Holo Pursuits

by fresne

Summary

It's a universally acknowledged truth that a transporter in contact with anomalous energy will malfunction. It is also a universal truth that if something can go wrong on the holodeck it will go wrong.

A series of holodeck and transporter accidents result in some revelations for the Bakerstreet crew.

Notes

There are quotes from these stories in this story:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventure_of_the_Three_Garridebs
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventure_of_the_Six_Napoleons

See the end of the work for more notes.
It's a universally acknowledged truth that a transporter in contact with anomalous energy will malfunction. It is also a universal truth that if something can go wrong on the holodeck it will go wrong.

Owen had just started up his favorite Regency holo-novella when was a transporter accident due to some sort of anomalous maguffin that space was full of.

John and Commander Holmes had to be stored in the holodeck's memory. If the novella ended before they could be pulled back out, they would die. If they died in the novella, they would actually die. Which meant instead of getting to be the star of his own story, he'd have to switch his character arc to a side character.

Meanwhile, Yao and Hudson were working on resolving the transporter problem to beam them out.

Owen looked at holo generated versions of John and Commander Holmes, who for reasons Holmes was now a Normal Human who was a skosh shorter than Owen. And a woman.

Owen hiked up the neckline on his somewhat period scandalous dress, said, "Hold my beer," and went to flirt with the militia.
Miss Whilemina Sherlock Scott Watson POV

There were not enough gentlemen to dance at the ball and yet Lord Watson, stood aloof in the corner of the room dressed in Byronic black, and did not dance. An elegant town raven surrounded by plump country pigeons.

Not that Miss Willemina Sherlock Scott Holmes, Sherlock to her friends, was looking at that elegant lord, the richest aristocrat in the county, in his well fitted town clothes in the latest fashion. Oh, no.

Not that she would have danced with him had Lord Watson asked her.

Mamas were whispering about the room that Lord Watson was a libertine of the highest order. A rake. That he despoiled aristocratic ladies of their most valuable possession. Their virtue.

In any case, Sherlock did not yet have permission to waltz from her step-mama, who was a horrible soul intent upon crushing her very soul. Her very soul!

She wouldn't even let Sherlock to take tea with the officers in the local militia saying that she was a terrible flirt, and would surely tumble with any that asked her to go for a walk down a country lane.

In any case, Sherlock was not interested in waltzing with a libertine with firm thin lips and startling brilliant golden locks of hair pulled back into a queue with a black silk ribbon that caressed the tanned line of his angelic visage. Dissolute as a fallen angel. She was uninterested in square competent hands that would span her entire back and hold her. Cradle her as they moved as one, face to face, breast to breast, and loin to loin. Her feet moving between his legs as he gripped her back and held her right arm up as he spun her.

Not at all.

Her dearest friend, Mr. Tregennis, commented upon the very tight pants that Lord Watson was wearing, but Sherlock had not deigned to notice.

Not that she was not capable of noticing, merely that she'd decided that those firm thighs were beneath her notice. Nor the clearly defined place where his manly organ was tucked. Not the tight points of his hips or his well defined buttocks. None of it.

She did not listen to Lord Watson discuss his plans to ride out in the vicinity of Rye the next day. She did not listen. Sherlock did not care. Indeed, she cared as much as the identity of the current Prime Minister, and what was that individual to her. Nothing.

Any more than the silly motions of the earth and the sun.

Sherlock turned the subject to Mr. Tregennis' own flirtation with certain members of the militia stationed in Pelverton upon Heath, which Mr. Tregennis admitted with a wicked wink had progressed far further than a flirtation should.

Her bosom companion lowered his voice, "I'm afraid I might be in a family way."

The only answer would be for her dear friend to fly to London before his ruin was well known and Sherlock must accompany him for the sake of propriety. For the sake of friendship and to escape her dreary step-mamma.

But how to acquire the money?
Sherlock did not think of any of this after the ball. Not at night in her narrow and very virtuous bed. Nor when she went to visit her hideously controlling sister living in Rye along the sea.

Sherlock had always been impetuous. High spirited. Perhaps she should have remained at her sister's, which was the impression her step-mama had for her plans. But it was a fine night to walk home. Imagining ancient battles and romantic highwaymen in fine cravats that in no way mirrored Lord Watson.

That a sudden downpour rolled in from the sea was not entirely unexpected. She made her way into the only abandoned crofts with a working roof to find the room was not unoccupied. Lord Watson was already there, crouched before a small smoking fire in the hearth. His eyes dragged over her and he said in a very insolent way. "What do we have here?"

Sherlock placed her hand upon her chest, which was only heaving due to the tightness of her stays. "A virtuous maiden, who would remain so." Her loins fairly trembled to be alone with a rake.

Her reputation was already in tatters by that mere fact!

