The Hound of the Baskervilles

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Arthur Conan Doyle was born into poverty and an alcoholic father with a history of psychiatric illness. With help from members of his extended family, however, Doyle was able to achieve an excellent education and eventually earned a doctorate in medicine. He would practice medicine in various forms for much of his early adult life. While in medical school, Doyle took up writing as a hobby. By 1886, he had created the character of Sherlock Holmes. The character was a great success with the public, and Doyle soon found himself a wealthy man. However, he felt that Holmes had backed him into a corner, making it impossible for him to write on other topics—such as his interests in spiritualism or the historical novel. By 1893, Doyle had decided to kill Holmes off. There was such a backlash against this, however, that he was forced to bring the character back to life in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which would go on to become Holmes' best-known and best-loved novel. A man of diverse interests, Doyle participated heavily in politics and was knighted by King Edward VII for his writing on the Boer War, whereupon he became Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He had five children between two wives, but none of these children had children of their own. Thus, Doyle has no direct descendants today. He is often referred to today as Conan Doyle, as though his name were a compound. While this was the name he preferred to be called, Conan was simply his middle name and not a part of his full surname.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Detective fiction is a direct result of the advent of detective agencies in the real world. Police forces did not always exist in the iconic way that they do today. In fact, England did not have something resembling a modern police force until 1749, when the Bow Street Runners were formed. Previously, private citizens were expected to take a much more active role in policing their communities, catching criminals and bringing them before the courts of their own accord. The Bow Street Runners were the first individuals paid by the government and commissioned to deal with such tasks professionally. The Runners were superseded by organizations such as the Metropolitan Police Service, founded in 1829, and others, which slowly took the form of modern police departments. In the meantime, however, there was a rise of private detective agencies that worked alongside early police forces. The first of these was founded in 1833 by an ex-criminal named Eugène François Vidocq. He used exceptionally modern, empirical techniques in his work, including the use of plaster to cast molds of footprints, undercover officers, and even ballistics. The idea of a scientifically-minded expert going head-to-head with expert criminals intrigued the public and inspired writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Honoré de Balzac, and Victor Hugo.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

While the adventures of Sherlock Holmes are probably the best-known examples of early detective fiction, they certainly weren't the only ones or even the first. The idea of the mastermind detective had enflamed the imaginations of many popular authors. Charles Dickens' Inspector Bucket, an important character in his 1853 novel, *Bleak House*, is as brilliant and peculiar as Holmes. C. Auguste Dupin was another exceptionally popular fictional detective, created by Edgar Allan Poe for his short stories, including "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," published in 1841. Wilkie Collins' 1868 novel, *The Moonstone*, is generally considered to be the first full detective novel. The kind of mastermind criminals Doyle favored also inspired a great deal of early film, such as Louis Feuillade's *Fantômas* (1913) and *Les Vampires* (1915) serial films and Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler* (1922).

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Hound of the Baskervilles*
- **When Written:** 1901-1902
- **Where Written:** Surrey County, England
- **When Published:** 1901-1902
- **Literary Period:** Late Victorian/Edwardian
- **Genre:** Detective fiction, crime fiction, serial fiction, novella
- **Setting:** London, England, and Devonshire County, England
- **Climax:** Sherlock Holmes uncovers Jack Stapleton's plot to kill Sir Henry Baskerville and shoots Stapleton's monstrous hound dead just seconds before it can accomplish the murder.
- **Antagonist:** Sherlock Holmes
- **Point of View:** Third-person limited

EXTRA CREDIT

Holmes is Dead. Long Live Holmes! Doyle killed Sherlock Holmes off in the 1893 short story "The Final Problem." When the public revolted against this, Doyle brought Holmes back with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1901-1902. However, it wasn't until his 1903 short story, "The Adventure of the Empty House," that Doyle explained how Holmes was still alive. Therefore, avid readers of Holmes stories would have read *The*

Hound of the Baskervilles not having any idea whatsoever how Holmes was in it!

One Big Puppy. Watson describes Stapleton's gigantic hound as a mixture of bloodhound and mastiff. Male bloodhounds can grow to 110 pounds, while male English mastiffs can tip the scales at a jaw-dropping 230 pounds, while standing nearly three feet tall at the shoulders. The mastiff was a common working dog in the English countryside, where they were valued for their immense strength and protectiveness, so readers of Doyle's time would have been well aware of just how large and formidable the Baskervilles' hound was. Interestingly, the bloodhound has a quite relevant nickname: the "sleuth" hound (sleuth is another name for detective). It's so-named because of its uncanny ability to track down its targets—an ability the dog shares with Holmes himself.

PLOT SUMMARY

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson are in Holmes' Baker Street apartment, examining a **walking stick** left at the apartment the evening before by an unknown visitor. The stick was a gift, as shown by a plaque on it that says it's from "friends of the C.C.H." to James Mortimer. Using this information, Holmes asks Watson to determine what he can about their mysterious guest. Watson deduces from the stick's worn appearance that it belonged to an older man, successful and well-esteemed—an old country doctor, who makes his rounds on foot. Holmes encourages Watson's speculation but eventually reveals much of what Watson's said to be false.

Rather than an elderly old country doctor, Holmes supposes Mortimer to be a young surgeon in London, well-liked as Watson supposed, but who recently abandoned his position for the country due to a lack of ambition and not because of age. Mortimer, he says, also owns a dog—one larger than a spaniel but smaller than a mastiff. Watson confirms most of Holmes' deductions using a directory of medical professionals. The remaining information comes shortly thereafter, when Mortimer returns in search of both Holmes and his walking stick. Holmes has erred only in that Mortimer left the London hospital because he got married (although, Mortimer does lack ambition).

Mortimer has come to present Holmes with a unique case, which he's sure will interest the famous detective. The case begins with a document from 1742 that tells the legend of Hugo Baskerville and how he was mauled to death by a hound—allegedly from Hell—that came to be known locally as the hound of the Baskervilles. Hugo had kidnapped a local townswoman with the intent to rape and otherwise brutalize her at his home in Baskerville Hall. However, before Hugo had the chance to enact his awful plans, the woman escaped. The legend states that Hugo agreed to sell his soul to the devil if only the devil helped Hugo to catch the woman before she made it back to town, and the devil made good on his side of the bargain. Hugo ruthlessly killed the woman, but he was quickly made to pay his due, as he was found shortly thereafter being devoured by a large, hellish hound. This hound, the legend states, will stalk and kill any Baskerville caught traversing the moors outside of Baskerville Hall at night for at least four generations: a veritable Baskerville curse.

Mortimer has brought this strange legend to Holmes because Sir Charles Baskerville has recently died under what appear to be equally strange circumstances: his heart gave out while running from something. While the townspeople seem happy with the official explanation that Baskerville died from over-exertion on his evening walk, Mortimer has discovered the footprints of a large dog near the body. He doesn't want to rile up the moor's inhabitants by suggesting that these footprints might belong to the hound of the Baskervilles, however, so he keeps the information to himself, sharing it only with Holmes.

Mortimer has not come to Holmes for help in solving the mystery of Sir Charles' death, though. Rather, he wants Holmes' advice on how to handle the coming of Sir Henry Baskerville, Sir Charles' only living heir, who, having inherited Baskerville Hall, is moving to his new home from America. Mortimer worries that Sir Henry might quickly come to the same end as Sir Charles, should he choose to live at Baskerville Hall. Though he's a man of science, Mortimer is tempted to believe that the curse might be true. Holmes agrees that the case is an interesting one and agrees to think about it some more. He asks Mortimer to bring Sir Henry to the Baker Street apartment as soon as possible, without telling him anything about the Baskerville curse or the hound.

Upon their subsequent meeting, Sir Henry reveals that he has received an odd letter at his hotel, and that one of his new boots has been stolen. The letter, he shows Holmes, was constructed almost entirely of words cut from a newspaper. It warns Henry to stay away from the moor if he wants to live. Holmes is intrigued and quickly realizes that the words were cut from the previous day's *Times* newspaper. Where the author of the letter has been forced to print certain words, such as "moor," he or she has gone to great lengths to obscure the handwriting. Even here, however, Holmes is able to deduce that the author likely used a pen from a hotel. How the author knew where to send the letter, though, remains a mystery to all. No one knew at which hotel Sir Henry would be staying when he arrived from America. Concerned, the group repeats the legend of the hound of the Baskervilles to Sir Henry, and Holmes advises the man not to go to Baskerville Hall. Henry, however, flatly refuses this advice, saying that no devil in Hell could keep him from his ancestral home.

When Sir Henry and Mortimer leave together, Holmes and Watson shadow them. Holmes is convinced that someone must be following Sir Henry, since there's no other way that his hotel

address could have been known. Sure enough, they quickly discover a bearded man following Sir Henry from a horse-drawn cab. The man realizes he's been seen, however, and makes a quick escape—though not before Holmes gets the number of his cab. Holmes uses this information to get the name and address of the cab driver. At the same time, he also hires a boy to scour the wastepaper of local hotels in search of the newspaper that was used to create the odd letter sent to Sir Henry Baskerville. He also sends a telegram to Mr. Barrymore, the bearded housekeeper of Baskerville Hall, to see whether or not he is at home. If he's not, Holmes surmises, it's possible that he was the one following Sir Henry.

Later, at lunch, Sir Henry reveals that he's missing another boot: an old one this time. The group also discusses Sir Charles' will. He was, it seems, a great philanthropist. Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore, the housekeepers of Baskerville Hall, inherited some 500 pounds each from Sir Charles, and Mortimer inherited 1,000 pounds. In total, Mortimer tells the group, Sir Henry's inheritance will be some 740,000 pounds in liquid assets that, when combined with the value of the estate, total nearly one million pounds (over 100 million pounds in today's currency). Obviously, Holmes declares, it is this money that is providing the motivation for the crime. Holmes reluctantly agrees that Sir Henry must go to Baskerville Hall if they're to get to the bottom of things, but he implores Watson to go as well. Watson agrees, happy that Holmes has shown such confidence in him. Accompanying Sir Henry to his room, the group is surprised to discover the new boot that Sir Henry was missing in a place where they'd already searched for it. Additionally, Holmes receives two telegrams: the first informing him that Mr. Barrymore was indeed at home, the second reporting the failure of the hired boy to find the cut-up copy of the *Times*. This leaves Holmes with but one last lead: the cab driver. Holmes meets with the driver and offers him money in exchange for any information he might have about the bearded man. The cab driver only knows that his passenger claimed to be the famous private detective, Sherlock Holmes. With this information, Holmes suddenly has no leads at all in the case.

It isn't long before Watson, Mortimer, and Sir Henry make their way to Baskerville Hall. During the trip, they encounter heavily armed soldiers. The soldiers are searching for Selden, a murderer who has recently escaped from a nearby prison. Upon arriving at the Hall, Mortimer departs, and Sir Henry, accompanied by Watson, is greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore. Mr. Barrymore soon suggests that the couple may not want to continue on as housekeepers for long. They worry that the younger Sir Henry will want to live more grandly than did Sir Charles—at any rate, they haven't felt the same about the Hall since Sir Charles, who they considered a friend as well as an employer, died. Exploring the house after dinner, Watson and Sir Henry are impressed by the long line of family portraits. Later, in bed, Watson hears the distinct noise of a woman crying. The next morning, Watson and Sir Henry ask Mr. Barrymore about this crying. Barrymore claims it wasn't his wife, but Watson notices shortly that Mrs. Barrymore's eyes look as though she'd been weeping. Watson begins to suspect Mr. Barrymore of being a brute towards his wife, which leads to further suspicions. Watson decides to go to the postmaster's office and enquire whether the telegraph that Holmes sent to Barrymore was delivered directly to Barrymore's hands, and no one else's, as directed. Sure enough, he finds that the message was left with Mrs. Barrymore: so it is once again possible that Mr. Barrymore was the bearded man who had been following Sir Henry.

While returning from the post office, Watson encounters Jack Stapleton, who knows a surprising amount about the case: that Sir Charles had a weak heart, that there was a legend about the hound of the Baskervilles, and that Sherlock Holmes has taken an interest in the case. Stapleton is particularly keen to discover Holmes' thoughts on the situation from Watson and offers his assistance in whatever way possible. Together, the two walk back to Stapleton's house so that Watson can meet Beryl Stapleton, who Jack introduces as his sister. Along the way, Stapleton points out a particularly nasty part of the moor that is mostly swamp. Together, he and Watson witness a wild pony tragically drowning in the marsh and hear an inexplicable howling, as if from a great hound. Stapleton claims that he's the only person on the moor who can safely navigate the swampy area—it's a skill he's had to learn as a naturalist, since the best butterflies and rarest plants can be found there. Adjacent to this area, Stapleton also points out a series of Neolithic huts that he claims still bear evidence of being lived in by early humans. As Beryl Stapleton walks up to meet the two men, Jack is distracted by a rare butterfly and runs off. Beryl hurriedly approaches Watson and urges him to leave the moors as quickly as possible. When Jack returns, however, she instantly abandons this line of talk and, when Jack reveals that his guest is Dr. John Watson, she blushes and informs Watson that she thought he was Sir Henry Baskerville. Later, when Watson is walking back to Baskerville Hall, Beryl sneaks out of her house to catch up to him, asking that Watson forget her earlier warning. Her fear, she says, was just a flight of fancy that she can't really explain.

In a report written to Holmes about the ensuing days, Watson reveals that Sir Henry has met and taken a liking to Beryl Stapleton, though Jack Stapleton seems strongly disapproving of this, even flying into an outrage when he catches the two together alone. Jack agrees, however, to accustom himself to the idea of Sir Henry dating his sister, if Sir Henry will only give him a few months to do so. Most importantly, however, Watson reports that he and Sir Henry have discovered Mr. Barrymore using a candle to signal to someone on the moor late at night. When confronted, Barrymore refused to explain himself, even

when Sir Henry threatens to fire him. The mystery is only solved when Mrs. Barrymore reveals the secret in order to save their careers. Mr. Barrymore is signaling to Selden, the escaped convict. The Barrymores have been providing Selden with food and clothing (including some clothes which Sir Henry had donated to Mr. Barrymore), because Selden is Mrs. Barrymore's brother, and she feels responsible for him. Both Watson and Sir Henry see the impossible situation that the Barrymores have been put in and forgive them for their subterfuge. Still, Watson and Sir Henry feel that they must try to apprehend the criminal and immediately take to the moors to attempt it. Though they are athletic, young men, Selden quickly outpaces them and gets away. In their pursuit, however, Watson sees another man in the distance, watching them. They are unable to catch this mysterious man, either, and Watson is only able to confirm that the man did not appear to be any of the neighbors that he has met. He now believes that this man is the same one who followed Holmes in London and that Mr. Barrymore was only a red herring.

The next morning, Mr. Barrymore thanks Sir Henry for allowing him to continue working at Baskerville Hall (although Barrymore doesn't like that Sir Henry tried to hunt Selden down). In exchange for this graciousness, Barrymore reveals something he'd kept secret from everyone out of respect for Sir Charles Baskerville: namely, that Sir Charles was scheduled to meet a woman at the exact hour and location where he was killed. Mr. Barrymore doesn't know much beyond this, just that a letter arrived for Sir Charles that same day requesting the meeting. It was written in a female hand and signed "L.L." After some inquiry, Watson decides that L.L. must be Laura Lyons, a typist in a nearby town to whom Sir Charles had sometimes given charity in the form of money. Watson goes to Lyons, and learns that she had planned on asking Sir Charles for the funds necessary to obtain a divorce from her husband, but she found an alternative source for these funds and thus never went to the meeting. She never cancelled the plans, however, and will tell Watson nothing about her other benefactor.

