

Sherlock Holmes



Dr. Mortimer read the legend of the Hound of the Baskervilles to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

Preview:

1. Read the name of the story.
2. Look at the picture.
3. Read the sentence under the picture.
4. Read the first 3 paragraphs of the story.
5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that

- a. the story is told by Sherlock Holmes.
- b. Sherlock Holmes lost his walking stick.
- c. the story is told by someone named Watson.
- d. Sherlock Holmes and Watson are enemies.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read to find out what new adventure awaits Sherlock Holmes.

Sherlock Holmes

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the great detective, was seated at the table in his apartment on Baker Street in London. He was usually very late to breakfast in the morning. Today was not any different.

I was standing by the fireplace on this bitter cold morning holding a fine wooden walking stick. Our visitor had left it behind the night before. We had missed him and had no idea what it was he wanted.

"Well Watson, now that you have examined the stick, what do you think of the man who left it?"

"The initials, *M.R.C.S.* suggest that James Mortimer is a doctor. He is not a town doctor, however, for this stick is worn, used by a man whose foremost means of transportation are his feet. Dr. Mortimer is a country doctor. I suspect the *C.C.H.* has something to do with a hunt. Dr. Mortimer might have given care to a hunter."

Although Holmes was impressed with my views, he set about the construction of Dr. Mortimer.

"My dear man, you have helped me find truth with your errors!" he said. "For instance, Dr. Mortimer was given the walking stick from a hospital rather than from a hunt; *C.C.H.* represents Charing Cross Hospital. The man practiced in town first, then went into practice in the country. Also, Dr. Mortimer has a dog. Observe the teeth marks on the stick."

As Holmes was solving the mystery of the walking stick, he noticed a dog outside on the doorstep.

"Dr. Mortimer will soon be with us, Watson."

At that moment, a reply to a knock at the door brought us face-to-face with James Mortimer. Mortimer was joyful, most civilized, when he saw the walking stick. He believed that he might have left it at the Shipping Office the day before.

More of Mortimer's character became clear as he was questioned about his past. He was not a doctor, but a man interested in science. Further discovery showed that

Mortimer left the hospital because he had married. Indeed, the walking stick was a gift to him by two friends at the Charing Cross Hospital.

"I have come to you, Mr. Holmes, because you absorb details, have a mind keen for curiosity, and possess a practical attention for facts. I have an old manuscript for you to examine."

Mortimer took the manuscript from his coat. The writer of the manuscript began his tale with hope for pardon in the Baskerville family; as Mortimer read on, the legend began to unfold.

"Hugo Baskerville, the first of the family, was not civilized. His taste for cruel actions was known to many people. This Hugo came to love a young woman who was the daughter of a yeoman. Her family held lands near the Baskervilles, but were not as rich as an admiral's family might be. Since the position of the woman's father was not of an admiral, Hugo believed he could carry off the young woman when her father and brothers were not at home. She was placed in an upstairs chamber in Baskerville Hall, but escaped when the time was right.

"Hugo discovered the woman had run away. Angry and bitter at her action, he cried out that he would give his body and soul to the Powers of Evil if he could capture the young woman. His friends were drunk and angry and told him to release the hounds upon her. Each hound was shown the maiden's scarf and given her scent for the hunt.

"Hugo mounted his mare for transportation and let loose the hounds on the darkness of the moor. Hugo's friends suddenly came to their senses and realized that the woman was in great peril. They, too, mounted their horses and started across the moor.

"A shepherd, half-crazy, gave a description of the unhappy woman and the hounds on her trail. 'But I saw more than that!' the shepherd stated in a startling speech. 'Hugo

Baskerville passed by on his black mare. Behind him ran a hound - running as if the devil was after him! Heaven forbid a hound like that should ever run after me!'

"Later, Hugo's friends saw a black mare approach them. Some of the men rode towards a clearing with the aid of the bright moon. The scene raised the hair upon their heads. In the center of the clearing lay the woman, fallen dead of fear in heart, weary worn in body. Hugo Baskerville lay dead near her. The men shuddered when they saw the horrible thing as it plucked at Hugo's throat. It was a great, black beast shaped like a hound, but much larger than any man had ever seen. The beast tore out Hugo's throat as if it had a right to punish him. With blazing eyes and dripping jaws, it turned to attack the three men who watched in disgust. They rode away to save their lives, screaming across the moor.

"To this day, the family remains unhappy in deaths which have been sudden, bloody, and filled with mystery. They pray to God for release, not to be punished for a past cruel deed. Watch then with care when a Baskerville crosses the moor in those dark hours when the Powers of Evil are stirring."

The manuscript was signed by Hugo Baskerville, a descendant of the evil Hugo, to his sons, Rodger and John.

Mortimer finished reading. "Do you not find it interesting?" he asked.

"To a collector of fairy tales," said Holmes, yawning.

Sherlock Holmes

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

- Watson thought that Mortimer traveled mostly on foot because
 - a. Mortimer's shoes were worn out.
 - b. Mortimer's walking stick was worn.
 - c. Mortimer's walking stick had teeth marks on it.
 - d. Mortimer lived in the city.
2. Holmes knew that Mortimer would arrive soon because
 - a. he heard footsteps.
 - b. they had set a time to meet.
 - c. he saw a dog outside.
 - d. he saw Mortimer coming.
3. Mortimer came to see Sherlock Holmes to
 - a. buy a walking stick from him.
 - b. give him a walking stick for a gift.
 - c. treat him for an illness.
 - d. show him an old manuscript.
4. The writer of the tale described Hugo Baskerville as
 - a. cruel.
 - b. friendly.
 - c. having a keen mind.
 - d. being interested in science.
5. First, Hugo Baskerville carried off the young woman. Then, she escaped. Next,
 - a. Hugo placed her in an upstairs chamber.
 - b. Hugo released the hounds.
 - c. the woman was killed.
 - d. Hugo was killed.

Preview Answer

- c. the story is told by someone named Watson.

- In the clearing, Hugo Baskerville's friends saw
 - a. a half-crazy shepherd.
 - b. Sherlock Holmes.
 - c. a huge black dog.
 - d. a woman running in fear.
7. The writer of the manuscript believes that the Baskervilles
 - a. continue to be punished for Hugo's cruel deed.
 - b. are not as rich as their neighbors.
 - c. are a very happy family.
 - d. have nothing to worry about.
8. Sherlock Holmes yawned and called the manuscript a "fairy tale" because
 - a. it was past his bedtime.
 - b. he thought the story was true.
 - c. he thought the story was made up.
 - d. he liked fairy tales.
9. Another name for this story could be
 - a. "An Amusing Tale."
 - b. "A Tale of Terror."
 - c. "Dr. Mortimer's Stick."
 - d. "A Surprise for Sherlock Holmes."
10. This story is mainly about
 - a. the history of the Baskervilles.
 - b. the curiosity of Sherlock Holmes.
 - c. an unhappy young woman.
 - d. Watson's clever guesses.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.