his usual excuse against most
movies.

Looking to Mycroft for help, he was a bit saddened by the fact that he was more focused on his
phone than the two of them. Sighing, John decided to ignore it and instead held up his hands in
surrender to Sherlock. “Not having this argument again because it’s a bloody movie series and
they’re all amazing and you just don’t know how to enjoy nice things like television.”

“There’s nothing nice about that ridiculous series. Not to mention that—“

“I really do hate to interrupt, but I’m afraid I won’t be able to go along with such lovely plans,”
Mycroft said, pocketing his phone disappointedly. “Some rather important business requires me
back in London as soon as possible, I’m afraid.”

And while he figured something like that might have been on the horizon, it didn’t stop John from letting his shoulders drop in defeat as he looked at Mycroft sadly. “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

“I’m sorry. I really was looking forward to this evening. I’ll make it up to the both of you.”

“If you want, we could come back to London with you,” he offered a bit miserably.

After all, they were meant to be pending their little holiday together, just the three of them and with Mycroft gone, the entire point of it was lost, even if Mycroft did claim that the holiday was nothing more than a reward for how well they handled the Reichenbach case.

Gathering up his things, Mycroft shook his head. “No. You both really have earned yourselves a holiday for all your good work. Enjoy it. I’ll... call when I can.”

“What about your things?” John asked, noting the hurry the man seemed to be in to leave.

“I’ll take care of it,” Sherlock offered. “If it’s that important, it’s probably best not to keep your handlers waiting.”

“Why thank you, Sherlock,” Mycroft said, sounding genuinely surprised and grateful.

“Right,” John said, watching him move around the room. “Well, I love you.”

Making his way over to the bed, Mycroft kissed John briefly before saying, “I love you too.”

“Try not to start a war,” Sherlock said before leaning over to kiss his brother’s cheek.

Smiling, understanding the statement for what it was, Mycroft nodded before kissing Sherlock goodbye as well. “Will do, Sherlock.” With that, Mycroft was getting only what was necessary before heading out without another word.

Lying back on the bed, John frowned disappointedly at the ceiling. He didn’t know why the world seemed so vehemently against the three of them having even the briefest moment of niceness between them, but he didn’t appreciate it in the slightest. A matter Sherlock didn’t seem too overly concerned with as he laid down next to John, cuddling up against his side.

“If you want, we can go and get some positively miserable takeaway, lie about on the bed and watch your miserable Bond movies,” he offered, pressing a brief kiss to John’s jaw.

Turning his head to face him, John furrowed his brows as he asked, “Are you trying to make me feel better?”

“Yes.”

“Thank you,” he said, mustering up a small smile. “I think I would actually rather like that, to be honest.”

“Good.”

Sitting up, John watched as Sherlock began to get ready, a bit touched that he was willing to suffer through what would certainly be a long and boring evening of arguing over why James Bond wasn’t the world’s worst character, how movies about Q would never be better than ones about Bond and whatever other ridiculous ideas Sherlock had managed to think up since the last time John and Mycroft ruled that watching Bond would be in the best interest of the three of them.
It wasn’t the evening he wanted, but such was the method of compromise when involved with the Holmes brothers.
Mutually Assured Destruction

Chapter Summary

Trusting in the enemy not to make a move is probably the most foolish thing Mycroft has ever done.

Chapter Notes

This took forever. I am so sorry about that.

Even if he didn’t care to think about it, Mycroft knew that the reason for him being at Moriarty’s every beck and call was because he had allowed it to happen. When every call came, he answered it. When summoned he went before Jim even had a chance to mention that tape or Sherlock because he didn’t want to hear those things coming from the other man’s mouth. Keeping it left unsaid, the words dead on Jim’s lips meant that he didn’t have to think of it all. That he wouldn’t have to deal with the fleeting moments where he second guessed his decisions.

It was something he had become more than a bit adept at during his little game with Jim. It was all motions for the most part. Knocking on the door, waiting somewhat impatiently until Jim let him in. Looking around the room as he stood next to the coffee table, idly wondering how often it was that Jim switched places since Mycroft was nearly positive that, despite the decor and furniture, he didn’t actually live in the flat. Not really.

“You wore that on your holiday?”

Glancing down at the black three piece suit he wore, he gave Jim an annoyed look, wondering why it was that so many felt the need to question his attire. “I went home and showered first. And you’re one to talk about strange outfits,” he said, nodding toward what Jim was wearing.

Looking himself over, Jim tugged at the collar of his shirt with an exaggerated look of hurt. “You don’t like?”

“Why are you dressed like that?” He asked bluntly.

It wasn’t as though he cared all that much, simply unused to seeing in Jim in anything other than a suit since his release. And really, with his neatly combed hair and blue polo shirt, he looked very unlike the Jim Moriarty Mycroft had come to know. There was something deceptively sweet about him that made Mycroft feel more than a little unsettled.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Jim made a vague gesture with his hand, any trace of hurt feelings disappearing as quickly as they came. “I’m giving up my life of crime to be a children’s television narrator. Read stories. Be happy.”

“I’m certain you’ll do wonderfully,” Mycroft said sarcastically, rolling his eyes. After all, if Jim didn’t want to tell him the truth, he wasn’t going to press the subject.
“I think so,” Jim agreed happily. Much like most of Jim’s moods, it was hardly lasting. In the blink of an eye, Jim was staring at him curiously, as though he couldn’t seem to figure something out. Looking Mycroft over, he asked, “Now, why are you here?”

“You called me here. Remember?” He pointed out knowing that while Jim didn’t ask rhetorical questions, he didn’t forget things either. So when the man continued to look at him as though he was some sort of anomaly, Mycroft couldn’t help but feel a bit more cautious about him.

“Yes, but...” Walking over to Mycroft, Jim shook his head. “I wasn’t expecting you so soon. Not when you had a holiday with your brother and John to look forward to. I can’t believe you left that for me.”

“Blackmail does inspire people to do such a thing,” he pointed out boredly.

“Yeah, except for the part where you still went home to shower and change first.”

“I didn’t realize that you were holding my hygienic behaviours against me,” Mycroft quipped, standing a bit straighter since backing away from Jim as he pressed himself against him.

“I’m not.” Pressing his face to Mycroft’s neck, Jim inhaled deeply before licking along the edge of his shirt collar. Stepping back, he stared at him with wide innocent eyes as he said, “You smell nice.”

“Why did you call me here, Jim?” Mycroft asked, trying to cut to the point of things.


“The truth.”

“You can’t handle the truth,” Jim said, his moment of seriousness immediately ruined by his own chuckling.

“And you can’t handle music or movies from the way you constantly quote them,” Mycroft pointed out.

Eyes darkening, Jim sneered. “You’re no fun.”

“Is that why you called me here? Because Sherlock was actually informing of such a fact before I left. John as well.”

Taking a deep breath, Jim slid his hand down the front of Mycroft’s waistcoat before tracing his thumb along the edge of each button. Pressing his lips to Mycroft’s jaw, he slowly began to unbutton the waistcoat as he muttered into Mycroft’s skin, “I hunger for your sleek laugh, your hands the colour of a savage harvest, hunger for the pale stone of your fingernails.”

Getting the waistcoat undone, he gently pushed it off Mycroft’s shoulders along with his jacket, careful to catch both to keep them from hitting the ground. Nipping at Mycroft’s skin, sucking at it with almost enough force to leave a mark, he chuckled darkly and added, “I want to eat your skin like a whole almond.”

Staring straight ahead, Mycroft merely nodded along with the poetic words, doing his best to seem unaffected by the actions that came with them. “Touching.”

Turning to place the waistcoat and jacket on the coffee table, Jim shrugged. “I thought of quoting E.T., but Katy Perry often lacks the cannibalistic themes I desire when seducing people.”
“Is that what you’re doing, seducing me?” Mycroft asked, as he placed a hand on Jim’s hip.

Looking between the hand and Mycroft, Jim snickered. “I don’t know. You tell me. Are you seduced?”

“Hardly.”

“Think Sherlock would be?” Jim asked as he wrapped his arms around Mycroft’s neck. Running his fingers along the back of his neck, he smiled tauntingly. “I’ve seen him. He’s attractive with his clothes off. I bet he even bleeds pretty. What do—“

Gripping the front of his shirt, Mycroft slammed Jim back against the wall, trapping the smaller man between it and his own body. Not that it was shocking. In the weeks since their odd blackmailing routine had come to extend to sexual gratification, Mycroft often found that trapping Jim Moriarty was at times far too easy.

Not that such knowledge stopped him from cupping Jim’s jaw tightly as he questioned darkly against Jim’s ear, “What have I told you about mentioning?”

“Not wearing a tie,” Jim teased as he tugged lightly at Mycroft’s.

“And I find it still entirely possible to use you until I find myself cradling your jaw in my hands, watching you teeter right at the knife’s edge of release before I snap your neck and leave you to rot in this place,” he breathed, ignoring the shiver that ran down Jim’s spine.

Letting his eyes fall shut as he licked his lips, Jim shook his head as best he could with Mycroft still gripping his jaw. When he opened them again, he stared at Mycroft with furrowed brows as he said, “Bad guy to Bond villain, threats shouldn’t be that sexy. It... it creates confusion.”

“Most people would know to pick life over death.”

“Not coming from you,” Jim teased, loosening Mycroft’s tie. “Hell, even your own brother lets you—“

Silencing the man by crushing their lips together, Mycroft didn’t bother thinking about when he let kissing Jim become the acceptable method for silencing the other man. All that mattered was that he wasn’t talking, all words replaced by some pleased noise as he worked his tongue into Mycroft’s mouth, trapping himself against the wall even more as he pulled Mycroft closer.

