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Samuel French Acting Edition

Ken Ludwig's
Baskerville:
A Sherlock Holmes Mystery

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www.SamuelFrench.com

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FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Info@SamuelFrench.com

1-866-598-8449

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KEN LUDWIG'S BASKERVILLE: A SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERY was first produced as a co-production between McCarter Theatre Center for the Performing Arts (Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director) and Arena Stage (Molly Smith, Artistic Director; Edgar Dobie, Executive Director) at Arena Stage's Kreeger Theater in Washington, D.C. The opening night was January 16, 2015. Following the run at Arena Stage, the production subsequently shifted to the McCarter Theatre Center's Matthews Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. The opening night was March 13, 2015. The performance was directed by Amanda Dehnert, with sets by Daniel Ostling, costumes by Jess Goldstein, lights by Philip Rosenberg, and sound by Joshua Horvath and Raymond Nardelli. The Production Stage Manager was Alison Cote. The Assistant Stage Manager was Kurt Hall. The cast was as follows:

SHERLOCK HOLMES Gregory Wooddell
DOCTOR WATSON Lucas Hall
ACTOR 1 Stanley Bahorek
ACTOR 2 Michael Glenn
ACTRESS 1 Jane Pfitsch

KEN LUDWIG'S BASKERVILLE: A SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERY was subsequently produced by The Old Globe (Barry Edelstein, Artistic Director; Michael G. Murphy, Managing Director) in San Diego, California. The opening night was July 30, 2015. The performance was directed by Josh Rhodes, with sets by Wilson Chin, costumes by Shirley Pierson, lights by Austin R. Smith, and original music and sound by Bart Fasbender. The Production Stage Manager was Annette Yé. The cast was as follows:

SHERLOCK HOLMES Euan Morton
DOCTOR WATSON Usman Ally
ACTOR 1 Blake Segal
ACTOR 2 Andrew Kober
ACTRESS 1 Liz Wisan

CHARACTERS

Sherlock Holmes

Doctor Watson

Actor One

Dr. Mortimer

Baron Scarpia

Man with Black
Beard

Lucy

Milker

Castilian Desk Clerk

Train Conductor

Trap Driver

Barrymore

Stapleton

Victor

Doctor McCann

Country Farmer

Sir John Falstaff

Actor Two

Sir Charles

Baskerville

Daisy

Sir Hugo

Baskerville

Bradley the

Tobacconist

Sir Henry

Baskerville

Wilson

Inspector Lestrade

Actress One

Mrs. Hudson

Maiden

Shepherdess

Floria Tosca

Cartwright

German Maid

Baby

Mrs. Clayton

Mrs. Barrymore

Miss Stapleton

Nurse Malloy

Winnie

Nurse MacKeeble

Laura Lyons

SETTING

London & Devonshire

TIME

The late 1890s

The Romance of Sherlock Holmes: A Q&A with Ken Ludwig

Ken Ludwig and Linda Lombardi, Literary Director at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., discussed Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery as part of the Arena Stage/McCarter Theatre Center co-production. This interview was originally published on January 22, 2015 on Stage Banter: the Arena Stage Blog.

What is it that makes Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson so popular with both writers and audiences?

There is something romantic at the heart of Sherlock Holmes that touches all of us. He is quixotic, cerebral, dashing and inspiring. But there is also something dark and dangerous about Holmes, and we admire him for the courage with which he fights his demons. He broods, he plays Beethoven, he revels in danger and experiments with drugs. At times he frightens us, and that is part of his allure.

Meanwhile, Watson creates a resonance of his own. He is steady, stalwart and wonderfully earthbound. Together they are Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. They are Ariel and Caliban. They are fire and earth. These roots plant them firmly in our shared mythology, and we respond to them as we respond to all mythological characters, not just through the brain, but also viscerally and through our hearts.

Sherlock Holmes is one of the most famous characters to be portrayed in literature, in film and on TV. What attracted you to him and, in particular, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*?

Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson have been a staple of our culture since the 1890s, but they have recently re-entered our world in a more muscular way. For some reason, it seems to be just the right time for Holmes and Watson. Perhaps these days we crave a hero who succeeds despite, or perhaps because of his quirks, his obsessions and his near-fatal flaws.

Also, it is easy to dismiss Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as a writer of mere genre literature. After all, say the critics, he wrote only mysteries and adventure stories. But the man had a touch of genius about him. Certainly his genius was different in kind from that of, say, Jane Austen or Henry James. It was not as deeply personal or psychological. But genius comes in many shapes, and Conan Doyle inhabited one of them.

To begin with, he virtually invented the entire mystery genre as we know it. There would be no Agatha Christie without Conan Doyle, no

Dorothy Sayers, no Raymond Chandler, and no detective movies or television shows. The detective and his sidekick, the locked-room mystery, the clues, the red herrings, the bungling policeman and the grateful client – he virtually invented all of it.

In addition, in the characters of Holmes and Watson, he somehow plumbed the depths of our immortal souls – and his audience recognized this from the beginning. Think about the number of times in the history of literature that there have been people literally waiting in line for a novel or story. I can think of Charles Dickens; I can think of J.K. Rowling; and I can think of Conan Doyle, whose myriad fans would wait on the dock in New York for the latest installment of Sherlock Holmes in *The Strand Magazine*. The public realized instantly that Holmes and Watson were not just for an age but for all time.

As for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Conan Doyle wrote it with his usual instinct for a whopping good story. Again, in the history of English literature, how many truly great adventure stories have been written – stories of depth and quality that create mythologies and yet keep you turning the pages while you hold your breath. I would include *Treasure Island* and *The Hobbit*. *Kidnapped*, perhaps, and *The Prisoner of Zenda*. And preeminent among them is *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Like *Treasure Island*, it contains a villain who reaches deeply into our subconscious. And like *Treasure Island*, it touches on the darkness in all of us. The very image of the hound brings out the danger that lurks in the depths of our souls. The hound is mysterious and unknowable, and so are we. He is frightening and difficult to control. There is a hound in all of us.

Why write a play about Sherlock Holmes at this moment in time?

There is a great tradition of melodrama in our theater, both English and American. In melodramas, we sit on the edge of our seats watching exciting stories where anything can happen. There are villains, there are mysteries, there are fortunes lost and reputations regained. These are the plays that defined our theater for over two hundred years, and the literary icons we most revere, like Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, loved to act in them and write about them.

There should be a bigger place in our lives for these kinds of plays. They needn't be a steady diet, but they shouldn't disappear, either. Beginning in the 1930s, this genre was subsumed by Hollywood movies, and the theater was poorer for it. And while I yield to no one in my love for Errol Flynn in *Robin Hood* and Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus*, I think that adventure stories are just as good, and maybe even better, when they're presented on a live stage with actors you can touch.