On his way back to Baskerville Hall from Lyon's house, Watson witnesses a boy delivering food into the moors and, following the boy's path, finds himself amongst the Neolithic huts he'd observed earlier. Here, Watson comes face-to-face with none other than his friend Holmes, who has been living in the huts the entire time, in order to get an outsider's view of the situation. At first Watson is upset by Holmes' deception, but Holmes praises Watson's work so far. This cures all of Watson's ill-will. In comparing reports, Holmes fills Watson in on some facets of the case that Watson still has not unearthed: most importantly, that Jack and Beryl Stapleton are not brother and sister but rather husband and wife. Holmes deduces that Jack has pretended to be a single man in order to ensnare Laura Lyons into his plan, using her to lure Sir Charles out into the moor where he was killed. Holmes assumes that Jack plans to use Sir Henry's infatuation with Beryl Stapleton similarly. Both now agree that Stapleton is the man responsible for Sir Charles' death and the threat to Sir Henry's life. Holmes and Watson are still working out all of the details when they hear a baying and snarling hound nearby. Fearing that Sir Henry is in danger, they rush towards the sound only to find the body of a dead man. As the body is dressed in Sir Henry's clothes, they fear the worst. However, on closer inspection, they realize that the body is none other than Selden, who is wearing the clothes that Sir Henry donated to Mr. Barrymore. Selden seems to have fallen to his death while trying to escape the hound—which Holmes and Watson now believe to belong to Jack Stapleton. Helping to confirm their suspicions, Stapleton arrives at the scene of the death only moments later, sure that Sir Henry has been killed and seeming slightly disappointed when he has not.

Back at Baskerville Hall, Holmes and Watson reveal nothing of their suspicions of Stapleton to Sir Henry. Instead, they bid him to simply follow whatever directions they give him, without question. While they talk, Holmes takes great interest in the family portraits hanging on the wall, noting that Sir Henry has features not unlike those of Hugo Baskerville, the would-be rapist whose death started the legend of the hound of the Baskervilles. However, when Holmes uses his hands to cover up a portion of Hugo's features, a stronger resemblance is seen. Hugo Baskerville looks exactly like Jack Stapleton. From this, Holmes gleans Stapleton's motive: he must be a hitherto unknown member of the Baskerville family and heir to its fortune should Sir Henry die. Holmes remarks that he now has only to be able to prove what he knows in order to arrest Jack Stapleton. He tells Sir Henry that he and Watson will be returning to London immediately to better work on the case, and advises Sir Henry to have dinner with Stapleton that night. Holmes warns Sir Henry to only take the straight path through the moor between Baskerville Hall and Stapleton's house. Watson is astounded by this advice and Sir Henry terrified by it, but both agree.

Attempting to find the proof they need, Holmes and Watson again visit Laura Lyons. When they reveal to her that Jack Stapleton is a married man, she tells the two everything. Stapleton had convinced Lyons that he wanted to marry her, if only she could pay for a divorce from her estranged husband. Such a marriage would have been a life-changing event for Lyons, who barely managed a living through typing work and was a societal outcast as an estranged woman. Stapleton suggested that Sir Charles would happily give her the money and demanded that she arrange a meeting with him. When the time arrived, however, Stapleton told her that it would be inappropriate to ask Sir Charles, and that Stapleton himself would find the money for the divorce. Clearly, this allowed Stapleton to know precisely where Sir Charles would be at the given hour, allowing Stapleton to know when and where to

release his hound. Lyons assures Holmes and Watson that she never knew Stapleton intended harm to Sir Charles, a man she cared deeply about because of all the help he'd given her.

Holmes reveals to Watson that he has no intention of returning to London. He only wanted to make Sir Henry and Jack Stapleton believe that he would be gone, so that Stapleton would feel emboldened enough to attempt to murder Sir Henry. On their way back to the moors, Holmes and Watson meet with a detective from Scotland Yard, who Holmes has enlisted to help them in capturing Stapleton. Together, the three men set up watch on the road outside of Stapleton's house. They're sure that Stapleton will release the hound the moment that Sir Henry leaves from his dinner there. As they wait, however, a thick fog rolls in, forcing them to retreat further and further from the house in order to avoid being wrapped up in it. Eventually, they place themselves out of sight on the roadside and wait for Sir Henry to pass them by. Moments after he does, the men hear the sound of a dog running their way. Soon, a massive beast gallops past them. It appears in the fog to be breathing fire and to have glowing red eyes. The men are taken aback by this at first, and it passes them unharmed on its way to Sir Henry. Holmes, however, quickly springs to his feet and running at an astonishing rate catches up to the beast just as it pounces on Sir Henry. Holmes shoots the dog dead, saving Sir Henry.

Rushing to Stapleton's house to apprehend him, the Holmes and Watson find only Beryl Stapleton, who Jack has mercilessly tied up in a bedroom because she refused to continue to help him in his crimes. Jack has fled into the swampy part of the moor. The men go after him, but soon come to believe that he has been pulled down into the marshes, a victim both of his own haste and the dense fog. They find the secret area where Stapleton kept the hound as well as Sir Henry's old boot, which Stapleton used to provide his dog with Sir Henry's scent. Later, inspecting the dead hound, they come to realize that its glowing eyes and fire-breathing mouth were merely a phosphorous paint that Stapleton had applied. The tale ends with Holmes, months later, lengthily wrapping up the remaining loose ends for Watson. Many of the details in Holmes' description are redundant, but others—such as his identification of Stapleton as the mysterious bearded man who trailed them in London—are new information.

CHARACTERS

Sherlock Holmes – Sherlock Holmes is a private detective who conducts his work alongside Dr. John Watson, who is Holmes' friend, sidekick, and official chronicler. Dr. James Mortimer, and later, Sir Henry Baskerville himself, hire Holmes and Watson to help with the peculiar case of the supernatural Baskerville hound that is murdering the few remaining Baskerville family members. As both a private detective and intellectual, Holmes' reputation is world-renowned, and Mortimer refers to him as the "second-highest expert in Europe." Holmes, however, is also an egoist. He takes offense to Mortimer's suggestion that he might be second-best at anything. Holmes has good reasons to be confident, as he has a unique ability to solve complex mysteries using the scantest of clues—the kinds of things that ordinary people might overlook. Using only Dr. Mortimer's **walking stick**, for instance, Holmes is able to deduce Mortimer's name, approximate age, occupation (and even his previous occupation), as well as the types of pets he owns. The detective is often able to arrive at these insights within moments of observing a scene. When Holmes finds he needs more time to unravel the enigma before him, he prefers complete solitude and close quarters. However, Holmes' brilliance doesn't come without a price. A decidedly rational man, Holmes is entirely unable to understand art—though he tries, much to the dismay of Watson, who is forced to listen to Holmes' nonsensical diatribes on the subject. Holmes can also be a bit of a jerk. For instance, he loves to ask Watson to provide insight on clues that Holmes has already figured out, simply so he can tear his friend Watson down a bit when he arrives at the wrong conclusions.

Dr. John Watson – Watson is Sherlock Holmes' friend and assistant. He serves as the story's narrator, presenting the plot in a series of first-hand diary entries, letters, and reports written to, or at the request of, Sherlock Holmes. Together, Holmes and Watson work to solve difficult mysteries, though Holmes is clearly better at this type of work and is unafraid to let Watson know it. Nevertheless, despite both Holmes and Watson's own lack of confidence in his abilities, Watson *is* an intuitive man with an exceptional work ethic. By examining Dr. James Mortimer's **walking stick**, for instance, Watson is able to deduce that its owner was a doctor who lived in the country—insights that were both correct and not readily apparent. However, because Watson lacks Holmes' strict rationality (and is, instead, somewhat emotional and romantic), he incorrectly believed Mortimer to be an older man, just retired, rather than the young man Mortimer is. Such missteps seem typical of him. Watson also shows great concern and respect for those who have been placed in his care, such as Sir Henry Baskerville, whom Holmes has ordered Watson to protect. Though Baskerville orders Watson to leave him alone for a while (so that he can court Beryl Stapleton), Watson nevertheless follows Sir Henry, taking great care to obey both Holmes' orders to protect him and Sir Henry's orders to leave him alone. He is able to do this partly through his excellent athleticism, which enables him to navigate the moor's rough terrain quickly and with ease. This fitness also lends to another important trait, his bravery, as Watson generally feels himself capable of fending off any would-be attackers.

Sir Henry Baskerville – Sir Henry is alleged to be the last surviving member of the Baskerville line and thus heir to

Baskerville Hall following the death of his uncle, Sir Charles Baskerville. Sir Henry was living in America until news of his inheritance reached him. Upon hearing of the bizarre circumstances surrounding his uncle's death from Dr. James Mortimer, Sir Henry enlists the help of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson. Asking for help doesn't mean that Sir Henry is a coward or even all that afraid, however. He declares early on that nothing will stop him from taking possession of Baskerville Hall and promptly moves in, despite the ominous threat of the hound. Furthermore, he isn't afraid to cross the moors alone when he's trying to court Beryl Stapleton or in pursuit of the criminal Selden. Sir Henry is also firm but understanding with regard to his duties at Baskerville Hall. When he discovers that Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore have been aiding Selden in his escape, Sir Henry promptly fires them. However, after the couple have a chance to explain the unique situation, Sir Henry has a change of heart and allows them to continue their long employment. Sir Henry even donates his old wardrobe to Mr. Barrymore, having gone to great pains while in London to buy a new wardrobe more suited to his new, noble title.

Dr. James Mortimer – Dr. Mortimer is a house surgeon who left his London practice in order to set up house and a country practice in the Devonshire moors near Baskerville Hall with his wife and dog. Mortimer is a phrenologist and believes that a person's most intimate characteristics can be understood through careful measurement and examination of his skull. Indeed, he feels the individual predisposed to whatever characteristics his or her skull imbues. As such, he takes great interest in the skull of Sherlock Holmes when they first meet. Since Holmes is such a singular character, Mortimer is sure he must have a singular skull. Mortimer was a friend of Sir Charles Baskerville and is the reason that Holmes and Dr. Watson are first brought into the case. He is observant and scientific, discovering unnoticed footprints left behind by a dog at the scene of Sir Charles' death. He is also considerate, sharing the information about the footprints only with Holmes and Watson for fear of causing a panic among the moor's occupants. Mortimer's familiarity with both dogs and the Baskerville legend make him something of a **red herring**, at least until his own dog goes missing on the moors.

Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore – The Barrymores act essentially as one unit, never appearing separately for any length of time. Both of their families have served the Baskerville estate for centuries, and they take great pride in this fact. Nevertheless, they worry that the new, young master of Baskerville Hall, Sir Henry Baskerville, will expect a level of service and grandeur that they will be unable to provide. Both Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore take their duty to Sir Henry quite seriously, but they are loyal to one another before all else. When Sir Henry and Dr. Watson catch Mr. Barrymore using a lantern to send signals to the escaped convict Selden, Mr. Barrymore refuses to explain himself, because it would incriminate his wife. This would have costed Mr. Barrymore his lifelong career, had Mrs. Barrymore not revealed the secret to Sir Henry in order to save her husband (even at the expense of her brother's life). Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore's primary function in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is to provide information about Baskerville Hall's past and the stories of its past inhabitants (through, for instance, the **family portraits**), since Sir Henry Baskerville—the only living Baskerville, so far as anyone knows—has not been there since he was a small child and knows little about his family's history. They have a secondary function, however, as **red herrings**, because of the strange behavior they exhibit while covering up the location of Selden.

Jack Stapleton – Jack Stapleton is Sir Charles Baskerville's nephew and Sir Henry Baskerville's cousin. According to research undertaken by Sherlock Holmes, Stapleton's father left England for South America as a young man with a bad reputation. He was believed to have died, but instead, he married and had Jack, his only son. Jack inherited his father's immoral behavior and returned to England after stealing a large sum of money and marrying Beryl Stapleton. He used this money to open a school, which failed under particularly notorious circumstances. Afterwards, the couple changed their name and assumed the identities of brother and sister, rather than husband and wife. This marked the beginning of Jack's plans to use murder in order to inherit Baskerville Hall and its accompanying fortune. While a fraud as a schoolmaster, Stapleton was an active etymologist and botanist, passions that helped him to lay out a safe path through the marshy parts of the moors where he hid his hound. These pursuits also helped him to make his hound appear particularly fearsome, as he was able to easily procure phosphorous. Mostly, however, Stapleton appears as a man of a singular mind, willing to do anything whatsoever in order to gain the Baskerville fortune, including murdering innocent bystanders and harshly abusing his wife.

Laura Lyons – Laura Lyons is a typist in the nearby town of Coombe Tracey. An impetuous young woman, she soon found herself exiled from her family after marrying a man possibly because she became pregnant out of wedlock. Her husband soon deserted her, leaving Laura to make a living in whatever way she could. Lyons depends on the generosity of others, including Sir Charles Baskerville. Jack Stapleton preys on Laura's precarious position in society, and her friendship with Charles Baskerville, to enable his murderous plans against Sir Charles. He pretends to want to marry Laura *if* she can pay for a divorce from the man that deserted her. He suggests that she arrange a meeting with Sir Charles in order to ask him for the necessary money, but demands at the last minute that she not attend the meeting. He sends his bloodthirsty hound in her place. To Laura's credit, however, she shows an indominable spirit when Sherlock Holmes reveals Stapleton's plans to her. Rather than the weak, submissive woman that Stapleton assumed her to be, Lyons quickly turns on him and agrees to

offer evidence against him in court.

Selden – Selden is Mrs. Barrymore's brother and Mr. Barrymore's brother-in-law. According to Mrs. Barrymore, Selden was overindulged as a child, and this led directly to his criminal life. Shortly before the opening events of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Selden escapes from prison and eludes recapture by hiding out on the moors. His sister provides him with food and drink, and later with clothes provided unwittingly by Sir Henry Baskerville. Selden is known as the "Notting Hill murderer," and is remembered by Dr. Watson as being a particularly brutal killer who only avoided the death penalty because the court thought he might be insane. He is later referred to as "one of the most notorious criminals in the country." As a wanton fugitive already known to be capable of brutal murder, Selden serves as a **red herring** until he is killed while fleeing Jack Stapleton's hound.

Beryl Stapleton – Beryl Stapleton is Jack Stapleton's wife, although Jack claims to Dr. Mortimer, Sir Charles Baskerville, Sir Henry Baskerville, Laura Lyons, Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes, and others that Beryl is his sister. Although Jack physically abuses Beryl, she remains mostly obedient to him, even allowing Sir Charles to court her at her husband's request. However, sensing the danger that Sir Charles Baskerville is in, she is quick to try to warn him off of Baskerville Hall, and quick to turn on Jack when Holmes discovers the murderous plot. Beryl is widely known for her beauty, which nearly everyone remarks upon.

