Three Patch Podcast – Episode 1

Birthdays are Boring

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From the Notebook of Kitty Riley: IvyBlossom

Consulting Fan: Emma Grant
Guest: Ivyblossom
– Ivyblossom on AO3 and Tumblr
– Ivyblossom fics discussed: The Progress of Sherlock Holmes and The Quiet Man
– Meta on a gifset

(Music intro)

> **John:** *People want to know you're human.*
> **Sherlock:** *Why?*
> **John***: Cause they're interested.*
> **Sherlock:** *Why are they?*
>
> **John:** *Remember what they told you, don't try to be clever and please, just keep it simple and brief.*
> **Sherlock***: I'll just be myself.*
> **John***: Are you listening to me?*

(Music fades out)

Emma: Welcome to the very first interview segment for The Three Patch Podcast. This is Emma Grant and I'm extremely excited today because our very first interview guest is IvyBlossom and, if you have been in the Sherlock fandom for more than about two minutes, then you know who this is and all of the stuff that she's written.

First of all, welcome, Ivy. I'm so excited.

Ivy: Oh! I'm so excited, thank you.

Emma: This is an honor. This is going to be a lot of fun. So, first thing I want to do is have you talk a little bit about how you came to fandom in the first place. How did you find the wonderful world of fandom and fanfic and all of that?

Ivy: Ohhh my goodness! This is a long time ago. This is back in 2001. I was a doctoral student at the time and, while that's fascinating, I found it very lonely, shall we say? So, I was kind of, I think, fishing around anyway for something more interesting to do, not that the work wasn't interesting. I was reading all kinds of things at the time and I was reading Harry Potter. Then, I saw on line an article about Harry Potter slash and I thought it was hilarious.

(Laughter)

You know, as people generally do when you first ever hear about it, you think it's really funny and then I went looking for it and then, of course, you start reading it and then it's very engrossing, you know? Once you've done that, there you are. It kind of ate my head and I was in a position where I kind of wanted something to be really passionate about as well.

You know how it happens. You get passionate about it almost by accident.

Emma: So, had you ever written any fanfic before?

Ivy: No, or even heard of it at that point. I think most of us have the experience of having written a lot, like, you know, in high school or whatever. I had always been a person that liked to write so I had written a lot and when I started my academic career, I sort of kind of put it to one side because I figured that no, I'm not a writer. I'm an academic. I'm going to do this thing. Then, I got caught up and it was kind of boring and it seems like whenever that gets boring, then I come back to my first love. So, I couldn't stop myself, basically. It just kind of poured out.

Emma: So, what's the first fanfic you ever posted on line? What fandom was it and what pairing?

Ivy: Harry Potter...

Emma: Yay!

Ivy: Harry Potter/Draco Malfoy.

Emma: Yay!

Ivy: Again, I have to say that the way that those stories are written, it was actually fairly easy to make the argument that Malfoy has a crush on Harry because it was like, all he talks about and, you know, like the Potter Stinks badges, it's all classic crush behaviour and it was clearly not deliberate. I mean that from her point, I don't think she was doing that deliberately but it was there and so it was like how do you construct an antagonist, even just the pitfalls of that your kind of accidentally making it very easy to say, "Well, he does is talk about Harry. He's obsessed with Harry. Surely that's a crush at that age." So, it was kind of funny, but then, of course, as fandom does, we take things so seriously and we delve into it. Suddenly, it turns into this whole big thing.

Emma: When and how did you discover the Sherlock fandom?

Ivy: My best friend is Canadian but she's also English and she was raised in England and so she always pays attention to what the BBC is doing. I guess it aired in August and it was right after it aired, she said to me, "You have to watch this." I was very, at the time, really busy but, again, wanted a distraction in life, so she said it. I was like oh, I have a feeling this is going to be a fannish experience but I said okay.

Emma: *(Laughs)*

Ivy: I watched it and fell into it.

Emma: So what was it about the show, then, that made you say "I have to write fic for this"?

