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Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Simplified Edition by ChatGPT)

Part 1

At that time, Sherlock Holmes and I lived together in Baker Street in London. Holmes often woke late in the morning, unless he had worked all night. On this day he sat at the breakfast table while I stood near the fire. A walking stick lay on the rug. Our visitor from the night before had forgotten it, and I picked it up to study it.

The stick was thick and strong, made of dark wood with a round head. Around it was a wide silver band. Words were cut into the metal: “To James Mortimer, M.R.C.S., from his friends of the C.C.H., 1884.” It looked like the kind of stick a country doctor might carry—solid and serious, meant to give comfort to patients.

Behind me Holmes spoke without turning. “Well, Watson, what do you think of it?”

I was surprised. “How did you know I was looking at the stick? You cannot see me.”

Holmes answered calmly. “I see your reflection in the coffee pot in front of me. Now tell me what you learn about our visitor from the stick.”

I felt pleased that he asked my opinion. I said, “I think Dr. Mortimer is an older doctor who is respected by his friends. They gave him this gift because they like him.”

“Good,” Holmes said.

“Also,” I continued, “he must be a country doctor who walks a great deal. The stick is worn at the end. A city doctor would ride more and would not damage it this way.”

Holmes nodded. “Very good.”

“And the letters ‘C.C.H.’ must mean a local hunting group. Perhaps he helped them with medical care, and they gave him this gift to thank him.”

Holmes laughed softly and lit a cigarette. “My dear Watson, you are improving. You help my thinking even when you are wrong.”

I felt less pleased. “Have I made a mistake?”

“Not entirely,” Holmes said kindly. “The man is a country doctor, and he walks often. But the gift did not come from a hunting group. More likely it came from a hospital. ‘C.C.H.’ probably means Charing Cross Hospital.”

“That sounds possible,” I admitted.

Holmes continued, “Imagine this. A young doctor works at a hospital. When he leaves to begin his own practice, his friends give him a present. That explains the stick.”

I thought for a moment. “Then he worked in London before moving to the country.”

“Exactly. And he was not an important doctor there. He must have been a house doctor, still young. The date tells us he left about five years ago. So our visitor is not an old man but a young one under thirty. He is friendly, not very ambitious, a little absent-minded, and he owns a dog.”

I laughed. “A dog? That is too much.”

Holmes pointed to marks on the stick. “A dog has carried this stick often. You can see the teeth marks. The space between them tells us the size of the animal. Larger than a small dog but smaller than a very large one. A curly-haired spaniel.”

At that moment Holmes walked to the window and stopped. “And here is the dog itself,” he said. “I hear it on the stairs, together with its owner.”

A moment later there was a knock, and our visitor entered. He was tall and thin, with a long nose and bright gray eyes behind gold glasses. His clothes were neat but worn. Though young, his back bent forward slightly, and he looked at

everything with great interest.

When he saw the stick in Holmes's hand, he hurried forward. "I am so glad you found it," he said. "I feared I had lost it."

Holmes smiled. "A gift, I see. From Charing Cross Hospital?"

"Yes," said the man. "From friends there when I married."

Holmes shook his head with mock sadness. "Ah, that changes our theory."

The visitor looked confused. "Why is that bad?"

Holmes laughed. "Only because it proves our deductions were not perfect. Please sit down, Dr. James Mortimer."

"Mister, not doctor," he corrected gently. "I am only a surgeon."

Holmes waved him into a chair. "And a man interested in science, I think."

Dr. Mortimer's eyes shone. "Yes, indeed. I study many things. Mr. Holmes, I have heard much about you. Your skull is very interesting. May I examine it someday?"

Holmes smiled patiently. "Perhaps another time. I believe you did not come only to study my head."

Mortimer laughed and began to roll a cigarette with quick fingers. "No, sir. I came because I face a serious problem, and I am not a practical man. I need your help. You are the second greatest expert in Europe."

Holmes raised an eyebrow. "And who is the first?"

"Monsieur Bertillon," Mortimer replied.

Holmes looked slightly annoyed. "Then perhaps you should visit him."

Mortimer quickly added, "But you are the greatest practical expert. That is why I am here."

Holmes leaned forward. "Then please tell me clearly what troubles you."

Mortimer took a folded paper from his pocket. "I carry an old manuscript."

Holmes said, "It is from the early eighteenth century."

Mortimer stared. "How can you know?"

"I saw part of it while you spoke," Holmes replied. "I place it around the year 1730."

"Very close," Mortimer said. "It is dated 1742. This document belonged to Sir

Charles Baskerville, who died suddenly three months ago. I was both his doctor and his friend.”

Holmes spread the paper across his knee while I looked over his shoulder. At the top were the words “Baskerville Hall” and the date written clearly beneath.

Mortimer continued, “This paper tells an old family legend. It is connected to a very modern and urgent problem. With your permission, I will read it.”

Holmes leaned back and closed his eyes while Mortimer began to read in a thin voice.

The story told of Hugo Baskerville, a cruel man who lived long ago. He became obsessed with a young woman who feared him and refused his attention. One night he and his wild friends stole her from her home and locked her in Baskerville Hall while they drank and shouted below.

The frightened girl escaped by climbing down ivy on the wall and ran across the dark moor toward her home. When Hugo discovered her escape, he became mad with rage. He swore he would give his soul to evil powers if he could catch her. He set his hunting dogs on her trail and rode after them across the moonlit land.

His drunken friends followed later. On the moor they met a shepherd who trembled with fear. The man said he had seen Hugo ride past, followed by a terrible black hound larger than any dog alive.

Soon the riders found Hugo’s horse running without him. Farther on they discovered the girl dead from fear and exhaustion. Nearby lay Hugo’s body, and over him stood a gigantic black hound with blazing eyes. The beast tore Hugo’s throat before turning toward the men. They fled in terror. One died from shock that very night, and the others were never the same again.

The manuscript warned future Baskervilles to avoid the moor at night, for the family was said to be cursed by this terrible hound.

When Mortimer finished reading, he looked at Holmes with expectation. Holmes yawned slightly and dropped his cigarette into the fire.

“Well?” he said.

Mortimer looked surprised. “Do you not find it interesting?”

Holmes replied calmly, "It is interesting to someone who collects old stories."

Mortimer then took out a newspaper. "Then let us speak of something recent," he said. "This article describes the death of Sir Charles Baskerville."

Holmes leaned forward, his eyes sharp with attention, as Mortimer began to read.

Part 2

Dr. Mortimer adjusted his glasses and began to read from the newspaper in a careful voice. The article spoke about the recent death of Sir Charles Baskerville, a wealthy man whose passing had saddened the people of Devonshire. Though he had lived at Baskerville Hall only a short time, he had become widely loved because of his kindness and generosity. He had made a large fortune in South Africa and returned to England to restore the old family estate.