Sir Charles Baskerville –Sir Charles Baskerville is uncle to Sir Henry Baskerville and Jack Stapleton. He was the master of Baskerville Hall prior to his untimely death, which occurred while fleeing from Jack Stapleton's hound. He was friends with Dr. James Mortimer. Sir Charles died an immensely rich man, despite a lifetime of philanthropic giving, including to Laura Lyons. He was said to have had a weak heart, which made him particularly vulnerable to the kind of fear caused by the mysterious hound.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

THE POWER OF REASON

Perhaps no character in the history of literature is so endowed with pure reason as is Sherlock Holmes. His fictional prowess is such that both his first and last name have been turned into adjectives (Sherlockian, Holmesian) used to describe people of unusual perceptiveness and reasoning. While Holmes is a character with a real-life inspiration—Arthur Conan Doyle's college professor Joseph Bell—he is also a product of the optimism of Doyle's time, which had an increasing sense that the rationality of science would one day be able to explain all of life's mysteries. In Holmes, Doyle creates a character who embodies this belief, with Holmes' success at detective work suggesting that reason has the ability to cut through not only natural mysteries, like alleged hauntings, but also the criminal mysteries that man creates through his subterfuge and cunning—if one can only overcome the emotions that tend to cloud that reason.

From his introduction, Holmes shows how much information is available to a thinking, logical man if he only chooses to look for it. For instance, when Watson and Holmes discover they've missed a caller at Baker Street, Holmes is able to deduce the name of the caller (Dr. Mortimer), his age, his occupation, where he lives, and even what pets he owns from the **walking stick** that Mortimer left behind. Holmes accomplishes this through careful consideration of all of the elements of the walking stick—its dedicatory plaque, how worn it is, where it's been chewed on—coupled with a consideration of what might reasonably be deduced from those elements. When Watson attempts this, his deductions prove all wrong, because he has failed to take into consideration all of the facts. Instead, Watson crafts a fanciful, even emotional, story featuring what he *imagines* about the owner. Watson's attempts only use some of the facts, and he makes emotional deductions that aren't supported by evidence—such as when he imagines Mortimer to be a bumbling old country doctor. This reliance on emotion, rather than reason, leads Watson astray.

A similar conflict between reason and rationality occurs when Holmes and Watson are forced to confront the possibility of a supernatural explanation for the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. The (quite understandable) emotions that the inhabitants of Baskerville Hall and Dr. Watson feel about a hellhound stalking them blind them to the empirical realities of that hound. That is, the dog leaves very real footprints, and its demonstrably real howl—that of a regular, and not otherworldly, dog—is heard throughout the moor. An eminently rational man, Holmes knows that such physical traces must come from a physical animal. Indeed, when the animal finally makes its attempt on Sir Henry Baskerville, Holmes is the first to shoot it, because he knows that—rationally—an animal that has the physical body needed to leave footprints in the moor also has a physical body that can be brought down by bullets. The others simply stand in terror. Similarly, Holmes is the first to recognize that the beast does not really have glowing eyes, and does not breathe fire, but rather has been painted with phosphorous. He is able to do this because his extreme rationality has overridden the natural emotion of fear affecting the reasoning skills of Watson and Mortimer. This, in turn,

enables Holmes to unravel the hound's mystery.

Even Holmes' decision to "stake out" Baskerville Hall from the nomadic hut on the moor—a choice that ultimately allows the case to be solved—is one enabled by a triumph of reason over emotion. When Watson imagines Neolithic man living in these huts, he shudders and pities anyone that would have to live under such conditions. The same is true when Watson ponders the case of Selden, the escaped convict living on the moor. He feels a kind of empathy for the man on the run, even going so far as to suggest that the hardships Selden undergoes on the moor should count as partial repayment for his crimes. Holmes, however, realizes that the moor managed to keep Neolithic man alive. This means that Holmes can be sure that he won't freeze to death on the moor, or die of dehydration or starvation. As such, any qualms he might have about living on the moor are strictly emotional grievances about giving up creature comforts. In addition, since he knows that living on the moor will give him an unbiased viewpoint of the events at Baskerville Hall, Holmes is able to forgo any such concerns about comfort and attend to his rational desire for information. This, in turn, allows the case to be cracked.

Perhaps the most convincing proof of reason's power is not found in Holmes' actions and deductions but rather through his inaction. The detective possesses such strong abilities that Doyle has to write him out of most of the book just to have the time to develop a thrilling plot—indeed, it's not entirely clear what Holmes is doing for most of the book, despite the awkward recounting of events Doyle throws in at the end. Were Holmes present at Baskerville Hall from the get-go, his successes suggest that he would have solved the crime almost the moment that he met Jack Stapleton—which would have truncated most of the story! Instead, Doyle holds off Holmes' appearance until the story reaches the height of its drama, though even this late appearance tends to lessen the dramatic effect, as the reader is certain Holmes will save the day. Thus, while Doyle clearly advocates for the power of reason through Holmes, he might also suggest that a life lived only in the pursuit of reason could be a bit too straightforward and boring—indeed, perhaps even impossible outside of the fictional realm.

STRONG WOMEN

Victorian society prescribed a strict role for women as "angels of the home" (indeed, "The Angel in the House" was a popular poem of the Victorian era). To be an angel of the home was to take care of that home, attend to one's children, ensure the comfort of one's husband…and little else. Doyle's female characters fit this mold, but only marginally. When the situation demands it, they find themselves able to break free of this stereotype and take real, effective action, altering both their own (fictive) lives and the plot of the story itself. In this way, Doyle argues that the old Victorian ideal of women as little more than domestic angels is absurdly limiting, as women—though they are empathetic creatures who may truly enjoy caring for their families—are capable of so much more.

There are three women who are essential to the plot of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*: Mrs. Barrymore, Laura Lyons, and Beryl Stapleton. Each of them is played for a fool by the men in their lives, who attempt to control and manipulate them through various means. Selden constantly abuses his sister, Mrs. Barrymore. The convict knows that Mrs. Barrymore has a soft spot for him and has used it to mooch off of her all his life. This reaches its peak when Selden escapes from prison and expects his sister to provide him with food, drink, and clothing while he hides out in the moor. That is, Selden expects his sister to be an "angel of the home" despite the fact that sheltering him is a crime for which she could pay dearly. Jack Stapleton leads on Laura Lyons, using her to lure Sir Charles Baskerville to his death. Lyons is what was known in the Victorian era as a "fallen woman" (the unavoidable association with "fallen angel" was intentional), meaning that she had engaged in prenuptial sexual activity and possibly became pregnant out of wedlock as a result (this is so scandalous that Mortimer says that she was disgraced for having married without her father's consent "and perhaps one or two other things as well"). Fallen women were essentially untouchable—no respectable man would want to marry one, and no other women would want to associate with one for fear of being stigmatized. Thus, Lyons is forced to eke out a living as a typist, work which barely gets her by. She depends on charity to make ends meet. Stapleton offers to marry Lyons because it would give her a chance at being a proper angel of the home, but his offer is only a rouse to gain emotional control over her. Beryl Stapleton is also abused by Stapleton, who expects her to remain silent about his murderous plans strictly out of her love for him. This is despite the fact that Stapleton attempts to pawn her off as his sister, even allowing Sir Henry Baskerville to court Beryl.

Despite being played as fools, however, each woman finds herself in control of their situation, with great power over the men who appear to control them. Beryl Stapleton and Laura Lyons both know enough about Stapleton's plans to ensure that the police would arrest him if they were to turn on him. Similarly, Selden is at the mercy of his sister, who has only to turn him in to the authorities. Both Stapleton and Selden expect the women to obey them in the traditional way, however, and never suspect how their reliance on these women has made them weak. That is, they fail to recognize what the women are capable of, thinking of them as little more than housewives. This is a failure, because in all three instances, the women turn on the men in order to better their situation.

By realizing their power and using it, the women enable Holmes to see a case through prosecution that he might not otherwise have been able to, even though he knew the

murderer and the murderer's entire plan. The murder of Sir Charles Baskerville, for instance, could never be proved without the help of Laura Lyons, who alone knew the truth about the covert meeting Selden sought between her and Sir Charles Baskerville. Without this information, Selden is at worst guilty of attempted murder: a far less serious crime. Thus, without the help of women, even the great Sherlock Holmes would not have truly cracked the Baskerville case.

Doyle's strong female characters notwithstanding, one should not be too quick to read a modern feminist sensibility into Doyle's work. While Jean Doyle, Arthur Conan Doyle's daughter, suggested that her father saw women not as men's equals, but rather as their superiors, Doyle nevertheless took a measured approach to creating equality for women. For instance, he felt that they should be able to divorce more easily but simultaneously felt that giving them the right to vote would create havoc in marriages. In this way, his more moderate personal views seemed to reflect those of his society in general: both seeking to overcome the notion of a severely limited Victorian ideal but neither quite ready for full equality.

NATURAL VS. SUPERNATURAL

It's impossible to discuss *The Hound of the Baskervilles* without engaging, in some way, with a debate between the natural world and a possibly unseen, supernatural one. The titular hound, after all, is believed to have come from Hell in pursuit of a Baskerville who sold his soul to the Devil. Furthermore, Doyle himself, both a devoted spiritualist (someone who believes that the human soul lives on after death and can be communicated with through a medium) and scientist, was embroiled in real-life debates about the existence of ghosts. He even believed that his own house was haunted by the ghost of a young boy who died there. But whereas other writers of the time used supernatural elements in their writing—such as Oscar Wilde in *The Canterville Ghost* or Henry James in *The Jolly Corner*—while still managing to retain a certain level of ambivalence regarding their belief in the supernatural, the spiritualist Doyle presents his paranormal hound entirely as a kind of hustle designed to cover the commission of a crime. This isn't to suggest that Doyle thought *all* spiritualism was fraudulent—far from it. Rather, Doyle is suggesting that a belief in the otherworldly should only come after *all* empirical avenues have been explored—to behave otherwise would be quite dangerous.

Doyle recognizes early on that humans have a tendency to quickly, even lazily, attribute inexplicable occurrences to the supernatural rather than doing the work of explaining them. Dr. Mortimer, who Holmes points out is a man who has dedicated his young life to science, is thoroughly convinced that the hound of the Baskervilles is a spectral hound that has come from Hell to destroy the Baskerville family. Mortimer believes this, even though he has seen the hound's footprints and admits that the moor is full of large dogs (used by the residents for herding sheep). Despite his skepticism of Mortimer's claims, and his general reliance on science and reason, even Holmes admits that there is such a thing as the devil, though he says he would be surprised if such a being bothered taking part in human affairs. It is precisely this willingness to believe in a supernatural basis for the Baskerville deaths that Jack Stapleton depends on to hide his crime. That is, Stapleton exploits the tendency to explain through the supernatural towards a murderous end.

Stapleton does more than exploit fear of the supernatural to cover up his crime, however. He actually uses that fear in the commission of the crime. Neither of the hound's victims, Sir Charles Baskerville and the escaped convict Selden, are killed by the hound itself or even by Stapleton. Instead, they are killed out of their own fear of the hound. Sir Charles dies as a result of a heart attack while running in fear. Selden also dies as a result of a fall, which occurred as a result of running in fear. While it is natural that both men would fear a large dog chasing them, Holmes points out that their fear was worse than that normal fear might be: it was a fear approaching madness. They were brought to this level of fear through Jack Stapleton's artifice, the painting of the hound's mouth and eyes with phosphorous to make it appear spectral and otherworldly. So, in reality, both men died of fright as a result of their belief in the hound's hellish origins.

Recognizing the danger inherent in such easy turns to the supernatural, Holmes says that should he and Watson find themselves "dealing with forces outside the ordinary laws of Nature, there is an end to our investigation. But we are bound to exhaust all other hypotheses before falling back on this one." Had they failed to investigate other avenues, Sir Henry Baskerville would be dead. Stapleton, the only remaining heir to the Baskerville fortune, would then take his place, becoming a rich man—as well as a murderer.

Doyle himself fell victim of the dangers of an easy belief in spiritualism. His belief in the otherworldly had greatly injured his reputation in society (as much as declaring a belief in ghosts would do to one's reputation today). Of the four novels that Doyle published featuring Holmes, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is the only one to take a supernatural theme. It's possible that Doyle wished to address the subject openly, making it clear that he believed in science and rationality above all else. That *Hound* remains the most beloved and well-known of the collection, however, is a testament to how much the supernatural still captures readers' imaginations—and perhaps how quick people are to fall into its fallacies.

CRIMINAL NATURE VS. CRIMINAL NURTURE

Dr. Mortimer, the young man who first introduces

Watson and Holmes to the Baskerville case, is a proponent of a school of quasi-medical thought known as phrenology. Phrenology is the belief that characteristics about a person can be determined through exacting measurement and observation of their skull. The central tenet of such a belief is that there exists a biological basis for all behavior that predetermines the way that one acts (as opposed to behavior being formed through one's upbringing and history, the "nurture" one received in life). That is, according to phrenology, criminals have a distinctly criminal type of skull that can be known, classified, and identified. While the phrenological school of thought had its moment in time, that moment had already passed by the time of Doyle's writing. The debate of whether or not behavior was formed by nature or nurture, however, was alive and heated; indeed, it was in the late Victorian era that the term "nature vs. nurture" was first popularized. Through Mortimer, Holmes, and the criminals of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Doyle illustrates his stance on the subject: he places criminality as being firmly the result of nurture and not inherent through nature.

This is seen most clearly in the case of Selden. Selden is the only person who the reader knows, all along, is a criminal. He is both a murderer and an escaped convict. Watson blatantly refers to him as "one of the most notorious criminals in the country." Yet, despite this fact, Selden's sister—Mrs. Barrymore—is a kindhearted woman who has served the Baskerville family notably for years and been a good wife to her husband, Mr. Barrymore. Were Selden's criminality biological, one would expect Mrs. Barrymore to show it as well, since the two share the same blood. Instead, Mrs. Barrymore confirms that it was Selden's upbringing that spoiled him. The child was "humored" too much, and he was raised in such a way that the world belonged to him, and he could do whatever he wanted. This poor upbringing led him to associate with others like him, which in turn made his behavior increasingly worse, until he was a fully-fledged criminal.

The Baskervilles, too, show that criminality is strictly a result of societal factors. Hugo Baskerville, one of the earliest Baskerville progenitors, was a rogue who killed a woman when she tried to escape him. He had planned to rape and imprison her—the crime that provided the essential source of the Baskerville curse. Sir Charles Baskerville and Sir Henry Baskerville, however, are both charitable, mild-mannered men. Furthermore, the only other remaining Baskerville, James Desmond, is described as living a "saintly life" as a perish clergymen. Desmond is so saintly, in fact, that he refuses any money from the Baskerville estate whatsoever.

But if Mortimer's phrenology were correct, then none of the above relationships could be true. Most importantly, Stapleton could not be the mastermind behind the Baskerville plot. As Stapleton is himself a Baskerville, and we know the Baskervilles to *generally* be good, solid people.

It's important to note that, while the story clearly points to a societal reason for behavior, it nevertheless fails to prescribe any sort of solution for how such criminality might be avoided in future generations. This is in stark contrast to many other writers (such as Charles Dickens) who came to the same conclusions on the same debate, and used their writing as a kind of political platform to suggest change. This may indicate that Doyle did indeed see criminal behavior as a result of failed nurture, but he also saw that failure to nurture as being inevitable. That is, regardless of how well-intentioned society might be in overseeing its children, some would probably always slip through the cracks.

