

Breathless

by mazaher

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Another set of 221B, three versions leading to the same final line. Just because.

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John: Running

Breathless.

Along the dirty pavement, around the corner into the darkness of an alley slamming on them like a cold wet blindfold. Blindly following Sherlock's footsteps, running after the suspect. Losing track when they explode out again into the bright lights of Old Jamaica Road, and the noise of the traffic disperses the shuffle of feet.

John stops. North to Abbey? South to Dockley? Straight across to Freat? No sign, no clue. Leaning forward, trying to catch his breath. Just now, what he wishes most is a chance to implant a GPS tracking chip on Sherlock. But he's out of luck, so he starts southward along Thurland Road, reasoning that their quarry -- Sherlock's quarry, now-- is probably headed where street lighting is dimmer.

Like those fearful souls in Bardo Thodol, he surprises himself thinking, who turn away from the light of the gods and fall back into yet another womb.

Then, the sound of a scuffle from Spa Road. He runs. Sherlock is holding on to the man's ankle as he struggles to climb over a chain mail fence. The shoe slips off. The man falls on the other side and sprints away. Sherlock stumbles back, still clinging to the shoe.

"Are... you... all right?" John pants.

"Fine. And you?"

"I'm fine when I can see you," John answers, breathless.

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Sherlock: Healing

In the end, it was nothing very exciting. A faulty beaker, exploding on the Bunsen at a bare 354°F. The lab at Bart's remained almost undamaged. Sherlock got seventeen glass splinters in his face, and six more in his eyes. Rushed to the London Eye Hospital in Harley Street, the operation took two hours. John was at work when the accident happened. Molly called him as soon as Sherlock was safely on his way to the ambulance, and he was there in twenty minutes, alternately sitting and pacing in the waiting room outside the sliding doors to Surgery, and cursing the day when he'd decided he belonged with the non-smokers.

When the right stretcher was finally rolled out, Sherlock was apparently wide awake under the heavy bandage covering his eyes and half his face, and accompanying with emphatic gestures a vociferous argument with the nurses about being dismissed and sent straight home in a cab. John took hold of his hand, walked along all the way to the room, and managed to calm him enough to accept the idea of two or three days in hospital, provided John stayed with him around the clock.

The bandages come off on the third day.

"How do you feel?" John asks with a smile.

"I'm fine when I can see you," Sherlock answers, breathless.

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Lestrade: Waiting

He's lost them.

Sherlock texts Lestrade at 23:51: *Swan and Pike, near Reservoir. Murderer a Whitewebb's golfer. Come at once.*

Within five minutes he's on his way with two cars. When they get there there is no-one to be seen. Only a disturbed patch of grass at the very end of the road. And a small pool of fresh blood.

Lestrade feels a shiver run across his shoulders. Then he reflects that the blood on the ground is not enough for a grown man to bleed to death.

The comfort is minimal.

There are no traces, no clue as to where John and Sherlock may be now. Lestrade texts both, then calls, but no answer. Nothing else remains than taking photos and measures, gathering blood samples, packing up and getting back to NSY.

One hour, fifty-four minutes and eighteen unanswered calls later, Lestrade steps out of the Yard, hails a cab and makes his way to Baker Street.

He has the keys to the flat; it's some time since the last drug bust. Since John came, in fact. Lestrade lets himself in, sits up in Sherlock's armchair, worries, and waits.

They climb the steps at 2:18, laughing about dead cellphone batteries.

"Lestrade! You're so pale... Are you feeling well?" John asks.

"I'm fine when I can see you," Lestrade answers, breathless.

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Notes:

-- The last line (I wonder if anyone did recognize it...?) is the translation of the greeting Renzo Tramaglino gives his betrothed Lucia Mondella when they meet again after their long separation in ALESSANDRO MANZONI, *I Promessi Sposi* (1842²), chapter 38: "...an old turn of phrase, but one which he would have invented himself all over again, on the spur of the moment."

-- *Running*: I am familiar with *Bardo Thodol* through the Italian translation from the Tibetan by Namkhai Norbu, *Il Libro tibetano dei Morti*, Roma: Newton Compton, 1997.

-- *Healing*: for penetration of eyeball by foreign object, see:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1042306/pdf/brjopthal00565-0061.pdf>

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