

– Sorting Sherlock

Music Voiceover:

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.*

Sherlock Holmes: *I know you're an army doctor recently 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 is psychosomatic, quite correctly I'm afraid. It's enough to be going on, don't you think?*

Music fades in/out.

Shannon: Hi everyone, and welcome to the Sorting Sherlock segment, and we're here doing the character that I've been waiting this whole time for, and the reason why we started doing Sorting Sherlock to begin with. We're going to be sorting John Watson today. And, this is Shannon, and I'm joined by...

Rachael: Rachael.

Roane: This is Roane.

Drinkingcocoa: Drinkingcocoa.

Katie: Katie.

B: And B.

Shannon: Excellent. So this is quite literally the biggest sorting roundtable we've had, and I think we might actually have half of the Three Patch Podcast here. So, we're anticipating we may go a little long, so we may actually find ourselves cutting this roundtable in half. So, it's kind of like a cliffhanger, if you will. To see how we sort him. Which I think is very apt in light of what Gatiss and Moffat like throwing at us. So, the first question asks- what scene most epitomizes John's character to you, and why?

Roane: I'll start!

Shannon: Okay.

Roane: Because I was ridiculously excited about this as well. The first thing I thought of when this question came up, and I know it maybe it sn't the most intuitive thing, but the first thing I thought of was the scene in the warehouse with Mycroft.

Rachael: Really?

Roane: Yeah. Well, part of it is because that's the scene that made me kind of sit up and go whoa, wait a minute. Who is this guy? Just because he's so....it's condensed John-ness in this scene. You get all of it. You get the really stoic, "I'm not going to give anything away to you at all" sort of attitude. You get the humor, because he's cracking jokes like crazy. Yeah, you can kill me but I'm going to laugh at you anyway! You get the loyalty towards Sherlock right there; he's like right

there to the point that Mycroft's like, "Wow, you are really loyal really fast." Like I said, it's condensed John-ness, all right there in just those few minutes.

Shannon: I love that expression. I think you need to coin that.

Rachael: I'm picturing a can of evaporated or condensed milk with John on the front. I think I need to make that...

[LAUGHTER]

Rachael: ... that for Tumblr. Condensed John-ness.

Roane: It would have to be tea though.

Rachael: Tea? Okay. So, I thought about it for awhile, because there are a whole lot of really good John scenes, but the one that just screams John to me is actually a scene where he doesn't say anything, and it's the scene from the first episode, at the very end of the first episode, where Sherlock has his blanket, and he's talking to Lestrade, and Lestrade's kind of describing the suspect of who might have been the one to shoot the taxi guy, and you see Sherlock's brain kind of working it out, and then looks at John, and John has this really quiet, proud, loving, loyal John look on his face. He knows what's going on, but he doesn't have to be really loud about it. It's reminiscing about something John did that to me is very John, and also just captures so much of the way I love how Martin Freeman portrays him.

Shannon: Yeah, let's have a little more love for Martin Freeman here, because he is so awesome as John. God!

[groans and agreement]

Roane: I think it's very telling that both depict scenes where he doesn't say a whole lot, because that man's face, it's just amazing what he does with his face.

Rachael: He doesn't say anything in that scene, but it's done so well.

Shannon: You're right. He's standing there very unassumingly, just looking off, but you know, very solid, very firm, very confident, very John.

Roane: Well it's not just his face too, it's his body language. I'm really struck by how often during *Sherlock*, he's in parade rest. That's just what he does, that's how he stands, and it's just amazing.

Shannon: Let's see. Drinkingcocoa, how about you? What is your quintessentially John scene?

Drinkingcocoa: I have the same one as Roane, and I read that scene in the warehouse, the first time that Mycroft has kidnapped him, as his sorting scene, it's sorting hat scene to me. Because- and then there are two follow ups to it- what happens to me, Mycroft, who is as close as we get to a sorting hat, he kidnaps John and the first thing he does is test him to see if he is a Slytherin. He offers him money to spy, and John says no. So the second thing he does is ask if he's Hufflepuff. He says, "You're very loyal, very quickly", and John says, "No, I'm not interested," and that's when Mycroft looks at him and reads the tremor in his hand and realizes, a-ha nailed it, Gryffindor. Your hand is steadier when you are under pressure, you're a Gryffindor. The reason I was thinking that is because I thought, what *is* sorting? Sorting is when they take you on the first night of your first

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year, and they look in your head, they see what makes you tick, and they decide where you are going to live. And who your friends are going to be. So, at the end of this scene, Anthea (or not Anthea) comes and says, "I'm supposed to take you home," and that's when John decides what house is his home, and he says, "Take me to Baker Street."