The report explained that Sir Charles had planned many improvements for the countryside. He gave money to local charities and wished to help the people living near the Hall. Because he had no children, many believed his work would continue through his heir.

Mortimer read on. The newspaper stated that the death appeared natural. Sir Charles had long suffered from heart trouble and nervous weakness. His servants, Barrymore and his wife, confirmed that their master often showed signs of poor health and deep anxiety.

Sir Charles had a habit of walking each evening before bed along a path known as the yew alley. On the night of May fourth he went out as usual but never returned. When midnight came and the front door remained open, Barrymore grew worried and went searching with a lantern.

The ground was wet, and Sir Charles's footprints were easy to follow. They led down the alley toward a small gate that opened onto the moor. There he seemed to have waited for some time. After that point, the footprints changed in appearance, as if he had begun walking on his toes. At the far end of the alley his body was found lying on the ground.

There were no signs of violence. However, his face showed terrible fear. Doctors explained this as a common result of heart failure. A post-mortem examination confirmed serious heart disease, and the official verdict declared death from natural causes.

The article ended by noting that the next heir was Sir Henry Baskerville, believed to be living in America, and that efforts were being made to contact him.

Mortimer folded the paper slowly and placed it back in his pocket. "Those are the public facts," he said.

Holmes nodded. "Thank you. Now tell me the private ones."

Mortimer hesitated. His hands trembled slightly. "I have told no one else," he said quietly. "I feared that speaking openly would encourage superstition. Also, I worried that Baskerville Hall would never again find a resident if the truth became widely known."

Holmes leaned forward with interest. "You may speak freely here."

Mortimer continued. "The moor is lonely country. Few educated men live there, so Sir Charles and I became close friends. We often spoke about science during long evenings together. Yet in recent months I saw that his nerves were failing. He believed completely in the legend I have just read."

Mortimer paused before continuing. "He would never go onto the moor at night. He believed some terrible fate followed his family. Several times he asked me whether I had seen a strange animal or heard a hound howling while traveling at night."

Holmes listened silently.

"Three weeks before his death," Mortimer said, "I visited him in the evening. As we stood near the door, his eyes suddenly fixed behind me with an expression of extreme terror. I turned and glimpsed something large and dark moving near the drive. I thought it was a calf, but it vanished quickly. The incident greatly disturbed him."

Mortimer wiped his brow. "That night he gave me the manuscript for safekeeping. I believed his fears were only imagination. I advised him to go to London for rest. He agreed and planned to leave the next day. Then came the

tragedy.”

Holmes spoke softly. “You reached the Hall soon after his death?”

“Yes. Barrymore sent a groom to fetch me. I arrived within an hour and examined everything carefully. I followed the footprints. I saw where Sir Charles had waited at the gate. I examined the body before it was moved.”

Mortimer’s voice lowered. “There were no injuries. Yet his face showed terrible emotion. But one thing said at the inquest was not true.”

Holmes’s eyes sharpened. “What was that?”

“Barrymore claimed there were no marks near the body. He simply did not notice them. But I did.”

“Footprints?” Holmes asked quickly.

“Yes.”

“A man’s or a woman’s?”

Mortimer looked at us both. His voice dropped almost to a whisper. “They were the footprints of a gigantic hound.”

A cold feeling passed through me at his words. Holmes leaned forward, suddenly alive with energy.

“You saw them clearly?”

“As clearly as I see you now.”

“Why did you say nothing?”

“What good would it have done? No one would have believed me.”

Holmes asked question after question. “Were there sheepdogs nearby? Was it raining? Where exactly were the prints? Was the gate locked?”

Mortimer answered each carefully. The prints lay on the path near the gate. The night had been damp but not rainy. The gate was closed and locked, though low enough for anyone—or anything—to pass over.

Holmes struck his knee in frustration. “If only I had been there! The rain and curious villagers must have destroyed the evidence.”

Mortimer looked troubled. “There are matters beyond human reason, Mr. Holmes.”

Holmes replied calmly, “You suggest the supernatural.”

“I do not know what to believe,” Mortimer said. “Since Sir Charles’s death, several people claim to have seen a terrible creature on the moor. All describe the same thing—a huge, ghostly hound. Fear now rules the district. Few dare cross the moor at night.”

Holmes folded his hands. “Yet you come to me.”

Mortimer nodded. “Not to investigate the death itself. I want advice about Sir Henry Baskerville. He arrives in London very soon.”

“The heir,” Holmes said.

“Yes. He has lived in Canada and knows nothing of these events. He is the last Baskerville. If he moves into Baskerville Hall, the whole countryside will benefit. Yet I fear for his safety.”

Holmes considered this. “If a supernatural force exists, why would London be safer than Devonshire?”

Mortimer sighed. “You speak lightly, but the danger feels real.”

Holmes finally said, “Meet Sir Henry at the station. Tell him nothing yet. Bring him here tomorrow morning. I will decide within twenty-four hours.”

Mortimer agreed and left quickly. Holmes watched him go, then returned to his chair with a look of deep satisfaction.

“A fascinating case, Watson,” he said.

I prepared to leave for the day, knowing Holmes preferred solitude while thinking. When I returned that evening, the sitting room was filled with thick smoke from strong tobacco. Holmes sat wrapped in his dressing gown, papers spread around him.

“You have been at your club all day,” he said at once.

I stared at him in surprise, and he laughed gently at my expression. After explaining his reasoning, he told me he had spent the entire day studying a large map of Dartmoor.

He spread it before me. “Here is Baskerville Hall,” he said. “Around it lies empty moorland. Only a few houses stand within miles. A perfect stage for tragedy.”

“It must be a lonely place,” I said.

Holmes nodded. "Yes. Now we must answer two questions. Was a crime committed? And if so, how?"

He paused thoughtfully. "Sir Charles was running when he died."

"Running?" I asked.

"Yes. Running in terror. The footprints show it. But from what was he fleeing? And why was he waiting at the gate that night?"

Holmes lifted his violin. "We shall know more tomorrow when we meet Sir Henry Baskerville."

Part 3

The next morning our breakfast was finished early. Holmes remained in his dressing gown, waiting with quiet excitement for our visitors. Exactly at ten o'clock Mrs. Hudson showed Dr. Mortimer into the room, followed by a young man whom I immediately recognized as Sir Henry Baskerville.

Sir Henry was about thirty years old, strongly built, with dark eyes and thick black eyebrows. His face was firm and confident, and his clothes showed that he was used to outdoor life. Though he had the look of a man who had worked hard, his manner was calm and direct.

Dr. Mortimer said, "Mr. Holmes, this is Sir Henry Baskerville."

Sir Henry stepped forward and shook hands warmly. "Mr. Holmes, I was planning to visit you myself. I am told you solve strange problems, and I seem to have one already."

