

Three Patch Podcast – Episode 2

Kissing is Tedious

February 1, 2013

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Extreme Crafting with Mrs. Hudson

Consulting Fans: Kat, Emma Grant, Dixie, Shannon

- In which we discuss John/Sherlock
- “It’s an Experiment!”: Anything by [Penny Dreadful](#) or [This Pretty Wren](#)
- Dangerous case leads to the boys getting together: “[26 Pieces](#)” by [Lanning](#)
- Sherlock love John long time: “[As You Consume the Longitudes](#)” by [Coloredink](#)
- Crossover: “[You Are a Paradigm](#)” by [1electricpirate](#)
- All possible tropes ever: [Shannon’s Bookmarks on Ao3](#)

(Music intro)

John: *We’re not a couple.*

Irene: *Yes you are.*

(Music fades)

Emma: Welcome to “The Science of Seduction”.

Dixie: The shipping segment of The Three Patch Podcast.

Shannon: Where we discuss the relationship side of the Sherlock fandom.

Emma: For our first round table we’re discussing John and Sherlock, also known as Johnlock. So, for our very first question, we’re going to ask everyone to talk about the very first time that they

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realized that they were going to ship John and Sherlock. So, I'm Emma Grant and I'll start. My answer to this question is basically immediately, um the first time I watched A Study in Pink... *(Laughter)* Yeah, right... The first time I watched A Study in Pink, um, I think, pretty much immediately the first time they were onscreen there were sparks but definitely it was sealed by the time, uh, that scene where they run after the cabbie and then they get back to 221B and they're leaning against the wall and they're laughing and they look at each other and it's like, that is such a classic slash moment. I mean thinking of all the canons that I've ever known, all the fandoms I've ever been in, we would've killed to have a moment like that, and you know, you're looking for your favorite pairing and there it was in the first episode and I just thought "Oh my God." And then, what really really clinched it, as if that wasn't enough, what really really clinched it was the moment at the very end of the episode when Sherlock realizes that John was the shooter and he just looks at him and there's this look on his face like he's just heard a choir of angels singing, you know? And it's just clear that he's completely fallen in love in that moment and John is oblivious for a while but it's just completely glorious.

Shannon: Yeah, that is really early, you know, I wish I could say I was the same but I had to go back to my LJ and check my blog, and I found that it was February 22nd, 2012, and that's when I started reading John/Sherlock fic. In fact, I started reading that before I saw season 2, which came a few weeks later. Um, and I think I was reading "A Cure For Boredom", and, immediately after that, I mean that was just a draft, immediately after that I dove into "221 Bravo Baker", that whole awesomely good AU, but I was reading, I think it started there, I didn't start shipping until I started reading the fic and then I was, it like, opened my eyes, and then I saw season 2 with my slash goggles on.

(Laughter)

Dixie: Well, I was like Emma, the first minute they appeared on screen, you know they had that chemistry, and it was there, and you'd have to be blind not to see it, and then when you watch the pilot episode, the part where you see Sherlock standing on top of the building and the wind whipping his coat, and through his hair...

Shannon: Batman Sherlock.

Dixie: Yes, exactly. And then you see John looking up at him and he smiles, and that's the moment, that's the moment when John Watson became bi-curious about Sherlock Holmes, right then.

(Laughter)

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Dixie: A million slashers just gasped and grabbed their pens and started writing, right there, that moment.

(Laughter)

Kat: Well for me, I watched season 1 and season 2, um, one after the other, so I just watched them together basically, and immediately after Reichenbach, it was just, OK, these two were made for each other, I need to write them together, need to see them together, I saw the chemistry immediately. I'm not usually a slash, really, um, I'm usually a femslasher, actually, um, and this was the first time that I was hit with immediate slash OTP feelings, and it was just immediately there for me, so, quickly after watching it, yeah.

Shannon: Oh, awesome, awesome. OK, um, well, I forgot to introduce myself I think, but I'll do that now, I'm Shannon, and I have the next question, and it's just a nice one, um, why you ship John and Sherlock. Do you guys mind if I jump right into this? Because, it's kind of like a therapeutic question for me, I realized that, um, it serves kind of a fantasy fulfillment for me in some ways, um, we'll get into this more later on, but, I think I really like, I like that this ship pushes us to accept, it's where characters are forced to accept and admire both the amazing and damaged parts of each other, and I think, um, I like a little bit of pain with my love, I like a little bit of angst before the smut, and this ship really pushes those buttons for me.

Emma: Well something I'll add to that is that I think that this particular pairing is a very, very much a classic example of something that slashers have always been attracted to, which is the partners that...which is this kind of a partner trope where you have two really good friends who complete each other in a way that, when they're together, they're greater than the sum of their parts. That together, they're better than they are individually, even, so, they work so perfectly together that they complete each other, and other examples of this that are classics like Kirk and Spock or Starsky and Hutch, or, you know, you could even go with like Thelma and Louise, there's lots of examples, Barney and Fred...

(Laughter)

Emma: Lots of examples of this, right? Out there...

Shannon: Do people ship those?

Emma: Probably. So they're clearly meant to be together, and one of the things that we do as

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slashers is that we take the homosocial relationship that's already there, and we ask the question "what would happen if we remove this boundary that's there in canon, that prevents these two men from - or two women, depending on the relationship - from having a romantic or a sexual relationship?" So if we take that boundary away what would happen? And, great things happen, it turns out, so this is just a great example, John and Sherlock are a great example of this classic slash pairing that we love.

Shannon: Interesting.