Rachael: I think that this would be better if Mycroft just busted out a sorting hat.

[LAUGHTER]

Drinkingcocoa: He doesn't have to!

Shannon: He has a sorting broly.

Roane: I'll accept artwork of this soon.

Drinkingcocoa: What I love though, is that in this scene, plus the two follow up scenes that I think are continuations of this, Sherlock is invisibly there also and Sherlock agrees with Mycroft, and on this show, when Sherlock and Mycroft agree on anything, we're supposed to take it as pretty much inarguable. Because while Mycroft is trying to figure out John, Sherlock is texting John, and he's doing the same thing. First he throws off the polite, "Come if convenient." Then he starts to nag, which just pisses John off, and he goes, "Could be dangerous," which is when John goes. When John arrives at Baker Street, and he's "okay, I'm here," he's not loyal to Sherlock yet. He goes, "you got me here to send a text?" He's not loyal to him, he's there because it's danger. And then the follow up scene, the first one is at the end of *Scandal*, it's another John/Mycroft scene where Sherlock is invisibly present. Mycroft uses his knowledge of John, assuming he's Gryffindor to lie about him, because since Irene is in a witness protection program, Mycroft has a security clearance, Sherlock has the security clearance, John doesn't. So Mycroft is compelled to lie to John so he doesn't know anything about Irene. How does he distract John? He triggers John's chivalry, which is a Gryffindor trait. He makes John worry about Sherlock's emotional well-being, and as soon as he triggers that, that is all John cares about. He is so distracted, he won't think Mycroft is lying, and then we know that Sherlock is in on it too, because Sherlock plays dumb about Irene when John comes up. So I read that as Sherlock and Mycroft both deciding that this is a strategy that is going to work to protect John. To me this is Mycroft using the knowledge to manipulate John, you know, this is how you manipulate a Gryffindor, but not for evil. It's to protect him. The second follow up which also confirms it for me is the Diogenes Club scene, that is again dialogues between Mycroft and John with Sherlock invisibly present, and this is... just like how Sherlock, when he's under stress, he focuses only on cognition and he'll delete things or he'll really damp down sentiment so he can focus, and the same thing happens to John as a Gryffindor, except he shuts out distractions and he just clarifies everything so that he can fight. So the way Mycroft gets John to the Diogenes Club is calculated to piss him off, like the way that these guys come and suppress him? By the time he's talking to Mycroft, he's already so mad, and in that frame of mind it's really easy for Mycroft to manipulate him, because in those scenes in the Diogenes Club, Mycroft tells John almost nothing. He lets John just make stuff up, and then get mad about it, and Mycroft doesn't agree or disagree, he just lets John do it to himself, then John says to Mycroft, "Why don't you and Sherlock talk to each other?" We know that Sherlock is in on this, because when he says the same thing to Sherlock later, both Mycroft and Sherlock answer the same way. They get kind of shifty and they don't make eye contact. They mumble something. So we're meant to know that Sherlock and Mycroft have discussed this between themselves; this is how you protect a Gryffindor. Anyway, that's my scene.

Shannon: Katie, do you want to jump in here?

Katie: Oh gosh, I have sort of picked a scene that probably at least one other person has picked. It's the scene in *The Reichenbach Fall* after Lestrade and Sally come to assent to bring Sherlock to Scotland Yard after the girl screams, and Sherlock and John have that conversation about... man, I'm blanking out on the quotes now... "You should have gone to the station." You know that scene, "They'll think you're stupid or wrong." "No, that just means they're stupid and wrong." And he says, "Sherlock, I don't want them thinking that you are a fraud." I think that John saying he's going to stick with him, whatever happens next.