THE SUPERIORITY OF URBAN LIFE

Baskerville Hall forms the gateway between the aristocratic, orderly world of the Baskerville family—who are far more at home in sleek, urban London—and the untamed, even dangerous world of the moor. Through this liminality, the unruliness of the moor comes to infest the tidy world of the hall with its primitive ideas about ghostly, cursed hounds and the crude greed that drives the murder plot. That is, the moor contributes nothing good to life at Baskerville Hall: it only detracts from it and enables murder and secrecy. This negativity shows Doyle's clear preference for city life, which—though cramped and frantic—he finds far more appropriate for modern man.

Perhaps the most bizarre pieces of evidence for this claim comes not from Baskerville Hall or the moors, but rather in the form of Sherlock Holmes, who finds himself only able to think when in the close atmospheres of confined quarters. Holmes is at once the most brilliant man in the story (and possibly the story's world, if the dialogue of Dr. Mortimer is to be believed) and a firm believer in science and rationality. Doyle is a firm believer that these are the best qualities for a modern man. Yet, Holmes is only able to really utilize his abilities when surrounded by smoke and cramped into his apartment. He claims that he's even gone to the lengths of confining himself to a box when his small flat proved too expansive. These cramped, smoked-filled conditions necessary to Holmes' process were the very essence of London-life during both Holmes and Doyle's time. They exist in strong juxtaposition to the expansive, empty space of the moors.

The moors, of course, provide plenty of evidence, too. They are, put simply, quite dangerous. To navigate the moors, one has to have specialized knowledge, lest they find themselves mired in quicksand. Even animals, who have a natural instinct about the wild (and twice as many legs with which to navigate it), find themselves often lost in these pits. Indeed, even Jack Stapleton, the one character who has the knowledge necessary to navigate the quicksand, is killed by the moors when he attempts to navigate them in the fog. In contrast, while London streets may be dangerous, that's only because of the people

there. The streets themselves won't swallow a person whole the way the moor can. What's more, the moors enable a level of secrecy that's impossible in London. When Holmes and Watson are being trailed in the London streets, they discover it immediately. Though their shadow manages to escape them, the mechanization of London life allows the detectives to find the cab driver that the shadow hired and thus discover more about the man himself. By way of comparison, both Selden and Holmes manage to stalk the moors virtually unseen for weeks. Indeed, Stapleton himself manages to hide a monstrous dog there, and enact his complex murder plot, all without being seen or suspected. This would be entirely impossible in London, where someone is always around and all the land is developed.

It's important that, though Baskerville Hall has been a liminal space for some five centuries, it seems to have had little impact on the moor itself (whereas the moor has infiltrated it handily). What seems wanting is money—which, at the story's end, Sir Henry Baskerville has in spades. This influx of capital will allow the hall to become a glorious and modern place, which the moor's residents in turn hope will serve as an example for both its current residents and any newcomers inspired to move there by the moor's shifts in fortune. That is to say, Sir Henry hopes to infiltrate the moor in order to convert it into an entirely urban space, replicating the London atmosphere of which he's so fond, in this way destroying its liminality altogether.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

THE WALKING STICK

When Dr. Mortimer accidentally leaves his walking stick in front of Sherlock Holmes' apartment on Baker Street, Holmes and Watson treat the instrument as a kind of diary from which to read the history of Mortimer's life. The walking stick represents the way that people leave very deep, revealing traces of themselves wherever they go, which can make people vulnerable. Through careful analysis of the walking stick, Holmes is able to discover much about Mortimer: that he is a doctor, for instance—though an unambitious one—and that he is well-liked. Holmes also deduces that Mortimer owns a dog and walks great distances. Holmes is participating in an early form of what is today called forensics, the use of scientific methods and thinking in discovering something hidden (often the source of a crime).

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Borzoi edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles, A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four* published in 2014.

Chapter 1 Quotes

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who was usually very late in the mornings, save upon those not infrequent occasions when he stayed up all night, was seated at the breakfast-table. I stood upon the hearthrug and picked up the stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Dr. James Mortimer, Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 249

Explanation and Analysis

As the story opens, Holmes and Watson discuss the walking stick left behind by Dr. James Mortimer. These are the very first lines of the book. They're important not because of what they say about Holmes but rather because of what they don't say: there's no long, drawn-out discussion about who Holmes is, who Watson is, why they live together, or what they do. Instead, Doyle jumpstarts the story with a series of clever deductions Holmes makes. Doyle is able to do this for the simple fact that Holmes and Watson are already famous characters in Doyle's England (and abroad) who need no introduction. Indeed, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* would have been highly sought out by Holmes' fans, as Doyle had killed Holmes off in a short story years ago.

Really, Watson, you excel yourself [...] It may be that you are not yourself luminous, but you are a conductor of light. Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating. I confess, my dear fellow, that I am very much in your debt.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Dr. James Mortimer, Dr. John Watson

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 250

Explanation and Analysis

Dr. John Watson has just finished his analysis of the stick—using, at Holmes' request, Holmes' own method of deduction. While Watson has created a believable story as to who might own the stick, Holmes is quick to point out that it is a fallacious one. Watson has missed several clues and misinterpreted others.

This conversation between Holmes and Watson is typical of their relationship. Watson positively adores Holmes and seeks to emulate the detective in most aspects of his life, but he can never quite do it right. Holmes, though he considers Watson a dear friend, doesn't seem to recognize this and often mocks Watson for his failures. Even when he compliments the other man, it's backhandedly. The same is true in this passage, as Holmes asserts that his successes are made possible by watching Watson fail.

Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ Such is the tale, my sons, of the coming of the hound which is said to have plagued the family so sorely ever since. If I have set it down it is because that which is clearly known hath less terror than that which is but hinted at and guessed.

Related Characters: Dr. James Mortimer (speaker), Dr. John Watson, Sherlock Holmes, Sir Charles Baskerville, Sir Henry Baskerville

Related Themes:

Page Number: 260

Explanation and Analysis

Mortimer is reading the manuscript entrusted to him by Sir Charles Baskerville, which tells the legend of the hound of the Baskervilles and how it came to be. He is relating this story to both Holmes and Watson so that they might advise him regarding the anticipated arrival of Sir Charles' heir, Sir Henry. There is some irony in the idea that a terror known is less terrifying than one only guessed at. After all, by the story's end it's realized that there is no hound of the Baskervilles at all. Yet this document, which sought to abate terror, instead allowed it by creating a supernatural avenue for Stapleton to enact his murderous plot.

❝ Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!

Related Characters: Dr. James Mortimer (speaker), Sir Charles Baskerville, Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 265

Explanation and Analysis

Dr. James Mortimer has just finished relaying the story of Sir Charles' death to Holmes and Watson. His story differs from the official newspaper account because it includes this fact about the footprints, which Mortimer kept to himself for fear of causing a panic. This quote is important for a few reasons. Mortimer doling out information when and to whom he sees fit seems suspicious—the kind of a thing a murderer would do if we wanted to avoid giving the full picture to someone. Even if he's not a suspect, though, it's telling that Mortimer is so easily wrapped up in the idea of the supernatural, despite his lifelong dedication to science.

In addition, these words come at the very end of the second chapter, and it's good to remember that *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was originally published chapter-by-chapter in a magazine. Though readers today can easily move to the next chapter by simply turning a page, contemporary readers would have had to wait some time to learn more about Mortimer's discovery.

Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ I find that before the terrible event occurred several people had seen a creature upon the moor which corresponds with this Baskerville demon, and which could not possibly be an animal known to science. They all agreed that it was a huge creature, luminous, ghastly, and spectral.

Related Characters: Dr. James Mortimer (speaker), Sir Charles Baskerville, Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 268

Explanation and Analysis

Sherlock Holmes has just expressed his shock that Mortimer, a man of science, should be so taken in by the legend of the supernatural hound. Mortimer responds that he's a bit shocked himself, but that he can't account for some aspects of what's happening—like the reports from his neighbors about a large, hellish dog. It's shocking how easily people in the story tend towards believing in the

supernatural, as Mortimer does here and Watson will shortly. This is a testament to the power of supernatural belief, certainly, but there's also something here about the ability of agrarian landscapes to instill beliefs that would be impossible in an urban setting. All of the moors inhabitants claim to have seen a ghastly dog (and, of course, they did), but it seems much harder to believe that a similar reporting would take place in a city environment.

> My first impression as I opened the door was that a fire had broken out, for the room was so filled with smoke that the light of the lamp upon the table was blurred by it.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 271

Explanation and Analysis

Sherlock Holmes has asked Watson, as well as Sir Henry and Mortimer, to leave him alone for a bit so that he can ponder the case. To facilitate his thought process, he orders a pound of tobacco and proceeds to smoke it—all of it. This results in his Baker Street apartment being completely overcome with smoke. This whimsical moment offers some insight into Holmes' thought process. He works in the singular, observing one clue at a time and exhausting all possibilities from it before moving on to the next. By filling the room with smoke and keeping in close confines, he is able to avoid any distractions that would keep him from this thought process. In turn, when it comes time to deduce a course of events from a series of clues, Holmes is less likely to make the kinds of fanciful missteps that Watson did, for instance, regarding the walking stick.

Chapter 4 Quotes

> Really, Mr. Holmes, this exceeds anything which I could have imagined [...] I could understand anyone saying that the words were from a newspaper; but that you should name which, and add that it came from the leading article, is really one of the most remarkable things which I have ever known.

Related Characters: Sir Henry Baskerville (speaker), Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 277

Explanation and Analysis

Sherlock Holmes has just discovered the exact newspaper article from which the threatening letter to Sir Henry was constructed. He's done this only moments after reading the letter for the first time, such that even Watson is taken aback. Here, Sir Henry expresses his awe in Holmes' abilities. Even as a fictional character, Holmes' abilities are a bit fantastic—and they have a secondary effect of ensuring confidence in those who witness them. It's clear to the reader (as it surely is to Sir Henry) that if Holmes can unravel this strange letter in mere seconds, he can unravel the whole mystery in no time at all. This, indeed, is probably true: which is why Holmes is about to exit the story shortly and remain hidden for the majority of it thereafter.

> We are dealing with a clever man, Watson.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Jack Stapleton, Dr. John Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 283

Explanation and Analysis

Jack Stapleton has just eluded Holmes and Watson, who discovered him spying on Sir Henry and Mortimer. Holmes is impressed that Stapleton (who he knows at this point only as a mysterious bearded man) had the presence of mind to hire a cab rather than following the group on foot. The cab would enable Stapleton to flee much more quickly if discovered, as he does when Holmes spots him.

In order for the story to create drama and intensity, it needs someone who can match Holmes' incredible detective skills with equally exceptional criminal prowess. Otherwise, the case would be open and shut, and the book dull and procedural. Doyle creates this criminal mastermind mostly by suggestion: he involves Stapleton in the plot only marginally for most of the work, as with this cab chase, and instead supplies his readers with a series of red herrings.

Chapter 5 Quotes

Sir Charles had a reputation for being rich, but we did not know how very rich he was until we came to examine his securities. The total value of the estate was close to a million.

Related Characters: Dr. James Mortimer (speaker), Sir Henry Baskerville, Sir Charles Baskerville

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 290

Explanation and Analysis

Dr. James Mortimer has just informed Sir Henry of the immense fortune that he's about to receive, adding in the process that Sir Charles left one-thousand pounds to both Mortimer and the Barrymores as well. Holmes feels (understandably) that this inheritance is the motivation for the murderer.

Sir Charles and Hugo Baskerville both come from the same bloodline. However, where Hugo is willing to throw away both his life and soul on a momentary, evil whim, Sir Charles manages to die a millionaire. He does this by making careful investments abroad, making a disciplined end to those investments before they became gambling, and then carefully investing his money back home. This is as sure a marker as any as to the role of nature and nurture in the book.

It might interest you to know that you have been driving Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

Related Characters: Jack Stapleton (speaker), Sir Henry Baskerville, Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 294

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes and Watson have just finished interviewing the cab driver who had been taxiing the mysterious bearded man around. The driver informed them that the man gave his name as none other than Sherlock Holmes. This bit of deceit convinces Holmes that they're dealing with a shrewd, bold criminal. If Stapleton—who, of course, is the bearded man—doesn't seem to be particularly clever for having thought to call himself Holmes, he is at least quite daring. This is the first of many instances where Stapleton shows no fear whatsoever of interacting with Holmes and Watson.

This is remarkably bold indeed, given the immense prowess Holmes has already shown to this point (and which contemporary fans would have supplemented with his formidable successes in previous mysteries).

Chapter 6 Quotes

In a very few hours the brown earth had become ruddy, the brick had changed to granite, and red cows grazed in well-hedged fields where the lush grasses and more luxuriant vegetation spoke of a richer, if damper climate.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 298

Explanation and Analysis

Dr. John Watson, along with Sir Henry and Mortimer, are travelling to Baskerville Hall from London. The ride takes a long time and involves several modes of transportation, with the landscape changing slowly as the group progresses. The trip is decidedly one through space. However, as witnessed in this passage, it is also one through time. As the group leaves London, the massive urban buildup gives way to larger houses and open tracts of land, eventually ending in just land. It's as though the group has travelled centuries back to a time before London became settled and was still an open area. This time travel seems to enable an equal devolution in belief, as the rationality of the Baker Street flat is replaced by the far older, more superstitious beliefs of the countryside—beliefs that suggest, for instance, that something like the hound of the Baskervilles could exist.

I remembered the case well, for it was one in which Holmes had taken an interest on account of the peculiar ferocity of the crime and the wanton brutality which had marked all the actions of the assassin.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Sherlock Holmes, Selden

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 300

Explanation and Analysis

Just before arriving at Baskerville Hall for the first time,

Watson and company encounter a series of heavily-armed soldiers. They're looking for Selden, the convict who escaped recently from a nearby prison. Watson does his best to recall Selden's case, as he knows something about it. Certainly Doyle intends to establish Selden as a red herring in these moments: after all, he's a verified killer running amok in the midst of a murder investigation. However, this feels a bit too easy, and it's not certain that all readers would fall for the idea that Selden—a ferocious madman—would be capable of the subtlety that Holmes has so far identified in the crime. Selden does, however, provide a nice foil for Jack Stapleton. He makes Stapleton appear to be more of the criminal mastermind that Holmes expects simply by being such a common, boorish cutthroat.

Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ Already round this pale-faced, handsome, black-bearded man there was gathering an atmosphere of mystery and of gloom.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore

Related Themes:

Page Number: 306

Explanation and Analysis

On his first night at Baskerville Hall, Watson overhears a woman crying and realizes that it must be Mrs. Barrymore. When asked, however, Mr. Barrymore denies this—even though his wife shows visible signs of having been weeping. This makes Watson very suspicious of Barrymore. As with the walking stick, Watson here shows his tendency to take one piece of information and run with it, supporting his deductions with assumptions and emotion rather than fact. Watson feels a natural protectiveness over Mrs. Barrymore (though she clearly does not need his protection), which in turn engenders a resentment towards Mr. Barrymore. Yet, just as with the stick, Watson has no reason to think that Barrymore is abusive towards his wife other than that it is a possible explanation that fits his suspicions.