Kat: Yeah, I agree. Um, I think it's basically this friendship that already transcends, like, so many boundaries about friendship, that it can be so easily be more than just a friendship without really overinterpreting the canon material. So you can go there without having to stretch yourself too much, um, it is there in the show, you can see it if you want to, and it's not that hard to see it. And they take that relationship to a level where you can see that they accept each other, and they also make each other worse in a way: they sort of spoil each other for other people, they don't make each other functional, but they do accept each other in their dysfunctions, which makes them the perfect partnership, because they, with each other they just function better even though they don't really function better in a wider sense but with each other they can actually function better, so that makes them a really good slash pairing I think.

Shannon: There's something very romantic about that idea, maybe disturbingly so, because it's almost like saying, you know, it's like two parts of a whole, this destiny, now we're getting into trope stuff, you know, because I really think, I could see where's that's coming up where they complete each other, as Emma had said.

Dixie: They depend on each other, I mean Sherlock gives John that excitement and adventure that he craves and John gives Sherlock a moral compass. I mean they complete each other. I mean and you can't help but want them to build on it, and there's so much room for angst, you know...

Shannon: Delicious.

Dixie: ...And they're the most significant person in each other's lives.

Kat: Yeah, they are. And sometimes it even seems a little unhealthy in the way they have this emotional dependency, I think they both have, um, some issues, and John seems like the more normal one, and Sherlock seems like the weirder one, but I don't think that's true. I think John actually has more of a problem being a functional being than Sherlock, and um, they both sort of accept that in each other, and they appreciate it in each other, that they're different from most

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people, and they actually really like that. Um, so it's, they see the problems, and they just are drawn to that, even if they don't really want to be, and that makes them unhealthily involved in a way that is just, you know, irresistible to people to people who want to write about them.

Shannon: Does it have to be unhealthy though? I mean, I think there's damage in all of us, and I think that's what draws me to them because I think it's uh, it's not, I mean it's idealized in some ways, and fic does tend to go in that direction, but I like the ugliness, the sourness that's a part of all of us, that we're not just in love with someone because they're so pure and great and awesome, but they're also total assholes or they're, they're, they're insecure, or they're lost.

Kat: Yeah, I agree, I think it's, the fact that they fit together that way, um, they don't really want to make each other better, and they don't really need to, because they're both a little unhealthy, but you know, who isn't? All of us are, and they don't, they go into the relationship as friends, or as lovers, whatever you want to call it, um, and they just really like what's there, and they don't want to change it, they like it because they're both a bit outside of the norm, and it works for them, and they want to keep it that way and they just like each other the way they are. So it is, you know, it's not unhealthy in that they do, you know, help each other out in a respect, they make each other less lonely, which I think is a very healthy thing, but, um, it can be a bit unhealthy, maybe, somehow, if you look at how they, um, well, spoil each other for other people, because they're the only people that understand, they're the only person that understands the other, really. But, I see your point, they just, they fit together well even though they're not really, um, that perfect socially, or, emotionally.

(Laughter)

Kat: What are your favorite tropes for this pair? And, you can call some fics, call some names, that are good examples of these tropes.

(Laughter)

Kat: Um, I'll go first, just to keep, you know, the pattern going. For me, I'm not really that much of a trope person, even though I know I do enjoy the off trope now and then. I do really love, you know, high school alternative universes where they're both young and meet each other at a tender age, and change each other in a different way than they do in the show. And um, I have to say I have read a lot of, um, alternative universes with tropes, and I, they do speak to me more in this fandom than they ever have before in other fandoms, because the universe that they live in is more like our own, um, and you can really change that around and see what happens to the relationships and to the personalities. And for me, one of the things that I really enjoy is, uh, gender-swap, so I'm kind of into that right now, it's more of a new thing for me, I'm not really that

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experienced with it, but I do like it, because it can be really interesting to see how authors play with, you know, the relationship between them, and how people see them as doctor, or as consulting detective when they're women, and then you have the whole lesbian thing that is a bit different from the gay thing, and it's interesting to see if authors, uh, handle that well, so for me, gender-swap is something that is potentially very interesting, even if it's not always handled that well in my opinion. But for me, that's one of the tropes that I'm, that I'm really interested in. But that's really the only one that I really, really love.

Emma: I love tropes, and part of it is, I guess, after being in fandom for a long long time, um, I love watching the way all the same story ideas can kind of be written again and again and again, but never quite be the same, and in multiple fandoms, I love that. Um, in this fandom, some of the things I'm really enjoying are, and I think this may be something that's a bit unique to the Sherlock fandom, but the whole "it's an experiment" trope, so, "It's an experiment!", or, "For science!", whatever, and there're so many stories along those lines, and in fact I kind of wrote one myself...

(Laughter)

Emma: ...but there's so many stories along those lines it's sort of hard to know where to start but I think that two people who do this really well I think are pennydreadful and thisprettywren, both of whom have written a lot of amazing things along these lines of, I think thisprettywren wrote an incredible chastity belt fic that I will link to in the show notes. Everybody knows this fic, it is unbelievably hot.

Shannon: I think I've missed that one, shame on me!

(Laughter)

Emma: Oh, it's really good. That's a good one. Um, another big trope that's a big one here is, basically the idea that there's a case, and somewhere in the case Sherlock and John are, one or the other or both of them is endangered and something about the situation pushes them to act on their feelings for each other. Um, again, there's tons of examples of that, I think "Twenty-six Pieces" by Lanning is one of my favorites among those lines...

Shannon: Oh, yes...

Kat: Yeah. It's amazing.

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Shannon: It's a fantastic story, I remember reading it going "Oh my God, this is amazing!"