Ivy: On some level, I think it's a combination of whether or not I want to be distracted to the level that's required to write. To write is to give over part of your brain, as I'm sure you know, many people know. There is a sort of absorption that happens and so you have to kind of, first, want that to happen. This was a controlled defense on my part that I definitely did. I thought that would be a good thing to have this other part of my brain given over to it for one. But, on the other hand, just really well constructed characters and I'm really interested in opposite characteristics, I guess, being in close proximity and, obviously, struggling to work their own relationship. It's about that. This is a series about relationships and it really makes a non-traditional and interesting way that I felt it left us lots of places to play.

Emma: So, probably like eighty percent of the people in the fandom, you're mostly into John/Sherlock, it seems. I don't know that I've even seen you talk about any other pairing, come to think of it.

Ivy: *(Laughs)*

Emma: I'm going to throw out the question. So what about that pairing appeals to you?

Ivy: I find them both really interesting as characters, in and of themselves. There's sort of something to be said for each... Well, generally, there's something interesting to me about writing about Sherlock and there's something interesting to be said about writing about John so I like

them both. And, dually, I think their relationship is really interesting and, of course, because they are toying with where that relationship is or ways to perceive that relationship as part of the show, not to say they're asking us to write it...

Emma: *(Laughs)*

Ivy: Not exactly, but there is that. The hooks are there. Any time you are in a situation where you think there's a 'what if' question you'd like to answer here, there's just a lot of 'what if' questions in this particular series. There's a lot of 'what if this' and 'what if that' and I'm interested in that. The little, tiny details and the little, tiny scenes that either you see or you don't and sort of a what if it went this way and what if this. I guess the other thing and I've never written television fandom before because I was writing in a book fandom. Which is different because you have a lot more interiority because presumably you know more about what's going on behind their eyes than you do in a television fandom where there is no interiority in television. You have to presume it. It's not text in the same kind of way, if you know what I mean.

Emma: Uh huh.

Ivy: So that was new to me and so there's something also appealing of having this very rich relationship on a screen and then having the absence of interiority which then makes me want to rush in and fill it.

Emma: Oh yeah. That's really an interesting point, actually. I hadn't thought of that but yeah.

Ivy: You don't know what they're thinking. You can guess. So, that is the other beautiful thing, I think, about the series and those characters' relationship. It's that you can actually a lot of very well-educated assumptions about the way people are, what is going on behind their eyes.

Emma: Let us talk about a couple of your fan fics in particular. I believe that the two fics that come up most often when your name is mentioned are The Progress of Sherlock Holmes [http://archiveofourown.org/works/173274] and The Quiet Man [http://archiveofourown.org/works/322978]. Both of these were posted as works in progress, I believe. The way that you've done both those fics. In The Progress of Sherlock Holmes, you're very much inside Sherlock's brain. Which is something else that, when I first got into this fandom, that was one of the first fics that I read and, before I read it, I didn't know how it would be possible to write from Sherlock's point of view. I read that, and I went "Oh, there you go." It was really cool and I think The Quiet Man was maybe one of the first post-Reichenbach fics that I started reading. So, both of those fics, everybody knows them. Everybody recs them. Why don't we start with The Progress of Sherlock Holmes?

Ivy: Actually, your experience in terms of looking at Sherlock's point of view and thinking how on earth could that possibly happen is exactly how I stumbled in on that one, in the first place. Because I didn't think it was possible. I didn't think I could do it. I didn't think it could be done.

I'm a bit of a purist on the first person stuff and I'm getting worse as time goes on about that in terms of the rules that I've set for myself for it. So, part of the appeal of it to me, again, as I've said, in the television fandom when there is no interiority, it's open for you to play with and it's not really easily contradicted by anything because you don't get to see what people are thinking.

But, I wanted to experiment . I just told myself, I think like the night before I started writing that, which it was not intended to be long. I just started playing with it cause I told myself the day before, I said that this was not possible. I cannot do it based on what I think first person needs to be. And lots of people have different interpretations of that so I'm not saying other people couldn't. But, I just thought for myself and the way I think first person should go, I didn't think this was possible because it would basically be a spread sheet. It would just be a bunch of lists and that would not make a good story. I don't know that he has a narrative brain or, at that point and this is in Series 1, not necessarily a metaphorical brain either. As somebody who's a big fan of the metaphor, I thought that I don't think I could do this. I just don't think it's possible.