My hope is that *Baskerville* is about the theater as much as it is about Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson. I want it to succeed not only as a tale of fellowship and courage, but also as an adventure in itself. I'd love us to return, at least now and then, to nights at the theater when we feel the way we do in the movies watching *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*: sitting breathless in the dark, mesmerized by the action, munching bags of popcorn.

***Baskerville* is a cast of five. Three of the actors play over 40 characters. What is that like in your development process, as far as writing these very distinct characters, knowing that one actor will be playing these ten roles, another these ten, another these ten?**

Writing for this many characters in a single play felt joyous; and knowing that they'd be played by only three actors felt like a breath of fresh air. It was liberating.

Classical theater has always been filled with doubling and tripling, and it is often a source of theatrical joy. Shakespeare's company had between 12 and 15 actors in it, but his plays contain as many as 25-35 characters.

One of my favorite authors, J.B. Priestley, said something about theater that I like very much: He reminded us that when we go to the theater we feel two things at the same time. First, we see characters who tell us a story. Second, we're conscious that professional actors are playing those characters and telling the story on a small wooden stage.

When actors double, triple – and, in the case of *Baskerville*, play dozens of parts – we're reminded of this duality. Characters may die, but the actors are, reassuringly, still standing at the curtain when they take their bows. I believe that this knowledge can enrich the experience of seeing a play, and reminds us that play-going is not merely life, but life enhanced.

Are you more a Holmes or a Watson?

I think I'm a Watson but I wish I were a Holmes.

Finally, a question I ask all our playwrights...what's your favorite word?

"Fadge." In *Twelfth Night*, at the first great turning point in the play, Viola sums up the story and then asks, "How will this fadge?" meaning how will it all turn out in the end. What a simple, and simply breathtaking word.

**Comedy in His Bones:
A Conversation with Playwright Ken Ludwig
On Adapting Arthur Conan Doyle's
*The Hound of the Baskervilles***

This interview between Ken Ludwig and Danielle Mages Amato, Literary Director/Dramaturg at The Old Globe in San Diego, discussed Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery. It was originally published in The Old Globe's Performances Magazine.

Baskerville is not your first Sherlock Holmes play; you've written about the character before. Could you talk a bit about what draws you to Holmes?

In our literary history there are only a handful of writers who have created myth out of whole cloth. One of these is Arthur Conan Doyle. Through the alchemy of words on paper, Conan Doyle, almost overnight, created two of the most unforgettable characters in English literature. Part of the secret was the quality of his writing. Sentence for sentence, Conan Doyle writes with the brilliance of Dickens, he tells whopping stories that keep us on the edge of our seats. To top it all off, Conan Doyle was wonderfully prolific – especially with his two greatest characters. Holmes and Watson appear in four novels and fifty-six short stories, and we end up treasuring them, in part, because we know them so well.

What do you think makes Watson and Holmes such iconic characters?

I think in Holmes' case it may be because there had never been a character quite like him before. He's an admirable aesthete with a lightning-fast mind who lives for justice and is willing to die for it; at the same time, he's deeply dangerous, with a drug habit and a lack of interpersonal skills. These traits, taken together, create a sense of dangerous romance, and I think we respond to Holmes the way we respond to Heathcliff in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*: with envy and with awe at the mystery inside him. As for Watson, he's the good old sensible earth and clay to Holmes' fire and ice. He's Sancho Panza to Don Quixote, Caliban to Ariel, and we see ourselves in him.

Do you have a theory of why Sherlock Holmes seems to be having a cultural renaissance right now?

The darkness and danger of Sherlock Holmes that I spoke about a moment ago seem to symbolize our peculiar moment in history. Holmes is neurotic, which I think explains exactly why we're so drawn to him in these troubling times. Somehow,

Conan Doyle found the perfect character to reflect the twentieth century that lay ahead of him. At the same time, Holmes is part of a literary genre that we find particularly reassuring at the moment. In traditional mysteries (as in classic comedies) the world may seem topsy-turvy as we bump and rattle along through the bulk of the story, but by the end, it somehow rights itself. Think of a jigsaw puzzle. The writer throws all the pieces up in the air in a way that seems unsolvable; but somehow, through the magic of storytelling, all the pieces fall to earth and lock into place. This pattern gives us confidence that our lives will be all right in the end.

Why did you decide to adapt *The Hound of the Baskervilles*?

I think *Hound* is the best of all the Holmes stories. It's clever and crafty, filled with colorful characters (and an especially fine villain), has evocative settings, and it moves like lightning. Also, it's the perfect length dramatically—it's not a short story and it's not a long novel. Also, the story moves from London to the countryside, so it replicates one of my favorite tropes in comic literature: city people going into the country where they learn something of value they can bring back to their city lives. It's the prototypical pattern of *As You Like It* and *The Beaux' Stratagem* and dozens of other plays and novels. I think there's a sturdiness to that shift in geography.

Do you consider yourself primarily a writer of comedies? Why do you think you tend toward that form?

I think the answer is simply that I write what I love and what I care about. The great Shakespeare comedies that inspire us all – *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado...*, *Midsummer*, and the rest – are works of divine intervention and beyond imitation. But what I can aspire to – in the same way a cat can look at a king – are plays like *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*, *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Private Lives* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. These are the works of literature that I just love in my bones. They are bound up with the nature of good fellowship and humanity, and nothing else delights me or interests me in the way that they do. So what I've done is spent my life trying to write them.

*For J.W. Morrissette
who knows so much about the theatre it should be illegal,
and in gratitude for many years of friendship and good cheer.*

ACT ONE

(In the darkness, music begins. Something troubling from the Romantic repertoire. Perhaps the opening of the First Movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 3 in D Major. It suggests the murky atmosphere of the moors of England, the gloomy, dangerous world of fog and quicksand, criminals and beasts.)

Prologue: The Yew Alley at Baskerville Hall, late 1890s

(Baskerville Hall is on the Moors of Devonshire, and the night is filled with the sucking, breathing sounds of danger. Out of the mist appears SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE, a middle-aged man in faultless attire. He steps out of his back door –)

SIR CHARLES. I'll be back in a moment, Barrymore. Just enjoying the garden.

BARRYMORE. *(off)* Very good, Sir Charles.

(– and walks down the grass alley between the famous Baskerville yew trees. He stops at the gate and looks around as though he is expecting someone. But no one is there. He checks his pocket watch. Perhaps he's early. He lights a cigar. He takes a puff ... at which moment he hears something strange. Then we hear it. It's the sound of something terrible and large, breathing heavily in the distance. He looks up, slightly alarmed. He looks in one direction, then another. The breathing gets louder. Then he sees it. Something is approaching.)

