The Garden Party

by mydogwatson

Summary

John and Sherlock at Buckingham Palace. Everybody is dressed.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

John Watson feels ridiculous.

He tugs yet again at the crème silk waistcoat beneath the tailored grey suit jacket. The suit, his first ever not bought off the rack, had been insisted upon by Harry. “You cannot go to Buckingham Palace in your old blue suit,” she’d said. Which might have been true, he supposes, but what the devil is he even doing at the palace anyway? He is not the kind of man who gets invited to a garden party with the bloody Queen. He knows damned well that the blame lay mostly with Stamford, always a busybody, who had suggested to someone with influence that John’s work with wounded vets, as well as his service in the war, merited some royal attention.

So now here he is, standing in the middle of a chattering crowd, wondering if he will actually get some tea. Or meet the Queen. Trying to calm his nerves, he stands at parade rest and surveys the sunlit scene.

And promptly spots just the kind of man who definitely belongs at such an occasion. Although truth be told, the man in the artfully wrinkled linen suit and what looks like a silk shirt [lilac John thinks, although his colour knowledge is lacking] does not seem as if he is enjoying himself very much. He seems vaguely uncomfortable, despite the fact that his tousled dark curls and chiselled profile are certainly posh enough to allow him to fit in with the royals.

Abruptly, the other man seems to realise that he is being observed.
Now John finds himself on the receiving end of an analytical gaze that makes him feel very much like one of the butterflies his grandfather used to collect and pin to a board. Oddly, he doesn’t seem to mind all that much, mostly because it seems to grant him some vague permission to keep staring at the other man in return.

There is a sudden frisson of excitement around him as, apparently, the royals are arriving. John barely notices and does not care at all, because he is much more interested in the fact that the tall, thin man with the pale skin and piercing gaze is making his way elegantly through the crowd towards him.

He stops right in front of John. Close up, the silver eyes are even more intense and John feels himself begin to tumble, without knowing where he is going to land. And not caring, actually. “So,” the stranger says in a voice that is a low and lazy rumble, “Afghanistan or Iraq?”

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End Notes

Title: The Garden Party by Katherine Mansfield

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