

BBC Sherlock S3 E2

The Sign of The Three

세 사람의 징후

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO. A newspaper article is headed, “BANK GANG LEAVE COPS CLUELESS”. The accompanying photograph shows two men outside a court holding their hands up in front of their faces so they cannot be recognised in the pictures. At the entrance to the court itself Detective Inspector Greg Lestrade and Detective Sergeant Sally Donovan walk briskly out through the door.

LESTRADE: They just walked out of there!

DONOVAN: Yeah, I know. I was sort of sitting next to you.

LESTRADE: The whole Waters family! They just walked right out of there!

DONOVAN: Again, I was in the room.

LESTRADE (angrily): How do they always manage that?

DONOVAN: They’re good.

LESTRADE: They’re greedy, and they’ll do it again, and next time we’re gonna catch ’em in the act.

DONOVAN: How?

[Transcriber’s note: some of the newspaper articles name Greg as ‘DCI Lestrade’ but in the end credits of the programme he is named as ‘DI Lestrade.’ I am far more inclined to believe the end credits.]

TWELVE MONTHS AGO. A newspaper article is headed, “WHO STOLE OUR TWO MILL?” and shows police officers standing in a cordoned-off area outside a building, with a police car parked behind the cordon. In real life, Greg gets into the driver’s seat of his car parked just outside the cordon and angrily slams the door closed. Sally is sitting in the passenger seat.

DONOVAN: No good?

LESTRADE: They always know we’re coming. (Furiously) How do they always know?

DONOVAN: They’re good. They work at it.

LESTRADE: They’re never gonna stop.

DONOVAN: Well, neither are we.

SIX MONTHS AGO. A new headline reads, “POLICE ARE NO CLOSER TO WATERS GANG CONVICTION” and the photograph again shows the court. Greg storms out of the building with Sally behind him. He lets out an angry incoherent noise as he walks away.

THREE MONTHS AGO. This time the headline reads, “Waters gang walk free - again!” and there is another photo of two men near the court, covering their faces against the photographers. On the steps outside the court, two uniformed police officers stand and watch while Greg repeatedly kicks the living daylights out of the back tyre of his car, grunting with fury. Sally stands beside the driver’s door and helplessly watches him. Finally she has had enough.

DONOVAN (loudly): Greg!

(Greg gestures dramatically at her.)

LESTRADE (loudly): In the act! The only way we’re gonna do this! In. The. Act!

(He kicks the tyre once more and then storms forward and angrily tugs the driver's door open, inadvertently shoving Sally out of the way.)

YESTERDAY. A man wearing a gruesome clown's mask and holding a sawn-off shotgun looks around a bank vault and then turns to where a second man, wearing a different but equally horrid-looking mask, straightens up from typing on a laptop. A third masked man is inside a nearby open strong room and is slowly carrying three heavy gold ingots toward the door. The laptop screen shows, "ALARMS OFFLINE". The second man goes into the strong room where hundreds of gold ingots are stacked up on a couple of pallets. He lifts three ingots on top of each other, then hauls them up in his hands and makes his way out.

On a different laptop the screen shows the same information as the one in the vault but this one now displays a second message reading, "*** HACKING DETECTED***". In a car outside the bank, Sally sits in the passenger seat with the laptop on her lap. The rooftop lights of nearby police cars are flashing and police officers are walking around. Greg sits beside her.

LESTRADE: You still blocking it?

DONOVAN: Yeah. Very efficiently hacked. They must be bloody pleased with themselves.

LESTRADE: They must be! (He smiles at her.)

(Inside the strong room the third clown is looking down at the two pallets, which are now empty. The second clown walks over to him and puts his hand on his shoulder.)

Outside, armed police begin to run into the bank. Greg and Sally are out of the car and Greg gestures to her as they follow the others.)

LESTRADE: Right then?

DONOVAN: Oh, no! No, you've gotta make the arrest. This one's yours, boss.

LESTRADE: You've never called me 'boss' before.

DONOVAN: Ah, well, look what happens when you're good!

(They both grin as they walk on.)

LESTRADE: You know how most days aren't good days? This is a good day.

DONOVAN: Not for the Waters family.

(Greg's phone beeps a text alert. He looks down towards his pocket and grimaces, but then ignores it.)

DONOVAN: Okay: ten men on the roof; all exits covered; the bank's closed, so there are no hostages to worry about ...

(Greg's phone beeps again. Again he grimaces and Sally looks round at him.)

LESTRADE: Sorry, no, go on, go on.

DONOVAN: Um, we've got the tunnel entrance covered; and Davies, Willard and Christie are heading up our Response on Mafeking Road.

(Greg's phone beeps twice more. He takes it from his pocket and stops to look at it.)

LESTRADE: Sorry, I'd better get this.

DONOVAN (continuing onwards with the other officers): It's him, isn't it?

(Greg's face fills with shock as he reads the string of messages he has received:

HELP.

BAKER ST.

NOW.

HELP ME.

PLEASE.

He looks up at Sally.)

LESTRADE: I-I, I have to go.

DONOVAN (turning back in surprise): What?!

LESTRADE: You make the arrest.

DONOVAN: No way!

LESTRADE: Sorry. You'll be fine. I'm-I'm-I'm cool with this.

DONOVAN: Jones'll get all the credit if you leave now! You know he will!

(Greg hesitates, clearly reluctant to give up his chance for success.)

LESTRADE: Yeah, but d... It doesn't matter. I have to go.

(He turns and hurries away. Sally watches him for a moment, grimacing, then continues on with the other officers.

Outside, Greg is running for his car, making a phone call as he goes.)

LESTRADE (into phone): Back-up. I need maximum back-up. Baker Street, now!

(He gets into his car and speeds off.)

221B BAKER STREET. Greg races up the stairs and into the living room.

LESTRADE (breathlessly): What's going on?

(Sherlock is sitting at the dining table looking at his laptop. The fingers of both his hands are pressed into his temples.)

SHERLOCK: This is hard.

LESTRADE: What?

SHERLOCK: Really hard. Hardest thing I've ever had to do.

(Lowering his hands, he picks up a book and holds it up to show Greg. The book is called "How to write an unforgettable best man speech".)

SHERLOCK: Have you any funny stories about John?

(Greg stares at him in disbelief. Outside, police cars are sirenning their way into Baker Street and screeching to a halt.)

LESTRADE: What?!

(Putting the book down, Sherlock looks up at him.)

SHERLOCK: I need anecdotes.

(He seems to notice Greg's expression.)

SHERLOCK: Didn't go to any trouble, did you?

(Greg stares at him, still breathing heavily. Outside, an ambulance is sirenning its way up the road, and a helicopter can be heard approaching. Sherlock's eyes shift sideways when he becomes aware of the noise outside, and the curtains in the open window behind him billow inwards as the helicopter hovers lower. Sherlock looks round as the billowing curtains knock some sheet music off its stand. Greg closes his eyes in exasperation.)

OPENING CREDITS.

At 221B Baker Street, violin playing can be heard, playing a gentle waltz. Mrs Hudson comes out of 221A carrying a tray of tea things. She stops, smiling with delight at the sound of the music, then goes up the stairs. The living room door is closed and she stops outside for a moment, then opens

the door. Inside, Sherlock isn't playing his violin as she believed. Instead, wearing a camel coloured dressing gown over his shirt and trousers, he is waltzing around the room on his own, holding an imaginary partner while he dances in time to the music. He glances over his shoulder when his landlady walks in.

SHERLOCK: Shut up, Mrs Hudson.

MRS HUDSON: I haven't said a word.

SHERLOCK (sighing as he continues to waltz): You're formulating a question. It's physically painful watching you thinking.

(He stops dancing.)

MRS HUDSON: I thought it was you playing.

SHERLOCK (gesturing to a music player on the dining table): It was me playing.

(He picks up a remote control, switches off the music player and bends down to make a notation on the sheet music lying on the table.)

SHERLOCK: I am composing.

MRS HUDSON (putting her tray onto the table beside John's chair): You were dancing.

SHERLOCK: I was road-testing.

MRS HUDSON: You what?

SHERLOCK (throwing down his pen and turning to her): Why are you here?

MRS HUDSON: I'm bringing you your morning tea. (She pours some milk into the teacup.) You're not usually awake.

SHERLOCK (sitting down in his chair): You bring me tea in the morning?

MRS HUDSON (pouring the tea): Well, where d'you think it came from?!

SHERLOCK: I don't know. I just thought it sort of happened.

MRS HUDSON: Your mother has a lot to answer for.

(She takes the cup and saucer over to him.)

SHERLOCK: Mm, I know. I have a list. Mycroft has a file.

(Giggling, Mrs H sits down in John's chair.)

MRS HUDSON (excitedly): So - it's the big day, then!

SHERLOCK (taking a sip of tea): What big day?

MRS HUDSON: The wedding! John and Mary getting married!

SHERLOCK: Two people who currently live together are about to attend church, have a party, go on a short holiday and then carry on living together. What's big about that?

MRS HUDSON: It changes people, marriage.

SHERLOCK: Mmm, no it doesn't.

MRS HUDSON: Well, you wouldn't understand 'cause you always live alone.

(Sherlock is lifting his teacup to his mouth but stops momentarily.)

SHERLOCK: Your husband was executed for double murder. You're hardly an advert for companionship. (He drinks.)

MRS HUDSON: Marriage changes you as a person, in ways that you can't imagine.

SHERLOCK: As does lethal injection. (He smiles pointedly at her.)

MRS HUDSON: My best friend, Margaret - she was my chief bridesmaid.

(Putting his cup and saucer down on the table beside him, Sherlock rolls his eyes.)

MRS HUDSON: We were going to be best friends forever, we always said that; but I hardly saw her after that.

SHERLOCK (standing up): Aren't there usually biscuits?

MRS HUDSON: I've run out.

SHERLOCK: Have the shops?

(He pointedly walks towards the door.)

MRS HUDSON: She cried the whole day, saying, "Ooh, it's the end of an era."

SHERLOCK (gesturing towards the stairs): I'm sure the shop on the corner is open.

MRS HUDSON: She was probably right, really.

(Sherlock closes his eyes and grimaces.)

MRS HUDSON: I remember she left early. I mean, who leaves a wedding early? (She shakes her head.) So sad.

SHERLOCK: Mmm. Anyway, you've got things to do.

MRS HUDSON: No, not really. I've got plenty of time to ...

SHERLOCK (sternly): Biscuits.

(She gets out of her chair, tutting.)

MRS HUDSON (walking towards the door): I really am going to have a word with your mother.

SHERLOCK: You can if you like. She understands very little.

(He closes the door on her, then turns around sighing. He turns his head and looks towards John's chair for a few long moments, then walks through the kitchen and down the hallway.)

SHERLOCK (taking off his dressing gown): Right, then.

(He walks through his bedroom to his wardrobe, where a morning suit is hanging from the open door. He looks at it.)

SHERLOCK: Into battle.

A man is doing up the buttons on the jacket of his military dress uniform. Although it would seem easier to use two hands to do this, he is only using his right hand. A suitcase is on the nearby bed and laid out beside it is a white webbing belt, a pair of white gloves, a military cap and a ceremonial sword. The man reaches down and picks up the belt and swings it around the left-hand side of his waist and then clamps it to his side with his left arm and now we see why he is only using his right hand. His left hand has been badly burned in the past and is very scarred. It is clear that he is unable to use this hand. Reaching behind himself he tugs the belt around his waist, pulls it tight and does it up. He bends down to the cap, picks it up and puts it on, and we now see that the left side of his face is also severely scarred. He stares ahead of himself as he straightens his jacket.

Church bells peal and the doors to a church open. John and Mary, newly married, walk out followed by Sherlock and the chief bridesmaid, whose name is Janine, then two more bridesmaids and the vicar. A photographer is waiting outside.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Congratulations! Okay, hold it there - I wanna get this shot of the newlyweds.

(John and Mary stop and the bridesmaids stand behind them. Sherlock steps to Mary's side.)

PHOTOGRAPHER: Er, just the bride and groom, please.

(Sherlock doesn't move. John looks round at him.)

JOHN: Sherlock?

SHERLOCK: Oh, sorry.

(He walks out of shot.)

PHOTOGRAPHER: Okay - three, two, one, cheese!

(The bridesmaids throw handfuls of confetti into the air and the photographer starts taking pictures. The rest of the congregation come out and the photo-taking continues, including one of

John, Sherlock and Greg standing side by side, with a young pageboy - about eight years old - standing in front of them wearing either John's or Sherlock's top hat. Later, the photographer takes a picture of Sherlock and Janine. Nearby, Molly stands with her fiancé Tom. She is gazing at Sherlock and if she really believes that she has "moved on," her expression suggests that she's not fooling anyone but herself.

After the photographer has finished with them, Janine looks round at Sherlock.)

JANINE: The famous Mr Holmes! I'm very pleased to meet you. But no sex, okay?

SHERLOCK (startled): Um, sorry?

JANINE (laughing): You don't have to look so scared. I'm only messing. Bridesmaid, best man ... It's a bit traditional.

(She gently punches his arm. He looks down with distaste.)

SHERLOCK: Is it?

JANINE (a little awkwardly): But not obligatory(!)

SHERLOCK: If that's the sort of thing you're looking for ... (he jerks his head towards one of the wedding guests) ... the man over there in blue is your best bet. Recently divorced doctor with a ginger cat ... (there's a close-up of a ginger cat hair stuck on the man's suit, and the sound of a miaow) ... a barn conversion ... (close-up of sawdust on the man's footwear) ... and a history of erectile dysfunction.

(The close-up pulls out a little to reveal that the man is wearing cowboy boots. There's the sound of a bullet ricocheting off something with a high-pitched ping, like in a Western movie. Sherlock blinks.)

SHERLOCK: Reviewing that information, possibly not your best bet.

JANINE: Yeah, maybe not.

SHERLOCK (looking puzzled): Sorry - there was one more deduction there than I was expecting.

JANINE: Mr Holmes ... (she takes his arm) ... you're going to be incredibly useful.

(Again Sherlock looks down at her hand. He frowns.)

Later, John and Mary, with Sherlock at John's side, are standing outside the venue for the reception, greeting the guests.

MARY (shaking a man's hand): Hello. Lovely to meet you.

(She then kisses a woman. The woman moves on to kiss John, and another man moves in to kiss Mary.)

MARY: How are you?

MAN: You look beautiful, Mary.

MARY: Thank you!

MAN: Congratulations.

(More guests move past the three of them, then a man wearing a lurid purple tie comes forward. Mary looks at him with delight.)

MARY: David!

(She reaches out her arms ready to hug him. He leans away, laughing nervously, and just clasps her arms briefly.)

DAVID: Mary. Congratulations. You look, um, very nice.

(He quickly moves away from her. Mary looks puzzled. He shakes John's hand.)

DAVID: John, congratulations. You're a lucky man.

JOHN: Thank you.

MARY: Um, er, David, this is Sherlock.
(Sherlock smiles at him, tight-lipped.)
DAVID: Um, yeah. We've, um, we've met.
(He looks down nervously.)

FLASHBACK. David, sitting at the dining table in 221B, looks around the room and then turns to where Sherlock is sitting opposite him holding a pen.

DAVID: So, what exactly are my duties as an usher?
(He picks up the Sudokube [Click for image] from the desk and idly plays with it. Sherlock frowns disapprovingly, then puts down his pen and folds his hands.)

SHERLOCK: Let's talk about Mary, first.

DAVID: Sorry, what?

SHERLOCK: Oh, I think you know what. You went out with her for two years.

DAVID: A-ages ago. We're j... we're just good friends now.

SHERLOCK: Is that a fact?

(He looks down at his notes in front of him.)

SHERLOCK: Whenever she tweets, you respond within five minutes regardless of time or current location, suggesting you have her on text alert. In all your Facebook photographs of the happy couple, Mary takes centre frame whereas John is always partly or entirely excluded.

DAVID (laughing uncomfortably): You can't assume from that I've still got some kind of interest in Mary.

SHERLOCK: You volunteered to be a shoulder to cry on on no less than three separate occasions. Do you have anything to say in your defence?

(David opens his mouth but is unable to speak.)

SHERLOCK (looking down and making a note): I think from now on we'll downgrade you to 'casual acquaintance.' No more than three planned social encounters a year, and always in John's presence.

(He puts the pen down and folds his hands again, looking intensely at David.)

SHERLOCK: I have your contact details. I will be monitoring.

DAVID (a little wide-eyed): They're right about you. You're a bloody psychopath.

SHERLOCK: High-functioning sociopath ... with your number.

(He grins manically, showing a lot of teeth, then drops the smile and steeplest his hands in front of his chin, looking sternly at David. David looks down, then lets out a nervous breath and gets up and walks away. Sherlock picks up the Sudokube and puts it back into its proper position on the table.)

THE PRESENT. David makes a couple of anxious noises, waves briefly to Mary and goes indoors. John looks round at Sherlock with a curious expression but Sherlock raises his head and looks inscrutable. The next guest approaches.

MARY: Hello!

(The greetings continue. A woman in a black and white dress approaches and kisses Mary.)

MARY: Pleased to see you.

(The woman moves on to kiss and hug John.)

WOMAN: Congratulations.

JOHN: Thanks for coming, thank you.

(The young pageboy is standing a few paces away. Mary smiles down at him.)

MARY: Hello, Archie!

(The boy's eyes are fixed on Sherlock and the moment he has a clear route he runs straight to him and wraps his arms around him, smiling happily. Sherlock looks awkwardly down at him.)

SHERLOCK: Mm, yes, um, well done in the service, Archie.

(The woman in the black and white dress, obviously Archie's mother, smiles at them.)

MUM: He's really come out of his shell. I don't know how you did it.

SHERLOCK: Um ...

FLASHBACK. 221B. Sherlock sits in his chair and looks at Archie sitting in John's chair. They stare straight-faced at each other for a moment, then Sherlock draws in a breath.

SHERLOCK: Basically it's a cute smile to the bride's side, cute smile to the groom's side and then the rings.

ARCHIE (instantly): No.

SHERLOCK: And you have to wear the outfit.

ARCHIE (instantly): No.

SHERLOCK: You really do have to wear the outfit.

ARCHIE (instantly): What for?

SHERLOCK: Grown-ups like that sort of thing.

ARCHIE (instantly): Why?

(Sherlock pauses for a moment.)

SHERLOCK: ... I don't know. I'll ask one.

ARCHIE (more slowly, thoughtfully): You're a detective.

SHERLOCK: Yep. (He pops the 'p' loudly.)

ARCHIE: Have you solved any murders?

SHERLOCK: Sure. Loads.

ARCHIE: Can I see?

SHERLOCK (after only a momentary hesitation): Yeah, all right.

(They get up and go over to the laptop on the dining table. Sherlock shows him a series of pictures - which we can't see - and after a while Archie leans in to look more closely at an image.)

ARCHIE: What's all the stuff in his eye?

SHERLOCK: Maggots.

ARCHIE: Cool!

SHERLOCK (looking at him for a moment): Mm!

THE PRESENT. Archie is still hugging Sherlock.

MUM: He said you had some pictures for him, as a treat.

SHERLOCK: Er, yes ... (he pats Archie's head) ... if he's good.

ARCHIE (turning to look at his mum): Beheadings.

SHERLOCK (quickly): Lovely little village.

(He unwraps Archie from around him and gently pushes him towards the entrance.)