SIR CHARLES. No ... no ... Stay back. Stay where you are ...

(SIR CHARLES backs away. We hear the sound of something approaching SIR CHARLES, first at a walk, then at a gallop. SIR CHARLES turns and runs, screaming.)

SIR CHARLES. *Get away! Stay there! Stay away from me!*

(The music builds. A shadow looms up and springs at SIR CHARLES and we hear the roar of something almost supernatural.)

SOUND. *ROOOOOOOAAAAAAARRRRR!*

SIR CHARLES. *AHHHHHHHHHHH!*

(The lights black out before we can see what has happened to SIR CHARLES.)

Scene One: 221B Baker Street, the Residence of Mr. Sherlock Holmes

(The lights come up to reveal DOCTOR WATSON standing in the sitting room. WATSON is solid and reliable, the Sancho Panza to Holmes's Don Quixote. Nearby is DAISY, the scullery maid, in a mob cap, scrubbing the floor. There is a window to the street and we hear the sound of carriages on the cobblestones below.)

WATSON. *(to the audience)* It all began, as these things do, with simplicity itself: a walking stick, left at our residence by an unknown visitor. However, the trail, like a labyrinth out of an ancient myth, led eventually to what my friend Sherlock Holmes described as the greatest and most dangerous case in the history of his career. It ended with a kind of reckless triumph, and along the way it renewed my respect for the greatest man I have ever known.

(MRS. HUDSON enters with the stick. She's the housekeeper and is full of warmth and good spirit.)

MRS. HUDSON. Oh Doctor Watson, look at this cane. That man last night left it here by accident when you and Mr. Holmes were out at the opera. Oh it's so romantic leaving a stick like this by the fireside.

(SHERLOCK HOLMES enters. He is lean and moody, a bundle of energy and intelligence. He is in a good mood.)

HOLMES. Good morning, Watson.

WATSON. 'Morning, Holmes.

DAISY. 'Morning.

MRS. HUDSON. Have you seen the cane yet, Mr. Holmes? I wonder who left it?

HOLMES. *(examining the cane)* Hmm, well, that's not a problem now is it? The inscription says right here on the ferrule: "To Doctor John Mortimer: good luck from his friends at the CCH, 1894." What do you make of it, Watson?

(He hands the cane to his friend.)

WATSON. Well applying your methods, Holmes, though I'm sure I can never equal them, I'd say that because the stick is scratched on the bottom, the man likes to take long walks and he lives in the country. Therefore, CCH stands for "Country Club Hunt." And because such a gift is generally given upon retirement, I'd say that the fellow's a successful, elderly medical man who has lived in the country his entire life and is obviously well-beloved by his friends.

HOLMES. Excellent, Watson. Truly remarkable.

WATSON. Am I correct then?

HOLMES. No, you're completely wrong.

WATSON. Really, Holmes –

HOLMES. But you inspire me, Watson. Like John Falstaff, you are not only witty in yourself, but the cause that wit is in other men. In point of fact, as the cane tells us, our Doctor Mortimer is a young man under thirty who used to work at Charing Cross Hospital – "CCH" – here in London. He has lived in the country for the

past five years, and he is amiable, unambitious, absent-minded, and the possessor of a favorite medium-sized dog.

MRS. HUDSON. Oh Mr. Holmes, sometimes I think I'd marry you if you didn't have such filthy habits.

HOLMES. Trifles, Mrs. Hudson. A parlor game. He is *Doctor* Mortimer, so "CCH" must stand for Charing Cross Hospital, and he must be a *young* man because he wouldn't leave such a fine practice if he were well established. So he must have been a student there, and as the date on the stick is five years old, we have a young fellow, under thirty.

WATSON. And the rest of it?

HOLMES. The scratches on the cane confirm that he does indeed live in the country now, and it is my experience that only *amiable* men receive testimonials, only *unambitious* ones abandon London, and only *absent-minded* ones leave their sticks and not their visiting-cards.

DAISY. Gor.

MRS. HUDSON. And what about the dog?

HOLMES. Look at the tooth marks.

(He holds the stick to his mouth sideways and demonstrates.)

Being a heavy stick, the dog has held it tightly by the middle. The dog's jaw, as shown in the space between the marks, is too broad for a terrier and too narrow for a mastiff. It may have been, aha, yes it is! It's a curly-haired spaniel.

WATSON. Holmes, please! How could you possibly know that?

HOLMES. Because I'm looking out the window and see the dog on our doorstep now,

(Ring!)

and there is the ring of its owner. Mrs. Hudson, the door?

MRS. HUDSON. Right away, sir.

(She goes off.)

HOLMES. Now is the dramatic moment of fate, Watson, when you hear a step upon the stair of someone walking into your life, and you know not whether for good or ill. What does Dr. Mortimer, man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, specialist in crime? And can he relieve the tedium of our mortal existence? Come in!

(DR. MORTIMER enters with MRS. HUDSON. He's about thirty, sparkling, friendly eyes, gold-rimmed glasses.)

DR. MORTIMER. Ah, my stick! What a relief. I wouldn't lose it for the world.

HOLMES. A presentation, I see.

DR. MORTIMER. Indeed. From Charing Cross Hospital when I moved to the country. I was a student at the time.

(HOLMES gives WATSON a look.)

I take it I am addressing Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

HOLMES. And this is my friend, Doctor Watson.

WATSON. How do you do.

MRS. HUDSON. Ahem.

HOLMES. And this is Mrs. Hudson.

MRS. HUDSON. How do you do, sir.

HOLMES. Tea, Mrs. Hudson?

MRS. HUDSON. Yes, I'd love some. Hm? Oh of course. Right away.

(She exits.)

DR. MORTIMER. Shall I begin, sir?

HOLMES. Please.

DR. MORTIMER. I have here a manuscript –

HOLMES. Mid-eighteenth century, unless it's a forgery.

DR. MORTIMER. 1742 to be exact. Handed down for over a century and committed to me for safe-keeping

by my friend Sir Charles Baskerville, whose sudden death three weeks ago created so much excitement in Devonshire.

WATSON. It appears to be a statement of some sort.

DR. MORTIMER. May I read it to you?

(HOLMES nods and settles down to listen.)

HOLMES. Have a seat.

DR. MORTIMER. “Of the origins of the Hound of the Baskervilles:”

(Eerie, troubling music begins to play in the background.)

WATSON. “Hound?”