❝ The Mire has him. Two in two days, and many more, perhaps, for they get in the way of going there in the dry weather, and never know the difference until the Mire has them in its clutch. It's a bad place, the great Grimpen Mire.

Related Characters: Jack Stapleton (speaker), Dr. John Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 311

Explanation and Analysis

Watson has just met Jack Stapleton, and the two are travelling together to Stapleton's house, so that Watson might meet Beryl Stapleton. On the way, Stapleton points out some features of the moors, including the great Grimpen Mire—a kind of swampland with quicksand-like marshes capable of swallowing whole ponies whole, as the two men witness here. This is at once another demonstration of Stapleton's boldness, as witnessed by his actively soliciting Watson, as well as a demonstration of the superiority of urban living. Though the city might be smoke-filled, close-quartered, and stifling, it is at least largely knowable. One knows, for instance, that the streets will not turn into quicksand because the weather had been a bit wet. Doyle also engages in a bit of foreshadowing here, as the pony in this scene meets the same fate that Stapleton does at the story's end.

Chapter 8 Quotes

❝ He is much attached to her, no doubt, and would lead a lonely life without her, but it would seem the height of selfishness, if he were to stand in the way of her making so brilliant a marriage.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Sir Henry Baskerville, Jack Stapleton, Beryl Stapleton

Related Themes:

Page Number: 320

Explanation and Analysis

Watson is contemplating the strange resistance that Jack Stapleton has to the idea of Beryl and Sir Henry's romance. He accepts that, though Jack might be lonely at his sister's leaving, he certainly couldn't object to her being married to such a kind and fabulously rich man as Sir Henry is. While signaling heavily towards his red herrings, this is one of the few moments wherein Doyle allows something suspicious to arise about Stapleton, the story's criminal mastermind. Watson makes a keen psychiatric observation here: Stapleton's obsession with Beryl isn't one borne out of love.

Rather, it's one created by the man's desire to possess Beryl completely, allowing no other man to have access to her. This desire is at least partially due to Beryl's usefulness to Jack: she simply serves as an object who can help him advance his murderous plans.

❝ Some deep sorrow gnaws ever at her heart. Sometimes I wonder if she has a guilty memory which haunts her, and sometimes I suspect Barrymore of being a domestic tyrant. I have always felt there was something singular and questionable in this man's character [...].

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Selden, Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore

Related Themes:

Page Number: 323

Explanation and Analysis

Watson, who has not yet discovered the truth behind the Barrymores' strange behavior, continues to suspect Mr. Barrymore of criminal intent—at least on the level of domestic abuse, if not murder outright. Here, he again emotionally bonds with Mrs. Barrymore while further vilifying her husband. Watson's reaction to the behavior of the Barrymores, when juxtaposed to his thoughts on Stapleton's odd reactions earlier in the chapter, show just how intent Doyle is at pushing his readers towards his red herrings. Stapleton's behavior is excused as eccentric; Mr. Barrymore's, however, surely suggests some kind of evil intent. This serves as another prime example of Watson letting his emotions get the better of his reason.

Chapter 9 Quotes

❝ She kept coming back to it that this was a place of danger, and that she would never be happy until I had left it.

Related Characters: Sir Henry Baskerville (speaker), Dr. John Watson, Beryl Stapleton

Related Themes:

Page Number: 330

Explanation and Analysis

Sir Henry has been strongly rebuked by Jack Stapleton for his advances towards Beryl. What's more, Beryl hasn't been particularly receptive to them either, despite the obvious fondness she bears for the man. Sir Henry is explaining all of this to Watson, along with Beryl's particular concern that the only happiness Sir Henry can bring her is in leaving the dangers of Baskerville Hall.

To some degree, Beryl has to accept Sir Henry's advances in order to make it seem plausible that she is Jack's sister and not his wife. In that sense, her actions can be seen as aiding Jack. However, her multiple and clear admonishments that he should leave the moor are exactly the opposite of what Jack would want, and she places herself at great person risk by warning Sir Henry. While Beryl may be somewhat attracted to Sir Henry, he is essentially a complete stranger, and it is a testament to Beryl's strength of character that she puts herself in so much danger on his behalf.

❝ Oh, John, John, have I brought you to this? It is my doing, Sir Henry—all mine. He has done nothing except for my sake, and because I asked him.

Related Characters: Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore (speaker), Selden, Sir Henry Baskerville

Related Themes:

Page Number: 334

Explanation and Analysis

Sir Henry and Watson have discovered Mr. Barrymore signaling out to Selden on the moor. Barrymore refuses to explain himself to the two men—even after Sir Henry threatens to (and does) fire him. When Mrs. Barrymore realizes what is happening, she intervenes to save the situation. Though Mr. Barrymore shows a great deal of strength himself, it is mostly Mrs. Barrymore that shines in this passage. She has at once to recognize twin and competing allegiances that she holds: the first to her brother, the second to her husband. Though the emotional, familial bond with her brother is a strong one, it takes her no time at all to decide that her husband is more important to her. Thus, she makes the decisive move to give Selden up to save her family that Mr. Barrymore could not.

Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ There is the death of the last occupant of the Hall, fulfilling so exactly the conditions of the family legend, and there are the repeated reports of...a strange creature upon the moor. Twice I have heard [...] the distant baying of a hound.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 341

Explanation and Analysis

Watson, corresponding with Holmes, talks about the oddity of the case and the difficult time he's had reconciling all of its components. Clearly he is beginning to doubt a natural explanation and be swayed by a supernatural one. One could read this both as a function of Watson's time in the country slowly attacking his rationality and as a function of Watson's time away from Holmes doing the same. Regardless, the result is the same: Watson, despite all of his training in rationality and detective work, cannot resist coming around to the belief that the hound is real. This is particularly interesting given his quote: Sir Charles' death does fulfill exactly the requirements of the legend. This might be because the hound is real—or because the person commissioning the crime is intimately familiar with the legend.

❝ Her father refused to have anything to do with her, because she had married without his consent, and perhaps for one or two other reasons as well.

Related Characters: Dr. James Mortimer (speaker), Dr. John Watson, Laura Lyons

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 347

Explanation and Analysis

Watson has just been told by Mr. Barrymore about the meeting arranged by "L.L" and is seeking to discover who L.L. might be. Mortimer suggests that it might be Laura Lyons, and offers up some of the woman's history to Watson. Mortimer focuses on her "fallenness"—the fact that she married without consent and probably as a result of premarital sex. Despite the negative connotations surrounding the talk of Lyons' life, it can't be denied that she is making ends meet through her own industriousness. Society has turned its back on her, as witnessed in Mortimer's refusal to even discuss the reasons for Lyons' estrangement from her father, but nevertheless she soldiers on.

Chapter 11 Quotes

❝ Mrs. Lyons [...] you are taking a very great responsibility and putting yourself in a very false position by not making an absolutely clean breast of all you know. If I have to call in the aid of the police you will find how seriously you are compromised.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Jack Stapleton, Laura Lyons

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 354

Explanation and Analysis

Watson has gone to meet Laura Lyons to see what he can determine about her meeting with Sir Charles Baskerville. Lyons at first dissembles, but when it's clear that Watson knows about the meeting she eventually comes clean. Still, there are elements she won't disclose—such as Stapleton's involvement—despite Watson's strong threats. It's interesting that Lyons, who experienced such a destructive ending from her previous dabbling with love, is so quick to shelter Stapleton. But she recognizes in him a way out of her current existence—self-made as it is—and back into the world of respectability and comfort. She impressively stands up to the intimidating Watson in order to protect that pathway and all of its possibilities.

❝ It is a lovely evening, my dear Watson [...] I really think that you will be more comfortable outside than in.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Dr. John Watson

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 362

Explanation and Analysis

Watson has finally discovered the hiding place of the mysterious man on the moor and has camped there for hours, waiting for the man's return. He does not, in this exact moment, discover that it is Holmes, and the reader is instead left at another cliff-hanger, knowing only that the mystery man has the advantage of knowing Watson's name.

Although it's not clear that Holmes is about to enter, this is nevertheless another key indicator of the type of person Holmes is. He has used Watson as a pawn and possibly put him in danger for the sake of solving the case, and when Watson finally discovers him, Holmes treats his friend as

casually as though they had planned to have dinner together. Shortly, he will repeat the same sort of backhanded compliments that he gave Watson at Baker Street.

Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ The gleam of the match which he struck shone upon his clotted fingers and upon the ghastly pool which widened slowly from the crushed skull of the victim. And it shone upon something else which turned our hearts sick and faint within us—the body of Sir Henry Baskerville!

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Selden, Sherlock Holmes, Sir Henry Baskerville

Related Themes:

Page Number: 369

Explanation and Analysis

While comparing notes on the case outside of the primitive huts, Holmes and Watson are surprised by the familiar baying of the hound very nearby. Both men jump to action, convinced that Sir Henry is in danger, and run to the sound. Here, they discover a body they initially believe to be Sir Henry's, but which is discovered to be Selden's. Up until now, much of the storytelling has been a retrospective reporting of Watson's activities and thoughts on the case—not boring, because it moves quickly and directly engages the mystery, but at best sedentary. Doyle deftly yanks his audience to their feet in this moment, however, imbibing the scene with tension, fear, and heartbreak all in the matter of a few sentences. It is with a genuine (and surprising, given that someone is still dead) sense of relief that Holmes and Watson discover their mistake.

❝ One cannot always have the success for which one hopes. An investigator needs facts, and not legends or rumors. It has not been a satisfactory case.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Dr. John Watson, Jack Stapleton

Related Themes:

Page Number: 373

Explanation and Analysis

Moments after Holmes and Watson discover Selden's body, Stapleton approaches the scene, ostensibly to gloat over his success. He's surprised to discover Watson there, and he recognizes Holmes immediately. The three discuss the convict's death, as well as Holmes' progress on the case. Holmes, believing Stapleton to be the killer, acts as though he's had little success with the case and plans to give it up, returning to London.

Stapleton hasn't been shown to be so bold since those moments in London where he was tracking Sir Henry and company—before Holmes or anyone else knew this was Stapleton. While he was expecting to find the mangled body of Sir Henry when he stumbled upon Holmes and Watson, he does an admirable job of hiding his reaction. He plays this encounter off quite coolly, giving the two men no reason to suspect him. Holmes also shows himself up to the job, concocting his story of leaving for London on the fly. This will, unfortunately, be the only time that the criminal mastermind and the great detective meet.

Chapter 13 Quotes

❝ That's lucky for him—in fact, it's lucky for all of you, since you are all on the wrong side of the law in this matter. I am not sure that as a conscientious detective my first duty is not to arrest the whole household.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Selden, Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore

Related Themes:

Page Number: 377

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes and Watson have just arrived at Baskerville Hall to report the death of Selden. While there's some disconcertion on the part of the Barrymores, the feeling is generally one of relief. There is some small concern, however, that the clothing that Selden is wearing might lead investigators back to Sir Henry. Sir Henry says that none of the clothing is marked as his, and this is Holmes' response. It's a testament to the moor's ability to make people think and act strangely that Holmes has to point this out at all. While Mrs. Barrymore at least has emotions hindering her reasoning, none of the party have any good reason for allowing a murder convicted of particular savagery to freely roam the countryside. Yet, all of them seem to have come to a tacit agreement that it's fine: perhaps because they've also tacitly agreed that there's something far worse on the

moor—the hound.

Yes, it is an interesting instance of a throwback, which appears to be both physical and spiritual. A study of family portraits is enough to convert a man to the doctrine of reincarnation. The fellow is a Baskerville—that is evident.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Jack Stapleton

Related Themes:

Page Number: 379

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes explores Baskerville Hall and, because he has an amateur's interest in art, settles on the family portraits. His detective training, however, is not amateur, and he quickly picks out a face resembling Jack Stapleton amidst the centuries worth of portraits. Once certain features of the painting are obscured, such as the hat, everyone agrees that the likeness is nearly exact. Of course, the painting Holmes has centered on is that of Hugo Baskerville.

Reincarnation, the belief that the souls of the dead can return to live new lives in new bodies, is an exacting choice of words for Holmes. What he is contesting is not that Jack Stapleton has a familial resemblance to Hugo Baskerville, or that he has some of the traits of Hugo Baskerville: he is suggesting that Stapleton is Hugo Baskerville, born again. This is a bit of hyperbole on Holmes' part, since he doesn't actually believe that Stapleton is Hugo reincarnated. Rather, he feels that Stapleton represents the evil of Hugo Baskerville brought back into the world.

Chapter 14 Quotes

The great ordeal was in front of us; at last we were about to make our final effort, and yet Holmes had said nothing, and I could only surmise what his course of action would be.

Related Characters: Dr. John Watson (speaker), Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 387

Explanation and Analysis

At last, Holmes has everything he needs to confront Stapleton and bring him to justice. Yet, he hasn't told Watson or their newfound partner Lestrand anything about how this will be accomplished. Watson laments this, even as the group approaches Stapleton's home. Holmes' self-assuredness shines through here, as it has throughout. He doesn't feel the need to tell his colleagues what they're doing, because he already knows that it will all work out. Or, at least, he thinks he does: Holmes' plan is almost ruined twice. First, by the strange fog that rolls in just as they are about to spring their trap, and second by the shock that they all feel as the great hound rushes past them with flaming eyes and mouth. In this sense, his confidence is almost their downfall, but it all works out for the best in the end.

I said it in London, Watson, and I say it again now, that never have we helped to hunt down a more dangerous man than he who is lying yonder.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Jack Stapleton, Dr. John Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 396

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes, Watson, and Lestrand have successfully saved both Sir Henry Baskerville and Beryl Stapleton from Jack Stapleton. While they were not able to bring the man in, they have ample reason to believe that he has met his death in the swamps of the Grimpen Mire. Holmes confirms again to Watson that Jack Stapleton represented his greatest challenge. For all the work that Holmes does to elevate Stapleton to his own level, it can be difficult to understand the comparison. Stapleton is only a minor character for much of the work, appearing only briefly. When he does, he's often a kind of bumbler: chasing after a butterfly, jumping up and down because a man is talking to his sister, and so forth. These are the public-facing sides of Jack Stapleton that he allows everyone to see. It's easy enough to forget that, when Holmes references the dangerous man of Jack Stapleton, he is referring to an individual rather alien to Stapleton the bumbler.

The dangerous Stapleton bought a dog and trained it, then starved it, with the intention of killing his elderly neighbor—with whom he was friends. The dangerous Stapleton made his wife pretend to be his sister for years and beat her savagely. The dangerous Stapleton directly played a game of cat and mouse with the world's foremost

detective. Stapleton did all this while maintaining,

believably, the disguise of a simple country naturalist.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

Sherlock Holmes, a famous private detective, is sitting in his Baker Street apartment with Dr. John Watson. They are looking at a **walking stick** that has been left behind by an unknown visitor the night before. Holmes hopes that he can determine something about the visitor based on the scant evidence provided by the walking stick.

The Hound of the Baskervilles, the most beloved of the Holmes stories, was actually written at the height of Holmes' popularity. As such, Doyle doesn't need to waste time introducing his characters, since his readers already know all about them.

The **stick** has a small dedicatory plaque on it that reads, "To James Mortimer, M.R.C.S., from his friends of the C.C.H." alongside a date. Holmes asks Watson to "reconstruct" the visitor they've missed. From the amount of wear and tear on the stick, Watson believes that Mortimer is an elderly country doctor who does most of his travelling by foot.