And, then, of course, once you think to yourself that it's not possible, then there's a part of your brain that goes "But how could it be possible?" "Maybe it could be possible!" So there was some part of me that was just trying to work it out and then well, okay, try. Try a little bit and see what it looks like. I remember I posted it and the first person that looked at it said "Ah, I think there's some words missing in there" because there was either no verb in some, no subject in sentences. Like, the sentences are completely disastrous. And I'm like, yeah that's completely what I'm going for with him. Actually, I'm just going to go with that. Then, it just sort of exploded on me from there.

I knew... Well, to me, it seemed like a really big risk because I wanted to write a Sherlock with feelings. And, at the time, I don't recall it being particularly well received or as being an idea that people would accept. I think I posted saying right at the very beginning This is probably not your taste because this is not a Sherlock that most people really want to read about because he's supposed to be a sociopath, whatever, and I just have decided that he's not. I just don't want him to be. I don't want to write that story. People would say what if he's just not capable of expressing enough or recognizing what's happening to himself, if he's just distanced from it and separated from it? And, I kind of liked that story better for myself in this case. I wanted to write about somebody who had feelings, a lot of feelings about all kinds of things, but just didn't really know how to mesh those into his life or into the way he was trying to rationally look at the world.

If I was going to expect anything, I guess it was that people would say this is the most out of character Sherlock ever. That's fine because I just want to write it this way so I was surprised that I didn't hear more of that, though I did hear that for sure and that's fine. I mean, fandom, generally speaking, is very kind and very open to different interpretations and receptive to things and really like to be entertained and if they find it entertaining, then I'm pleased. I guess, generally, my experience with that has been the discussion about the voice.

That's sort of the 'why first person' and somebody asked me recently why everyone writes in first person. Why does everyone in this fandom write in the first person? I didn't know that was true, first off.

Emma: *(Laughter)*

Ivy: And, I don't know because I can only really speak for myself on that front.

Emma: Do you think that the response was different after Series 2? I was just thinking about the things that you were saying about Sherlock not having emotions and stuff and I'm thinking that the Sherlock we saw in Series 2... I came into the fandom after Series 2, and the Sherlock that we saw in Series 2 resonated very much with the Sherlock that you wrote in "Progress".

Ivy: Yes. How please was I? How pleased was I? Yeah, because there really isn't, if you look at it just from Series 1, there isn't a ton of evidence to support a very emotional Sherlock but there is in Series 2, for sure. And, so I think that the expectation that I had that people would point out that I was taking massive character leaps in "The Progress of Sherlock Holmes" were set to rest and I haven't really heard anything like that since Series 2 because, he clearly does have emotions and actually says straight out that he has them but he just puts them aside. He just actually says that right in "Hounds" so I was like "Yay!"

Emma: You were like "I was right!"

Ivy: *(Laughter)*

Emma: I called it! I called it! *(in a singsong voice)*

Ivy: I was just like at least I don't have to keep apologizing for that, for wanting to interpret that way, even though it was really just a choice on my part that I just prefer to write. But the other was that we do have a very metaphorical Sherlock in Series 2 as well where he makes great use of metaphor to describe things so I was quite pleased about that. I just can't help it. You know, when you reach a point where you want to write in an authentic voice but at the same time, it's your voice, too. You can't actually decouple those. I write the way I write and I'm probably far too flowery and I keep editing myself back in writing these two characters in order to keep it realistic in my mind. Realistic as an internal voice, a metaphor breaks in, then I kept thinking I'm massively out of character. But then, maybe not quite as badly out of character any more.

(Laughter)

Emma: Was your approach to the quiet man any different? Obviously, it's a different character but I mean the way you were sort of trying to get inside the head of the character and the way that you approached the process of writing it. Was it different or did you take kind of the same approach?

