

## Daybreak

**Author:** CK

**Rating:** P14

**Summary:** Sometimes it were quite unusual means that brought the desired effect. For John it included getting to know Sherlock by lips and hands.

**Disclaimer:** Leave it all to the BBC, Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat. I'm actually quite happy with them having it - even if the BBC could be a bit quicker with passing it on to us.

**Author's Notes:** Sequel to "Moonshine", third part in the "Solace" series that explores how it goes on from this story and John and Sherlock's new arrangement. Can be read as stand-alone story.

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Twenty-seven cracks. Fifty-four little black dots of unknown origin - though it was to be assumed they resulted from a mixture of aged paint, shadows, and one or the other experiment - in an area of approximately two square meters. Probably a multitude of both across the whole ceiling of the bedroom.

For two hours Sherlock had been studying the top end of his and John's room. He had woken up to darkness outside, and retreated to his mind palace to catalogue past cases, newly learned facts and in future possibly helpful information, all the while his eyes wandered over the surface above, refusing to close once again.

It wasn't much different from what he did when he lay on the couch in the living room, when his stare was fixed somewhere between the ceiling and nothingness. In fact, it was better, since the couch was too short for him, whereas in the bed he could fully stretch. The difference was significant, even though he'd never paid much attention to it before.

The difference, however, was also noticeable in not so favorable aspects, such as his need to remain quiet and unmoving so he wouldn't disturb John, still fast asleep. He had started feeling restless a while ago already, wanting to get up, tend to experiments, update his website, look for new cases. Instead, however, he lay in bed, John next to him, and didn't so much as flinch a muscle, which was slowly putting a considerable strain on same fibrous tissue.

There was light pressure against his side whenever his friend breathed in, and warm air grazing his neck and shoulder whenever he breathed out. An arm around his chest locked him tightly to the other man's body, and soft, short hair tickled his cheek with every little movement. He loved it. He had never expected this kind of sentiment of himself, but he really did enjoy it. More so, he sought it, craved it even; it had become a necessary aid to his mind when it balanced on the threshold between consciousness and sleep.

It was odd to be awake like this, though. Over the past months their sleeping patterns had synchronized; they fell asleep and woke at almost the same time. Now being awake when John wasn't suddenly didn't appear as normal as it was when they hadn't yet been sharing the bed. When Sherlock had been up for nights on end, having what could only be called naps during the hours of the day when his flatmate was out.

Sleeping besides John had become something he didn't question anymore; if he ever had. It was something he didn't take any time to consider more thoroughly, as he usually did. It was, in the simplest of ways, something that mustn't change. Going to bed alone ever since irritated him; he had tried it once or twice in the past months and it had never worked out. John being a part of him had extended to almost every aspect of his life, including moments when his sleep-numbed mind shouldn't notice the difference his friend's presence made, and yet did.

Lying besides John... well, he didn't object to that either. It was more the fact that, while he had a habit of sitting or lying in the living room for hours, it was usually his own decision to do so. He could jump up then, walk around when his mind momentarily got lost in chaos before movement helped him sort it again, or distract himself for a little while by checking on one of his experiments.

But this, he concluded, *this* didn't work. He couldn't stay in bed any longer.

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It was not even four in the morning when the body next to his pulled away, and John grumbled at the loss of contact. His eyes fought hard to stay closed, lids as heavy as his mind, demanding him to go back to sleep. But he couldn't; didn't want to; not without Sherlock.

It was chance - or maybe instinct - that let him catch his friend's wrist before he was gone all together, and jerked at it with as much force as he could muster in his barely awake state. It was enough, though, to get Sherlock to fall back onto the bed; not that the detective countered with much resistance, John noticed.

"Stay," he whispered, breaking the unwritten, the *unspoken* rule of their hushed arrangement, "don't go." To emphasize his words, he lifted the blanket and wrapped it together with his arm around Sherlock, pulling him close.

"I'm not tired, John," the detective replied, complained, one could have said, his voice low and husky, a rare sound that John felt strangely affected by.

"It's too early to get up." The statement was simple and nothing that could ever have convinced one Sherlock Holmes; even half-asleep John knew that. He was too tired to argue, though. And the kiss on the shoulder more instinct than anything else. But it did the unintended trick. Sherlock stilled, maybe out of shock, maybe out of curiosity; John only knew that if his friend didn't like something, he sure was going to let him know. Protest never came.