Holmes motioned him to a chair. "Please sit down, Sir Henry. You have had some unusual experience since arriving in London?"

"Perhaps only a joke," Sir Henry said, placing an envelope on the table. "But I would like to know what it means."

We all leaned closer. The envelope was plain gray paper. The address read: "Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel." The words were printed roughly, not written by hand. The postmark showed it had been mailed the previous evening from Charing Cross.

Holmes asked quickly, "Who knew you would stay at that hotel?"

Sir Henry shook his head. "No one. We decided only after I met Dr. Mortimer yesterday."

Mortimer confirmed this. "I was not staying there myself."

Holmes's eyes brightened. "Then someone is watching your movements very carefully."

He removed a folded sheet from the envelope and opened it on the table. Across the center a message had been made by cutting printed words from a newspaper and pasting them onto the page. It read:

As you value your life or your reason keep away from the moor.

Only the word "moor" had been written in ink.

Sir Henry looked at Holmes. "What does that mean? And who sent it?"

Holmes turned to Mortimer. "There is nothing supernatural here, at least."

Mortimer replied, "Perhaps it came from someone who believes the danger is supernatural."

Sir Henry frowned. "It seems everyone knows more about my affairs than I do."

Holmes raised a hand calmly. "You shall learn everything before you leave. For now, let us study the letter itself."

He asked me for yesterday's newspaper and quickly scanned its pages. Suddenly he smiled with satisfaction.

"Excellent," he said. "These words come from yesterday's leading article."

Sir Henry stared. "You mean they were cut from that paper?"

"Exactly," Holmes replied. "The words 'you,' 'your,' 'life,' 'reason,' and others appear there. The sender cut them out and pasted them together."

Mortimer looked amazed. "But how could you know which newspaper?"

Holmes answered patiently, "The style of print is distinctive. To me it is as clear as the difference between two faces. These words could come only from the *Times*."

Sir Henry laughed softly. "Well, that is clever."

Holmes continued his examination. "The message was cut with small nail scissors. You can see where the cuts overlap. The words were fixed with gum. The

writer printed the address to hide his own handwriting.”

Sir Henry pointed to the last word. “Why write ‘moor’ instead of cutting it out too?”

“Because the word did not appear in the article,” Holmes said. “It was easier to write it.”

He leaned back and thought for a moment. “The sender is educated, since he reads the *Times*, yet he tried to appear uneducated. He worked quickly, perhaps nervously. And I believe the address was written in a hotel.”

“A hotel?” Mortimer asked.

Holmes explained, “The pen spluttered and the ink nearly ran dry several times. Private ink bottles are rarely so poor, but hotel writing tables often are.”

Sir Henry looked impressed. “So someone in a hotel near Charing Cross prepared this warning.”

“Very likely,” Holmes said. “Now tell me, Sir Henry, has anything else unusual happened since you arrived?”

Sir Henry hesitated. “I am not sure it matters.”

“Anything outside your normal experience is important,” Holmes said.

Sir Henry smiled slightly. “Then perhaps losing one of my boots counts.”

Mortimer waved his hand dismissively. “It is only misplaced.”

Holmes leaned forward with sudden interest. “You lost a boot?”

“Yes. I bought a new pair last night and left them outside my hotel door to be cleaned. This morning one was gone.”

Holmes’s eyes shone. “You had never worn them?”

“Not once.”

“That is very interesting,” Holmes murmured.

Sir Henry looked puzzled. “You truly think so?”

“Every detail may matter,” Holmes replied calmly. “Small events often lead to great discoveries.”

He rose and began pacing slowly across the room. “Let us consider the situation. A warning letter arrives almost immediately after your arrival in London. Someone knows your plans. Someone wishes to frighten you away from the moor.

At the same time, one of your boots disappears.”

Sir Henry laughed uneasily. “It sounds like the start of an adventure story.”

Holmes stopped pacing. “Perhaps it is. The question is whether the writer is your enemy—or your protector.”

Mortimer looked concerned. “You believe Sir Henry is in danger?”

Holmes answered carefully. “I believe someone thinks he is.”

Sir Henry crossed his arms. “I have no intention of hiding. Baskerville Hall belongs to my family. I plan to go there.”

Holmes studied him for a long moment. “Courage is admirable, Sir Henry. But caution is wiser.”

He turned toward me. “Watson, what do you think?”

I replied honestly, “The case grows stranger at every step.”

Holmes smiled faintly. “Indeed it does. We must move carefully now.”

He faced Sir Henry again. “For the moment, remain in London. Do nothing without informing us. This afternoon we shall examine matters further.”

Sir Henry nodded. “Very well, Mr. Holmes. I place myself in your hands.”

Holmes sat down once more, fingers pressed together, his eyes bright with thought. I knew that expression well. A complex problem had taken hold of his mind, and he would not rest until every hidden truth stood clear before him.

Part 4

Holmes remained silent for several moments after Sir Henry spoke. He sat with his fingertips pressed together, his eyes half closed, thinking deeply. At last he rose and stood before the fireplace.

“There are several paths before us,” he said calmly. “We must choose the safest one. Sir Henry, until we understand this matter better, you must not go alone anywhere.”

Sir Henry smiled. “You make it sound serious.”

“It may be very serious,” Holmes replied. “Someone knows your movements and has already taken action. That warning letter was not sent by chance.”

Dr. Mortimer leaned forward anxiously. "Then you believe danger truly exists?"

"I believe," Holmes said, "that we must act as if it does."

He turned suddenly to Sir Henry. "Tell me, when did you last see your missing boot?"

"Last night," Sir Henry answered. "I placed both boots outside my room before going to bed."

"And only one remained in the morning?"

"Yes. The hotel staff searched everywhere but could not find it."

Holmes nodded slowly. "Curious. Extremely curious."

Sir Henry laughed. "It seems a small matter compared with curses and giant hounds."

Holmes shook his head. "In my experience, small matters often reveal the truth. A man who steals a single boot does not do so without purpose."

Mortimer looked puzzled. "But why steal only one?"

Holmes did not answer immediately. Instead he walked to the window and looked down into Baker Street. At last he spoke.

"We must test whether Sir Henry is being watched. Watson, you will come with us. We shall walk together after leaving the house. If anyone follows, we may discover it."

Sir Henry stood eagerly. "Good. I dislike sitting still while others decide my fate."

Holmes smiled faintly. "Action has its place, but careful observation comes first."

Soon we left Baker Street together and took a cab toward Regent Street. Holmes sat quietly during the ride, watching through the window. His calm manner hid intense attention. I knew he missed nothing.

When we stepped onto the busy street, Holmes suggested that we walk slowly past several shops. Sir Henry stopped at one window to look at walking sticks while Mortimer admired a display of books. Holmes moved slightly behind us, pretending to study the crowd.

