

Mr Sherlock Holmes

My name is Doctor Watson. I am writing this story about my friend, Mr Sherlock Holmes, the famous detective.

Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street, in the middle of London. My story begins in Baker Street, one morning in 1889, when a man knocked on the door.

I heard the man say, 'Mr Holmes? My name is Dr Mortimer. I need your help.'

'Come in,' said Holmes. 'How can I help you?'

'I have a strange story to tell you, Mr Holmes,' said Dr Mortimer. 'My story is very strange. Perhaps you will not believe me.'

The Curse of the Baskervilles

Dr Mortimer sat down. Sherlock Holmes and I listened to his story.

'I am a doctor and I work in the country,' said Dr Mortimer. 'I live and work on Dartmoor. And, as you know, Dartmoor is a large, wild place. There is only one big house on Dartmoor – Baskerville Hall. The owner of the house was Sir Charles Baskerville. I was his friend as well as his doctor.'

'I read of his death in *The Times* newspaper,' said Holmes.

‘That was three months ago,’ said Dr Mortimer. ‘The newspaper reported his death, but it did not report all the facts.’

‘Was there something strange about his death?’ asked Sherlock Holmes.

‘I am not certain,’ said Dr Mortimer. ‘There was a story about a curse on the Baskerville family. Sir Charles believed this old story.’

‘A curse?’ I asked. ‘What do you mean?’

‘Here is the story,’ said Dr Mortimer. He took a large piece of paper out of his pocket. ‘Please read this. It is the story of the Curse of the Baskervilles.’

Holmes took the paper and read it. ‘It is called *The Hound of the Baskervilles*,’ he said. He showed me the paper. This is what it said:

In the year 1645, Sir Hugo Baskerville was the owner of Baskerville Hall. Sir Hugo was a cruel man who did not believe in God. Every day he went out hunting and drinking with a gang of wild friends.

A farmer on Dartmoor had a beautiful daughter. Sir Hugo wanted to marry the girl, but she was afraid of him. The girl’s father told Sir Hugo to stay away from his farm. Sir Hugo was very angry.

One day, when the farmer was working in his fields, Sir Hugo rode to the farm with his friends. They caught the girl and took her to Baskerville Hall.

The poor girl was terrified. Sir Hugo locked her in a bedroom. Then he started drinking with his gang. When he was drunk, he became more wild and cruel. He shouted at his men and hit them.

The frightened girl waited until it was dark. Then she opened a window and escaped from Baskerville Hall.



'Please read this. It is the story of the Curse of the Baskervilles.'

Her father's farm was about four miles away. It was night, but she was able to follow the path in the moonlight. She started to run across the dark moor.

Sir Hugo went to the girl's room. It was empty and Sir Hugo was terribly angry. He ran to his men and jumped onto the table where they were drinking. He kicked the plates and glasses off the table. 'Fetch the horses!' he shouted. 'Get the girl!'

They all ran outside and jumped onto their horses. Sir Hugo kept a pack of wild dogs for hunting. 'Let the dogs find her!' he shouted. 'The Devil can take me if I do not catch her!'

The dogs ran out across the dark moor. Sir Hugo and his men rode after them. The dogs barked and Sir Hugo shouted.

Then they heard another noise. It was louder than the noise of barking and shouting. The dogs stopped and listened. They were afraid.

The men heard the noise too. It was a loud and deep howling sound – the sound of a huge dog howling at the moon. The men stopped their horses, but Sir Hugo rode on. He wanted to catch the girl.

Sir Hugo did not catch the girl. Suddenly his horse stopped and threw him to the ground. The horse ran away in terror.

In the moonlight, the men saw a strange, black animal. It looked like a dog with huge, fiery eyes. But it was as big as a horse. All the men became very frightened.

The huge black dog jumped on Sir Hugo Baskerville and killed him. The other men ran away into the night and Sir Hugo was never seen again.

Since that time, many of the sons of the Baskerville family have died while they were young. Many of them have died strangely. This is the Curse of the Baskervilles. The black dog – The Hound of the Baskervilles – still walks on the moor at night.

‘Well, Mr Holmes, what do you think of this story?’ asked Dr Mortimer.

‘I do not think it is a true story,’ said Sherlock Holmes. ‘Why do you show me this story? Do you believe it?’

‘Before Sir Charles Baskerville’s death, I did not believe the story,’ Dr Mortimer answered. ‘But Sir Charles believed the story. It worried him. He became ill and his heart was weak.’

‘Why did he believe this story?’ I asked.

‘Because he saw the hound on the moor,’ answered Dr Mortimer. ‘Or, he thought he saw it. When Sir Charles told me this story, I told him to take a holiday. I told him to go to London for a few weeks and forget all about the curse.’

‘Did he take a holiday?’ I asked.

‘No,’ said Dr Mortimer. ‘He planned to go to London the following Friday. But, on the Thursday evening, he went for a walk on the edge of the moor. And he never returned.’

‘How did he die?’ I asked.

‘He died of a heart attack,’ answered Dr Mortimer. ‘His servant came to fetch me. I found Sir Charles near the house, on the edge of the moor. He was running away from something when he died. I am sure of that. I think he was terrified of something.’

‘Terrified?’ asked Holmes. ‘What was he running away from?’

‘I looked at the ground where Sir Charles had walked. I saw his footprints,’ said Dr Mortimer. ‘But there were other footprints on the ground. They were not the footprints of a man. They were the footprints of a gigantic hound!’