

## **Injured.**

### **An open-ended BBC Sherlock story**

by mazaher

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#### **author's notes:**

1. *This is an experiment of sorts, a fic without an ending.*

*Sherlock has reached the crucial, final stage in his campaign to eradicate the late Moriarty's organization. His endeavour is successful, but an unforeseen (although not unlikely) setback leaves him in an unpleasant situation. His mobile phone is only one-quarter charged, and down to the last pound's worth of credit.*

*He can reliably make only one call.*

*Whose number will he form?*

*Readers are welcome to write their own ending in the comments, or prompt me. Inspiration may strike...*

*I hope you'll enjoy it.*

2. *I love cast-iron foundries. My grandfather owned one, besides developing specialized cupola furnaces. What struck me most the first time I was in London, was the ubiquitous scent of coke and cast-iron and machinery grease, as though a hundred years had not passed...*

*Therefore I set this short story in one of the largest abandoned foundries in Britain. See here for information: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-13641489>*

*Also, look up the haunting, beautiful pictures by Michael Murphy that you can find here: <http://www.murphyz.co.uk/tag/abandoned/>*

3. *the images are my elaboration on free-use materials.*

4. *bonus points to whomever will catch the movie reference. I have it on Dr. Oliver Sacks's authority that the trick does indeed work.*

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It hurts.

Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective, former (?) cocaine addict, also addicted to occasional self-harm (and to one Dr. John H. Watson); Sherlock Holmes, whose pale smooth skin currently bears the marks of no less than four knife wounds and two bullet grazes received in the last twenty-one months; Sherlock Holmes, who has detailed, personal knowledge of the neural pathways of pain through limb and brain; Sherlock Holmes, until a moment ago, wouldn't have believed a mere fractured metatarsal (albeit the fracture is exposed) could ever hurt so much, effectively stopping him in his tracks when his job is almost finished. When he's almost home.

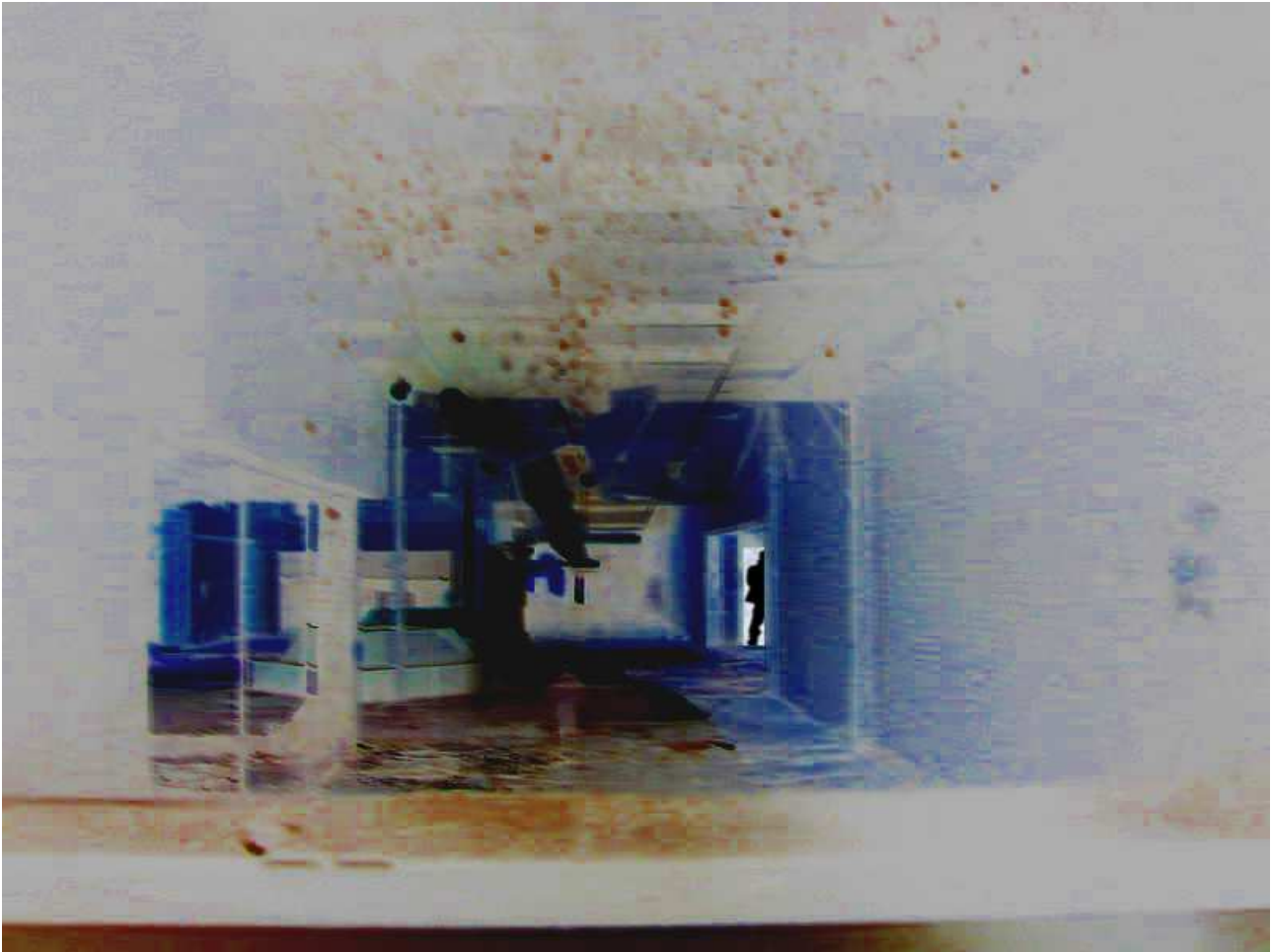
Perhaps tiredness has a bearing on that.