(Laughter)

Emma: Um, so, other tropes that I really like are the one where Sherlock is inexperienced or oblivious about sort of sex or romantic attraction and then he kind of stumbles into a relationship with John and John knows what's going on but Sherlock doesn't. Um, one that I really like that's along those lines is called "As You Consume the Longitudes" by coloredink. Fantastic one. Um, and then, uh, I think, I think this one's going to come up when Shannon talks, but um, virgin!Sherlock is a lot of fun, even if I don't find it very realistic, it's fun to read. Gay-for- you!John is one that I like...

Shannon: I can buy that one, maybe.

Emma: Yah, I've never liked the "gay for you" thing in other fandoms, I was always was like aw, I don't like it, I find it kind of offensive, but, it works for me in this fandom, with this pairing, this like you know "OK, I'm not really into guys, but, yeah, you're an exception." I love that, and it's such a guilty pleasure. And I think finally then, um, it's not really a trope, but more of a genre, is crossovers with, uh, other universes. Um, when you find a good one, it's incredible, and my very favorite crossover, this may be my favorite crossover fic of all time, is "You Are a Paradigm" by 1electricpirate, which is a Harry Potter/Sherlock crossover. That one.

(Gasps)

Shannon: Yes!

Kat: So amazing, yeah. I second that, yeah. It's good, it's really good.

Shannon: Oh, gosh, uh, I had trouble with this question a little bit because it's hard for me to differentiate between tropes and themes, so I love virgin!Sherlock, that's a clear trope, but then I also find, um, omega!verse, and I'm sorry that Olivia isn't here because I know that she's all over that, but I have never read omegaverse, or anything quite like that, I mean I've read mpreg, um, you know where you have, um, what was the nice term that people would use, well, uh, I think omega!verse I like to read without the babies, I like just the other, the sexual compulsion, and in other, um, in other, uh, canons like the Harry Potter canon, that's usually magically- induced sexual compulsion, so I find that this omega!verse is an interesting way of introducing sexual compulsion that is not due to magic. But I really love, uh, all the AU fics and I'm just trying to

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think, you know, where you have, um, werewolf and vampire Sherlock and John, or where you've got, um, them with very different careers but there's kind of like, uh, an enemy element, and I'd say that, like, "A Study in Winning" is a nice example of that, that's the tennis thing.

Kat: Amazing.

Emma: Yeah.

Shannon: And, uh, and you can also that the coming up a little bit in "Performance in a Leading Role" where again they're acting but there's also that opponent, or, and the opponent is both society as well as Moriarty having a role there. Um, but there's also, uh, I guess, re-booting, going back when they were younger, or if they had met before, I think that's another trope, and I don't know what to call that, but, um, there's a really beautiful one, I think where they're in boarding school, or where they're younger and they meet five years earlier when Sherlock still has a drug problem or something like that, so, those are, those really get me, I like these kind of "what if?" scenarios in a way, I mean there's so much potential in that here.

Emma: So, this is Emma again, um, Johnlock shippers sometimes get accused of going too far in looking for evidence in canon to support their ship...

(Laughter)

Emma: So, what do you guys think? Is it, is the John/Sherlock relationship, is it canon? Is it purely fanon? And if you think that there's something in canon that we...and if you see evidence for it in canon, then please let us know what it is.

(Laughter)

Shannon: Honestly, you know, I don't care about canon. I ship what I want, you know?

(Laughter)

Shannon: Um, but, I was just thinking that, what I get out of canon that I draw upon are compelling characters that I can see having a relationship with each other, and I would say that the, what I get out of canon may not necessarily be the text, but the interpretation by the actors. So, the glimpses, the touching, the nuances that Cumberbatch and Freeman bring to their characters, that, that kind of layer of vulnerability or the belief that there is some degree of emotion and caring: that is what I latch onto. So it doesn't matter if John is protesting that he's

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gay; what he's saying is not as important as...not gay, I'm sorry...

(Laughter)

Shannon:...what he says is not as important...

Kat: That's a Freudian slip.

Shannon: I...you see? Slash goggles...

(Laughter)

Shannon: ...What he says is not as important as the interaction and the, um, the chemistry. So the chemistry is enough for me.

Emma: I like the fact, I think we're going to talk about this with the next question too, but, I like the fact that it's played with in canon, but I never ever want the thing that I ship in any fandom to become canon. Um, basically because I'm very selfish, and I don't want, once that door is closed, it becomes really hard to have the kind of freedom again, it just, the fandom becomes less accepting of, of fics that do it differently you know?

Shannon: Mmm, mm.

Emma: Um, so while that door is open, there are, especially because I'm someone who, I like first time fics, I want to read eighteen-gazillion variations of these two characters getting together, I mean, so, once there is a way, that is sort of the canonical way, it just seems like it shuts off a lot of the creativity in the fandom, and I don't want to see that happen here. And so I never ever want that door to get closed. But also, um, another thing is that I don't, as much as I love what Gatiss and Moffat have done, I don't trust them to do that well. Um, and I, how many times have you been watching a show, and like you, there's some pairing that you're kind of shipping, but when they finally get together it's disappointing.

Shannon: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Right.

Emma: Or, it goes in a direction that you wouldn't want it to go. So, I'm selfish about these characters and I want that door to remain firmly open or me to imagine. And other people to imagine stuff.

Shannon: Yes, we need to leave room for us to dream and play.

