Wrong

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Wrong

by PerseShow

Summary

Takes place directly after the Irene Adler fiasco. John is convinced Sherlock "doesn't feel things in that way." Sherlock decides to prove him wrong.

Notes

This is my most popular work on AO3. The ao4.lol mirror recently recovered and displayed it, making it now possible for me to preliminarily check whether the copy on my computer reflects all edits on AO3. While I don't mind my readers enjoying my work via the mirror, none of the formatting and almost none of the paragraphing is preserved, making it very low quality. I decided to cross-post it myself. I'll double-check that all the tags/etc are the same once AO3 is back up.

“You’re wrong.”

John looked up from his book. “Sorry?”

“I said, you’re wrong.”

Sherlock was sitting across from John, each in their respective chairs. Sherlock was also reading a book. Or at least, he appeared to be. John supposed that was his mistake—ever believing that Sherlock Holmes had room in his mind palace for literature.

John himself had, moments ago, been thinking about the conversation he’d had with Mycroft just hours ago in the cafe next door to 221B. About how Mycroft had fabricated the tale that the Adler woman had gotten safely to America. When really she was dead, and Mycroft wanted to spare Sherlock the misery of knowing.

Mycroft truly believed Sherlock had cared for that woman. Of course, John wasn’t ready to dispute with his friend’s own brother, who had known Sherlock for a lifetime longer than he himself had, but still.

“He doesn’t feel things in that way.”

The words still rang true in John’s ears.

“And Mycroft doesn’t know what to think,” Sherlock added. “Unsurprising that you chose the wrong answer and he came startlingly close to the truth.”

John blinked and set down his book. “Sorry, what again?”

Sherlock sighed. “We’re talking about the Adler woman, do try to keep up.”

“Ah. So that’s why you’re sitting there reading a book.” John pointed a knowing finger. “You haven’t absorbed a word, have you? You’re in your mind palace.”

“Yes, quite an astute observation, now can we get back to the topic at hand?”

“Which is?”

“You’re wrong.”

“About what?”

“Me. Adler.” Sherlock looked down suddenly, as if to distract himself among the pages of his book once again. John knew better. He wasn’t reading.

John leaned forward a little. “What exactly…are you saying?”

“You think I…don’t…feel…” He coughed out the words, eyes on his book. “…things in that way.”

“Now come on, you couldn’t read my mind word for word.”

“I overheard you in the cafe.”

“Ah.” John swallowed. “So you know what really happened to her.”

“Yes.”

“Yeah, well about that, I’m sorry, I…”

“John, please, do try to focus. I know she pulled some very distracting tricks, one of which was her quite interesting decision to parade about naked in front of you, but this is *not* about her.”

John frowned. “I’m not—and you just said—”

“That you were wrong about Adler? Yes. I never felt anything for her.”

John blinked, now thoroughly confused. “So…you don’t…”

“Oh, please.” Sherlock tossed his book aside and stood, pacing in annoyance. “Really, you’re the last person I would expect to miss the subtext. Aren’t you the one who’s supposed to be good at this? Feelings? Emotions? I really didn’t think I’d have to spell it all out for you.”

John turned as far as he could, peered over his shoulder. “What exactly are you talking about?”

Sherlock kept his back to John. “Do try to deduce.”

John mentally flipped through the signs. It was true, with anyone else he would have known what was going on right away. But this was Sherlock Holmes, the self-professed high-functioning sociopath, the one John would never have expected to feel any sort of…well, anything. But the signs were indeed there. The accelerated rise and fall of his chest probably indicated discomfort, perhaps anxiety. Completely expected, if Sherlock the consulting detective was making an attempt at showing emotion. And that was when it hit John. Him saying he was wrong. That this had nothing to do with Adler. Of course…he was simply trying to express that he *did* feel things. Perhaps not for that exact woman, but he could feel.

But why was he telling John now?

“Wait,” John said. “You’re telling me…that you *do* feel? What happened to ‘high-functioning sociopath’?”

Sherlock let the slightest trace of a smile show on his averted profile. “A distraction, John, nothing more.”

“Meaning, you *want* other people to perceive you that way.”

“Ah, but there’s one person I can never fool, isn’t there?”

With that, Sherlock turned around, and that was an expression John knew. Confidence. Knowing. Some might even say overconfidence. And it was aimed right at John.

“You never have believed that lie,” Sherlock said, circling back in front of John so he could relax in his chair. “Have you?”

“Well of course not,” John said. “I know there’s a person under there.”