MUM: Hmm? (She looks down at Archie as they go inside.) What did you say?

INSIDE. Molly is canoodling with Tom, repeatedly kissing his cheek. Tom indicates that the photographer is approaching them, and she turns and smiles into the camera while he takes some pictures.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Nice.

(He moves on to the next nearest couple, who are Mrs Hudson and what must surely be Mr Chatterjee from the sandwich shop. Apparently Mrs H has forgiven him for already having two wives - or she hasn't yet found out about the one in Islamabad. She smiles happily for the camera; Mr Chatterjee doesn't look quite so happy to be there. The photographer turns and snaps several pictures of Greg who is sitting at a table and drinking. Greg, looking a little glum, raises his glass to him.)

John and Mary are standing nearby. John indicates as a waiter approaches with a plate of canapés.)

JOHN: Oh, d'you want ...?

MARY (taking one from the plate): I'm starving.

JOHN (declining the waiter's offer of the plate): Thanks.

MARY: Had to lose so much weight to get into this dress.

(John chuckles. Sherlock and Janine are standing together a short distance away. Janine looks admiringly at the waiter as he walks past.)

JANINE: He's nice.

(Sherlock sniffs deeply.)

SHERLOCK: Traces of two leading brands of deodorant, both advertised for their strength, suggestive of a chronic body odour problem manifesting under stress.

JANINE: Okay, done there. What about his friend?

(Sherlock turns to look where she's looking. In the nearby kitchen, another waiter is carefully pulling out the skewer from the middle of a large joint of roast beef.)

SHERLOCK: Long-term relationship, compulsive cheat.

JANINE: Seriously?

SHERLOCK: Waterproof cover on his smartphone. (Close-up of the phone in the man's jacket pocket.) Yet his complexion doesn't indicate outdoor work. (Close-up of the man's face.) Suggests he's in the habit of taking his phone into the shower with him, which means he often receives texts and emails he'd rather went unseen.

JANINE (smiling admiringly at Sherlock): Can I keep you?

SHERLOCK: D'you like solving crimes?

JANINE: Do you have a vacancy?

(Sherlock's eyes drift over to John, then he looks away again.)

Mary puts a hand on John's shoulder.)

MARY: So, Harry?

JOHN: Er, no. No show.

MARY: Darling, I'm so sorry.

JOHN: It was a bit of a punt asking her, I suppose. Still, free bar - wouldn't have been a good mix.

(He looks down, then raises his eyes towards the entrance and looks surprised.)

JOHN: Oh, God, wow!

(The scarred uniformed man we saw earlier has just walked in.)

MARY: Oh, G... Is that ...?

JOHN: He came!

(While Mary smiles with delight, John walks over to the man and they salute each other. Sherlock walks over to Mary.)

SHERLOCK: So that's him. Major Sholto.

(His voice sounds disapproving.)

MARY: Uh-huh.

(Sherlock narrows his eyes as he looks at the two men.)

SHERLOCK: If they're such good friends, why does he barely even mention him?

MARY: He mentions him all the time to me. He never shuts up about him.

SHERLOCK: About him?

MARY: Mm-hmm.

(She takes a drink from her wine glass, then grimaces.)

MARY: Urgh. I chose this wine. It's bloody awful.

SHERLOCK: Yes, but it's definitely him that he talks about?

MARY: Mm-hmm.

(At the entrance)

JOHN: I'm very, very glad to see you, sir. I know you don't really do this sort of thing.

SHOLTO: Well, I do for old friends, Watson ... John. It's good to see you.

JOHN: You too.

(Sholto nods, then looks around the room.)

SHOLTO: Civilian life suiting you, then?

JOHN: Er, er, yes, well ... (he gestures towards Mary) ... I think so, sir.

SHOLTO: No more need for the trick cyclist?

JOHN: No, I-I go now and then. Sort of a top-up.

(Sholto nods.)

JOHN: Therapy can be very helpful.

(Sholto awkwardly looks away.)

JOHN: Where are you living these days?

SHOLTO: Oh, way out in the middle of nowhere. You wouldn't know it.

(Back at Sherlock and Mary)

SHERLOCK: I've never even heard him say his name.

MARY: Well, he's almost a recluse - you know, since ...

SHERLOCK: Yes.

MARY: I didn't think he'd show up at all. John says he's the most unsociable man he's ever met.

SHERLOCK: He is? He's the most unsociable?

MARY: Mm.

SHERLOCK: Ah, that's why he's bouncing round him like a puppy.

(Mary grins and hugs his arm.)

MARY: Oh, Sherlock! Neither of us were the first, you know.

(He looks round at her.)

SHERLOCK: Stop smiling.

MARY (indignantly): It's my wedding day!

(Rolling his eyes, Sherlock pulls free and walks away. She takes another drink from her wine glass, then pulls a disgusted face at the taste.)

Elsewhere, the camera pans across the interior of a grand building and into a room with a large old painting on the wall and a suit of armour standing nearby. A steady regular thumping sound can be heard. The camera pans around the corner and reveals a running machine. Mycroft - dressed in gym clothes - is jogging on the machine. After a while he switches it off and jumps off, breathing heavily. He walks a few paces away, then stops and lifts his top to examine his stomach, patting it

reflectively and looking quite pleased with himself. On a nearby table, his phone rings. He picks it up and answers.

MYCROFT (breathlessly): Yes, what, Sherlock?

SHERLOCK (walking through the wedding reception room as he talks into his phone): Why are you out of breath?

MYCROFT: Filing.

SHERLOCK: Either I've caught you in a compromising position or you've been working out again. I favour the latter.

MYCROFT: What do you want?

SHERLOCK: I need your answer, Mycroft, as a matter of urgency.

MYCROFT: "Answer"?

SHERLOCK: Even at the eleventh hour it's not too late, you know.

MYCROFT (sighing): Oh, Lord.

SHERLOCK: Cars can be ordered, private jets commandeered.

MYCROFT: Today. It's today, isn't it? No, Sherlock, I will not be coming to the "night do," as you so poetically put it.

SHERLOCK (insincerely): What a shame. Mary and John will be extremely d...

MYCROFT: ... delighted not to have me hanging around.

SHERLOCK: Oh, I don't know. There should always be a spectre at the feast.

MYCROFT (picking up a glass of juice from the table): So, this is it, then. The big day. (He sits down in an armchair.) I suppose I'll be seeing a lot more of you from now on.

SHERLOCK: What do you mean?

MYCROFT: Just like old times.

SHERLOCK: No, I don't understand.

MYCROFT: Well, it's the end of an era, isn't it? John and Mary - domestic bliss.

SHERLOCK: No, no, no - I prefer to think of it as the beginning of a new chapter.

(Mycroft simply smiles.)

SHERLOCK: What?

MYCROFT: Nothing!

SHERLOCK: I know that silence. What?

MYCROFT: Well, I'd better let you get back to it. You have a big speech, or something, don't you?

SHERLOCK (still demanding an answer to his previous question): What?

MYCROFT: Cake, karaoke ... mingling.

SHERLOCK (angrily): Mycroft!

MYCROFT: This is what people do, Sherlock - they get married. I warned you: don't get involved.

SHERLOCK: Involved? I'm not involved.

MYCROFT (disbelievingly): No.

SHERLOCK: John asked me to be his best man. How could I say no?

MYCROFT (insincerely): Absolutely!

SHERLOCK: I'm not involved!

MYCROFT (insincerely): I believe you! Really, I do! Have a lovely day, and do give the happy couple my best.

SHERLOCK: I will.

(He lowers the phone, about to switch it off when Mycroft speaks again. Sherlock lifts the phone to his ear once more.)

MYCROFT: Oh, by the way, Sherlock - do you remember Redbeard?

(Sherlock's jaw tightens.)

SHERLOCK: I'm not a child any more, Mycroft.

MYCROFT: No, of course you're not. Enjoy not getting involved, Sherlock.

(Sherlock hangs up. He looks down for a moment, then walks across the room towards the top table.)

Fast-forward - literally - through the wedding meal as the guests eat their way through the three courses and drink lots of champagne, and then the Master of Ceremonies - or possibly just the head waiter - taps a spoon against a champagne glass to get everyone's attention.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Pray silence for the best man.

(The guests applaud and cheer as Sherlock rises to his feet at the top table. John and Mary are sitting to his right; Janine to his left. He buttons his jacket, looking a little uncomfortable.)

SHERLOCK: Ladies and gentlemen, family and friends ... and ... erm ... others.

(He stops and blinks. There's an awkward pause.)

SHERLOCK: Er ... w...

(John narrows his eyes and looks up at him.)

SHERLOCK: A-a-also ...

(Mary lifts a thumb to her mouth, rubbing it on her top lip. Mrs Hudson looks nervous and Greg sits back a little, looking concerned.)

FLASHBACK. Greg walks into Molly's lab at Bart's.

MOLLY: Greg.

LESTRADE: Molly.

MOLLY (turning to him): I just had a thought.

(She is holding a large metal bowl in front of her. He looks into it.)

LESTRADE: Is that a brain?!

MOLLY: What if John asks Sherlock to be his best man?

LESTRADE: Well, he will, won't he? He's bound to.

MOLLY: Exactly.

LESTRADE: So?

MOLLY: So he'll have to make a speech in front of people.

(Greg gazes into the distance as if realising the ramifications of this for the first time.)

MOLLY: There'll be actual people there, actually listening.

LESTRADE (tentatively): Well, what's the worst that could happen?

MOLLY: Helen Louise probably wondered the same.

LESTRADE: Helen Louise?

(Molly pointedly looks down at the brain in her bowl.)

FLASHBACK. Mrs Hudson, sitting in her kitchen, answers the phone.

MRS HUDSON: Oh, hallo, dear.

(Molly is on the other end of the line, again in her lab. She is wearing safety goggles and there is blood spatter on her lab coat. She is holding an electric bone saw in the blood-covered glove on her other hand.)

MOLLY (into phone): I was just thinking. If-if John does ask Sherlock ...

MRS HUDSON: What, the speech, dear? No, it'll be fine.

MOLLY: It-it's not just the speech, though, is it?

Shortly afterwards, John lets himself in the front door of 221 and walks towards the stairs. High-pitched hysterical noises are coming through the open door of 221A. As the noises continue, punctuated with an occasional squeal of, "Oh, dear!" and "Oh, brilliant!" John goes into her flat and looks into the kitchen in concern.

JOHN: Mrs Hudson?

(She waves to him from where she is sitting at the table, laughing hysterically.)

MRS HUDSON: Oh, hello, darling! (She continues to giggle.)

JOHN: You all right?

(She covers her mouth, laughing.)

JOHN: I was - I was coming to see Sherlock, and I thought you were ...

MRS HUDSON (giggling): Go!

JOHN: ... possibly dying. (He grins at the sight of her mirth.)

MRS HUDSON: Oh, sorry!

(She continues laughing.)

JOHN: What's wrong?

MRS HUDSON: The-the telegrams!

(She giggles.)

JOHN (grinning but clearly with no idea what she means): Sorry, what?

MRS HUDSON (giggling): Oh, sorry, dear!

(Standing up, she pats his arm and walks away, still shrieking with laughter. John looks bemused.)

THE PRESENT. John closes his eyes in realisation.

JOHN (quietly): Telegrams.

(Mary looks at him and Sherlock jolts out of his blankness.)

SHERLOCK: Right, um ...

(He pats his pockets, then seems to realise that the telegrams are in a pile in front of him. John clears his throat. Sherlock does likewise and looks at the guests, swallowing hard.)

SHERLOCK: First things first. Telegrams.

(He picks up the cards and shows them to the guests.)

SHERLOCK (quick fire): Well, they're not actually telegrams. We just call them telegrams. I don't know why. Wedding tradition.

(He lifts the first card.)

SHERLOCK (sarcastically): ... because we don't have enough of that already, apparently.

(John narrows his eyes a little.)

SHERLOCK (reading): "To Mr and Mrs Watson. So sorry I'm unable to be with you on your special day. Good luck and best wishes, Mike Stamford."

JOHN: Ah, Mike.

MARY: Ahh!

SHERLOCK (reading the next card): "To John and Mary. All good wishes for your special day. With love and many big ... (he breaks off, then continues slowly) ... big squishy cuddles, from Stella and Ted."

(He looks up, blinking rapidly. Greg sniggers and Molly smiles.)

SHERLOCK (reading the next card): "Mary - lots of love, ..."

(He breathes out an almost silent 'Oh.' John and Mary look up at him.)

JOHN: Yeah?

SHERLOCK (disparagingly): "... poppet ..."

(He loudly sounds the 't' at the end of the word. John and Mary giggle.)

SHERLOCK: "... Oodles of love and heaps of good wishes from CAM."

(Mary's smile fades. Sherlock continues reading the message.)

SHERLOCK: "Wish your family could have seen this."

(John looks round and sees Mary's face. He reaches out and takes her hand.)

JOHN: Hey. Hmm?

(She smiles reassuringly at him.)

SHERLOCK (looking at the next card): Um, "special day" ... (he drops the card onto the table and looks at the next one) ... "very special day" ... (he drops that one, then continues working rapidly through the next ones) ... "love" ... "love" ... "love" ... "love" ... "lo..." ; bit of a theme - you get the general gist. People are basically fond.

(There's some laughter from the guests.)

SHERLOCK (looking at them): John Watson. (He gestures towards John.) My friend, John Watson.

(He looks down for a moment, then looks at John.) John.

(John smiles at him. Sherlock turns to his audience again.)

SHERLOCK: When John first broached the subject of being best man, I was confused.

FLASHBACK. John trots up the stairs to 221B.

JOHN: Sherlock?

SHERLOCK (from the kitchen): What was that noise downstairs?

(John turns into the kitchen. Sherlock is standing at the table in his camel coloured dressing gown. Wearing safety glasses, he is holding an eyeball with a large pair of tweezers and is holding a lit blowtorch near to the optic nerve dangling behind it.)

JOHN: Er, it was Mrs Hudson laughing.

SHERLOCK: Sounded like she was torturing an owl.

JOHN: Yeah. Well, it was laughter.

SHERLOCK: Could have been both.

JOHN (looking at what he's doing): Busy?

(Sherlock sighs heavily.)

SHERLOCK: Just occupying myself. (He lifts his head and looks dramatically towards the ceiling.) Sometimes, it's so-o-o hard not smoking.

(The eyeball slips out of the tweezers and drops with a splash into a mug on the table. Sherlock looks down at it.)

SHERLOCK: Oh.

JOHN: Mm-hmm. Mind if I interrupt?

SHERLOCK (putting down the tweezers and gesturing to the chair at the end of the table): Er, be my guest.

(He switches off the blowtorch and puts it down while John walks over and pulls back the chair from the table. Sherlock picks up the mug and offers it to him.)

SHERLOCK: Tea?

JOHN: Er ...

(He shakes one hand to decline the offer. Sherlock puts down the mug and takes off his glasses.)

JOHN (sitting down): So. The big question.

SHERLOCK (turning to face him): Mm-hm.

JOHN (folding his hands and putting them onto the table in front of him): The best man.

SHERLOCK: The best man?

JOHN: What do you think?

SHERLOCK (instantly): Billy Kincaid.

JOHN: Sorry, what?

SHERLOCK (quick fire): Billy Kincaid, the Camden Garrotter. Best man I ever knew. Vast contributions to charity, never disclosed.

(John frowns.)

SHERLOCK (quick fire): Personally managed to save three hospitals from closure and ran the best and safest children's homes in north England.

(John tiredly rubs his fingers over his eyes.)

SHERLOCK (grimacing briefly): Yes, every now and again there'd be some garrottings, but stacking up the lives saved against the garrottings, on balance I'd say ...

JOHN (interrupting): For my wedding! For me. I need a best man.

SHERLOCK: Oh, right.

JOHN: Maybe not a garrotter.

SHERLOCK: Gavin?

JOHN: Who?

SHERLOCK: Gavin Lestrade? He's a man, and good at it.

JOHN: It's Greg. And he's not my best friend.

SHERLOCK: Oh, Mike Stamford, I see. Well, he's nice, um, though I'm not sure how well he'd cope with all ...

JOHN (interrupting): No, Mike's great, but he's not my best friend.

(Sherlock looks thoughtfully at him as if he can't think of another friend to suggest.)

JOHN: Look, Sherlock, this is the biggest and most important day of my life.

SHERLOCK (dubiously, pulling a face): Well ...

JOHN: No, it is! It is, and I want to be up there with the two people that I love and care about most in the world.

SHERLOCK: Yes.

(John nods. Clearly oblivious, Sherlock waits for him to tell him who these people are.)

JOHN: So, Mary Morstan ...

SHERLOCK: Yes.

JOHN (sighing tightly): ... and ...

(He looks up at Sherlock, who is still patiently waiting for further information. Eventually John pulls in a long breath.)

JOHN: ... you.

(Sherlock blinks rapidly several times but otherwise doesn't move or react.)

RECEPTION.

SHERLOCK: I confess at first I didn't realise he was asking me. When finally I understood, I expressed to him that I was both flattered and ... surprised.

FLASHBACK. Sherlock has frozen solid, staring blankly in John's direction but not actually looking at him. John taps his foot patiently.

RECEPTION.

SHERLOCK: I explained to him that I'd never expected this request and I was a little daunted in the face of it.

FLASHBACK. Sherlock is still motionless.

JOHN: Sherlock.

(Sherlock doesn't react.)

RECEPTION.

SHERLOCK: I nonetheless promised that I would do my very best to accomplish a task which was - for me - as demanding and difficult as any I had ever contemplated. Additionally, I thanked him for the trust he'd placed in me ...

(John frowns as if unable to remember this conversation.)

SHERLOCK: ... and indicated that I was, in some ways, very close to being ... moved by it.

FLASHBACK. Sherlock is still fixed in place, staring sightlessly ahead of him. The silence drags on for long seconds.

JOHN: That's getting a bit scary now.

RECEPTION.

SHERLOCK: It later transpired that I had said none of this out loud.

(John laughs, and some of the guests join in.)

FLASHBACK. Sherlock's brain finally begins to reboot and he takes a breath. He swallows and narrows his eyes slightly as he refocuses and looks at John.

SHERLOCK: So, in fact ...

(He thinks for a moment.)

SHERLOCK: You-you mean ...

JOHN: Yes.

SHERLOCK: I'm your ...

(John nods.)

SHERLOCK: ... best ...

JOHN: ... man.

SHERLOCK (almost simultaneously): ... friend?

JOHN: Yeah, 'course you are. 'Course you're my best friend.

(He smiles. Without looking down, Sherlock absently picks up the mug from the table and raises it towards his mouth. John watches with interest while he takes a long slurping drink and then swallows.)

JOHN: Well, how was that?

(Sherlock licks his lips, thinks about it for a moment, then nods.)

SHERLOCK: Surprisingly okay.

(Inside the mug, the eyeball pops up to the surface of the tea.)

JOHN: So you'll have to make a speech, of course.

(Sherlock offline again for a moment, then looks at John.)

RECEPTION. Sherlock reaches into his jacket pocket, clearing his throat, and takes out a handful of cue cards, looking at each one and putting it onto the table as he talks to himself.

SHERLOCK: Done that. ... Done that ... Done that bit ... Done that bit ... Done that bit ... Hmm ...

(He looks up at the guests again, then turns to John.)