Shannon: So, I also picked a Season 2 scene, and I actually picked one that was in *A Scandal in Belgravia*, and in fact this is maybe more than one scene. It's actually a long sequence that I think captures the range in John's character. So, it starts with him speaking -- this is New Year's Eve, I guess, when we see Sherlock playing violin at the window, and not being very responsive, and John says to Mrs. Hudson, "Has he ever had a girlfriend?" and she comments, "No, who knows what's going on in that funny old head of his?" So, we kick off this moment of concern, and then he goes outside, and then he sees a black car. Well actually, he sees an attractive woman and he does a little of his "Three Continents Watson" thing, only to then think, oh Mycroft. And what does he do? Well, he gets in the car. So we see a little bit of resignation here, kind of like yeah, Mycroft is calling again, and this insistent guy is going to drive him off in a car somewhere. But he gets in, because it's kind of an extension of what we see- this concern about Sherlock, and that is extended even further when he thinks he's meeting Mycroft and he start talking about, you know, "He's playing sad music. He doesn't eat. He rarely speaks except to shout at the TV, but then that's the way he always is." And then he turns around and he sees Irene. So, he's expressing concern over Sherlock, his emotional well-being, there's something that's affected him deep. The loss of Irene seems to be getting at him, and he's expressing this to Sherlock's brother Mycroft, who is an ally in this; we've seen them working in concert before around the whole danger night moment. But then he sees Irene, and then he says, "Tell him you're alive." And when she refuses to do that, saying she can't, he threatens, "Well then, I'll tell him, and I still won't help you." We see at this point a whole range of emotions where the ferociousness, the ferocious protectiveness in John Watson, and I think the part that a lot of people respond to is a very strong, powerful, but grounded presence. Someone who has been there, and remains there alongside Sherlock this entire series. So this is a terrific extension of his character, and then that scene ends when he realizes that Sherlock has overheard the exchange between him and Irene, and you see this concern, this moment of uncertainty drift across his face when Irene says, "I don't think so, do you?" We see this giant range of John Watson caring, John Watson dangerous, and John Watson maybe a little bit uncertain here as well. So I think that's to me a really beautiful range of Martin Freeman's acting, but the scope of his character.

Shannon: So B, what do you think? What's your scene?

B: Mine is actually a little bit after Katie's; mine is in the Reichenbach episode as well. After John punches the Scotland Yard head in the face and they are running through the streets, that moment when he grabs him, when they are trying to hop over the fence, and he says, "We're going to need to coordinate." I feel like that really, really describes John for me. Not only is he stopping and pulling back on Sherlock, he's kind of the stabilizing force in their relationship. I feel like he's the one that's trying to guide them into not being quite as reckless. Sherlock is running headlong into things. I feel like him pulling him right there, that's a good indicator of their relationship and him. He also just punched the Scotland Yard head in the face. He did that without even thinking about it. I think that shows he's a bit reckless as well. He's not quite as... I think that's why he works so well with Sherlock. He does the stabilizing force, but he's also reckless as well. He also doesn't really try to stop Sherlock while they're running. He just trusts him completely. He doesn't even know if he has a plan; he doesn't ever tell him to stop though. He just keeps running with him. So I feel like that shows that John is very loyal and trusting, which are two very good characteristics of

him. It also shows that he's really alert though. Right after that scene where they stop, John is the one that notices that they are being followed. He's very alert. I feel like that's a good indicator of his personality too. He's not... he's still running, but he's still alert and intelligent. He's not just a follower. He's still looking around them as well. So, I feel like that is a good scene for him.

Shannon: Oh, terrific! This is such a good range of scenes guys! Let's move on to our second question: what is John's almost house? So, in your mind you've already sorted him- we'll get to that in a moment. But before that, what is the other house he could have possibly been sorted into? The next closest one, I guess you could say. So who wants to start with this one? Rachael, can I pick on you?

Rachael: Absolutely. I think that John's almost house is Hufflepuff, and I don't even actually think... this question was hard for me to answer, because I actually don't even think that the sorting hat would have a hard time with John. I don't even think it would waver and get to this question. But, there certainly is an argument that he has Hufflepuff tendencies. He is so fiercely loyal to Sherlock. I mean, that is a thread that we see throughout the entire series, and to be fair, I do think that the character of Watson throughout several iterations of the Sherlock Holmes narrative possesses this trait, but it's done in the BBC version in a particular way that is profoundly Hufflepuff I would say. Also John, you kind of think about his background. He's in the military. That is something that... you need to have some level of loyalty and fairness and you have to be a hard worker. You should be patient in order to have a military life, so I think there's definitely an argument that he's one of the badgers.