Ivy: It was very different, actually. Similar in that writing "The Progress of Sherlock Holmes" and after I finished that one, I wrote a novel length story that's not fandom, just to take what I've learned, what I've learned writing in Progress. So that was between there but there was basically

a year gap between those two stories. So at least I had a chance to get rid of the Sherlock voice which took me months to stop writing like that.

(Laughter)

Ivy: Stickiest voice of all time. For me, it was very difficult so I had a good gap in there but what I learned along the way, I started writing the first big story, "The Progress of Sherlock Holmes", with no plan and I developed a plan about, I think, like six or seven chapters then realized I had a chaptered story and not little vignettes. It was actually going to be something else. So, then I had to stop in the process of that and figure out what that story was so that I knew where I was going and had a very bare bones outline at the time. By the time I got to writing "The Quiet Man", I knew that I needed a really good outline and I experimented with several ways of creating them.

So, I knew when I started writing "The Quiet Man" that it was a long story. I didn't know it was going to be quite as long as it turned out to be but I knew it was at least as long as "The Progress of Sherlock Holmes". So, I was a little bit more aware of where I was going and I find everything I sit down to write is a learning experience and I'm sort of taking something from that to learn about how stories work. That's what really, right now, drives me to do all this, is just to try and figure out how narrative works for us and why it's satisfying. But in that case, I really thought that this is a story that to me is incredibly obvious and it's right there. When I watch Series 2, that's what I see. That's what's there and I thought this is intensely obvious and it's just basically like pointing out the color of the furniture but I have to... I want to write this! I want to write this! So that's like another process to watch, to walk through which I enjoy. Somebody's emotional journey.

Emma: So, when you're writing, stories and posting them serially like this, as you are going along, how much impact does the feedback you get from readers have?

Ivy: That's really interesting and I know that's something I think about a lot, too. I think, because, especially that in the last couple of years anyway, I've been pretty good about keeping my outline... My outline's pretty secure. So, like, there's not a whole lot of changing the big stuff, the whole narrative arc. But, I can't say that there isn't a tremendous impact from what a reader says along the way. I think there are some ways that are really clear because I do a lot of experimenting. I just want to know, especially with voice, I've been playing with that with writing from first person, present tense a lot and I want it to be as close to the experience of just being as I can be.

You can't be perfectly right every time. It's from Ulysses forward, how far do you want to go down that crazy path but I keep playing with it. Sometimes, I'll try something to see what it's like and if it resonates or not or if it or if it's successful. Sometimes, it seems like nobody gets it. It's gone. That's a failure and I have so much of that. There's so many things that I try that just completely fail.

Emma: Speaking about the fact that at least traditionally, certainly one hundred years ago it was much more common for works to be written serially and published in pieces. I

mean, like, works in progress right now, and then for reader feedback in the form of letters or comments or whatever, that used to be quite common for professional writers.

Ivy: Definitely.

Emma: It's kind of an interesting way to write but, the idea that you're getting this kind of live feedback about what's working and what's not, which is what you were just talking about is really tremendously helpful.

Ivy: It's very helpful. I think it's like the fast track, honestly, and I know there's always that discussion about is writing fanfiction actually helpful to a professional career, and the answer, of course, is yes. If you just look around at the people on the New York Times Bestseller List, you can pretty much see that, yes, it does actually help us. But I think, in this case, for me, and I'm not a published writer, I definitely learn a lot watching people's responses, Then, I get into these big, long conversations about the nature of narrative and the structure of narrative and the whole experience of writing something, constructing something, putting it out there and people sort of help you see what you can't see.

The other thing, too, is that I have very little or basically no visual imagination, so I can't "see" the characters that I write, which I know is very weird.

Emma: Oh! That is interesting.

Ivy: Yeah, so, I thought maybe a television fandom would make that different, but it doesn't. They just vanish. They turn into these hovering balls of feelings. It's like clouds of feelings that kind of interact with each other. Therefore, I will, basically, never describe anybody because I just can't keep track of it If I'm writing original stories, I'll describe them one way and then ten thousand words later, they'll look completely different because I just can't hold visual information like that in my head. But, I've noticed that people seem to think that I describe things well which I think is hilarious because I never do. I don't describe anything.

