Letter from the Editor

This may come as a surprise to some, but Washington, DC has a rather large zine culture. Taking inspiration from the many creators I've encountered, I thought why not combine my love of zines and my love of fanworks? Therefore, I am proud to present to you the first annual GridLOCK DC Zine!

Thank you to the creators who decided to contribute to our little endeavor and make something just for us. The whole con-com hopes that you enjoy our little project and that maybe even you can contribute next year, adding in your favorite characters and pairings.

Enjoy our creation, enjoy our convention, and most of all enjoy each other!

- Oddree and the Con-Com

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Sherlock at the Smithsonian
By: Jonathan Rigby

Sherlock Holmes stood on the sheen granite floor of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History with his partner admiring Ormond, the first fully intact Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton ever found. Head to toe he reared forty-two feet, brushed bronze colored bones refracting the overhead lights. A group of schoolchildren walked by, chattering like chickadees. Sherlock was as excited as them.

“Do you see that, Watson? Where the thoracic vertebra meets the lower cervical, at the base of her neck? They’re shorter at their bases than the tops; friction abrasions, doubtless ground down from the strain of supporting that massive head in her old age. And those teeth! Serrated, twelve inches long, made for ripping and tearing. Marvelous, absolutely marvelous. The tip is broken on the third from the left, though, I wonder how that happened?”

“We’re on vacation, Sherlock. Ormond, a ridiculous name for a dinosaur, might I add, is already sixty five million years dead. He doesn’t need us to lend a hand in solving the mystery of her demise.”

“Yes, I know, but a complete skeleton, the king of the Mesozoic! The tales these ancient bones whisper about his life.” His broad smile abruptly turned to a frown. “Well, that’s not right.” Sherlock strode up to the red satin divider that surrounded the skeleton. He hopped over it as if it were a hurdle, and walked straight through the display to the weathered bones.

A security guard seated behind a wooden counter, caught sight of Holmes. “Excuse me, hey, excuse me! You can’t go in there.”
Sherlock ignored the man, and swiped his left index finger across the femur. Upon removal a film of white residue with thin, brick colored streaks lay on the tip. He touched it to his tongue. “Calcium carbonate.” He looked at Watson, who only stared blankly. “Chalk, in the form of limestone sculpted to look like the right femur, and weathered with hydrogen peroxide. Beautifully done, but fake.” Sherlock turned his gaze up to the pelvic cavity. “And this is the pubic bone of a female. You can tell by the wide chute, but the narrow pelvic bone above is clearly male.” He touched Ormond’s leg. “The rest is real, but where is Ormond walking off to?”

Watson gave him a resigned look as a group approached them from behind. “I can’t say, but it looks like these men want a word with you.”

“And I with them.” Sherlock stepped back over the divider and rolled up his sleeves as he approached the four security guards and the administrator of the museum.

“So much for our vacation,” Watson sighed.

Sherlock said, “The Smithsonian acquired the first complete Tyrannosaurus skeleton ever found. I believe someone else wants it too, and is sacking Ormond piece by piece.”

Watson muttered under his breath, “I still think it’s a silly name.” Holmes pulled a crisp white card from his breast pocket.

“I’d like to assist in the investigation. Here is my card. Sherlock Holmes, at your service.”
When John reaches for the doorknob, Sherlock grabs the back of John’s shirt. “Stay here. Outside is full of idiotic American bureaucrats.”

“You find everyone idiotic, regardless of nationality.” But then John lets go of the door and turns to kiss Sherlock.

It has been six months, but John still feels his knees go weak when Sherlock kisses him back. John loves that Sherlock wants him constantly when they aren’t on a case—including now, as their suspect’s arrival has been delayed two days.

“I don’t want to visit D.C. only to see our hotel room,” John says, in one final attempt to leave.

Sherlock only stops kissing him to murmur: “Are you certain?”

“Um,” John says. “Nearly.”

They don’t leave until noon the following day.

* * *

John leans against the stone building, his body collapsed under the force of his laughter.

“I don’t see what’s so funny,” Sherlock says.

