Train tracks

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Train tracks

by Head_councilor_of_Ares_Cabin

Summary

On the train on the way home from Constantinople, James realised Sherlock's wound is infected.

Notes

Hello loves
I'm Head_councilor_of_Ares_Cabin and I am an Ao3 immigrant.
While I do intend to return once Ao3 is back up I also intend to continue writing here.
Anyways, enjoy!

Chapter 1

James watches his friend, sitting across from him in the carriage, asleep.

Yet he looks anything but relaxed.

He sits beside his older brother, slumping against the window, pale and sweaty

"Are you *sure* we shouldn't wake him?"

"Yes, Mr. Moriarty." Mycroft says again, exasperated. "The last time we woke him, might I remind you, he was quiet upset."

James sighed but did not push it. He knew that he only wanted to wake him for his own comfort. And he knew Sherlock needed his rest. But it did not help.

Sherlock shifted in his sleep, groaning lowly.

Beatrice sat the other side of him, lifting her eyes from her book for the first time in a while to glance at her brother.

Mrs Holmes sat on the bench beside James, across from her three children.

"He shouldn't be this pale, should he?" James asked again.

Cordelia patted his leg in comfort. "It's been a hard few weeks on him. He is most likely exhausted dear. That's all."

James nodded but didn't say anything. Did not agree with her.

When James looked at his friend again, this time he did not see him. He saw his own mother, pale and sweating, to thin. To small for a women her age. Just a few days before the consumption took her.

James looked away. Lord, how many had he watched die this way?

Slowly of fever or hunger or exhaustion.

Too many. Two siblings, already. And of course his dear Mamí.

He *had* watched his Da die but that was nothing like the rest.

"James, dear?" Cordellia asked.

He cleared his throat, looking back. "Sorry?"

"I asked if you were alright?"

"I, yes. Sorry." He managed. "Tired, I suppose."

She nodded. God he couldn't look at her. Why, out of all the people on this earth had she had to look so much like *his* Mamí, from when she was well?

Beatrice was watching him, he realised. He held her gaze for about five seconds before he broke away, looking at his lap.

She had that same calculating stare as her big brother. She could see right through him and they both knew it.

Half an hour later, Sherlock finally stirred.

He looked around, blinking slowly, eyes adjusting to the light.

James sat up, looking at him. Mycroft helped his brother straighten where he sat.

"How are you feeling?" James asked.

Sherlock's eyes took a second too long to focus on him.

"Uh," He cleared his throat. "Um yeah I'm okay. Tired."

James nodded. "You catch something? Your quiet pale."

Sherlock frowned. "Perhaps." He shifted, uncomfortable with the eyes on him. "Though none of you are ill. And it can't have been anything I've eaten. We've all had the same food."

James nodded, but kept watching him. "Do you need me to show you where the restroom is? You've been asleep for quiet a while."

Sherlock nodded, pushing himself up and stumbling. James caught his arm but Sherlock brushed him off.

"I'm fine."

"Of course you are Sherly."

He rolled his eyes and let James guide him to the restroom.

Once they had left their room, Sherlock slumped slightly against him.

"You alright?"

"Mmmh." He hummed in response.

James glanced at him. He was clutching his side where his shirt was, James realised, starting to tint pink.

He cursed and grabbed Sherlock's hand yanking him into the nearest room which was thankfully empty.

Sherlock made a surprised yelp. "What the hell are you-"

"Your *bleeding!"* He hissed.

Sherlock looked down. "Oh."

"That was supposed to have closed up days ago!"

"I must have thorn it open on the horse when I was chasing Silas." He muttered in surprise. "How could I not have noticed-?"

"Shush. I need to- I need to stich back up." James muttered to himself. "I'll be right back."

James stepped into the corridor and jogged to the edge of the carriage, yanking the first aid kit from where it sat on the wall. He jogged back, pulling the door open.

Sherlock still sat slumped across the bench.

"Sit up. Take off your shirt."

"Buy me dinner first."

"Wow, your your humor truly astoundes me." James deadpanned.

Sherlock sighed but obliged and James quickly peeled off his now soiled bandages.

James swallowed when he saw the wound. He was expecting maybe a few thorn stitches and a reopened wound but... Lord.

The skin around the wound was swollen and red. More so than when he'd last seen it. There was a foul smell from it and milky yellow puss was begining to dry around the wound.

He'd thorn maybe four stitches and it was bleeding, though at quiet a leisurely pase. The blood was dark, almost a dark crimson and had soaked the first layer of bandage and was smeared down below his trousers, most likely atleast lightly staining the inside of Sherlock's trousers.