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Kat: Yeah, I um, well it's obviously not canon, and I don't think it's going to be canon, and that's quite fine by me, um, but it's also not, you know, it's not purely fanon, there's certainly some evidence there, if you want to see it, and I think it was put there very deliberately by Moffat and Gatiss, and um, what's the other guy's name, Thompson. I think, um, it's sort of tongue-in-cheek engagement I think, with an undercurrent of, you know, the sexual tension in all the Holmes adaptations, Holmes and Watson are always, always sort of involved in a way, and modern adaptations pick up on that because, if you put it into a modern context, you will always have that question. I think we're going to come to that later, um, you have two men living together and there's always going to be that question: what's going on there? And, you know, their environment's going to think that as well, and they play with that a lot in the show, and I kind of like that, I think it's realistic, um, in the sense that, if you had two men of John and Sherlock's age, living together, they would get those comments, and, it's also played for laughs a bit, but it's also quite realistic, and you can pick that up as being evidence for the fact that there should be something going on, because it's not something that happens a lot in our culture, um, in that way. So, yeah, you can see a lot of things there, you know you have the glances, the disregard for each other's personal space, moving into each others'... "Yeah, John," "Yeah, Sherlock, look into my eyes," ...

(Laughter)

Kat: ...There's a lot of that and it's between Cumberbatch and Freeman, you know, at the bat, I think they work very well together as characters, and, um, yeah, you can see that John is trying to sustain some heterosexual relationships, but it doesn't work, because he's too involved with Sherlock, and his life with Sherlock, living there, working with him, and Sherlock is, you know, sort of gleefully sabotaging John's plans to get together with women. So if you want to there's loads of evidence there, and I think, um, a lot of people who watch the show, I mean I've watched it with some of my real life friends who are not as into fandom as I am, and all of them see it, and that's never happened before with me, that I ship people and my real life friends are always like "no, that's never going to happen" and now they're like "Yeah, John and Sherlock, totally! I see it, yeah!" So I think it's there, you know, it's addressed in the show itself and you have, you know, they play with it a lot, so yeah, there's a lot of evidence, if you want it, yeah, definitely.

Emma: Well, so the next question kind of builds on this a little bit, because it also kind of goes to criticism about the show. Some people have said that there's been a tendency for the script to overplay this sort of gay/not gay situation that we've been talking about between John and Sherlock. So what do you guys think of this, and has that influenced your shipping?

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Dixie: Well I think Moffat and Gatiss are enablers, I mean, the way they write John and Sherlock, it's a slasher's dream. I mean they still manage to walk that fine line so everyone will continue watching, you know, by making it funny, but, I think they play to what the fans want, I mean, it honestly wouldn't surprise me, in the next season...

(Anticipatory laughter)

Dixie: ...if you were to see John folding the red underpants while he's doing the laundry...

Kat: Oh Jesus...

Dixie:...I mean, they like to throw stuff in there for fans. Yes! Just, you've heard it here first, that's going to be the, um, the closing episode there'll be the red underpants and we'll all be going "Oh my God! Oh my God!" You just wait and see.

Emma: I don't know if I would say that, um, Moffat, et al., are guilty of queer-baiting in the same way that you see in other fandoms. I mean I think like Teen Wolf is a great example of a fandom where I think there's really genuine queer-baiting going on. Um, because I don't think that they're doing it intentionally, at least if the interviews are to be believed, I don't think that, at least I don't think that Moffat is thinking that way because he seems to be, sort of after the first series, things he said in interviews made it sound like he was sort of surprised that people were taking that interpretation. I mean, like, he genuinely didn't think about it. And the actors as well, I mean it wasn't until after sort of getting an idea of what was going on in fandom that they were kind of caught off guard by that. I remember reading an interview with Amanda Abbington where she talked about, watching series two with Martin and saying "Look how, you know, look at that. Look how, you know, homoerotic that is, were you doing that intentionally?" and he's like "No, we're not doing it intentionally!" because I don't think that they're doing it on purpose, um, but one thing that people often, or people who maybe are not in fandom, who are on the edges of fandom say that it's getting old, right? This whole "Oh, John and Sherlock must be a couple" you know, on the show, that it's getting old and they want to move on from it. But I hope that they don't, because, I mean as a slasher, those are the moments that we love, and we live for them. So, so I guess I don't feel like it's queer-baiting in the same sense that it can be in other places. Um, but they're definitely aware of it, and I think they're doing it in a way that works for me, personally.

Shannon: You know, I kind of want to give them more credit than other people may, and say that, um, I believe they're obviously aware, due to many reasons, of the slashing that's going on and what people are interpreting, but I can also see that certain things, like, you know the whole

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Sherlock in a sheet, and John commenting on him wearing any pants, or other things that are just kind of, like, maybe a little over the line, can strike me as kind of cheeky critique of the assumption that we're basing our slashing on that men who are close or touch or who care too much overtly must be in a sexual relationship or have to be moving in that direction, so, if they continue doing that I'd almost think that was kind of a nice way of saying "why do we always have to rely on this assumption?" Um, it's fun to play with, yes, but after a while, you know, that's what fanfic is for: go off and play there, but they're not going any further from that, so it could almost be a critique about this assumption about what male friendship is allowed to be.