It was just another thing he didn’t think about; how willingly his body moved to be closer Jim’s. Letting his body simply act was the easiest solution to his problems, from where he stood. Focusing on the soft noises Jim made as they relearned each other’s mouths, his hands untying Mycroft’s tie while he still continued hold Jim’s jaw, though he loosened his grip. The less he thought about his actions, the less he had to consider the consequences.

Thankfully, Jim was all too willing to help in that respect. Spreading his legs just enough for Mycroft to wedge his thigh in between them, Jim turned his head, panting softly as he began to rut against him. The desperate keening noises that fell from his lips as he gripped Mycroft’s hair, guiding the man’s mouth to his neck, were as enticing as they were for show and Mycroft was grateful for it. Only too delighted cause that sharp intake of breath in the man as he bit a little too hard at his neck.

Of course, much like everything else, the shudders and gasped meant nothing when coming from Jim. Shoving Mycroft away weakly before redoubling his efforts to create some actual space between their bodies, Jim looked him over with a breathless chuckle. “Come along, Pond,” he
said as he took off his shirt, tossing it aside carelessly before walking to room.

Dragging his thumb along his lower lip, Mycroft thought about not following. Of just leaving Jim and the strange game of sexual gratification they had fallen into. But, glancing between the bedroom door and the front door, Mycroft shamefully followed after the criminal mastermind, sliding his braces off his before untucking shirt as he went.

When he found Jim, the man was kneeling on the edge of the bed, hands held out in front of him like a dog standing on its hind legs.

“Woof,” Jim laughed.

“Does this make me your master then?” Mycroft asked as he unbuttoned his shirt, letting it hang open as he moved to stand at the edge of the bed.

Narrowing his eyes as he smirked, Jim said, “Hardly.”

“Hardly is not a no, James,” Mycroft pointed out, relishing the annoyed look on Jim’s face at the use of his given name. Taking off his tie, he draped it over Jim’s shoulders, the ends held tightly in his hand. With Jim staring at him, wide eyed and taunting, Mycroft scowled at him. “I could strangle you now, you know.”

“Or you could tie me up and make me forget anything but you until I’m saying your name over and over like a prayer to God.”

Closing his eye as he took a deep breath, Mycroft clenched his jaw. The feeling of a hand resting over his heart before nails began to drag down his chest wasn’t helping him in the slightest, but that’s what Jim wanted anyways as he nuzzled at his chest hair in some quiet apology for what he had just done.

“You’re a sadist,” Mycroft muttered as Jim bit and licked at his skin.

Jim’s only answer was a sound of acknowledgement as he made his way to one nipple, sucking until it stiffened just so he could rolled it between his teeth, before moving to the other, leaving a wet trail in his path as he worked his mouth across the expanse of Mycroft’s chest. Biting down on his tongue, Mycroft did his best to keep his breathing even as he wanted to force Jim’s too clever mouth where he wanted it most.

When Mycroft rested his hand in Jim’s hair, the other still gripping the tie around the his neck like a leash, Jim rested his hands on his thighs, thumbs resting against the crease of his legs and unwilling to move any closer than they were to the erection pressing against the front of Mycroft’s trousers.

Wrapping the tie around his fist until it rested against Jim’s throat, lust filled eyes staring up at him as his Adam’s apple bobbed out of excitement more rather than fear, Mycroft nodded at the bed. “Lie down, Jim.”

Gripping Mycroft’s wrist, Jim did as he was told, tugging Mycroft down along with him until he was on top of Jim, straddling his hips. Circling a finger around Mycroft’s navel, chuckling softly as his stomach fluttered beneath his finger, Jim lowered it until he reached Mycroft’s fly. With Mycroft’s fist still at his throat, he merely undid it, till avoiding where Mycroft wanted his hand most, likely for the way the man’s hips chased after his fingers as he moved them away.

“Someone’s eager,” Jim teased as he crossed his wrists above his head, fingers flirting with the edge of the headboard as a taunt.
Even giving himself up so obviously, Jim still managed to seem like he was the one in charge. Leaning forward, Mycroft bit at Jim’s shoulder, knowing that the soft cry that spilled from Jim’s mouth as he arched his back desperately was as real as anything could be when everything with Jim often seemed to be an act. And while such an idea would deter most, Mycroft went with it. Went along with the game to try and piece together the mystery of what was real and what wasn’t, leaving a trail of kisses as he worried Jim’s skin, carefully spacing out red marks that would blossom into bruises down his side as he undid Jim’s trousers.

Sitting back, Mycroft looked Jim over, trying not to focus on his bedroom eyes and parted lips, the way Jim’s fingers flexed with the want to touch even though nothing was stopping them. Instead he focused on his own against Jim’s trouser clad thigh, a patch of his tented neon green pants showing from the open fly. Arching a brow at him, Mycroft didn’t bother to hide his amusement as Jim let out a quiet huff as he looked away.

“Don’t question it. Just get back to the sex part. I was enjoying that,” Jim said as he glanced back at Mycroft.

Given his own needs, Mycroft chose to do as he was told, sliding those pants and trousers off Jim’s slim hips before removing the last of his own clothes. Leaning over to grab the lube from where it laid in waiting on the nightstand, Mycroft coated his fingers before pressing one into Jim roughly. It was how he always liked it, a low moan spilling out from his lips as he tossed his head back despite the inevitable burn because he never let Mycroft be gentle.

The fact that Mycroft only felt the need to be gentle came in fleeting moment helped balance out Jim’s insane needs. Stretching Jim open was nothing more than perfunctory motions that Mycroft refused to give up, ever the staunch traditionalists when the moment struck him, slipping in a second finger to make things easier for him more than Jim, who seemed frustrated when it was added, letting out an annoyed growl that faded into gasp as Mycroft’s fingers brushed over that spot inside him roughly.

Still, drawing out things to annoy Jim only meant that he had to sacrifice his own wants, because with Jim winning always seemed to come at a cost to him. Removing his fingers to Jim’s delight, Mycroft lined himself up and thrust in slowly, the cloying heat making him pause as soon as he was fully seated in the other man. The fact that he didn’t get to enjoy the moment as Jim wrapped his legs around Mycroft’s waist, heels digging into his back to spur him on, wasn’t a surprised though.

Gripping at the tie that still hung precariously around Jim’s neck, Mycroft gripped it just tight enough to be a threat as he began to move, only loosening his grip as Jim kissed him. And while the feeling of his own knuckle occasionally digging into his chest and chin was uncomfortable, he didn’t trust Jim not to say something annoying without the ever present warning. After all, while he may have kissed back eagerly, moaning into Mycroft’s mouth as he try to make Mycroft move faster, harder, whatever it was his sick mind desired, Jim was like an animal on the prowl, never truly off his guard. Between the two of them, things were as much business as it was pleasure.

And Mycroft hated how pleasurable it could be. Mind and body focused on nothing but Jim, no matter how hard he tried to avoid that. To ignore the fact that he felt as out of control standing too close to him as he did having sex with him, his own orgasm quickly building. The only comfort he had was the fact that he could make Jim come first, something he wasted little time doing. Releasing his grip on the tie to grip Jim’s leaking cock, working it hard and fast until Jim came with a hoarse cry of his name, Mycroft following him down that same path soon after.

Lying next to Jim, Mycroft closed his eyes as he tried to catch his breath, ignoring the way Jim took his hand and licked away any semen that was on it before getting out of bed. He had his own problems in trying to keep his mind at bay, rather than dissect everything he had done.
When Jim finally returned, still naked and warm from the shower he had taken, he laid down next to Mycroft. “Some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice. From what I’ve tasted of desire, I hold with those who favour fire.” Toying with his hair, Jim smiled as Mycroft let his eyes drift shut, saying, “But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate, to say that for destruction ice is also great and would suffice.”

Snorting softly, Mycroft shook his head slowly to keep from dislodging Jim’s hand. “Two ice jokes in one go. I almost think you’re getting better at this.”

“I try.”

“It’s hardly appreciated,” Mycroft said.

Shrugging it off, Jim opened his mouth to speak only to be cut off by the sound of Eye of the Tiger. Ignoring the questioning look Mycroft gave him, Jim reached over to grab his phone from his trousers and picked up as he went back to massaging Mycroft’s scalp.

“Daddy’s post coital, sweetheart, so you better not be calling to ruin that,” he said, sounding far too chipper.

Pressing his lips to Jim’s sternum, Mycroft did his best to ignore Jim’s little noises, the ones he made when he took calls in front of him. He rarely got any sort of information from what Jim said and couldn’t hear the person on the other line without moving closer to the phone, something Jim never allowed.

“That’s good. Oh that’s very good. I almost kind of like you for this. Keep it up and call later,” Jim said before hanging up.

“Good news?” Mycroft asked, knowing the answer.

Jim only shrugged before letting out a sift sigh. Flicking Mycroft’s nose playfully, he said, “I have to ask, why did you come here?”

“Jim, we’ve been over that.”

“Yeah, but you know I was never really going to leak that video.”

Looking away, Mycroft swallowed, drawing a mindless pattern on Jim’s hip with his finger. He knew the silence couldn’t last forever, not with the way Jim was staring at him. When he felt a sharp tug at his hair, Mycroft let out a heavy sigh.

“I don’t know. I was bored. I was lonely. I missed you. Which sounds best?” He questioned as he rubbed at his eyes.

Nodding, Jim moved to look him in the eyes, hand never leaving Mycroft’s hair as he pressed himself against him. Giving him the most earnest look he’d ever seen on Jim, the criminal mastermind frowned. “We had a good few weeks though. You answering my every beck and call.”

Furrowing his brows, Mycroft nodded in agreement. “We did. But now you’re ending it.”

“I once told your brother I was going to burn the heart out of him. I don’t know what it is about him that makes me want to ruin his existence, to just take away everything he loves before killing him, but... I do. I want to know he’s suffering. You understand that, yeah?”
“Not personally, but the idea isn’t lost on me.”