Sherlock smiled. “Exactly what I always appreciated most about you.”

John squinted. “Sorry, what? You’ve lost me.”

“No matter—I suspect I’ve successfully obtained the results of this experiment.” Sherlock dismissed John’s openmouthed stare with a wave of his hand. “Sorry to distract you from your book, John.”

And then he sank back into his chair, nose buried into his own book, as if he’d never moved at all.

But John wasn’t done.

“Me,” he said. “This is about me?”

Sherlock looked up and rolled his eyes. “Yes, of *course* this is about you. How more obvious must I be before you finally put the facts together?”

“It might help if you just told me.”

“John, I…” Sherlock broke off and ran his fingers through his curls, hiding his face behind his arms. “I don’t…find it easy…this sort of thing...”

John just stared back blankly.

“Yoo-hoo!” Mrs. Hudson suddenly called from the doorway. John turned to see her arms laden with snacks and smiled. “I just thought I’d bring these up—”

She caught sight of Sherlock fisting his curls and looked at John. “What’s got him so riled up this time? Difficult case, I take it?”

“What?” John asked. “N-n-no, no case—”

“Oh, are you two fighting?” Mrs. Hudson asked with an understanding nod. “I understand—I’ll just pop right back out—”

“Mrs. Hudson, for the last time,” John said, “we are not a couple.”

Sherlock mumbled something that sounded like “Unfortunately.” John cocked his head at his friend, but decided he must have misheard.

Mrs. Hudson glanced between them, got a strange look on her face, and backed out quickly. “Of course not.”

“Sherlock,” John said, “can you actually believe she still thinks—”

He was surprised when Sherlock looked up from between his arms, his eyes latched on John’s. “Mrs. Hudson is not in the wrong.”

“Wait,” John said, “what?”

“Right,” Sherlock said, almost to himself. “Of course. *Not gay.* You’ve said it enough times, how could I have let myself think--”

“Wait,” John said. “Sherlock?”

“Please do spare me the agony of offering you a long and tedious confession of affection—I really have no idea how to do it right.”

“Evidently,” John chuckled. “Look, Sherlock, come here.”

When Sherlock only gazed back at him distrustingly, John sighed and shifted forward, off his chair, until he was kneeling before his friend, looking up into his piercing—and yet lovable—features. Those pale eyes that always looked so focused, be it on a case or stray thoughts or some unfortunate soul who was the next victim of Sherlock’s deduction or John. The mouth, equally pale, slightly parted as he looked down on John’s likely unfathomable expression. The cheekbones that John had caught himself admiring on more than one occasion, and had put out of mind because Sherlock was, as he himself had proclaimed on their first case together, *married to his work.*

“What about the work?” John asked, clearing his throat more times than absolutely necessary.

Sherlock’s voice was low and deep, his eyes holding John’s so steadily he didn’t dare back away. “You’re part of the work.”

Married to his work…

“Sherlock…” John began.

“Oh, shut up, you’re obviously not that good at this ‘sentiment’ thing either.”

Wiser words had never been spoken. John elected for action instead. One minute his hand was resting quite innocently on Sherlock’s knee, and the next it was cupping the nape of his neck, drawing their faces more closely together. Sherlock’s breathing had stopped almost completely, and all John could see was that perfect mouth of his, closing in, closer, closer…

The first touch of their lips was like a spark of electricity, and suddenly John couldn’t get enough. He pressed closer, drawing Sherlock down toward him, forgetting in the power of his love for the man that if this was the wrong move, he could very likely never redeem himself. If he was forcing himself on Sherlock, Sherlock the untouchable, Sherlock the consulting

detective, Sherlock the one who was *married to his work*, then it was very likely John would never find himself welcome at Baker Street again.

"You're part of the work…"

"Oh, bloody hell." John pulled back and looked Sherlock straight in the eye. "Please tell me I didn't just forever prove myself an idiot."

"Not at all, John," Sherlock said, smiling. "In fact…I think you're far more perceptive than I've ever given you credit for."

"Well," John said, "the, you know, *feeling* thing really is my area."

"Mine too," Sherlock's voice rumbled. And as John stared up at him, scarcely daring to believe, Sherlock leaned in close—well, closer than he already was—and let his lips brush faintly over John's ear.

"*Thanks to you*."

It was John's turn to smile. But it didn't last long, because he leaned in and pulled Sherlock's mouth back to meet his.

When Mrs. Hudson returned a few minutes later, only to catch the two kissing slowly on the sofa, she only nodded to herself in approval and made a discreet exit.

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