Kat: Yeah, um, yeah I kind of agree with you on that, but I do, um, well, you know, I'm a queer person myself, so I have that queer, you know, um, what am I going to call it? You know, consciousness? And, I do understand that it's frustrating for a lot of people to...there are a lot of shows, especially right now, that play up the gay angle to sort of attract a gay audience, ah, which is OK, um, I don't really mind it that much, but it can be really frustrating to have this opportunity for, you know, genuine representation, you know, dangled in front of you, and then not have it really result in anything at all. But I have more problems with other shows than with Sherlock because I actually like the way that John and Sherlock's relationship is portrayed as, you know, a sort of, um, transgressive male friendship so to speak, almost? They are friends, and, lots of people read them as being more than friends, and they themselves are kind of like "no, that's not it at all," and they're just really not, uh, normal in a lot of ways, and their friendship is just another way in which they're not normal, and I can buy that, I'm OK with that. I can see that their friendship is different than lots of, you know, normal male friendships, and it's also a bit more emotional and a bit more deep and a bit more, you know, co-dependent than most friendships I think, but, um, I don't really see it as queer-baiting because you always have this feeling that it's just, um, it's just the way that they function, they have a lot, um, I'm not sure how to say it, I'm just going to say that, I do feel the concerns more than you do. It seems that you all say it works for you; it doesn't always work for me. Sometimes it does feel a bit hurtful, especially with the sheet scene for example, um, you can say that it's a cheeky way of saying that we over-interpret male friendships, it can also be a cheeky way of, you know, laughing at gay people trying to see gay representation in a show that they like. Um, which I don't really follow as an interpretation, but I do understand that sometimes people do, and I do want to put it out there as a thing that can be problematic in Sherlock sometimes, um, because you have a lot of gay jokes, and usually they're OK, but sometimes, sometimes they aren't, and there isn't a lot of positive queer representation. You have, you know, the inn-keepers in "Hounds", who are happy, it would seem, and you have Irene who is a controversial topic, um, and then Sherlock who is an asexual maybe, or maybe queer, or maybe not, so you have a lot of shades of sexuality, and I do like that, but I kind of sometimes feel like the creators are playing with us in a way that they think might be cheeky, and playful, but might be hurtful to the queer community sometimes. So, I don't know, sometimes I do

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think that we should be more critical of this issue.

Shannon: That's a very nuanced take on it.

Emma: I think it's actually an amazing point, and one of things that it makes me think about is the fact that we often have these conversations in fandom about the fact that fandom is a safe space for people to sort of re-appropriate media...

Shannon: Mm-hmm.

Emma: ...and to take things, and to fix things that they see as wrong, or as, um, oppressive...

Kat: Yeah.

Emma:or, insulting. Um, you know so that's one of the fantastic things about fandom, and particularly I think the slash side of fandom, is that we are re-appropriating sort of media that's, let's face it, created mostly by white men...

Kat: Yeah, definitely.

Emma:...and we're actually taking that at we're making it into something that satisfies us. You know, wherever you fall on the spectrum of being queer or, you know, being trans, or any kind of people who really don't feel like they have a voice in media, it's one of the great things that fandom does, is that it gives you a chance to have that voice and to take that material and to re-imagine it in the way that works for you.

Kat: Yeah, I agree, I think that the fandom makes this a lot better, and fandom does do these things, um, I've read lots of amazing fics about Irene which totally make sense and just make her so much of a better character than she was in the BBC show, and, um, you know, the John/Sherlock stories that make sense for both of them in, you know, sexuality and identification and it just makes it work. And then when you watch the show again you sort of have that back-story and it just makes everything work so well. And I love fandom for that, because you really have the chance to sort of make voices where there were none before. And I do think Sherlock as a whole is queer-friendly, there is a lot of, you know, openness towards that idea, most of the people who respond to John and Sherlock as, you know, friends or a couple, do it very positively, so there's a really...sense of, that it would be OK if they were, and that's fine, and it's just sort of an ideal, uh, community in that sense that, you know, Mrs. Hudson, who's, you know, elderly, she says "Well, it's OK if you only need one bedroom." That would be an amazing thing if it actually

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happened in real life so that would be a lot of fun, and sense it's sort of both escapist and a bit dismissive, but, you know, that's, that's media for you. And I do like most of the things that they do with it, and I think fandom plays an important role in this in just, you know, fixing the little things that they sort of dropped and making that better. So, yeah, fandom has a lot of power in that respect, definitely.

Dixie: Um, do any of you all ship any other incarnations of John and Sherlock? Like the Guy Ritchie movies, or the other Sherlock Holmes series? I personally don't.

Emma: You know, I don't either, and the other versions, I...let me say that when I saw the posters and the first previews for the first Guy Ritchie film, I remember, I went on my LJ, I can go back and find the post where I said "Oh, this is going to hit fandom, this is going to be huge," and then it kind of wasn't. Um, and I was surprised by that, but I saw it myself and was like "Ehh," didn't do anything for me, and I thought it would, and it didn't, and I was surprised but I thought "Eh, whatever," and then I moved on to the next thing which was probably Star Trek or whatever, but, then, you know, when...so when I first watched the BBC series, I thought "Well, people are all over this, it's huge, there must be something more to this than what was in the Guy Ritchie movies," even though people said that the Guy Ritchie movies were, like, really really gay, in fact, that was something that people kept saying about them, and I watched it I was like "Eh." But it wasn't really until this one, there's something about it, just, I think it's the writing? I love the writing, it's really amazing, um, I love the modern reboot, I love that, I love reboots in general, so, but this one I really love. But I think that has been mentioned before, the chemistry between the actors is just phenomenal, and there's something there that's really quite magical. Um, it's like, it's like that old...I mean it's kind of like the Kirk and Spock thing, there's something magical there, you wouldn't necessarily, you know, think of...you know, maybe there are people who think Leonard Nimoy's hot...

Shannon: He is! What!?

Emma:...I mean they're not, you know, but there's something more about it, right? There's something more there about that chemistry between them, so, there's that, and I mean the actors are easy on the eyes, don't get me wrong, um, but, but I think there's something special about the relationship there, for me.