After a few minutes Holmes spoke softly. "We are followed."

I felt a sudden thrill. "Where?"

"A cab across the street," Holmes murmured without turning his head. "The passenger hides his face behind a beard."

I glanced carefully and saw the cab moving slowly beside us. Inside sat a man watching in our direction. His dark beard covered much of his face, and his hat was pulled low.

Holmes whispered, "Do not stare. Continue walking naturally."

We turned onto another street. The cab followed at a distance. Holmes's eyes shone with excitement.

"Now we confirm it," he said quietly. "Sir Henry, please enter that shop as if something caught your interest."

Sir Henry obeyed at once. Mortimer followed him inside. Holmes and I remained near the door. The cab slowed again, then stopped briefly before moving forward.

Holmes suddenly ran into the street and shouted for another cab, but traffic blocked his path. By the time we reached the corner, the mysterious cab had disappeared into the crowd.

Holmes stopped and laughed softly, though I could see his frustration. "He is clever," he said. "He knew when to leave."

"Did you see his face?" I asked.

"Only partly. A thick black beard. But beards can be false. Still, we learned something important. Sir Henry is under watch."

When Sir Henry and Mortimer came out of the shop, Holmes explained what had happened. Sir Henry's expression grew serious.

"So someone truly follows me," he said.

"Yes," Holmes replied. "And that person either wishes to harm you or to protect you. We must discover which."

Mortimer looked troubled. "What should we do now?"

Holmes considered briefly. "Sir Henry will remain at the Northumberland Hotel for the present. Watson and I will investigate further."

Sir Henry agreed. "I will follow your advice."

We returned to Baker Street together, where Holmes immediately began planning the next steps. He paced across the room while speaking.

“First, the warning letter. It was prepared carefully, yet in haste. Second, the missing boot. Third, the unknown watcher in the cab. These events are connected.”

He turned to me suddenly. “Watson, what conclusion would you draw?”

I thought carefully before answering. “Someone fears that Sir Henry will go to Baskerville Hall.”

Holmes nodded. “Exactly. The question is why.”

He stopped pacing and faced us both. “Until we know more, Sir Henry must avoid unnecessary risk. Tomorrow we shall decide whether he travels to Devonshire—and whether one of us accompanies him.”

Sir Henry smiled with determination. “If danger waits there, I would rather face it openly.”

Holmes’s expression softened slightly. “Bravery is admirable, Sir Henry, but knowledge is safer. We shall gather that first.”

Outside, the noise of London traffic filled the air, but inside the room a feeling of quiet tension remained. The mystery had deepened. A dead man, a family curse, a warning message, a stolen boot, and a hidden watcher—all pointed toward something unseen moving behind events.

Holmes sat once more in his chair, already lost in thought. I knew that the game had truly begun, and that soon we would leave the safety of London for the dark and lonely moor where the shadow of the Baskerville hound waited.

Part 5

After our return to Baker Street, Holmes spent the afternoon thinking quietly. He spoke little, but I could see from his expression that his mind worked without rest. Papers lay across the table, and from time to time he made short notes before rising again to walk across the room.

At last he turned toward us. “Sir Henry,” he said, “you must return to your hotel now. Continue your normal habits, but remain careful. Do not go out alone at

night.”

Sir Henry nodded. “I understand.”

“Tomorrow,” Holmes continued, “we shall decide your journey to Devonshire. Until then, we must gather more facts.”

Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer left together. When the door closed behind them, Holmes stood motionless for a moment. Then he suddenly became active.

“Watson,” he said, “we must visit the Northumberland Hotel.”

“At once?”

“Yes. Every hour matters.”

We took a cab and soon arrived at the hotel. Holmes spoke quietly with the manager and then with several servants. He asked many questions about the missing boot, the cleaning staff, and any strangers seen near Sir Henry’s room. No useful information appeared. The staff seemed honest and confused by the disappearance.

As we prepared to leave, Holmes asked one final question. “Has the missing boot been found?”

The servant shook his head. “No, sir.”

Holmes frowned slightly but said nothing more until we returned to the street.

“What do you think?” I asked.

“The theft was deliberate,” Holmes replied. “But its purpose remains hidden.”

That evening we returned to Baker Street. Holmes spent several hours writing letters and sending telegrams. When he finally sat down, he looked satisfied.

“I have made inquiries about Sir Henry’s past,” he explained. “We must learn whether any enemy follows him from America or Canada.”

The next morning Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer returned as arranged. Sir Henry looked annoyed.

“Mr. Holmes,” he said, “my missing boot has returned.”

Holmes’s eyes widened. “Returned?”

“Yes. It appeared outside my room this morning. But now another boot is missing—the old one I wore yesterday.”

Holmes sprang from his chair. “Excellent!”

Sir Henry stared at him. “Excellent? I lose boots one after another.”

Holmes laughed softly. “Forgive me. I do not mean your inconvenience is pleasant. But this change is highly significant.”

“How so?” Mortimer asked.

Holmes explained slowly. “The thief first took a new boot, one never worn. Now he returns it and takes an old one instead. That means he wanted something from the boot itself.”

“Something?” I asked.

Holmes nodded. “A scent.”

Sir Henry looked puzzled. “My scent?”

“Exactly,” Holmes said. “A worn boot carries the smell of its owner. Whoever took it required that scent for some purpose.”

A silence filled the room as we considered this strange idea.

Holmes continued, “This confirms that our enemy—or perhaps our unknown friend—is preparing carefully.”

Sir Henry crossed his arms. “Then I insist on going to Baskerville Hall at once. I will not be frightened away.”

Holmes studied him carefully before answering. “You shall go—but not alone.”

Mortimer looked relieved. “You will accompany him?”

Holmes shook his head. “Unfortunately, I cannot leave London immediately. But Watson will go in my place.”

I felt both surprise and excitement. “I will be glad to help.”

Holmes smiled warmly at me. “You will act as my eyes and ears. Observe everything. Write to me daily with full reports.”

Sir Henry extended his hand. “I am grateful, Doctor Watson. It will be good to have company.”

Holmes began giving instructions in detail. “You will travel together tomorrow. Stay at Baskerville Hall. Watch all who live nearby. Pay attention to small details—especially anything unusual on the moor.”

He turned serious. “And never forget that danger may be real.”

Mortimer asked quietly, “Do you truly believe a crime has been committed?”

Holmes answered slowly. “I believe Sir Charles died while fleeing something that terrified him. Whether that thing was human or animal remains to be seen.”

He paused before adding, “But I do not believe in supernatural explanations until all natural ones fail.”

Sir Henry smiled confidently. “Then we shall solve it together.”

Holmes nodded. “Yes. But remember the warning letter. Someone wishes you to stay away. That alone proves the matter is serious.”

