

А. К. ДОЙЛ

ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЯ ШЕРЛОКА ХОЛМСА

A.C. DOYLE THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

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Текст произведений сокращен и незначительно адаптирован, снабжен грамматическим комментарием и словарем, в который вошли ВСЕ слова, содержащиеся в тексте. Благодаря этому книга подойдет для любого уровня владения английским языком.

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THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

CHAPTER 1 – MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who usually got up very late in the morning, except on those occasions when he was up all night, was sitting at the breakfast table. I stood near the fireplace and picked up the stick, which our visitor had left behind him the night before. It was a fine thick piece of wood. Under its head was a broad silver band. "To Dr. James Mortimer, from his friends of the C.C.H.," was engraved upon it, with the date "1884." It was just such a stick as old-fashioned family doctors carried.

"Well, Watson, what do you make of it?"¹

Holmes was sitting with his back to me.

"How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head."

"I have a well-polished silver coffee-pot in front of me," he said. "But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of our visitor's stick? Since we have missed him and have no idea why he came, this souvenir becomes of importance²."

"I think," I said, following as far as I could the methods of my companion, "that Dr. Mortimer is a successful elderly medical man, since those who know him give him this mark of their respect."

"Good!" said Holmes. "Excellent!"

"I also think that he is probably a country doctor who does a good deal of his visiting on foot."

"Why so?"

"Because this stick is so knocked about that I can hardly imagine a town doctor carrying it. It is evident that he has done a lot of walking with it."

"Perfect!" said Holmes, pushing back his chair and lighting a cigarette. "I must say that in all the accounts, which you have given of my investigations you have written very little about yourself. It may be that you do not have genius yourself, but you

are very good at stimulating it. My dear fellow, I am very much in your debt.³"

He had never said as much before, and his words gave me keen pleasure. I was proud, too, to think that I had mastered his system. He now took the stick from my hands and examined it for a few minutes, then he carried it to the window and looked over it again with a lens.

"Interesting, though elementary," he said. "There are one or two marks on the stick, which allow us to make several deductions.

"I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were wrong. When I said that you stimulated me, I meant that your mistakes guided me towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this case. The man is certainly a country doctor. And he walks a good deal."

"Then I was right."

"No, no, my dear Watson. A present to a doctor is more likely to come from a hospital⁴, and when the initials 'C.C.' are placed before that hospital the words 'Charing Cross' very naturally occur to you."

"You may be right."

"Now you see that he could not be a doctor at the hospital, since only a man

with a good London practice could have such a position, and such a man would not go to live in the country. What was he, then? A student. And he left five years ago – the date is on the stick. So your middle-aged family doctor turns into a young fellow under thirty, with a favourite dog, larger than a terrier and smaller than a mastiff.”

“A dog?”

“A dog has been in the habit of carrying this stick behind his master. The marks of his teeth are very well seen. These marks are too broad for a terrier and not broad enough for a mastiff. It may be – yes, it is a spaniel.”

I looked at him in surprise. He was now standing at the window.

“How can you be so sure of that?”

“For the very simple reason that I see the dog himself at our door, and there is the ring of its owner. Don’t go away, Watson. He is a professional brother of yours⁵, and your presence may help me. What does Dr. James Mortimer, the man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, the specialist in crime? Come in!”

The appearance of our visitor was a surprise to me, since I had expected

a typical country doctor. He was a very tall, thin man, with a long nose like a beak, keen gray eyes, sparkling brightly from behind a pair of glasses. Though he was young, his long back was already bowed. As he entered his eyes fell upon the stick in Holmes's hand, and he ran towards it with an exclamation of joy. "I am so glad," he said. "I was not sure that I had left it here. I would not like to lose that stick."

"A present, I see," said Holmes.

"Yes, sir."

"From Charing Cross Hospital?"

"From one or two friends there on the day of my marriage."

"Your marriage, you say?"

"Yes, sir. I married, and so left the hospital. It was necessary to make a home of my own."

"We are not so wrong, after all," said Holmes. "And now, Dr. James Mortimer —"

"I think that it is Mr. Sherlock Holmes to whom I am speaking —"

"Yes, and this is my friend Dr. Watson."

"Glad to meet you, sir. I have heard your name and that of your friend. You interest me very much, Mr. Holmes."