“Greatest. Museum visit. Ever.”

“It’s petty, John. Just because you know more about one topic doesn’t mean you need to gloat at every opportunity.”
“Sherlock,” John manages to say. Then he bursts into giggles again.
“I’ll leave you alone amongst the Americans.” (But Sherlock knows the truth. He can’t be here without John—not even when John forces him to go inside museums dedicated to planets and aviation, because, to quote, “I’m sure your ego can take it, I want to see this.”)

“You asked how many people inhabit the moon!”

Sherlock glares. “What do scientists do all day, if they have yet to make the moon habitable? It’s embarrassing for humanity.”

“No,” John says, but he softens the comment with a (still-shaking) hand on the small of Sherlock’s back. “It’s embarrassing for you, love.” (If John has a weakness for Sherlock kissing him, John knows Sherlock has a weakness for John saying ‘love.’) “Well. And the docent.”

Despite himself, Sherlock snorts. “He did seem rather incapable of responding.”

“I don’t think I’ve seen a face go quite that shade before. I wish I’d gotten a photo for Lestrade.”

“You won’t tell him.”

“I can’t say the only sight we saw was our hotel!”

Sherlock shrugs. “I don’t mind.”

John rolls his eyes. “No. But…if you let me plan this evening, I’ll keep mum.”

“Blackmail, John?”

He grins. “I’m learning from the bureaucrats.”
“John,” Sherlock whines. “This city is worse than Mycroft.”

John grabs Sherlock’s hand, feeling a little braver than usual after seeing so many same-gender couples during their evening stroll. “Have a little faith, love,” he says, spotting Board Room on their right. “I chose this place for a reason.”

John enjoys the rare thrill of seeing a Sherlockian sulk dissolve when Sherlock spots the truly massive pile of board games just inside the door.

“You pick our game—not Cluedo—and I’ll get us pints.” John says. “Can you bear that, in a city worse than Mycroft?”

“Shut up,” Sherlock says, in a way that John knows doesn’t mean anything of the sort.
By: Jess (lockholmes.tumblr.com)
The butler ushered us down the corridor and into the oval room. “Mr. Smith and Doctor Jones,” he said, then withdrew, closing the door behind him.

The stout man behind the carved desk rose and rounded the desk to greet us. “Ah, Mr…. Smith and Doctor Jones. A pleasure.”

Holmes reached into his pocket. “Mr. President, it is my honour to be the bearer of such an important missive from my government, and to place it safely in your hands.”

I breathed a small sigh of relief when Holmes handed the envelope to President Cleveland. Our mission had been undertaken with the utmost secrecy, and even as we approached that simple, yet elegant building where he lived, we had found it necessary to elude pursuit.

The President returned to his desk, where he opened the envelope and took out a single sheet of foolscap.

Holmes glanced at me, his brows raised. “Excuse my presumption, Mr. President, but is that not the desk made from timbers of *HMS Resolute*?” He stepped silently toward the door through which we had entered.
“Yes, it is,” said President Cleveland, frowning at Holmes. “A most gracious gift from your queen.”

“Would it be possible for Doctor Jones to examine the carvings? An uncle of his served on that vessel.”

After a momentary hesitation, the President replied. “Of course.”

I had no idea why Holmes suddenly presented me with an imaginary seafaring uncle, but I fell in with his obvious wish and approached the desk.

President Cleveland rose and gestured at the side panel. “Dr. Jones, you can see the—”

“Down, Watson!” cried Holmes as he threw open the door. The crack of a pistol sounded.

I hurled myself at the President, and despite his girth, bore him to the floor behind the desk. Another shot rang out, and Holmes gave a shout.

“Holmes!” I rose enough to glance over the desk.

Holmes struggled with a man holding a revolver. Grimacing, he had both hands around the man’s wrist and forearm, directing the gun away from where the President lay.

Fortunately, at that moment several men ran into the room and assisted Holmes in disarming the intruder. He was quickly led away, snarling in impotent rage.
I looked down at the grave face of the man lying quiescent beneath me and quickly got to my feet.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. President.”