The plans were settled quickly after that. Tickets were arranged, luggage prepared, and departure fixed for the following day. Holmes walked with us to the door.

“Watson,” he said quietly as Sir Henry and Mortimer stepped ahead, “trust your judgment, but trust facts more. Write everything, even what seems unimportant.”

“I will,” I promised.

Holmes shook my hand firmly. “Good. The case now moves to the moor.”

As I left Baker Street, I felt a strange mixture of excitement and unease. London’s busy streets seemed safe and ordinary, yet beyond them lay a lonely land filled with fear and old stories. Somewhere on that dark moor waited the answer to the mystery of the Baskerville family—and perhaps the truth behind the legend of the terrible hound.

Part 6

The next morning we gathered at Waterloo Station. The great hall was filled with travelers, voices, and the sound of trains preparing to depart. Sir Henry stood beside me with strong energy, clearly eager for the journey ahead. Dr. Mortimer checked the luggage while Holmes spoke quietly with me apart from the others.

“Remember,” Holmes said, “observe everything. Do not trust appearances. Send reports often.”

“You still believe danger is real?” I asked.

Holmes answered calmly, “Yes. The stolen boot proves preparation. Someone needs Sir Henry’s scent. That fact alone is deeply troubling.”

He paused, then added, "Above all, never allow Sir Henry to wander alone on the moor."

I promised again, and Holmes shook my hand firmly before stepping back as the train whistle sounded.

Soon we were seated in our carriage, and London slowly disappeared behind us. Sir Henry looked out the window with excitement.

"I have never seen my family home," he said. "It feels strange to inherit a place I do not know."

Dr. Mortimer smiled kindly. "You will find the country quiet but beautiful."

As the train moved farther west, the crowded city gave way to open fields and rolling hills. Villages passed by, then wide stretches of empty land. The sky grew larger, and the air seemed clearer when we opened the window.

Sir Henry spoke cheerfully during much of the journey, asking questions about Baskerville Hall and the surrounding district. Mortimer described the people who lived nearby—the Barrymores at the Hall, Mr. Stapleton the naturalist, and Mr. Frankland, an elderly man who enjoyed legal arguments more than friendship.

Gradually the land changed again. Trees grew fewer, and dark hills rose in the distance. The wide moor appeared, stretching far under a gray sky.

Mortimer pointed. "There is Dartmoor."

I felt a sudden chill despite the daylight. The land looked wild and empty, with patches of rock and dark grass moving under the wind. No houses stood close together. Everything seemed distant and silent.

Sir Henry watched with interest. "It looks lonely," he said.

"Yes," Mortimer replied quietly. "Lonely, but strong."

When we arrived at the small country station, two men waited beside a carriage. One was tall and thin with a dark beard and serious face. The other was shorter and strong, wearing the clothes of a servant.

Mortimer introduced them. "This is Mr. Barrymore, the butler of Baskerville Hall, and Perkins, the groom."

Barrymore bowed politely. His manner was respectful but cold. His pale face and dark beard gave him a solemn appearance.

“Welcome to Baskerville Hall, Sir Henry,” he said.

As we climbed into the carriage, I noticed two soldiers standing near the station gate with rifles in their hands.

“Why are soldiers here?” Sir Henry asked.

Perkins answered, “A prisoner has escaped from the prison on the moor, sir. The police search everywhere.”

Mortimer added quietly, “The man is dangerous.”

The carriage moved forward along a narrow road. The land around us grew darker as evening approached. Wind swept across the open ground, bending the grass. Far away I saw strange shapes of stone rising from the earth.

Sir Henry looked around with curiosity. “It feels like another world.”

Mortimer nodded. “The moor has its own character. Some love it deeply. Others fear it.”

Soon trees appeared ahead, forming a dark line against the sky. We passed through iron gates and entered a long drive surrounded by old woods. The branches closed above us, and shadows covered the road.

At last Baskerville Hall appeared. The house stood large and gray, its towers rising into the evening mist. Narrow windows reflected the fading light. The building looked ancient and silent, as if watching our arrival.

Sir Henry stared at it with mixed feelings. “So this is my home.”

Barrymore opened the door and led us inside. The great hall was long and dim, lit by a fire at one end. Old portraits hung on the walls, their faces dark with age. Our footsteps echoed on the stone floor.

Mrs. Barrymore appeared to greet us. She was a tall woman with a pale face and serious expression. Though polite, she seemed nervous.

Dinner was served soon after. Sir Henry tried to speak cheerfully, but the heavy silence of the house pressed upon us. Outside, the wind moved through the trees with a low sound that reminded me of distant voices.

After the meal Sir Henry said, “The house feels empty.”

Barrymore answered respectfully, “It has been quiet since Sir Charles’s death, sir.”

Later, as I prepared for bed, I walked along the corridor. The long passages were dimly lit, and the house seemed filled with faint sounds—the wind, the movement of old wood, and something else I could not clearly name.

That night I slept lightly. At some hour after midnight I awoke suddenly. From somewhere in the house came the sound of a woman quietly crying.

I listened carefully. The sound rose again, soft but full of sorrow. It lasted only a short time before fading into silence.

The next morning I asked Barrymore whether anyone in the house had been crying during the night.

He looked surprised. “No, sir. Only my wife and I are here besides yourself and Sir Henry.”

His answer sounded calm, yet something in his expression troubled me. Later I noticed Mrs. Barrymore’s eyes were red, as if she had indeed been weeping.

That evening I began my first written report to Sherlock Holmes. I described the journey, the strange atmosphere of the moor, the behavior of the Barrymores, and the distant prison with its escaped convict somewhere upon the lonely land.

As I wrote, the wind rose again outside the Hall. The great house felt isolated in the darkness, surrounded by miles of empty ground. I could not escape the feeling that unseen eyes watched us from the moor, waiting patiently for something yet to come.

Part 7

The morning after our arrival at Baskerville Hall began cold and gray. A thin mist lay over the land outside, and the wide moor stretched away like a silent sea. Sir Henry appeared in good spirits at breakfast, though he admitted that the house felt strange to him.

“It will take time to grow used to it,” he said. “Still, I intend to make it lively again.”

Dr. Mortimer soon arrived to guide us around the grounds. As we walked outside, the air felt sharp and fresh. Behind the Hall stood dark woods, while

ahead the land opened toward the moor.

Mortimer pointed toward the distance. "Beyond those hills lies Grimpen village. Few people live here, and neighbors depend greatly on one another."

We walked along a path bordered by old trees. Their branches twisted overhead, and fallen leaves covered the ground. The silence felt deep, broken only by the wind.

Sir Henry stopped suddenly. "What is that sound?"

A low, distant cry floated across the moor. It rose slowly, then faded away into the air. The sound was strange and mournful, unlike anything I had heard before.