DR. MORTIMER. “Know then, that in the time of the Great Rebellion, the Manor of Baskerville was held by one Hugo, of a most wild, profane and godless nature.”

(Thunder. The story that DR. MORTIMER is recounting begins to unfold in front of us, and DAISY turns into SIR HUGO BASKERVILLE before our eyes.)

“It chanced that this Hugo came to love the daughter of a yeoman who held lands near Baskerville, but the maiden feared his evil ways and would ever avoid him.”

“So it came to pass that one Michaelmas this Hugo, with five or six of his wicked companions, stole down upon the farm of the maiden and carried her off. And when they brought her to Baskerville Hall, the maiden was placed in an upper chamber – ”

MAIDEN. *No, stop it, please!*

HUGO. *(striking her) Quiet down!*

MAIDEN. *Ah!*

DR. MORTIMER. “– while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long carouse, as was their custom.”

(Singing and carousing is heard.)

“Now the poor lass upstairs was like to have her wits turned by the singing and shouting, and in the stress of fear, she did that which might have daunted the bravest of men, for by the aid of the ivy which covered

the south wall, she came down from the eaves and so began homeward across the moor. Now it chanced that some small time later, Hugo found the cage empty and the bird escaped, whereupon, rushing down the stairs he sprang upon the table and cried:”

HUGO. *If I can but overtake that wench this very night, I shall render up my body to the Powers of Evil!*

(crash of thunder)

Now saddle my mare, unkennel my pack AND PUT THE HOUNDS UPON HER!!

(We hear thundering hooves and the hounds baying in their bloodlust.)

DR. MORTIMER. “Taking to their horses in pursuit, the revelers had gone but a mile when they passed a shepherdess and cried to her to know if she had seen the hunt. The woman was crazed with fear and could scarcely speak, but at last recounted:”

SHEPHERDESS. I have seen the maiden and the dogs, and then Sir Hugo passed me upon his mare and there ran behind him *such a hound of Hell as man has never looked upon!*

DR. MORTIMER. “The drunken squires rode on, but soon their skins turned cold for they came upon the dogs who, though known for the valor of their breed, were whimpering in a cluster at the head of a ditch;”

(sounds of the dogs whimpering)

“and there in the moonlight lay the unhappy maiden where she had fallen dead of fear. But it was not the sight of her body nor that of Sir Hugo lying nearby which raised the hair upon their heads, but standing over him and plucking at his throat was a foul thing, a great black beast shaped like a hound yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon.”

(We hear the hideous, snarling, tearing sounds of a horrid beast.)

“And even as they looked, the thing tore the throat out of Sir Hugo.”

HUGO. *Arghhhhh!*

(As HUGO and the MAIDEN disappear, DR. MORTIMER closes the manuscript. There is a dead, almost eerie silence.)

HOLMES. ... Continue.

DR. MORTIMER. I am here because of the sudden death three weeks ago of my friend and patient Sir Charles Baskerville at the very same estate in Devon. The verdict at the inquest was death by natural causes.

WATSON. But?

DR. MORTIMER. But I got there before the police came, and at the inquest I was reluctant to reveal certain ... observations I made at the time for fear of endorsing local superstitions.

HOLMES. I'm fond of "observations," Doctor. Pray continue.

DR. MORTIMER. The day had been wet and the footprints of Sir Charles reveal him walking behind the house to the gate, where he seems to have waited. He then continued, but his footprints changed – he appears to have walked on *tiptoe* from that point on, moving *away* from the house to the spot where he fell. I then examined the body, which had not been touched.

(Eerie music begins; SIR CHARLES is lying on the ground.)

Sir Charles lay face down, his arms out, his fingers dug into the ground, and when I turned him over, his features were convulsed with such strong emotion that I could hardly have sworn to his identity. There was certainly no physical injury of any kind, and while there was no disturbance *near* the body, there were marks on the ground several yards away.

WATSON. Footprints?

DR. MORTIMER. Footprints.

HOLMES. A man or a woman's?

DR. MORTIMER. Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound.

(A screech of sound. The dialogue becomes rapid-fire.)

HOLMES. You saw this?

DR. MORTIMER. Clearly.

HOLMES. And you said nothing?

DR. MORTIMER. What was the use?

HOLMES. How was it that no one else saw it?

DR. MORTIMER. The marks were twenty yards from the body.

WATSON. There are sheep dogs on the moor?

DR. MORTIMER. This was no sheep dog.

HOLMES. You say it was large?

DR. MORTIMER. Enormous.

HOLMES. *Oh, if I had only been there! You should have sent for me!*

DR. MORTIMER. I didn't think of it. Besides ...

WATSON. What is it? You hesitate.

DR. MORTIMER. There were incidents before the tragedy. Several people saw a creature upon the moor which corresponds exactly with the Baskerville demon of legend, a creature from a nightmare, with blazing eyes and dripping jaws. *Gentlemen, there is such a reign of terror in the district that no one will even cross the moor at night!*

HOLMES. *(quietly)* How can we assist you?

DR. MORTIMER. By advising me what I should do with Sir Henry Baskerville, who arrives at Waterloo Station in exactly one hour.

WATSON. He is the heir?

DR. MORTIMER. Yes. He's an American who lives in Texas.

WATSON. Why not take him to the home of his fathers?

DR. MORTIMER. But consider the history. The danger! What can I *do*, gentlemen?!

HOLMES. First I advise you to call off your spaniel, who is scratching at my front door with the zeal of a Christian, then take a cab and collect Sir Henry.

DR. MORTIMER. And then?

HOLMES. Then return here tomorrow morning at ten with Sir Henry and I will suggest how to proceed. Good morning.

WATSON. Goodbye.

DR. MORTIMER. Goodbye.

(DR. MORTIMER leaves the room.)

HOLMES. I like it, Watson. There is a feverish quality to this unlikely tale that appeals to me. Are you going out?

WATSON. Unless I can help you in some way.

HOLMES. No, dear fellow, but when you pass Bradley's, would you ask them to send up a pound of their strongest shag tobacco.

WATSON. *(to the audience)* This was the moment when everything changed. Holmes had smelled the bait, and I sensed that we were on the verge of another one of his strange, roller-coaster adventures. I also knew that tobacco was the engine he required at these moments of intense, mental concentration, so I stopped at Bradley's.

BRADLEY. That'll be two and sixpence for the best shag tobacco in the country.

(He smells it.)

Ahhhh.

WATSON. I had it sent 'round, then returned that evening.

Scene Two: That Evening

(WATSON enters the room and is overwhelmed by a dense cloud of tobacco smoke. He chokes and waves his arms and gasps, as HOLMES appears in the middle of it, puffing away on his pipe.)

