

– Sorting Sherlock

John Watson: *We don't know a thing about each other. I don't know where we're meeting. I don't even know your name.*

(Music returns)

Sherlock Holmes: *I know you're an army doctor and you've been invalidated home from Afghanistan. I know you've got a brother who's worried about you, but you won't go to him for help because you don't approve of him—possibly because he's an alcoholic, more likely because he recently walked out on his wife. And I know that your therapist thinks your limp's psychosomatic, quite correctly I'm afraid. That's enough to be going on with, don't you think?*

(Music rises)

Shannon: Welcome to the Sorting Sherlock segment of the Three Patch Podcast. In this segment, we take something of a Harry Potter twist and use the Hogwarts Houses' sorting as a way to analyze characters from the show. And, for our first roundtable, we're tackling Sherlock Holmes, himself.

I'm Shannon and joining me today are:

Fox: Fox Estacado. Fox for short.

TQOH: Queen of Hearts.

Denzil: And, Methleigh.

Shannon: All right. So, just an easy background bit of question. I just want to find out or want all of us to share, what house we're in and what background we're bringing to this discussion. So, I'll start. I'm a Ravenclaw. It doesn't matter what Pottermore seems to think because it puts me in Slytherin. And, my analysis is heavily influenced both by the reading of Rowling's books and a lot of reading of fannish meta analysis and fan fiction.

TQOH: And I am a hardcore Slytherin, big believer in that. Mostly, I'm basing my analysis on J.K. Rowling's canon and a Harry Potter astrology website [] that I found.

Denzil: My house is, I say SlytherinClaw which was the first thing that I had chosen when I read the books. I kind of choose both and then I went to Slytherin but I think we're back with Ravenclaw because that's what it really is. What I'm basing my interpretation on is A Wondering but Purposeful Study of Alienation and Pride Through Various Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. All I've ever wanted to do was to solve the Final Problem and, here in Sherlock, it's presented so beautifully.

Shannon: I like that you want to solve The Final Problem.

Denzil: That's what I want to do.

Fox: Well, I asked The Sorting Hat to put me in Gryffindor so that's what I identify as but I'm probably more accurately Ravenclaw. What I bring to the table, the Sherlock Canon including Arthur Conan Doyle canon. Also, different other pastiches [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastiche>] and works including ?????? works and the Guy Ritchie films as well as the Harry Potter canon. And there's also a lot of fanon and head canon kind of all in there as well because I believe part of who Sherlock is now is something of a collective fandom kind of consciousness which is a somewhat heightened or maybe even exaggerated super-focused interpretation of who Sherlock Holmes is. . .

Shannon: Excellent.

Fox: Throughout the decades. So, there we go. That's my interpretation.

Shannon: I think we're bringing a lot of different directions even though we only have three houses represented here, so no Hufflepuffs among us. I think we'll start with a really easy one and I was just wondering, what three words would you use to describe Sherlock. Just really simple.

Denzil: Okay, so I've got three words here: brilliant, driven, alienated.

Shannon: I had brilliant, too. I thought that was really. . .

TQOH: (squeals) I had brilliant, too!

Denzil: Yeah, it's kind of obvious.

(Laughter)

Fox: I describe Sherlock as: genius, child, addict.

Denzil: Interesting.

Shannon: What I find really interesting is that you selected nouns. All of yours were nouns.

Fox: Oh!

Shannon: Yeah. So, I also used brilliant but I came up with a phrase, 'emotionally fragile'.

Fox: I was going to write that, yeah.

Shannon: Those were my three

TQOH: I saw him as scientific, brilliant and ignorant.

Denzil: Interesting!

TQOH: Which is ignorant of the more emotional aspects of people, which is interesting, because, Shannon, you said 'emotionally fragile', so I think that's cool.

Shannon: Now getting back to a more sorting hat base type question, this is one that I had come up with. So, we've come across this sometimes in discussions of the stories, but you can see this also mentioned in the Harry Potter wiki, that The Sorting Hat tends to sort students based qualities they value and not necessarily the qualities they personify. You see this coming up when people would talk about Neville early on. What makes him brave, that sort of thing. But, based on Sherlock's own words and actions, and relationships with other characters, what qualities do you think Sherlock values but doesn't necessarily exhibit?

