

The dream

by mazaher

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Elf-shot.

This is how John is feeling.

An elf pierced his heart with an arrow, but in the end it turned out that his elf couldn't fly.

John has been having trouble sleeping, this past year and a half. He will fall asleep easily enough around eleven, but then he will wake up abruptly at all hours, with his mind a blank and in his stomach the sensation of falling, falling.

Silence ringing in his ears until he will turn on the lamp and listen to the night noises from the street slowly flooding him with reality again.

He doesn't have nightmares anymore. Only this... void.

John fears that the void will drain away his memories, sooner or later. That his fingers will forget the shape of Sherlock's collarbones and his eyes the outline of his head as he bent over a microscope. The exact intonation of his voice when he called out to Mrs. Hudson. The smell of his clean shirts.

This is something he doesn't tell Ella.

The voice is steady, even, no ghostly whisper.

"John."

"Sh... Sherlock?"

John is not sure if this is a dream. He doesn't want to find out anyway. He doesn't turn on the light.

"I miss you."

"How..."

"I had to come and tell you. I'm sorry, John. So sorry, look, there was no other way, there was no time to find another way, I had to, and I'm sorry. I wanted you to know."

"Where are you? Let me touch you."

"No, don't. I'll go if you try."

By now John is awake enough to be suspicious. He's seen what Moriarty can do; he's seen what *Mycroft* can do. He knows he can't believe his ears or his eyes anyway. He wants proof.

"How do I know this is not a recording, or a hallucination? It wouldn't be the first time, right?"

"Today it is March 1 and the main news on *The Guardian* are the killings at Gaza. Again."

"Mycroft may have arranged for the headline."

"Silver Blaze won the Wessex Cup. He was given at 22/1. Did you bet on him? You'd have made a nice pile."

"As a matter of fact, yes, it was... So. You are here. Alive, I presume."

"Hm-mmm. I shouldn't be doing this."

"You're telling me now, why not earlier? You don't know-- you can't imagine how it's been like."

"I don't need to imagine. I saw you. At my grave. And I couldn't tell you earlier. You are a lousy actor and a worse liar. You will act different from now on. I need it to be ascribed to your having reached the next stage of grieving, or however that bullshit goes. I can't afford you giving me away yet. There's still work I must attend to."

"What can I do?"

"Don't get married. Please."

"Don't joke, Sherlock, it's no joking matter."

"I am not. I have to go now."

"Are you in danger?"

"Probably. For a while longer."

"I want to help. Let me help."

"You can't. Really. I wish you could."

"How much longer?"

"May be months. A year or two. I don't know."

"And then, you'll come back?"

"If all goes well. Yes."

"What if you don't? What if this is the last time and what if..."

"It won't be, John, listen..."

"...what if I forget you? I'm already forgetting, or I would have been sure. At once, I'd been sure."

"You are allowed to not remember everything. It's impossible to remember everything. You will always remember what matters. Let me go."

"Oh. All right. If you must."

"Would you close your eyes now? You mustn't see which way I go."

"Sherlock. Sherlock! ...Can you fly?"

No answer.

The elf is gone.

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