Emma: Interesting. So there's something about that filling in the details that's happening?

Ivy: Yeah and that I learned just because I know for a fact it's a failing and then people talk to me and say "Wow, this is such a visual scene!" I'm like really? Because I describe nothing. So, anything that is happening is happening in your head and that's actually the revelation I came to. I say it and people get upset with me when I say it but the writing is not about the words. It's about something else. It's about the story that we are constructing together in the reader's head. It's what's in the reader's head. It's not the words that I'm putting on this page. The words on this page should aid in constructing something in your head but the thing that's in your head is the important thing, not which choice of word I used or whether that's a real pretty phrase.

That sort of got me to understand that that's what story building is about is what's in your head. If I can avoid describing things so that I'm leaving room for somebody else to view it, because

they're very visual... So all of this process has sharpened for me, not only my own many faults and failings as a writer, but also the ways that the reader will fill in for me the things that I can't do.

Emma: That is really a fascinating idea and I guess I don't think I had quite thought of fanfic in that way or my own writing in that way. You often think about, sort of the intellectual texts being sort of like that. Always been left all this room to play and whenever anyone would listen, I'd say I don't want my favorite pairings in any fandoms to become canon because it closes the door to all the different ways it can happen.

So, I'm used to thinking about interacting with the original text that way but I hadn't thought about fanfic in that way. That's really interesting.

Ivy: For me, it's such an educational playground on so many levels and I've learned so much from everybody in the community and it's such a generosity from everybody, both people creating things and people consuming things and responding to them and actually engaging with us is such a gift.

Emma: Oh god it is! It's amazing!

Do you write on any kind of a schedule, then? Or do you just sort of sit down when you have time and let it come out? Or are you one of those people who says every day, I'm going to write a thousand words or whatever?

Ivy: I am not one of those people. My theory on this is I will only write when it's fun which is what everybody in the world will tell you is the worst possible thing to do. But, I'm genuinely fortunate in that most of the time it's fine so I'm able to do that. But, what I won't do is, again, because I have a full time job which I love and I won't force myself to do something if I don't enjoy it. Or if I'm too tired. I just don't. If it's not fun, there's no point. It turns into a schedule because it will usually be like three or four times a week that I actually want to sit down and write my fifteen hundred or two thousand words but that's sort of a schedule that there kind of is. But I try to not force myself to stick to that again because I don't want it to become work and I think that the quality of what I'm doing will decrease if I'm not passionate about doing it.

So, I want to make sure that when I'm writing something, it's really something I love, so I write it and if I'm patient enough, someone will look at it which is nice because I drop a lot of words and then I post it and then I'm done and I feel great. I don't know how other people do that when they sort of force themselves into it every day. Maybe I'm wrong about the quality of it. Maybe it just doesn't feel as good but maybe it looks just fine. I don't know but if I give myself a couple of days break, I come at it with so much more energy and joy and I just like that better.

Emma: I totally agree with you. I've had conversations with people before where they talk about writing one thousand words a day and I remember having a conversation with someone once where she said that the only problem is is that she hits her thousand word mark and then the next thing she really needs to do is go through and edit and she ends up cutting stuff out and she doesn't make her thousand word goal for the day. And, I'm like, if

the goal is interfering with turning out good stuff, the goal is wrong. That would not work for me.

Ivy: Yeah, that's really well put and I feel like there's so much writing advice that focuses on that and I kind of get it, like don't wait for inspiration or whatever but I don't know. Life is short and I like it to be fun, playful and I like to enjoy everything that I do. So, I'm with you. The goal is for me to enjoy myself, primarily, I obviously am very selfish. I want to have a good time and then I want what I'm writing to be something I like. Whatever makes those two things happen together, then I'm happy.