SHERLOCK: I'm afraid, John, I can't congratulate you.

(Mary looks surprised and John looks up at him.)

SHERLOCK (looking at the guests): All emotions, and in particular love, stand opposed to the pure, cold reason I hold above all things. A wedding is, in my considered opinion, nothing short of a celebration of all that is false and specious and irrational and sentimental in this ailing and morally compromised world.

(The guests begin to look uncomfortable and some of them start murmuring quietly to each other.

Greg and Molly look at Sherlock in horror.)

SHERLOCK: Today we honour the death-watch beetle that is the doom of our society and, in time - one feels certain - our entire species.

(The guests stare at him. Sherlock pauses for a moment.)

SHERLOCK: But anyway ... (he looks down at his cards) ... let's talk about John.

JOHN (quietly): Please.

SHERLOCK (looking up again): If I burden myself with a little help-mate during my adventures, it is not out of sentiment or caprice - it is that he has many fine qualities of his own that he has overlooked in his obsession with me.

(Greg laughs silently.)

SHERLOCK: Indeed, any reputation I have for mental acuity and sharpness comes, in truth, from the extraordinary contrast John so selflessly provides.

(John sighs heavily, while Mary frowns.)

SHERLOCK: It is a fact, I believe, that brides tend to favour exceptionally plain bridesmaids for their big day. There is a certain analogy there, I feel.

(Janine stares up at him and the other two bridesmaids look uncomfortable.)

SHERLOCK (moving on to his next card): ... and contrast is, after all, God's own plan to enhance the beauty of his creation ...

(The vicar smiles.)

SHERLOCK: ... or it would be if God were not a ludicrous fantasy designed to provide a career opportunity for the family idiot.

(Mary face-palms and John is half-hiding behind his clasped hands. The vicar looks at Sherlock grimly, and more guests are muttering amongst themselves. Sherlock pauses for a moment.)

SHERLOCK: The point I'm trying to make is that I am the most unpleasant, rude, ignorant and all-round obnoxious arsehole that anyone could possibly have the misfortune to meet.

(He looks at the vicar.)

SHERLOCK: I am dismissive of the virtuous ...

(He turns to Janine.)

SHERLOCK: ... unaware of the beautiful ...

(He turns towards Mary and John.)

SHERLOCK: ... and uncomprehending in the face of the happy. So if I didn't understand I was being asked to be best man, it is because I never expected to be anybody's best friend.

(The guests have fallen silent again and are listening intently. Molly and Greg exchange a long glance.)

SHERLOCK: Certainly not the best friend of the bravest and kindest and wisest human being I have ever had the good fortune of knowing.

(Mary smiles proudly at her husband. Several of the guests make appreciative "aww" sounds.)

SHERLOCK: John, I am a ridiculous man ...

(John smiles and nods his agreement.)

SHERLOCK: ... redeemed only by the warmth and constancy of your friendship. But, as I'm apparently your best friend, I cannot congratulate you on your choice of companion.

(He looks down for a moment, then smiles a little.)

SHERLOCK: Actually, now I can.

(The guests murmur again, but now their tone is much more approving. John and Mary smile.)

SHERLOCK: Mary, when I say you deserve this man, it is the highest compliment of which I am capable. John, you have endured war, and injury, and tragic loss ... (he leans closer to John) ... so sorry again about that last one ... (he straightens up again) ... so know this: today you sit between the woman you have made your wife and the man you have saved - in short, the two people who love you most in all this world. And I know I speak for Mary as well when I say we will never let you down, and we have a lifetime ahead to prove that.

(Mrs Hudson whimpers and holds a tissue to her nose. Molly wipes tears from her eyes with her serviette. Other guests - even some of the men - sniffle. John turns to Mary and whispers to her.)

JOHN: If I try and hug him, stop me.

MARY: Certainly not.

(She pats his arm. Sherlock moves on to his next card.)

SHERLOCK: Ah, yes. Now on to some funny stories about John ...

(He trails off as he looks up and sees so many of the guests crying.)

SHERLOCK (quick fire): What's wrong? What happened? Why are you all doing that? John?

(Molly smiles proudly at him.)

MRS HUDSON (tearfully): Oh, Sherlock!

(Sherlock looks down at John.)

SHERLOCK: Did I do it wrong?

JOHN (standing up): No, you didn't. Come here.

(He pulls him into a tight hug. The guests break into applause. The fandom goes crazy.)

SHERLOCK: I haven't finished yet.

JOHN: Yeah, I know, I know.

SHERLOCK (holding up his next card and talking over the applause as John releases him): So, on to some funny stories ...

JOHN: Can you - can you wait 'til I sit down?

(Sherlock nods as the applause continues. John sits down, clearing his throat, and the applause finally fades.)

SHERLOCK: So, on to some funny stories about John.

(John chuckles. Sherlock looks at the guests.)

SHERLOCK: If you could all just cheer up a bit, that would ...

(The guests laugh.)

SHERLOCK: ... be better. On we go. So, for funny stories ... (he reaches into his pocket and takes out his phone) ... one has to look no further than John's blog.

(He holds up the phone. John laughs and turns to speak quietly to Mary.)

JOHN: Here we go.

SHERLOCK: The record of our time together. Of course, he does tend to romanticise things a bit, but then, you know ... (he looks down at John and Mary and half-winks at them) ... he's a romantic. We've tackled some strange cases: the Hollow Client ...

FLASHBACK. John and Sherlock walk up the stairs and into the living room of 221B, then stop dead at the sight which greets them. In John's chair which is facing towards the door is a suit, laid out exactly as it would appear if there was actually anyone inside it and sitting in the chair. There is even a pair of shoes at the bottom of the trousers.

SHERLOCK: ... the Poison Giant ...

FLASHBACK. A man is running across a rooftop. As he comes into full view we see that he is a person of short stature. He stops and raises a blowpipe to his lips.

SHERLOCK (offscreen): Get down, John!

(The man blows into the pipe and on the other side of the roof Sherlock and John duck down to avoid the dart which flies out of it. They immediately jump up again and run on in pursuit of the man.)

SHERLOCK: We've had some frustrating cases ...

FLASHBACK. In 221B John sits down at the dining table with a mug of tea. He looks across to Sherlock sitting in his chair, who is running his finger across his top lip and frowning down thoughtfully at a matchbox held in his other hand.

JOHN: What is that?

(Sherlock looks at him.)

SHERLOCK: A French decathlete found completely out of his mind, surrounded by one thousand, eight hundred and twelve matchboxes - all empty except this one.

JOHN: And what's in that one?

SHERLOCK (looking at the matchbox): The inexplicable.

(He slowly pushes open the matchbox. Whatever is inside glows brightly, illuminating Sherlock's face. He grins with delight.)

SHERLOCK (rolling his eyes): ... 'touching' cases ...

FLASHBACK. John is standing at the window of 221B looking down into the street.

JOHN: She's going to ring the doorbell.

(He's looking at a young woman who is hovering outside Speedy's and looking towards 221's front door. She stops and then turns around.)

JOHN: Oh, no. She's changed her mind.

(The woman walks away a few paces, then stops and turns around again.)

JOHN: No, she's gonna do it ... No, she's leaving. She's leaving. ... Oh, she's coming back.

(Sherlock is sprawled in his chair with his head raised towards the ceiling. His eyes are closed.)

SHERLOCK: She's a client. She's boring. I've seen those symptoms before.

JOHN: Hmm?

SHERLOCK: Oscillation on the pavement always means there's a love affair.

SHERLOCK: ... and of course I have to mention the elephant in the room.

FLASHBACK. The boys stand in the doorway of what looks like a fairly ordinary room somewhere. They stare up wide-eyed at what they can see inside. Sherlock opens his mouth. Offscreen, an elephant trumpets loudly. Sherlock closes his mouth again.

SHERLOCK: But we want something ... very particular for this special day, don't we?

(He looks down at his phone, then raises his eyes again.)

SHERLOCK: The Bloody Guardsman.

FLASHBACK. John's blog entry entitled "The Bloody Guardsman" drifts across the screen for a moment, then fades to a view of Sherlock standing in the living room of 221B looking at his information wall behind the sofa. He turns to where Mary is sitting at the dining table and John is sitting in his armchair and looking at his phone.

SHERLOCK: Need to work on your half of the church, Mary. Looking a bit thin.

MARY (smiling): Ah, orphan's lot. Friends - that's all I have. Lots of friends.

(We get a glimpse of the paperwork on the wall and realise that Sherlock is organising the hell out of the wedding. There is a list of things which need to be done, all of them ticked off, and the wall is divided into areas which are headed, "Transport," "Catering," "Rehearsal," "Wine," and probably other items too. On the table beside Mary is a cardboard 3D model of the reception venue.)

SHERLOCK: Schedule the organ music to begin at precisely 11.48.

MARY: But the rehearsal's not for another two weeks. Just calm down.

SHERLOCK: Calm? I am calm. I'm extremely calm.

MARY: Let's get back to the reception, come on.

(He walks over to the table.)

MARY (handing him an RSVP card): John's cousin. Top table?

SHERLOCK (looking at the card): Hmm. Hates you. Can't even bear to think about you.

MARY (looking up at him): Seriously?

SHERLOCK: Second class post, cheap card ... (he sniffs it and grimaces) ... bought at a petrol station. Look at the stamp: three attempts at licking. She's obviously unconsciously retaining saliva.

MARY: Ah. (Over her shoulder to John) Let's stick her by the bogs.

[Transcriber's note: 'bogs' is a slang word for 'toilets.]

SHERLOCK: Oh yes.

(He sits down. Mary leans closer to him.)

MARY: Who else hates me?

(Instantly Sherlock hands her a sheet of paper. There's a long list of names on it.)

MARY: Oh great - thanks(!)

JOHN (looking at his phone): Priceless painting nicked. Looks interesting.

MARY (looking at paperwork on the table): Table four ...

SHERLOCK: Done.

JOHN (chuckling at something on his screen): "My husband is three people."

MARY: Table five.

SHERLOCK (looking at a list): Major James Sholto. Who he?

MARY: Oh, John's old commanding officer. I don't think he's coming.

JOHN: He'll be there.

MARY: Well, he needs to RSVP, then.

JOHN (firmly): He'll be there.

MARY: Mmm ...

JOHN (reading from his phone): "My husband is three people." It's interesting. Says he has three distinct patterns of moles on his skin.

SHERLOCK (standing up and speaking quick fire): Identical triplets - one in half a million births. Solved it without leaving the flat. Now, serviettes.

(He squats down beside the coffee table, reaches under it and pulls out a tray with two serviettes folded into different shapes. He gestures to them as he looks up at Mary.)

SHERLOCK: Swan, or Sydney Opera House?

MARY: Where'd you learn to do that?!

SHERLOCK (looking down): Many unexpected skills required in the field of criminal investigation ...

MARY: Fibbing, Sherlock.

SHERLOCK: I once broke an alibi by demonstrating the exact severity of ...

MARY: I'm not John. I can tell when you're fibbing.

SHERLOCK (exasperated): Okay - I learned it on YouTube.

MARY: Opera House, please.

(She leans to one side and reaches into her trouser pocket.)

MARY: Ooh, hang on. I'm buzzing.

(She takes out her phone and lifts it to her ear.)

MARY: Hello?

(She listens for a second, then stands up.)

MARY: Oh, hi, Beth!

(John's eyes lift from his phone as Mary heads for the kitchen.)

MARY (into phone): Yeah, yeah, don't see why not.

JOHN (standing up and looking at Sherlock): Actually, if that's Beth, it's probably for me too. Hang on.

(He heads for the kitchen, while Sherlock sits down on the floor cross-legged and facing the coffee table.)

In the kitchen, John smiles at Mary as he walks closer to her. They talk quietly.)

JOHN: He knows we don't have a friend called Beth. He's gonna figure out that it's code.

MARY: He's YouTube-ing serviettes.

JOHN: He's thorough.

MARY: He's terrified.

JOHN: 'Course he's not.

MARY: Right, you know when you're scared of something, you start wishing it sooner just to get it all going? That's what he's doing.

JOHN: Why would he be scared that we're getting married? It's not gonna change anything - we'll still do stuff.

MARY: Well, you need to prove it to him. I told you to find him a new case.

JOHN: I'm trying.

MARY: You need to run him, okay? Show him it's still the good old days.

(She nods encouragingly to him. He doesn't immediately respond, and she nods again and gestures towards the living room. He looks around, then turns and slowly starts towards the door between the kitchen and the living room. Mary puts her hands on his back and shoves him forward. Sherlock is still sitting cross-legged on the floor in front of the coffee table, his head propped up on one hand. He briefly looks round at John, then turns back and gestures at what's in front of him. There are at least seven serviettes folded in Sydney Opera House shapes on the table, and sixteen or so more on the floor.)

SHERLOCK: That just sort of ... happened.

(He looks round at John again, who frowns but then smiles. Glancing back into the kitchen for a moment, he walks towards his friend.)

JOHN: Sherlock, um ...

(Sherlock stands up.)

JOHN: ... mate ...

(Again he frowns briefly, perhaps wondering if he is overdoing it.)

JOHN: I-I've ...

(He walks over to the dining table. Sherlock glances towards the kitchen where Mary can be heard talking as if she's on a phone call, then they both sit down at the table.)

JOHN: I've smelled eighteen different perfumes; I've sampled ... (he stops to think) ... nine different slices of cake which all tasted identical; I like the bridesmaids in purple ...

SHERLOCK: Lilac.

JOHN: ... lilac. Um, there are no more decisions left to make. I don't even understand the decisions that we have made. I'm faking opinions and it's exhausting, so please, before she comes back ...

(He glances towards the kitchen, activates his phone, clears his throat and holds the phone across the table. The screen is showing Sherlock's "Science of Deduction" website.)

JOHN: ... pick something.

(Sherlock's eyes flicker down to the screen a couple of times.)

JOHN: Anything. Pick one.

SHERLOCK: Pick what?

(John blinks a few times and then laughs.)

JOHN: A case. Your Inbox is bursting. Just ... get me out of here.

SHERLOCK (leaning closer and speaking quietly): You want to go out on a case? N-now?

JOHN: Please, Sherlock, for me.

(Sherlock takes the phone.)

SHERLOCK (quietly): Don't you worry about a thing. I'll get you out of this.

(He starts to flick through messages on his website. After only a few seconds he finds something of interest.)

SHERLOCK: Oh.

[Transcriber's note for the following scenes: my knowledge of military terminology is extremely limited. I have googled the heck out of certain terms in the hope of getting them right but am not confident that I am using the correct words all the time. I'm happy to take corrections from people with expertise.

Click here for information about Her Majesty's Foot Guards, which also indicates that Sherlock is incorrect in referring to his new client as a 'Grenadier.' While I wouldn't necessarily expect him to

have the knowledge of how to distinguish between the different Guards, I would have expected the writers to do their homework.]

In a military barracks inside a grand building, two members of The Queen's Foot Guards wearing full dress uniform and carrying their tall fur bearskin caps walk up the stairs. The voice of one of them narrates his message to Sherlock.

BAINBRIDGE (voiceover): "Dear Mr Holmes, My name is Bainbridge. I'm a Private in Her Majesty's Household Guard. I'm writing to you about a personal matter ...

(Outside Wellington Barracks in London, Bainbridge is one of two men standing on duty outside the gates in the full uniform of the Welsh Guards [not the Grenadier Guards]. A Japanese tourist stands beside him posing with her thumbs up while her male friend takes photographs.)

BAINBRIDGE (voiceover): "... one I don't care to bring before my superiors - it would sound so trivial - but I think someone's stalking me.

(Over the other side of the road, three tourists are taking photos of the view. Bainbridge - with his gaze fixed ahead of him as he must do while on duty - has a clear view of them.)

BAINBRIDGE (voiceover): "I'm used to tourists - it's part of the job - but this is different. Someone's watching me.

(The tourists over the road walk away. Standing behind them is a man with the hood of his jacket pulled up and obscuring the view of his face. He seems to be looking directly at Bainbridge but as soon as the tourists are no longer blocking him, he turns and walks away.)

BAINBRIDGE (voiceover): "He's taking pictures of me every day.

(Inside the barracks, Bainbridge walks across what may be his bedroom or dorm room, which overlooks the parade ground. He is bare chested. He idly looks out of the window and sees the usual group of tourists outside the gates but his attention is immediately drawn to a man wearing an overcoat and with a cap on his head. The man is standing close to the fence and is initially aiming his camera in a different direction, but he then swings the camera across and up to point at Bainbridge in the window.)

BAINBRIDGE (voiceover): "Don't want to mention it to the major, but it's really preying on my mind."

(The man snaps a couple of photographs, then hurries away.)

SHERLOCK (still looking at John's phone in 221B): Uniform fetishist. "All the nice girls like a soldier."

JOHN: It's "sailor."

[Click here for the lyrics of the song to which the boys are referring.]

JOHN: And Bainbridge thinks his stalker is a bloke.

(Sherlock looks at the phone again, perhaps reading more of Bainbridge's email.)

JOHN: Let's go and investigate. Please?

SHERLOCK (reading): "Elite Guard."

JOHN: Forty enlisted men and officers.

SHERLOCK: Why this particular Grenadier? Curious.

JOHN: Now you're talking.

SHERLOCK (handing his phone back): Okay.

(They stand up and walk towards the doors just as Mary comes back into the room with her phone at her ear.)

MARY (into phone): 'Bye.

JOHN: Er, we're just going to ... I need, um, Sherlock to help me choose some, er, socks.

SHERLOCK (simultaneously): ... ties.

MARY (looking from one to the other): Why don't we go with socks?

JOHN: Yeah.

MARY: I mean, you've got to get the right ones.

JOHN: Exactly - to go with my ...

SHERLOCK: ... tie.

JOHN (simultaneously): ... outfit.

MARY (looking at John): That'll take a while, right?

(John points towards the kitchen.)

JOHN: My coat in there?

MARY: Yes!

(He walks into the kitchen and Mary and Sherlock walk closer together.)

SHERLOCK (quietly): Just going to take him out for a bit - run him.

MARY: I know.

(Sherlock smiles at her.)

MARY (gesturing happily towards him): You said you'd find him a case!

SHERLOCK: Mm.

JOHN (from the kitchen doorway): Come on, Sherlock.

SHERLOCK: Coming.

(He turns and goes to the living room door, then turns back to face Mary. Unseen by each other, Sherlock does a double thumbs-up at her and gives her a "only you and I know about what we're doing here" grin, while from the kitchen John circles his thumb and forefinger at her and winks much the same message. She holds up her thumbs to both of them and grins widely. The boys both turn and head for the stairs. Going out of the front door, Sherlock finishes putting his coat on and calls out to an approaching cab.)

SHERLOCK: Taxi!

There are a few interspersed scenes of a group of Guards marching back to the barracks, and Sherlock and John making their way to the barracks themselves. The Guards arrive back and are in the parade ground marching into position preparing to be dismissed.

PARADE SERGEANT: Company, halt! ... Right turn!

(Our boys are at the entrance to the barracks. John has given his wallet containing his military ID card to the duty sergeant.)

JOHN: We're here to see Private Stephen Bainbridge.

DUTY SERGEANT: He's on duty right now, sir ... (he hands the wallet back) ... but I'll certainly let him know when he's free.

SHERLOCK: And when will that be?