M.R.C.S. means "Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons." It's a degree that certifies Mortimer in a specific type of surgery, but not for general practice. Though he's often referred to as "Doctor," Mortimer is careful to mention that he's "only" an M.R.C.S.

Watson also notes that Mortimer must be esteemed by his colleagues, because the **walking stick** is well-made and expensive-looking, and the plaque is made of silver. He believes that "C.C.H." probably refers to a local hunting club (the "H" being "Hunt") that Mortimer assisted at some point.

Watson's deduction that the "H" in "C.C.H." stands for hunt doesn't make much sense—there's no evidence to back it up. The flimsy deduction is based entirely on Watson's belief that Mortimer is a country doctor.

Holmes congratulates Watson on his deductions, telling him that he has constantly underrated himself. Holmes says that he is very much in Watson's debt. Watson, who narrates the encounter, remarks at the pleasure that this rare praise from Holmes causes him.

Watson's desire to please Holmes is a constant motivation for him, and he dreads failing Holmes in any way.

The moment is short-lived, however, as Holmes quickly points out that Watson was wrong about most of his deductions. Holmes was in Watson's debt not because of Watson's great skill but because, in thinking about how fallacious Watson's thinking was, Holmes was able to properly guide his own thinking.

Holmes is unspeakably cruel to his devoted friend in this moment. It serves as one of many instances where Holmes' hyper-rationality makes him act insensitively in situations that require empathy and care.

Watson was correct, Holmes says, that Mortimer is a practitioner who walks a great deal. However, Holmes thinks it's far more likely that the "H" in "C.C.H." stands for "Hospital." If that's true, then he believes the hospital to be Charing Cross Hospital—an urban institution. Holmes thinks that Mortimer's coworkers gave him the **walking stick** when he decided to leave the hospital and start up his own practice in the country.

Holmes' belief that "H" stands for "Hospital" is based on the fact of Mortimer's advanced medical degree rather than conjecture (as Watson's was). This kind of deduction is Holmes' hallmark. It is always grounded purely in the material facts of a case with no room for imagination, which can quickly lead one astray.

Holmes goes on to suggest that Mortimer could not have been a part of the regular staff of the hospital, since it would be unlikely that someone in such a prestigious position would start up a lowly country practice. Instead, he must have been a house-surgeon or physician—a "senior student." If that's true, then the date on the **stick**, only five years prior, makes Watson's assertion that the doctor was an old man impossible.

In the Victorian era, surgeons were seen as a lower class of medical practitioner because they actually touched the body. Physicians, who simply prescribed medicine, were considered the highest evolution of the career.

Holmes thus posits Mortimer as a "young fellow, under thirty, amiable, unambitious, absent-minded" and, he goes on to add, the owner of a dog—one larger than a terrier but smaller than a mastiff. Holmes gleans this last deduction from the chew marks found here and there on the **stick**. He feels that Mortimer is unambitious because he would not have left the hospital otherwise.

Though it's early on in the book, Mortimer owning a larger dog begins to establish him as a red herring. The book, after all, is called The Hound of the Baskervilles, *and this is the first mention of a hound. What's more, the mention comes as part of a small mystery.*

Watson points out how impossible it is to confirm most of Holmes' suspicions without meeting Mortimer. The professional aspects, though, he can easily check using his medical directory. Sure enough, when Watson consults the book, he finds that Mortimer was indeed a house-surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital some years before.

Indeed, many of the features that Holmes attributes to Mortimer never come to light, as he is—despite this long meditation on him—a quite minor character. Mostly, this moment serves to display Holmes' deductive prowess to the reader.

Holmes looks out the window and gently mocks Watson for his failure to come to the correct conclusions. Holmes goes on to explain in greater depth how he arrived so easily at them. As he's discussing how he deduced that the dog must be between a terrier and a mastiff, Holmes exclaims decidedly that the dog is a curly-haired spaniel. Watson, in exasperation, demands to know how Holmes could possibly know the exact breed of dog. Holmes says that it's simple: he's just seen Mortimer and his dog walk up to the apartment.

It's interesting that Holmes has such an impressive amount of knowledge about dog breeds. This isn't because he's a dog enthusiast, however. Instead, he knows that understanding the bite radius of different dogs might help him solve a case. This is part of what would today be called forensic science, a branch of criminology that was only beginning to gain traction at the time.

Mortimer is relieved to find his **walking stick**, saying that he wouldn't lose it for the world. Holmes questions him to see if his earlier deductions were correct. They were mostly correct, except that Mortimer left Charing Cross Hospital because he got married, not because of a lack of ambition.

Holmes is far more concerned with knowing that he was right about Mortimer than he is about knowing the reason for Mortimer's visit. Coupled with his earlier treatment of Watson, it's easy to see that Holmes is arrogant about his skillful deductive reasoning.

Mortimer says that he knows Holmes and Watson by reputation. He goes on to talk at length about Holmes skull. As a phrenologist, Mortimer is convinced that Holmes' skull must be as unique as the man himself. He even goes so far as to ask Holmes if he can feel his head and possibly even make a cast of it—until the "original is available."

Mortimer's discussion with Holmes is strange and off-putting. While he talks about Holmes with reverence, he also treats him as a kind of object to be studied. This clinical detachment lends to Mortimer's early status as a red herring.

Holmes ignores this banter and asks Mortimer pointedly why he's come. Mortimer responds that it is because, when it comes to being a detective, Holmes has the second greatest scientific mind in the world and the first when it comes to practical matters. Annoyed, Holmes asks who the greatest scientific mind in the world is, to which Mortimer responds Monsieur Bertillon. Holmes crossly suggests that Mortimer get on with his story.

The Bertillon Mortimer refers to is Alphonse Bertillon, a famous French police officer who invented a system of identifying criminals by measuring parts of their body. This system is still partly in use today. Comparing Holmes to a real-world detective makes the story more realistic, just as it is about to take a supernatural turn.

CHAPTER 2

Mortimer produces a manuscript, which he says was created in 1742. It was given to him by Sir Charles Baskerville, who was Mortimer's friend and patient. Mortimer says that Sir Charles was a serious, intelligent man who was not prone to flights of fancy or superstition. Nevertheless, Baskerville was very concerned about the contents of the manuscript.

The introduction of the manuscript marks the story's turn to the gothic. An old, handwritten document from a long-dead relative calls forth images of haunted houses and hauntings into what had been a decidedly rational space.

The document contains a family legend regarding Hugo Baskerville, a wicked, drunken man who kidnapped a young woman from a nearby town with the intent of raping and otherwise brutalizing her at his home of Baskerville Hall. However, before Hugo could have his way with her, the woman escaped.

It's interesting that Doyle chooses to create Hugo Baskerville as such a despicable figure—certainly, no one will have pity for him, and even engendering pity for his innocent descendants might prove difficult.

In a drunken rage, Hugo was said to have made a pact with the devil. He would give the devil his soul if only he could catch the woman before she made it back to town. The devil held up his part of the bargain, and Hugo located and killed the woman before she found safety. Hugo, in turn, was made to pay his dues quite quickly: the legend states that he was found alongside the dead woman, being consumed by a giant hellhound.

Obviously, Hugo had more on his mind than simply catching the girl before he gave the devil his soul. Hugo is such an evil man, however, that it's relieving when the devil manages to dupe him so easily. Here, again, Doyle makes it difficult to feel sympathy for the Baskerville plight.

The legend claims that the hound has terrorized the Baskerville family ever since, often bringing them to bloody ends whenever they've been found alone on the moors outside of Baskerville Hall at night.

Note that this doesn't make sense, really, as both Hugo and the devil fulfilled their part of the bargain. There's no need for the hound to go after other Baskerville family members—and especially not for several generations.

Mortimer then produces a newspaper article describing the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. It says that Sir Charles had only lived at Baskerville Hall for a short time, but that he had quickly become loved by his neighbors due to his philanthropic activities and his desire to use his wealth to improve the Dartmoor moors where Baskerville Hall is located.

The juxtaposition of the antique manuscript with the crisp, modern newsprint further reinforces the weird friction between Holmes' hyper-rational world and the seemingly supernatural mystery he's about to take on.

Regarding Sir Charles' death, the article quotes Mortimer. He says that Sir Charles was in poor health, with a bad heart, but that he nevertheless was in the habit of taking an evening walk with a cigar. When he failed to return from this walk one evening, Mr. Barrymore went out to search for him. Barrymore found Sir Charles' body near the moor gate.

Doyle continues to work at painting Mortimer as a red herring. Mortimer is not only the person supplying Holmes with all of the case's information, he's also supplying the newspaper's information as well. A true criminal would use all of that control to hide evidence and manipulate the case's outcome.

The official explanation for the death was "cardiac exhaustion," which, the article states, has been generally believed—this, in turn, has put an end to rumors that the death was the result of the Baskerville hound. The article ends with the statement that Sir Henry Baskerville, the last known Baskerville heir, has been summoned from America to receive his inheritance and take his place at Baskerville Hall.

It's important to note that the Baskerville curse seems to be well-known amongst neighbors of Baskerville Hall. This means that the locals would attribute Sir Henry's death either to his health or to the hound long before they would ever suspect foul play.

Mortimer adds to the article, saying that Sir Charles had become obsessed with the Baskerville legend and refused utterly to go out onto the moors at night. He adds three things that the newspaper article failed to mention: Sir Charles died with a look of terror on his face; he died while running away from something; and, near Sir Charles' body, Mortimer discovered the footprints of a "gigantic hound."

It's especially advantageous for Mortimer to have discovered the footprints of the gigantic hound by himself. No one else will be able to confirm or deny their existence, and he can claim them to be whatever size he'd like to avoid suspicion about his own dog.

CHAPTER 3

Holmes asks a series of follow-up questions, especially regarding the footprints. He wants to know how many dogs are on the moor generally. Mortimer responds that there are a great many, generally large sheep dogs used in farming. These prints, however, were from an even larger dog.

The Old English Sheepdog is an impressively large dog, weighing up to 100 pounds. However, the dog's long, mop-like coat coupled with its typically bubbly attitude means that it's far from intimidating.

Knowing Mortimer to be a man dedicated to science and medicine, Holmes is taken aback that the doctor seems to believe that a supernatural hound had something to do with the death. Mortimer responds that he doesn't know what to believe, but that his neighbors have all reported seeing a spectral hound with glowing eyes and mouth stalking the moors.

It's particularly telling that Holmes' creator firmly believed in the supernatural elements that Holmes openly mocks here. There's a slight suggestion that Holmes is ignoring these facts of the case because they don't seem rational enough.

Flippantly, Holmes responds that he has often combated evil through his work as a detective, but that combating an actual agent of the devil might be a bit out of his league. He reminds Mortimer, however, that the hound is leaving behind an awful lot of physical evidence, such as footprints, for something supposedly supernatural.

The rules for how a supernatural being would interact with the natural world aren't readily apparent. For instance, it's not clear how the supposedly supernatural hound would harm Sir Charles—aside from giving him a heart attack—if it were unable to do so much as leave footprints in the dirt.

Holmes asks Mortimer why he would consult him at all, if the doctor really believes that Sir Charles' death was brought on by a hound from Hell. If this is true, after all, there's nothing to be done about it. Mortimer replies that he doesn't want Holmes to investigate Sir Charles' death. Rather, he wants Holmes to advise him regarding Sir Henry Baskerville's coming arrival.

Monstrous dogs from the afterlife have appeared in literature since at least Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Greek mythology who made sure that departed souls stayed in the underworld. A similar creature—albeit more horse-like—appears in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre.

Mortimer is worried that whatever happened to Sir Charles will shortly happen to Sir Henry if the young Baskerville is allowed to simply move into Baskerville Hall. Mortimer confirms that Sir Henry is the last surviving Baskerville, largely because every Baskerville who has gone to the Hall has met an evil fate.

The allure to return to the "home of one's fathers" is seemingly so strong that it overrides common sense. If Baskervilles die when they go there, then the obvious solution seems to be for Baskervilles to simply not go there.

Holmes asks Mortimer to bring Sir Henry to the Baker Street apartment the next day. In the meantime, Holmes will ponder the case. He chooses to do this by confining himself in the apartment and smoking until the air becomes so thick that breathing becomes difficult. This, he tells Watson, helps him to think.

Holmes, for all his encyclopedic knowledge, was not aware of the negative health effects of smoking. Instead, he seems to use the smoke as a way to obscure any possible distractions to his thought.

With the available data, Holmes comes to only one conclusion. Sir Charles was terribly afraid of the moors and avoided them at all costs, especially at night. If he was killed in the evening, by the moors, it's because he intended to meet someone there.

Any number of things might have caused Sir Charles to approach the moor that night, but following his performance with Mortimer's stick, Holmes is allowed some shaky inferences.

CHAPTER 4

Sir Henry arrives with Mortimer early the next morning. The young Baskerville has odd news: he's received an ominous letter advising him to stay away from the moor if he values his life or his sanity. The letter is constructed almost entirely of words cut from a newspaper and glued to paper.

Newspapers of the time were made with poorly processed wood pulp. Its acidic nature made the paper fragile and prone to rapid deterioration. This would have given the letter an even more ephemeral, mysterious feel.

Where the author of the letter has been unable to find a word (such as the relatively rarified "moor"), he or she has written the word in using a carefully disguised handwriting.

The fragile nature of turn-of-the-century newspapers would also have made cutting out individual letters to form the word nearly impossible. The difficulty of this task underscores the sender's desire for Sir Henry to stay away from the moor.

Just as he did with the **walking stick**, Holmes is able to pull some clues from the letter. First, he recognizes the series of words as being from an article on free trade in the previous day's *Times* newspaper. He also believes that the author used small nail scissors to cut the words out, and that they did so hurriedly.

This deduction comes only partly from Holmes' having read the article. He also makes the identification from the typeface used, which could have been slightly different between publications.

Most importantly, however, Holmes decides that the author used a hotel pen to write and address the note. This is because the pen itself was faulty and the ink low, which would be rare in a privately owned pen. How the author knew where to send the letter, however, remains a mystery to all: Sir Henry has only just arrived.

The modern ballpoint pen was still some three decades off, so the pen Holmes is referring to was surely a fountain pen. These pens had their own internal supply of ink, like a ballpoint pen, but had to be refilled frequently.

Holmes asks Sir Henry if he's noticed anything odd, or had anything odd happen to him, since arriving in the country. Sir Henry notes that he doesn't think it's worth mentioning, but he purchased a new pair of boots upon arriving, and one of the pair has gone missing.

Note that this theft, and the mysterious letter, both happen when only Mortimer knows where Sir Henry is. If Mortimer is not a red herring, then he is surely a very daring criminal.

Sir Henry asks to know what's going on, since he's just arrived from America to receive his inheritance and knows nothing about Mortimer's suspicions regarding the nature of his uncle's death. Mortimer fills him in, and Holmes says they are trying to decide if it's safe for Sir Henry to go to Baskerville Hall. Sir Henry replies that he doesn't care if it's safe: he's going.

Sir Henry is called "Sir" because he is a baronet—the lowest order of nobility and one that could, at times, be purchased. Still, Holmes and Mortimer show him a good bit of deference here, and Sir Henry shows a good bit of command.