WATSON. (*choking*) Holmes ... Holmes ...

HOLMES. Caught cold, dear man?

WATSON. No, it's this poisonous atmosphere!

HOLMES. It is rather thick, but as a medical man you will admit that smoking is good for the health.

(DAISY *emits her distinctive laugh.*)

WATSON. You know I admit no such thing. Now, how is the case coming?

HOLMES. (*casually changing his tie at a mirror*) There are certainly some points of distinction about it. That change in the footprints, for example. What do you make of that?

WATSON. Mortimer said the victim began walking on tip-toe at some point.

HOLMES. He was running, Watson, running desperately for his life until his heart burst and he fell dead on the spot.

WATSON. Running from what?

HOLMES. There lies our problem. There are indications that the man was literally crazed with fear.

WATSON. His face you mean?

HOLMES. That and I believe that something dangerous approached him from across the moor. Only a man who has lost his wits would run *from* the house instead of towards it when he was threatened. But who was he waiting for that night? And why was he waiting in the Yew Alley instead of inside the house? The thing takes shape, Watson. It becomes coherent. Come, get your hat, we'll be late.

WATSON. For what?

HOLMES. For the opera! There is nothing like a little musical mayhem to clear the mind.

Scene Three: A Box at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

(**HOLMES** is seated, in his own world, as **WATSON** addresses us. From the stage below we hear the end of Act Two of *Tosca* as **BARON SCARPIA** brutalizes **FLORIA TOSCA** and she takes her revenge by stabbing him to death.)

WATSON. As always at the opera, Holmes sat there motionless, as though in a trance induced by the discordant harmonies that swirled around us.

(We hear the divine music echoing through the theater and we see **TOSCA** stabbing **SCARPIA** on the stage below the box.)

I have no doubt, however, that his brain was racing a mile a minute, sorting clues like a ciphering machine, while on the stage below us a woman named Floria Tosca was taking her revenge on the evil Baron Scarpia, acting out the kind of ruthless murder that had become part of our daily lives.

(*Bing bong!* A doorbell rings and we're back at:)

Scene Four: 221B Baker Street, the Next Morning

MRS. HUDSON. Doctor John Mortimer and Sir Henry Baskerville, Baronet. *Entrez s'il vous plaît.*

(**MRS. HUDSON** exits. **SIR HENRY** is a handsome young man, full of charm and innocence. He has a Texas accent, not a silly one, but pronounced.)

SIR HENRY. Gentlemen, it's good to meet ya.

WATSON. Likewise. It's a pleasure.

SIR HENRY. I understand, Mr. Holmes, that you think out little puzzles for people, and if mah new friend here hadn't arranged for us to come 'round this mornin', I'd have come myself.

HOLMES. You have had a remarkable experience, then?

SIR HENRY. I wouldn't call it remarkable, exactly. Just this oddball letter that arrived at my hotel this mornin'.

HOLMES. (*reading the address on the envelope*) "To Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel." Who knew you were going to the Northumberland?

DR. MORTIMER. No one could have possibly known.

HOLMES. Except yourself.

DR. MORTIMER. Well, yes, but we only decided to stay there after we met at the station.

(**HOLMES** removes the letter from the envelope and unfolds it – and behind the **ACTORS** we see it projected or otherwise displayed. [See Appendix.] It consists of several words cut out of a newspaper and glued to a piece of paper – all except the last word, which is written in ink.)

WATSON. Good heavens! All the words have been cut out of a magazine or a newspaper.

HOLMES. Except the last one. "As you value your life or your reason, keep away from the moor."

(*examining the letter minutely, holding it an inch from his nose and smelling it*)

I take it you've told Sir Henry about the hound.

DR. MORTIMER. Yes I have –

SIR HENRY. And it sounds like hogwash to me. A big ol' hound with blazin' eyes who breathes fire? Hell, I got hounds back home that would eat him for breakfast and spit out the bones.

HOLMES. Watson, do we have yesterday's *Times*?

WATSON. Right here.

HOLMES. There's an interesting article on the front page about Free Trade. Listen carefully. "You will see that it stands to reason that your tariffs will keep away wealth from the life of the country, which ..."

SIR HENRY. Aren't you gettin' a bit off the trail here?

HOLMES. On the contrary, I am hot *on* the trail. See the words in this article: “you,” “your,” “life,” “reason,” “keep away,” “from the.” You see the words in this letter – “you,” “your,” “life,” “reason,” “keep away,” “from the” – they were cut out of a copy of this very article.

DR. MORTIMER. That’s remarkable! How did you know that?

HOLMES. Come now, Doctor. It is my profession. I know the print of every newspaper in the country – though I will confess that once, when I was very young, I confused the *Dover Express* with the *Oxford Mercury*. I couldn’t leave my house for weeks.

SIR HENRY. But why is the word “moor” written out by hand?

WATSON. The word is less common and therefore harder to find in print.

HOLMES. Well done, Watson.

WATSON. Thank you, Holmes.

HOLMES. Now tell me, gentlemen, have you observed anyone following you this morning?

SIR HENRY. Holy cow, it’s like I’ve walked straight into a dime novel.

DR. MORTIMER. I’ve seen no one.

WATSON. The point remains whether Sir Henry should go to Devonshire or not.

SIR HENRY. No it don’t remain! That is my property now – all ten thousand acres of it – and I ain’t givin’ it up for nobody.

HOLMES. Then do as I say and do it now. I want the two of you to *walk back* to your hotel at a brisk but not unreasonable pace. Doctor Watson and I will then join you there for lunch at one. Good morning, gentlemen. Go quickly.

SIR HENRY. I gotta confess, I don’t quite understand why we’re –

HOLMES. *Do not question me! Go now!*

WATSON. We shall see you later.

(The two men hurry out. The moment they're gone, HOLMES springs into action.)

HOLMES. Quick, Watson! Your hat! Not a moment to lose!

WATSON. What? What's the matter?! Shall I stop them?!

HOLMES. Not for the world, dear friend. We'll follow them at about fifty yards! Quickly, quickly! Into the street!

Scene Five: Through the London Streets

(It's pouring rain and we hear the sound of it. We also hear a boom of thunder. We follow HOLMES and WATSON out the door and through the streets of London as they keep SIR HENRY and DR. MORTIMER in view. The street is crowded and full of street noises.)

WATSON. Good Lord, it's pouring out here!

HOLMES. Keep them in view!

WATSON. There they are!

HOLMES. Stay low. Act natural.

(They pull their hats down.)

WATSON. Holmes! Look! They're stopping at a window!

HOLMES. Duck in this doorway! Look, there! Do you see that cab with the man inside? The one with the black beard?