Katie: I actually agree with Rachael. I think that if the sorting hat for some strange reason wasn't quite sure, I think he...I don't know gender the sorting hat is, but I think it could choose Hufflepuff for John too. I read multiple websites defining what the house traits are, and the gist of Hufflepuffs are hard working, loyal and honest and impartial and patient and first of all, I think that any person needs to have an insane amount of patience to put up with someone like Sherlock and his brother.

Rachael: That's true.

Katie: Loyal? We've already explained why we think he's loyal. He follows this crazy dude everywhere and nearly gets himself killed multiple times. Hard working? He's working at the surgery helping people. Honest? I don't really... I don't know, because there is that scene in Season 2, Episode 1, where he lies to Sherlock about Irene. "Oh, she's got herself on a witness protection program," when according to Mycroft, she's actually dead, but he doesn't know that she's not dead. So yeah, I think this is why Hufflepuff might be a choice for John.

Rachael: The honesty bit is a good point, but it is funny to note that when John does lie, he's usually doing it for Sherlock.

Roane: And also, badly.

Rachael: Yeah, he's a bad liar.

Shannon: What is it, looking down to the left or something with his eyes that gives away he's lying?

Roane: So, if I could jump in, this ties into me playing devil's advocate here a little bit. I could see him... I think he's got a lot of traits that fall under Slytherin.

GASPS

Shannon: I'm excited!

Roane: I'm kind of looking over the list and reading, and the thing that really hits me the most is, this is a guy, and this is where I admit my headcanon may be kind of overwriting what we actually see on screen in the BBC, but, this is a man who is a doctor and who is also a captain in the army. That's pretty ambitious. That's someone who's just going to pick a career and happily go along with whatever happens. He has gone out into the world and made this happen, and losing that career, as we see at the beginning of *A Study in Pink*, is a pretty big blow. So you can see that that really meant a great deal to him. I think to have survived in that field you would have to be very cunning. He obviously has leadership qualities, or he wouldn't be a Captain necessarily. Self-preservation, obviously, because he did survive despite being wounded. For all that he is loyal and all of these other traits that we associate with other houses, he does have a sense of doing what needs to be done, and what he feels needs to be done according to his moral compass, whether or not someone else might see that as moral.

Shannon: Are you saying he's a little bit of... well, morally flexible then?

Roane: He is very morally flexible!

LAUGHTER

Roane: I mean, come on! This is the guy who shoots a man in cold blood and is like, "Hey, let's go get dinner."

Katie: And hits the Chief Superintendent in the face.

Shannon: Yeah, some law-breaking going on there.

Roane: Yeah, he is very moral. As Sherlock says, he has a very strong moral compass. In a lot of ways he's very much an "ends justify the means" kind of guy.

B: So, I sorted him secondary as Ravenclaw.

Shannon: Ooh! Yes!

B: I wrote down some words about him: curiosity, competitiveness, sass and oneupmanship. I think that he has a lot of those traits. He's definitely very curious. Just going back and watching the series recently, he's the one asking a lot of questions anytime they go on a case. Obviously Sherlock is automatically seeing everything; he'll ask a couple of questions, but John is the one that is avidly looking and asking questions. He wants to know these things, and I think that's a good quality for Ravenclaw. Just valuing knowing what's going on in the situation. He's very tenacious as well about finding things out. There are several times where Sherlock kind of gives up on cases or he says he gives up, like the Bruce Partington Plans, or with Connie Prince, where he goes off and interviews the brother and he tries to figure out his own set in the case there, with the cat, and he feels like he has the right answer, even though Sherlock proves him wrong. I feel like that shows a good high intelligence, that he wants to figure things out. I feel like he's also competitive as well, where he knows that Sherlock is smarter than him, but he still wants to try and prove that he has intelligence as well, which... I mean, he is a smart man. He a great doctor. He went through medical school, that's not easy. Actually I paused, I think where he's in the clinic talking to Sarah,

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they show his résumé and I paused it on his résumé to look at it, and his first line up there at the very top when he's talking about his goals, he's looking into things like bloodless surgery, which I looked up, and that's like cutting edge technology. He's still interested in learning new things and increasing his own intelligence to make himself a better person. So I feel like that's also a good Ravenclaw quality. Also, I just don't feel like...I think Sherlock keeps him around too... he calls him a good "conductor of light". Just being intelligent, I feel like Sherlock can see that as well. I feel like he wouldn't keep someone around who wasn't at least a bit as smart as he is, and who can keep up with him, so I feel like him being hungry for knowledge like Sherlock is. He wants to know what's happening on cases as well, so I feel like that makes him a good secondary Ravenclaw.