In fact, she was already so ruined that nothing could do any further damage to what was already done.

"If you desired virtue, you would have remained at your sister's house," he said with a smile, "but having loudly spoken of your plans in my hearing, and hearing my own plans to ride in the area, you set off alone across the moors to the only place where we might meet."

Lord Watson's libertine smile was languid. His kisses were less so. Overwhelming as the storm that thundered upon the sod roof of the cottage. Overcoming all possible objections.

Not that Sherlock made any. In fact, she unlaced her stays herself.

Soon Sherlock could not count herself virtuous or a maiden. Seduced. Ravished. Bruised breasts caught against a voluptuaries' lips. Her own teeth caught on a rake's breast. Groaning. Wriggling. Thoroughly trammeled as pleasure's flower bloomed into a ripe and sultry blossom by a very thorough ploughing by a manly staff.

All the night, she gave way to all manner of licentious behavior. No license did she withdraw from. All was permitted. Even down to the Lord tasting her rearward entrance. Even down to her returning the favor.

By the morning, having completed another bout of burnishing pleasure's sweet pearl with Lord Watson's iron hard tumescence, the sky being clear, the night being over, and the Lord having not declared his intention to restore Sherlock's virtue with marriage, she stole Lord Watson's horse, trousers, and purse, and made for Mr. Tregennis' home and thence to London.

Sherlock had not imagined such a rough and sordid place to alight upon reaching London. Nor the thickness of the air. The foulness of the streets. Nor that she and Mr. Tregginnis would so quickly fall to a life of crime. Nor even that she would be quite so good at it.

Nor that with seven stolen handkerchiefs stuffed into her stays that she would find Lord Watson sprawled upon her lumpy bed with an offer of a nice little place near Regent's Park. Food and board, and a small stipend in exchange for a life as Lord Watson's kept mistress.

It was no offer of marriage, which really was what Lord Watson should have done, given that he'd deprived Sherlock of a virtuous life.
She did insist upon a bonus per visit and a settlement on any children that might come of what they were planning on doing.

"Unlikely, I'll only visit once or twice a month," agreed Lord Watson. "Only when my very important work about which I can tell you nothing, or my crippling black moods resulting from my traumatic experiences during the Peninsular war, give me the opportunity."

It was in this state of agreement that Lord Watson tugged Sherlock over his firmly masculine lap and flipped up her skirts to roundly punish her for her wicked theft of Lord's Watson's horse by applying his well calloused palm to Sherlock's bare rump, which left Sherlock squealing and quite humiliated.

Utterly writhing around in complete abject humiliation with loud and mortified cries as Lord Watson mortified her posterior. While Sherlock also deduced the source of his callouses at each slap. But Sherlock was so abjectly debased that she lost all composure and found herself taking Lord Watson's fully swollen member in her mouth and applying sinful suction. This prompted Lord Watson to conclude her well-deserved punishment by applying his fingers to sweetly caress the pearl of pleasure betwixt her burning thighs.

Then there was nothing for her utter abasement, but to punish her rump further, but slapping it against that lumpy mattress as Lord Watson demeaned her further with his overwhelming desire.

"How quickly virtue falls when sin comes calling," said Sherlock a few days later to Mr. Treggenis, who had by several turns of fate become the kept mistress of the Tiger, the greatest criminal mastermind in all of London and was now fully entangled in his criminal ventures.

"Ain't that the truth," said Mr. Tregennis, eating a grape and asked further details about the manner of license that Sherlock had given way to, which Sherlock was more than happy to do with her bosom friend. As well as somewhat oddly asking her to stand up, "Cuz you're a good two head's shorter than you are most days and it's more than a bit funny."

Although, on the way home, Sherlock chanced to see Lord Watson skulking in some sort of black domino attempting to be a disguise and followed him. It was thus that Sherlock discovered that Lord Watson was in the service of King and Country as a spy. After seeing him deal roundly with a base French spy, Sherlock was unable to contain her approbation, which led to her discovery and round scolding. If also identifying a key clue, which for some reason Lord Watson had utterly missed.

Although, Sherlock insisted that Lord Watson wait to paddle her rump until they returned to the little flat in which Lord Watson was keeping her. As much as she deserved it for interfering in his investigation and providing the clue that would lead him to the spy master working to free Napoleon from his exile.

It was possibly from this encounter, or the solid month of encounters that had come before it, that left her unwed and so disgracefully burdened as to be with child.

After all of this, on another visit to her good friend, Sherlock did find herself asking, "How is that you are still so slender, while I appear to grow rounder each time Lord Watson ploughs within me, which is rather more frequently that he initially led me to think would be the case? Not that I mind." She very much did not mind. In fact, she encouraged it with a variety of stratagems.

