

Five doors of perceptions: 2. Touch

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touch, noun: 1. *the act or state of touching; state or fact of being touched.* 2. *that sense by which anything material is perceived by means of physical contact.* 3. *the quality of something touched that imparts a sensation.* 4. *a coming into or being in contact.* 5. *mental or moral perception, sensitivity, or understanding.*

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John

John is fuzzy.

Not only because of his jumpers (the soft thick one which makes him look a little bit like a Suffolk sheep when he pulls the sleeves up while cooking, the thinner striped one which makes him look a whole lot like a bee when he's busy cleaning up) but most of all because "fuzzy" is his own personal texture.

The way his hair falls behind his ears and on his neck. The very pattern of the thin, delicate creases on his face. The almost invisible down on the backs of his hands. (Sherlock wants so much to ask for a sample to examine under his microscope, but he suspects the request may not be taken well after only nine weeks of cohabitation-- later, perhaps.)

John: fuzzy.

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"I have something for you. It was on discount at Tesco. I think you'll like it."

"What is it? Anything you'll pester me to eat?"

"No. Lay back on the sofa and close your eyes. I'll be with you in a moment."

Sherlock complies. He has nothing better to do right now, and --much to his surprise-- his flatmate hasn't yet fallen below being interesting. Not a single time. Rather amazing.

He crosses his ankles on the armrest, covers his eyes with his arm, and listens to the small sounds of John putting things away. Hands being washed, fresh groceries arranged into the fridge (small sigh by John on opening, but no vocal protest for the half-defrosted hedgehog in the salad bowl), cans and boxes of food being stowed into cabinets, washing-machine detergent stashed under the sink.

Then John crouches next to the sofa.

"Lower your arm. Your head is going to be touched now. Don't open your eyes."

The touch is precise like fingertips and ubiquitous like raindrops, but the fingertips are tiny and the raindrops don't soak. It is just this side of ticklish. Hard but springy, accompanied by a thin metallic noise. Satisfying like scratching around a scab. Elusive like pleasure. Calming.

Arousing. Wonderful.

Sherlock lets out a breath he didn't realise he was holding and all but melts down on the sofa.

"Like it?" John asks.

"Marvelous. Can I look now?"

"If you wish. Here it is, The Head Scratcher. Only This Week At £ 0.85. Manual Operation. No Batteries. No Cord. Completely Low-Tech. And before you ask, forget about using this to stir stuff in your experiments."

"I'll get another for myself."

"I bought the last three. This one is for me, yours are on the kitchen table, with a marker cross on the handle. Don't let me catch you with mine."

Sherlock turns to look at John and then he keeps looking, because John is fuzzy and wonderful and now he's smiling a fuzzy smile and time after time he's revealing himself as nothing short of brilliant, in a fuzzy sort of way.

"Thank you," he finally says.

"You're welcome," John smiles back.

Sherlock

Sherlock is silky.

Whatever he's wearing slides and flows along his long thin body with the simple elegance of water going down a tall waterfall. Everything about him is smooth, sliding, soft. Cool and clear. Shiny and neat. Silky. A reflection of his mind, like the aerodynamic body of a Ferrari is designed around the full power of the engine inside, allowing it to perform at its best.

And, like a Ferrari, Sherlock is almost untouchable.

For all that Sherlock seems to remain completely unfazed by anything people routinely throw at him, John is concerned that the mere touch of his metaphorical fingernail may scratch and spoil the perfect shine of that polished surface.

During the last nine weeks, John has acquired a completely new concept of "just transport".

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"Budge back."

"Oh, come *on*, Sherlock, I'm knackered. Let me be. Get the armchair yourself for a change."

"You've been out all day and I need information about you. Stay where you are if you really need to. Just shut up."

John sighs. He's not been living here for long yet (although it's definitely longer than it feels, now that he thinks of it), but he's already learned that there's no reasoning with Sherlock when he's in stubborn mode, which means roughly 98% of the time. So he pushes himself back up against the armrest, and resolves to adopt the "play dead" tactics which he used to employ against teenager Harry on her bad days.

It seems to be working. Sherlock cleverly slides and sneaks his way between John's outstretched body and the back of the sofa with a minimum of fuss. It's amazing how he seems able to extend or shrink his own body at will, taking up an astonishing share of space when he sprawls somewhere in a dramatic pose, and reducing himself to a thin sliver when he needs to slink through some narrow opening. Or like now, stretched alongside John, his head settling next to his shoulder, but mysteriously avoiding to press on it.

John finds that although Sherlock as a flatmate is troublesome enough, as a sofamate he is rather perfect.

And silky.

Even through the stiff fabric of his jeans, John can feel the warm slide of Sherlock's dressing gown along his thigh. He can see Sherlock's dark curls just under his nose, each fine shaft shiny and soft, a faint whiff of Floris' shampoo wafting up together with Sherlock's own scent-- a bit feral, a bit wild.

Sherlock sniffs around for a while in the area of John's woollen-jumpered side, the touch of his nose barely perceptible, relaxing. John is almost falling asleep.

Then Sherlock snakes an arm over, picks up John's right hand and sets it on his own face.

John feels his warm breath exhale on his palm, rhythmical, hypnotic. He falls asleep while Sherlock nuzzles his palm, giving tiny licks with the tip of his tongue, and he doesn't dream.

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Note: this is the gadget John brought back from Tesco:

Other note: the nuzzling and licking are an inside joke between me and one of my cats, F.L.