“I knew it wouldn’t be.” Lowering his hand from Mycroft’s hair to his chest, Jim began to play with his chest hair, more focused on the motions of his fingers. “And, to be fair, I had planned to kill his landlady, John, that detective, but you... I could never really touch you.”

“It would only lead to your own death,” Mycroft said, knowing all too well the sort of things that might cause pause in Moriarty. “So you finding out about Sherlock and myself was... fortunate.”

“It was the best thing ever,” he said, sounding less than thrilled about it. Meeting Mycroft’s gaze, he sighed and said, “I thought I was really losing it when I first watched it.”

“So you come to me, tell me and make a plan to torture me because I knew where you were and I couldn’t tell them.”

“I figured it would be fun to watch. I know how much you care about him. Well... Them,” he said, ducking his head shyly. A strange gesture given that there was nothing he had to be afraid of in that moment. “But you are... You know, I just don’t understand you. You knew I couldn’t do anything, but you let me stay because I remind you of him?”

Sighing, Mycroft shook his head. “You weren’t the only one using someone in all of this, Jim.”

From the moment Moriarty had mention that he might leak the video if Mycroft didn’t let him stay, he knew the man was bluffing. Without Sherlock and John to worry about, there was nothing that the man could possibly hold against. Certainly his higher ups wouldn’t trust a criminal mastermind over him. And even if they did, he was too valuable to be gotten rid of.

And yet, he let himself fall into the same situation for weeks on end for reasons he didn’t want to think about any more than he had wanted to when he had first arrived. To ignore his reasoning for playing about with Moriarty was to keep a shred of his own dignity and sanity in place, although he was clearly going to be stripped of those sooner rather than later.

Smirking at him, Jim nipped at his lip, muttering into his mouth, “And here I thought I was the only one with a crush back in that cell.”

The idea that he could easily kiss back and stop whatever Jim had on his mind then and there was tempting, but he knew better. The obvious had been avoided for far too long. So, turning his head, he said, “And yet now you... You expect me to tell him you’re going to come after him. To ruin everything he has because you will, one way or another.”

“Warn him, give him a fighting chance in all of this and you wind up confessing to our little affair. Keep it a secret—“

“And you will let the world know of what kind of relationship he has with his brother. And you don’t want to do that,” Mycroft said softly, everything falling into place as the taste of bile rose in his throat. “I mean, you want him disgraced, but it’s only fun for you if you can leave me to suffer the consequences of all this.”

“Or I love you,” Jim said casually. “Whichever sounds better.”

“I need to get dressed.”

Getting up, he began to redress, ignoring the way Jim watched him as he did so. Glancing towards the bathroom where his tie had likely been left by Jim, he decided to let it go. He had a number of black ties and to lose that one meant nothing. All he wanted was to leave before everything the weight of his own actions had a chance to overtake him. The arms wrapping around his waist
from behind put a brief pause to his rush as he looked over his shoulder at the other man with a scowl.

“You know, I was enjoying this. Us,” Jim said, sulking against his shoulder. Grimacing, he furrowed his brows as he added, “It’s just... I can’t stop thinking about him and seeing in the papers, it’s... It's too much for one man to bear, I’m afraid.”

“At least you have the comfort of knowing I put myself into this position,” Mycroft offered hollowly.

Of course, Jim seemed to take as much comfort in the sentiment as he did. “Yeah. That I do,” he agreed with just as much as enthusiasm. Pinching at Mycroft’s side, he said, “It’s too bad you had to have a younger brother. We could’ve had fun together, Mr. Holmes.”

Disentangling himself from Jim’s grip, he looked toward the ceiling, taking a deep breath before looking at Jim, still naked and kneeling on the edge of the bed. On anyone else it would’ve looked amusing given the pout on his face, but on him, well, Jim Moriarty was nothing if not a master actor.

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less travelled by and that has made all the difference,” Mycroft said, the words of another the only thing he really had to offer in the moment.

“But at what cost?” Moriarty asked before lying back down.

And wasn’t that just the question of the evening.

Nodding his farewell, Mycroft said, “Goodbye, James.”

“Goodbye, Mycroft,” Moriarty called out as he left the room, the weight of the past few months resting heavily on Mycroft’s shoulders as the taste of defeat settled in his mouth like ash.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock is finally told about Mycroft’s affair with Jim.

Chapter Notes

Happy thanksgiving. Or for my foreign readers: happy Thursday. Two chapters left guys!

The fact that Mycroft had specifically called him over wasn’t the strange part. John was out for the night, spending time with some mates who wanted to take him out to a pub to congratulate him for their recent success and Sherlock refused to go to a pub with a bunch of former soldiers. It would only end poorly and with John in a tiff over his behaviour towards his mates.

The strange part when he walked in, placing Mycroft’s suitcase to the side, since he hadn’t seen his brother since their holiday a few days ago. His brother had merely opened the door without a word before going back to his chair, a half filled glass of something brown and alcoholic in front of him, his shirtsleeves rolled up just above his elbows. He looked pensive about something, which made Sherlock think that perhaps the crisis that he brought the man back to London early might not have been averted in the slightest.

“I was rather hoping for a hello or a kiss. Some sort of greeting since your suitcase is still filled with clothes instead of sea life,” Sherlock said, trying to break the ice.

“Yes, well, thank you.”

Locking the door behind him, Sherlock walked over to his brother, staring down at him with a frown. “What’s going on, My?”

Taking a deep breath, Mycroft licked his lips as he turned away from Sherlock. “You once said something about me keeping secrets.”

“Because you do,” Sherlock said with a slight scoff. “You’ve made a rather filthy habit of it over the years.”

“An amusing view coming from a former drug addict,” Mycroft shot back immediately. Catching the way Sherlock watched him, he shook his head, waving off the statement as he said, “But I suppose it’s warranted.”

“Suppose? Do you need me to list the men and cases that speak to your secret keeping?” Lifting his hand, Sherlock began to count them off as he ran through the list of Mycroft’s affairs, knowing that Mycroft tended to turn a blind eye to his own dalliances. “There was Harry, Oberstein, that secretary of state by the name of... Hope. Harry, again? Then there’s your drinking, your leaving the country. Really, if need be, I can go on.”
“No,” he said, rubbing at his eyes to ease his nerves rather than take a drink from the glass in front of him. “Your point seems perfectly valid, if not slightly hypocritical.”

“The list of my sins pale in comparison to yours,” Sherlock pointed out darkly.

Not that he wanted to have the same arguments they’d been going through for the past few months, or even the past few years. It ended in the same blame game and series of crushed feelings, no matter what. It was a trigger for them given the ease to which they could lose themselves in old grudges and something about Mycroft’s behaviour told him that he didn’t want to fall that particular rabbit hole, no matter how tempting it was.

Even Mycroft didn’t seem all that eager for it, his shoulders slumped as he leaned forward, eyes looking everywhere but at him. Disappointment flashing over his face, he muttered softly, “It’s part of my job, but that’s not why I called you here. Well, not entirely.”

Brows knitting together in confusion, Sherlock watched as Mycroft finally gave in and finished off his drink. It had to be his fourth that evening, at the very least, a concerning fact given that it was the only one that he had seen his brother drink. Keeping his distance, he rested his hands on his hips as he asked, “Why am I here? You cancel dinner with John and I all to come back for work? What are you playing at?”

At that, Mycroft shrugged. Leaning back in his chair, he held his glass up to the light, watching the droplets of liquor slide down the side with a pensive look. “Do you recall when you first found out about Harry for the second time? That time with John there?”

“Yes. At the palace as you asked me to help you out with a case,” Sherlock said a bit bitterly, even though he told himself it didn’t matter. After all, they hadn’t been together at the time and who Mycroft invited to his bed wasn’t his concern. Not that he could actually resist adding, “I hope a married man was worth it.”

“It was until you threatened to blackmail him about our affair, thank you,” Mycroft stated, placing his glass down on the side table.

“I find being asked by one of your lovers to work a case for them a bit tactless.”

He hadn’t even known that Mycroft was seeing anyone until that afternoon and for it to be Harry again, well, that was something that stung on a variety of levels since it wasn’t fair that Mycroft would choose the risk of being in an affair with a married man rather than him. To be forced to sit in that room, having to deal with those prats with their quaint yellow ties had been more torturous than he would ever admit to and Mycroft likely knew it the entire time.

Not that one would be able to tell. They were masters of hiding their emotions when they had to, something that was apparent in the blank look on his brother’s face as he nodded in agreement.

“Fair enough,” he said, not even the hint of a fight in his voice. Looking up at Sherlock for what felt like the first time since he had arrived, Mycroft looked worried as he asked, “But you understand why I’ve kept secrets in the past, yes?”

“Of course,” Sherlock said, waving his hand vaguely. “Two parts work, one part trying to convince yourself you’re capable of being normal like everyone else instead of being with me.”

Letting out a faint laugh, Mycroft allowed himself the barest of smiles as he averted his gaze back to his empty glass. “Yes, well, what I have to tell you... plays into that first part, I suppose.”

“Planning a war?” He questioned cheekily.
Mycroft seemed to wince at it, brows furrowing together as though he could make the glass explode under the force of his gaze alone. Fingers clenching at the arm of the chair, a safe alternative to the glass he clearly didn’t trust himself to hold anymore, he sighed. “You remember when I began asking you and John about Moriarty, yes?”

“Of course. Retrieving information to make him go away, I’m certain,” he scoffed, since he wasn’t an idiot. Mycroft didn’t just ask questions without a point and he could only wonder what purpose the rhetorical ones coming from him could serve. Although, instead of asking that, he settled for, “How did that work out?”

“I’ve told you before that during that... scandal, he texted me about the Bond plan.”

“Yes. And the repetition of information does nothing but stall the conversation at hand,” he said, losing his patience with his brother.

