

Our fingerprints on each other

by mazaher

June 25th -- July 5th, 2012

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A sketch of a sequel to Some things change, some things don't, because I kept having glimpses of scenes which I'll never manage to write in extenso, but neither I'm ready to let them fall through.

Thanks to fennishjournal, for the encouragement.

Very special thanks to my valiant beta, athens7, whose late-night texted observations added a whole new layer to this part.

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Then...

Mary is standing next to the bed, watching.

The men are stretched on the mattress in His Bedroom; John didn't let go of Sherlock's hand until he'd brought him back where they'd left off, in the exact spot where the void of him had gaped for three years.

Now they're just lying there, fully clothed on the bedcover, heads on hands on planted elbows, staring at each other.

She stands, arms relaxed at her sides, fists slowly closing and opening again in a rhythm like breathing.

She looks at her husband's back, the strong line of his shoulders, the thick nape of the neck cupped by the ugly plaid shirt, the backs of his legs neatly folded at the knees. She looks at Sherlock, limbs wiry and too-thin under frayed denim, his eyes fixed into John's, and she sighs quietly.

Sherlock's free hand twitches minutely, fingertips drawn to John's cheek, John's heat, John's firm body, present and real.

He stops midair, breath catching. His eyes leave John's and touch Mary's, uncertain, asking for permission.

She feels hers filling with tears which are not of sadness. She beats her eyelids once, then turns her head slowly to the side, like a cat saying *iloveyou*.

Sherlock exhales, blinks in return, stretches his hand to graze John's hairline, ear, jaw, resting at last on his lips and chin.

John nuzzles the palm, and even if she can't see, Mary knows from the points of his ears that he's smiling.

She turns around, steps out, closes the door quietly.

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Then...

"Would you stay? John said I could ask you. Yes?"

"In fact, I did. If. If you want. This is nothing like what we ever knew before. But we..."

"...should consider the opportunities. If you want."

"Or you may want to think it over."

"We can set rules. John is good at rules."

"I'd rather have you set some anyway. Even if number one turns out to be to not mention the matter ever again."

Mary leans on the doorjamb, crosses her arms. Their blush makes her smile, and blush a little herself.

The men are, again, on the bed-- half naked already, the sheets rumpled where they rolled on each other a moment ago. She feels the tug of their intimacy, like fingers deftly pulling to release the knot in the sash of her bathrobe. But someone must keep a clear head if they're even going near *this*, and right now she's the least inebriated by the haze of happiness.

The men look up at her expectantly, shapeless in their desire and joy.

The threshold of the room is the threshold to a new world, where new dangers lurk: wrong expectations, unforeseen developments. Her heart aches at how vulnerable the three of them are just now, in this perfect moment. She shudders at the power she's being given, of opening a way for their pooling life to flow on.

"I think..." she draws. "I think that we should definitely do this. I think that rules must be agreed upon, and that they will change by mutual agreement along the way, as we learn. I think that there are a number of things I want to do, and a number of things I don't. I'm fine with you two fucking-- God knows and John knows what I'd do if Will were here. It's good that someone else can have what I can't. I want John and I to still have time together. John saved my life, not just once but every single damn day these last eighteen months. I can't and won't go on alone. Sherlock, I'm not going to have sex with you. But you are the man my husband loves. I think we should try and test what you and John and I are comfortable with, and go on from there. So, yes. My answer is yes ...and, thank you."

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The next time, it's John and Mary while Sherlock is at St. Bart's.

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The time after that, it's Mary gently taking Sherlock --surprised, uncertain, unresisting-- by his fingertips and leading him on as she follows John to *their* bedroom.

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There is the pleasure of watching. Happiness is never dull.

There is the pleasure of cuddling by threes, after-- sometimes, instead.

The pleasure of feeling loved, wanted, on both sides. Feeling the others present even when they aren't.

Love speaks many languages, half of them silent.

One by one, they're learning them all.

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