Shannon: I have to agree with that, because, um, I, I've watched just about every single one from the Granada series and I worship at the feet of Jeremy Brett, he is awesome, but, I didn't want to ship him with either of his Watsons and I think a lot of it has to do with, OK, Martin Freeman brought something to Watson that I don't think I've seen in some of the other interpretations and

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it made him a much more compelling character that I wanted that to see Sherlock with, so like, while I could believe the friendship, uh, between these men in other interpretations, in this one I see more potential for something that transcends that. So, I really think it's the acting, and of course then the writing, so I think John's character was, was amped up a bit: he's, he's, he holds his own in a way that I, I can see him being a better partner to Sherlock. And so I really, really ship the hell out of this one, and not the others.

Kat: For me it's the same basically as I said, I've never been much of a slasher and you know, John/Sherlock in the BBC version is my first actual version of a slash male/male pair that I've actually shipped. It's never really talked to me before in that way and this one just has from the start. It's just them – it's the actors. It's the stories. It's the atmosphere of the show. It just makes it happen, the magic.

Shannon: It is magical.

(Laughter)

Kat: It is, yeah.

Alternate universe fics are very common for this pairing. What do you think it is about the relationship between these two men that makes that so compelling, regardless of the context? Anyone?

Shannon: I never found myself drawn to AU in other fandoms that I read like I was drawn here. Like I mentioned before with “A Study in Winning,” they're playing tennis. I don't give two shits about tennis, but oh my god, did that suck me in. I love the whole Potter!lock thing where they're in the Harry Potter verse. I love magical realism fics, so that's where you kind of switch things up a bit. I think SwissMiss' “Best Picture of the Human Soul” [\[http://archiveofourown.org/works/413343\]](http://archiveofourown.org/works/413343), “Touchstone” [\[http://www.fanfiction.net/s/7758662/1/Touchstone\]](http://www.fanfiction.net/s/7758662/1/Touchstone), in these reality is transformed a bit. I think, Kat, it may be related to what you said before, that the Sherlock series is situated in the modern day which unlike, say, Harry Potter, even though it's in the modern day, it was in a parallel alternate universe already, which was fun to explore. I still like that. For me, I love AU because I think I like to play with reality and I like to see Sherlock and John challenged by that. I like to see them pushed in those directions and because they share my reality already, I like to see that warped a bit. I like when their reality is very different, whether it has to do with them being superhuman or their careers are changed. I really, really like that.

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Kat: Yeah me too. I think that because we know the universe that they live, it's interesting to see what people do with them if they're in a different situation. The quality of that really depends on if they're the same and what the differences are, what kind of small differences you have in their personalities because of some things that have changed. A different universe. A different way of meeting. Younger, older, different sex, things like that. It's really interesting to see what people can do with that. They can make them the same characters with these tiny differences that really makes it work in this different world and that really interests me to see what people do with that.

Emma: I think to add to that too, these characters are such perfect archetypes and there's a reason why the Sherlock Holmes idea has stuck around for as long as it has, right?

Kat: Yeah.

Emma: In addition to sort of inventing the whole genre of the procedural, but they also kind of invented this – buddy cop is maybe not quite right. It seems to work that way in the BBC version, maybe not quite so much in other versions. But there is this idea that there are these two characters who fit so well together and complement each other so well as we've said before, that particular device is so powerful and it's a very powerful way to tell stories and it's a great drama. It's great drama in general. It makes for compelling human drama, I guess is what I should say. If you look at all of the different ways that Holmes and Watson have been portrayed in different AUs and mainstream media – think about *House* and *Bones* – and all of these shows that are really doing the exact same thing. Or what's the other one – *Moonlighting*! Just go back to any situation where you have these two characters, and often they've made them a male and female, to sort of put that sexual element into it more explicitly. You keep seeing this come up, over and over again, and there's a reason for it. So when fandom writers do that and take these two characters and put them in another universe, they're really just doing the same thing that writers have been doing for a century because these are such great characters and they always will be.

Shannon: I wanted to – I'm sorry to follow up again – I was just thinking how you said they invented the procedural. It occurred to me another reason why I like AUs is because what we see already on TV, for example, are a lot of procedural dramas with a crime element in a modern city context. So whether you're talking about all the *Law and Order* type things or the various spin-offs, like the *NCIS*, stuff like that. It's kind of nice to put them somewhere else, you know? To get away from that. Whether they're in the Appalachian backwoods in “The Bone Fiddle” [http://archiveofourown.org/works/573857?view_full_work=true] or they're dealing with – oh gosh! – Father John Watson in the whole “Hearts at Home” series [<http://yalublyutebya.livejournal.com/22286.html?title=Hearts%20At%20Home%20Masterpost>]

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&hashtags=] as a priest. This is crazy stuff! But it's awesome and you don't see that on TV and in fact it kind of pushes the boundaries of what you might see in other places in mainstream media.

Alright so, I've got the next question. This is one that kind of takes us back to old canon stuff. Do you feel this ship is a conscious effort by Arthur Conan Doyle and his original work or a fandom phenomenon?

Kat: I have a lot of feelings about this. I had a Victorian literature class many, many years ago and I read a lot of Victorian literature so I know a lot about it. In my opinion, it's definitely a fandom thing. Let me talk about that. There are some different issues in this question. The sense that what is homosexuality for Victorians? What is masculinity? How does Victorian literature work? Masculinity for Victorians was very different than what it was for us. You had all these men with very close male friendships, talking and smoking pipes together, having intellectual discussions. They had these very close masculine relationships that today would probably seem quite homosocial or even homoerotic to our eyes.