Hesitating for a long moment, Mycroft looked at nothing in particular with so much disgust Sherlock couldn’t help but step closer to him. Reaching out to cup Mycroft’s jaw, he moved his hand back when his brother jerked away from the threat of comfort like a scared animal.

Running his finger along his bottom lip, Mycroft took a deep breath before finding it in him to continue. “In an effort to return the favour, I... had my men retrieve him for some talks.”

“Is that the new political term for torture?” Sherlock teased, trying to lighten the mood. Anything to get Mycroft from acting the way he was.

And despite his brother’s cold, distant smile, he knew that Mycroft wasn’t amused, even if his voice was coloured with amusement and wonder as he said, “It’s amazing what that man can suffer through. Days and weeks of being at the mercy of one of our best negotiators and nothing.”

“Why does any of this matter Mycroft?”

“Because we eventually figured out how to make him talk.” Looking up at Sherlock with a distressingly clear eyes, a fake smile tugging at his lips, Mycroft let out a soft breath as he went to speak. “Something so simple it should’ve been more worrisome but... He was giving us information.”

“He spoke to you,” he said bluntly.

Nodding, Mycroft looked away again, fist pressed to his mouth. “According to John, I attract a certain type.”

“You’re comparing myself to Moriarty?” Sherlock scoffed.

Mycroft didn’t bother to look at him. Instead, he continued to stare blindly at nothing, clenching his jaw as he did. Opening his mouth, Sherlock stopped and let his own shoulders drop, grateful that Mycroft couldn’t meet his eyes so that he couldn’t see the look of disappointment he felt for his own sake rather than his brother’s.

“You actually are comparing us. Why?” He asked, far too quietly.

His entire body was tense with anticipation, his breaths coming quicker than he would’ve liked as Mycroft slowly, nervously looked back at him. Lips parted with some immediate excuse, Mycroft hesitated before finding his words again.

“We had him for... months. All throughout our meetings he was only too happy to tell me everything for a glimpse into my life,” he said in a bland voice. Simply stating facts because facts
couldn’t be changed. “His interest in you was always so minimal.”

Something that should’ve been good if not for the giant but hanging in the air. Nodding along as he listened, Sherlock forced himself to carry on the conversation, to ask Mycroft, “What did he want to know about?”

At that, Mycroft licked his lips, a pained joy passing over his features as he said, “He wanted to know about the man I was sleeping with.”

“Right,” Sherlock said, rolling his eyes. “His interest in Sherlock Holmes, the detective was minimal, but his interest in Sherlock Holmes, your lover fascinated him.”

“Do you really think I told him that I was sleeping with my own brother?” Mycroft questioned, accusing him even though he was the one with all the secrets in all of this.

Taking a deep breath, Sherlock shook his head because Mycroft would never out himself like that. Still, his brother wasn’t acting like himself and Sherlock was doing everything he could to keep his anger under control.

Rubbing at his face, he asked, “What did you tell him?”

“Nothing of importance. No names,” Mycroft said, trying to be assuring even though it did nothing to alleviate the sense impending doom that hung in the air like the heat from a fire. Toying with his ring, he added, “Nothing more than pathetic details about your love of Treasure Island and the sort.”

“Personal details of a complete stranger.” Which came as a sort of relief, doing so very little to ease the sense that he was walking into a trap of sorts. Of course, the fact that the trap seemed to involve a reluctant Mycroft was something that had Sherlock crossing his arms over his chest, hands balled into fists to keep from holding himself as he tried to act like his usual self, saying, “Definitely not the secret that keeping Moriarty hostage would be, but it fits nearly everything. Why you were always gone, why you appeared to be hiding something. It even fits your habit of putting forth the penny before pound.”

“You both are far too curious. Far too... observant,” Mycroft said wistfully. “When I first met him I tested him and he didn’t fail me. The man is all the genius you are.”

“If not more. But you’d never say that to my face, would you?” He snapped.

“He was always testing limits. Always giving up everything too willingly, something I did as well, perhaps,” Mycroft mused, obviously still trying to piece together their interactions, even after all this time. It was probably the only thing that Sherlock could sympathize with his brother over at that point, and even that felt like a stretch. “I never meant to, but denying that he was better than sex somehow led to telling him of our first kiss,” he said with a soft laugh, that sad look still in his eyes.

Sneering, Sherlock found himself looking away from Mycroft. “I hope what he said was of more use.”

“I wish it had been. Not to say it wasn’t useful, but in the end he retreated back into his shell and after our final meeting, the one before his release, he wound up scrawling your name across his cell.” Shrugging off the fact as though it was nothing, and maybe it was considering how insane Moriarty was, he continued on, finger circling around the edge of his glass. “Still, I suppose it wasn’t actually all that much of a surprise when I came home after his release to find him waiting for me on my sofa.”
Stomach clenching at that, Sherlock resisted the urge to look at his brother with open concern. Instead, he sighed heavily, feeling exhausted as the conversation continued to drag on.

“How did he even get in?”

“Same way you do?” Mycroft offered, only briefly glancing at the door. Whatever thoughts were running about in his head, he shook them off easily, telling him, “It doesn’t matter because he came to tell me that I had ruined his plans of seeing my lover suffer because I didn’t keep photos of those nature in my home.”

“Why does this matter?” Sherlock asked, voice annoyed and tired.

“It didn’t. He had brought his own photos. You and John in... compromising positions. John and I showing casual signs of PDA. More than enough to prove that all three of us were in some kind of relationship.” Hesitating, Mycroft pursed his lips together before adding, “To... prove who the other man in the relationship was.”

“So he had some photos that could’ve proved I was the other man in the relationship. I don’t see how this—”

“It could’ve. If not for...certain... footage.”

It was the sheer diplomacy of such a statement that had a strange sense of dread building in the base of his spine, slowly spreading out to consume him whole as he asked, “Of?”

“Apparently there was a... camera in 221B and...”

“No,” he said.

“Sherlock—”

“Are you saying that... Moriarty knows about us and nothing came of that?” Sherlock asked facetiously.

Moriarty was willing to let himself be blown up for the simple sake of taking Sherlock with him. He didn’t do things by half steps. If he knew about the relationship between them there would’ve been some sort of consequence. Something that...

Realization dawning on him, Sherlock stared at the blank expression on Mycroft face as the feeling of dread settled right over his chest. “No. Of course not. What exactly did you give him? More information on me? The government?”

“He wanted a pet. Someone who’s life he could disturb by his presence, so I agreed,” Mycroft said as though it was nothing.

Smiling to himself, Sherlock couldn’t help but let out a humourless chuckle. “As opposed to giving up me or letting him ruin all of our lives. I supposed I ought to be touched.”

Mycroft merely shrugged, proving it truly meant so little to him that he would put himself in such a position. “It was... Manageable until...”

“Until what? Just cut to the point of this Mycroft because you’re giving me filler and I hate when you do that,” he said, sick of the constant talking. The needless explanations that meant nothing to him.

It was something Mycroft had long since grown used to given the way he watched him with a
clipped smile, that look of fondness haunting his eyes. “You always did confuse context and filler.”

“And I always missed the finer points of the matter,” Sherlock shot back bitterly, used to conversation. Except this wasn’t the sort of conversation that he and Mycroft had had time and time again over the years. It almost hurt physically hurt him to say, “We’re so similar, but he’s smarter. He used you to get information on your relationship with me and rather than ruining our lives, he went after you.”

Mycroft averted his gaze, trying repeatedly to look at him only to fail time and time again. Taking a shuddering breath, Sherlock scowled at him as he asked, “Was the sex as nice?”

“Sherlock...” the rest of the sentence never came. Instead Mycroft forced himself to his feet, resting his hands on Sherlock’s shoulders as he stared at him, every fibre of his body laced with a silent apology. “I don’t love him. Not more than you and John.”

Shoving Mycroft away, Sherlock yelled, “You can’t just deny something and quantify it in the same breath, Mycroft!”

“He became something he shouldn’t have,” Mycroft admitted, keeping his distance as Sherlock began to pace like a caged animal. Hands raised in surrender, he told him. “The obvious games, the blatant honesty... Certainly you must understand after Ms. Adler.”

“Don’t you dare compare our situations,” he said, his movements growing quicker as he tried to make sense of how this could even be happening. “I didn’t —“

“Sherlock, do you think I’m an idiot?” Catching the look he gave him, Mycroft shook his head. “Don’t answer that. Just... spare me the lie.”

Forcing himself to stop moving, Sherlock gave up trying not to hold himself, his hands wrapped tightly around himself as he shook his head violently as though that would make it less real. “So what was this? Your attempt to even the score? I fall for the woman that you were after so you have some tryst with Moriarty?”

“It was—“

“Just sex?” Sherlock interrupted, hating how hysterical he sounded to his own ears. “Do you really want to make that point to me, of all people, Mycroft? He’s the same man that tried to kill John and myself. Or does that not matter?”

Looking away, Mycroft quietly told him, “You don’t want me to answer that.”

“No,” Sherlock agreed. “I don’t. But you’re going to.”

Because wanting and needing were two different things and Sherlock often found himself needing things he didn’t always want, his brother being a primary source of such conflicting feelings. If the man was going to offer up information, Sherlock was going to make sure he got every sickening rationale from it.

Sighing, Mycroft said, “It should. I know it should because he’s James Moriarty. He’s a criminal mastermind, who still wants you dead, but...” Pausing, he looked at gave Sherlock an apologetic look as he added, “He’s... Jim.”

“Shut up. You sound like Molly,” Sherlock said, his frustration getting the better of him. “I mean... What about us getting back together? How could you pretend everything was fine when
“you were sleeping with him behind both our backs?”

“I... It’s complicated. I’m sorry.”

“Sorry? Complicated?” Laughing, Sherlock almost wished that he was unfamiliar with such pathetic excuses coming from his brother. Wished that it stung more to know Mycroft cheated on him and John more than the idea that he did it with Moriarty, of all people. “What could be so damn complex that it made you want to sleep with him?”