Still, Sir Henry wants time to think about everything and suggests that they all meet up later over lunch. Holmes and Watson agree, and Sir Henry and Mortimer leave. Unknown to them, Holmes and Watson follow closely behind, to see if anyone is following Sir Henry. This is the only way Holmes can explain the letter being addressed to Sir Henry so soon after his arrival.

While other writers, such as Charles Dickens in Bleak House or Edgar Poe in "The Man of the Crowd," remark on the seeming impossibility of following someone through crowded London streets, Sir Henry is not only able to be followed, but Holmes is able to quickly identify his follower.

Sure enough, Holmes quickly discovers that someone is watching the young Baskerville from a horse-drawn cab, but the mysterious bearded man realizes he's been seen before Holmes can apprehend him. He escapes, but not before Holmes is able to get the number from the side of his cab.

As the plot thickens, Mortimer's status as a red herring diminishes. Though he remains somewhat important while in London, he becomes a fairly minor character at this point, which is surprising given how much time has been spent on him.

Before rejoining Sir Henry, Holmes hires a boy to check the wastepaper of all local hotels in an effort to try to find the newspaper used to create the letter. He also sends a telegram to Mr. Barrymore—to be delivered directly into his hands only with a confirmation of delivery. Holmes wants to see if Mr. Barrymore is at home because Barrymore is the only person involved in the situation so far that has a beard. If Barrymore's not at Baskerville Hall, it might mean he was the man was who following them.

These actions are decisive, but they are also decidedly unlikely to work. Holmes admits as much about the hotel wastepaper, sure that it will have already been disposed of. If Barrymore's not at Baskerville Hall, though, it doesn't mean he's at London. Furthermore, even if it's claimed that he's at Baskerville Hall, it doesn't mean that he truly is.

CHAPTER 5

Upon meeting again, Sir Henry reports that yet another boot has gone missing. This time, the boot is an old one, well-worn with age. Sir Henry seems to feel that the hotel's shoe-shine boy is to blame.

It seems pretty obvious that the shoes are being stolen to provide scent to a dog, but Doyle delays this reveal for a bit.

The topic of conversation soon turns to Sir Charles' will, where it's discovered that Dr. Mortimer received 1,000 pounds from his friend and the Barrymores received 500 pounds each. The whole estate, Mortimer tells Sir Henry, is worth close to one million pounds. Holmes is convinced that this must be the motivation for the death of Sir Charles.

Adjusting for inflation, this amount is equivalent to over one-hundred million pounds today. That Sir Charles is so exceptionally charitable with his money goes a long way in creating empathy for the man, despite the inexcusable deeds of his ancestor.

Holmes decides that the only way to solve the mystery is to have Sir Henry go to Baskerville Hall. However, he insists that Watson go along. Holmes claims to be too busy himself to take the time to do so, but he is sure Watson will be a fine substitute.

The real reason for Holmes' separation from Watson is simple: Doyle has to keep Holmes—who solves mysteries in an instant—away long enough to build up suspense for the reader.

After lunch, the group follows Sir Henry to his room, where he is surprised to discover the new boot that went missing almost immediately upon his arrival. There is no sign of the old boot, however, and with the future plans mapped out, the group disbands.

One mystery that's never solved is why the thief bothers to return the new boot, or bother stealing single boots altogether: especially given the easy scapegoat of the shoe-shine boy.

Upon returning home, Holmes finds the results of his earlier inquiries. The boy he hired to search the hotel wastepaper was unable to find the newspaper used in writing the letter, and the telegram to Mr. Barrymore was delivered as requested, meaning that Barrymore was at Baskerville Hall.

The speed at which Holmes' inquiries are resolved is stunning. It's a sign of the positively modern world that Holmes enjoys in the metropolis of London, which will be unavailable to him on the moor.

With these two clues amounting to nothing, Holmes meets with the cab driver of the bearded man who was following Sir Henry. The cab driver is willing to help, but he only knows the name of the person he was driving. The name the bearded man gave was none other than Sherlock Holmes. Holmes fears that this artifice is the sign of a dangerous criminal mastermind.

Holmes refers to the use of his name by his opponent as a "touch." This is a reference to the sport of fencing, the goal of which is to use a kind of mock sword to touch one's opponent in a critical area, thus scoring points. Thus, Holmes sees the emerging mystery as a game—though clearly a serious one.

CHAPTER 6

Soon, Watson, Dr. Mortimer, and Sir Henry are on their way to Baskerville Hall. Holmes admonishes Sir Henry to never go out alone and Watson to always have his revolver near-to-hand. The road to Baskerville Hall is a long one with multiple stages, including a train ride. The scenery changes consistently from urban buildup to a sparsely populated, heavily vegetated rural landscape.

The trip into the country is described in inexact, transitional terms, such that it's impossible to know for how long the group has travelled, nor how far from London. Fittingly, when they arrive, the sense is that they have not only travelled a long ways in miles, but also centuries back in time.

As they engage on the final leg of their trip, the group encounters a series of heavily armed guards. They learn that a notorious murderer named Selden has escaped from a nearby prison and is believed to be hiding out in the moors. Watson spends some time trying to remember what he knows about Selden's case, recalling that Selden was a particularly vicious killer who only avoided the death penalty because it wasn't quite clear that he was sane.

The image of a dangerous criminal hotly pursued by soldiers in a desolate moor is reminiscent of the opening chapters of Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. This is partly a function of landscape: the hills, lush vegetation, and exceptionally high rainfall of moors all conspire to make hiding from others easy, if not comfortable.

At Baskerville Hall, the party is greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore, and Dr. Mortimer departs for home. The Barrymores are happy to meet Sir Henry but are concerned that they won't be able to keep up with the housekeeping needs of a younger, more social man. They also recall Sir Charles fondly, and remark that the house doesn't feel like home anymore since his death.

While both Sir Charles and Sir Henry were bachelors, the younger Sir Henry would have been expected to engage in a much broader social life than his predecessor. This would have almost certainly included finding a suitable wife and having children.

Watson and Sir Henry both find the Hall gloomy and depressing, though they're impressed by the long line of family portraits. They go to bed early, but Watson is awoken in the middle of the night by the sound of a crying woman.

While not a gothic novel per se, The Hound of the Baskervilles *dabbles in gothic imagery here. The portraits and the mysterious crying woman are both genre staples.*

CHAPTER 7

The next day, Sir Henry and Watson ask Mr. Barrymore about the crying. Barrymore claims that it was not his wife, but when Watson sees Mrs. Barrymore, he can't help but think that she looks as though she's been crying. This makes Watson very suspicious of Barrymore.

With Mortimer out of the running, Doyle needs to establish a new red herring. Although Mr. Barrymore has already been eliminated from suspicion, he begins to fill that role here.

Barrymore has already been eliminated as a suspect, however, since Holmes determined through his telegram that Barrymore was not in London when Sir Henry arrived. Watson decides to check with the postmaster to make sure that the telegram was delivered directly to Barrymore as Holmes demanded.

It's interesting that, even as far removed as Baskerville Hall is from the rest of the world, the telegraph lines still make their way there, sending their lightning quick messages to and from London with ease.

Sure enough, at the post office Watson discovers that the telegram was delivered to Mrs. Barrymore, who claimed that her husband was upstairs at the time. Thus, Watson realizes, there is no way to be sure that Mr. Barrymore was at Baskerville Hall. He might, have been in London instead, trailing Sir Henry. Watson thinks the Barrymores might want to harm Sir Henry because the house will be left to their care if he dies. When Sir Henry asks Mr. Barrymore whether he was there when the telegram was received, Barrymore's feelings are so hurt that Sir Henry donates his old wardrobe to the man to make up for it.

Interestingly, the first investigative action Watson undertakes on his own reopens a line of inquiry mistakenly closed by Holmes himself. Holmes, of course, never mentions this, and Mr. Barrymore is ultimately found innocent of any wrongdoing. Still, it should be noted that Holmes was wrong to trust so completely in the postmaster's adherence to his instructions. Such trust could have been disastrous.

On his way back to Baskerville Hall from the post office, Watson meets Jack Stapleton. Stapleton knows a great deal about the case and about Holmes and Watson. Stapleton is very interested to learn what their thoughts are and what their next steps might be. He even offers help, which Watson politely declines. Stapleton insists, however, that Watson walk with him to the Stapleton house in order to meet Jack's sister, Beryl.

The whole of the Baskerville mystery revolves around Stapleton, who shows himself to be very nearly the criminal mastermind that Holmes feared. Given that, it's surprising that this interaction is the most time with Stapleton that Doyle gives his readers.

As they walk, Stapleton points out some elements of the moor. The Grimpen Mire is a particularly swampy area of the moor that's incredibly dangerous. He and Watson even see a wild pony drowning to death in the marshes there, and they hear the strange baying of a dog. Stapleton claims to be the only person on the moor capable of navigating the Grimpen Mire. He has learned this skill, he claims, because he's a naturalist and the swampland is where all the best plants and insects are.

The death of the wild pony is heartbreaking and graphic. The animal, a symbol of freedom and beauty, is ensnared by a seemingly innocuous bit of ground. Through one small, unknowable misstep, the pony brings about its own death. If the moors were not a desolate and dangerous place already, Doyle ensures that they are now.

Stapleton also points out some stone huts that he claims were once inhabited by Neolithic man. These huts still contain evidence of their ancient owners.

The Neolithic period began around 10,000 BCE and is believed to mark the beginning of farming by humans.

As Watson and Jack approach the Stapleton home, Beryl Stapleton walks out to meet them. Jack is distracted by a butterfly and runs off to catch it. Beryl seizes this opportunity to talk to Watson alone. She hurriedly advises him to leave the moor at once, as he's in great danger.

Part of what makes Stapleton's artifice so effective and convincing is that he truly is a naturalist with vested interested in the moors—as well as a cold-blooded killer.

When Jack returns, however, Beryl quickly stops this line of conversation. When she learns that the visitor is Dr. Watson and not Sir Henry Baskerville, she blushes and says that her previous speech was aimed at the wrong person. Later, after Watson leaves, Beryl catches up to him and begs him not to say anything to either Jack or Sir Henry about her warning. It was just an impulsive outburst.

Beryl's willingness to put her life on the line to warn the man she thinks is Sir Henry emphasizes her strength and courage. Rescinding that warning, even though doing so might make her seem foolish, marks her as a shrewd woman.

CHAPTER 8

Up until this point, Watson has been relaying the events of the story directly. He now switches to the reports that he sent to Holmes during this period in time.

Books taking the form of a series of letters are called epistolary fiction: a style already largely out of style when Doyle wrote.

Watson reports that Sir Henry has taken a strong romantic interest in Beryl Stapleton. He notes that Jack Stapleton doesn't seem very happy about this, which he finds odd. Watson also expresses concern that a romance between Beryl and Sir Henry will make it nearly impossible for Watson to stay constantly by Sir Henry's side.

Note that, unlike his rapist ancestor, Sir Henry is affectionate and respectful of Beryl Stapleton when courting her. In contrast, Sir Henry's other blood relative, Jack Stapleton, physically beats Beryl. This is a strong repudiation of the power of nature in nature vs. nurture.

Watson also notes that he has observed Mr. Barrymore using a candle to signal out into the moor late one night. With Sir Henry, Watson devises a plan to catch Barrymore in the act and get to the bottom of this newest mystery.

Watson is again led away from reason by his emotion. His suspicion of Barrymore is centered around Barrymore's treatment of his wife, which Watson doesn't know as fact.

CHAPTER 9

In his second report, Watson reports that Jack Stapleton has practically attacked Sir Henry over his advances towards Beryl. The man has so berated the young Baskerville that Sir Henry wonders if Jack is insane. Watson can't figure out why Jack would oppose a relationship between Beryl and Sir Henry, who is a nice man and is fabulously rich. Stapleton, for his part, says that his sister means everything to him. He claims he'll eventually come around to the idea of the two dating, but he needs them to wait a few months first.

Jack's inexplicable outburst coupled with his desire for Sir Henry to "wait a few months" is a pretty serious hint for Doyle to drop. It's obvious that Stapleton wants a few months because he knows Baskerville will be dead by then. Doyle, however, likely felt that he had presented Mr. Barrymore as a strong enough red herring, though, to throw off any suspicion.

With regard to the strange signaling of Mr. Barrymore, it takes few nights for Watson and Sir Henry to stay awake long enough to catch him in the act, but eventually they manage it. Mr. Barrymore is flustered at first, but this quickly turns into a stubborn reticence.

Though the image of a butler sneaking around a dark, old manor at night is undoubtedly gothic, there's nothing supernatural suggested here.

When confronted, Mr. Barrymore refuses to provide any explanation for his behavior, saying it was a personal matter. It's not until Sir Henry threatens Mr. Barrymore's job that Mrs. Barrymore intervenes, revealing that Barrymore is signaling to Selden to let him know that food is available for him. Selden, she confesses, is her brother, and she feels responsible for him.

As with Beryl Stapleton, Mrs. Barrymore shows some real strength here. First, she shows substantial control over her husband. More importantly, however, she is in control of the couple's future and actively decides what is best for them.

Watson and Baskerville are surprised by this sudden revelation but understanding of the impossible situation that Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore have found themselves in. Still, they feel it necessary to try to capture the escaped convict and set out immediately to do so. Almost immediately, they hear the sound of the baying hound that Watson heard before with Jack Stapleton.

Watson's reason is once again overruled by his emotions. He knows that Selden has been on the moors for weeks and will continue to be there. He also knows that the moors only pose a danger to Sir Henry at night. Yet, in an emotional moment, he charges onto the moors at night in pursuit of a dangerous killer with Sir Henry.

Despite the ominous sound, the two press on. Selden, however, sees them coming and manages to escape. Watson is surprised by how quickly and agilely the convict is able to move. Just as they've given up hope of catching Selden, Watson sees the silhouette of another man watching them. He's not sure who it is, and he's not able to catch him, either.

Watson mentions his physical prowess and athletic ability multiple times—though always in the context of him being beaten at some athletic context, such as this foot race. It's not clear if Doyle intends for this to be ironic.

CHAPTER 10

Switching away from his reports to Holmes, Watson now uses his diary to reconstruct the events of the case. He begins the following day. Though Mr. Barrymore is grateful that Sir Henry wants to continue to employ him, he's also upset that Sir Henry and Watson went after his brother-in-law. Selden, Mr. Barrymore says, has it quite hard enough out on the moors without additional hardships.

Mr. Barrymore has a familial obligation to his brother-in-law that clearly includes keeping him from starving on the moors. After the previous night's escapades, though, Barrymore shows some gall here in reprimanding his employer.

Barrymore adds that the convict has plans to escape the country for South America. Once out of the country, he will never return and never again be a danger to the people of England. When Sir Henry asks Watson what he thinks about this, Watson replies that Selden leaving the country would relieve the taxpayers of the burden of paying for his incarceration. Grudgingly, Watson and Sir Henry agree not to tell the police about Selden, giving him his chance to escape.

This plan works out for everyone involved except for South America, who will now have a hardened, escaped convict to deal with. That no one seems to care about this—at least not in the same way they care about English taxpayers—is probably to be expected from the colonial superpower that England still was at the turn of the century.