DUTY SERGEANT: Another hour.

Bainbridge, with another Foot Guard, is on duty outside the gates of the barracks. He stands fixed in position and tourists take photographs. Over the other side of the road and a few yards back from the pavement, Sherlock and John are sitting on a bench in the park looking towards the gates.

SHERLOCK: Do you think they give them classes?

JOHN: Classes?

SHERLOCK: How to resist the temptation to scratch their behinds?

JOHN: Afferent neurons in the peripheral nervous system.

(Sherlock turns his head slightly in John's direction.)

JOHN: Bum itch.

SHERLOCK: Oh!

(They sit in silence for a few seconds.)

SHERLOCK: So why don't you see him any more?

JOHN: Who?

SHERLOCK: Your previous commander, Sholto.

JOHN: "Previous commander."

SHERLOCK (briefly closing his eyes awkwardly): I meant "ex."

JOHN: "Previous" suggests that I currently have a commander.

SHERLOCK: Which you don't.

JOHN: Which I don't.

SHERLOCK (with a small smile): 'Course you don't. He was decorated, wasn't he? A war hero.

JOHN: Not to everyone. He led a team of crows into battle.

SHERLOCK: "Crows"?

JOHN: New recruits. It's standard procedure: break the new boys in - but it went wrong. They all died; he was the only survivor. The press and the families gave him hell. He gets more death threats than you.

SHERLOCK: Oh, I wouldn't count on that.

JOHN: Why have you suddenly taken an interest in another human being?

SHERLOCK: I'm ... chatting.

(John raises his eyebrows and looks round at him. Sherlock half-turns his head and looks at him out of the corner of his eye.)

SHERLOCK (turning his head back to the front): Won't be trying that again.

JOHN: Changing the subject completely ... (he pulls in a breath through his nose, then looks at Sherlock again) ... you know it won't alter anything, right, me and Mary, getting married? We'll still be doing all this.

SHERLOCK: Oh, good.

JOHN: If you were worrying.

SHERLOCK: Wasn't worried.

(John looks down and chuckles thoughtfully.)

JOHN: See, the thing about Mary - she has completely turned my life around; changed everything. But, for the record, over the last few years there are two people who have done that ... and the other one is ...

(He looks round. Sherlock is no longer sitting at his side.)

JOHN: ... a complete dickhead.

(He looks all around the park but there is no sign of said dickhead.)

Inside the barracks, the duty sergeant sits at his desk looking through paperwork. Through the window behind him, three pairs of Guards march past, only the upper part of their bodies and their bearskins visible. A seventh bearskin-wearing person marches behind them ... except that this one is wearing a highly non-regulation Belstaff coat.

Outside, Sherlock marches along behind the others, smartly swinging his arms, then he stops, takes off the bearskin and puts it down on a nearby ledge. Using the window above the ledge as a mirror, he ruffles his flattened hair back into position, then heads off across the parade ground.

Inside the barracks, he walks across the entrance hall towards one of two flights of stairs. Two Guards wearing standard khaki army attire walk down the other flight and Sherlock turns his head away from them and apparently instantly becomes invisible, because they take no notice of him. He trots up the stairs, employing the “I’m invisible if I don’t look at you” trick again partway up when two more soldiers walk across the landing, then he goes up onto the landing. Several voices can be heard talking and laughing from a nearby room, and he walks across and opens the door. Inside is a rec room where many soldiers are sitting and chatting. Two are playing table tennis and others are watching them. Sherlock must have gone into invisibility mode again, because nobody looks at him or reacts in any way. He closes the door again and moves on.

Outside the barracks, a new Guard has come to relieve Bainbridge. He marches over, turns to stand at Bainbridge’s side and shuffles sideways until their shoulders touch. Bainbridge marches forward a few paces, then turns and marches into the barracks.

Inside, now holding his bearskin under his arm, he walks up the stairs. His face appears to be rather sweaty. He walks into the shower room, puts the bearskin down and undoes his white webbing belt, grimacing a little. Putting the belt down, he starts to unbutton his jacket.

In an office nearby, an officer called Major Reed is sitting behind his desk and looking at John’s military ID card. He looks up at John who is sitting opposite him.

REED: Can I ask what this is in connection with?

JOHN: Private Bainbridge contacted us about a personal matter, sir.

REED: Nothing’s personal when it concerns my troops. What do you really want?

JOHN: I’m here on a legitimate enquiry.

REED: Press? Digging for some bloody Royal story or something?

JOHN (pointing at his ID card): No, sir, I’m Captain John Watson, Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.

REED: Retired. You could be a used car salesman now, for all I know.

The duty sergeant walks into the shower room. One of the showers is running and steam billows across the floor.

DUTY SERGEANT: Bainbridge! Gentleman here to see you!

(He walks across towards the cubicle.)

DUTY SERGEANT: Bainbridge!

(He raps on the closed door of the cubicle, then looks down. Through the almost-opaque door, Bainbridge can be seen slumped on the floor with his back against the door, and bloodstained water is pouring out of the cubicle.)

REED’S OFFICE. Major Reed looks closely at John.

REED: I know you, don’t I?

JOHN: Hmm?

(Reed tosses John’s card across the table. John picks it up and puts it back into his wallet.)

REED: I’ve seen you in the papers.

(John clears his throat uncomfortably.)

REED: Hang around with that detective - the one with the silly hat. What the hell does Bainbridge want with a detective?

JOHN: I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to say.

REED: You're not at liberty to say?! He's a soldier in my regiment - I'll be damned if he's going to get up to cloak and dagger nonsense like this.

(The duty sergeant hurries into the room.)

DUTY SERGEANT: Sir ...

(He stops when he realises that Reed isn't alone in the room.)

DUTY SERGEANT: Sir.

REED: What's going on?

DUTY SERGEANT: It's Bainbridge, sir. He's dead.

(Looking horrified, Reed gets up and follows the sergeant out of the room. John hurries after them.)

In the shower room, Bainbridge is now lying face down on the floor on top of a great deal of broken glass. There is a lot of blood on his lower back. The duty sergeant leads the others in, and Reed hurries over to the body staring at it in shock.

REED: My God!

(Sighing deeply at the sight, John walks towards Bainbridge but Reed holds up a hand to stop him.)

JOHN: Ah, no, let me take a look, sir. I'm a doctor.

REED: What? Sergeant, arrest this man.

(The duty sergeant instantly takes hold of John's left arm and twists it behind his back.)

JOHN: What? No-no! I'm a - I'm a doctor.

REED: Oh, you're a doctor now, too. Sergeant ...

(He jerks his head towards the door.)

JOHN: Let me examine him, please!

(The sergeant starts to pull John away but just then another sergeant comes in, bundling Sherlock into the room. He has Sherlock's right arm twisted up behind his back.)

SERGEANT: Sir, caught this one snooping around.

(Reed looks at John.)

REED: Is that what this was all about? Distracting me so that this man could get in here and kill Bainbridge?

JOHN: Don't be ...

(Sherlock has pulled free of his sergeant and is walking forward to look more closely at the body.)

The sergeant follows him, taking hold of his arms and pulling him away again.)

SHERLOCK (to Reed): Kill him with what? Where's the weapon?

REED: What?

SHERLOCK: Where's the weapon? Go on, search me. (He holds his arms wide.) No weapon.

JOHN: Bainbridge was on parade. He came off duty five minutes ago. When's this supposed to have happened?

REED (to Sherlock): You obviously stabbed him before he got into the shower.

SHERLOCK: No.

REED: No?!

SHERLOCK: He's soaking wet and there's still shampoo in his hair. He got into the shower and then someone stabbed him.

DUTY SERGEANT: The cubicle was locked from the inside, sir. I had to break it open.

REED: You must have climbed over the top.

SHERLOCK: Well then I'd be soaking wet too, wouldn't I?

JOHN (loudly): Major, please. I'm John Watson, Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers. Three years in Afghanistan, a veteran of Kandahar, Helmand, and Bart's bloody Hospital. (Firmly) Let me examine this body.

(Reed looks down at the body for a long moment, then finally looks at the duty sergeant and nods sharply. The man releases John.)

JOHN (taking his jacket off): Thank you.

(Walking forward, he puts the jacket onto a bench and then goes over to crouch down beside Bainbridge. The duty sergeant talks quietly to Sherlock.)

DUTY SERGEANT: Suicide?

SHERLOCK: No. The weapon again - no knife.

(He walks to the front of the shower cubicle and bends down to look all around it, then squats down at Bainbridge's head. John is examining Bainbridge's lower back.)

JOHN: Hmm. There is a wound to the abdomen - incredibly fine.

SHERLOCK: Man stabbed to death. No murder weapon. Door locked from the inside. Only one way in or out of here.

(John has moved to Bainbridge's head and has peeled one of his eyes open.)

JOHN: Sherlock.

SHERLOCK: Mmm?

JOHN: He's still breathing.

DUTY SERGEANT: Oh my God.

SHERLOCK (to John): What do we do?

JOHN: Give me your scarf.

SHERLOCK: What?

JOHN: Quickly, now.

(While Sherlock unwraps his scarf from his neck, John looks up at Reed and the others.)

JOHN: Call an ambulance.

SERGEANT: What?

JOHN (loudly): Call an ambulance now.

(He points towards the door. Still the men hesitate.)

JOHN (firmly): Do it!

(Both of the sergeants turn and hurry from the room. John has pressed the scarf against the wound in Bainbridge's back and now he takes Sherlock's hand and puts it on top of the scarf, positioning his fingers where he wants them.)

JOHN: Nurse, press here - hard.

SHERLOCK (wrinkling his nose in distaste): "Nurse"?

JOHN: Yeah, I'm making do. Keep pressure on that wound.

(Sherlock leans closer so that he can press harder. John moves to Bainbridge's head.)

JOHN: Stephen. Stephen, stay with me.

RECEPTION.

SHERLOCK: Private Bainbridge had just come off guard duty. He'd stood there for hours, plenty of people watching, nothing apparently wrong. He came off duty and within minutes was nearly dead from a wound in his stomach, but there was no weapon. Where did it go? Ladies and gentlemen, I

invite you to consider this: a murderer who can walk through walls, a weapon that can vanish - but in all of this there is only one element which can be said to be truly remarkable. Would anyone like to make a guess?

(The guests fidget and look at each other.)

SHERLOCK: Come on, come on, there is actually an element of Q and A to all of this.

(He clears his throat. Still the guests remain silent.)

SHERLOCK: Scotland Yard.

(Greg lifts his head.)

SHERLOCK: Have you got a theory?

(Greg stares at him blankly.)

SHERLOCK: Yeah, you. You're a detective - broadly speaking. Got a theory?

LESTRADE: Er, um, if the, uh, if the, if-if-if, if the blade was, er, propelled through the, um ... (he stops to think for a moment) ... grating in the air vent ... maybe a-a ballista or a - or a - or a catapult. Erm, somebody tiny could-could crawl in there. (He sucks in a breath.) So, yeah, we're loo... we're looking for a-a-a-a dwarf.

(Sherlock is staring at him blankly.)

SHERLOCK: Brilliant.

LESTRADE: Really?

SHERLOCK (instantly): No.

(Greg sighs and lowers his head.)

SHERLOCK: Next!

TOM (whispering to Molly): He stabbed himself.

SHERLOCK: Hello? Who was that?

(Tom looks round, wide-eyed.)

SHERLOCK: Tom.

(Grimacing, Tom slowly stands up.)

SHERLOCK: Got a theory?

(Tom sways nervously from foot to foot for a moment.)

TOM (slowly, tentatively): Um ... attempted suicide, with a blade made of compacted blood and bone; broke after piercing his abdomen ... like a meat ... dagger.

(A couple of the guests snigger. Sitting beside Tom, Molly's face is a picture of disbelief. She may be reconsidering her marriage options. At the top table, Sherlock's expression also speaks volumes.)

SHERLOCK (speaking precisely): A meat dagger.

TOM (awkwardly): Yes.

MOLLY (whispering through gritted teeth): Sit. Down.

SHERLOCK (to Tom, speaking precisely): No.

(Tom sits down.)

SHERLOCK (to the guests): There was one feature, and only one feature, of interest in the whole of this baffling case, and quite frankly it was the usual. John Watson - who, while I was trying to solve the murder, instead saved a life.

(Mary quietly laughs in delight, and John smiles.)

SHERLOCK: There are mysteries worth solving and stories worth telling.

(He looks down at John.)

SHERLOCK: The best and bravest man I know - and on top of that he actually knows how to do stuff.

(John lowers his head and chuckles with embarrassment.)

SHERLOCK: ... except wedding planning and serviettes - he's rubbish at those.

JOHN: True!

(The guests laugh.)

SHERLOCK: The case itself remains the most ingenious and brilliantly-planned murder - or attempted murder - I've ever had the pleasure to encounter; the most perfect locked-room mystery of which I am aware. However, I'm not just here to praise John - I'm also here to embarrass him, so let's move on to some ...

LESTRADE (interrupting): No-no, wait, so how was it ... how was it done?

SHERLOCK: How was what done?

LESTRADE: The stabbing.

(Sherlock looks down awkwardly for a few moments, then raises his head.)

SHERLOCK: I'm afraid I don't know. I didn't solve that one. That's ... (he pauses) ... It can happen sometimes. It's very ... very disappointing.

(He looks reflective for a second, then takes a breath and looks out to the guests again.)

SHERLOCK: Embarrassment leads me on to the stag night. Of course there's hours of material here, but I've cut it down to the really good bits.

FLASHBACK. An entry from John's blog entitled "The Mayfly Man" drifts across the screen. It starts, 'We'd just returned from a quiet, civilised evening in the pub ...' The entry fades from view and we're in Molly's lab at Bart's.

MOLLY: Murder scenes?

(She turns and looks at Sherlock standing beside her.)

MOLLY: Locations of ... murders?

SHERLOCK: Mmmm, pub crawl - themed.

MOLLY: Yeah, but why-why can't you just do Underground stations?

SHERLOCK (wrinkling his nose in distaste): Lacks the personal touch. We're going to go for a drink in every street where we ...

MOLLY (joining in, then finishing his sentence for him): ... every street where you found a corpse! Delightful(!) Where do I come in?

SHERLOCK: Don't want to get ill. That would ruin it - spoil the mood.

MOLLY: You're a graduate chemist. Can't you just work it out?

SHERLOCK: I lack the practical experience.

(He smiles at her. She looks at him straight-faced and her voice drops half an octave.)

MOLLY: Meaning you think I like a drink.

SHERLOCK: Occasionally.

MOLLY: That I'm a drunk.

SHERLOCK (quickly): No. No!

(She sternly holds his gaze. He looks away, blinking for a couple of seconds, then finally finds something to say.)

SHERLOCK: You look ... well.

MOLLY (smiling slightly): I am.

SHERLOCK: How's ...

(He looks to the side, clearly searching his brain for the name before finally finding one which he doesn't seem totally confident of, because he offers it very tentatively.)

SHERLOCK: ... Tom?

MOLLY: Not a sociopath.

SHERLOCK: Still? Good.

MOLLY (smiling at him): And we're having quite a lot of sex.

(Sherlock offlines momentarily, his eyes flickering between her and mid-air before he can move on.)

SHERLOCK: Okay.

(He takes a large folder full of papers from his coat and puts it on the table.)

SHERLOCK: I want you to calculate John's ideal intake, and mine, to remain in the sweet spot the whole evening.

(The folder appears to be full of his and John's medical records and other personal documentation. Molly looks at what seems to be a birth certificate.)

SHERLOCK: Light-headed, good ...

(He hands her a picture of Vitruvian Man [click for image] with a photograph of John's head stuck over the original head.)

MOLLY: Urinating in wardrobes, bad.

SHERLOCK: Hmm.

PUB. Sherlock stands at the bar and looks at the barman.

SHERLOCK: Two, er ... beers, please.

BARMAN: Pints?

(Sherlock takes two tall and slender glass graduated cylinders from his coat pockets and puts them onto the bar. [Thanks to opaljade for the correct terminology.]

SHERLOCK: Four hundred and forty-three point seven millilitres.

(Shortly afterwards he takes the cylinders, now almost full of beer, over to the nearby bench where John is standing and puts them onto the table.)

JOHN: Ah...

(He looks at them in disbelief, then sighs heavily while Sherlock takes out his phone, selects an app and puts it onto the bench. The phone's stopwatch starts up.)

JOHN (picking up his cylinder): What, are we on a schedule?

SHERLOCK: You'll thank me.

(Smiling, he clinks his own cylinder against John's and they drink.)

NEXT PUB. Sitting at a table in a bar, the boys clink their cylinders together and drink.

NEXT PUB. Standing at the bar, Sherlock drains his cylinder, grins widely, then delicately wipes his lip. He seems to be feeling the beer a little. John looks down into his own cylinder with perhaps a disappointed expression.

NEXT PUB. John takes a long pull on his drink and hums appreciatively, while Sherlock looks thoughtfully at the level of beer remaining in his own cylinder. They both turn and look down at Sherlock's phone on the bar, then John puts down his cylinder and Sherlock bends to look at the level.

NEXT PUB. They clink their cylinders together again.

JOHN: Cheers.

SHERLOCK: Cheers.

(They drink. Sherlock is holding his phone in his other hand, updating their alcohol levels.)

NEXT PUB. Sitting at a table, the boys drain their latest beers, grimace and then put the cylinders onto the table. This bar has loud music playing. John turns and looks all round the room. Sherlock points over John's shoulder.

SHERLOCK: Over there.

JOHN (leaning closer): What?

SHERLOCK: Toilets. Any second now, you're going to ...

JOHN (putting a hand on his arm): Hang on. Tell me after - I need the loo. (He gets up.)

SHERLOCK: Mmm, on schedule.

JOHN (turning back): Eh?

SHERLOCK: Nothing - go!

(John stumbles off, while Sherlock looks at his phone and pulls up his charts which will measure urine output against blood alcohol level. He updates the alcohol level chart and finishes it with a fancy flourish.

A little while later John returns to the table.)

SHERLOCK: How long?

JOHN: Sorry?

SHERLOCK: Your visit.

(John sits down and gives him a quizzical look. Sherlock looks down at his chart.)

SHERLOCK: If you could estimate approximate volume discharged ...

JOHN: Stop talking now.

(He half-winks at him.)

NEXT PUB. John is alone at the bar, and he takes a shot glass full of - presumably - whiskey from the barman.

JOHN: Ooh, er ...

(He glances over his shoulder to where Sherlock is standing with his back to him.)

JOHN: Quick, one more. He mustn't see.

(He drinks the shot in one gulp, humming appreciatively, then takes the second shot which the barman has brought him.)

JOHN: Ta.

(The two cylinders are on the bar in front of him, full of beer, and he pours the whiskey into the left one. He takes both of them across towards Sherlock but then stops and looks at them, apparently unable to remember which one has the shot in it. Sniffing the left one and presumably thinking that that one contains only beer, he puts it onto the table.)

JOHN: There you go.

(Sherlock turns and picks it up.)

JOHN: Cheers.

SHERLOCK: Thank you.

(They drink.)

NEXT PUB. Sherlock is plastered. In the smoking area outside the pub, he is loudly and drunkenly gesticulating and sounding off to a male customer over the very loud music.

SHERLOCK: I know ash!

(John is sitting at a nearby table, looking fairly legless himself. He covers his face with his hand.)