“He can be so heartbreakingly perfect,” Mycroft said, letting his answers come more freely instead of fighting Sherlock. Biting down on his lip briefly, he looked towards his bedroom for a lingering moment before turning his attention back to Sherlock. “When he first kissed me, he looked away out of embarrassment. Afterwards... He’d just lie there next to me, toying with my bloody hair. He...”

“Mycroft stop talking,” he shouted. “Just... Please stop talking.”

“I’m sorry,” Mycroft offered, cautiously moving closer to him.

Stepping back, Sherlock closed his eyes. Facts weren’t something a person could argue against and the fact was that Mycroft confessing to an affair with Moriarty. Taking a deep breath, he forced himself to accept it. “Fine. He’s your... woman. Just tell me things are over and this... This affair is done with.”

“It is,” Mycroft agreed too readily. Pursing his lips together, he looked almost pained as he said, “And I’m so sorry I let this happen. Because now... He really does have a plan for watching you die and I—“

“Of course not.” Making his way over to the sofa, Sherlock sat down on it, pulling his legs up to his chest as he holed himself up in the corner like a scared child. Refusing to look at his brother, he told him, “Fine. Tell me everything about you two. From when he was captured to... when you last saw him.”

“Would you care for a drink?”

“I already feel numb inside, thank you. Just... Sit there and tell me everything,” he said, gesturing to the chair Mycroft had been seated in previously.

“Alright.”

Sitting on the sofa, Mycroft pulled Sherlock into his arms, something he went along with willingly despite how angry he was at the man. But as they manoeuvred themselves into a lying position, Sherlock clinging to him in a way he hadn’t done since he was a boy, he couldn’t help but be grateful for the sort of bitter comfort his brother offered him.
John just wanted to lie about and enjoy a relaxing, normal day, but those are all but impossible with Sherlock around.

There were times when John loved nothing more than being with Sherlock. Not in a relationship sense, but rather in the fact that the man was quite possibly his best friend and that Sherlock always brought out a certain amount of novelty in the world, something that likely had to do with the fact that Sherlock could never have enough novelty himself. Cases, experiments, even the occasional movie had to be absolutely fascinating for him to truly involve himself in it and that entire concept was completely insane. It was what led to Sherlock shooting a wall or coming home covered in pig’s blood with a harpoon. It was probably what John loved most about the man.

And yet, normality was good. Sure, no one who could look at the way he lived with Sherlock or the cases he allowed himself to be dragged along to would think that John had any interest in normality, but he did. Sometimes keeping things simple and calm led to the best moments of his life. Certainly none of them happened to involve his relationship with Sherlock or Mycroft, but those brief moments where there was no urgency in his life, where he could just lie in bed without fear of missing out on something or being interrupted, those were absolutely magic.

Not to say the feeling of a hand running down his back wasn’t pleasant either, just a bit too cold on his blanket warmed skin. The occasional shift in the bed as the person settled down more comfortably next to him and the odd brush of a shirtsleeve against his skin making him debate just how badly it was he wanted to remain asleep. Shifting in an effort to make it go away, John couldn’t help but smile into his pillow as long, delicate fingers traced down his spine to the edge of his pants, making a less than subtle move for his front.

Rolling over onto his side, John clutched at his pillow as he murmured tiredly, “Mm. Keep that up and I’ll happily leave Sherlock for you, Mycroft.”

“Very amusing, John.”

Cracking open one eye, John pretended to be surprised when he found the younger Holmes kneeling next to him. “Oh. Sherlock. It’s you. I thought you were someone else,” he said as he rolled over onto his back, trying his best to look apologetic, something that wasn’t happening when he was only half conscious to being with.

“Someone who hasn’t been around in days?” Sherlock questioned. Tugging the blanket away
from John, whose tired attempts to cling to it hardly stood a chance, he settled himself between John’s legs with a triumphant smirk. “I find that highly unlikely.”

Which was fair enough. With all their cases, John was having a rather difficult time remembering when the last time he actually saw Mycroft was beyond that failed holiday. Certainly there had to have been at least one time since then, but with all the work they’d all been up to, it was to keep days straight, let alone the occasional meeting.

Rubbing at his eyes as he yawned, John asked, “What’s happened to him, anyways? Hardly ever see him.”

“Well, we’ve had cases and he’s had work. It often makes seeing him an impossible task,” Sherlock said derisively, rolling his eyes as he ran his hand along John’s chest.

Placing his hand over Sherlock’s, he gave him a concerned look when the detective finally looked at him. “And you’re alright with that?”

“Used to it, more than anything,” Sherlock said, attempting to shrug it off. Leaning forward, he went to kiss John, catching the side of his mouth as the man turned his head. Ignoring John’s odd aversion to kissing first thing after waking, Sherlock muttered against his cheek. “You learn to get over it, really.”

“Well that’s motivating.”

Perhaps it was just childish on his part, but he did like to believe that sooner or later they’d be able to convince Mycroft that a bit of notice wasn’t the worst thing in the world. Just the odd bit of notice that he would be disappearing for a few weeks to do something he could never really talk about. Anything to make it seem like that man wasn’t simply running out on them time and time again since neither he or Sherlock were all that fond of it, not that Sherlock said much on the matter. Too many years allowing such insane habits to settle to make Sherlock want to change.

“It’s Mycroft,” Sherlock said as he cupped his cheek.

Realizing that he had to look a bit pensive, the feeling of his furrowed brows coming to his attention as Sherlock spoke, John didn’t bother trying to deny what it was he’d been thinking of. Instead, he merely sighed and nodded along, since that seemed to be the best excuse for their disappearing civil servant.

Not that Sherlock seemed to believe his gestures voice softening to seem a bit more caring as he told him, “You know he loves you, we had a lovely holiday together—”

“Until he left and I was left with you and your complaints about everything good about our country’s cinematic history,” John teased, since while he would’ve loved to have had Mycroft around for that, it was still nice to share the night with Sherlock. Or at least it was in hindsight.


Staring at the ceiling with a small grin, John covered his eyes as he shook his head. “Because you would enjoy the one movie I don’t.”

“You liked that girl and the Beeblebrox... Whatever.” Waving off the thought, since it obviously didn’t matter, he began to tug at John’s pants only to have John move to stop him. Rolling his eyes, he added, “The sighing doors were fun.”

“Yeah, alright, you liked Arthur Dent, who was just an average bloke with a towel,” he pointed out.
Because out of all the characters, he would of course like the most boring one in the entire thing. Something John found particularly odd since he would’ve bet money that Sherlock’s favourite would’ve been the robot given that they seemed so similar, not that Sherlock had taken all that kindly to the comparison once he caught onto the fact that John was referring more to their moodiness than intellect.

Scoffing, Sherlock pinched at his thigh. “Says the man who cried over that stupid movie with the cancer guy who drowns.”

“It was a moving film, Sherlock,” John said as he pinched Sherlock back. Not that it was nearly as effective with Sherlock being fully dressed as well as wide awake. “And besides that, we were talking about Mycroft, who I’ve hardly heard anything from beyond the odd congratulatory call after a case. Which is frustrating. It’s hard to date someone you barely even speak to, let alone see.”

“He calls you?” Sherlock questioned disbelievingly.

Flushing, John nodded a bit nervously. “Yeah, well, it’s just to say we’re doing good or that he’s pleased with how we solved a case. Nothing all that important.”

“He doesn’t call me after a case,” Sherlock complained. Crossing his arms over his chest, he scowled at John as he said, “Usually he calls me in the midst of one to tell me to stay away from his precious MPs and the like.”

“Well, perhaps it’s because I’m not a nuisance like you are and don’t tease him about his weight all the time or steal his things or—”

“I’m the one that solves the cases and yet he congratulates you?” Sherlock questioned, largely ignoring everything John had said. Furrowing his brows, he looked John over carefully before shaking his head in disbelief. When that look got him shoved away, he quickly added, “I mean, not that you don’t do a rather large part in it all, but... You’re like a piece in a machine. Like a wheel on a car. It’s important, but not that important.”

“Yeah, well, he doesn’t love you as much,” John said, trying to get Sherlock to move away so he could go to sleep given the fact that talking to Sherlock was suddenly at the very bottom of the list of things he was interested in.

Of course, Sherlock seemed rather eager to ignore that, gripping John’s legs so that he couldn’t move them as he said, “Clearly. I can’t believe he calls you.”

“You know, it does help that I actually pick up as well. I don’t just ignore my phone until people finally break down and text me like you do.” Mycroft, Lestrade, Mrs. Hudson; most everyone they knew happened to know that if one wanted to get in touch with Sherlock in a crisis, to call John. Scratching at his chin in thought, John nodded to himself. “Yeah, actually, I think that may be a small factor in why he calls me instead of you.”

“Complete and utter rubbish,” Sherlock scoffed.

Taking note of the hands moving up and down the inside of his thighs, John clenched his jaw as he did his best to ignore them and Sherlock because he wanted to be sleeping more than anything. He wanted to enjoy the quiet time that Sherlock felt every need to ruin with conversation and less than subtle actions. Swatting at one of the man’s hands, he stared down Sherlock’s hurt look with one of annoyance.

“Yeah, alright. Me answering my phone is just rubbish,” he agreed sarcastically. Gripping
Sherlock’s wrist when one hand got a little too close to his groin, he nodded at the door and asked, “Look, why don’t you go call him about that while I go back to sleep?”

Without waiting for an answer, he closed his eyes, not even bothering to bite back a yawn as he tried to get as comfortable as he could with Sherlock kneeling between his legs like he was. To anyone else, it would’ve been a clear hint that he wanted sleep, but for such an observant man, Sherlock could be amazing at overlooking the obvious.