In return for this promise, Mr. Barrymore gives up a piece of information he's previously withheld. He knows that Sir Charles was meeting a woman on the night of his death. He learned this from a letter that Sir Charles received requesting the meeting. The letter was written in a feminine hand and signed "L.L." Sir Charles had attempted to burn the letter, but parts of it remained. Barrymore never revealed this information previously for fear that it would damage Sir Charles' reputation.

Lyons had a tarnished reputation, and Sir Charles meeting with her at all, let alone discreetly in the secluded moor, would have caused nearly the same scandal as if Sir Charles were found consorting with a prostitute. This is also why Sir Charles kept his charity to Lyons a secret.

Watson makes some inquiries into who "L.L." might be. Mortimer suggests that it might be Laura Lyons, a typist in nearby Coombe Tracey. Lyons was an acquaintance of Sir Charles, to whom he sometimes gave charity in the form of money. She was a headstrong young woman who married without her father's consent, possibly because she had engaged in sexual activity (or even became pregnant) out of wedlock. When her husband deserted her, Mortimer asserts, she was left to scrounge a living in whatever way she could. Watson decides to go to Coombe Tracey the next day to meet her.

Literature of the era often saw only one way out for so-called fallen women: death. That Lyons is able to live—if a bit uncomfortably—as a woman with a career, is something of a revelation. Sir Charles' donations show, too, that not all members of society agreed that fallen women should be treated so poorly by society: especially when their male counterparts suffered no consequences.

CHAPTER 11

Watson goes to Coombe Tracey as planned. He finds Laura Lyons to be a difficult witness to interview. She is reluctant to answer any of his questions regarding Sir Charles and responds sharply when she does. She agrees to cooperate only after Watson tells her that he's trying to protect Sir Charles' reputation.

It's not surprising that Lyons is hard to talk to. She would have been used to a life of men talking down to her, or even expecting her to be sexually promiscuous with them.

At first, Lyons denies asking Sir Charles to meet her. However, when Watson reveals that he knows about the letter, she changes her story. At first she's upset that Sir Charles didn't burn the letter, but she calms down when Watson tells her that the older Baskerville attempted to.

Despite all the strength that Doyle builds into Lyons, there's never a suggestion that she could be a suspect in the case. The men only assume that she is a tool of the real criminal.

Lyons tells Watson that she has lived her entire life in fear that her husband will come back and force her to live with him—something he could legally do. She wants to divorce her husband but doesn't have the money necessary for the legal fees. She hoped that Sir Charles would be able to help her with these fees as he had helped her in the past.

Some legislation had been passed in the late 1800s that helped women divorce their husbands: but the procedure remained exceedingly rare. Women caught in unwanted marriages in previous literature almost always remained in them.

After writing the letter requesting the meeting, however, Lyons procured funding "from another source." She never cancelled the meeting, however, and learned of Sir Charles' death the next day in the newspapers.

Though entirely possible for large London publications, it would be very unlikely that Sir Charles' death would have appeared in a small-town newspaper only hours after it happened.

On his way back to Baskerville Hall from Coombe Tracey, Watson considers all of the leads that have opened and shut in the case. He feels like the only mystery he has any hope of solving is the identity of the mystery man that he and Sir Henry saw on the moor while chasing Selden. Watson is certain this is the same man who followed Sir Henry in London. If he can catch him, he will have cracked the case wide open.

To Watson's credit, he again avoids a supernatural explanation, though such an explanation would be easier given the mystery man's ethereal appearance and quick disappearance. There is scarcely anything more gothic in literature than a mystery man cloaked in moonlight and serenaded by a baying hound.

As luck would have it, Watson is shortly thereafter waylaid by a chatty neighbor—Frankland—who reveals that he's seen a boy delivering food into the moors. Frankland believes that this boy is aiding Selden; however, Watson knows this isn't the case. With Frankland's help, Watson is able to trace the boy's path through the moor. It leads to the Neolithic huts. After some time, the man finally returns to the hut.

Though Doyle spends a hefty amount of time describing Frankland, the man's only real appearance is in this moment. It's worth noting, however, that Frankland is Laura Lyons' father.

CHAPTER 12

Watson is amazed to discover that the man he's been tracking all this time is none other than Holmes himself. The detective reveals that he's been living in the moors almost all along. He wanted to be removed from the case so that he could see everyone's interactions more clearly, with an outsider's perspective.

For all of Mr. Barrymore's assertions that Selden led a horrible existence on the moor, Holmes seems completely unphased by his living there. This makes sense if one considers that Holmes is entirely rational, Selden purely irrational—and even insane.

At first Watson feels angry and ill-used by Holmes. However, after Holmes compliments him heavily, he returns to his former good mood.

Holmes' compliments are, as before, a little back-handed—though Watson doesn't seem to mind.

In comparing notes, Holmes knows only two things that Watson does not: first, that Jack Stapleton has engaged in an intimate relationship with Laura Lyons. Second, that Jack and Beryl Stapleton are not sister and brother, as they've claimed, but rather husband and wife. From these pieces of information, Holmes has decided that Stapleton is Sir Charles' killer and the mastermind behind the plan to kill Sir Henry.

A large part of Holmes' case against Stapleton will come from Jack's resemblance to the portrait of Hugo Baskerville. Yet, for all the importance that familial resemblance has here, the near-certain lack of resemblance between Jack (who is English) and Beryl (who is Costa Rican) is never mentioned.

Holmes doesn't explain why he feels Stapleton to be the killer, but Watson readily accepts the premise. When Watson tells Holmes that Lyons wanted to meet with Sir Charles to obtain money for a divorce, the pieces all fall into place. Holmes deduces that Jack Stapleton had made Lyons believe he wanted to marry her in order to have her request the meeting with Sir Charles. Once Sir Charles' time and location was pinned down, Stapleton told Lyons not to go to the meeting, enabling him to murder Sir Charles "in cold blood." The two men decide to confront Lyons with this information in the morning, with the hope that she will testify against Jack Stapleton.

Holmes' earlier assertation that Sir Charles must have been meeting someone was flimsy at best. Charles, for instance, may simply have been responding to a call for help from the moor—or any number of other things. Stapleton's plan seems equally clunky in this light. If Sir Charles was in the habit of making an evening stroll, there must have been an easier way of luring him into the moors than the convoluted plot with Laura Lyons.

As Watson is preparing to leave, he hears the eerie sound of the hound baying again. This time, however, it is accompanied by a deep growl, which sounds like it's coming from nearby. In a panic, Holmes realizes that the hound of the Baskervilles is on the scent of Sir Henry. Holmes and Watson rush out to find the beast.

Holmes' panic is not brought on by the ghostly sounds of the hound—indeed, Holmes seems to have abandoned a supernatural explanation altogether—but rather by his fear that Sir Henry is in danger from the very real and dangerous hound.

They find that they are too late. Among the rocks of the moors they find a broken body dressed in a suit they recognize as Sir Henry's. The man died in a fall caused by his fleeing from the hound. Upon closer inspection, however, Holmes and Watson realize that it is not the body of Sir Henry they're looking at, but rather Selden's. Watson realizes that Mr. Barrymore must have given Selden the wardrobe that Sir Henry donated to him in order to help the criminal with his escape.

Doyle does an excellent job here of selling Sir Henry's "death." Though it seems impossible that the great pair of Watson and Holmes failed to protect their client, the writing leaves no ambiguity that the man is dead. Concurrently, Doyle delivers an effective shock when the men realize that it is Selden, not Sir Henry, who has died.

While Holmes and Watson try to decide what to do with the body, Jack Stapleton approaches. He sees the body and instantly assumes it must be Sir Henry. He's taken aback when he sees it isn't. The three men realize they can't carry the body back with them, so they agree to leave it, covered, on the moor. Before they part, Holmes mentions to Stapleton that he plans to return to London the following morning.

The tension in this moment is quite strong. Both Holmes and Watson know (or think they know) that Stapleton is the killer. Stapleton, of course, knows for sure. Yet none of the men are prepared to bring the situation out into the open.

CHAPTER 13

Back at Baskerville Hall, Holmes laments the lack of evidence they have in the case. He reminds Watson that, though they know Stapleton was responsible for Sir Charles' death, that the man died of heart failure with no marks on him. They will have a very hard time proving the case in court. He pins his hopes again on Laura Lyons' testimony.

It's important to remember that—Selden withstanding—no provable attempt has been made on Sir Henry's life. Thus, the death of Sir Charles, already a settled matter in the court's eyes, is the only thing that Holmes can currently try to pin on Stapleton.

After breaking the news of Selden's death to the Barrymores, Holmes turns to the family portraits lining Baskerville Hall. Watson remarks that the picture of Hugo Baskerville looks like Sir Henry. Holmes, however, covers a portion of the painting with his hands, obscuring Hugo's hair and hat. Once he's done this, the resemblance becomes much clearer: Jack Stapleton is the spitting image of Hugo Baskerville. From this, Holmes realizes that Stapleton is a Baskerville and is clearly trying to become the next in line for the Baskerville inheritance.

The Baskervilles are clearly a family of generally good people, with the glaring exceptions of Jack and Hugo. While Doyle's argument is clear that criminality is a function of nurture and not nature, it's interesting that he nevertheless chooses to have Jack and Hugo look alike. It's as if he's saying that, in the end, evil always looks the same.

Holmes arranges his plan, telling Sir Henry that he must do everything that Holmes and Watson request of him without question. His first request is that Sir Henry attend dinner with the Stapletons that night, making it clear that he intends to walk home from their house. Meanwhile, Holmes tells the young Baskerville that he and Watson will be returning to London. Both Watson and Sir Henry are taken aback by this, but Holmes is adamant. Before they leave, he sends a telegram asking for assistance from Scotland Yard.

Doyle conveys both Sir Henry's distress and courage quite well in the moment. The young Baskerville has only recently learned of his immense inheritance and only recently moved to England from America—and now must deal with an active plot to murder him. He must do this seemingly alone, when moments before he had the world's best detective to assist him.

The next stop is for Holmes and Watson to meet with Laura Lyons. As Holmes expected, Lyons quickly turns on Jack Stapleton when she finds that he is already married and only using her. She confirms all of Holmes' deductions, including that Stapleton forced her to set up the meeting and then subsequently called it off. Stapleton even went so far as to convince Lyons that she would be a suspect in the murder if she admitted the planned meeting to anyone.

While all of the women in The Hound of the Baskervilles *share love as a weakness, none of them are fools to it. When it becomes clear that their affection is being misused, they are able to rally themselves and act rationally, with self-interest.*

After securing Lyons' testimony, Holmes reveals to Watson that they are, in fact, returning to the Dartmoor moor and Baskerville Hall. First, however, they pick up Lestrade, an official from Scotland Yard that Holmes has worked with previously.

Holmes is a private detective and seemingly needs the help of Lestrade to legitimize his efforts. In other stories by Doyle, Lestrade is shown to take credit for Holmes' successes.

CHAPTER 14

Holmes, Watson, and Lestrade make their way to just outside the Stapleton house, where Sir Henry is eating dinner as a guest. The three men hide just off the road. At 10:00 P.M., a fog forces the three men to move further from the house, and Holmes fears that if Sir Henry doesn't leave soon, it may ruin everything and possibly endanger the young Baskerville's life.

Fogs, of course, are quite common in England. This one, however, is built in simply to heighten dramatic effect. If the three men cannot see what's happening around them when Sir Henry leaves, they will be unable to protect him—with possibly fatal consequences.

Soon, however, Sir Henry comes down the path. Holmes, Lestrade, and Watson let him pass without making their presence known. Moments later, the sound of running, padded feet is heard, and Holmes warns the men to be prepared: the hound is coming.

Just as Holmes had remarked to Mortimer at the beginning of the tale, the hound leaves far too many material traces (here, the sound of its feet hitting the ground) for it to be supernatural.

The three men draw their guns but are shocked into inaction at the moment the hound arrives. It is an impressively large dog, with glowing eyes. It appears, even, to be breathing fire. It rushes past them and gains on Sir Henry.

The dog itself could weigh as much as two-hundred pounds—or possibly more. The largest English mastiff ever recorded weighed over three-hundred pounds and stood over seven-feet tall.

Holmes is the first to react, running after the beast with a speed that Watson finds almost unbelievable. At the exact moment that the hound pounces on Sir Henry, Holmes shoots it dead. Sir Henry escapes unharmed, although quite scared.

Watson's description of Holmes' speed makes him appear nearly superhuman—but remember that Watson thinks most of what Holmes accomplishes is superhuman.

Looking at the dog, Watson realizes that what appeared to be glowing eyes and a fire-breathing mouth were nothing more than an application of phosphorous paint. There is nothing unnatural about the dog; it's just quite large.

Phosphorous has a supernatural quality all its own. Its name is Greek, but in Latin, it is lucifer, which means bringer of light. It's called this because of the glow it creates when exposed to oxygen.

Realizing that Jack Stapleton probably heard the shots and realized that his plot had been foiled, Holmes and company leave Sir Henry and double back to the Stapleton house. Jack is nowhere to be find, but they find Beryl Stapleton gagged and bound in a spare room filled with Jack's rare insect collection. Beryl is unconscious and shows signs of having been beaten. Holmes is able to revive her, however. Her first instinct is to discover whether or not Sir Henry is safe. She is anxious to help Holmes find and arrest her husband.

Though it's established that Stapleton was directly responsible for the death of Sir Charles, and has just now attempted to kill Sir Henry, it is Jack's treatment of his wife that comes across as his most odious crime. This is only increased by the realization that Beryl likely endured such treatment from Jack on a regular basis, though, of course, the reader is never exposed to it.

Beryl tells Holmes that there's only one place that Jack might have fled to: the swampy Grimpen Mare. There is a kind of island in the middle of the swamp, she reveals, where Jack kept the awful hound. The fog, however, makes it impossible for the group to safely follow Jack that night, and they wait for Beryl to guide them the following morning.

Whereas Watson foolishly pursued Selden at great risk to himself and Sir Henry, Holmes' calm rationality prevails here. He knows that, though Stapleton may get away, the group will surely fail if they try to follow him that night.

On the way to Jack's hideout the next day, Holmes discovers Sir Henry's other missing boot. He realizes that Stapleton had stolen the boot in order to train the hound to recognize Sir Henry's scent. This, however, is the only sign of Jack they encounter, and the three men come to accept that he must have died in the marshes as so many wild animals had before him.

Most of the chapters of the book end as cliffhangers. This one does, too—even though it concludes the primary plot of the book. It's never ascertained that Jack is dead, and Holmes is certainly afraid of the types of crimes that Stapleton could commit if he's not.

CHAPTER 15

Months later, Watson and Holmes sit together and recollect the case in the Baker Street apartment. Holmes recalls that most everything they had deduced during the case turned out to be true, and in the interim they have learned whatever details were missing: for example, that Stapleton was the bearded man who shadowed Sir Henry in London. Content with their success, and the hard work they've put into other cases in the months that followed, Holmes suggests that he and Watson take the evening off to attend the opera.

The Hound of the Baskervilles *was printed chapter-by-chapter in* The Strand Magazine *before it was sold as a complete, bound book. This fifteenth installment, which is almost entirely redundant, would have helped readers who had read the book over the course of several months remember key details of the case and better understand how Holmes arrived at his conclusions.*

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