(We see him.)

It's halted on the other side of the street ... and now it's moving slowly forward again ... it's following Sir Henry and Doctor Mortimer ...

(Suddenly the MAN turns and stares directly at HOLMES and WATSON.)

WATSON. Oh, I say! He's spotted us!

MAN WITH BLACK BEARD. Sherlock Holmes!

HOLMES. Get back!

WATSON. Too late!

MAN WITH BLACK BEARD. *(screaming to his driver) Move! Move at a gallop!*

(We hear the whinny of a horse and the carriage hurrying away over the cobblestones.)

WATSON. *There he goes!*

MAN WITH BLACK BEARD. *Quickly! Quickly!*

HOLMES. *Watson, find us a cab immediately!*

(He and WATSON try to hail one.)

WATSON. Taxi! Taxi!

HOLMES. *Cab! Cab! Where's a cab, for God's sake! ... Ah! How could I be such a dolt! An idiot! My God, I'm a babe in the woods! I trust, Watson, if you're an honest man, you will record this blunder of mine in your memoirs along with the successes you keep writing about!*

WATSON. Who was the man?

HOLMES. I have no idea.

WATSON. But how did you know that he'd – ?

HOLMES. Watson, please. It was evident from all we heard that Sir Henry has been closely shadowed since arriving in London. But I thought his pursuer would be on foot, not in a cab.

WATSON. It's a pity we didn't get the number.

HOLMES. *(a look)* My dear Watson. As clumsy as I've been, you don't think I failed to get the number, do you? I have an idea, come with me. Yes, there it is, the Messenger Office. Come inside!

(HOLMES leads the way into:)

Scene Six: A District Messenger Office

(We hear the jingle of a bell as they enter. An exuberant man named WILSON is behind the counter.)

WILSON. Mr. Holmes! Oh my goodness! What a pleasure to see you so *LUCY! IT'S MR. HOLMES AND DOCTOR WATSON!* I'm afraid she's going a bit deaf like her mother, who couldn't hear a freight train if it was runnin' her down but *LUCY!*

(*LUCY runs in.*)

LUCY. Oh my saints, it's Mr. Holmes and the dear Doctor! Oh, we'll never forget what you gentlemen did for us.

WILSON. We'd have no business left!

LUCY. He'd be rotting in jail as he ought to be.

WILSON. Owwww.

WATSON. You're lovely to say it.

LUCY. What?

WATSON. *YOU'RE LOVELY!*

LUCY. Ooh, Doctor! (*flirting*) Last man who called me lovely is the father of me children.

WILSON. Now what can I do for you gentlemen?

HOLMES. Just two items. First, I'd like to send a wire to the Cab Authority. Tell them I seek the identity of the woman who drives Cab Number 2704. [*spoken as "twenty-seven-oh-four"*]

WATSON. "Woman?"

HOLMES. Come, Watson, you didn't notice?

WILSON. I'll do it this instant, sir.

HOLMES. Also, amongst your messenger boys I recall you have a lad named Cartwright who has done some errands for me in the past. Is he here?

LUCY. Who?

WATSON. *CARTWRIGHT!*

LUCY. Oh he's a good lad, he is. I'll call him for you. He's been one of our regulars since *CARTWRIGHT, GET DOWN HERE! IT'S MR. HOLMES TO SEE YOU!*

CARTWRIGHT. (*off*) *Coming, ma'am!*

HOLMES. And if you would be so kind, I'd like a moment alone with him.

LUCY. What?

WILSON. *Be quiet!*

WATSON. *ALONE!*

LUCY. (*taking his hand*) Of course you feel alone, Doctor, you need a wife to take care of you.

WILSON. *CARTWRIGHT!!*

CARTWRIGHT. (*entering*) I'm right 'ere, sir.

(CARTWRIGHT is a boy of fourteen, a street urchin with a Cockney accent. He wears a cap and has a ready smile.)

WILSON. We'll leave you to it.

LUCY. What? What?

WILSON. *WE'RE GOING AWAY!*

LUCY. No, I don't think we should stay ...

(They're gone.)

CARTWRIGHT. 'Allo, Mr. 'Olmes. Doctor.

HOLMES. Hello, Cartwright. How are the rest of the boys?

CARTWRIGHT. The Irregulars, sir? They're doin' all right with the odd job now and then. O' course they wouldn't mind a little extra work on their plates if it came a-callin' in the scheme o' things.

(A boy named MILKER pops in. Another street urchin.)

MILKER. We certainly wouldn't!

WATSON. Who's that?

MILKER. The name's Milker, sir. I work with Cartwright when there's a shilling or two in circulation, if ya see what I mean. So what d'ya think?

HOLMES. Fine, fine, it will speed things up. Now do you boys see this Hotel Directory?

(HOLMES has taken it from one of Wilson's shelves.)

There are twenty-three hotels listed in the neighborhood of Charing Cross.

CARTWRIGHT. I see 'em.

MILKER. Got it.

HOLMES. You will visit each of them in turn.

CARTWRIGHT. Yes, sir.

HOLMES. (*giving them money*) You will begin in each case by giving the porter one shilling.

MILKER. Yes, sir.

HOLMES. You will tell him that you want to see yesterday's refuse. You will say that you're looking for a lost telegram.

CARTWRIGHT. Yes, sir.

HOLMES. But what you are really looking for is this page of *The Times* with some words cut out.

MILKER. Yes, sir.

HOLMES. Will you both stop saying "Yes, sir?"

CARTWRIGHT & MILKER. Yes, sir.

HOLMES. Now in about twenty cases the waste of the day before will have been burned, but in the three other cases you will be shown a heap of paper and you will look for this page of *The Times* among it. The odds are enormously against your finding it, and I'd like a report as soon as possible.

MILKER. Yes, s –

CARTWRIGHT. You got it, sir.

MILKER. And may I say what a pleasure it is entering your employment, Mr. Holmes –

CARTWRIGHT. and you Doctor Watson

MILKER. and now

CARTWRIGHT. like a runaway 'orse

MILKER. or a speeding train

CARTWRIGHT. or a spotted leopard

MILKER. or a genie in a bottle

CARTWRIGHT. or a phantom

MILKER. or a ghost

CARTWRIGHT. or a bullet

MILKER. or a sound

CARTWRIGHT & MILKER. *we're off!*

(They run off.)

HOLMES. Watson, come. We are due at the Northumberland Hotel and I know the desk clerk there. He's a Castilian.