I like to write in little tiny bursts and I feel great about posting. Just the act of posting. It's not the feedback or anything else, it's even just the posting feels so good to me like "I did it! I'm done!" And then, I just get such a rush from that so I post frequently, because you can't call them anything but chapters, but they're actually scenes. They're not chapters. I like to keep that glide of enthusiasm, just keep going and feel like I'm so productive but then I've written these tiny little bits. What's funny is how quickly those tiny little bits add up to something just absolutely smack you across the face massive.

Emma: Do you tend to sit on things you've written for a while before you post? It sounds like you just kind of get them out the door.

I**vy:** If I can sit on something overnight, that takes incredible effort on my part, to be honest, and it drives everybody crazy so there's airynothing. She has eyes with like lasers for dropped words and all those things that are so easy to miss. I like to get her to look over things even if I'm "oh done". Sometimes I just can't stand it and I have to post it even though she hasn't looked at it yet, which is terrible. I have the worst beta practices, ever. Why I still have any betas at all is a mystery because I can't help it, it's posted already.

Emma: So what happens when, and maybe this doesn't happen to you like it happens to me. What happens when someone sends something back to you and says, "No. This is all wrong. This is going the wrong direction. You really need to rethink this or rewrite this." How do you handle that? "Oops! I already posted it" or?

Ivy: That happened with something during "The Quiet Man", actually. There was an extra scene in "The Quiet Man" that I finished and then I wasn't feeling as impatient. I kind felt that maybe it wasn't going anywhere. It just didn't push things along. As much as nobody will believe me because there isn't much that happens in that story, each piece has a job. Every little scene has a job to do and if it doesn't it needs to move from one place to another or where the scene starts and the scene ends, the person needs to be changed in some way. There has to be a change so you can't show together with two scenes ago. There has to be a gap. That's sort of the way that I construct things. I want to see what work each scene is doing. So I wrote one and I was kind of okay with it. It was okay but I knew there was sort of something and then my beta said I didn't need it. But in that case, I hadn't posted it and was okay she was right. You could take that scene out and it would make no difference, therefore, it was not needed so I just didn't post it.

But I try to avoid that. Partly, I can avoid it mostly in terms of that conversation with my beta because I outline things to a pretty ridiculous degree. I share that outline so that my beta will know what it is I'm trying to do and can say whether I've done it or not.

Emma: So, one of the other kinds of writing that you do that I think a lot of us enjoy over on Tumblr is that you tend to do a lot of meta [http://ivyblossom.tumblr.com/post/37592181684/ivyblossom-valeria2067-cumbermums], and what I'll see often is some gif set comes by and then you've written like eight paragraphs of this really beautiful meta analysis about John and Sherlock's relationship. I love that you do that!

I'm assuming that's something that's just really fun for you but could you talk a little bit about how you get inspired to write those things?

I**vy:** I'm sure, I keep waiting for it because I think it's an effect of not writing, actually. So, part of the appeal for me of this show is the gaps that exist in what is there and, so, when I see the gifs and I love the gifs, they're amazing and so information bearing. There's so much in them, little snippets that summarize so much of a scene or an emotion or something that's going on and I'm, again, just sort of driven to state what I think is shockingly obvious. I guess partly, I really love the gif culture and the way that that contributes to fandom dialogue and I like to contribute to it in some way as well as to why that moment is significant. Why that person was right to get the gif of this particular moment and what that means.

Emma: You really hit something there about how the whole practice of putting gifs together, and it's not something that I do but it's something that I appreciate that other people do, is that it does. It highlights these moments in a way that – and when I was in the Harry Potter fandom, we didn't really have a way of doing them. You could transcribe a section of text and then say let's talk about what's going on here. People did that obviously. But just taking that with this little bit of dialogue and this little bit of a scene and thinking about what these four seconds show us about these characters. That's fascinating.

Ivy: I know it is. It really is.

Emma: I think back to my days in like Star Wars or Buffy and I'm thinking about if we could have done that then.