Mr. Tregennis tugged up the rather tawdry looking corset he was wearing. "Cuz I'm not a hologram and won't get caught by holographic spunk." Then quite enigmatically, "Hudson, you almost done? I'm not sure how long I can keep stalling the plot. Commander Holmes is beginning to look more than a bit preggers, which ain't nothing I can do a thing about."
"Whatever you do, do not let the story conclude before I can transport everyone out safely."

Which made no great sense to Sherlock, but she returned to find Lord Watson prowling her little pied-a-terre, wild with jealousy.

Simply wild. Full of accusations and fury.

And on a night that Lord Watson had promised to take Sherlock to the opera for the first time. Made more miserable when they actually went.

Sherlock sat in Lord Watson's box and felt all eyes upon her. She was given the cut direct by several a lady or gentleman that she had formerly met in Peverton or in Bath. Perhaps the brilliant red silk gown with the neckline to her rouged nipples had been a bit much as a choice, but Lord Watson hadn't even paid any attention to these details when they had been for his benefit with the expectation of some utterly depraved behavior in his private box.

Instead Lord Watson went on and one about how Sherlock had gone to the home of the Tiger of London, and accusing her of having an affair with that loathsome creature. The idea, and in her delicate state.

The only way to improve her evening was, as they took Lord Watson's carriage back, first to press a slipper to Lord Watson's groin and then as they went over a particularly rough set of cobble stones, pressed Lord Watson's molten member into the glistening portals of Sherlock's womanhood to ride roughshod upon passions tide to everyone's satisfaction.

After Lord Watson said, "You never call me John."

Sherlock put her skirts back in order. "It wouldn't be proper." She didn't expect Lord Watson to follow her inside her pied-a-terre. They had after all had been well satisfied. Then again, Lord Watson came over most evenings the better to vigorously soar over passion's sweet flow.

Still, she went to see Mr. Treggenis for commiseration in the morning. She did not expect to be roughly grabbed by the Tiger's men.

The Tiger said, "Owen's been keeping things from me, ain't he. You're Lord Watson's woman, fat with his kid. Worth a pretty penny or maybe even worth trading a few secrets."

Shockingly it turned out the Tiger was actually the spy master for Napoleon and he'd pulled Owen into his unpatriotic designs!

Sherlock was thrown into a foul basement and tied up, and not in the fun way with silk scarves, but real rope.

Mr. Treggennis having decided to break things off with Tiger, which was quite sweet of him, helped free Sherlock from where she'd been imprisoned. They fought their way past several guards using their womanly wiles. To finally emerge from the stygian depths to find Lord Watson dueling with the Tiger.

The Tiger was massive and cruel. Using every foul trick that could be used. He drove Lord Watson back, despite the passion with which he fought. In a dark moment, he received a graze upon his arm from the Tiger's knife, which had him bleeding, before declaring loudly that he was driven by Love, and running the Tiger through.

Sherlock rushed forward to see to Lord Watson's wound. Tears trembled in Sherlock's eyes, as she confessed her profound and enduring love for John of the Northumberland Watsons.
Her dear wonderful John said, "It is worth this scratch to receive confirmation of your love." He then confessed, "I had intended to offer you marriage after we shared an indecent night of love, but then you stole my belongings and my heart, I thought you would disdain such an offer from a battered heart such as mine."

Sherlock pressed dozen kisses to her true love's lips.

Then, in the passion of the moment, she felt the results of passion's flowering press out through her heaving loins. There, with the body of Tiger a few feet from her in a luxuriant den of iniquity, she gave birth to her love's child.

Mr. Tregginnis dashed away a tear. "General like, I prefer to be the silly tart, but running the criminal underworld has been fun."

As the constabulary took Mr. Tregginis away for various and sundry crimes, quite unfitting for a fallen lady, he said, "Hudson, how much longer? I don't particularly want to have to plead my belly and be deported to Australia in the epilogue."

"A few minutes, dear. We don't want to mix anything up," came the reply.

Not that Sherlock cared, swept up as she was in love's sweet promise to pay off a bishop to marry within the hour with the date listed as a week before so that their child could be legitimate and inherit all of John's vast entailed estates.

Not that that mattered.

Virtue restored was what mattered.

Virtue and for some reason sitting on the floor of the transporter room blinking at John.

John asked, "What just happened?"

Tregennis swaggered into the room wearing a brilliant red silk empire dress. "Now that's a story and a half.

Sherlock obtained a copy of the records, which was simpler than listening to Tregennis' babble. They hadn't actually been acted out in holographic light, as the action had centered on Tregennis, but the information had been recorded in the program's memory.

Sherlock had no memories of being John's mistress. His Beta Human uni-gendered mistress.

The events in the drama had been coded by a team of developers on Mars. The path taken through the adventure were first informed by Tregennis' desires and interests, and the need to keep the program running.