Mortimer listened carefully. "The people here say it is the cry of the hound."

Sir Henry laughed uneasily. "Surely it is only an animal."

"Perhaps," Mortimer replied. "The moor produces many sounds carried by the wind."

Though he spoke calmly, I noticed that his face had grown pale.

We continued walking until we reached a rise from which we could see far across the land. The moor appeared endless, dotted with dark rocks and patches of grass. In the distance stood small stone huts, old and broken.

Mortimer explained, "Those are ancient homes built long ago. People once lived there, but now only the wind remains."

As we turned back toward the Hall, a man approached along the path. He was thin, with fair hair and bright eyes. His movements were quick and energetic.

"Mr. Stapleton," Mortimer said, greeting him warmly. "Allow me to introduce Sir Henry Baskerville and Dr. Watson."

Stapleton shook our hands eagerly. "Welcome to the moor! It is a wonderful place once you learn its ways."

His excitement contrasted sharply with the lonely landscape around us.

"You enjoy living here?" Sir Henry asked.

"Very much," Stapleton replied. "Nature is never dull. Every hill and plant tells a story."

He spoke rapidly, pointing out birds flying overhead and plants growing along the path. His knowledge of the land seemed endless.

“You must visit my home,” he added. “My sister will be delighted to meet you.”

As we walked together, Stapleton suddenly stopped and stared across the moor. A small butterfly moved in the air, and he ran after it with surprising speed, chasing it across the grass like a child.

Sir Henry laughed. “He seems devoted to his hobby.”

Mortimer nodded. “He is deeply interested in nature.”

When Stapleton returned, slightly out of breath, we continued toward his house, Merripit House, which stood alone near the edge of the moor.

There we met Miss Stapleton. She was beautiful, with dark hair and serious eyes. Her manner was calm but watchful. When she learned Sir Henry’s name, her expression changed suddenly.

She spoke quietly but urgently. “You must return to London at once.”

Sir Henry looked shocked. “Why?”

She glanced nervously toward her brother, who had walked ahead of us. “Please,” she said softly, “do not stay here. Go back before it is too late.”

Before Sir Henry could answer, Stapleton returned. His sister’s expression changed instantly, and she greeted him calmly as if nothing unusual had happened.

We soon left Merripit House and began walking back toward Baskerville Hall. Sir Henry looked puzzled.

“What did she mean?” he asked me quietly.

“I cannot say,” I replied, though her warning troubled me deeply.

That evening Sir Henry spoke often of Miss Stapleton, clearly impressed by her beauty and kindness. Yet I could not forget the fear in her voice.

Later that night I again heard soft footsteps in the corridor outside my room. I opened the door quietly and saw Barrymore moving down the hall carrying a candle. He walked carefully, looking around as if afraid of being seen.

Curious, I followed at a distance. Barrymore stopped at a window at the end of the corridor and held the candle high, staring out into the darkness of the moor.

He stood there for several minutes before lowering the light and returning silently to his room.

I went back to bed but slept poorly. Why would the butler signal into the

darkness at night? And to whom?

The next morning I wrote another detailed report to Holmes. I described Stapleton and his sister, the strange warning she gave, the distant cry on the moor, and Barrymore's secret action with the candle.

As I finished writing, I felt certain that hidden connections tied these events together. Somewhere beyond the Hall, across the wide and lonely moor, someone—or something—waited and watched us in silence.

Part 8

The mystery of Barrymore's behavior troubled me greatly. After finishing my letter to Holmes, I decided to speak privately with Sir Henry. We sat together near the fire in the morning room while wind moved softly outside the windows.

"Sir Henry," I said, "I must tell you something I witnessed last night."

He listened carefully as I described Barrymore walking through the corridor and holding a candle at the window as if giving a signal.

Sir Henry's eyes grew sharp with interest. "A signal? Then someone must have been watching from outside."

"That is my belief," I replied. "But we must be certain before accusing him."

Sir Henry stood at once. "We shall watch tonight and learn the truth."

That evening we waited quietly in Sir Henry's room until the house fell silent. The long corridors grew dark, and only faint light came from distant lamps. Hours passed slowly.

At last we heard a soft movement outside. The door opened slightly, and Barrymore stepped into the hall carrying a candle. He moved exactly as before, walking carefully toward the far end of the corridor.

Sir Henry and I followed silently, keeping to the shadows.

Barrymore reached the same window and raised the candle high. The small flame shone against the glass, steady and clear. He stood motionless, staring into the darkness beyond the Hall.

We waited. Suddenly Sir Henry rushed forward.

“Barrymore!” he cried. “What are you doing?”

The butler turned, shocked and pale. The candle shook in his hand.

“Sir—Sir Henry!” he stammered.

Sir Henry spoke firmly. “You were signaling someone. Tell us the truth.”

Barrymore hesitated, clearly distressed. At that moment Mrs. Barrymore hurried into the corridor, her face filled with fear.

“Please, sir,” she said, her voice trembling. “Do not blame my husband. It is my doing.”

Sir Henry looked surprised. “Your doing?”

Tears filled her eyes. “The signal is for my brother. He is the escaped prisoner on the moor.”

I felt sudden understanding. “The convict from the prison?”

She nodded. “Yes. He is my younger brother. He escaped days ago and hides among the hills. We bring him food so he will not starve.”

Barrymore added quietly, “We meant no harm, sir. We only wished to help family.”

Sir Henry’s anger faded. “You should have told me.”

Mrs. Barrymore wept softly. “We feared losing our positions.”

After a moment Sir Henry spoke kindly. “You may continue helping him until he leaves the country. But you must promise honesty from now on.”

Both servants thanked him deeply.

Later that night Sir Henry turned to me. “Now we know who received the signal. But who watched us in London? And who sent the warning letter?”

“Those questions remain,” I said.

The next morning Barrymore brought us important news. “My wife’s brother plans to leave soon,” he explained. “A ship waits for him at a distant port. He will go when he has strength.”

Sir Henry nodded. “Good. The sooner he leaves, the safer everyone will be.”

Yet the discovery did not end our unease. The moor still felt dangerous, and Miss Stapleton’s warning continued to trouble my thoughts.

That afternoon I walked alone near the edge of the grounds, hoping to

understand the land better. The wind moved across the grass, carrying distant sounds. Suddenly I saw a figure standing on a hill far away.

The man watched the Hall. Even at that distance I felt certain he observed us carefully. When I tried to approach, he disappeared among the rocks.

I returned quickly and told Sir Henry what I had seen.

“Another watcher,” he said. “Then we are surrounded by secrets.”

That evening I wrote again to Holmes, describing the truth about Barrymore and the escaped convict, as well as the unknown man on the hill. I asked for guidance, feeling increasingly aware that events moved toward something serious.