It was the only explanation for why he moved away from John, only to lie down next to him, body pressed close against John’s side.Pressing his mouth to John’s jaw, Sherlock told him, “He’d never give me an honest answer and I know you don’t really want to sleep.”

“And here I thought closing my eyes meant the opposite of that. Weird,” John grumbled, burying his face into his pillow.

“You’re already up and from what I can tell, you’re actually rather interested in me.”

And as if to prove his point, Sherlock slipped his hand into John’s pants, lightly caressing his erection as John sighed. If he had ever had any chance of getting Sherlock to leave him alone, it was long gone judging by the feeling of lips smirking against his skin, not that John was willing to admit defeat that easily.

“Oh! Get your hands out of my pants,” John complained, albeit with a lot less conviction than he would’ve liked.

Chuckling, Sherlock shook his head. “No thank you.”

Turning his head to look at Sherlock, he glanced at his own erection with a scoff. “That down there is a terrible measuring system of my will to do anything other than have sex. Hell, even after too many drinks, it’s a bit rubbish at that.”

“Hmm. I think it’s a more honest measure of what you want.”

And as if to prove just how right he was, Sherlock began to stroke him and really, no matter how badly John wanted to sleep, it was kind of hard to fight for such a thing. Swallowing, he ran his hand through his hair, eyes falling shut as he tried to focus his mind because he actually didn’t want this. Didn’t want it in the slightest, no matter how Sherlock twisted his hand just right, lips moving down his neck.

“Bloody hell,” John muttered softly. “Don’t you have a case you’re supposed to be working on?”

“Already working on it, actually,” Sherlock said, completely unbothered. Of course, it was probably rather easy given the fact that he wasn’t the one being assaulted.

“Sherlock, we’ve been busy. You’ve had me running around all over the place, catching criminals and rescuing people. I just want to sleep in just this once, please,” he practically begged, hoping that Sherlock might take pity on him since his own body was busy thrusting into the man’s hand.

“If you really wanted that, you wouldn’t be pressing yourself into my hand.”

“Fine.” Looking down at his erection with a glare, John said, “You go away so he’ll stop.”

“I don’t think it’s listening to you,” Sherlock laughed.

“It never does,” he grumbled, feeling rather bitter about that fact. Biting his lip to hold in a groan as Sherlock gave him a brief squeeze, John shook his head. “You’d think after all these years, it
might listen just once.”

“Maybe next time?” Sherlock offered, amusement colouring his tone.

Giving in, John asked him, “I’m not getting sleep am I?”

“Well, you’re usually tired after so, there’s always that to consider.”

“Except you’ll probably want something else or Mycroft will call because you both live to make me miserable.”

“Is that what you call sexual gratification?” Sherlock laughed. “Misery? Because if so, a number of your previous relationships would make a lot more sense.”

“Very funny coming from the bloke whose only previous relationship seems to be his brother,” John shot back as best he could with his head tossed back in pleasure.

Chuckling, Sherlock whispered in his ear, “I’m a very private person.”

Glancing at him, John gave him a disbelieving look. “You were willing to walk through Buckingham Palace wearing nothing a look of superiority,” he reminded him.

After all, while a person could be private about their sex lives rather easily, John was fairly certain that they were never the types that were willing to walk around naked in front of at least one complete stranger.

“You’re talking far too much,” Sherlock complained, throwing one of his legs over John’s.

Cocking his head to the side, John couldn’t help but ask, “Am I? If I keep it up will you let me sleep?”

“No.”

“Didn’t think so.” His sleep was thoroughly interrupted anyways, so even to fight for it was rather a bit of a waste. Sighing as he stared at the ceiling, John rolled his hand in the air, signalling for Sherlock to continue like he was. “Fine. Do your worse, Sherlock.”

“Not something I’m used to hearing before intercourse,” the man teased as he removed his hand from John’s pants just long enough to pull them down to his thighs. Running his tongue along his hand, Sherlock took his time practically felating it in an effort to get it slicked up before going back to stroking John’s cock.

Sighing in pleasure, John bit at his bottom lip since while he may have caved on the idea of sleep, he still wasn’t going to kiss Sherlock with his mouth tasting like something died in it. “Yeah, well, I’m not used to being bullied out of sleep all so someone can give me a bloody handjob.”

Pausing, Sherlock stared at him in confusion for a moment before asking, “Did you just hear anything you just said?”

“Yeah and in hindsight, it sounded fairly stupid,” John admitted since now that he was awake, he couldn’t figure out what he had been so against the idea of Sherlock getting him off.

“It really did.”

“Yeah well...” Pausing at the sound of a ding, John frowned. “What was that?”

It was probably the wrong question to ask given that Sherlock was looking off toward the door
with a look of apprehension. “It’s just an experiment. Nothing urgent, just—“

“Something that has already taken precedence over me in your mind,” John said with a bit of a laugh in his voice because he knew better than to trust a Holmes and yet he seemed to do it with all his being time and time again.

Looking back at him a bit sheepishly, hand long since gone still on John, Sherlock said, “To be fair, I hadn’t counted on you complaining nearly as much as you did.”

“Go and handle your little experiment,” John said with a shake of his head. Squirming out of his pants, he shrugged. “I’ll just... go take a shower or something.”

“Honestly, if need be, it really can wait since—“

“No. Go ahead. I’d hate for you to be in here sexually gratifying me when there’s a non-urgent experiment to be dealt with.”

“I’ll make it up to you later. I promise,” Sherlock said as he rushed out of the room.

Letting out an frustrated noise, John nodded, “Yeah. I bet.”

Looking down at his still eager erection, John knew that he wasn’t going to be getting any sleep with that at full attention. So, instead, he decided to start his day, given that he didn’t have many other choices. Grabbing his dressing gown, he made his way to the bathroom, contemplating having a nice cold shower before settling on a hot one and simply finishing off what Sherlock started. After all, it wasn’t as though it was the first time, a fact that didn’t make John any more pleased, and Sherlock always kept his promises about making it up later. All in all, it was just a bit of a nuisance, more than anything.

And, really, once he got over the fact that he had been woken up and left to take care of himself, John at least had the chance to enjoy his shower, another thing that didn’t seem to happen as much when they were busy. For an entire morning not to be consumed with a sense of urgency was absolutely perfect and he revelled in it as best he could.

Walking out of the bathroom in his dressing gown, John made his way to the living room, furrowing his brows briefly as he tried to decipher what the noise he was hearing was as he entered the room.

“It’s your phone,” he said, in case the detective managed to overlook that as well.

“Mm. Keeps doing that,” Sherlock said, keeping his focus on his microscope.

He didn’t even look like he had just been willing to forgo the entire experiment for him. Instead, Sherlock was all but dead to the world, nothing mattering except for whatever it was he was working on. To be perfectly honest, John didn’t really care all that much given the fact that Sherlock always gave everything he did his full attention.

So, instead of questioning it further, he walked over to his chair and grabbed the newspaper. Looking it over, he asked, “So, did you just talk to him for a really long time?”

“Oh. Henry Fishgarde never committed suicide,” Sherlock said, giving what only he could believe was a reasonable excuse for the dummy swaying about from noose around its neck. Picking up a book, he slammed it shut as he said, “Bow Street Runners: missed everything.”

“Pressing case, is it?”
“They’re all pressing until they’re solved.”

Returning his focus to the newspaper, John let Sherlock return to his work as he went back to the paper. Reading over various bits of political problems, he idly wondered if that was what was keeping Mycroft away more often than not, since even if Sherlock claimed that it was perfectly normal behaviour for the man, that didn’t mean that John had to like it. If anything, it just made him more resolved to see if he couldn’t make both of the Holmes men understand that the best relationships came with a bit of warning toward long absences, not merely apologies after the fact.

Of course, it could’ve just as easily have been Mycroft or anyone else texting Sherlock as the man’s phone went off again. Lowering his paper, John stared at it.

“I’ll get it, shall I?” He questioned a bit sarcastically.

Being met with the exact sort of response he expected, the complete and utter silence of Sherlock, John got up and walked over to the phone. Picking it up, all feelings of annoyance turned to dread as he stared at the message. Definitely not Mycroft and definitely not good.
It wasn’t easy moving on, but John gave it his all. Forced himself through all those daily motions when all he wanted to do was lie in his room and never move again. He got up, he ate, he continued pretending that his life wasn’t a shattered wreck and that every paper claiming that Sherlock was a fraud didn’t make him physically sick. He did everything he could to try and be alright, went through all the advice his therapist had given him and yet after the fifth time he found himself sitting outside of Sherlock’s bedroom crying because he couldn’t bring himself to go in there anymore, because the man he wanted no longer resided in that room, because nothing was right anymore, he gave up. Gave up trying to be ok and telling everyone he was fine because all of them knew it was a lie and he didn’t feel fine. He didn’t feel like he would ever be fine again. Everything felt mechanical and vile. Every morning was just another day and every meal was just a process, a method of keeping Mrs. Hudson and Lestrade away from him because if he didn’t starve himself and occasionally remembered to crawl out of bed before noon just to sit around staring at Sherlock’s empty chair, they wouldn’t worry that he was completely shutting down. It worked wonderfully most days, but as he returned from getting groceries, all too conscious of the lack of weight that came from buying milk, he could tell that it wasn’t going to be one of those days. Not when he caught sight of someone reading a paper about the fake detective that had committed suicide in Speedy’s. Staring blindly at the person to the window, John let out a broken noise before rushing into 221B.

Back pressed to the door, he fought the feeling of nausea rising in his throat because the world needed to bloody well move on and stop tormenting him in such a way. Sherlock had been dead for nearly three weeks and there had to have been other news since then. Something to take his name out of the papers once and for all, if only for what little piece of sanity John managed to cling desperately to.