Sherlock flicked through the code documenting the adventures of a diminutive female version of himself. Flaring only into recorded images when Sherlock's path crossed that of Tregennis.

His simulacrum's characterization was a curious mix of a group of Martian Beta Human developers, commenting their delight with particular algorithms, and what appeared to be echoes of his own personality. His and not his. Odd because his consciousness had been stored everywhere except the holodeck.

In addition, that particular character hadn't been programmed to follow Lord Watson, but behave entirely as a demoiselle in distress.
It made sense to follow the trend of his own adventures. He felt a reasonable enough pleasure in that more confident version of himself's seduction by and of Lord Watson.

His character's skill as a thief was an uncommented bit of code that had been added recently, and not by Tregennis. Likewise the spy plot arc.

The punitive events when Lord Watson made his financial offer were an option in the code. Something John might have selected.

Sherlock had an entire chapter on John's enjoyment in corporal punishment. Sherlock's primary interest was in the opportunity for after care. His own reaction to pain being somewhat dictated by biology and training in his youth.

He was struck by his emotional response – surely chemically induced - to watching himself in John's arms giving birth, cradled and held, cared for, told that he was loved. Sherlock had already known he was infected with the pheromoneal and hormonal state of love.

Still, the next time John visited the holodeck, borrowing Tregennis' holo drama, Sherlock played the role of Lord Holmes, and tenderly provided aftercare after the thrashing in the rude flop. Sweeping John off to a life of luxury and adventure fighting Napoleonic spies.

While he had no idea why John saw him as an autocratic and slightly wounded aristocrat, he was more than happy to play the role as long as he was able to continue to medicate his hormonal condition.
Violet Smith POV

When Vi finally caught up with Bugsy the mob boss of Chicago in her latest noir holo-story, there was an galvanic energy storm kicking the can out of the shields, cutting the strings on the safeties, and she was down to just one last bullet.

One bullet, but plenty of juice and no less mojo jo jo. She was going to find out who had masterminded the theft of the Godolphin Dolphin even if it killed her, which it just might. But she couldn't put the program down.

She did not expect Watson to jump into the scenario and yell, "Down." Three Klingons in full armor came into her scenario when she'd finally picked the path that actually led somewhere.

She thought. There had been a lot of dead ends and a lot of dead bodies.

Bugsy had plenty of bullets. The Klingons did not know what hit them. Bugsy also got a blast or two from a disruptor.

Vi lit a fake cigarette at the loss of her last lead to the Godolphin Dolphin. Until a blonde dame with legs down to the floor sultried into the room.

"Do you need me?" she asked Watson.

"No idea," said Watson. "A ship of Klingon privateers boarded when the galvanic storm took out our shields."

She picked up Bugsy's gun and waved it at Watson. "You know where to find me if you need anyone else dealt with."

Vi was fine playing without a safety net. She was a pilot after all.
Violet Hunter POV

Violet did not join the crew when they went to Brigadoon once a month.

It was a ten by ten room.

"I have no idea how they all fit in there," she told Julian.

"Don't forget the vertical space. It's a very hilly village." Which was true, but still.

She wanted to tell Julian that she thought a few of the crew members were forming romances with some of the holograms. Changing the scenario to get rid of wives or making them fit what everyone wanted. But she knew she was on thin ice.

Very thin ice.

Not that Julian seemed to mind.

She kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. But so far, all that happened was on Irish Holiday night, Julian took her to the completely empty galley, replicated a bottle of wine and asked about her day.

Eventually, she'd ask him about the somewhat more functional parts of his anatomy that she'd added to his code, but she was content to let this unspool and hope there were no thin patches ahead.
Sally rode into Deadwood ahead of a sandstorm. Sheriff eyed her Winchester rifle and her Colt revolvers, but didn't move to get up out of his poker game with the dandified town doctor.

She felt like an idiot. A child playing dress up. Holodeck simulations of old west towns, and whoever thought that the town doctor would be a black man hadn't paid any fucking attention during history class.

She was about to throw back her weakass whiskey, which at least was a replication of synth-bourbon, and get the fuck out of fucking weakass Dodge, when Hudson's voice came over the coms. "Lieutenant Donovan, sorry to interrupt your off time, but whatever you do not end the program you're in."

Sally grabbed the bottle of bourbon and gave herself another shot. "Why?" She turned to put her elbows on the bar. "Have to store someone in holographic memory again?" Which was when she spotted it.

Everyone was Julian.

The Sheriff in his folded down leather vest and canvas pants. The Doctor looking dapper with a silk brocade vest. The cowboys in their dust. The whores in their rouge. Everyone.

Hudson said, "Julian was performing an upgrade on himself and there was an issue with his memory core, so we had to back him up in the holodeck. It is a separate system after all."