Sherlock Holmes asked our strange visitor to take a seat.

“I came to you, Mr. Holmes, because I have a very serious and extraordinary problem. I called here last night and again today –”

“Indeed, sir! I would like to know, Dr. Mortimer, what your problem is in which you want my help.”

CHAPTER 2 – THE CURSE OF THE BASKERVILLES

“I have a manuscript in my pocket,” said Dr. James Mortimer.

“The exact date is 1742.” Dr. Mortimer drew it from his pocket. “This family paper was given to me by Sir Charles Baskerville, whose sudden and tragic death three months ago was much talked about in Devonshire¹. I may say that I was his personal friend as well as his doctor. He was a shrewd, practical man, but he took this document very seriously, and his mind was prepared for just such a death as he met.”

Holmes took the manuscript and looked at it.

I looked over his shoulder at the yellow paper where it was written: "Baskerville Hall," and below: "1742."

"It is a legend of the Baskerville family."

"But I understand that it is something more modern and practical upon which you wish to consult me?"

"Very modern. A very practical, pressing matter, which must be decided within twenty-four hours. But the manuscript is short and is connected with it. With your permission I will read it to you."

Holmes leaned back in his chair, and closed his eyes. Dr. Mortimer turned the manuscript to the light and started reading.

"There have been many stories about the Hound of the Baskervilles. I come in a direct line from Hugo Baskerville, and I had the story from my father, who also had it from his. I have written it down with all belief² that it occurred as is written here.

"About a hundred years ago Baskerville Hall³ was owned by Hugo, a most wild, and godless man. It so happened that this Hugo fell in love (if, indeed, so dark a passion may be known under so bright a name) with the daughter of a farmer who had land near Baskerville Hall. But the young girl avoid-

ed him, for she feared this evil man. So it happened that one day this Hugo, with five or six of his idle and wicked companions, came to the farm and carried off the girl, as he knew that her father and brothers were away from home. When they had brought her to the Hall the girl was locked in a room upstairs, while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long dinner, as was their custom. Now, the poor girl upstairs was frightened by the wild singing and shouting and terrible cursing which came up to her from below, for they say that the words used by Hugo Baskerville, when he was in wine, were really terrible. And in her fear she did what could only be done by the bravest man. With the help of the ivy which covered (and still covers) the wall she came down, and ran across the moor to her father's farm.

“It so happened that some little time later Hugo left his guests to carry food and drink to the girl, and found the cage empty and the bird escaped. Then he rushed down the stairs into the dining-hall, sprang upon the great table and cried aloud before all the company that he would give up his body and soul to the Powers of Evil if he caught the girl. And while the guests stood

frightened of the man's fury, one more wicked or, it may be, more drunken than the rest, cried out that they should put the hounds upon her⁴. At once Hugo ran from the house, crying to his grooms that they should saddle his horse. And giving the hounds a kerchief of the girl's, he put them on the scent⁵, and off they went over the moor.

"For some time the guests stood still, unable to understand what had been done. But soon thirteen of them took horses and followed Hugo and the hounds.

"They had gone a mile or two when they passed a man, and they asked him if he had seen the girl. And the man, as the story goes, said that he had seen the unhappy girl, with the hounds on her track. 'But I have also seen,' said he, 'Hugo Baskerville on his black horse, and a hound of hell ran behind him.' The drunken squires cursed the man and rode on. But they saw Hugo's horse soon galloping across the moor, with an empty saddle. They came at last upon the hounds. They stood whimpering. The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there lay the unhappy girl where she had fallen, dead of fear and exhaustion. But it was neither her body,

nor the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of the men. A great black beast, looking like a hound, but larger than any hound in the world, stood over Hugo biting at his throat. And they looked the beast tore the throat out of Hugo Baskerville. When it turned its blazing eyes upon them, the men shrieked with fear and rode, still screaming, across the moor. One, it is said, died that very night of a heart attack, and the others were broken men for the rest of their days.

“Such is the story, my sons, of the hound, which has plagued the family ever since. Many deaths in the family have been unhappy, sudden, bloody, and mysterious. My sons, I ask you, and I advise you not to cross the moor in those dark hours when the powers of evil are the strongest.”

When Dr. Mortimer finished reading this unusual story he looked at Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

“Well?” he said. “Do you find it interesting?”

“To a collector of fairy tales.”