He remained silent as I helped him stand, his gaze travelling from Holmes to me and back again.

Holmes smoothed his ruffled hair and straightened his coat, then turned to us.

“Mr. President, I deeply regret—”

“Well, Mr. Smith, I must say that you live up to your brother’s encomiums.” The President resumed his seat with a stifled groan. “What was it that alerted you to the danger?”

Holmes smiled briefly. “The doorknob turned slowly and the door opened slightly, but no one entered. I heard a wheezing breath, one which I had encountered earlier, when the good doctor and I avoided being waylaid. I do apologize for the deception regarding the desk, but my first concern, of course, was for your safety.”

“Naturally.” The President nodded and folded his hands before him. “Mr. Smith, Dr. Jones, by successfully bringing this letter, you have foiled the attempts of the enemies of our two great nations to divide us.” He turned to me. “Despite the indignities imposed upon my person, your bravery and quick thinking prevented a national tragedy. For that I thank you.”

Perhaps one day future generations will learn of our journey to the shores of the United States and our adventures there, but for now, these brief notes will reside in my faithful tin dispatch-box.
“Oh oh oh, Myc, lookit!! The Washington Monument!” Greg Lestrade elbowed his partner, Mycroft Holmes, in the back of their cab as they rode down Constitution Avenue. Greg had begged Mycroft to come with him to his conference in the States this time, his holiday time lining up perfectly. Now, he was glad he came. He had read up on the monuments and the history of them, learning all he could in preparation to visit the American capitol city. He’d planned whole days for he and Mycroft, wanting to tour all of the museums the Smithsonian had to offer, especially the Air and Space.

But they wouldn’t be getting anywhere with... "This traffic is horrendous," Mycroft commented as they came to a fourth complete stop. "And with only a few blocks to go until we arrive as well..."

But, as soon as Mycroft said it, Greg was stepping out of the cab. The warm August breeze flitted over his skin, making him smile. He looked up at the outline of the Washington Monument against the bright blue sky, tall and regal.
Mycroft poked his head out. “Gregory, what are you doing?”

“C’mon, Myc. Let’s take a walk.” Greg’s eye immediately found a souvenir stall over on the walkway and he grinned. “Look, Myc! Trinkets and stuff!” And, excitedly, he rushed over to it, admiring the shirts and hats and knick-knacks, many of them boasting ‘I ♡ DC’ and the like.

Rolling his eyes fondly at his partner, Mycroft paid the cabbie and carried his briefcase over to where Greg was ogling a… “Is that half a mug?” Mycroft asked, amused.

“Yeah… ‘DC was so expensive, I could only afford half a mug!’” he read from the front of the novelty cup. “That bloody hilarious.” He pulled a few American notes from his pocket and paid the vendor for the cup and a t-shirt he had picked out. It was vibrant green with the ‘I ♡ DC’ bold on the front. “I’m gonna give this to Sal,” he said, laying the garish shirt over his arm. “She’d love it.”

Mycroft nodded, but then turned to look up the street. Traffic, backed up as far as he could see. “Lord they’re in a gridlock. I’m glad we are walking.”

Greg smiled. “Me too.” He reached out and laced his fingers with Mycroft’s as they made their way down the walk. “I’m glad I came. This is amazing.”
By: avawatson
It should have been silent. Sherlock had expected stillness, hush, reverence, but this place of remembrance seemed almost alive.

He had anticipated the gentle rolling hills, and the vibrant, nearly outrageous green of the lawns. He had visualised the uniform array of the gravestones, mute guardians of names and dates. What he hadn’t imagined was the vitality. Car doors slamming, children’s voices. Trees, so many trees, old and twisted, rustling in the hot breeze, alive and full of birds. The shadows and shade from the trees somehow made everything else seem brighter. The white of the markers fairly glowed in the daylight. There was so much life here. He could not resolve the dissonance.