Sally sighed. Considered another shot of bourbon, but Bartender-Julian with his bar handle mustachio wanted more funds, which this character did not have.

Course this was the point that Poor-Little-Settler-Julian in a gingham dress ran in closely followed by Cattle-Baron-Julian.


Sally shot Cattle-Baron-Julian as he was about to drag his poor settler self-back out the door. "There. I fixed it."

"That would be the opposite of fixed, dear," said Hudson. "Now the story is shifting to the end game, where the Cattle Baron's four sons attempt to get revenge on the entire town. I'm sending in the cavalry."

The cavalry was – no surprise – Hunter in a cavalry uniform and a rifle. "What the actual, fuck?" said Sally.

Hunter took one look at Cattle-Baron-Julian and said, "Why did you shoot him?"

"He was annoying me. Isn't that the point of a simulation like this?"

"The program might delete key portions of Julian's code if any Julian dies." Hunter muttered, "You're worse than Commander Holmes," which probably the one thing that kept Sally from storming out of the story.
Hunter got some information from Madam-with-a-heart-of-gold-Julian, and they led the Julian-the-Sons on a merry chase through the countryside.

Ended up with a First Nation's tribe – also all Julian – who hid them in their cliff dwellings, which led to a cave, which was full of gold and an old shaman – also Julian, who led them through an interplanetary portal. The other side was inhabited by fourteen foot tall four armed aliens. Also, all Julian.

"This was not the simulation I picked," said Sally, while being thrown back by a giant furred beast.

"Julian has been reading pulp fiction recently," said Hunter, which sort of implied actually reading, which was fucking stupid. No more stupid than gladiatorial combat on Mars with green Martians.

Odd to say, when they finally fixed things, Sally had had a decent enough time. Not enough to consider doing it again soon, but decent.

She asked Hunter, who was looking at the sole remaining and actual Julian, who was looking sheepishly at the floor, "Want a real whiskey?"

"No, I… why did you do it?" which clearly wasn't directed at Sally.

She wasn't able to get out of the room before Julian said, "I wanted to grow old with you. But my modifications," and then the door closed, because Sally was not on the Bakerstreet for this kind of shite.

She drank in the galley with Hudson, who could hold her liquor like anything.
Sherlock was putting the finishing touches on his psionic sensor, when he became vaguely aware of John repeating his name. "Hey, uh… I've got to go. I have a… uh… reservation on the holodeck."

Sherlock swallowed suddenly flushing. "Yes. I will. Leave." He quickly made his way to the holodeck, reviewing the nature of John's requested program. A mystery set in England of the eighteen hundreds. Sherlock would be in the role of a famous consulting detective, who carried an unspoken and forbidden love for his flatmate and friend, John's role. After a near death incident, he'd declare his love and finding that John returned his affections, they would make love at some suitably idyllic locale.

This was the fifth time John had run this scenario. Each time, the incident had been a little different. Each time, the location where they coupled had changed.

The program began as it always did.

Sherlock playing the violin when John returned from his medical practice. Their client came in. There were clues. This time to do with the theft of race horse, which took them the moors again.

What was different was hearing Hudson over the com. "John, whatever you do, you have to keep your holodeck program running. We're conducting an emergency evacuation from Auberj. The only way to fit everyone on the ship is to store them in them in memory."

"Do you need me?" asked John.

"No, you stay where you are and keep the program going as long as you can, and don't let anyone die until we can get them out."

"Ta," said John.

The program ran through its paces and Sherlock was on fire. He was brilliant. He was amazing. John was amazed by him.

A red headed man, who John vaguely recognized as the chief of security on the Auberj base, came in about a mysterious red headed league, which had consumed his time over the last month copying the encyclopedia, while his apprentice watched his pawn shop. The apprentice and accomplices, who it turned out were digging from the pawn shop basement into the Bank of England's vault, was the medical staff at the base.

The swarms of children, faces covered in the blue lesions of the inactive state of the illness that afflicted Auberj were sent by Sherlock to keep watch on their nefarious criminals while Sherlock took John to a mid-day concert in the middle of the mystery to draw things out. To listen to Carmen with John at his side.

They were next pulled into a case involving a gambling ring intent on stealing certain secrets to a certain maguffin in the hands of some sort of government office. All staffed by personnel Sherlock recognized as base staff at Auberj. Including Drebber, which the less time with him the better. Sherlock almost regretted augmenting the memory capacity in the holodeck.

He reflected that it was fortunate that he'd informed Hudson at least where he was as the ship around them lurched. Gravity shifting as they avoided some sort of pursuit. The brief loss of gravity covered
by the holodeck adding a sudden carriage accident.

Lestrade was the police officer who brought them in to investigate the disappearance of the Mona Lisa, which Sherlock found in a London dockyard, next to thirty forgeries.

