

## Sherlock Holmes proposes a toast

by mazaher

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*Now join me in drinking a toast to the bride and groom: Dr. John Hamish Watson, the gentleman by whom I am proud to be called friend; Mrs. Mary Watson, née Morstan, the only lady I know to be good enough for him.*

*May they never bore each other. (\*laughs\*)*

*May their life together be as cloudless as it is possible to hope from the English weather. (\*laughs\*)*

*May they have as many children as their hearts wish.*

*May the happy couple and their sons and daughters never meet the first three Riders of the Apocalypse.*

*And when the time should come to meet the Fourth, may it be at a ripe old age after a fruitful life, and may the Angel present the Lord with the report they deserve.*

*And now let us drink, because I am running short of words.*



*The lights are out at 221B, Baker Street. From the pavement, a lonely pedestrian who happened to raise his eyes to the first floor windows would only catch the faint flicker of a coal fire slowly turning to embers. Inside, all is quiet. Mrs Hudson, slightly tipsy with champagne, sleeps curled around a hot water bottle and softly slips into some happy dream. Upstairs, her remaining lodger, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, delays his rest in the company of a glass of brandy and his musings.*

A Christmas marriage.

They'll be in Paris tomorrow, in Nice on the 25th.

Possibly away until mid-January.

I'll have to learn again how to work alone. The attic needs tidying up anyway.

Watson was handsome today, next to his bride. Proud and straight and not limping.

She looked radiant. They appeared for all the world like they had found in the other a holy Grail of their own, just when they had given up searching.



It's cold. I should add some coal to the fire.  
Their fire is burning bright, ready to kindle new flames, and I? I'm almost burnt to ashes, a sterile burn which doesn't even warm me.  
I am cold.

Watson is leaving and I have no grounds to complain.

It is I who stand askew to the current of life, while my Watson and his Mary have left the moorings and float bravely downstream together.

What have I contributed to the immense workings of the universe? Only the pride of my intellect. If pride be a sin, then I have sinned for a lifetime, because what little good I may have done solving crimes and mysteries was always second, not first, among my motives. So it is right that my Watson receives his prize (such a prize!) and I do not.

I do not count among my sins that of loving him. No just God could fault me for wanting his good more than my own, and in all fairness I shouldn't begrudge him his happiness.

But I am cold, and alone, and useless, and for however blissful our years together have been, I am selfish enough to regret not having made more of them.

What is there for me now? Some years of work, until age, accident or a violent end will stop me. A lonely old age.

I must leave London-- I can't live here and not work, and if I must stop working I should disappear as well.



Sussex, perhaps. A garden that would mostly tend itself. Plants for the bees. Lavender, of course, rosemary, lilac, mint, vervain. Gorse and hellebore. Ivy and thyme.

I'm chilled. I should go to bed.

They would come once in the summer, bring the children. Maybe Watson could be induced to come once or twice to pick up some honey, and stay the night. But wouldn't I be a weight, unwanted baggage, an obligation?

It's no good looking too far into the future, nor trying to unravel the reason behind the Plan, if a Plan even exists..

It is too cold. Bed, then.

*Soon the old house is completely still. Only an owl perched on the chimney chuckles over her prey, her huge eyes glinting in the moonlight, while a woodworm, slow and deliberate, ticks its death watch inside the old oak roofbeams.*