Shannon: I am so excited guys! We're getting all four houses here, because I'm going to jump in and say that the secondary house I would put him in, and this is mostly drawing upon his behaviour in Season 1, not Season 2, would be Gryffindor. So, I don't sort him into Gryffindor at all but, I see some characteristics that other people have drawn upon. So, we do see a lot of elements of bravery. Although, to be fair, we see the same in Sherlock. But, for example, when we look at *The Great Game*, which I think is a terrific example of things where John puts his life at risk continuously. For example, the situation- he and Sherlock are taking on the Golem and are fighting in the dark. They are going to shady parts of London to chase down this guy. We also see that moment of course, the very telling moment in the pool when he's covered in Semtex and takes a moment to jump Moriarty and tell Sherlock, "Run, run." So he's willing to risk his life at that point. There's a kind of steadiness to him at that moment, which we've seen also when people point out Mycroft's comment on John being under stress and his left hand not shaking, so he has a calmness under points of danger. We can see that there is a degree of bravery. Looking at his experience in the military is another good example. Clearly he was involved in areas of combat, and being an army doctor, although he's not on the front lines in the same way as someone might be if you're doing special ops or other things, you are dealing with a lot of high stress situations and that is kind of an adrenaline charging job that you need nerves of steel to handle. So he has a great deal of bravery. He's also got a kind of stubbornness, but an emotional quality that we often see in Gryffindors when they feel that they've been pushed too far. The outbursts, the recklessness, so I think some of you guys have pointed this out before, but chinning the Chief Superintendent in Series 2, in Reichenbach, is another good example of an impetuous recklessness that is also there in him as well. He definitely has determination. I think we see this from the very first episode when Sherlock runs off and leaves him there. John doesn't go, oh well, I guess he's gone. He looks at the computer, he grabs it, jumps in a cab and runs. He keeps running through the building until he finds Sherlock. You know, there's this kind of determination, this doggedness, to him, and I think we saw a lot of that exemplified in Harry for example, a great example of a Gryffindor, his dogged determination in finding out what was going on with the Philosopher's Stone, his suspicion of Snape and how even his absolute conviction about certain things can be wrong, and I think John possesses a lot of those qualities as well. So, his secondary house for me would be Gryffindor. And how about you Drinkingcocoa?

Drinkingcocoa: I wavered. I concluded that I don't think he has a secondary house, I don't think he has a tertiary house, I think where I sort him is his first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth houses.

LAUGHTER

Drinkingcocoa: I looked to see if I would make Hufflepuff his next, and I couldn't, because I thought if he found hard work to be a source of strength, he would have found medical work at the beginning of the series instead of sitting there looking at his gun. In *The Blind Banker*, he waits to work, to get a job, until he has to borrow grocery money from Sherlock. That does not read Hufflepuff to me, and the other reason why I could not sort Hufflepuff for his second house is

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because Hufflepuffs are really insistent on fairness, on treating everybody alike. Hufflepuffs will get in your face if they feel like you're not doing that. Like, you'll see Mrs. Hudson scolding Mycroft, and you'll see Donovan furious with Sherlock for treating people unfairly, and John sees a lot of this, and he doesn't like it, but the only times he ever tells Sherlock to cut it out are when he's doing it for Sherlock's self-protection, like "don't be yourself in court". He never... he can tolerate Sherlock's bullshit when it's only other people getting hurt. So, I was surprised that I didn't think Hufflepuff for his second house. And I thought, you know, I guess it would be Ravenclaw. Partly because he has got to be really bright in order to appreciate Sherlock the way he does. Whenever Sherlock is brilliant, he loves it. It lights up something in him. He must be incredibly secure about his own intelligence. In *Hounds*, when Sherlock is having his anxiety attack, John... he can do it, he can say, "Be rational. Think rationally." He knows how to do that. And then Stamford says, "Oh, the bright you things like you and I used to be." So, I think when Sherlock's not around, John is pretty bright. He's not an idiot. So- Ravenclaw.

Shannon: Hmm. I'm happy to see all of the houses represented here, at least in this part. So, and this where I think we're going to have to take a bit of a break and come back and actually do the sorting in Round 2. So this is a Gatiss and Moffat approved cliffhanger here.

Rachael: We should give them cliffhanger music.

Music fades in/out.