Fox: When I was thinking about this question, I thought this might be the shipper interpretation. But I believe his values, Sherlock's values are personified by John. John is the personification of values that he values but does not exhibit. And that is being determined, loyal, and moral. I think Sherlock has determination but maybe loyalty and morality are more abstract values that, he probably values on an idealistic level but has not ever been quite able to rationalize or exhibit himself. So I think these are values that he values.

Shannon: It's funny that you mention the JohnLock shipper interpretation because I feel the same way. That who he's drawn to, who he has the greatest relationships with, maybe that's a reflection of the qualities and characteristics he values and that he's hoping to develop more or maybe not. But, I saw the same thing in John. They both have kind of a wry sense of humor. John's a bit sassier than Sherlock. But I think it's clear that Sherlock appreciates John's loyalty and sense of adventures. I think

Sherlock's quite adventurous on his own, but I think that by season two, or across season two, we're meant to see that he's kind of started to internalize and appreciate John's ability to be friends with others, and that whole friend arc is really crucial at the end. He ends up making this huge sacrifice despite all that he says about sentimentality and how he seems to sneer on making yourself vulnerable through emotions to others.

But that same time, he is vulnerable. He does exhibit. . . You often see facial expressions throughout, the way Benedict Cumberbatch seems to depict Sherlock. He does have these glimpses of these vulnerable moments. But his desire to remain above emotion and remain above sentiment, I think is or his desire to be emotionally distant, I don't think that's a value or quality that is as inherent in him as it might be in Mycroft. This is where I think, to some degree, even though he's always at odds with Mycroft, he does maybe value this older brother. And, I think some of his desire to be above sentimentality is kind of a reflection of his desire to be a bit like or better than his brother. That sibling rivalry? I don't think that's quite as inherent in Sherlock. I think he has to work at it harder than Mycroft has done.

TQOH: I totally agree with you guys about the John thing. I didn't really piece that all the way together when I was thinking about this question, but I think he values morality and general goodness but I don't think he's always moral or always good. You know, he tends to be rude to people or he's definitely manipulative in a lot of situations.

Denzil: He's on the side of the angels but he's not one of them.

Shannon: That's right.

And with that, let's see. We also wanted to do kind of a house by house analysis looking at specific qualities that are tied directly to the houses. And, Fox, we'll start with you. Does Sherlock exhibit any Gryffindor qualities that you see?

Fox: Absolutely. I probably wouldn't – Well, we're going to get to that later on what house I believe he belongs in – but he definitely exhibits a lot of the qualities of Gryffindor House including bravery, nerve. These traits came from the Harry Potter Wiki [http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page] so it includes chivalry, I'm not sure about that one.

Shannon: No.

Fox: Courage. He definitely has courage.

Denzil: He is with Mrs. Hudson.

Shannon: Oh yeah, that's true.

Fox: He definitely does there. So these are very much like Harry, himself. Sherlock, I think, has a little bit of Harry's idealism as well but it's definitely secondary to his rationality. But he does rush headlong into situations which is probably not very smart to do sometimes. I don't think he always has a back up plan, I think he just says that. Because he believes that what he's doing is absolutely right and there should be no circumstance in which he fails even though he will say later on that he does have statistical probabilities on how things happen always.

Shannon: Do you think he's stubborn too?

Fox: He is stubborn. He's very proud and I think that's a quality that is characteristic of many Gryffindors as well. So, I believe he definitely has Gryffindor qualities.

Shannon: What do the rest of you guys think?

Denzil: There's some arguments for Gryffindor.

TQOH: Yeah, I think I can see a lot of Gryffindor qualities in him. The one I'd highlight is bravery, even bravery to the point of stupidity. Which is not to say that he's stupid. He's obviously a genius but, for example, when he got in the cab in Study in Pink, you are like 'why are you doing that, don't do that, why would you ever do that'.

Shannon: He is a bit of an idiot. I don't know if idiot is necessary for Gryffindor.

TQOH: I think bravery turning into being an idiot. Think about Harry Potter. He did so many dumb things because he's brave.

Denzil: John says he wants to risk his life to prove he's clever.