Behind all these mysteries was one mastermind.

One name that reoccurred.

Moriarty.

John muttered, "I didn't put him in my program."

Sherlock tried to think how he could interject a warning without exposing… everything.

Sherlock threw himself into the investigation. There were after all clues and puzzles being left behind by the master criminal. All the while knowing that this must be what Moriarty wanted from them.

They followed the clues to Switzerland. To a ledge next to a waterfall. There, standing by the abyss, was Moriarty.

"Face it Sherlock, you just can't win." He smirked and sneered and preened. Impossible to tell if he was a hologram, or the real thing.

"I wasn't aware we were on a first name basis," said Sherlock.

John said, "You know what, fine. I'll ask the stupid question. What's your evil plan?"

Moriarty's smile grew if anything even wider. "It was to convince the Federation to leave Dominion territories. But now I think I'll burn the heart out of the Federation. After all, you solids have decided its all fun and games to move into the Gamma quadrant. No reason the Dominion can't do the dastardly and return the favor. And it has been a blast. First I was the annoying Ensign, who no one liked. Course," he shifted into the image Julian. "It was fun the time or two I was Ms. Hunter. Until Hunter ruined my fun." He shifted again. Becoming the Andorian conference organizer. "Or even this." He was briefly one of the murder giants. He shifted back to Moriarty. "But fun as it's been kicking around with you on your little adventure, I've other things to do."

"I knew you hadn't left," said Sherlock. After all, it was long past time to admit that he was there.

"Yes, your massive solid brain finally figured it out. Since you're about to engineer a way to identify when it's little old me, I thought I'd give you a bit of a thrill before I left."

Moriarty pulled out a projectile weapon. "By the way, I've taken off the safeties." He winked at Sherlock. "Say goodbye to John."

"No," Sherlock jumped. He wasn't faster than physics. But time slowed or spun perhaps, as the Bakerstreet made its way through the wormhole.

As they came out, the bullet grazed John's arm, as he crumpled. Sherlock held him in his arms. "If you've killed him, then I'll kill you."

"So, dramatic." Moriarty dissolved into an orange ooze and slid into the waterfall.

John laughed. "I love this line. Um… how does it go? It was worth a wound, it was worth many wounds, to know the depth of loyalty and love which lay behind that cold mask." He chuckled. "Get me over to the cave wall will you?"
Sherlock helped him get up. John said, "Replicator, cellular regenerator." Two waves of the wand and the wound was closed. "Fortunately, Moriarty was a shite shot and only grazed me."

As he moved, John's scent shifted unmistakably. Sweet and delicious. "Oh, for fuck's sake. He must have coated the bullet." John swallowed, "Um... bridge, if uh... I think Moriarty has been hiding on the ship for the last few months. And he might be a shapeshifter from the Dominion. Um..." He reached up to brush his fingers along Sherlock's cheek. As always, Sherlock leaned into the touch. "Turning off the audio. Beam the crew out when you're ready. But don't disturb me until I message."

"We're already transporting as we speak. Hudson out."

On that, John kissed Sherlock in earnest. Tongue tasting. Exploring. Hands everywhere. They were soon quite bare to the cold spray of the waterfall. Neither of them cared. Sherlock certainly did not. He covered John's body with his own to keep him safe from the cold. But as always, it was John who kept him safe. Who spread his legs so that Sherlock could push inside. Sherlock whispered, "I don't know what I'd have done if he'd killed you." He moved in and out. Taking his time. Despite his every instinct telling him to rush.

He clung to rationality. To the sweet taste of lips and breathing a scent that grew richer and stronger the longer he moved. To bringing John again and again to release. He let his feelings spill into words. "I love you."

And was rewarded with the words in return.

After all, that was the scenario John had requested.

Until finally, John said, "Please, now."

Sherlock pushed in a final time. Knotted deep inside John. Unable to speak as his own biology took over. He spilled inside John. Unable to resist biting that sweet spot on his neck. Nor did it seem John wished him to, if his cries were any indication.

John's heat, artificial as it was, left as quickly as it had come.

Still, when they were done, it was to find that Hudson had left a message. The transporter had been fixed six hours previously. Also, they had searched the ship, and Moriarty did not appear to be on it, but then they hadn't found him last time either.

Still, there was considerably less reason to assume he was on the ship this time.

John dressed. Sherlock moved into his blind spot in the holodeck. He watched John leave. Went to shower and joined in the investigation.

In the fallout of a scrambled evacuation of an entire base, the Starfleet personnel were not Sherlock's concern. The Auberj weren't his concern either. Those adults who had been living near the base, the orphaned infants who had been cured. The orphaned children, who had, for a brief time, been an irregular army for him. Investigating Moriarty on streets of a holographic London.