SHERLOCK: Don't - Tell - Me - I - Don't!

(On each word he pokes the man in the upper chest with one finger, and on the last word he puts his hand on the man's shoulder and pushes him. Sighing, John looks up as the man swings a punch at Sherlock's face. Sherlock sways back - possibly more by luck than judgement - and avoids it.)

JOHN (jumping up): Oh ...

(Thrown off-balance by his swing, the man stumbles forward and almost falls onto a nearby table. One of his mates helps him up. John grabs Sherlock from behind and pulls him away while Sherlock flails wildly towards the man.)

JOHN: All right, enough! That's ...

(Grunting with the effort and slurring the rest of his words [possibly saying 'Come on'], he drags Sherlock a few feet away, supporting most of his weight, before propping him onto his feet.)

JOHN: Stand up straight.

(Sherlock turns round towards him. John points towards the exit to Sherlock's left.)

JOHN: Yeah.

(Sherlock points back towards the customer.)

SHERLOCK (slurring): Ashtray. I know ashtray.

[A million thanks to miss-dramateen for posting this video with the music removed so that the words finally became clear.]

All is silent. The camera pans slowly down a flight of stairs and reveals the boys lying on the steps. John is on his back by the wall with his arms folded; Sherlock is on his side facing the bannisters. Both of them have their eyes closed.

SHERLOCK (slurring): I have an international reputation.

(John briefly opens his eyes, then closes them again and settles his head into a more comfortable position. Sherlock looks over his shoulder.)

SHERLOCK: Do you have an international reputation?

(He settles his head down and closes his eyes again.)

JOHN: No, I don't have an international reputation.

SHERLOCK: No.

(He pauses for a moment, then turns his head towards John a little but doesn't open his eyes.)

SHERLOCK: And I can't even remember what for.

(He thinks for a second.)

SHERLOCK: Sss... Crime ... something or other.

(He settles his head back down on the stair and grunts quietly. The camera pulls back a little and we now realise - if we hadn't already - that the boys are lying near the bottom of their own staircase in Baker Street. The door to 221A opens and Mrs Hudson comes out with a bag of rubbish. She stops in surprise at the sight of them.)

MRS HUDSON: Ooh! What are you doing back? I thought you were going to be out late.

SHERLOCK (slurring): Ah, Hudders. What time is it?

(Mrs H looks at her watch.)

MRS HUDSON: You've only been out two hours.

(The boys sit up, trying to stand but too tightly wedged together. Sherlock falls off the step and thumps on his backside onto the next step down.)

Later, they are upstairs, sitting in their armchairs in the living room, and are playing the Rizla Game. Rizlas are thin white pieces of paper, with glue along one of the long sides, which are used to roll up loose tobacco to form a cigarette. I won't bother providing a link to explain the game itself because you'll see how it works here. Sherlock has a Rizla paper stuck to his forehead. Written on it in John's handwriting are the words "SHERLOCK HOLMES". He looks blurrily across to John, who has a Rizla stuck to his own forehead which reads, in somewhat wobbly writing by Sherlock, "MADONNA". John peers at him, apparently trying to keep his eyes open.

JOHN: Am I a vegetable?

(Sherlock, holding a glass of whiskey in one hand, points at him.)

SHERLOCK: You, or the thing?

(They both snigger.)

JOHN: Funny!

(Sherlock looks down.)

SHERLOCK (bashfully): Thank you.

JOHN: Come on.

(Sherlock raises his head again.)

SHERLOCK (slurred): No, you're not a vegetable.

JOHN: It's your go.

(He picks up his own glass and drinks.)

SHERLOCK: Errr ... am I human?

JOHN: Sometimes.

SHERLOCK: Can't have 'sometimes.' Has to be, um ...

(He struggles to pull himself up a little in his chair.)

JOHN: Yes, you're human. (He puts down his glass and slumps back in his seat.)

SHERLOCK (still finishing his previous sentence): ... 'yes' or 'no.' ... Okay.

(He leans woozily forward, bracing his upper arms on his legs.)

SHERLOCK: And am I a man?

JOHN: Yep.

SHERLOCK: Tall?

(John holds his hands wide.)

JOHN: Not as tall as people think.

SHERLOCK: Hmm. Nice?

JOHN: Ish.

SHERLOCK: Clever?

JOHN: I'd say so.

SHERLOCK: You would?

(John chuckles.)

SHERLOCK: Mmm, am I important?

JOHN: To s-some people.

SHERLOCK: Do "people" ... (he makes vague air-quotes around the word) ... like me?

JOHN (reaching for his glass but not picking it up): Er, no, they don't. You tend to rub 'em up the wrong way.

SHERLOCK: Okay.

(John sniggers. Sherlock slumps back in his chair and then leans forward again.)

SHERLOCK: Am I the current King of England?

JOHN: Are you ...? (He cackles with laughter.) You know we don't have a king?

SHERLOCK: Don't we?

JOHN: No. (He chuckles again briefly.)

SHERLOCK (sitting back): Your go.

(He drinks from his glass. Unfolding his legs, John shifts forward until he is sitting right on the edge of his seat. He instantly starts to slide off and reaches out to brace himself with one hand on Sherlock's right knee. He pushes himself back a little, then he and Sherlock look down at his hand. John pulls it away and holds both his hands out, shrugging.)

JOHN: I don't mind.

(Sherlock raises his fingers around his glass and shrugs to indicate that he's not bothered either.)

JOHN: Am I a woman?

(Sherlock looks at him for a second, then snorts laughter. He chuckles for a few moments.)

JOHN: What?

SHERLOCK: Yes.

(Again he tries to straighten himself up on the chair.)

JOHN: Am I ... pretty? (He points up to his Rizla.) This.

(He props his head up on one fist.)

SHERLOCK: Err ... Er, beauty is a construct based entirely on childhood impressions, influences and role models.

JOHN: Yeah, but am I a pretty lady?

(He blinks owlishly at Sherlock, who leans forward and screws up his eyes to peer at the Rizla.)

SHERLOCK: I don't know who you are. I don't know who you're supposed to be.

JOHN: You picked the name!

SHERLOCK (flailing a hand towards another part of the room): Ah, but I picked it at random from the papers.

JOHN (slumping back in his seat): You're not really getting the hang of this game, are you, Sherlock?

SHERLOCK (raising his eyes towards his own Rizla): So I am human, I'm not as tall as people think I am ...

(He sits back in the chair.)

SHERLOCK: I'm-I'm nice-ish ...

(John stretches out his socked feet and props them against the front of Sherlock's chair next to his friend's legs.)

SHERLOCK: ... clever, important to some people, but I tend to rub them up the wrong way.

(He laughs with delight.)

SHERLOCK: Got it.

JOHN: Go on, then.

SHERLOCK: I'm you, aren't I?

(Mrs Hudson knocks on the open door.)

MRS HUDSON: Ooh-ooh!

(The boys look round at her. She is standing in the doorway with a young woman who is wearing a nurse's outfit with a cardigan over it.)

MRS HUDSON: Client!

JOHN: Hallo.

SHERLOCK (waving at the woman): Hallo!

(Mrs Hudson turns to go back down the stairs.)

JOHN (gesturing the woman into the room): Come on.

TESSA: Which one of you is Sherlock Holmes?

(Smiling broadly at her, John raises his hand and - whistling a single rising note through his teeth in time with his hand movement - slowly points up towards the words on Sherlock's Rizla. Sherlock grins widely at her.)

Shortly afterwards, the boys have removed the papers from their heads and have relocated to sit side by side on the sofa. Tessa sits on a dining chair facing them.

TESSA (hesitantly): I don't ... a lot ... I mean, I don't ... date all that much ...

(Sherlock sinks back on the sofa and props his head up on his left hand.)

TESSA: ... and ... he seemed ... nice, you know?

(John smiles at her, then blinks slowly, trying to keep his eyes open.)

TESSA: We seemed to automatically connect. We had one night - dinner, such interesting conversation. It was ... lovely.

(John smiles again and glances briefly towards Sherlock.)

TESSA: To be honest, I'd love to have gone further ...

(Sherlock's eyes drift closed. He forces them open and shakes his head, sitting up and withdrawing his right hand from where he had draped it along the back of the sofa behind John. Your transcriber wobbles and realises that that was probably why John smiled towards him a few seconds ago.)

TESSA: ... but I thought, 'No, this is special. Let's take it slowly ...

(Sherlock leans forward, braces his elbows on his legs and folds his hands in front of his mouth. John shifts his own position.)

TESSA: ... exchange numbers.'

(Sherlock's eyes drift closed.)

TESSA: He said he'd get in touch and then ...

(She looks down sadly.)

TESSA: Maybe he wasn't quite as keen as I was ...

(John is practically asleep with his eyes open but he shrugs vaguely at her.)

TESSA: ... but I - I just thought ... (she becomes tearful) ... at least he'd call to say that we were finished.

(She lifts a hand to wipe a tear from her eye. Sherlock's face fills with sympathy and sadness for her. She falls silent and Sherlock looks away, his face still full of sympathetic pain ... then he frowns as if wondering where the hell that emotion came from.)

TESSA (pulling herself together): I went round there, to his flat.

(Sherlock has also recovered and props his chin on his clasped hands.)

TESSA: No trace of him. Mr Holmes ...

(Sherlock smiles cheerily at her, his eyes starting to close at the same time.)

TESSA (gazing down at the floor beside the sofa): ... I honestly think I had dinner ... with a ghost.

(She turns her head and looks at Sherlock. The camera is behind him and John and we can't see their faces. Neither of the boys reacts to what she just said, but a slight grunt comes from Sherlock, followed by a noisy but brief exhale.)

TESSA: Mr Holmes?

(The camera angle changes and we see that both Sherlock and John have their eyes closed. Sherlock snores gently and John's head drops lower and he grunts quietly.)

TESSA (loudly): With a ghost, Mr Holmes!

(Sherlock's head falls off his hands and he almost tumbles off the sofa.)

SHERLOCK (forcing himself back upright): Boring, boring, boring - no!

(John draws in a noisy breath and rolls his head on his neck.)

SHERLOCK: Fascinating!

(He turns round to John.)

SHERLOCK: John - John! Wake up!

(He shakes John's leg. John opens his eyes and flails at him. Sherlock turns to Tessa.)

SHERLOCK (slurred): Apologies about my ... (he points towards John) ... you know ... thing.

(He pulls in a breath, clears his throat, then turns to John and points at him.)

SHERLOCK (sternly): Rude. Rude!

(He turns back to Tessa.)

TESSA: I checked with the landlord, and the man who lived there died. Heart attack. And there we are, having dinner one week on.

(She picks up her handbag from the floor and rummages in it.)

TESSA: And I found this thing online, sort of chatroom thing ...

(She takes out a printout and gives it to Sherlock.)

TESSA: ... for girls who think they're dating men from the spirit world.

(John has fallen asleep again but Sherlock stands up and then wobbles a little unsteadily.)

SHERLOCK: Don't worry. I'll find him in ten minutes.

(Tessa smiles with delight.)

SHERLOCK: What's your dog's name?

JOHN (blurrily, talking in his sleep): Yeah, I'm there if you want it.

[People tend to speak the truth in their sleep. This statement is therefore now canon. *nods*]

SHERLOCK: John! Wake up!

(He reaches down and shoves John's shoulder. John almost falls over sideways.)

SHERLOCK: We're meant to ... (he clicks his fingers) ... The game's ... (he waves a hand vaguely) ... something.

(He stumbles away. John's eyes drift upwards as he applies all his mental skills to the problem and then points at Sherlock.)

JOHN: ... on.

(Tessa gasps excitedly. Sherlock staggers over and points down at him.)

SHERLOCK: Yeah, that, that!

(He turns and wanders off again.)

TESSA (standing up): Okay!

(John slowly pushes himself to his feet.)

LATER. In a living room elsewhere, Sherlock wobbles unsteadily in front of a large clear glass plate on a stand. The boys are in what looks like a warehouse conversion. It's a large apartment with

bare brick walls and a very high ceiling. The room is decorated with several pieces of modern furniture and art. Sherlock grins drunkenly at the glass plate, then straightens up a bit and looks around the room. He is currently kneeling on the sofa with his arms braced on its back. John stands nearby, leaning against a supporting pillar in the middle of the room.

JOHN: Ohhh, it's nice!

(Sherlock stands up off the sofa, then promptly falls back onto it. John turns a little and braces his hand against the supporting pillar. Tessa is standing nearby, together with the landlord who is holding a set of keys and looking at the boys in confusion.)

JOHN: Nice place.

(The landlord sighs and crosses his arms. Sherlock gets up and totters around the living room.)

TESSA: See anything?

SHERLOCK: Hmm?

TESSA: Any clues, Mr Holmes?

(John has now braced his back against the pillar and has closed his eyes.)

SHERLOCK: Oh, errrrr ...

(He looks blurrily down at the fancy coffee table and starts deducing:

designer

table

art?

He looks across to an armchair:

chair

seat

leather

sleeeeep

Moving on to a fancy-looking speaker:

thing

speaker

hi tech

thing

His eyes drift on to a painted animal skull on a stand ...

? death ?

skull

? deaded ?

... and then to a tall slender ornament on the window sill ...

wood ?

? pipe/tube/wotsit

thingamebob?

?

... and to a pale green egg chair ...

egg ?

chair??

sitty thing?

????????????

Still umming vaguely, he wanders over to the chair and looks more closely at it, then twirls around and his eyes settle in a rather unfocused way on Tessa and he deduces her:

nurse

?? client ?

victim ??

cardigan

Scratching his head, he suddenly looks inspired. He grins at Tessa.)

SHERLOCK (slurred): I'm just gonna whip this out.

(He puts his hand into his coat pocket, then stumbles in circles across the room while he tugs at whatever he's trying to pull out. Eventually he manages to extract his pouch of equipment from the pocket, simultaneously shaking off his coat and dropping it to the floor. He blinks at the pouch, then unrolls it and takes out his magnifier. Tossing the pouch over his shoulder, he holds the magnifier up to show the others.)

SHERLOCK: Mm-hmm?

(He clicks it open. The landlord sighs again while Tessa smiles awkwardly. John is still half-asleep leaning against the pillar. Sherlock drops to his knees on a white rug, braces himself with his left hand and slowly wobbles forward onto his right elbow. Tessa turns to John and gently pushes him upright from the pillar.)

TESSA (smiling at him): You all right?

JOHN (vaguely): Hmm? Yeah. He's clueing.

TESSA: What?

JOHN: He's ... hmm? He's clueing for looks.

(They look down at Sherlock, who has brought his face down to within about four inches of the rug. He is holding his magnifier to his eye and looking through it, then his eyes drift closed and he slowly topples forward and face-plants onto the rug.)

TESSA: Mr Holmes?

(Sherlock doesn't respond, still on his knees with his bum stuck up in the air. He snores noisily. Tessa looks nervously at the landlord and steps forward towards Sherlock.)

TESSA (louder): Mr Holmes?!

LANDLORD: I'm calling the police.

TESSA: Oh, no ...

(The landlord walks across to the rug and hauls Sherlock up onto his knees.)

SHERLOCK (flailing and indignant): Whoa, whoa, whoa!
(The landlord steps back as John holds out a warning hand to him.)
TESSA: This is a famous detective. It's Sherlock Holmes and his partner, John Hamish Watson.
(John steps towards the landlord, attempting and utterly failing to look threatening.)
SHERLOCK (indignantly): What d'you think you're doing? Don't compromise the integrity of the ...
(He turns round, bends over and throws up on the rug. The landlord closes his eyes, and Tessa puts her hand across her mouth. John's eyes drift upwards as he goes into full thinking mode again. Eventually he finds the words he needs to finish Sherlock's sentence for him.)
JOHN (loudly): ... crime scene!
(He grins triumphantly at Tessa and holds up his right palm for her to high-five. She doesn't take up the offer. Eventually he lowers his hand again, shaking his head. Sherlock coughs and straightens up onto his knees again. He gestures towards John with the magnifier.)
SHERLOCK: Yeah, that.
(Looking up at the others, he holds up the magnifier and delicately clicks it closed, then wipes the vomit off his mouth.)

Close-up of John's face. He is in a bright room somewhere. His heartbeat can be heard, and his gentle exhale sounds very loud. His eyes move behind his closed lids with a rasping sound. He screws up his eyes a couple of times, the movements making squelchy sounds, then he opens his eyes and blinks with a loud click. A door opens nearby and now we see that John is sitting on the floor of a white-tiled room with his back against the wall. He grimaces at the sound of the door.

LESTRADE (cheerfully, offscreen): Wakey-wakey!
JOHN (still grimacing): Oh my God.
(He peers towards the door and now we see that beside him, Sherlock is flat out on his back and fast asleep on the bench of a police holding cell.)
JOHN: Greg. Is that Greg?
LESTRADE: Get up. I'm gonna put you two in a taxi. Managed to square things with the desk sergeant.
(John painfully climbs to his feet. Greg laughs disparagingly.)
LESTRADE: What a couple of lightweights! You couldn't even make it to closing time!
JOHN (quietly as he slowly walks towards him): Can you whisper?
LESTRADE (yelling in his ear as he walks past): NOT REALLY!
(Sherlock flails upwards on the bench, his eyes wide and his mouth open in shock. He looks round the cell in bewilderment. John gives Greg a look of hurt betrayal, then leaves the cell. Greg beckons to Sherlock.)
LESTRADE: Come on.
(He follows John. Sherlock sits up on the bench, stands, totters, falls back onto the bench, then stands up and puts his fingers to his temples, wobbling on one foot. After a moment he lowers his hands and delicately paddles out of the cell.)

POLICE STATION FRONT DESK. Grunting with the effort, Sherlock puts on his coat. John tucks his wallet into his back pocket.

JOHN: Well, thanks for a ... you know ...
(They turn and walk away from the desk.)
JOHN: ... an evening.

SHERLOCK: It was awful.

JOHN: Yeah.

(Sherlock groans and pinches the bridge of his nose.)

JOHN: I was gonna pretend, but it was, truly.

SHERLOCK (lowering his hand): That woman, Tessa.

JOHN: What?

SHERLOCK: Dated a ghost. The most interesting case for months. What a wasted opportunity.

JOHN: ... Okay.

Close-up of a glass of water. An effervescent antacid pill is dropped into it and starts to fizz as it dissolves. After a few seconds John sighs quietly, picks up the glass and drinks.

MRS HUDSON: How are you feeling?

JOHN: Mmm. (He drinks again.)

MRS HUDSON: It's just like old times, having you back here.

(John puts down the glass and smiles towards her. She brings a plate across the kitchen to the table where he's sitting.)

MRS HUDSON: Thought I'd make your favourite, one last time.

(She puts down the plate in front of him. It contains a full English breakfast - a fried egg, two sausages, mushrooms, baked beans, tomato slices and two half-slices of buttered toast.)

JOHN: Mm. Don't sound so ... final about it. I will be visiting, you know.

MRS HUDSON: Ooh, I've heard that one before!

JOHN (picking up his cutlery and cutting into his breakfast): Mm, no, it's different now, though, isn't it? It's different to when we thought we'd lost him.

MRS HUDSON: Well, marriage changes everything, John.

(John lifts the forkful of food towards his mouth, then looks at it and pauses.)

JOHN: Does it?

MRS HUDSON: Yeah.

(She sits down opposite him.)