TQOH: Yeah

Shannon: Yes

That's something that Rowling was talking recently about Hufflepuffs and I was trying to find the quote and I couldn't find it again. I felt around that time, she made a comment about certain types of Gryffindors, that they had a certain kind of tendency towards being a show-off. Sherlock also has that quality of loving the attention, loving John's admiration. But in that exchange he has in Baskervilles with John, he admits he is a show-off, that's what he does. So, he's aware of that side of himself. That gets to the kind of flashy bravery he has. It's rare for him to take a personal risk but he might take a risk if it gets him the attention or admiration or gets to what he wants, gets to his means, in a sense. That's kind of leading us into the Slytherin one, though.

Let's see, Queen, I think that was you.

TQOH: Yeah, I can definitely also see an argument for Slytherin. There are so many reasons I could see that he would be Slytherin but one, as I mentioned earlier, is he's pretty manipulative. When he compliments Molly on her hair in The Blind Banker so he can access the bodies in the morgue. He knows exactly how to play her. He's cunning. He's manipulative. And, I'm a Slytherin, I don't have any problem with these qualities. I feel like it's only fair to point them out.

Denzil: I've got a quote here from an anonymous source for Slytherin: He's a brilliant loner who doesn't care about general knowledge, spends all day manipulating people into letting him solve crimes for him and started a blog to show the world how brilliant he is. He really cares about his publicity photos.

Shannon: Your anonymous source is right about using whatever means he can to get to solving cases. You see how he tries to manipulate John by offering him the winning lottery tickets to get cigarettes and he tries. . . I mean, think about it. You always see him with his puppy dog face to try to like getting into the flat above or with Molly. He not only compliments her but looks sweet when he asks her questions. Or he can be a complete asshole when he needs to be. Like the headmistress at the school in Reichenbach Fall where he tries to get her to speak quickly so he is definitely about getting the facts, getting the information, but also getting access to the crime scene. I could see that.

Denzil: Well, I think it's means to an end.

Fox: Well, I think he knows how to get what he wants so, I'm not entirely sure, I believe it's resourcefulness. He's very resourceful and he uses the resources around him and that includes using people. I'm not sure how this is very Slytherin of him, actually. Definitely, I see the resourcefulness of Sherlock.

Shannon: Well, can't resourcefulness be a nice way of saying Slytherin cunning?

Fox: Absolutely. Yeah.

TQOH: I've heard resourceful listed just under Slytherin, normally.

Denzil: The Sorting Hat says something about 'using any means to reach their end. I forget the exact words but The Sorting Hat says that about Slytherin.

Shannon: I have that written down here, exactly. "Or perhaps in Slytherin, you'll make your real friends. Those cunning folks use any means to achieve their ends"

Denzil: They get real friends too.

Fox: I definitely see that.

Shannon: Well, are we ready for Ravenclaw? I'm going to start off with that one because, my house. It seems clear for all of us that he's in possession of a great deal of wit or cleverness and, you know, wit beyond measure is man's greatest treasure. I think that's something that he values in himself as well. If we look at his brilliance and his intelligence, he wears it like a badge and it seems to be the quality he leads with so I would almost say that Sherlock, himself, would self-identify with Ravenclaw, if he were into that sort of stuff.

But I also think, and this is going a bit beyond canon, and this is pulling a lot from my reading of canon text but also my reading of a fair amount of fanfiction dealing with Ravenclaw characters who we don't see as much of in the canon text, and I think of them and I identified Sherlock as being emotionally fragile, and I think we see some of that. That there's the brilliance goes hand in hand with a kind of sensitivity and fragility.

I think Luna is an example of that. She's maybe a bit of an outsider as well, but she seems to be kind of sensitive to the feelings of others at times in some of the things she says. The Grey Lady, I thought, was a really good example of how her jealousy of her mother, her relationship problems with The Bloody Baron, kind of manifested themselves in a kind of unfortunate way. So, I think we see some examples of Ravenclaw characters who have some either great emotional maturity or great emotional immaturity. But that emotional side, that emotional fragility, is, I would say, another characteristic.