James found himself looking away. Sherlock hadn't said anything in almost a minute. James forced himself to look back.

He was at no danger of bleeding out but the infection *would* kill him if not treated.

He'd need a doctor, again but right now he'd have to work with what he had.

James did his best to clean the wound.

Sherlock's skin was disturbingly feverish.

He did not mean to be rough but he didn't want to risk it getting any worse.

Sherlock moaned, grabbing James wrist, almost as a reflex.

"Sherly, I need to-"

"I know." He muttered, dropping his friends hand. "Sorry."

"S'arlight." James responded, forcing a smile.

"I'm going to have to tell them." He told Sherlock. He didn't look away from his work.

Sherlock did his best to shift without moving his abdomen which was quiet a difficult feat. "No you don't."

"I do. We both know this is worse than your making it out to be. They've almost lost you far to many times. Don't put them through that again. Please." He looked up at his friend. Sherlock looked back with those stupid big green eyes of his, almost grey in this light, pleading with James.

James *almost* crumpled.

"Fine." Sherlock said, looking away, out the window at the fields rushing past them.

James touched Sherlock's face gently, making Sherlock look him in the eye again. "Thank you." He said, sincerely.

He knew this was hard for Sherlock, for whatever reason but he needed this.

James looked back at his hands, shaking slightly and went back to work.

Sherlock groaned again, as James pressed into his injury.

"Tell me about Ireland." He said suddenly.

"Sorry?"

"Ireland? That's where your from, yes? Dublin? Tell me about it."

A slight laugh escaped. "No. No, not Dublin." He said. He didn't want to say more. He hadn't mentioned Ireland since he came to Oxford to *anyone.*

He'd promised himself he wouldn't.

But...

"Cork." He said, and Sherlock looked up. "County Cork. It was... it was lovely at some time, I'm sure, but..." He trailed off. He'd began redoing the stitches. "I was born during the last years of the hunger and well, even if I don't remember it much out family never really recovered. Or our parish, really."

"But... the potatoe famine, there was soup kitchens set up, yes? And that was in 1845 anyway." Sherlock argued.

"It was in 1845 for England. And ye didn't even *have* a famine. We were still starvin' till 52'. And yer soup kitchens were useless. There wasn't half enough and they got rid of them after the first bloody year. Didn't do us much good."

Sherlock was quiet for a moment.

James sighed.

"Anyway, Cork was, *fine* i suppose. I got to go to school. Me and Eoin. The rest of my siblings didn't, but ya know. We had a nice enough landlord too. Kind of. He let us off on late rent once or twice. And he's the reason I went to secondary school. Mightv'e just been to get me out of his hair but-" James shrugged. "Anyways my had both passed by the time I was 14 and he had us evicted then, so I suppose his generosity ran dry. We sent a a while on the road and I finished school. Eoin got a job in Dublin and I got the scholarship, so..." it hit him just how much he was telling Sherlock. No one from Oxford knew he had siblings or we'll, anything about him.

Sherlock and Cordellia were the only people who knew he was orphaned.

But Sherlock seemed distracted from the pain atleast.

"Ava is living with Lar in Cork. He got a cottage with his wife, Mary. And they have a son. He's the cutest yoke. Ava's only 15," He explains. "I suppose Lar"s only 18 but well, we all had to grow up quick."

He looked up at Sherlock who was staring at him, eyes wide and damp. He sniffed and forced a smile.

"Then, Cathy and Billy God rest their souls died 3 years back. Mam a year prior. And, well, Da died when I was 10."

"God, James..."

He looked down, away from him and kept talking, ignoring him. Ignoring his *pity.*

"We had a dog for a while. When we were on the road. Cú. Stray we found. Ava adored him. I did too I suppose. It wasnt all bad I suppose. You know, I liked the music. I liked being with me siblings. I much preferred the language."

He tied up the bandage and patted Sherlock's leg, who was still staring at him.

"Right. Wait here. I'll be back. I just want to talk to your brother."

"Jam-"

He was out the door before he could finish.

He made his way back to their room.

"What the bloody hell took you so long? And where's Sherlock?" Mycroft added as James stepped in, closing the door behind him.

"His wound opened and started bleeding again. I had to re-stich it." He explained. "But Mycroft I'm worried it's infected."

Mycroft was quiet for a minute. Cordellia and Beatrice were both asleep. James realised for the first time how late it was.

"How bad?"

"Very."

He nodded. "Where is he?"

"Room down the corridor a bit. Sat him down I there to bandage him up. And I wanted to explain to you what happened without Sherlock interrupting to insist he's fine."

Mycroft nodded again. "I'll help you get him back here."

"Thank you."

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