Scene Seven: The Lobby of the Northumberland Hotel

*(Behind the counter is a **CASTILIAN DESK CLERK** with an unctuous manner and pronounced accent.)*

DESK CLERK. *Meethter Holmes!* What a pleasure, thir. And *Doctor Watthon!* Oh I read about your exthploits in the Thtrand Magazine *religiouthly*. Thir Henry Baskerville is exthpecting you upsthairs, thir.

HOLMES. Have you any objection to my looking at your register?

DESK CLERK. Oh, not in the leatht, thir. Mi regithterio eth tu regithterio.

HOLMES. Ah, I see that no one has checked in since Sir Henry arrived.

DESK CLERK. That ith correct, thir. We try to keep out the rift and the raft becauth, ath you know, our hotel ith the most proper in all of London.

*(During the following, the **DESK CLERK** tries to listen to what **HOLMES** is telling **WATSON**, but tries to cover it by playing with the plant on his desk or some such.)*

HOLMES. *(aside to **WATSON**)* This is very interesting. If no one's checked in, it means that the man in the cab is anxious to *watch* Sir Henry but equally anxious not to be *seen* by him.

WATSON. You mean he might be recognized – ? Well look who's coming.

*(**INSPECTOR LESTRADE** enters. He's a blustery, unrepentant member of Scotland Yard with a loud voice)*

that has the timbre of a meat grinder. He's overflowing with self-confidence and a lack of irony. He speaks with a lower-middle-class accent.)

HOLMES. It's an old friend.

WATSON. Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard.

HOLMES. Let's hope he does not derail the investigation this time.

LESTRADE. Well, knock me senseless, it's Mr. Sherlock 'Olmes. What the 'ell are you doin' here? 'Ello, Doctor.

HOLMES. I'm meeting a client. What about you?

LESTRADE. They're wastin' me bleedin' time with some piss-pot baloney about some baronet.

DESK CLERK. Thir, your language, pleath!

LESTRADE. What about it?

DESK CLERK. Thith ith a public hothtilery and we have children here!

(A baby carriage rolls across stage.)

BABY. *(inside the carriage)* WHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAA!

DESK CLERK. Do you thee what you've done?! *Ay Dios mio en España! Hasta cuanto tengo que soportar a este insolente insultando y desgraciando la honra de mi hotel?!*

LESTRADE. I ain't impressed! Me mother speaks Italian, too.

(to HOLMES)

If you ask me it's a lot o' bollocks for some toff from America who's goin' to inherit a fortune anyhow.

HOLMES. He's my client, actually.

LESTRADE. Good, 'cause I got a more important case in 'Ounslow involvin'

(directed at the DESK CLERK to defy him)

some bleedin' bastard and his naked mistresses!

DESK CLERK. *Ayeeee!*

(LESTRADE exits.)

BABY. WHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAA!

DESK CLERK. *Theeth ith outrageous! He ith thpoiling the prethtidge of theeth hotel and he will ruin uth!!!*

(SIR HENRY enters holding a black boot.)

SIR HENRY. Galdarnit!

HOLMES. Sir Henry. What's the matter?

SIR HENRY. I'll tell ya what the matter is! They're playin' me for a sucker in this hotel! And if they don't find my boot, there's gonna be trouble!

WATSON. You lost a boot?

SIR HENRY. Not just a boot – it's my favorite pair! And they lost just *one of 'em!* Now does that make any sense in the world?! *Hey you!*

(A GERMAN MAID has entered, crossing the lobby. Perhaps the DESK CLERK has summoned her and then gone off.)

GERMAN MAID. *Mein Gott!*

SIR HENRY. She's the maid. I talked to her earlier. Miss, have you found my boot yet?! Now tell me the truth, 'cause if you were in on it – !

GERMAN MAID. Nein, nein, sir! I have not found der boot, I swear. I'm asken der boot-black und iss not mitt him. Und I look in der cupboard und I look on der shelves und I make der qeries –

SIR HENRY. Well either that boot comes back before sundown or I'll talk to your manager!

GERMAN MAID. I find, I promise! I find das boot!

(DR. MORTIMER enters in a warm coat from the street.)

HOLMES. Ah, Doctor Mortimer –

DR. MORTIMER. I'm sorry I'm late. Brr, it's cold!

GERMAN MAID. *(asking to take the Doctor's hat)* Bitte.

DR. MORTIMER. It's more than bitter, it's downright freezing.

GERMAN MAID. Danke.

DR. MORTIMER. Yes it's dank as well.

(He shivers, and the MAID exits with his hat.)

SIR HENRY. I'm sorry, Mr. Holmes. It just gets in my craw when somebody tries to play me for a sucker. I know it ain't important in the scheme o' things ...

HOLMES. On the contrary, I believe it's quite important.

WATSON. You do realize that you were followed this morning after you left us.

DR. MORTIMER. Really?

SIR HENRY. By who?!

HOLMES. Dr. Mortimer, do any of your acquaintances in Devonshire have a black beard?

DR. MORTIMER. Barrymore does. Sir Charles's butler.

WATSON. And did Barrymore profit by Sir Charles's will?

DR. MORTIMER. He and his wife were left five hundred pounds each. But I trust a bequest doesn't make one a suspect. I received ... well, ten thousand pounds.

WATSON. That's a lot of money.

DR. MORTIMER. Yes, it is.

HOLMES. Anyone else?

DR. MORTIMER. He left a bit to a few charities, and the residue went to Sir Henry.

HOLMES. And how much was that?

DR. MORTIMER. Seven hundred and forty thousand pounds.

WATSON. *Good God!* Excuse me.

HOLMES. Quite enough money to provoke a murder, don't you think?

SIR HENRY. When Dr. Mortimer told me the amount of the legacy I almost fell off mah chair.

HOLMES. And if anything happened to Sir Henry, who would inherit?

DR. MORTIMER. Well I've heard talk of a black-sheep son of Sir Charles's brother Roger, but I believe he died some years ago in South America.

HOLMES. *(to SIR HENRY)* And you're unmarried?

SIR HENRY. That's right.

HOLMES. No children?

SIR HENRY. I sure hope not, but I can't swear to it. Ha!

WATSON. Have you made a will?

SIR HENRY. Nope.

HOLMES. Hmm. Well. I agree that you should go to Devonshire and claim your inheritance. There is only one proviso: you must not go alone.

SIR HENRY. Dr. Mortimer's goin' with me.

HOLMES. But Dr. Mortimer has his practice to attend to, and I presume that his house is not near the Manor.

DR. MORTIMER. Four miles away.

HOLMES. There you are. You must take someone trustworthy who will stay by your side.

SIR HENRY. Could you come yourself?

HOLMES. I'm afraid that's impossible. There is a scandal threatening the King of Bohemia that requires my attention at the moment. However, if my friend would agree, you could have no better companion, nor any braver.

