**Author:** tj_teejay (AO3 – Tumblr – Instagram – Reddit – E-Mail)
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**Prompt:** Sherlock BBC, John OR Moriarty, a three-(nicotine)patch problem

# A Snake Called Monty

On days like this, Sherlock drives him absolutely bonkers.

John knows all too well how to interpret the signs. Sulky expression, restlessness, pacing, staccato fragments of sentences uttered at random to no one in particular. The disheveled sofa cushions tell the story as much as the more-than-usual chaos in the kitchen and the papers strewn haphazardly all over the desk.

He lingers in the doorway between kitchen and sitting room, watching his friend with a wary eye. Sherlock is perched on the edge of the sofa, his head in his hands. John isn't sure, but it sounds like he's muttering mathematical equations of some sort.

"Three-patch problem?" John asks.

No answer is forthcoming, which doesn't perturb John all that much. Unpredictability is something you got used to if you came to tolerate Sherlock's presence for extended periods of time.

John just shrugs and sits down in the armchair, laptop on his thighs. It isn't much use to pressure Sherlock for information on days like this. John knows he'll be sharing when he's ready.

It's about ten minutes later that he hears Sherlock's voice. "What?"

John looks up to find Sherlock's gaze on him, an errand curl of his hair sticking up at an odd angle. "I'm sorry?" John asks back.

"You said something. Didn't you say something?"

"No, I didn't. Unless you mean ten minutes ago. I asked you then if it was a three-patch problem."

Sherlock's brow creases in confusion. "If *what* is a three-patch problem?"

"Whatever it is that has you so wound up."

Sherlock lets out a sound that speaks of irritation and frustration, not unlike the noise that small dogs make when they try to be menacing. It's followed by an impatient, "Shut up, John. Unless you have something significant to contribute."

"Sherlock, I don't even know what I'm supposed to be contributing *to*!"

"Shut up," Sherlock repeats, jumping up from the sofa to start pacing once again. "I need to think."

John just sighs. This is useless. He hoped he could type up the blog entry that was long overdue, but he realizes Sherlock's high-strung antics are making that close to impossible. A low patience level doesn't mix well with days like this. He decides he might as well leave, and it's not like Sherlock would even notice.

He closes the lid of the laptop and grabs his jacket off the back of the desk chair. Sherlock is now sprawled on the sofa, his hands steepled with index fingers pressing against his lips as John walks across the room to the door. All the more does it surprise him when Sherlock's voice sharply cuts into the silence.

"Where are you going? You can't leave *now*!"

John turns around, his expression perhaps a little too sour. "I don't see why I would possibly want to stay. You're having conversations with… I don't know… people in your Mind Palace, for all I know. Which makes it impossible for me to concentrate on any tasks of my own. You're rude and unappreciative. You refuse to tell me about your case, your problem, your—whatever it is. Why, Sherlock, give me one reason why I should stay."

Sherlock looks like he's taken aback by John's outburst, confusion dominating his expression. He's lost for words, which is a rare occurrence for Sherlock Holmes.

John waits a moment, or maybe three, raising his eyebrows at the silence that greets him. He draws in a breath that he releases audibly. "Yeah, I didn't think so," he mumbles finally.

He's on the verge of turning to leave, when Sherlock says, "Everything makes more sense when you're here."

John digests the statement. "Does it now?" he says, his mouth curving into the faintest of smiles. "And are you holding conversations with me in your head while I'm here, too?"

Sherlock makes a shrugging gesture. "Maybe."

John can only shake his head, then looks at Sherlock. "I'm going to stay under one condition."

"Name it."

"You stop being so bloody distracting. And you lay off the nicotine patches."

"That's two conditions."

"Well," John raises his arms in mock exasperation. "Consider this the Spanish Inquisition, then."

Sherlock looks at him in utter bewilderment. "The *Spanish Inquisition*?"

"Oh, for God's sake. Don't tell me you've never heard of Monty Python."

Sherlock stares into the distance for a moment, then meets John's gaze, clearly clueless. "If you're referring to a snake called Monty, I'm not sure how that is of relevance to this conversation."

"You know what?" John gives Sherlock a forced smile, "Forget I mentioned it. Now, can we agree on little to no distraction?"

Sherlock hums indecisively, then leans his head back against the armrest without another word. John briefly chews his lower lip in hesitation, but deep down he knows Sherlock has already won him over.

He takes off his jacket again, and with a sigh sits back down in his armchair. After his laptop awakes from hibernation mode, he brings up the blog and starts typing…

*The Golden Valley Mystery*

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THE END