Living together as bachelors was definitely one of those things. You had these Victorian people, men of a certain age, who lived together, who were very respectable in their respective communities and who were not as scandalous as they would be today, especially not – it was a lot less scandalous to live with another male friend, not a female friend. That was an accepted norm of masculine heterosexuality in Victorian society.

I think that Doyle was just portraying something that really existed in his age as well as a literature trope. The bachelor is thing that happened a lot in Victorian literature. It's a thing that you see happening. You have this eccentric character who doesn't have time for women, doesn't have time to invest in relationships with women, to get married. It's not worth it. Holmes is one of those archetypes. He's definitely one of those bachelor types that just pops up in Victorian literature all the time.

Watson, on the other hand, is also an archetype. He's the narrator of the story. He writes about Holmes. He has this very strong connection to Holmes. He knows what Holmes is thinking all the time, but that's because he is sort of the consciousness between Holmes and the reader. So he isn't really a character. He's more like a literature technique that takes a reader to Holmes. That gives him a very close emotional connection to Holmes, but not really an actual human relationship. It's more a technique to use Watson in that way.

In that sense, I think Doyle definitely didn't mean to write two gay men. He just had this bachelor type that really existed in his society and it was definitely a heterosexual archetype. Two men

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living together was not homosexual in Victorian times at all. Then, Watson, the narrator of the story and the two very different archetypes just interact very well together.

But today if you see their behavior in the original stories, if you read it today, there's definitely a lot there where you say, "Okay, that's very gay." We definitely see it as a gay thing. Two men living together, sharing everything – that's kind of gay. But it wasn't for the Victorians. So I think even if Doyle was quite liberal in his views of homosexuality – which he was – he still probably didn't mean to write Watson and Holmes as, you know, as lovers or as partners. Just as friends in a very Victorian sense that men could be, I think.

Shannon: I'm ignorant in this area, so I just learned a lot from what you said.

Kat: *[laughs]*

Emma: Yeah, that's a much better answer than what I had. I was going to say something...

Dixie: Same here.

Emma: – along the lines of, I think it's revisionist for people to go back and judge, you know, 19th century writing by 21st century standards, but you said it much better than me.

Shannon: We interpret it through our current lens, but it doesn't take into account the historical body and context of that time.

Emma: Right, exactly.

Kat: But it is okay to read the original canon and see male love there, see homosexuality there. It is okay. I've read some of the stories, not all of them. You can't stop your own viewpoint from intruding and that's normal, that's okay. But it is necessary to – I mean, there was this post going around on Tumblr saying, "All Johnlock shippers: watch this. This is a thing about Doyle wanting to write two gay men, but he couldn't because of society" and things like that. I typed out this whole post as a reply: "No! It's not true! Victorian times are very different! Tropes of masculinity, and blah blah blah." I was very bleh!

But I didn't post it because it was really stupid, but I think it's important that people sort of realize that those stories are written in a very different time than we are now and those things change a lot. It's okay to see love between Watson and Holmes. I mean, there was love there. You can interpret that in any way you want. That's the beauty of literature. But it wasn't the intention

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of Doyle at all. We can be clear about that. It wasn't his intention at all, no.

Emma: I think something I would add to follow up on that is that what Doyle did or did not intend is pretty much irrelevant to me personally.

Kat: Mmhm.

Emma: For that fact, what Moffat or Gatiss do or do intend about the characters is irrelevant. I mean, that's the whole point of fandom is that the author is dead. You can take it and do what you want with it.

Shannon: We have and will continue to do so!

(Laughter)

Kat: We will kill them very gruesomely.

Shannon: We'll send them to a support group. We'll have them go to a sex club.

Kat: Yes.

(Laughter)

Shannon: Oh god.

Kat: Yes, we do do that.

Emma: Bringing it back around the BBC series here, what do you hope to see happen between John and Sherlock in series three?

I can tell you that I'm hoping there won't be a three year gap. I hope not. I hope it's more like six months. I think three years in the day and age where we have the technology, you know with texting. It just seems like three years is a really long time for him to disappear. I also hope that John is really, really – I hope John gets to be angry. I want him to be mad at Sherlock. I want him to be able to express that anger in however way he wants. I want them both to realize –

Kat: Me too.

Emma: I want there to be some sort of emotion coming out of that, that Sherlock is sort of forced

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to realize that you really did hurt John, with what he did and I want John to understand that Sherlock really did have a good reason for doing what he did. I kind of hope that by the end of the series that they're solving cases and living in 221B and really good friends and all that.

Shannon: Ohhh, I hope we don't have to wait till the very end of the series for that to happen. Dixie?

Dixie: I personally hope that they take turns tying each other to the bed. But I know that's not going to happen.

(Laughter)

Dixie: A girl can dream. I do not want John to get married. I will die if he meets Mary and gets married. I just do not want to see that happening.

Emma: You don't think it would create this whole new genre of OT3 fic? See, if Mary is a total badass, I think that would be amazing.

Kat: Yeah!

Emma: I want her to be a total badass that even Sherlock has to respect her badassery and he's like, "Okay. If you had to pick a woman..."

Kat: She's so awesome even Sherlock likes her.

Emma: "And then we can have some threesomes." That's just me though.

Dixie: Nooo, I like it between Sherlock and John. I don't want her to show up.

Shannon: Well, you know, within the context of what we were talking about here, how the two of them seem to complete each other or how they, in a sense, ruined each other for other people, I don't want to think of it negatively, but they're kind of stronger than the sum of their parts, like you were saying before, Emma. It's hard for me to add something to that equation, so it's going to change the whole formula. But within the show, I kind of think Mary would be a great thing to have. I'd actually like to see a really awesome female character who sticks around and is not just there temporarily.