Sherlock straightened where he stood in the shade of one of the surprising trees, and refocused his attention. John Watson stood fifty yards and ten years away, at the foot of a grave. He stood in a brace of sunlight, staring at a marker, unblinking, lost in memory. John had hesitated to suggest this visit, though Sherlock knew it had occurred to him the moment this case came up. Soldiers with whom he had served rested here, and it was inevitable that he would want to pay his respects. Sherlock had immediately, enthusiastically approved and offered to keep him company, but withheld all other comment. This was wise; the two of them had a problematic history with cemeteries at best.

Sherlock considered how different things could have been for them both. John’s wound had been severe; it was obvious from the scar. A flat tire on an ambulance, an overtired surgeon, penicillin missing from a supply cabinet, and he could have been lost. It could be John’s name on a white marker in the midst of too much green, across the ocean in a far different and heartbreakingly similar setting. But fate had been
kind, in a twisted fashion. John had come home, damaged but alive. Sherlock might easily have never known him, but he was here, now, in this painfully bright place on a hot and humid day, paying respects to the memories of less fortunate friends.

Sherlock shifted his gaze to the gravestone with a sigh. He knew he was being selfish. He should have been thinking on those who had fallen, allies who had stood with his countrymen against common enemies. But all he could think of was John, the bravest man he had ever known.

In a minute, maybe two, John would finally nod, turn, and walk toward him. His pace would be slow and steady, with a slight hitch at first. He would walk up to Sherlock, and their eyes would meet. John would smile ruefully, and incline his head in the direction of the exit. Sherlock would want to ask if he was all right, to know what John was feeling at that moment, but he wouldn’t trust himself to find the words. So instead they would turn and walk toward the gates, moving with purpose, with certainty, grateful and together.
Sherlock and John stepped off the aging trolley in front of the U.S. Capitol Building, their sleeves rolled up against the June heat. John paused for a moment to get his bearings, but Sherlock’s ridiculously expensive shoes had barely hit the concrete before he was off, weaving through the crowd toward Constitution Avenue. John rolled his eyes and jogged after him, muttering apologies to the people he jostled along the way.

“How far to the Supreme Court building?” he asked when he finally drew level with Sherlock’s shoulder.

“One block. We’re nearly there,” Sherlock said, speeding his steps. John sighed and lengthened his strides to keep up.

“And you really think we’ll be able to do enough snooping in a highly-secure building to solve this?” he asked.

“It’s open to the public, John, it can only be so secure under those circumstances. There has to be a reason someone would be killing docents in such a place. With that level of access, the killer could be assassinating judges or high-level lawyers, but instead they go for the docents. Why?”

“Yes, yes, it’s terribly fascinating, and I’m sure you have ten theories already,” John said, and wished he didn’t sound so fond about it.

“Only seven, but I appreciate the credit.”
As they rounded the corner, the crowd suddenly thickened. John pushed in front of Sherlock and made a path through the crowd for them, until they stood on the plaza in front of the columned building. Suddenly, a wave of cheering went through the assembled masses. People screamed, burst into tears, hoisted signs and waved flags—waved rainbow flags.

John tapped the elbow of the nearest person who wasn’t currently locked in an embrace, a young Black girl with pink, purple, and blue stripes painted over each cheekbone. “Sorry, but we aren’t from around here. What’s happened?”

The girl grinned from ear to ear, radiant in her joy. “The Supreme Court just ruled that all fifty states have to issue and recognize same-sex marriages!”

John opened his mouth to reply, but the girl was swallowed up by a crowd of her laughing, crying friends, the paint running down her face in teary streaks. Then a hand landed on John’s shoulder.

“Come on, John, everyone is distracted. Now is a perfect time to investigate,” Sherlock’s voice rumbled in his ear.

To John’s horror, he found his throat too thick to speak. He opened his mouth, then closed it again. Pursed his lips and looked away. He gestured for Sherlock to walk on, but Sherlock didn’t budge. John could feel the man’s eyes on him, studying his every reaction.
“Same-sex marriage has been legal in England since 2014, John. We don’t even live here. I don’t—”

“I know,” John said, finally finding his voice. “I know. Come on, let’s go catch our killer.” He started to walk away, but was pulled up short by Sherlock’s fingers around his wrist.