MRS HUDSON: You might not think it, but it does.

(John moves the fork closer to his mouth, then changes his mind and lowers it back to the plate, groaning quietly.)

MRS HUDSON: It's a different phase in your life.

(John pushes the plate away from him a little.)

MRS HUDSON: You meet new people 'cause you're a couple ...

JOHN: Mmm.

MRS HUDSON: ... and then you just ... let your old friends slip away.

JOHN: It won't be like that.

MRS HUDSON: Well, if you've found the right one - the person that you click with - it's the best thing in the world.

JOHN: Well, I have. I know I have.

MRS HUDSON: Oh, I'm sure. She's lovely!

JOHN: Yeah. I think so. What about you?

MRS HUDSON: Me?

JOHN: Did you think you'd found the right one when you married Mr Hudson?

MRS HUDSON (smiling): No! It was just a whirlwind thing for us. I knew it wouldn't work, but I just got sort of swept along.

JOHN: Right.

MRS HUDSON: And then we moved to Florida. We had a fantastic time, but of course I didn't know what he was up to. (Whispering) The drugs.

JOHN (laughing): Drugs? (He grimaces at the pain in his head.)

MRS HUDSON: He was running ... um, oh God, what d'you call it? Um, a ... cartel.

(John props up his head with his fingers.)

MRS HUDSON: Got in with a really bad crowd.

JOHN: Right.

MRS HUDSON: And then I found out about all the other women. I didn't have a clue! So, when he was actually arrested for blowing someone's head off ...

(John's eyes drift sideways, perhaps a little confused by the matter-of-fact way she just said the phrase.)

MRS HUDSON: ... it was quite a relief, to be honest.

JOHN: ... Right.

MRS HUDSON: It was purely physical between me and Frank. We couldn't keep our hands off each other.

(John lowers his head, cringing.)

MRS HUDSON: I know: there was one night ...

(John holds up a finger to stop her, then turns the finger to point upwards.)

JOHN: Hang on - was that ... Sherlock?

(There's no sound coming from above them.)

MRS HUDSON: Is it?

(John continues to point upwards, and raises the finger of his other hand to his lips. After a moment they hear footsteps upstairs.)

JOHN: That's Sherlock.

(He gets up and painfully walks towards the kitchen door, groaning quietly.)

Upstairs, Sherlock has an online news article on his laptop screen. It shows a photograph of Major Sholto before he was injured, and a large strapline beside the photo reads, "He destroyed us all. And he gets a medal for it." A few visible lines of text above and below the photo show that this is an interview with Madeline Small, the mother of one of the soldiers who died under Sholto's command. The headline of the article reads, "V.C. Hero - The Unanswered Questions. Why did my boy have to die?"

[Transcriber's note: to see the full text of the online article about Sholto, together with the newspaper articles which Sherlock looks at later, and the newspaper articles at the beginning of the episode, click [here](#).]

Sherlock looks towards the living room door when he hears John climbing the stairs. He switches to a different tab on the laptop - the website for I DATED A GHOST.COM. John comes in and walks across to the dining table where Sherlock is sitting.

SHERLOCK: There are going to be others.

JOHN: Others?

SHERLOCK: Victims, women. Most ghosts tend to haunt a single house - this ghost, however, is willing to commute, look.

(He stands up and they look at a map of London spread out on the table behind the laptop. Sherlock has stuck a pin in various places which presumably indicate an appearance of the ‘ghost date.’ There are seven pins in the map, forming a rough circle spanning a few miles around the Thames.)

Overhead view of a large Council Chamber. The room has wood panelling on the walls and a blue carpet. Banks of benches with red leather-covered seats form a semi-circle. There are six rows of these benches in tiers. At the front of the room on top of a high dais is a large ornate bench - reminiscent of a judge’s bench in a courtroom - behind which is a chair where the Chairman would sit. This chair is high above the chamber floor. The chamber is initially empty but then the perspective changes and Sherlock is standing in front of the closed door at the rear of the room, and many women are standing silently in front of seats all around the room. Sherlock walks down the steps towards the floor, looking around him as he goes, then he reaches the bottom, walks across towards the Chairman’s bench and turns to face the seats. There are at least forty-eight women standing around the room. Sherlock slowly scans all of them, then pulls a thoughtful face and points towards one of the women to his right.

SHERLOCK: Mmmmmm, not you.

(The woman sits down. He points to another woman on the right.)

SHERLOCK: Not you.

(That woman sits down. He takes a few steps forward and points to a woman on the left-hand side of the seating.)

SHERLOCK: Not you.

(She sits and he points separately to two women behind her.)

SHERLOCK: Not you. Not you.

(The women sit down.)

[Transcriber’s note: Your humble transcriber is so anally obsessed with the accuracy of her transcripts that normally she would type every single instance of what follows, carefully counting every “Not you” and the location of the woman to whom Sherlock says it. However, it would probably make for very boring reading and so for speed, convenience and the nurturing of very sore typing fingers, suffice it to say that this scene continues for a long time, with Sherlock dismissing woman after woman, each of whom sits down.]

(Eventually only four women remain standing. Sherlock looks around the room once more, then walks over to the nearest of the standing women. She is wearing a black dress.)

SHERLOCK: Hi.

WOMAN: Gail.

(He turns and walks to the next nearest standing woman, who is wearing a denim jacket.)

SECOND WOMAN: Charlotte.

(He turns his head to look at the third woman, wearing a pink jacket.)

THIRD WOMAN: Robyn.

(He turns to the final standing woman, wearing a red dress and red leather jacket.)

FOURTH WOMAN: Vicky.

(He turns away and walks towards the Chairman’s bench, then turns back and looks across the room again. The perspective changes and now all the seated women have vanished and the four remaining women are now standing in a semi circle in front of him. He looks at Gail.)

SHERLOCK: How did you meet?

GAIL: Came up to me in a pub.
(He looks at Charlotte.)

CHARLOTTE: Same gym as me.
(He turns his head to Robyn.)

ROBYN: We just got chatting on the bus.
(He looks at Vicky, who lowers her eyes flirtatiously at him.)

VICKY: Online.
(He turns his head back towards Gail.)

SHERLOCK: Name?

GAIL: Told you.

SHERLOCK: His name.

GAIL: Oscar.
(He turns his head to Charlotte and then in turn to the other two.)

CHARLOTTE: Mike.

ROBYN: Terry.

VICKY: Um, "love_monkey."

(Sherlock frowns, then turns back to Gail.)

SHERLOCK: Your place?

ALL FOUR WOMEN (simultaneously): His place.

SHERLOCK (to Gail): Address?

(The four women simultaneously recite four different addresses. Your transcriber isn't so anal as to try and decipher what each of them says.)

GAIL: Nothing happened. It was just ... very romantic.

SHERLOCK (looking above their heads): Four women in four nights. He must have something special.

GAIL: He was very charming.

CHARLOTTE: He listened.

ROBYN: He was sweet.

VICKY: He had a lovely ...

JOHN: You okay?

(John is suddenly standing beside Sherlock. Sherlock raises his hand towards Vicky and there's a beep as she freezes and falls silent. He lowers his hand and turns his head to John, and the two of them are now standing in the living room of 221B. John looks down at the coffee table which has six laptops open on it. One of them is showing a typed message reading, "VICKY: He had a lovely ..." Also on the table is a plate containing a slice of gammon steak with a pineapple slice on top of it, a fried egg and some chips.)

JOHN: Let your food go cold. Mrs Hudson'll play hell.

SHERLOCK: Not now, John.

(Unbuttoning his jacket, he squats down to the coffee table and types onto the laptop which is showing Vicky's message. The screen is on the website I DATED A GHOST.COM and he and Vicky are writing on its forum. His message comes up reading, "SHERLOCK: Sorry about that." Back in the Council Chamber, Sherlock's hand is raised to Vicky but now he lowers it.)

SHERLOCK: Sorry about that.

(The beep sounds again.)

VICKY: He had a lovely manner.

(Sherlock looks away.)

SHERLOCK: Different names, different addresses.

(He turns to Gail.)

SHERLOCK: Describe him.

GAIL: Short blond hair.

CHARLOTTE: Dark hair - long.

ROBYN: Ginger. (She shrugs.) I like gingers.

VICKY: Couldn't tell.

(Sherlock gives her a querying look.)

VICKY (in a laid-back way, signifying that it was nothing unusual): He had a mask on.

(Sherlock looks away.)

Without transition he is standing at the side of the Chairman's bench, holding a newspaper and quickly turning the pages until he reaches the Obituaries page.)

SHERLOCK: He's stealing the identity of corpses ...

(He works through a different newspaper to its Obituaries page. He zooms in on a message announcing the death of a Michael James Heaney.)

SHERLOCK: ... getting the names from the Obituary columns.

(He picks up another newspaper from the pile beside him and turns to the relevant page.)

SHERLOCK: All single men. He's using the dead man's flat under the assumption it'll be empty for a while.

(He raises his head.)

SHERLOCK: Free love nest.

GAIL (looking down, appalled): I feel sick.

ROBYN: It's gruesome.

CHARLOTTE: That's awful.

VICKY (looking impressed): Clever!

TESSA: Bastard!

(Sherlock - now standing in front of the women again - turns his head to see that Tessa is now standing between Charlotte and Robyn.

In 221B, Sherlock's head turns at a beep from another laptop lying on one of the dining chairs. He goes across to it, where Tessa's message on the forum reads, "TESSA: BASTARD!" He types onto that computer and his message appears reading, "SHERLOCK: Hello Tessa".

In the Council Chamber, Sherlock greets her. She's wearing casual clothes and a long cardigan.)

SHERLOCK: Hello, Tessa.

(She looks at him angrily.)

SHERLOCK: Meanwhile, back to business. No-one wants to use a dead man's home.

(Vicky shrugs as if she's not bothered. Sherlock throws her a disapproving look.)

SHERLOCK: ... Least not until it's been cleared. So, he disguises himself, steals the man's home, steals his identity.

JOHN (suddenly beside him in the chamber again): But only for one night.

(Sherlock turns to look at him.)

JOHN: Then he's gone.

SHERLOCK: He's not a ghost, John. He's a mayfly. He lives for a day.

(He turns back to the women and John has gone again.)

SHERLOCK: So - what was it he was looking for?

(He turns his head to Gail.)

SHERLOCK: Job.

GAIL: Gardener. (She is now wearing a pale jumper and overalls.)

CHARLOTTE: Cook. (She's wearing a cook's jacket and hat.)

TESSA (now back in her uniform): Private nurse.

ROBYN: I do security work. (She's wearing a security officer's uniform.)

VICKY (also wearing the appropriate outfit for her job): Maid.

(Sherlock looks down for a brief moment, then raises his head.)

SHERLOCK: Obvious. You all work for the same person!

(In 221B, he moves from laptop to laptop, typing onto each one, and in the Council Chamber information rapidly scrolls across the face of each of the women in turn. His research goes on for some time but finally, in the Council Chamber, he sighs.)

SHERLOCK: No, not the same employer. Damn.

(He screws his eyes closed.)

SHERLOCK: Come on. We can do this.

(He opens his eyes and looks towards Gail.)

SHERLOCK: Ideal night out.

GAIL: Clay pigeon shooting.

CHARLOTTE: Line dancing.

TESSA (shrugging): Pictures?

ROBYN: Wine in front of the telly.

VICKY (smiling quirkily at him): Dungeon.

(Sherlock shakes his head in disbelief. He turns his head to the front and shuts his eyes for a moment, then turns to Gail again.)

SHERLOCK: Make-up.

GAIL: Clarins.

CHARLOTTE: No. 7.

TESSA: Maybelline.

ROBYN: Nothing special.

VICKY: Whatever's cheap.

SHERLOCK: Perfume.

GAIL: Chanel.

CHARLOTTE: Chanel.

TESSA: Chanel.

(Sherlock's face lights up with hope as he turns to Robyn.)

ROBYN: Chanel.

VICKY: Estée Lauder.

(He shakes his head disappointedly at her, then looks directly at Tessa.)

SHERLOCK: Ideal man?

TESSA (looking off into the distance with a whimsical smile): George Clooney?

(She grins at him. He rolls his eyes.)

SHERLOCK: Oh, no.

GAIL: Home-loving.

CHARLOTTE: He'd have to like cuddling.

ROBYN: Caring.

VICKY: Ten things. (She holds up her thumb.) One: someone who isn't competitive with other men.
(Sherlock frowns at her, looking aghast.)

VICKY (holding up her forefinger): Two: someone who isn't constantly trying to define himself by his masculinity ...

(Sherlock holds up his hand to her. She freezes. He closes his fingers and thumb together and there's a beep from a computer. Sherlock looks up above the women.)

SHERLOCK: There's a unifying factor. There has to be.

(He lowers his hand and frowns.)

SHERLOCK: None of you reported anything stolen.

(He looks down, then raises his eyes and points at the women one by one but this time not going straight round the semi-circle. Presumably he is working in the order in which the 'ghost' dated the women.)

SHERLOCK: Security guard, gardener, cook, maid, private nurse. He's romancing his way up a pecking order, somebody's pecking order.

(He closes his eyes.)

SHERLOCK (sternly to himself): Come on, think.

(His eyes open again.)

SHERLOCK: Unless ...

(He twitches a small, brief smile and turns to Gail.)

SHERLOCK: Do you have a secret you've never told anyone?

ALL FIVE WOMEN (simultaneously): No.

(Sherlock smiles.)

SHERLOCK: Gotcha.

JOHN (suddenly at his side again): What d'you mean?

SHERLOCK: Everyone has secrets, and they all replied too quickly.

GAIL (looking anxious): Gotta go.

(She walks away, and there's a brief electronic sound of her logging off in the real world.)

CHARLOTTE: See ya.

(She too turns to leave/log off.)

SHERLOCK: No!

ROBYN: Bye-bye. (She leaves/logs off.)

SHERLOCK: Wait!

VICKY: Sorry, sexy. (She winks at him.) Some secrets have to stay secret.

(She walks away/logs off.)

TESSA (smiling at him): Enjoy the wedding.

(Sherlock makes an exasperated sound as she walks away/logs off.)

In 221B, Sherlock shuts down the lid on Tessa's laptop and straightens up.)

SHERLOCK: Why? Why would he date all of those women and not return their calls?

JOHN: You're missing the obvious, mate.

SHERLOCK (turning to him): Am I?

JOHN: He's a man.

SHERLOCK (slamming the lids down on each of the laptops by turn): But why would he change his identity?

JOHN: Maybe he's married.

(Sherlock slowly straightens up as if realising something.)

SHERLOCK: Ohh.

RECEPTION.

SHERLOCK: Married. Obvious, really. Our Mayfly Man was trying to escape the suffocating chains of domesticity ...

(John grimaces and shakes his head while Mary widens her eyes briefly and then smiles at him.)

SHERLOCK: ... and instead of endless nights in watching the telly or going to barbecues with awful dreadful boring people he couldn't stand, he used his wits, cleverness and powers of disguise ... (he finally takes a breath, and smiles slightly) ... to play the field. He was ...

(He stops when he realises that he has lost his audience again. The guests look silently back at him. He looks down to his right to see John looking back at him straight-faced and Mary wrinkling her nose and shaking her head slightly.)

SHERLOCK: On second thoughts I probably should have told you about the Elephant in the Room. However, it does help to further illustrate how invaluable John is to me. I can read a crime scene the way he can understand a human being. I used to think that's what made me special - quite frankly, I still do. But a word to the wise: should any of you require the services of either of us, I will solve your murder, but it takes John Watson to save your life. Trust me on that - I should know. He's saved mine so many times, and in so many ways.

(He holds up his phone.)

SHERLOCK: This blog is the story of two men and their frankly ridiculous adventures ...

(He smiles, and the guests chuckle.)

SHERLOCK: ... of murder, mystery and mayhem. But from now on, there's a new story - a bigger adventure.

(He looks down at the newlyweds, who smile happily.)

SHERLOCK: Ladies and gentlemen, pray charge your glasses and be upstanding.

(He picks up his own glass while the guests do likewise and stand up. The photographer walks forward with his camera.)

SHERLOCK (raising his glass): Today begin the adventures of Mary Elizabeth Watson and John Hamish Watson.

(John sighs a little, while Mary giggles.)

SHERLOCK: The two reasons why every single one of us is ...

(He stops, freezing in place, staring blindly towards the guests. The photographer snaps several photos of him but the popping flashbulb doesn't make him react. Sherlock's fingers loosen slightly and his champagne glass slips out of them and begins a very slow-motion tumble towards the floor. In the Council Chamber, Sherlock - now in his wedding gear - lowers his raised hand and turns towards the five uniformed women.)

SHERLOCK: What did you say?

(He points at Tessa.)

SHERLOCK (walking slowly towards her): You said, "John Hamish Watson." You said that. You said, "Hamish."

(Flashback to the landlord hauling a drunk Sherlock up onto his knees.)

SHERLOCK (in the flashback): ... whoa, whoa!

TESSA (in the flashback): This is a famous detective. It's Sherlock Holmes and his partner, John Hamish Watson.

SHERLOCK (circling around Tessa in the Council Chamber): How did you know? How did you know his middle name? (He walks backwards, still facing her.) He never tells anyone. He hates it.

FLASHBACK. Sherlock, with at least ten unlit cigarettes stuffed in his mouth, walks across the living room of 221B. John is sitting at the dining table facing the windows and typing on his laptop, and Sherlock frowns down at the screen as he walks past. Taking the cigarettes out of his mouth, he turns his back on John as he walks into his line of sight so that John can't see the cigarettes. There is a lot less grey in John's hair than in 'our' present and so this flashback presumably takes place not long after John moved into Baker Street.

SHERLOCK (reciting what he has just seen at the top of John's blog page): "John H. Watson"?

JOHN (glancing briefly round at him): Yep.

(As he continues typing, Sherlock sits down on the sofa, stuffing the cigarettes into a Persian slipper while keeping a wary eye on John in case he looks round. He taps the cigarettes down, then lies down on the sofa and shoves the slipper underneath it.)

ANOTHER DAY. The boys are sitting at the kitchen table. John is reading the paper.

SHERLOCK: Henry?

JOHN (without looking up): Shut up.

(Sherlock bites into a piece of toast.)

ANOTHER DAY. Sherlock looks up from his microscope at the kitchen table and turns his head to where John is sitting in his armchair reading.

SHERLOCK: Humphrey?

JOHN (firmly): Shut up.

ANOTHER DAY. Buttoning his jacket, Sherlock walks out of his bedroom and stops outside the door to the bathroom. The shower is running inside.

SHERLOCK (loudly): Higgins?

JOHN (loudly from inside the bathroom): Go. Away.

(Grimacing, Sherlock walks on.)

THE PRESENT. COUNCIL CHAMBER.

SHERLOCK: Took him years to confide in me.

FLASHBACK. John walks up the stairs of 221 carrying bags of shopping. Sighing tiredly, he walks into the living room where Sherlock is standing just to the left of the door with a sheet of paper in his hands. John glances at it as he walks past, then stops and backs up.

JOHN: That's my birth certificate.

SHERLOCK: Yep.

(Loudly popping the 'p,' he walks away. John stares after him.)

THE PRESENT. COUNCIL CHAMBER. Sherlock looks quizzically at Tessa, then turns and walks towards the Chairman's bench.

SHERLOCK: And The Woman - she knew.