Days passed, and Sir Henry grew more interested in visiting Miss Stapleton. He spoke often of her kindness and intelligence. I noticed, however, that Stapleton himself watched these conversations closely, sometimes with a strange intensity.

One afternoon we visited Merripit House again. Stapleton greeted us warmly, yet his eyes moved constantly toward his sister whenever she spoke with Sir Henry.

During a short moment alone, Miss Stapleton spoke quietly to me. “You must protect Sir Henry,” she said urgently.

“From what?” I asked.

She shook her head. “I cannot explain. But danger is near.”

Before she could say more, her brother returned, and her manner changed at once. She smiled calmly, as if no serious words had been spoken.

That night a heavy fog rolled across the moor, covering the land in pale gray mist. The Hall felt cut off from the world. As I stood by the window, I heard again the distant cry we had heard before—a long, deep sound rising from somewhere beyond sight.

The sound faded slowly, leaving only silence.

I felt certain that the mystery was drawing closer to its center. Somewhere on that vast and lonely moor moved unseen forces—human or otherwise—that threatened Sir Henry Baskerville. And though we had solved one secret, many more still waited in the darkness ahead.

Part 9

The days that followed brought no peace to Baskerville Hall. Though the truth about Barrymore had been revealed, the feeling of danger remained. Each evening the wind moved across the moor with a low sound that seemed almost like distant voices. Sir Henry tried to remain cheerful, but I could see that the strange events weighed upon his mind.

One morning Barrymore approached us with new information. His manner was serious.

“Sir,” he said, “my wife’s brother has seen another man on the moor.”

Sir Henry looked up quickly. “Another man? Not the police?”

“No, sir. Someone living there secretly. My wife’s brother says the man hides among the old stone huts and watches the Hall.”

I exchanged a glance with Sir Henry. This must be the same figure I had seen on the distant hill.

“Did he describe him?” I asked.

“Only that he is tall and moves carefully,” Barrymore replied. “He does not appear to be the escaped prisoner.”

Sir Henry stood at once. “Then we must find him.”

That afternoon we set out across the moor. The air felt cold despite the sunlight, and the ground grew uneven beneath our feet. Rocks rose suddenly from the grass, and narrow paths twisted between pools of dark water.

Barrymore had described the direction, and after a long walk we reached a group of ancient stone huts. Their broken walls stood against the sky, silent remains from long ago.

We searched carefully. Inside one hut we found signs of recent use—a blanket, food remains, and a small fire pit.

“Someone lives here,” Sir Henry said quietly.

Suddenly a voice spoke behind us. “Dr. Watson!”

I turned in shock. A familiar figure stepped from behind the rocks. It was Sherlock Holmes.

“Holmes!” I cried. “You are here!”

He smiled slightly. “Of course. Did you truly believe I would remain in London while matters grew more serious?”

Sir Henry stared in amazement. “You have been hiding on the moor?”

“Yes,” Holmes said calmly. “I arrived secretly and have observed events for several days. Forgive the deception, Watson, but secrecy was necessary.”

I felt both surprise and relief. “Then the unknown watcher was you.”

“Indeed,” Holmes replied. “I wished to study everyone without being noticed.”

He explained that he had stayed in the stone hut, receiving supplies from a local boy who helped him remain hidden. From there he watched Stapleton, the Barrymores, and movements around the Hall.

Holmes’s expression grew serious. “The case is now clearer. Sir Charles did not die from fear alone. A human enemy stands behind these events.”

Sir Henry asked eagerly, “Who?”

Holmes raised a hand. “Not yet. We must gather final proof.”

He then asked me for my reports. “Your letters were excellent, Watson. They confirmed my suspicions.”

We walked together across the moor while Holmes explained his reasoning. Stapleton’s behavior interested him greatly. The man appeared friendly yet controlled his sister closely. His knowledge of the moor allowed him to move unseen.

“Everything points toward careful planning,” Holmes said. “The warning letter, the stolen boot, and the fear surrounding the legend all serve one purpose.”

“What purpose?” I asked.

Holmes looked toward Baskerville Hall in the distance. “To frighten Sir Henry—and perhaps to kill him.”

Sir Henry remained calm but determined. “Then we must confront this enemy.”

Holmes nodded. “Soon. But we must act carefully. If we move too quickly, he may escape.”

As evening approached, Holmes returned secretly to his hiding place while Sir Henry and I walked back to the Hall. The sky darkened, and fog began forming

again across the land.

That night I felt renewed confidence knowing Holmes was near. Yet his words troubled me. Someone planned murder with patience and intelligence.

The next morning Holmes met us secretly once more. He spoke quietly.

“The time approaches. We shall set a trap. Sir Henry must appear unaware of danger. Our enemy must believe his plan will succeed.”

Sir Henry agreed without hesitation. “I will do whatever is required.”

Holmes outlined the plan. Sir Henry would dine with Stapleton soon and return across the moor at night, while Holmes and I waited nearby.

Though the idea filled me with anxiety, I trusted Holmes completely.

As we returned toward Baskerville Hall, the moor stretched wide and silent around us. Somewhere beyond the hills waited the final answer to the mystery—a truth hidden behind fear, deception, and the legend of the terrible hound.

Part 10

The plan arranged by Holmes filled me with both excitement and fear. Though he spoke calmly, I understood the danger clearly. Sir Henry would act as bait, walking across the moor at night while we waited to uncover the truth behind the mystery.

That afternoon Holmes explained every detail again to ensure nothing went wrong.

“Sir Henry,” he said, “you must visit Stapleton and dine with him as planned. Speak naturally. Show no sign that you suspect anything.”

Sir Henry nodded firmly. “I will play my part.”

Holmes turned to me. “Watson, you and I will hide near the path leading from Merripit House. We must watch carefully and act at the right moment.”

“And the hound?” I asked quietly.

Holmes’s eyes grew serious. “If my theory is correct, the hound is real—but not supernatural.”

Evening arrived slowly. A heavy fog crept across the moor, spreading like pale

smoke over the land. Holmes looked troubled when he saw it.

“This fog may ruin everything,” he said. “If it grows thicker, we may lose sight of Sir Henry.”

Still, the plan could not be delayed. Sir Henry left Baskerville Hall alone and walked toward Merripit House. Holmes and I followed at a distance, taking a different path across the moor.

The ground was wet beneath our feet, and the fog moved around us in shifting waves. Soon the lights of Merripit House appeared faintly through the mist.

“We wait here,” Holmes whispered.

We lay hidden among rocks near the path Sir Henry would take on his return. Time passed slowly. The night grew darker, and the fog thickened until shapes became unclear even a short distance away.

At last a figure appeared walking toward us. It was Sir Henry, moving steadily along the path.

Holmes leaned forward. “Be ready.”