“Sherlock, let me go. We need to get on with this before—”

“John.”

And there was something in his voice. John took a deep breath in through his nose, then turned to meet Sherlock’s gaze.

Sherlock looked down. Took a breath. Looked up.

“It’s good. This,” he said, gesturing to the waving flags and celebrating couples. “Good for them. For people like ... like us.”

John froze, and his mind went perfectly blank.

“So ... you’re ...”

“Gay, obviously,” Sherlock said. He smiled, just a little bit, just a tiny quirk of one corner, then looked down again. “And you are?”

The last part was said so quietly that John almost missed it. But once the words processed, his heart slammed itself into his ribcage. He clenched his left hand and snuck a quick look at Sherlock’s face—small, painfully vulnerable, attempting calm collected cool but failing by a mile.
“Bi,” John said finally, clipped and tense. He sucked in a huge breath and let it out in a gasping sigh, shaking out the tension in his hand. When he looked up, Sherlock had stepped closer.

“First time you’ve said it out loud?” he asked quietly.

John nodded. His breath was out of control, and Sherlock’s proximity wasn’t helping. A gentle hand on his elbow startled him out of his panic.

“Are you ready?” Sherlock asked, voice still pitched for their ears only.

John blew out another breath and nodded. Getting on with the case would do wonders for his spinning brain. “Yeah. Let’s do this.”

Then Sherlock’s mouth was pressed against his, gentle and sweet. A few seconds pressure, of shared breath, then he pulled back, that tiny smile on his face once again.

“Come on,” Sherlock said. “We have a murderer to catch.”

And they walked up the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court building, surrounded by waving rainbow flags and celebration. John had never felt part of any of it before, but this ...

This day belonged to him, too.
Driving the DC beltway was an exercise in hellish daredevilry at the best of times. At 5 p.m. on a Friday in July, I-95 was a convenience store warming shelf lined with unmoving boxes of sweltering meat.

John and Sherlock’s rented car had moved less than a mile in the past hour, and Sherlock, his dark curls matted with perspiration, was in rare form.

“Perhaps these cattle actually have gotten one thing correct,” he spat, depressing the clutch and shifting into first gear, only to slide right back to neutral and brake again barely a second later. “These lazy sods with their automatic transmissions may actually have an advantage.”
“You think anyone’s been murdered yet?” John asked, his arm out the
passenger-side window to catch every faint whiff of breeze.

“You mean the case we’re on? Unlikely, though I predict there will be
two bodies waiting for us by the time we make it to our exit. On this
bloody road, though? It’s entirely possible there’ve been several
murders within ten car lengths of us.”

An obnoxiously red Audi chose that moment to drive up the shoulder of
the road, past the line of stalled traffic, tires bumping over the grass of
its invented lane. Sherlock pointed.

“And that utter cock will likely be my own first victim. You should call
Sally right now and put money on my descent into murderous
psychopathy. I’d hate for her to have all the bragging rights.”

Clutch, shift, gas, brake, stop.

Clutch, shift, gas, brake, stop.

Once, Sherlock made it into second gear before he had to brake. He
nearly wept at the absurd blossom of triumph it inspired.

“John, I don’t know how much more I can take. My ankle is actually
starting to hurt from clutching so often.” He drummed his fingers on
the steering wheel and gear shift. “Can we get out and walk? Just
abandon this horrible car here and strike out on our own? I promise
not to conduct experiments in the kitchen for a month. Two months.
Please.”

“Oh, for—here, switch,” John said, and pulled the parking brake. He
threw one leg over the center console and carefully maneuvered his
more sensitive bits around the gearshift as Sherlock squeezed past
him, pressed up against his back. He dropped into the driver-side seat
just as the traffic in front of him began to creep forward another few inches.

John shifted into first gear and gave the engine one good rev to get the car moving, then shifted immediately back to neutral, letting the car coast on momentum alone for the short distance needed to catch back up. Except he’d miscalculated; the car began to slow with a sizeable gap still between them and the Prius ahead.