FLASHBACK to Irene Adler and Sherlock having eyesex in the living room of 221B during the events of "A Scandal in Belgravia."

JOHN (abruptly): Hamish.

(They both look at him.)

JOHN: John Hamish Watson - just if you were looking for baby names.

COUNCIL CHAMBER.

SHERLOCK (still walking towards the front of the chamber): God knows where she is.

(She is standing right in front of him, her hair up, her face beautifully made-up, stark naked and looking at him intensely. He stops and sighs with annoyance. She reaches forward and strokes one finger down his cheek.)

SHERLOCK (exasperated): Out of my head. I am busy.

(She slowly pulls her hand away and he turns back to the other women. Irene has gone again.)

SHERLOCK (to Tessa): There's only one time that name's been made public.

FLASHBACK. A mock-up of the wedding invitation is on the screen of a laptop. The top part reads:

Dr John Hamish WATSON & Miss Mary Elizabeth MORSTAN

Request the pleasure of your company

at their marriage

John points at the screen.

JOHN: Does it have to be on the invitation?

MARY: It's your name.

(She, John and Sherlock are in 221B's living room looking at the laptop.)

MARY: It's traditional.

SHERLOCK (simultaneously): It's funny.

(John looks round at Sherlock while Mary bites back a smile.)

TESSA (voiceover): Enjoy the wedding.

At the reception, Sherlock's glass continues its ultra-slow-motion fall towards the floor.

In the Council Chamber, Tessa smiles brightly at Sherlock.

TESSA: Enjoy the wedding.

SHERLOCK (pointing at her): The wedding. You knew about the wedding; more importantly, you'd seen a wedding invitation. Now barely a hundred people had seen that invitation. The Mayfly Man only saw five women. For one person to be in both groups ... (he tilts his hand back and forth) ... could be a coincidence.

MYCROFT (disapprovingly, offscreen): Oh, Sherlock.

(Sherlock turns around. Mycroft is up on the dais, standing in front of the Chairman's chair. The women have vanished.)

MYCROFT: What do we say about coincidence?

SHERLOCK (slowly walking towards him): The universe is rarely so lazy.

MYCROFT: So, the balance of probability is ...?

SHERLOCK: Someone went to great lengths to find out something about this wedding.

MYCROFT: What great lengths?

SHERLOCK (stopping, while continuing to stare intensely up at his brother): They lied, assumed false identities.

MYCROFT: Which suggests ...?

SHERLOCK: Criminal intent.

MYCROFT: Also suggests ...?

SHERLOCK: Intelligence, planning.

MYCROFT: Clearly. But more importantly ...?

The champagne glass continues its fall.

SHERLOCK (in the Chamber): The Mayfly Man.

The champagne glass continues downwards.

SHERLOCK (in the Chamber): The Mayfly Man is ...

SHERLOCK (at the reception): ... here today.

(His champagne glass smashes on the floor at his feet. He looks down at it.)

SHERLOCK (raising his head): Ooh, sorry. I ...

(He looks down at the floor, making an exasperated noise and clearing his throat. The Master of Ceremonies/Head Waiter hurries over to him.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Another glass, sir?

SHERLOCK (taking the glass from him): Thank you, yes. Thank you, yes.

(He looks out at the guests.)

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): Something is going to happen - right here.

(At the reception, Sherlock looks around, clearly thinking frantically. He flickers back and forth between the Chamber and the reception but then looks at the guests.)

SHERLOCK: Now, where were we?

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): Could be any second.

(Holding their glasses in the reception room, Mrs Hudson and Greg look a little anxious. Greg looks at Mrs H and frowns.)

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): You have control of the room.

SHERLOCK (shaking his head a little in the reception room): Ah, yes. Raising glasses and standing up. Very good. Thank you.

MYCROFT (sternly, in the Council Chamber): Don't lose it.

(At the reception, Sherlock raises both hands and gestures downwards.)

SHERLOCK: And down again.

(Confused, the guests start to sit down, murmuring amongst themselves. Sherlock looks at them for a moment, then puts his glass down on the table and straightens up.)

SHERLOCK: Ladies and gentlemen, people tell you not to milk a good speech - get off early, leave 'em laughing. Wise advice I'll certainly try to bear in mind. But for now ...

(He puts one hand on the table and quickly jumps over to the other side. The guests gasp in surprise.)

SHERLOCK: ... part two.

(He walks into the central aisle between the tables.)

SHERLOCK: Part two is more action-based. I'm gonna ... walk around, shake things up a bit.

(He looks at each person as he walks past, mentally tagging each of the men with a sign near them reading, "MAYFLY MAN?" The only male guest who doesn't get a tag is young Archie.)

SHERLOCK: Who'd go to a wedding? That's the question. Who would bother to go to any lengths to get themselves to a wedding?

(Two thirds of the way along the room he turns around.)

SHERLOCK: Well, everyone.

(He claps his hands once.)

SHERLOCK: Weddings are great! Love a wedding.

MARY (quietly, to John): What's he doing?

JOHN (watching his friend with concern): Something's wrong.

SHERLOCK (pointing towards him as he heads back along the room): And John's great, too! Haven't said that enough. Barely scratched the surface. I could go on all night about the depth and complexity of his ... jumpers ...

(John closes his eyes in disbelief. Out on the floor Sherlock is pacing and turning back and forth, peering at each of the male guests and their imaginary tags.)

SHERLOCK: ... and he can cook. Does ... a ... thing ... thing with peas ...

(John and Mary exchange a puzzled glance. Sherlock continues to pace and look closely at the guests.)

SHERLOCK: ... once. Might not be peas. Might not be him. But he's got a great singing voice ... or somebody does.

(He sighs in frustration, his teeth clenched.)

SHERLOCK: Ahh, too many, too many, too many, too many!

(He grimaces angrily, the "MAYFLY MAN?" tags now huge and overwhelming him. He stops and takes a breath and the tags disappear.)

SHERLOCK: Sorry. Too many jokes about John! Now, er ...

(Inside his head he slowly walks across the Council Chamber again towards Mycroft, staring up at him.)

MYCROFT: Criminal intent.

SHERLOCK (at the reception): Where was I? Ah, yes ...

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): Extraordinary lengths.

SHERLOCK (at the reception): Speech! (He points towards the top table, grinning round at the guests.) Speech. (He claps his hands together again.) Let's talk about ...

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): All of which is suggestive of ...?

(In the Chamber, Sherlock's eyes widen and he presses his lips together to begin forming the word.)

SHERLOCK (at the reception): ... murder.

(John sighs and lowers his head, while Mary frowns.)

SHERLOCK: Sorry, did I say 'murder'? I meant to say 'marriage' - but, you know, they're quite similar procedures when you think about it. The participants tend to know each other, and it's over when one of them's dead.

(He emphatically sounds the 'd' at the end of the word. Again John sighs and lowers his head.)

SHERLOCK: In fairness, murder is a lot quicker, though. Janine!

(She looks up a little wide-eyed.)

SHERLOCK (walking over to stand behind one of the male guests): What about this one? Acceptably hot? (He grins at Janine, then looks at the woman sitting beside the man.) More importantly, his girlfriend's wearing brand-new uncomfortable underwear ... (he zooms in on the top part of the woman's dress, where the seam of her ill-fitting bra - or whatever she's wearing underneath - is visible through the material; then he zooms across to a thread of cotton on the man's jacket) ... and hasn't bothered to pick this thread off the top of his jacket ... (he zooms to a smudge on the man's neck) ... or point out the grease smudge on the back of his neck. Currently, he's going home alone.

(Sherlock now has his phone behind his own back and is rapidly typing onto it with his thumb.)

SHERLOCK: Also, he's a comics and sci-fi geek. They're always tremendously grateful - really put the hours in.

(He chuckles.)

SHERLOCK: Geoff, the gents.

(He looks across to Greg and jerks his head towards the door.)

SHERLOCK: The loos, now, please.

LESTRADE: It's Greg.

SHERLOCK: The loos, please.

(Greg's phone beeps a text alert.)

LESTRADE (reaching into his pocket): Why?

SHERLOCK: Oh, I don't know. Maybe it's your turn.

(He jerks his head towards the door again, grimacing. Greg looks at his phone and the new text message which reads:

Lock this place down.

LESTRADE: Yeah, actually, now you mention it ...

(He stands up. Sherlock pockets his own phone.)

JOHN: Sherlock, any chance of a - an end date for this speech? Gotta cut the cake.

(While Greg heads out of the door, Sherlock smiles widely and dances down the aisle, gesturing dramatically.)

SHERLOCK: Oh! Ladies and gentlemen, can't stand it when I finally get the chance to speak for once, Vatican Cameos.

(He directs the last two words directly to John in a conversational way as if they're a natural part of the sentence. John straightens up in his chair.)

MARY: What did he say? What's that mean?

JOHN (quietly, tugging the bottom of his waistcoat down): Battle stations. Someone's gonna die.

MARY: What?!

(He puts his hand over hers, silently shushing her. Sherlock turns to look at the guests, where all the men are tagged with the "MAYFLY MAN?" question again.)

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): Narrow it down.

(At the reception, Sherlock grimaces, his eyes screwed tightly shut.)

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): Narrow it down.

(Sherlock blinks in the reception room, lowering his head and screwing his eyes shut again.)

MYCROFT (in the Council Chamber): Narrow. It. Down.

(Standing in front of him in the Chamber, Sherlock roars loudly with frustration and rage and slaps himself hard on the right cheek. In the reception room, he does the same.)

SHERLOCK (loudly, angrily): No!

(In both worlds, he slaps his left cheek.)

SHERLOCK: (loudly, angrily, in the reception room): No!

(The tags disappear from above the men's heads. Sherlock angrily points upwards with the index fingers of both hands.)

SHERLOCK: Not you! Not you!

(His mental image of Mycroft doubles, then floats away. Sherlock calms down and lowers his hands a little to point his fingers towards the top table.)

SHERLOCK (quieter): You.

(John straightens again, looking back at him.)

SHERLOCK (walking towards him, now pointing at him with just one hand): It's always you. John Watson, you keep me right.

(John stands as he walks up to the table.)

JOHN: What do I do?

SHERLOCK: Well, you've already done it. Don't solve the murder. (Intensely) Save the life.

(Drawing in a sharp breath through his nose, he turns towards the guests again with a manic grin on his face.)

SHERLOCK: Sorry. Off-piste a bit. Back now. (High-pitched) Phew!

(He claps his hands together and looks down at the floor, dropping the smile.)

SHERLOCK: Let's play a game.

(He raises his eyes while lowering his head a little more, staring intensely out into the room.)

SHERLOCK: Let's play Murder.

(Behind him, John sits down again. Sherlock prowls forward, his eyes flickering around the room at the guests.)

MRS HUDSON (disapprovingly): Sherlock.

SHERLOCK (steepling his hands in front of his chin as he progresses forward): Imagine someone's going to get murdered at a wedding. Who exactly would you pick?

MRS HUDSON: I think you're a popular choice at the moment, dear.

SHERLOCK (gesturing behind him): If someone could move Mrs Hudson's glass just slightly out of reach, that would be lovely. More importantly, who could you only kill at a wedding?

(He turns back to look at the guests and gives each one - both the men and the women - a new tag reading, "TARGET?" A line leads from each tag down to the relevant person and at the end of that line a small white bullseye overlays their body.)

SHERLOCK: Most people you can kill any old place. As a mental exercise, I've often planned the murder of friends and colleagues.

(Rubbing his hands together in an Evil Genius sort of way, he walks back along the room, then gestures towards John.)

SHERLOCK: Now John I'd poison.

(Mary nervously looks across to her husband.)

SHERLOCK: Sloppy eater - dead easy. I've given him chemicals and compounds - that way, he's never even noticed. He missed a whole Wednesday once, didn't have a clue. Lestrade's so easy to kill, it's a miracle no-one's succumbed to the temptation. (He turns and heads towards the back of

the room again.) I've got a pair of keys to my brother's house - I could easily break in there and asphyxiate him.

(He makes strangely gestures with his hands, then seems to realise that he may have gone too far.)
SHERLOCK: ... if, if the whim arose.

TOM (quietly to Molly): He's pissed, isn't he?

(Without even looking round at him, Molly stabs a plastic fork onto the back of his hand.)

TOM (grabbing at his hand): Ow!

SHERLOCK: So, once again, who could you only kill here?

(He turns and faces the guests again. A few of the chairs nearest him are now suddenly empty but still have their "TARGET?" tag pointing to the seats. He twirls his fingers and the tags disappear.)

SHERLOCK: Clearly it's a rare opportunity, so it's someone who doesn't get out much.

(The camera angle changes and more guests - and their tags - have vanished.)

SHERLOCK: Someone for whom a planned social encounter known about months in advance is an exception. Has to be a unique opportunity.

(He turns around and more of the guests have gone.)

SHERLOCK: And since killing someone in public is difficult ...

(He turns again and more guests have disappeared.)

SHERLOCK: ... killing them in private isn't an option. Someone who lives in an inaccessible or unknown location, then.

(He turns again and all the visible seats are now empty.)

SHERLOCK: Someone private, perhaps, obsessed with personal security.

(One final "TARGET?" tag drifts into view as he walks forward. It is pointing at the only person left in the room. Sherlock turns to face him. It is Major Sholto.)

SHERLOCK: Possibly someone under threat.

(The question mark beside the word in the tag disappears, and then the word itself fades out. The bullseye superimposed over Sholto's body flashes red for a moment and then also disappears. As if sensing Sherlock's gaze, Sholto turns and looks at him. Sherlock stares back at him.)

FLASHBACK. 221B LIVING ROOM.

SHERLOCK: Major James Sholto. Who he?

MARY: I don't think he's coming.

JOHN: He'll be there.

FLASHBACK. EARLIER AT THE RECEPTION.

JOHN: Where are you living these days?

SHOLTO: Oh, way out in the middle of nowhere.

FLASHBACK. ON THE PARK BENCH OUTSIDE THE BARRACKS.

JOHN (to Sherlock): The press and the families gave him hell. He gets more death threats than you.

At the reception, everyone is back in the room. Sherlock tries to act nonchalantly as he walks over to a nearby table and picks up one of the name cards on it while pulling a pen on a chain from his waistcoat.

SHERLOCK: Ooh! A recluse, small household staff.

FLASHBACK TO THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

SHERLOCK: Job.

GAIL: Gardener.

CHARLOTTE: Cook.

TESSA: Private nurse.

VICKY: Maid.

SHERLOCK (writing on the name card in the reception room): High turnover for additional security.

FLASHBACK TO THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

ROBYN: I do security work.

SHERLOCK (walking over to Sholto's table and casually dropping the name card down in front of him before walking away): Probably all signed confidentiality agreements.

FLASHBACK TO THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

SHERLOCK: Do you have a secret you've never told anyone?

ALL THE WOMEN (simultaneously): No.

SHERLOCK (at the reception): There is another question that remains, however – a big one, a huge one: how would you do it? How would you kill someone in public?

(Sholto picks up the name card and looks at the writing on it. It reads:

IT'S YOU

SHERLOCK: There has to be a way. This has been planned.

ARCHIE (excitedly jumping up from his chair): Mr Holmes! Mr Holmes!

SHERLOCK (stopping and turning to him): Oh, hello again, Archie. (He bends forward to get more down to Archie's level.) What's your theory? Get this right and there's a headless nun in it for you.

ARCHIE: The invisible man could do it.

SHERLOCK (very quick fire): The who, the what, the why, the when, the where?

ARCHIE: The invisible man with the invisible knife. The one who tried to kill the Guardsman.

(Sherlock gasps and straightens up, his eyes wide. In his mind he's standing in front of his information wall at 221B, looking at all the wedding plans stuck up behind the sofa. He zooms in on a wedding invitation pinned to the wall, announcing the wedding at St Mary's Church, Sutton Mallet on Saturday 18th May at 12 o'clock and after.

He moves to look at his list of things to do and focuses on the word "Venue." There's a brief shot of the outside of the reception room. He looks at the word "Venue" again and this time sees an image of the barracks and soldiers parading outside.

He shifts his focus to the word "Plan" and then sees a close-up of Private Bainbridge standing on guard outside the barracks, his gaze fixed on the three tourists over the road as they walk away and reveal the stalker.

Sherlock moves his eyes to look at the word "Rehearsal." In flashback, the Duty Sergeant walks into the shower room and raps on the cubicle door, calling Bainbridge's name before he sees the slumped body and bloodstained water.

Sherlock zooms in on the word “Rehearsal” and grimaces.)

(In the reception room Major Sholto gets to his feet, picks up his ceremonial sword propped against a nearby window and turns to walk towards the door. Sherlock turns his head away, closing his eyes for a moment. Then he opens them again.)

SHERLOCK (softly): Oh, not just planned. Planned and rehearsed.

(He turns and watches as Sholto reaches the door and starts to open it. Sherlock turns back and heads quickly towards the top table, swiping someone’s champagne glass from a table as he goes.)

SHERLOCK: Ladies and gentlemen, there will now be a short interlude.

(He skids to a halt in front of the top table and turns and holds up his glass.)

SHERLOCK: The bride and groom!

(A little uncertainly this time, the guests stand up and raise their glasses.)

GUESTS: The bride and groom.

(Instantly Sherlock turns back and bends down to John.)

SHERLOCK: Major Sholto’s going to be murdered. I don’t know how or by whom, but it’s going to happen.

(He turns and starts making his way through the guests who are now blocking the aisle.)

SHERLOCK: ’Scuse me, coming through!

(John quickly turns and takes Mary’s head in one hand and kisses her.)

SHERLOCK (pushing through the crowd): Consulting!

JOHN (to Mary): Stay here.

MARY: Please be careful.

(John gets up and starts making his own way through the guests.)

JOHN: ’Scuse me. Coming through! ’Scuse me.

(Mary hesitates for only a few seconds, then jumps up and follows him.)

MARY (to the guests): Sorry, one more. Whoops! So sorry! Thank you!

(The guests murmur and chatter to each other in confusion.)

Upstairs, Major Sholto opens the door to his bedroom and walks in. He lays his sword on the bed and then undoes the zip around his suitcase. Lifting the lid and laying it back, he picks up a folded shirt on the top of the contents and puts it down inside the lid. On top of the rest of his clothing is a large pistol. He picks it up.

Downstairs, on a half-landing partway up the staircase, Sherlock stands with the tips of his fingers against his temples and his eyes screwed closed. John paces impatiently beside him.

JOHN: How can you not remember which room? You remember everything.

SHERLOCK (irritably): I have to delete something!

(Mary runs around the corner and pelts up the stairs in between them, holding up her skirt with one hand to stop herself tripping over it.)

MARY: Two oh seven.

(The boys chase after her and Sherlock quickly overtakes her. She takes John’s hand and they hurry after him. Reaching the second floor, Sherlock knocks on the door of Room 207 and tries the handle.)

SHERLOCK (rattling the door handle): Major Sholto? Major Sholto!

(He slams the flat of his right hand repeatedly against the door.)

SHERLOCK: Major Sholto!

SHOLTO (sitting on a chair beside the bed and speaking loudly enough to be heard through the door): If someone's about to make an attempt on my life, it won't be the first time. I'm ready.
(John walks towards the door. Sherlock steps back, shaking out his right hand and flexing the fingers.)

JOHN: Major, let us in.