TQOH: Shannon, this is really funny, so, basically, I do agree with you, that he would self-identify as a Ravenclaw. He's smart. He's witty. But what you call emotional fragility, I kind of called social awkwardness.

Denzil: I'm with that totally.

TQOH: The way Shannon says it is true. But, I think it's funny that a Ravenclaw perspective is this emotional fragility and I'm a Slytherin and it's social awkwardness. I do think he'd identify as a Ravenclaw but one example of this kind of awkwardness or fragility is his kind of creepy excitement about crime which is just really a fascination with knowledge but can totally be interpreted the wrong way. I think a lot of Ravenclaws are interpreted the wrong way.

Denzil: It's also opportunity. It's opportunity to shine and to be his best. That's what his fascination with crime is that I can see. Pure knowledge is pure knowledge with an aim.

Fox: He's also childlike. It's all about learning things, solving the puzzle. He's all brain it seems and the emotional aspects, he's very immature at. But I think for him, rationality, logic, deduction, rational reasoning; those are all things that he holds very dear and places above all things, so in that way, I really identify him as the Ravenclaw.

Shannon: Well, then that brings us to the last house. The house that often gets overlooked in many things and, actually, I think, one of my favorite house, next to Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff. Thoughts on Hufflepuff qualities and Sherlock, guys?

Denzil: Yeah, I got nothing.

Fox: I... can... see.. hardwork.

TQOH: That's true, two hundred and forty three different types of tobacco ash.

Fox: Exactly! That takes a fair amount of dedication and patience and. . .

Denzil: I don't know. I still see that as a Slytherin thing.

TQOH: I didn't really see any Hufflepuff qualities. I mean, I think he's a loyal friend to John but I don't think he's a friend the way a Hufflepuff is a friend. I think a Hufflepuff friend is very transparently loyal, honest. I guess I see him as a friend more the way a Gryffindor or Slytherin would be a friend to John which is the only example I could think of that he'd be Hufflepuff-like in his friendship. But I think he's like, more of a friend that will do anything like how he lies to John or sometimes even insults him, I don't see a Hufflepuff doing that in a friendship. Which isn't necessarily criticism that he lies to John sometimes because it's to protect him, I just don't see a Hufflepuff dealing with a friendship that way.

Shannon: I do believe he does exhibit very focused and limited loyalty I would say definitely with John but beyond John, I think that gets what was going on in the Reichenbach episode, that there is a small group of people that he's identified as friends and makes himself vulnerable to but he's not a nice friend in many ways. He takes advantage. So, I agree with your assessment about his behaviour or his demonstration of loyalty might be a bit different. Willing to do whatever he has to do to protect them, that's a huge sacrifice. That's a deep display of friendship that most of us aren't asked to do but that he's willing to go to that extreme. That says something about his character.

I also think, getting back to the idea about his hard work. Sherlock goes through these episodes of absolute idleness which he hates. He likes to be occupied. That's not the same as hard working but when he does find something that engages himself, I think he's fixating. So, he has these extreme periods of just focusing on whatever it is to just get that case and puzzling it over and thinking about all the hours he must spend reading or thinking or noticing. There's a lot of work he does that maybe we don't see as work because it's all in the mind.

But then that is counterbalanced by bouts of him whinging about being bored and sulky and not doing anything around the flat.

Fox: Going back to kindness, kindness to John. I suddenly thought about what about the Homeless Network? We don't know too much about the Homeless Network from the Sherlock BBC show, but Sherlock Holmes in the Conan Doyle stories, he does show a kind of kindness to the street urchins that he uses and in Sherlock BBC fandom, we see a lot of authors take on this question. Like, how did he get this homeless network? Why are they so loyal to him? Why did he entrust those presumably the Homeless Network to play a roll in his fall? Because they must have known it was all a fake, that it was all a magic trick. And, yet, Sherlock did not even entrust this information to John. He entrusted this to his Homeless Network, if that is who they were, which I think is a high possibility.

So, who are they? How did he get their loyalty? How does he trust them? I think there is a kind of Hufflepuff kindness in how he deals with them, maybe. Maybe it's another side of them that we

haven't seen yet. Maybe there's some reason. Maybe he was one of them at one point in his life. I don't know what the backstory is but I think that's a real interesting area to possibly explore.