Forcing himself away from the door once he knew that he would be alright, John made his way upstairs, trying to get his mind off of anything relating to Sherlock. Yet as he walked through the front door, he came to a standstill, grocery bag dropping from his hand as he stood there, bile and tears welling up inside him as his entire body seemed to force itself into some sort of shut down.

“No,” John muttered quietly. “No. No, no, no. This isn’t happening. Get out!”

Uncrossing his legs, the taller man slowly got to his feet only to stand in front of the chair John was so used to seeing empty. Licking his lips, Mycroft hesitantly began to move toward John, only to stop when the man moved back, back pressed against the door jamb.

Looking away, Mycroft let out a soft sigh. “John, I wanted to see you.”

“No. No, you...” Shaking his head, John pressed his back further against the door jamb as though he was trying to disappear into it. “Just leave, alright? I just want you gone, is that so hard to
understand? I don’t want you here. I don’t want anything to do with you.”

“John, please,” Mycroft said, stepping closer to him again.

“No,” he shouted, pointing angrily. It was the only warning he had against the man, but Mycroft seemed to take it seriously, moving back again, hands raised in surrender. Swallowing down the flood of emotions rising within him, John closed his eyes as he tried to make sense of the moment. “Why aren’t you leaving? Who let you in? You can’t just... break into people’s homes, Mycroft. It’s... Just no. No.”

It was too much like something Sherlock would’ve done, had done time and time again. Too much of a shared quality for John to put up with, especially in a moment where even breathing felt like some sort of unsolvable problem. But for all that Mycroft seemed to understand, standing where he was looking mildly ashamed, he didn’t make a move toward the door.

“I haven’t seen you since the funeral and even then you wouldn’t even let me get close to you,” he explained, looking oddly hurt by such a fact for Mycroft.

If he had been anyone else, John was certain that he would’ve felt bad rather than laugh hollowly like he did. Looking at Mycroft with a mix of awe and confusion, he shook his head. “You ever think that there’s a reason for that? That maybe your part in getting him killed is kind of an issue for me still? That I’m not over that?”

“What do you want me to say?” Mycroft shot back angrily, as close to his wits end as he likely had ever been.

“Nothing. I want you gone,” John said, not understanding why the man couldn’t just do that. Biting down on his lip, he stalled for a moment, unable to look at Mycroft as he added, “Forever. I can’t... Just leave. That’s all I want from you.”

“I can’t do that.”

“Then why offer me anything?” John almost screamed.

It wasn’t as though he was asking for a lot. He just wanted the man gone and Mycroft seemed so eager to do the right thing just that once, John honestly thought that he might listen. That he might see how hard it was for John to even have to be in the same room as him and just leave because he wasn’t wanted or welcome at 221B anymore as far as John was concerned. But no, instead of leaving, he just stood where he was, head ducked in what only looked like defeat.

Taking a deep breath, Mycroft left it out slowly as he lifted his head to look at him. “People are worried about you.”

“Look, if you’re just here because Mrs. Hudson and Greg and everyone else I know think I’m not OK, you can leave because I don’t need you pressuring me to be better as well.” Moving away from the door, he kept close to the wall, coming to an immediate stop when he drifted a little too close to the hallway that led to Sherlock’s room. Turning his back toward Mycroft, he tried not to think about it too much even though he couldn’t help but mutter, “I’m trying my best and it kills me, alright? But I’m still trying.”

“You’re going to be sick if you don’t relax.” Given the complete lack of sound, John nearly jumped out of his skin when he felt a hand on his shoulder as Mycroft told him, “At least sit down.”

“No. And sod off, alright?” He asked, smacking Mycroft’s hand away as he quickly spun around. Looking down the hallway and then back at the man in front of him, John tried to keep himself
together, suddenly feeling furious and trapped. “You don’t get to act caring now.”

Licking his lips as he fought to keep his hands at his side, Mycroft narrowed his eyes at him, looking almost hurt by the statement. “I’m not acting.”

“Then where the fuck were you for the past few weeks?” John asked as he shoved the man, hating the claustrophobic feeling that was starting to eat at him. Moving toward his chair, he held his head in his hand as he began to pace in front of it. “Because while I was busy losing everything and... Suffering through the hell that was living in this place with his ghost in every fucking corner, you weren’t around.”

“You didn’t want me around.”

“I don’t want you here now, but that’s not getting you to leave any faster. You just...” God John felt like he was falling apart. His head hurt and every time he went to speak, it seemed to come out in a shout only to fade into a whisper of an aborted statement. Taking a deep breath, he forced himself to stop moving long enough to stare Mycroft down as he said, “You care when it’s convenient for you and you know, Sherlock was right and I should’ve stuck to my belief that everything about the both of you was toxic and wrong because... This... It’s not ok.”

“I... I should’ve been here for you, you’re right,” Mycroft agreed far too easily. As though agreeing to the fact that he had royally screwed up everything would make it all alright.

But John wasn’t going to allow himself to be so easily swayed. Glaring at him, he merely said, “I know that and now...”

Opening his mouth, he met Mycroft’s expectant look and crumbled. Gripping the back of his seat, he tried to fight the urge to be sick. It really was just a bit too much for him and while he should’ve sat down he refused to do what the other suggested. Instead, he merely waved the man off, taking deep breaths to calm himself down enough to quell the unpleasantness in his stomach.

Waiting until the wave of nausea passed, John looked back at him, knowing he had to look like a broken man as he said in a soft voice, “God, Mycroft, leave. I can’t deal with you right now. I don’t want to.”

“But I didn’t suddenly find it in me to care.” Mycroft said, of course going back to some previous point rather than take any sort of sympathy on him. Making his way over to the fireplace, he leaned against the mantle, eyes locked on the skull. “It’s just...”

Sighing, he looked at John once again, face torn between concern and distress. Jaw clenched it was hard to tell what it was the remaining Holmes brother might say, if anything judging by the doubt in his eyes. “This has been difficult for everyone. Not just you.”

Eyes widening, John let out several breaths of air and noises that failed to be words because there was no way that anyone could actually stand there and tell him, of all people, that. It would have actually managed to be funny if John didn’t know just how serious Mycroft was.

“Everyone? Really? You think this has been as hard for me as it has been for you when I’m the one who’s been stuck here, who lost everything I love as soon as he hit the ground?” He asked, anger and memories causing his throat to tighten. Wincing at how fragile it made him sound, he soldiered on, adding, “I mean, fuck, you get to continue on with your life like everyone else, but what about me? What am I supposed to do? My life was working cases with him and living with him and ... And now that’s all gone.”

Shoulders slumping, John tried to recapture his anger because he needed that. He needed to be absolutely livid with Mycroft rather than depressed that such an obvious fact had slipped itself out
of his mouth, making it just a bit more real than it was during every other moment of the day because he had said it. He had admitted to the fact that with Sherlock everything about his life felt oddly hollow because one didn’t just recover from being the companion to the near famous detective. That even working in some hospital wasn’t the same since it had been the danger and the man involved in it all that had made working with Sherlock something more than just helping others.

“It is,” Mycroft agreed far too easily. “And I’m sorry for that, but you can’t actually hold the fact that I can’t sit around wallowing in my own misery when there’s a country to be run against me. You got to mourn him, he told you goodbye and I know it must’ve hurt to watch him fall, but at least you got that much.”

Holding a hand up, John said, “Right. How is this about you when you’re the one that told Moriarty everything?”

“It’s not about me, but it’s not entirely about you either,” Mycroft said, raising his voice. Quickly shutting his mouth to keep himself from saying something he shouldn’t, he paused a moment before continuing, voice once again perfectly level “You’re not the only one who lost someone and yes, Sherlock was everything from your lover to your flatmate to your best friend, but can you at least try to remember that he was my brother as well?”

“Yeah, the brother that you had me watching over and saying your apologies to. The brother you would’ve let walk out of your life,” John reminded him before pausing to correct himself. “Should’ve let walk out of your life. You don’t get to criticise me for not considering your feelings because you certainly didn’t seem all that eager to show them off when everything was going to hell.”

Not even bothering to defend himself, Mycroft simply nodded along with what he said. “You know, I think you’re right. I should be leaving.”

“Right,” John agreed, trying to ignore the sharp stab of pain he felt at the thought. “Just go.”

“Fine.”

Walking over to Sherlock’s chair, Mycroft grabbed his umbrella from where it rested against the side of it before turning to look at John with a near unreadable face. Certainly if not for the pained look in his eyes, he would’ve been the Iceman even John had come to see him as. “But you should know you’re just as responsible for your own misery.”

Fighting the urge to move away as Mycroft moved to stand in front of him, John swallowed a bit nervously as Mycroft told him. “I’m trying to be here for you and you’re the one pushing me away, John. You’re telling me that you don’t want me here when it wasn’t all that long ago that you were telling me how much you happened to love me.”

“Yeah, well, I had Sherlock then,” he said, shrugging the entire thing off as he looked away. Not that he happened to look away fast enough to miss the defeated look in Mycroft’s eyes as he ran his thumb along his lip. “And that’s why you were with me? Because he was? Were you really that desperate to make sure I didn’t ruin things between you and him?”

Grimacing because he knew he shouldn’t have felt bad about such an accusation, that he could’ve easily have agreed just to piss the other man off since there was no way Mycroft could actually believe such a thing, John pressed the heel of his hand to the bridge of his nose to try and fight off the growing headache he felt.
“No. He was... I loved you,” he said, voice coming out a bit thicker at that simple sentence. “I did, alright? All I wanted to do that first night was call you or sit around his room with your bloody coat, but I couldn’t because it hurts. Everything about the idea of being with you or near you hurts.”

Anyone with eyes could see the obvious similarities between the two brothers. That same damnable intellect. Those same piercing blue eyes that John couldn’t bring himself to look into for too long. And even though they may have had more differences than similarities, it was still always a reminder of the man they had both lost because they were different. Mycroft was nothing more than a reminder of his brother, no matter how John tried to look at it and he couldn’t live with that. Not when he could scarcely make his way down the hallway without the feeling of tears prickling at his eyes.