Lying back down and going to sleep again was intended then. Another kiss on Sherlock's upper arm was what happened. And this time, the detective relaxed notably, breathing out what could nearly have been called a sigh of contentment.

At first, John frowned. At himself, his actions, and whatever he had thought he was doing, or *not thought*. He was just in the process of kissing his best friend; on shoulder and arm, and merely to soothe him, but somehow this didn't pass as a valid excuse.

*For what? And for whom?*, an inner voice demanded then, asking the questions that really should have concerned him, because this was no one's business except his and Sherlock's. Wasn't it? If this was their way of finding comfort, of resting their souls in a daily tyranny of cases and corpses, then no one had the right to deny it to them; not even society and its standards John had been trained to comply with by upbringing and life itself.

A sudden anger rose inside him, a defiance he felt at thinking of how he'd be met by disapproval among many of his old acquaintances. How it would be either critically considered or met by mockery what he and Sherlock were doing, while it had improved their daily lives so much, helped them more than anything else could have. He felt happier and more at peace, and that his mind was relieved of weights that had burdened it for years, and how it all came from simply sharing the bed with his best friend - and not from visiting his psychotherapist twice a week to talk for an hour about things he didn't feel the woman had any right to know.

The rush of thoughts on his mind felt like a wave of truth drowning his doubts, every single one he had had until now; it was as if a dam had been broken. He was free to do whatever he wanted to; there was no reason to keep quiet about it. He realized then that the fact how they hadn't talked about their arrangement until now mostly was

due to John's own denial of a situation he should have embraced to begin with. Sherlock was not the one to talk about things, not unless he was encouraged to; encouraged by John. But then maybe words weren't needed. Often enough, all it took were actions.

If kisses were what made Sherlock stay, he would use them, without guilt and second thought.

Lovingly he began to nuzzle his nose against the crook of his friend's neck, and immediately felt how Sherlock leaned into the touch; just as he did when John let his lips wander upwards, planting kisses wherever he could reach from his lying position next to Sherlock. He placed the little caresses on jawbone and cheek, on temple and ear, even an eyelid, while his hand rubbed soothingly over Sherlock's chest and arm. It was fascinating to feel the genius' breathing even out; he was always the first to fall asleep and had never before experienced this incredible sensation it gave him when his friend calmed down; when the lines on his face, always in concentration, smoothed, and he looked completely at peace.

He continued his tender attention a little longer, wandering down over neck and shoulder and finally rested his head against the latter, where sleep immediately claimed him.

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It wasn't going to remain the only occurrence of this special method to calm Sherlock. The next time John made use of his new-found knowledge was during a case. Though it had taken him some time, he had eventually managed to convince his friend that a few hours of sleep were necessary, even while they still had a case; it were considerably less resting hours they caught on these occasions, but it certainly was better than the alternative Sherlock had practiced before.

It turned out that kisses were of even more aid than on normal, case-less nights. John would brush his lips across pale skin, even lean up a bit on his own arms to reach more places. At least one hand would assist him, caressing the younger man's body, getting bolder with every new night. Then the hand would wander down over his friend's belly, and back up the sides; it would gently knead muscles in shoulder and biceps, and thread through fingers of the hand not buried beneath his own body as it leaned over Sherlock.

It became a habit he was almost tempted to continue outside the bedroom as well because it proved to be so effective to sooth his friend. He took his time, explored a bit more of Sherlock's body every night, until his lips knew the top half of the detective's lithe frame in great detail.

Not the mouth though. He never kissed him on the mouth. It would have meant something different, something new, a step into another direction. As long as he stayed away from Sherlock's mouth, it wouldn't mean anything, John told himself; it was just about one friend comforting the other, soothing him. Because that's what they were, and what John was comfortable with: friends who took care of each other, friends who reveled in the power of touch and caress.

This had nothing to do with others; this was just himself. He may have slept beside a man every night; beside a man who had come to be more important than anyone else in his life. He shared a blanket with him, didn't bother anymore to put on the top of his pajamas, had by now mapped out his upper body with hands and lips. But that didn't mean he was sexually interested in Sherlock. As comfortable as he'd come to be with the thought of sharing his bed with a man; whether he was attracted to him or not he was not yet ready to consider. Women were still of appeal to him, even if he had been without a relationship, or a one night stand, for the past months.

And after all, this was about what they both wanted and needed, and not about what ought to have happened, according to what clichés and most movies dictated.

Or what, just once in a while, their bodies seemed to desire.

But then, who listened to uncontrollable bodily reactions?

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