Title: For If The Dark Returns
Author: tj_teejay (AO3 – Tumblr – Instagram – Reddit – E-Mail)
Genre: Gen
Characters/Pairings: Sherlock, John
Rating: PG-13
Summary: Confusion and pain predominate Sherlock's senses, and he struggles to figure out what's happening. John's not there, but John needs to be there. Why is John not there?
Author's Note: This was written for an anonymous prompt on LiveJournal which said: *Sherlock and John both receive ~~minor~~ injuries while on a case, but bad enough that they need to be tended to by paramedics/hospital staff (stitches, checking for broken bones etc). Sherlock is used to John caring for him when he needs medical attention and the prospect of being examined/treated by someone else does not sit well with him at all. He panics and tries to fight off those tending to him, having to be physically restrained which makes him more scared/panicked, perhaps injuring himself worse because he is fighting. He doesn't calm down until John can come to be by his side.*
Told from Sherlock's POV. Hasn't been beta'ed, so please excuse any mistakes.
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Dark. It's dark, you can't see. This is puzzling, and you blink.

Then the pain hits you. You try to pinpoint. Where, where, where? Where is it coming from? Focus. Where?

You hear a groan. Maybe it's your own, you're not sure.

You blink again, and there's… something. You want to reach for your eyes, find out what's wrong, but there's…

"Sir?"

The voice is distant, unfamiliar. This puzzles you.

"Sir, please hold still."

Another groan, this time you're sure it's your own. The pain is sharp and you suck in a breath. "No. John."

"John? Is that your name?"

"Where is John?" Your voice sounds strangely ragged.

"Sir, you're injured. Please stop struggling, you're making it worse."

Injured? That makes sense, in a certain kind of way. It would explain the pain. Everywhere, still everywhere, but… Abdomen. That's where it seems to focus, ever radiating. Your wrist. That too.

There's still something wrong with your vision. There's light, and shadows, and colours. You try to lift your arm, fight to lift it. It's being restrained, and you're just… it's no use.

"Can't see," you strain to say.

The pain increases, there is pressure on your abdomen, and you just— “John,” you repeat, “John.”

You struggle against whatever holds you down, you need— You need to figure out what’s going on, you need to be in control, but what? What do you need to be in control of? You’re confused, and confusion isn’t something you do well.

“Liv?” the voice says. “Give me a hand, will you?”

Something touches you, presses down on your arms, keeps them still, but you don’t— You don’t want that. You can’t see, you need to see.

“Ten of morphine,” a female voice says. Probably Liv; the deduction isn’t difficult.

Morphine. A pinprick in the crook of your arm, but you still can’t see. The pain lessens. Just a fraction.

What happened, you wonder. Your memory is hazy, there was… John was there. Where is John?

You summon your last energy, try to free yourself. You say his name again. Maybe he can’t hear you, maybe you need to raise your voice. “John!”

“Sir, please, you need to keep still!” The voice is more insistent. You don’t care. You repeat your friend’s name.

Suddenly there’s a palm on your forehead, it’s gloved—probably nitrile, light blue, maybe purple, you’re guessing—applying pressure ever so gently. “I’ll see if I can find him,” Liv says, and somehow that reassures you.

You strive for control, but it eludes you. Your Mind Palace has closed its gates, iron-wrought bars refusing you entry. Oddly, they’re shaped like a dragon. You want to grasp them with both fists and shake them, but there’s… You’re too weak.

More voices, sirens approaching. Flickering lights, and something threatens to overwhelm you. You’re unfamiliar with it, but wonder if this is what panic feels like. “No,” you force out, “I can’t— “

“Sherlock,” a voice says, and it’s like music, calm and soothing. John’s voice—you’d recognize it anywhere. You involuntarily think of Schumann’s Andante, Trio in G Minor.

Suddenly it’s more of a hiss, with a worried, panicked edge to it. “Jesus, Sherlock.”

You know this can’t be good. “I can’t see,” you croak.

“Oh God. Yes, hang on,” John says, and there’s a ray of hope that things might be all right.

It doesn’t take long, maybe a few seconds, and something wipes at your right eye. Your vision clears somewhat, there’s shapes, and a face you recognize. You want to reach out, you need to know you can still move, you—

“Sherlock, keep still. They need to treat you,” John says.

And you comply, because it’s finally sunk in that you better obey.

“Easy. There you go,” John assuages you.

“How bad?” you ask.

His voice is hesitant. “Gunshot to your abdomen. Broken wrist, it looks like.”

Damn. It drives you crazy that you don’t recall being shot at. A bit not good, that. “I— I don’t remember.”

“Shh,” John whispers. “It’s okay. Just… relax. They’re taking good care of you.”

Something’s happening, you realize, there’s commotion. More pressure on your abdomen, but the pain is bearable. A plastic board is being slid under you.

The ground tilts, the axis all wrong. It takes you a second to realize they’re lifting you onto a stretcher. Men clad in yellow and green, then John comes into view. He’s cradling his right arm with his left, his expression stern. You don’t like either.

“You’re injured,” you state. Not exactly a genius conclusion.

“It’s nothing,” he dismisses. “I’ll be fine. Let’s get you to the hospital, okay?”

There’s dim light in the ambulance and a distinctly unpleasant smell lingers inside that you can’t quite place. John’s face isn’t in your field of vision anymore, and that feeling that might or might not be panic threatens its return.

“John,” you call out, your voice unsettled.

“Let me come with you,” he says to someone, but you can’t see him.

“Sir, you need to get checked out first.”

“I need to go with him,” John insists in that commanding, military voice of his, and you suddenly feel a sob working its way up your chest.

The ambulance rocks slightly, then he’s next to you, squeezing your arm. You relax just a little against the headrest.

Doors slam, the vehicle shakes, someone fumbles with something on your arm—probably the infusion line. The engine roars into action, and you try to hold on to the last shred of control you can find. John is with you, and you can do this.

You’ve come back from the dead once. It was the most difficult thing you’ve ever had to do, but you know you can hold out if you just try.

You close your eyes and try to find the right driveway, the one with the strip of grass in the middle. The iron gates are opening a crack, the dragon stepping aside to save his fiery breath for the next unwelcome visitor.

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THE END