MARY: Kick the door down.

SHOLTO: I really wouldn't. I have a gun in my hand and a lifetime of unfortunate reflexes.

SHERLOCK (walking closer to the door again): You're not safe in there. Whoever's after you, we know that a locked room doesn't stop him.

SHOLTO: "The invisible man with the invisible knife."

SHERLOCK: I don't know how he does it, so I can't stop him, and that means he'll do it again.

SHOLTO (sternly): Solve it, then.

SHERLOCK: I - I'm sorry?

SHOLTO: You're the famous Mr Holmes. Solve the case. On you go.

(Sherlock straightens up, his eyes rapidly flickering from side to side.)

SHOLTO: Tell me how he did it and I'll open the door.

(John steps forward again.)

JOHN: Please, this is no time for games. Just let us in! You're in danger!

SHOLTO: So are you, so long as you're here.

(Mary watches Sherlock as he paces back and forth across the landing.)

SHOLTO: Please, leave me. Despite my reputation, I really don't approve of collateral damage.

MARY (to Sherlock): Solve it.

(He stops and looks at her.)

SHERLOCK: Sorry?

MARY: Solve it, and he'll open the door, like he said.

SHERLOCK: If I couldn't solve it before, how can I solve it now?

MARY: Because it matters now.

SHERLOCK: What are you talking about? (He looks at John.) What's she talking about? Get your wife under control.

JOHN: She's right.

SHERLOCK: Oh, you've changed!

JOHN: No, she is. (He turns and points at him.) Shut up. You are not a puzzle-solver - you never have been. You're a drama queen.

(Sherlock's mouth drops open and he stares at him.)

JOHN (louder): Now, there is a man in there about to die. (Sarcastically) "The game is on." (Angrily, pointing at the door.) Solve it!

(Sherlock bares his teeth at him, then his eyes suddenly snap upwards. He can see Private Bainbridge in full uniform standing at attention against a white background. Bainbridge rotates as if standing on a turntable, and Sherlock's vision zooms in to the man's white webbing belt.

The image changes to Major Sholto in his dress uniform rotating on the invisible turntable, and again the view zooms in on his white webbing belt.

Sherlock then recalls the waiter in the kitchen downstairs reaching down to take hold of the skewer pushed through the middle of the joint of beef.

In the shower room at the barracks, Bainbridge unclips his belt.

The waiter slowly begins to pull the skewer out of the joint.

Bainbridge unwraps his belt from around his waist.

The skewer comes free of the joint, and blood and juice stream out of the hole.

Bainbridge stumbles slightly, looking uncomfortable.

Blood continues to pour from the hole in the beef joint.

The duty sergeant knocks on the door of the shower cubicle, calling Bainbridge's name. Bainbridge is slumped on the floor inside and bloodstained water pours out under the door.)

(Outside Sholto's bedroom Sherlock - who had closed his eyes during the memories - opens them again. He steps over to Mary, takes hold of her head in both hands and kisses her forehead.)

SHERLOCK (releasing her, then pointing towards John): Though, in fairness, he's a drama queen too.

MARY: Yeah, I know.

(John frowns. Sherlock goes over to the door and speaks loudly.)

SHERLOCK: Major Sholto, no-one's coming to kill you. I'm afraid you've already been killed several hours ago.

SHOLTO: What did you say?

SHERLOCK: Don't take off your belt.

SHOLTO: My belt?

SHERLOCK (turning around and talking to the other two): His belt, yes. Bainbridge was stabbed hours before we even saw him, but it was through his belt.

(Brief flashback of Sholto clipping his belt together when he got dressed for the wedding.)

SHERLOCK: Tight belt, worn high on the waist. Very easy to push a small blade through the fabric and you wouldn't even feel it.

(John is nodding his understanding.)

JOHN: The-the belt would bind the flesh together when it was tied tight ...

SHERLOCK: Exactly.

JOHN: ... and when you took it off ...

SHERLOCK: Delayed action stabbing. All the time in the world to create an alibi.

(He shakes the door handle.)

SHERLOCK: Major Sholto?

SHOLTO: So - I was to be killed by my uniform. How appropriate.

(He stands up and looks at himself in the mirror on the wall.)

MARY: He solved the case, Major. You're supposed to open the door now. A deal is a deal.

SHOLTO: I'm not even supposed to have this any more. They gave me special dispensation to keep it. I couldn't imagine life out of this uniform. I suppose - given the circumstances - I don't have to.

(He carefully tosses the pistol onto the bed and then looks into the mirror again.)

SHOLTO: When so many want you dead, it hardly seems good manners to argue.

(He puts his right hand to the belt fastener and tightens his fingers ready to unclip it.)

JOHN: Whatever you're doing in there, James, stop it, right now. I will kick this door down.

SHOLTO: Mr Holmes, you and I are similar, I think.

(John turns away from the door and Sherlock walks closer.)

SHERLOCK: Yes, I think we are.

SHOLTO: There's a proper time to die, isn't there?

SHERLOCK: Of course there is.

SHOLTO: And one should embrace it when it comes - like a soldier.

SHERLOCK (firmly): Of course one should, but not at John's wedding. We wouldn't do that, would we - you and me? We would never do that to John Watson.

(Sholto closes his eyes. Outside, Sherlock steps away from the door and John walks closer, leaning towards the door and listening for any sound from the room. He straightens up and takes off his jacket.)

JOHN: I'm gonna break it down.

MARY: No, wait, wait, you won't have to.

JOHN: Hmm?

(The door opens. Sholto glances briefly at Sherlock, then lowers his eyes before looking at John.)

SHOLTO: I believe I am in need of medical attention.

JOHN: I believe I am your doctor.

(He follows Sholto as he turns and goes back into the room. Giving Sherlock a quick smile, Mary follows him. Sherlock closes his eyes for a moment, then follows them.)

EVENING. An orchestral rendition of the waltz "On The Beautiful Blue Danube" by Johann Strauss II can be heard. In the foyer of the wedding venue, Sherlock and Janine are waltzing alone. Sherlock is counting time.

SHERLOCK: One, two, three; der, der, der ... Ahh, pretty good.

JANINE: Ooh!

(They stop dancing.)

SHERLOCK (releasing her): Just ... hold your nerve on your turning.

JANINE (adjusting the top of her strapless bridesmaid's dress): Why do we have to rehearse?

SHERLOCK (leaning in and speaking confidentially): Because we are about to dance together in public, and your skills are appalling!

(He smiles at her and she laughs.)

JANINE: Well, you're a good teacher.

SHERLOCK: Mmm.

JANINE: And you're a brilliant dancer.

SHERLOCK (quietly, leaning towards her again): I'll let you in on something, Janine.

JANINE (in a whisper): Go on, then.

SHERLOCK: I love dancing. I've always loved it.

JANINE: Seriously?

SHERLOCK (quietly): Watch out.

(Looking around to make sure that nobody else can see him, he swings both of his arms to the left, takes a sharp breath, rises onto his left foot and does a full-circle pirouette.)

JANINE: Ooh! Woah!

SHERLOCK (clearing his throat): Never really comes up in crime work but, um, you know, I live in hope of the right case.

JANINE (sighing wistfully): I wish you weren't ...

(He turns and looks at her.)

JANINE: ... whatever it is you are.

SHERLOCK: I know.

(John has just walked into view and has spotted them. He walks over.)

JOHN: Well, glad to see you've pulled, Sherlock, what with murderers running riot at my wedding.

(He claps his hand on Sherlock's back.)

SHERLOCK: One murder... - one nearly murderer. (To Janine) Loves to exaggerate. You should try living with him.

(The entrance door opens and Greg comes in.)

LESTRADE: Sherlock? (He points back out the door.) Got him for you.

SHERLOCK (clapping his hands together as the wedding photographer walks in): Ah, the photographer. Excellent! (To Greg) Thank you.

(He walks over to the photographer and points at the camera he's holding.)

SHERLOCK: Er, may I have a look at your camera?

PHOTOGRAPHER: Er ... (he pulls his camera back nervously but then holds it out to him) ... what's this about? I was halfway home!

SHERLOCK (taking the camera): You should have driven faster.

(He looks at the screen on the back of the camera and starts flicking through the pictures.)

SHERLOCK: Ah, yes. Yes, very good. There, you see? (He smiles.) Perfect.

LESTRADE: What is? You gonna tell us?

SHERLOCK (handing the camera to Greg): Try looking yourself.

JOHN (walking to Greg's side): Um, look for what?

(Janine also walks over. Sherlock strolls closer to the photographer.)

JOHN (pointing at the camera): Is the murderer in these photographs?

SHERLOCK: It's not what's in the photographs; it's what's not in them - not in any of them.

JOHN: Sherlock? The showing-off thing: we've discussed it before.

SHERLOCK: There is always a man at a wedding who is not in any photograph but can go anywhere, and even carry an equipment bag around with him if he likes, and you never even see his face. (He walks closer to the photographer and looks down towards his hand.) You only ever see ...

(Brief montage of the wedding pictures, and then the photographer going round the reception taking photos.)

(Back in the present, Sherlock rapidly slaps one cuff of a pair of handcuffs around the photographer's wrist and the other cuff around the frame of a nearby birdcage luggage trolley [Arthur Shapley would be so excited].)

SHERLOCK: ... the camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER: What are you doing? What is this?

SHERLOCK (holding up his phone to show the screen to the others): Jonathan Small, today's substitute wedding photographer - known to us as the Mayfly Man. His brother was one of the raw recruits killed in that incursion. Jonny sought revenge on Sholto, worked his way through Sholto's staff, found what he needed ...

(Cutaway shot of Small arranging a group of five wedding guests - one of whom is Sholto - for a formal photograph. He is moving the people around so that they can all be seen by the camera which is on a tripod in front of them.)

SHERLOCK: ... an invitation to a wedding - the one time Sholto would have to be out in public. So, he made his plan ...

(Cutaway shot of Small, wearing casual clothes and a cap, outside the gates of the barracks. He moves to stand beside Bainbridge and then holds up a smartphone as if he's about to take a selfie of himself with the Guardsman.)

SHERLOCK: ... and rehearsed the murder ...

(Cutaway shot of Small with the wedding group, moving to take Sholto by the shoulders to move him into position.)

SHERLOCK: ... making sure of every last detail.

(Standing behind Sholto, Small holds his shoulder with one hand and puts his other hand down to the back of his belt. We can't see what he's holding but we hear a sharp noise as the slender blade punches through the belt and into Sholto's back.

Outside the barracks, still holding his phone up with one hand, Small stands slightly behind Bainbridge and we hear the sharp noise of the blade stabbing through the Guardsman's belt. Bainbridge jolts slightly and blinks.

At the photoshoot, Sholto sways slightly and looks a little uncomfortable. Small glares murderously at him from behind, withdraws his hand and then puts it into his jacket's inside breast pocket, tucking the blade out of sight.

At the barracks, Small walks away from Bainbridge.

At the photoshoot, Small gives Sholto one last glare from behind, then walks forward to his camera.)

(Back in the reception foyer, Small looks calmly at Sherlock.)

SHERLOCK: Brilliant, ruthless, almost certainly a monomaniac - though, in fairness, his photographs are actually quite good.

(He tosses his phone to Greg.)

SHERLOCK: Everything you need's on that. You probably ought to ... arrest him or something.

(Nearby, Mary comes into view, apparently looking for John. She spots him, smiles and hurries towards him. Janine, standing beside Sherlock, leans closer and speaks quietly without looking at him.)

JANINE: Do you always carry handcuffs?

SHERLOCK: Down, girl.

MARY (holding out her hand to John): Come on, quick!

(She reaches his side and John puts his arm around her as she turns and sees Small nearby. He is looking at Sherlock fixedly.)

SMALL: It's not me you should be arresting, Mr Holmes.

SHERLOCK: Oh, I don't do the arresting. (He nods towards Greg.) I just farm that out.

SMALL: Sholto - he's the killer, not me. I should have killed him quicker.

(He grins manically, then his smile fades and he shakes his head.)

SMALL: I shouldn't have tried to be clever.

SHERLOCK (softly): You should have driven faster.

(He takes his hands from behind his back and crooks one arm to Janine. She takes it and they walk away. John and Mary follow them. Greg looks down at Sherlock's phone, then looks at Small.)

LESTRADE: Right ...

In the reception room, the tables have been cleared away. Looking into each other's eyes, Mary and John are dancing a slow waltz in the middle of the room to the sound of a single violin while all the guests stand around the edge of the room and watch them. On a low stage at the end of the room Sherlock is playing his violin. The tune is the same one we heard at the beginning of the episode. He sways gently while he plays, his eyes fixed on the newlyweds. As the tune draws to an end, John shifts one hand to Mary's back, holds her by the waist with the other and starts to dip her backwards. Mary gasps.

MARY: Really?!

(Chuckling, he bends her backwards as she giggles. He kisses her as the tune ends. The guests break into applause and some of them cheer. Everyone is looking at the happy couple except Janine who directs her applause towards Sherlock. She whoops at him.)

JANINE: Yeah!

(Sherlock looks at her for a moment, then turns to the music stand in front of him. He had taken off his buttonhole flower and put it on the stand so that it wouldn't get in the way while he was playing and now he picks it up, shows her what he's holding and then tosses it across the room towards her. She catches it. John - who has pulled Mary upright again and is laughing happily - waves his thanks to Sherlock, then kisses Mary again as Sherlock steps to the nearby microphone.)

SHERLOCK: Ladies and gentlemen, just, er, one last thing before the evening begins properly. Apologies for earlier. A crisis arose and was dealt with.

(He draws in a breath.)

SHERLOCK: More importantly, however, today we saw two people make vows. I've never made a vow in my life, and after tonight I never will again. So, here in front of you all, my first and last vow. Mary and John: whatever it takes, whatever happens, from now on I swear I will always be there, always, for all three of you.

(He hesitates momentarily, then stutters.)

SHERLOCK: Er, I'm sorry, I mean, I mean two of you. All two of you. Both of you, in fact. I've just miscounted.

(He takes a sharp breath. John and Mary exchange a slightly worried look.)

SHERLOCK: Anyway, it's time for dancing. (Over his shoulder to the DJ on the stage) Play the music again, please, thank you.

(Disco lights begin to flash and Sherlock gestures grandly to the guests as Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons' song "December, 1963 (Oh What A Night)" starts to play.)

SHERLOCK: Okay, everybody, just dance. Don't be shy!

(He walks down off the stage, still gesturing to the crowd.)

SHERLOCK: Dancing, please!

(The guests start to move onto the floor and begin to dance.)

SHERLOCK: Very good!

(He walks over to Mary and John who look quizzically at him.)

SHERLOCK: Sorry, that was one more deduction than I was really expecting.

MARY: "Deduction"?

SHERLOCK (looking intensely at her): Increased appetite ...

(Flashback to Mary taking one of the canapés from the waiter's tray.)

MARY (in flashback): Starving.

SHERLOCK: ... change of taste perception ...

(Flashback to Mary grimacing at her wine glass.)

MARY (in flashback): Urgh. I chose this wine. It's bloody awful.

SHERLOCK: ... and you were sick this morning. You assumed it was just wedding nerves. You got angry with me when I mentioned it to you. All the signs are there.

MARY: "The signs"?

(Sherlock glances across to John, then turns his eyes back to her.)

SHERLOCK: The signs of three.

(His gaze drops to her abdomen.)

MARY: What?!

SHERLOCK: Mary, I think you should do a pregnancy test.

(John sighs and drops his head, almost bending over double. Mary grins delightedly at Sherlock.)

SHERLOCK: W... th... the statistics for the first trimester are ...

JOHN (straightening up): Shut up.

(Sherlock freezes in the middle of forming his next word. He looks at John as if waiting for permission to continue.)

JOHN: Just ... shut up.

SHERLOCK: Sorry.

(John turns to Mary.)

JOHN (looking annoyed with himself): How did he notice before me? I'm a bloody doctor.

SHERLOCK: It's your day off.

JOHN: It's your day off!

SHERLOCK: Stop-stop panicking.

JOHN: I'm not panicking.

MARY: I'm pregnant - I'm panicking.

SHERLOCK: Don't panic. None of you panic.

(The Watsons both look down, their faces full of concern.)

SHERLOCK: Absolutely no reason to panic.

JOHN: Oh, and you'd know, of course?

SHERLOCK: Yes, I would. You're already the best parents in the world. Look at all the practice you've had!

JOHN: What practice?

SHERLOCK: Well, you're hardly gonna need me around now that you've got a real baby on the way.

(John stares, then Sherlock smiles happily at him. John laughs and reaches out to cup the back of his neck. Laughing even more, he turns to his wife and puts his other hand on her shoulder as she begins to smile with delight. Sherlock turns his smile towards Mary, but after a moment the smile begins to fade a little.)

JOHN (to Mary): You all right?

MARY (a little breathlessly): Yeah.

(John turns back to Sherlock, smiling joyfully. They look at each other for a long moment, then John breaks the eye contact and they both look a bit awkward. There's a slightly embarrassed pause for a couple of seconds.)

SHERLOCK (abruptly): Dance.

JOHN: Mm?

SHERLOCK: Both of you, now, go dance. We can't just stand here. People will wonder what we're talking about.

JOHN: Right.

(Mary reaches out to touch Sherlock's arm, her voice tearful.)

MARY: And what about you?

JOHN: Well, we can't all three dance. There are limits!

SHERLOCK: Yes, there are.

(John clears his throat. Still looking tearful, Mary turns to John.)

MARY: Come on, husband. Let's go.

JOHN (pointing over his shoulder): This isn't a waltz, is it?

(She laughs.)

SHERLOCK: Don't worry, Mary, I have been tutoring him.

JOHN: He did, you know. Baker Street, behind closed curtains.

(Turning to face her, he takes her right hand with his left and puts his other hand on her waist.)

JOHN: Mrs Hudson came in one time. Don't know how those rumours started!

(He sniggers. Giggling, she puts her left hand on his shoulder and they dance off into the crowd. Looking over John's shoulder, Mary smiles at Sherlock and mouths what may be a 'thank you.' He smiles, then nods to her. As his friends dance away, he lowers his eyes, then slowly turns and looks at everybody dancing all around him, keeping his head lowered as if trying not to meet anyone's eyes. He looks very lost and alone in the middle of the crowd. After a few moments, however, he seems to have a thought and lifts his head, still looking around but now with more intent. Eventually he sees Janine dancing some distance away. She is wearing his buttonhole flower pinned to the top of her dress. She looks across the room and smiles at him. Returning her smile he starts to walk towards her and she lifts her hand and points to her right with her thumb up, grinning happily. Sherlock stops when he realises that she's dancing with the 'comics and sci-fi geek' he had recommended to her earlier. She turns away and continues to dance with her new friend. Sherlock looks reflective for a few seconds, then turns towards the stage.

On the music stand is the hand-written music he played for the newlyweds. In the top right-hand corner is written:

Waltz,
for Mary & John
by
Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock picks up the music and folds it into an envelope, which he puts onto the stand. Written on the envelope is:

Dr. and Mrs Watson

Leaving the stage he walks slowly through the guests. Molly, dancing with Tom and Mrs Hudson, looks across the room and watches him for a few seconds, then turns back to the others.)

In the garden outside the reception room, while the revellers dance on, Sherlock puts his coat on and, with the collar turned up to the max, slowly walks away.