Ivy: I know. It's actually really genius and I'm so enamored with it. When you talk about it, people who were down on Tumblr or whatever and talk about it's just a bunch of animated gifs, whatever. We prioritize formats in a particular way. Writing and art? I don't know, which are the highest? There is a priority. There is a list in there, a ranking and for some reason, the animated gif is like nothing to people which I don't understand because I think it's absolute genius. I really do and I think this where you talk about on an academic level. The amount of information it's conveying. It's the ultimate citation.

You embed this piece and because of television, it's only one view. It's only ever watched

one. There's no interiority in it, all you have is this. And you have this dialogue which we're lucky enough with Sherlock, is never on the nose. It's always a little bit to one side so there's always something going on behind it that you can kind of see and talk about. Then it makes me just driven to say look at that moment and how what they are saying is this but this is what's clearly going on. Here's a derivation of what, to me, is clearly going on behind the scenes of that and how that relates back to things that I'm just particularly interested in.

I like the culture of it. I want to see more of it, frankly. I'd love to see people value that animated gif work in the way that I think they probably should because it's bringing something so wonderful to even just discussion of media, generally,

Emma: There have been several times when I've looked at this meta commentary that you've written on gifs and it's changed my perspective on the John/Sherlock relationship. This has happened multiple times and I've come away from a gif set and your analysis of it thinking "Oh my god!" The one that kind of came by my dashboard recently where you talk about the difference between series one John and series two John and you said in series two, John's pretty much accepting... It's about John accepting the fact that he's in a relationship with Sherlock and just trying to figure out what that means. And just the way that you framed it (Link: [http://ivyblossom.tumblr.com/post/37592181684/ivyblossom-valeria2067-cumbermums]. There's something about the way that you framed it that just sort of clarified the relationship arc between the two series and I think you hinted at so much could happen in series three and who knows, right?

Ivy: I never want to get into the prediction game but what I think is so beautiful about this series is that it is there to be investigated. It's kind of interesting to watch reactions to that kind of stuff because on the one hand, people have been very supportive and kind to me that I take time to write these things. And, there's always sort of this background discussion about how funny it is because we laugh about high school teachers that ask them to do this kind of thing and they don't want to. They laugh at people that think the curtains mean something when they're in the story or whatever and here we are, getting to this level with it. Yeah, this is called an English Degree. This is what you do, actually. Quite honestly, it's also how you look at historical documents. So, this is basic...

Emma: Quantitative Research and Social Sciences.

Ivy: Yeah!

(Laughter)

Ivy: Basic Critical Thinking.

Emma: I just want to finish up with , I had put a call out on Tumblr for people to submit questions to us and we only have time to tackle one of these but this is from

LongSnowMoon and her question is: Do you feel your Sherlock and John are consistent from work to work. Is there an Ivy!Sherlock and and Ivy!John and if so, what are they?

Ivy: I would have to say yes and no. You construct based on the series that you have so having written something in series one, that was only for me. You can only base it on what you know so when you get to the next series, it's going to change because there's more content. But, no, I have been asked before, like right now, I'm sitting down and writing a Sherlock point of view again and so, I've been asked a few times about whether this is going to be the same Sherlock. Definitely not and I don't think I could even do that. I don't know that I could even go back and take that character out of a story I've already written. You know that term, "head canon"?

Emma: Uh huh.

Ivy: I don't know that I have one because then I just look at it and say what about this? So what if this is true? So, I don't think I'm consistent, for me, anyway, as to what these people are thinking or doing or who they are from one place to another because there's just so many different directions you can go or different things you can say have happened to them in the past. So, I don't think so. But, the fact because it's me and all of us have a voice of our own or certain ways we like to see things so there's probably lots of consistency in the things I just happen to enjoy. But, beyond that, I don't think so.

Emma: I think, like you said, everybody's kind of got their head canon for how these characters are and I think, you've probably had the experience, too, of getting feedback on the same story from some people that say it was the most in character John and Sherlock they ever read. Then, on the other hand, this is so OOC but, whatever, if that's how you want to go with it. How can these two comments exist in the same except for, as you say, everyone is constructing that narrative in their head and it's something that some of the words that you've written are jiving with what's in their head or caused them to construct something that's different, whatever they're filling in isn't working.