Which house would respect be?

Shannon: That's true and that's a different quality.

Denzil: Well, it would be respect.

Fox: Yes I would put being respectful as a Hufflepuff quality.

TQOH: Being respected? Or respecting others?

Shannon: Right! Definitely not Anderson!

TQOH: I was going to say, I don't think he's necessarily respectful of people, generally.

Denzil: Take Mrs. Hudson, for instance.

Shannon: Is he respectful of her or is he protective?

Denzil: He's very respectful of her and that's sort of the same quality that might extend to the Homeless Network as well.

Shannon: I believe he admires her or he appreciates her but every now and again, his shooting up the wall, and treating her like a housekeeper.

Denzil: He's respectful. He said England would fall without her and I think he was being sincere.

Shannon: Maybe he's just not respectful of her property.

TQOH: I don't know if maybe he just sees himself as above her. He sees himself as above most people. So maybe he does respect her but not on the same level as what he needs.

Shannon: Interesting guy, this Sherlock.

The next question I wanted to move to and this kind of built on what we were saying here but in Deathly Hallows, you hear Dumbledore saying to Snape, "Sometimes, I think we sort too soon." so I think a lot of us are leaning towards a particular house here. But, based on the glimpses we have of Sherlock's youth, and they're really very implicit at best in the BBC series, but do you think this might be the case for him? Do you think he might have been sorted differently as an eleven year old child then he would be now?

Fox: Oh, absolutely. I mean, even just from season one to season two, we saw huge character growth. From Sherlock, where I would see him grow from more distant to more whole, from Season two we might even be able to argue that John may have had an influence in some emotional capacity. And, I think that kind of growth is very telling. Personally, I have a whole head canon of what's going on but I think maybe when he was younger, he might have had influences or suggestions to go into Slytherin House, to follow his brother on a path toward ambition.

Shannon: Denzil, what were you going to say?

Denzil: I was just going to say I've got a couple of possibilities that I considered here. Most of the clues to his youth are from Mycroft. Several things he said about younger Sherlock, he wanted to be a pirate, and when he was talking to John at the very beginning, he said 'time to choose a side'. I think the sides are pretty much order and chaos. And, I think that, as a child, he might have been sorted into Gryffindor. Just out of sheer rebellion. Mycroft calls him intractable and all kinds of words like this and that's what we see of young Sherlock through Mycroft. So that's on suggestion.

And the other suggestion is Slytherin, mostly from the Reichenbach Fall episode where he's talking about the young boy in the school? He sounds, to me anyway, like he's identifying with this child, would have gone to a similar school and so on. The spy stuff. All those stories about spies and what the young boy did and what he looked and what he saw and what he was thinking. Even as a child who was focused on ambition and vocation, he's going to the police about the Carl Powers case. For a young child, he would have been really young if you look at the picture of Carl in the episode, that's certainly above an eleven year old, generally speaking. I think that speaks to Slytherin.

Two options there, Gryffindor or Slytherin.

TQOH: For this question, I'm pretty new to this fandom, like weeks old new. I didn't catch as much or think as much about his childhood as some of you but I guess the main thing that I thought of was the pirate. He wanted to be a pirate comment and that definitely suggests a kind of Gryffindor bravery and knack for mischief that I would put him there. What did you think?

Shannon: See I interpreted that totally different.

Denzil: I see it as sheer defiance.

Shannon: I guess you could say it is a bit Gryffindorish if you take the position that Gryffindor is about going against rules. Like, if a pirate is an outlaw. But I saw it also as a bit of, you can look at it another way depending on how pirates are perceived in history. Like Robin Hood type characters so in a sense it's like righting wrongs. But they're also kind of living on the boundaries and fringes of society so there is a suggestion of being a little bit of an outsider. I think it depends on the moment that. I remember going back again and again. That particular exchange between Mycroft and John always befuddled me. I was trying to figure out what is Mycroft telling us. And it depends on what fic I've been reading at the time how I interpret it.

Denzil: You know I have not read a single fic, not one.

Shannon: Well, we're going to start closing this up a bit and my next question is just of a silly one, a simple one but, we know that The Sorting Hat takes an individual's preference into account when sorting so what do you think Sherlock's preferences would be regarding his sorting?