Sitting on the arm of the chair, he held his head in his hands, utterly defeated since he wasn’t Moriarty. He wasn’t someone clever enough to get around the Holmes brothers, even when he tried his damnedest. “I chose to lose you, sure, but how is this supposed to work? How am I supposed to be alright with everything you did?” He asked as he looked up at Mycroft. “With the fact that I couldn’t count on you to be around when he was alive, let alone with him dead?”

While the war in his mind seemed to play out over his features all too easily, Mycroft still made that move closer to John. Kneeling down in front of him, he cupped John’s cheek a bit hesitantly and told him, “I didn’t come around solely to see my brother. I do still love you and I know I ruined a lot, but the idea of losing another person over this... I couldn’t bear it.”

“You’re never going to be around when I need you,” John said, trying to remind himself of that more than Mycroft. “You’re not dependable.”

“I can try.”

“You weren’t even willing to try for Sherlock’s sake, so why would you bother trying for me?”

Sherlock had been his brother and yet everything about the two men seemed to come in the form of Sherlock settling for the fact that he was at Mycroft’s will and not the other way around from what he’d seen. John didn’t see why he, some average doctor and former soldier, would warrant any more consideration than one’s own flesh and blood.

Looking at him pensively, Mycroft shook his head. “Because I’ve realized that how I went about things in the past don’t work and... I suppose I found my motivation through his death.”

“That’s rather piss poor timing,” John said, trying to make light as he leaned into Mycroft’s touch.

“Mostly for him, but Sherlock always did have to force some of the simpler things out of me.”

It was a piss poor remark that made John’s stomach clench up, but then Mycroft’s mouth was pressed against his in a tentative kiss that John couldn’t help but throw himself into. All comments about how he wanted nothing to do with the man disappearing because he was wrong. He could feel how wrong he was in the very core of his body because with Mycroft there, actually there where John could dig his nails into the man’s shoulder to make sure that he was real, he felt a little less isolated and the flat felt more like a home than a hell.

“A flat surface would be appreciated,” Mycroft muttered against his mouth.

Which made sense beyond all ideas of just what it was that they were playing at. After all kneeling on the floor couldn’t have been all that comfortable. Getting up after Mycroft did, John looked towards the groceries he should really put away and then at the stairs leading to his room.
“Right. We can just... Where are you going?” John asked when he noticed Mycroft making his way down the hall. Wavering between chasing after him to stop him and running away, John whimpered helplessly. “You can’t go in there.”

“Who’s to stop me?”

Walking towards the hallway, he stared down it, hands clenched tightly at his side as he saw the man standing there, hand on the door knob. “Mycroft, please... I can’t... He wouldn’t...”

“He’s not here to complain and you can’t keep shrines to people. Especially when there’s no telling what could be rotting in here.”

Which was good and true, but as Mycroft opened the door, John couldn’t help but look away. He didn’t want to be a part of defiling Sherlock’s room. Not when he was still on edge with the idea of Mycroft having sat in his chair. But now the man was in Sherlock’s room and there was no telling just what it was he was doing in there beyond waiting to see if John would follow after him.

So, no matter how much it hurt, John forced himself to follow Mycroft, letting out a soft gasp once he was in the room again. It felt like returning home after a long absence, everything exactly the way Sherlock had left it aside from Mycroft’s jacket and waistcoat folded up on his nightstand. Although even that minor difference made the room feel more comforting as his mind screamed out about the most important thing missing in all of it.

Lying on the bed, Mycroft patted the spot next to him, the side that John always found himself on because it had been silently agreed that it was his. It took everything John had to make himself lie there next to the man, but his reward was immediate and wrong and perfect. To be kissing Mycroft in Sherlock’s room was certain to earn them both a special place in hell, but it was hard to care when he had Mycroft pressed against him, firm and real, while the lingering smell of Sherlock clung to the pillows and sheets around him.

It was everything both of them needed given the fact that when Mycroft’s hand fell away from his waist, he could feel it grip at the sheets for a moment too long before returning. There no secret about the fact that both of their minds were on Sherlock as much as they were on each other. He was the ghost lingering at the edge of the bed as their kisses grew heated enough to warrant the removal of clothes. Carefully removed shirts and carelessly tossed aside trousers until they were both laid bare, hips gently rocking against each other as they moaned into the kiss that was starting to leave John a bit lightheaded.

Pressing his cheek against Sherlock’s pillow, he breathed in the familiar smell, breath hitching as Mycroft’s mouth began to work its way down his neck to the hollow of his throat, mouthing at the slight dip before letting his mouth venture further down. Hand reaching out to grip the man’s hair, John was happy when Mycroft settled for sucking at his hip and licking at the crease of his thigh before moving to the other side rather than move out of John’s reach.

It was needy, but he liked the feeling of Mycroft under his hand and if that meant limiting the amount of attention Mycroft was willing to devote to him, he was fine with that. All he wanted was to know the man was near. Not that it was hard to forget such a thing when Mycroft focused his oral fixation on John’s all too eager cock, immediately taking it all before slowly lifting his head and repeating the process. Gasping into the pillow, John licked at his lips as he tried to keep breathing through his nose, not wanting to lose the smell of Sherlock.

If the way he was clutching the pillow to his face was a problem for Mycroft, he didn’t say a word. Instead, he continued to focus on pleasing John in a mix of a lust and apology. When he felt a slick finger press into him, John nearly choked on air, eyes he couldn’t remember closing
snapping open at the sudden shock. He didn’t know when Mycroft had managed to find the lube, but John didn’t actually care about things like that as his world narrowed down to the scent of Sherlock and Mycroft doing his best to tear him apart.

Like a bad memory of a good thing, it made him happy as the feeling of sickness began to climb up his throat. Too many nights spent in such a way rearing up to remind him that there should’ve been a hand in his hair, a deep voice muttering pure filth in his ear as he found a desperately sought after friction against John’s hip. Tugging at Mycroft’s hair as he whimpered, the memories starting to ruin what he wanted to be a good moment, John was relieved to know that Mycroft understood, loosening him up just a bit faster before settling between his thighs.

And while the room may have smelled overwhelmingly of Sherlock, having Mycroft pressed against him as he slowly pushed into John was the relief he needed. The paralyzing absence lessening with Mycroft to cling to, to kiss so eagerly that their teeth knocked together as he tried to urge the man into moving because he didn’t care about finesse. He didn’t need things to be nice, he just needed them to be happening and judging by the way he gave in, Mycroft needed the exact same thing.

There was no worrying about being sore or what it said about them or questioning of the wrong name being moaned, there was just a moment. A precious moment where Mycroft kept up a near punishing pace as John whined and groaned into his mouth, arched up against him to try and find some sort of friction until Mycroft began to stroke him and it was nice. It was wonderful and exactly what John needed, even as he felt tears start to burn their way down his cheeks after catching a whiff of the particular Sherlock like scent that was being washed out by the smell of sex.

And then it was too much, the tension building in his body, the loss that never went away, and the fear that he’d never be able to find solace in Sherlock’s blankets because they wouldn’t smell like him anymore. Confused by the almost dying sort of noise that escaped him as he came not long after a wet heat seemed to fill him, John was helpless to fight the broken dam of emotions that overcame him. Tears came far too freely, no matter how desperately he wanted them to stop because somewhere along the line, he lost the ability to breathe, taking large gasps of air whenever he could force himself to.

When he finally managed to calm down, Mycroft was muttering nonsense against the top of his head, gently rubbing John’s back as he held him tightly. He didn’t have a clue how long it was that he had been a helpless wreck, but Mycroft’s waistcoat laid in a balled up heap on the floor near the bed and his stomach was free from the cooling aftermath of his own release. Burying his face against Mycroft’s chest hair, John took a few more shuddering breaths before looking up at Mycroft.

Smiling at him, despite the look of concern in his eyes, Mycroft asked, “Feeling better?”

“Yeah,” John said, hating how hoarse his voice sounded. Toying with Mycroft’s chest hair, he looked off toward the window with a small frown as he sniffled. “I think I would’ve been more comfortable having sex on his grave.”

“Grass in awkward places,” Mycroft said, a slight look of disgust on his face as he did. As though that was the biggest con against having sex on his brother’s grave. “Besides, I always rather liked it in here. Smells like him.”

Resting his hand over Mycroft’s heart, he pointed out rather bitterly, “It won’t always be like that, though, will it?”

“Things can’t remain the same way forever.”
Which was a fair enough assessment even if John didn’t like it. Things had to move on and sooner or later John knew he would have to accept that he was one of those things as well. Something that felt a bit easier with Mycroft around, not that he was all that certain about how lasting that would be either.

Sitting up slightly, he looked down at him and asked, “And us? Think that’ll work out in the long run?”

Taking a moment to think it over, Mycroft kissed him before saying, “I think, that for the moment, it’s best to enjoy what we have and worry about everything else later.”

“I still miss Sherlock,” John said, for reasons he couldn’t understand.

It wasn’t as though the sex was supposed to cure that. Certainly if it even had a chance of doing that he was positive it wouldn’t have taken place in Sherlock’s room. It was just something that he felt the need to tell someone and he knew that at the very least he could count on Mycroft not to look at him like some sad little thing like everyone else did.

Instead, Mycroft nodded and told him, “I do as well.”

“And I still love you, no matter how stupid that is.”

Laughing, Mycroft forced him to lie back down, holding him loosely as he shook his head.

“You’re rubbish at romantic notions, but I love you as well.”

And even though it wasn’t what it used to be and there was no telling what might come next, John was willing to settle that for that as they laid in Sherlock’s bed in some vain attempt to ignore just how different everything was going to be from then on.

Chapter End Notes

So minor redirect for my long rambling thank you, And you know, thank you for reading this.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!