He hasn't slept in 56 hours, not eaten in 74, and the last hasty drink of water from a rusty faucet in a sordid hotel was yesterday night. His eyes kept slipping out of focus as he aimed at the sniper in the third floor window of this dismissed cast-iron foundry (Union Factory/AIDA Bliss Foundry, Chester Green, Derbyshire, main building, south-western wall), his only target a split-second glint of light on the barrel of a gun as for a single instant the sun peered under the cloud cover before disappearing.

His shot was fractionally late: the sniper had time to shoot just as Sherlock's bullet reached him, although the upward jerk of his trigger finger as he fell dead on his back lowered the trajectory from Sherlock's heart (but doesn't he know that Sherlock's heart resides at 221B Baker Street, London NW1 6XE, grieving?) to his right foot.



It is strange how bodymind reacts to sudden shock. In the first eight seconds after being shot, Sherlock's body registers the injury, every cell in him automatically taking stock of the situation and rearranging itself without his conscious input for continued efficiency. The shattering irruption of pain comes in the fifth second, making him squeeze his eyes shut for a moment, but it's followed by a flood of endorphins within the next four. It still hurts, but in a sort of detached way, as one could feel a small pang at the sight of another's grimace of pain while touching an aching tooth with his tongue tip: mirror neurons kicking in. He's functional, and he has a job to finish. It doesn't matter (yet) how long the biochemical fix is going to hold.



Sherlock crow-hops down the one ladder still standing. He makes his way across the desolated vastness of the empty building and around the filthy puddles on the ground, keeping himself upright by his hand on the walls and holding on to the assorted remains of machinery and decrepit forklifts littering the floor. He pauses on the half-open loading bay door. He listens, then slides outside, taking cover behind the tangled mass of hop vines clinging to the wall. He stands still, breathing as quietly as he can, and again he listens intently, trying hard to locate the second man hiding in the brush and rubbish around the ruined building. He hears a rustle forward and to his left. There is nothing to be seen. He closes his eyes, turns around slowly, equalising the sound between his ears; then he takes a breath, and shoots. A tiny slap as the bullet slams into his mark. A stifled cry. Silence.

Suddenly, Sherlock is free: his task is finally done.  
And stuck: pain floods him now, cutting his breath, claspings his whole horizon in an unbreakable band of sheer hurt and exhaustion.  
He can't make himself move.  
He can barely stand.  
He lets himself slide down along the wall, until he sits in the mud, right leg extended, foot bleeding copiously, and tears (tears?) flow from his eyes.  
He knows the wound is not lethal; it is not even dangerous.  
He knows he's been through worse.  
But until a half-minute ago, there was motivation to push him forwards, a hot weight below his navel, giving him stability and momentum. Now he feels like he's suspended in mid-air, waiting only for gravity to grab him and...  
Slam. Him. Down.  
Again.  
He has dreamed of this very moment since he stepped off the roof of St.Bart's, in a sort of desperate act of faith when there was nothing to have faith in.  
Except. (Except John?)  
He realises now that he made the same mistake he used to scorn as a kid in other children, who never seemed to ask what happened exactly during those endless happily-ever-afters.  
What happens, \*now\*?  
He has no plans, nothing to bridge between what he wants as soon as possible (221B; a shower; tea; fresh samples from the morgue; his laptop; \*John\*) and what he has right now (a soiled jacket; an empty stomach; a three-days t-shirt; ripped jeans; an overfull bladder; a foot currently in the process of soaking his right gray-and-black trainer with blood; and a mind-shattering amount of pain.)  
He dips a shaking hand into his pocket and fishes out his mobile. The battery is on the last two bars, but working. Credit is low, though. He struggles to \*think\*.  
Whom will he call?

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**The options** (in alphabetical order):

- Adler
- Anderson
- Donovan
- Holmes (Mummy)
- Holmes (Mycroft)
- Hooper
- Hudson (Mrs.)
- Lestrade
- Watson
- Wiggins (yes, Wiggins does have a mobile of her own, what do you think?!)