Without a word, Sherlock threw himself forward in his seat so hard that the car drifted forward a few extra inches. He did it again, and again, until the car’s momentum had dissipated entirely.

John stared. It wasn’t as if he really needed to keep his eyes on the road.

“Again,” Sherlock snapped without taking his eyes off the car in front of them. John shifted, revved, then went back to neutral. Sherlock threw himself forward over and over, and the car lurched forward with each effort.

_Ah, what the hell, _John thought.

He joined in. After the next shift, he and Sherlock both lurched forward in their seats, rocking the car forward again and again. A snort, then another, and then they both cracked up, their laughter ebbing in time with their coordinated rocking. A child’s voice drifted over from the open window of another car, a faint _what are they doing, Mommy? _that only made them laugh harder.

John took his hand off the steering wheel just long enough to wipe the tears from his eyes, meeting Sherlock’s open, relaxed grin with one of his own.

_**Sherlock Holmes will live another day without becoming a murderous psychopath,**_ John thought. _**And thank God for that.**_
Without my Boswell
By: pursuitofnerdiness

The telegram arrived on his desk, covered in a fine sheen of coal dust and scattered notes.

S: YOUR HELP NEEDED IN WASHINGTON. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FORTHCOMING. MH.

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THE MORSE TELEGRAPH ALPHABET.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 0


J. H. BUNNELL & CO., Telegraph Instruments, 76 Cortlandt St., N. Y.
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“Ah, Mycroft, always interrupting my research.”

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Two weeks later, Holmes emerged from the New Jersey Avenue train station after a grueling steamship voyage and relatively pleasant train ride from New York City. A man greeted him as expected and led him
to an office building not too far away, into an office marked WILLIAM P. HAZEN, DIRECTOR.

“Mr. Holmes, nice to meet you.”

The two shook hands. “A pleasure, though as you know, I’m supposed to be dead.”

“And yet, you are not. Your services were recommended by Mrs. Irene Norton, an old family friend of the Clevelands’.”

Holmes chuckled. “The local Pinkerton agency wouldn’t do?”

“Not for this. The Secret Service has only just begun protecting the president when needed, and right now, the need is dire. We’ve been receiving alarming threats from some anarchists, but the trail went cold in Colorado. However, we believe they are en route to the capital to enact their assassination attempt.”

“Shall we begin, then?”

---

A few days later, Holmes accompanied Hazen to apprehend the would-be assassins. Holmes sighed and thought, *What a shame it is that this singular incident will never be recorded by my Boswell.*
"It's 35 degrees out here. How are you not dying in that coat?"
"Perhaps I possess more control over my transport than you do, John."
"Human beings are mammals, Sherlock; body temperature controls are autonomic - shivering, sweating, that sort of thing."
"I don't sweat."
"Why are you pulling your coat closed?"
"Habit."
"And why is it lumpy in the back?"
"Um.... no reaso--OI!"
"I knew it! You nicked one of those water-cooled vests from Mycroft, you berk!"
"I'm borrowing it. For an experiment."
"You nicked it so you could look AND feel cool in the middle of August in Washington DC wearing a suit and a wool coat! How vain are you anyway?"
"This isn’t about vanity, John. It’s about maintaining an image. Thanks to your blog, I now have fans all over the world, including here in America. People expect to see me as you’ve described me."
"If that were the case, you’d be wearing your hat."
"It’s not my hat."
"People only recognize you in the hat."
"Not my hat."
"Besides, who’d expect either of us to be here, anyway? Unless…"
"Unless?"
*sigh* "Sherlock, you said this was a holiday! That means no work!"
"That’s what it means to you, John."
"And what does it mean to you?"
"A case worthy of the talents of my blogger!"
The Stars Tonight
By: BakerstreetJen

Sherlock checked the mirror of the museum restroom, making sure that his hair was behaving itself in its slicked back state. His usual style was too recognizable and the men that were following him would pick him out immediately. He quickly pulled everything out of his jacket pockets before shrugging it off and stuffing it into the bin. The hooded sweatshirt that he had swiped from the souvenir stand went on and so did the sunglasses, he had taken from yet another vendor. Honestly, did no one pay attention?