Kat: So would I.

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Shannon: She will be temporary because the show is not about Mary and John, but she can be relevant and useful and admirable and somebody we want to ship and talk about later. I want that. At the same time it's hard for me think about the formula being destroyed because I'm so happy with it now. I want to see, like you were saying, strong emotional reactions so that will inspire really great make up sex in the fic. I want to see continued sexual tension. I want to see hugging. I don't mind – I would like a hug. I don't need to see anything else more sexual in the show. I don't need to see kissing. I leave that to the fanfic writers who will do it so much better. But I want to see significant looks and tension that inspires fic. So I want that tension to be there. You know, that's got to be there.

Kat: I know what I don't want. There was this post going around on Tumblr about how all the season would be Sherlock's hiatus and reuniting with John at the end. I don't want that. I don't. I want them to be together from the start. I want him to come back at the beginning of the first episode and then yeah, basically everything that you guys said. Actual emotions, tension, anger and sort of realistic emotional response to the fact that you thought your best friend was dead.

Even if – I kind of like the idea that John would figure it out somehow or even have some suspicions, have some doubts so that it wouldn't be so completely a surprise. But still have that emotional response, like, “ You dick. You killed yourself in front of me, which is not okay.” And for Sherlock to actually recognize that as being something that he might have handled a bit better and for John to realize that Sherlock actually kind of loves him. That's what I want, more than that. But I'm kind of optimistic that we're going to get that. I sort of hope, I think we will, yeah.

Dixie: Another thing I do not want to happen – I don't want it to be the last one.

Kat: But it's not going to be. You know, people were saying that it was, but no, it isn't. Moffat has said I think, or Gatiss, one of the two, that it's not going to be.

Shannon: Yeah, they'll totally come back when Benedict's career has died down a bit, when he's forty-five and we'll have to wait eight years for the next one.

(Laughter)

Kat: Well, we're totally used to it. We'll just podcast a lot.

(Laughter)

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Dixie: Since this is our Valentine's Day episode, let's have a little fun here. What do you think the boys would exchange for Valentine's Day?

Emma: I think that John would give Sherlock something really thoughtful and useful. Some new lens for his microscope or I don't know, something that Sherlock would be like, "Oh yeah, I actually kind of needed that, thanks." And John would put a lot of thought into it. I think that Sherlock wouldn't get John a gift, I really don't. That would be a sentimental pointless gesture and yeah, no. I don't think he would.

(Laughter)

Shannon: I had a response to this one where I think they would both get each other the same thing but in a different fashion.

(Laughter)

Shannon: I thought that body parts. John would get Sherlock, you know, some toes, a corpse, a spleen – whatever he needed for his experiment, which is a common trope in fic. But he'd get him some body parts and Sherlock would get John, maybe, I dunno, his cock in his mouth.

Emma: Oh! The Gift of the Magi kind of a situation.

(Laughter)

Kat: I actually kind of think that they both would forget that it's Valentine's Day. If I think about John, I don't really see him remembering that it's Valentine's Day. I just don't. I think they would be realize it when they step outside for a case and see all the flowers and the balloons and everything. "Oh! Okay, that happened and we didn't take part in it." Not romantic. I don't see them doing it, no.

Emma: It's actually hilarious that you say that, cause I'm right now writing a fic in which something very much like that happens.

(Laughter)

Kat: Ah!

Emma: Hey! Maybe by the time this podcast comes out, that fic will be posted.

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Kat: Ooh, yay!

Shannon: Tease! Tease!

Kat: Hooray!

(Laughter)

Emma: So nobody said that John would give Sherlock the One Ring?

Shannon: The One Ring!

(Laughter)

Dixie: Oh, excellent.

Shannon: I love crossover. That was genius.

(Laughter)

Kat: That would be awesome. No! The One Ring in Sherlock's hand that would wreak havoc upon the world.

Emma: Oh, everyone would die.

Kat: Yeah, they would. It's even worse than Gandalf having the Ring. The whole of the world would just crumble in flame if Sherlock had the Ring. Die.

Shannon: Are you saying that if it were in the hand of Smaug Sherlock? Or is it John Harrison Sherlock? Because that's coming up soon too, right? Is that his *Star Trek* name?

Kat: Ooh.

Dixie: I cannot wait to see that.

Shannon: Alright, I think those are all our questions for now, so we've done a pretty good job. This is a crazy long segment.

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(Laughter)

Shannon: We'll see if the next roundtables can hold a candle to this particular ship. Alright, until next time! See ya later!

Kat: [laughs] Yes!

Emma: And that wraps it up for our first Science of Seduction panel. If any of our listeners want to contribute their answers to the questions we've raised – why you ship Johnlock, what your favorite tropes are, and so on – then you can leave us comments, everywhere where we are: on Tumblr, on Facebook, on our webpage, on Twitter. You can email us at bored at three patch dot com, so please let us have 'em. Thanks for listening.

Transcription Team

Episode transcript beta and producer: Caroline

Contact

Other consulting fans are encouraged to contribute to the discussion by posting comments on our various social media outlets, sending email, or leaving voicemail. Here's where you can reach us:

Web: [Three Patch Podcast web site](#)

E-mail: bored@three-patch.com

Twitter: [@threepatch](#)

Tumblr: threepatchpodcast.tumblr.com

Facebook: [Three Patch Podcast Facebook page](#)

Skype Username: [threepatch.podcast](#)

Music

The Science of Seduction: Queen, Greatest Hits: Somebody to Love (get it [here](#))

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