John came to him, the scent of what had just happened, a lingering curl in Sherlock's mind, very concerned. Sherlock did not say that they were not his concern. That would have had John stomping off. He did not say they were not his responsibility. Harsh words. He spun out a dozen scenarios based on past behavior. He said, "We should check in with Lestrade."

Not to deflect, but quite honestly, Sherlock has no idea as to what he could do. He had a ship. There were extra quarters that Starfleet had never seen fit to fill. Sometimes failing to fill crew vacancies as
personnel were transferred to new births.

Lestrade, no longer a London constable of the eighteen hundreds, had no idea. "That was a grade-a cluster-f. One moment, we were operations as normal, the next the planet was surrounded by a fleet. Shields on the relay station completed effed to hell. No idea how that navigator of yours got us out."

Sherlock had been... otherwise engaged, but had a very good idea how the Bakerstreet had managed to evade several hundred Dominion ships. He chose not to mention that Hunter had engaged the cloaking device. No one had asked him to build it, and most likely they'd tell him that he had to remove it if he brought it up. Despite the fact that the technology had nothing to do with how Romulan cloaking devices worked.

They went to Sisko next. Sisko said in a disgusted tone, "Starfleet has offered Bajor resources in exchange for taking the Auberj refugees in."

"As if we don't have enough to do rebuilding our own world," said Kira glaring at the room. "How can we support an alien race with a disease. The only reason there haven't been open riots against bringing plague to Bajor is the Vedeks assured the people that the Prophets must have meant the Auberj to come into this sector or they would not have allowed them through."

Sherlock briefly regretted that he couldn't sense the Prophets as John could.

"Too bad we can't put them back in the holodeck," said John, who as always was the illumination that Sherlock needed.

"Yes!" Sherlock realized that he was standing.

"Uh... Commander Holmes the energy requirements alone would..."

"Oh, I don't mean the holodeck. That would be idiotic, but I know a place." After all, his parents had told him often enough that the palace where he had grown up was his home, which if true meant it was his to do with as he wanted.

So, while Starfleet worked on determining the Bakerstreet's new orders, Sherlock took some leave on the 221B with his modified cloaking technology and a good deal of holographic storage. And all that was left of the people of Auberj.

Phasing through the Mare of Acquisition on Ferenginar's moon was not entirely without risk, but he had no desire to be stuck there afterwards should the controls cut in.

He'd reached some sort of separate peace with his parents, but he had no desire to push the matter.

He accessed the systems through the back door he'd created as a teenager and made some modifications to the holographic gardens. To the details on all the rooms. Eliminated details. Had the system replicate rooms based on a single design. Enough space to store the adults who had survived. Not as complex as they had once been, and he'd warned them of that. But enough to pass on who they'd been and who their people were as the children of Auberj grew up in a holographic palace with holographic gardens and a river and as many resources as the Auberj could wish to replicate.

A chrysalis rather than a prison.

He was simply glad that John didn't ask many questions as to how exactly he'd found them a home. While the Federation was only too glad to be down a problem.

It was surprising to be confronted by Donovan, who'd grimly told him, "That was a good thing." She
looked away for a moment, then turned back to look him in the eyes. "I'm proud to serve with you," before stomping off.

A day for miracles after all.
John was a Doctor. The ink was even dry on the diploma.

He was a man of science and reason.

Therefore he understood that several things were not possible.

It was not possible for a hologram to get a human pregnant. It was also not possible for someone whose fallopian tubes were no longer connected between their ovaries and their uterus to become pregnant.

When he developed nausea, he told himself that it was merely a return of the flu or some last unpleasant surprise from Moriarty. He let the Hudson know he would be attending the daily briefing remotely, while he got over it. He let that slide into habit. It was hard to look at Sherlock given everything.

There was gaseous discomfort. Also to be blamed on Moriarty. An almost constant need to piss. Tenderness in his mammary glands that had him gasping when the shower hit them. A tenderness that rapidly gave way to fullness.

There were odd looks at the Aug Soc that had nothing to do with jokes about spending an evacuation in the holodeck, but in the end the conversation went where it had for the last few weeks. Where Sherlock was taking all the Auberj refugees. What kind of people would turn a world into a blackened crater? What kind of people wanted to make an example of anyone who stood up to the Dominion?

They speculated, but the looks lingered.

The next day, Khatri came into see him. She said, "Doctor, as you know I have family concerns with blood clots and liver issues, which is why I've been taking the mini-pill at my age. But I've been thinking of going on the chorionic gonadotrophin injections instead, but have…well, you appear to be taking them," she breathed in deeply, "and I was wondering both as a doctor and as an Omega," she lowered her voice, "will it make me pee all the time?"

Since John was no longer required to take birth control, given the state of his reproductive system, he stared at her. Swallowed. Coughed. Told her, "It will increase kidney function.