Suddenly a terrible sound rose from the fog—a deep, wild howl unlike any ordinary dog. The cry froze my blood. Sir Henry stopped and turned, looking back into the darkness.

Out of the mist came a huge shape running toward him. Flames seemed to glow around its head, and its eyes shone with dreadful light. It was a gigantic hound, larger than any animal I had ever seen.

Sir Henry cried out and began to run.

Holmes fired his revolver at once. I followed his example, shooting toward the advancing beast. The hound leapt forward with terrifying speed, but another shot struck it. With a final cry the creature fell heavily to the ground.

We rushed forward. The animal lay still, breathing weakly before collapsing completely.

Up close the truth became clear. The hound was real flesh and blood, yet its mouth and fur shone with a strange glow.

Holmes examined it quickly. “Phosphorus,” he said. “Painted upon its body to make it appear supernatural.”

Sir Henry stood trembling, pale with shock. “Good heavens... I thought it was a demon.”

Holmes placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder. “No demon—only a cruel trick designed to frighten you to death, just as Sir Charles was frightened.”

We heard footsteps behind us and turned to see Stapleton running toward us from the fog. His face showed sudden alarm when he saw the dead hound.

“What has happened?” he cried.

Holmes stepped forward calmly. “Your plan has failed, Mr. Stapleton.”

Stapleton’s expression changed instantly. Without another word he turned and ran into the fog toward the moor.

“After him!” Holmes shouted.

We pursued, but the fog grew thick, hiding all direction. Soon we lost sight of him entirely.

Holmes stopped at last. “He knows the moor better than we do. We must wait until morning.”

We returned slowly to Baskerville Hall, guiding Sir Henry carefully. He remained shaken but unharmed.

“So Stapleton was behind everything?” he asked.

Holmes nodded. “Yes. The legend of the hound allowed him to hide his crime. Fear became his weapon.”

That night none of us slept easily. The events replayed again and again in my mind—the glowing beast, the terrible howl, and the moment when truth finally broke through the mystery.

At dawn we returned to the moor with police officers to search for Stapleton. The fog had lifted, revealing wide stretches of dangerous ground filled with deep bogs.

Holmes studied the land carefully. “He fled toward the Grimpen Mire,” he said. “A deadly place for anyone who does not know the safe paths.”

We searched for hours but found no sign of him except scattered footprints that ended suddenly near the edge of the swamp.

Holmes sighed quietly. “The mire has claimed him. Nature has passed judgment

where the law cannot.”

Though justice felt incomplete, the danger had ended. The terrible hound lay dead, its secret revealed, and the curse that haunted the Baskerville family proved to be the work of a human mind driven by greed and cruelty.

As we returned to Baskerville Hall under the clear morning sky, the moor no longer seemed filled with unseen terror. The wind moved gently across the land, and for the first time since our arrival, the great house felt safe.

Part 11

Several days passed after the night on which the hound was killed. The fear that had hung over Baskerville Hall slowly faded. Sunlight returned to the moor, and the wide land appeared less threatening than before. Sir Henry began to recover from the shock he had suffered, though the terrible sight of the glowing hound still troubled him at times.

Holmes remained at the Hall only long enough to complete the investigation. Each morning he walked across the grounds, studying the land carefully as if reviewing every step of the case.

One afternoon we gathered in the dining room while Holmes explained the full truth behind the mystery.

“The story begins,” he said, “with Stapleton himself. He was not who he claimed to be. In reality he was a member of the Baskerville family.”

Sir Henry looked astonished. “A Baskerville?”

Holmes nodded. “Yes. He was the son of Rodger Baskerville, the younger brother who fled England long ago. After changing his name, he returned secretly and settled near Baskerville Hall.”

“Then he was an heir?” I asked.

“Exactly,” Holmes replied. “If both Sir Charles and Sir Henry died, the estate would pass to him.”

Sir Henry shook his head slowly. “So he planned everything for money.”

Holmes continued, “Stapleton learned of the family legend and used it as a

weapon. He purchased a large hound and kept it hidden on the moor. By covering the animal with phosphorus, he made it appear ghostly and supernatural.”

I remembered the terrible glow of the beast and felt a chill.

“He first frightened Sir Charles,” Holmes said. “The old man already believed the legend. When the hound appeared, fear caused him to run until his weak heart failed.”

“But why steal my boot?” Sir Henry asked.

“The hound needed your scent,” Holmes explained. “At first Stapleton stole a new boot by mistake. When he realized it carried no scent, he returned it and stole a worn one instead.”

Everything suddenly made perfect sense.

Holmes went on. “The warning letter came from Miss Stapleton. She wished to save you but feared her brother. She could not speak openly, so she sent the message secretly.”

Sir Henry looked thoughtful. “She tried to help me all along.”

“Yes,” Holmes said gently. “She lived in fear of Stapleton’s control. Though presented as his sister, she was actually his wife.”

I expressed my surprise. “His wife!”

Holmes nodded. “He forced her to pretend otherwise to gain trust and freedom in society. Her position was most unhappy.”

Sir Henry lowered his head. “Poor woman.”

Holmes continued, “On the final night Stapleton planned to release the hound upon you. The fog nearly allowed him to succeed. Fortunately, we arrived in time.”

“And Stapleton himself?” I asked.

Holmes looked toward the distant moor visible through the window. “All evidence suggests he lost his way in the Grimpen Mire. Without knowledge of the safe path, survival there is nearly impossible.”

Silence filled the room as we considered his fate.

Later that day Holmes and I prepared to return to London. Sir Henry insisted on thanking him warmly.

“You have saved my life,” Sir Henry said sincerely. “I will never forget it.”

Holmes smiled modestly. “I merely followed facts to their conclusion.”

As our carriage departed from Baskerville Hall, I looked back at the great building. Sunlight touched its towers, and the house seemed transformed. No longer did it appear haunted or threatening. The shadow of fear had lifted.

During the journey back, Holmes remained quiet for long periods. At last he spoke.

“Watson, this case shows how powerful belief can be. A legend alone cannot kill—but fear created by a clever mind can.”

I nodded. “The supernatural seemed real because people expected it to be.”

Holmes smiled slightly. “Exactly. When reason returns, the darkness disappears.”

When we arrived again in London, Baker Street felt comfortingly familiar. The noise of the city replaced the lonely wind of the moor, and life returned to its usual rhythm.

Some weeks later we received news that Miss Stapleton had been rescued after wandering injured on the moor. She confirmed Holmes’s conclusions completely. Sir Henry, following medical advice, traveled abroad to regain strength after his ordeal.

One quiet evening Holmes sat beside the fire, playing his violin softly. The case of the Baskerville hound had ended, yet its memory remained strong in my mind—the lonely moor, the glowing beast, and the triumph of reason over fear.

Thus ended one of the most strange and memorable adventures I shared with Sherlock Holmes.