He leaned heavily on the counter, forcing himself to wait another two minutes before making his way out. He didn’t think that Moran’s men had seen him or they would have already burst into the bathroom with their usual oafish glee. Still, he couldn’t take any chances. Not when he was this close.

He took a deep breath, put his head down and walked out of the restroom the most boring, ordinary Washington DC tourist that anyone had ever seen. It worked. He saw the men at the other entrance and they were looking the wrong way. He used this to his advantage and followed the group of Boy Scouts that were
heading toward the next building, it didn’t matter where they were going. He just needed to blend in.

He walked through the doors, looked up and started to chuckle. Of course, it would be this one. The National Air and Space Museum was somewhere that he had never expected to find himself and now, on the run from and running down killers, Sherlock Holmes decided to take his time. He pushed the sunglasses up so they were sitting ridiculously on top of his head and looked around for a certain sign.

There it was. He was just in time for the next show.

Sherlock sat in the dark of the planetarium and wondered what John would think of him sitting there right now. Would he find it amusing? Sherlock could just hear him, *You actually sat through something called ‘The Stars Tonight’? I don’t believe it!*

Sherlock smiled to himself for a moment, but then the grin faded away. Who knew if he would actually live long enough to tell John about it, if John would forgive him for leaving him behind. He slumped in his seat, huddling in the oversized hoodie. He hadn’t even looked at it before he snatched it. What a ridiculous name. The Washington *Capitals*? They were currently in the capital of this bloody country, did they forget?

His internal chastisement of the naming conventions of professional hockey teams ended as the show started. He looked up at the projected stars and constellations and sighed. Even though they weren’t the real thing, he could still appreciate them.
It is with great humility and honor that I take to my keyboard to chronicle my first case with Mr. Sherlock Holmes. After all, to follow in the footsteps of his esteemed companion and biographer, Dr. Watson, is an overwhelming feat, even for a forensic chemist in a city crime lab.

It had been year since my dear Paul was dead and buried. So I was very surprised to get a letter addressed to Mr. Paul Bellinger. The return address was stamped “Baker Street Irregulars, New York City.” I remembered them. Paul had taken me to their annual dinner before that accident at the particle accelerator had claimed his life and wrecked my dreams of wedded bliss, for we were to have been married within a fortnight of that date.

Apparently this group had escaped my mailing list when the funeral notices went out. Painful memories blotted out the morning sunlight that dappled the correspondence at my breakfast alcove, where I’d been admiring the autumn New Haven foliage over my tea.

“I’m stronger than this.” I say to myself. Wiping off the tears that had strayed down my cheeks, I resolve to at least attend the cocktail portion of the annual dinner. After all, there was that box I had stashed away in the corner of the hall closet, packed with the belongings of some of his friends at BSI. Since I did not know this set of Paul’s friends personally, I had not known where to call on them. This resolved the issue nicely.

“You are Paul’s fiancee, are you not?” A friendly man approaches me at the BSI cocktail hour. He is a flaxen haired man about Paul’s age. His blue eyes highlight his square jawed, intelligent face. Immediately assessing my disadvantage, he continues, “I’m sure you don’t remember me, I’m Edward.” “I am Genevive Vernet, but I go by Vivi,” I respond, shaking his hand. He glances around the room and
he asks me the inevitable question which I stave off by handing him a printed card, commemorating my deceased beloved.

Edward is in shock at the news and grabs two glasses of wine off the tray of a strolling server. Taking me by at least attend the cocktail portion of the annual dinner. After all, there was that box I had stashed away in the corner of the hall closet, packed with the belongings of some of his friends at BSI. Since I did not know this set of Paul’s friends personally, I had not known where to call on them. This resolved the issue nicely.

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Edward is in shock at the news and grabs two glasses of wine off the tray of a strolling server. Taking me by the elbow, he hastens me over to a quiet corner of the room. “How did it happen?”