So that's really fascinating. I think everything that you said, in different stories, you're putting the characters in different situations and one of the things that is fantastic about fanfiction that I love is this idea of taking these two characters, putting them in those situations, and seeing what happens. Which, I think every story that I've ever written has kind of been like, "I wonder what would happen if..." and you've mentioned this before, too. This whole what if, right? Then, if they don't change, over the course of the story, then you haven't done your job, basically. So, at the end of the story, you've got these two characters that have been very profoundly affected by what happened in your story. When you go to write another story, they're not going to be the same characters because you're picking another starting point and there's going to be a different ending point so you end up with all these different versions of the characters. So, I don't know if... Maybe you have a starting point that's consistent for you but the ending point is never going to be the same.

Ivy: I completely agree. I write in fair volume but not a lot of stories so I don't have a ton of series one or a ton of series two. There's even the gap in time where you sort of change what you're

thinking the character is or things you would do differently and there are some things in other stories I've written that I think I'd just should go back and change that because that's driving me crazy. That will keep me up at night because there's one thing in Progress of Sherlock Holmes that I want to change but I can't do that. That happens.

Emma: How much would you say you're influenced by what you read from other people? I mean, how much is this fandom co-constructed experience? How much of that influenced your perspectives on the characters you write?

Ivy: Really interesting question. I find once I start writing, I have to stop reading because I'm afraid, I don't know why, but almost like I don't want to steal from somebody else or I don't want to get caught up in somebody else's vision that I forget what mine was or I just don't like mine anymore. I think that's the bigger fear, really, is that I'll see something somebody's done I'll like so much better. People say that all the time that they read this or that and now they don't want to write anything. It's so sad to see anybody say that ever but then, I feel it, too. I totally get that feeling.

Another thing I don't do when I'm writing, I don't re-watch the show cause I'm afraid that also will jolt me out. So that I think definitely fandom discussion shapes what we do. There is that constant drive to be novel. That's already been done so I can't write it, which I really wish everybody would stop. How could we as a fandom decided we would all right the exact same story because, you know what? It will never be the exact same story. We have a zillion. Who cares if it's been done? I'm sort of always fighting a battle in my head with that idea, that somebody did something like that so I can't. Then there's this whole sort of back and forth. I'm aware of it. I'm shaped by that. But, I still need to back off and say, "I'm going to do this my way."

Emma: I'm a person that loves tropes. I think you often know that you're done in a fandom when you think you can't stand to read another one of these blah blah blah fics. You move on to another fandom where it's exciting to read that exact same trope again, right? I love that and as much as I love seeing people put a new spin on an old trope, they're often things where I am perfectly happy knowing kind of how this is going to turn out.

I saw someone complain about a month or so ago that they were just getting tired of reading all the Sherlock fics where John and Sherlock are on a case and something about the case makes them notice each other and they end up having sex. I'm like...

Ivy: Stop reading.

Emma: Go find another fandom. Go off to Avengers for a while and come back. That trope is my thing. Oh my god, I love it.

Ivy: And it covers everything. You can put anything between those bookends. To me, that's like the real joy of fanfiction. Goalposts exists and there's just that means the world is infinite in between them and just go and bring what you are and who you are and your thoughts to it because it's always going to be new. That's a wonderful thing, isn't it?

Emma: Yeah, it really is. It's just amazing.

Well, on that note, I think we'll go ahead and wrap up our discussion so I just want to say thank you, again. This has been a fantastic conversation and I hope that our listeners have enjoyed it.

Listeners, if you have any comments or questions, for Ivy about any of the stuff that's come up, please feel free to comment on our show post on Tumblr or on our webpage or on LJ or wherever you found it. Or, you can drop us an email at bored@three-patch.com

Thanks, Ivy. Thank you so much.

Ivy: Thank you. This was really fun.

Emma: Tune in to the next episode where we'll have another exciting fan creator to be interviewed. Bye.

(Music outro)

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Transcript beta and producer: Caroline

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