He told himself that he hadn't experienced the same pain as he had in the past.

Then again, feeling tender and lonely every night after the incident, he'd made midnight appointments in the holodeck, starting at the point he'd left off. But without the heat this time. He'd lain in the sunshine next to a thundering waterfall while he and the image of his best friend made love among the flowers. If anything, it had felt almost as intense. Like parts of himself were fitting into place. He hadn't gotten much sleep, until finally, for what he told himself was the last time, he deleted all his downloads and cancelled his reservations in the holodeck.

He told himself that there was no way he could be pregnant from his heat, nor could he be showing anything after two weeks. But when he ran the scanner from behind a privacy shield, somehow he wasn't all that surprised.

So, he supposed on some level he must have known. His fallopian tubes were open and operational. No sign that they'd been closed. Another thirteen little shapes huddled inside him.
He did what he'd always done. Didn't hesitate. Didn't let himself stop to think. Shaking a little in rage and self-loathing as he added them to the set. He was twenty-three years old. A Doctor. A man of medicine. He had forty-four zygotes in a box under his bed.

He scheduled another visit to the holodeck.
Sherlock waiting in the blind. Uncertain. The reservation had been non-specific as to the scenario. John came in. He said, "Two folding chairs." He sat in one of them. The other sat empty.

His scent was different than it had been the last few weeks. The ever present scent of almonds had been overlaid with honeysuckle. Sherlock decided to check John's medical files when they were done. After all, the reason Augments typically shifted to chorionic gonadotrophin injections for birth control was due to a family history of blood clots.

"Sherlock, I'm waiting."

Sherlock stepped out of the blind. John gestured to the other chair. "Take a seat."

Sherlock asked, "How did you determine the truth?" Because there were at least eleven indicators that John knew.

"I have my ways."

Sherlock fidgeted. He was not good at being wrong. Although, clearly he was in the wrong. Although, John had been using his face and form for his fantasies.

"You want to play it that way do you?"

Sherlock's mouth closed with a snap. He must have spoken aloud.

"I think we can agree that we've both behaved… badly. But, we're both adults. I was under the impression that you wouldn't want this, but now I know differently. So, here's your choice."

Sherlock sat up. All of his attention on John.

"Either, when I make a reservation, we come here together. We enjoy ourselves, and whatever happens here stays here. It doesn't affect our working relationship."

Sherlock nodded his vigorous agreement to this plan.

"I was going to offer option two as we pretend this never happened, but it sounds like you want option one."

"Option one," said Sherlock firmly.

"I mean, we'll go for slightly less soppy scenarios." Suddenly John grinned. "This is great. We'll both get regular satisfaction and no entanglements."

"Yes." Sherlock was a little worried about his acting ability. But he'd take what he could get.

"Also, and this isn't contingent on the sex, which I hope we'll have a lot of," John pulled up a medkit. "I'd like a blood sample."

"Why?" said Sherlock.

"Because I'm your doctor."

Sherlock rolled up his sleeve and waiting as John took his blood.
John fidgeted. "So, we should discuss parameters of what we want. Don't want?"

Sherlock had utterly no idea what John was on about.

"You know, like maybe you don't enjoy going down or you really like going down or, I don't know. It's generally a good idea with a partner."

Sherlock still had utterly no idea what John was on about. "John, I've been pretending to be a hologram of myself. I think we can agree that I have a low bar on what I am unwilling to do, and I can save you time on enumerating your preferences, I've already noted them."

Sherlock called up his research on John's sexuality.

"Buggering fuck," said John staring at the file. Paging through it. "No, you're right I don't enjoy being called a cock whore. Nothing wrong with those who practice the art of prostitution, but may as well call me a hair dresser." Another a few pages. "Hair pulling, huh. Yeah, I guess I do." Another few pages. John stopped. "You have been very thorough. Of course, you were very thorough. Uh… this may take a while to read, but um… try to add a few entries for yourself, yeah?"

Sherlock sighed in aggrieved way.

They left without coupling, which was fine.

Everything was going to work out just fine. After all, he'd no longer have to pretend. Except of course, now he'd have to pretend even more. John had been explicit that he was only interested in sex. Sherlock would take what he could get.

He faced one inalienable truth. Sometimes something profoundly wonderful occurred on the holodeck.

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End Notes

http://memory-alpha.wikia.com/wiki/Hollow_Pursuits_(episode)
http://memory-alpha.wikia.com/wiki/Our_Man_Bashir_(episode)
http://memory-alpha.wikia.com/wiki/Elementary,_Dear_Data_(episode)
http://memory-alpha.wikia.com/wiki/Spirit_Folk_(episode)

If you've reached this point and have finished the preceding stories, you've finished season three. From here on out, S/J know that they are having set together. If… well… trek. Lots of possibilities.

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