TQOH: I think he'd want to be a Ravenclaw. He really values cold hard deduction and intellect and logic. Things I associate with a Ravenclaw. As you said, Shannon, the Ravenclaw slogan is wit beyond measure is man's greatest treasure. I can imagine Sherlock saying that really snarkily to tease Anderson.

Shannon: I can't wait till we sort Anderson.

Fox: I agree with Queen. Rationality is what he values. Going back to the pirate question, I think part of my head canon is his family would want him in Slytherin, therefore, to rebel, he'd ask The Sorting Hat for Ravenclaw. That's my head canon.

Denzil: I think it's a tricky question, actually. I think Sherlock is trying to be Ravenclaw. I think that's his aim. I'm basing that partly on a trivia that Benedict did with someone and what he was saying was that someone had asked him if he thought Sherlock had Asperger's and he said no, that he was trying to turn himself into a robot. So, my question is does he want to be a robot or is he turning away from something else in trying to do that? He's very successful at what he does. He's amazingly successful at being that and so that's some sort of victory. But it's sort of a private and conspiratorial pride, the feeling that comes from a victory of that type. What I wonder if that is a symptom of a real desire to be

Slytherin because that's pride and that's drive and that's success and ambition to be that robot or to be Ravenclaw. So that's kind of a tricky question for me but that's what I wrote about that.

Shannon: I like your answer. I don't think it's controversial at all because we see this as well. That individuals do possess multiple characteristics that can be stronger or weaker at different times and, getting back to the whole idea of sorting too soon, I think that's maybe not the best way to frame it but you might want or see yourself as something different based on the immediate circumstances or what you've most recently experienced or how you envision yourself. So, when that sorting occurs, you may be moving from one space to another and if Sherlock is aware, he may embrace one side more than another. I'm battling now, so I'm going to stop.

Cause I was going to say that grown Sherlock, were he to be sorted, would find the whole thing tedious and refused to be labeled. I don't think he would accept a sorting.

(Laughter)

Denzil: I think I'm kind of that mind also.

Shannon: So our final verdict? What house would you place Sherlock in?

Fox: Ravenclaw.

Shannon: Okay and I would say Ravenclaw.

TQOH: I'm confident he's a Ravenclaw now but I was really conflicted at first about what house I thought he belonged in. I considered every house except Hufflepuff. So I did some research and looked up Harry Potter Astrology because Sherlock's birthday is the only one we seemed sure about and I wanted to take advantage of that information because I am a big believer in astrology so I went to the segment on this website for capricorns because Sherlock is a capricorn and I read each of the descriptions. As I read Ravenclaw capricorn I said that's Sherlock. Two quotes are 'they have a dry, ironic wit and are fond of making subtle that only those blessed with intelligence and perception can understand'. I thought that was cute and then, 'there's not much that these wizards miss. They usually know what is going on long before anyone else.' If that's not Sherlock, I don't know what is.

Shannon: He definitely doesn't miss things. Maybe social cues.

Denzil: My idea here is why I selected Slytherin because he doesn't care about knowledge for knowledge sake. He explicitly rejects realms of knowledge as useless. He has aims and ends and is driven. He looks to prove, possibly to himself, that he's brightest and best. Because Mycroft is Sherlock Holmes older brother, I think he has to prove something to himself. And he doesn't let anything stand in his way. Not food nor sleep nor roof tops or things that seem impossible.

I've got this image in my head of a harpoon, if you will, thrown in a straight line. A straight line theoretically goes on forever. So, I've got this image of a harpoon thrown in a straight line going up into the sky, getting ever better and ever getting more knowledge and just becoming. I think Sherlock is like that and that's an image of ambition to me and that's why I put him in Slytherin.

Shannon: Those are good final thoughts to end on and I think we've had a successful sorting round table so thank you everyone. And we'll just round up and say goodbye!

All: Bye!

Music

Change in music

Watson: *That's fantastic*

Sherlock: *Do you know you do that outloud?*

Watson: *Sorry, I'll shut up.*

Sherlock: *No, it's fine.*

Music finishes.