I explain about Paul’s negligence in overlooking the stringent safety codes before firing up the machine.

“He was always a bit cavalier about it.” Edward nods his head sadly, as if remembering their other reckless adventures together. Then he resolutely raises his glass.

“A toast, to my irascible friend Bellinger, and your beloved Paul. He will be missed.” I take a swig and suddenly realize I must search for a tissue. As my vision mists over, I sense a change in the air around us, the way that the atmosphere changes before a tornado touches ground. Looking up I find two sinister, watery, green eyes slithering over my gloved fingers as I dab my grief away and attempt a shaky smile. Well over 70, he sports a trimmed goatee, stands with straight
back and is crowned with a full head of white, slicked back hair. With a voice as oily as his look, the man says, “Edward, do introduce me to your charming guest. It seems I have arrived in time to offer her solace.” When Edward hesitates, the man takes my hand and bows,” Professor Phillip Worthington at your service my dear.” “Genevive Vernet.” I stutter a little and pull my hand away hastily from his clutching grasp.

Edward explains about Paul while I recover my composure. Sir Phillip regards me his jade-like eyes and pats my shoulder sympathetically. “Such a sad time. Yet I congratulate you in coming to this dinner. I’m sure your former fiancé would have appreciated the gesture towards his passion.” “Oh no, I’m not attending the dinner. I am not a member.” I tell him. Then I let Edward know that the hotel concierge has the box of items, personal things that Paul had meant to return to BSI members.

Edward is sweet and even offers to ask “Wiggens” if they might make an exception for me, but I beg out of it. While we wait for the concierge to produce the box of personal effects Paul meant to return, Edward fishes out a shiny, silver coin. He places it in my hand reverently and says something about it that I’m too rushed to hear. Relieved to be alone in the street, I hail for a cab. Instead of a taxi, a black limousine slides up in response to my upraised arm. The window rolls down and Professor Worthington’s goatee juts out. He offers me a ride and doesn’t mind that I live in New Haven. The only excuse I can offer for such a poor choice in retrospect is that I was filled with resurfaced grief and my gut instincts had been dulled.

(To find out more, view the short film “Adventure of Art in the Blood” adapted from this story.)
“I still can’t believe Mycroft somehow managed to pull off the International Police Association meeting to coincide at the same time he had to come to Washington, DC for talks,” John said shaking his head.

“Well he knew he had to be here almost a month and really didn’t want to spend that time apart from me,” he grinned, looking at the sights on Pennsylvania Avenue.

“You said though that today was your day off with the team. Museum visits and all.”

“Yes, I did,” Greg smirked, causing John to cock an eyebrow at him.

“Well where are we going?” the former Army Doctor asked, peering at the blue signs pointing to various museums.

“Sally is going to Library of Congress then to the National Arboretum. Anderson is headed to the International Spy Museum for the James Bond exhibit and to satisfy his love of conspiracies. I sent Molly off to see the Textile Museum and the American History one where they have exhibits on fashion,” Greg listed off, looking rather please with himself.

John had to laugh since clearly Greg had sent everyone on their way. “But wait, where is Sherlock?” John asked, wondering why the two of them had alone time.
“Oh I sent him to the National Museum of Crime and Punishment. Exhibit on serial killers and I promised their forensics people he’d give a lecture,” he grinned.

“How did you get him to agree to do that?”

“Told him I’d finally let him have a crack at the Goodwin cold case.”

All John could do was clap as they continued along their route. “Well then can you at least tell me where we are going on our day off?”

At that moment Greg stopped and pointed to the restaurant in front of them.

Looking up, John saw the name **Barrel** on the door. “Doesn’t look like a museum Greg.”

“That’s because it isn’t. It’s a bar with 149 kinds of whiskey, bourbon, and scotch. John, we’ve had quite a few days with our team and our mates, and we’ll have a few more to see the sights in America. But right now you and I will try as many drinks as we can, and make Mycroft call a car for us at the end of the night,” he explained, and stepped inside, with John quickly following after.