WATSON. Me? Oh, I say, that's a kind way to put it.

SIR HENRY. And it would be kind of you, Doctor, if you're up for it.

WATSON. Well. Hm. I'm not really sure I'm the man for it, but ... I'll do it.

HOLMES. Excellent!

SIR HENRY. Okay!

DR. MORTIMER. The matter's concluded then. When shall we depart?

HOLMES. Shall we say Paddington Station today at four?

SIR HENRY. Done.

ALL. Done!

("Owhheeeeeeee!" The train.)

Scene Eight: The Platform at Paddington Station

(We hear the scream of a train whistle, then the noises of a bustling train station. A blast of smoke fills the air, and HOLMES and WATSON confer on the platform.)

HOLMES. Watson, you'll write to me frequently and report the facts. You are my eyes and ears and I must know everything. Now I've made some inquiries and learned that a man escaped last month from Princetown Prison, which is close to Baskerville, and he's said to be dangerous. There is also a scientist named Stapleton living nearby with his sister, as well as the butler and his wife, the Barrymores, of whom I hear rather sinister rumors, and of course our friend, Dr. Mortimer, who I believe to be honest but of whom we actually know very little.

WATSON. You should be more trusting, Holmes.

HOLMES. Oh I'd be much more trusting if he hadn't inherited ten thousand pounds. On which theory we should add Sir Henry himself to our little gallery.

WATSON. Oh I don't believe that. He's so American.

HOLMES. Well he inherited close to a million pounds, and *someone* killed Sir Charles Baskerville.

(MRS. CLAYTON, a cab woman, approaches. She's as tough as shoe leather and about as attractive.)

MRS. CLAYTON. Oy there! 'Scuse me. Are you the owners o' the 'ouse at 221B Baker Street?

WATSON. That's right.

MRS. CLAYTON. I understand you wanted some words with the driver of Cab Number 2704, now what d'you got against me?

HOLMES. I have nothing against you, Madam. On the contrary, I have half a sovereign for you if you'll answer some questions.

MRS. CLAYTON. Well I'm havin' a good day, aren't I? How can I 'elp ya?

HOLMES. Tell me about the man with the black beard who watched my house at ten this morning, then followed two gentlemen down Regent Street.

MRS. CLAYTON. Now what's the good o' me tellin' you? You know as much I do already! The gent told me 'e was a detective and that I was to keep me trap shut, as it were.

WATSON. My good woman, this is serious business, and you'll find yourself in a bad position if you try to hide anything!

HOLMES. Tell me where you picked him up and all that occurred.

MRS. CLAYTON. Well, this gentleman 'ailed me at 'alf past noyne this mornin' at Trafalgar Square and offered me two guineas if I would do as 'e wanted. First we drove to the Northumberland and waited there till two gents come out, and we followed 'em till they stopped at your place.

HOLMES. And then?

MRS. CLAYTON. They come out o' there and we followed 'em again, only this time my gentleman sees you on the street and 'e throws up the trap and cries "*Oy! You! Drive as 'ard as you can to Waterloo Station!*" and I got 'im there in ten minutes and away 'e went.

HOLMES. And who was this detective of yours? Did he give a name?

MRS. CLAYTON. Yes 'e did. As 'e left the cab, 'e said, "It might interest you to know, young woman, that you 'ave been drivin' Mr. Sherlock 'Olmes."

HOLMES. What?

WATSON. What?!

(And HOLMES breaks into a peal of laughter.)

HOLMES. Thank you, good woman. You have been very helpful.

MRS. CLAYTON. Thank you, sir.

(MRS. CLAYTON exits.)

HOLMES. What a foe, Watson! The cunning rascal! He spotted who I was in Regent Street, assumed I would find the driver of the cab, and sent me back this audacious message. I tell you, Watson, this time we have a foeman worthy of our steel.

WATSON. The man is bold, if nothing else.

HOLMES. He's a creature of tangles who is weaving a web whose intricacies we are barely glimpsing. I'm afraid I'm not easy about sending you on this dangerous errand. You have a revolver, I suppose?

WATSON. (*pats his coat pocket*) Yes, I thought it well to take it with me.

HOLMES. Keep it near you night and day and never relax your precautions. Ah, Doctor Mortimer, Sir Henry. Right on time.

(**DR. MORTIMER** and **SIR HENRY** enter and the train whistles.)

SIR HENRY. Well if this ain't an adventure, I don't know what is.

WATSON. Did you find your boot?

DR. MORTIMER. He did not. I suppose it's gone forever.

HOLMES. How very intriguing. Sir Henry, heed what I say and follow my instructions to the letter.

SIR HENRY. Instructions?

HOLMES. You must avoid the moor in the hours of darkness *at all costs*. It is a landscape that will try to seduce you with its morbid beauty. And you should not leave the house at all without Watson, is that clear?

SIR HENRY. Well I'll try, but I sure don't like bein' pent up.

CONDUCTOR. (*off*) *All aboard!*

DR. MORTIMER. Shall we proceed, Sir Henry?

HOLMES. Good luck to all of you. Watson.

WATSON. Holmes.

(*We hear the opening bars of the Second Movement of Mahler's Symphony Number One in D Major. It's a song of travel.*)

**Scene Nine: The Train To Baskerville/
Baskerville Station**

(We're inside the train carriage with WATSON, DR. MORTIMER and SIR HENRY. SIR HENRY is asleep. They sway and bump along with the train.)

WATSON. I looked back at the platform when we had left it far behind and saw the tall, austere figure of Holmes standing motionless and gazing after us. I felt alone; yet I was on my mettle to do my best for Holmes, and Sir Henry, knowing full well and without regret that there was danger ahead.

CONDUCTOR. *Grimpen Station! All out for Grimpen!*

SIR HENRY. Hmm? What? What? That was quick.

(WATSON steps out of the train.)

WATSON. Sir. You there in the trap. Could you take us to Baskerville Hall for a shilling?

TRAP DRIVER. *(ominously)* Baskerville 'All? Are you sure you wanta go there, young fella?

WATSON. Well yes. I am.

TRAP DRIVER. Fair enough. Climb aboard. If it don't kill ya, it'll make ya stronger. I believe that's how Nietzsche puts it, now ain't it. Haw Haw. Don't dawdle ... G'yap.

(Sounds of a clip-clopping horse and trap. WATSON and SIR HENRY bounce around in the carriage.)

WATSON. We proceeded through the moors of Devonshire, a landscape of such desolation and despair that we may as well have been visiting another, darker planet where the limbs, the trunk, the very heart of Nature were filled with malevolence. My heart grieved for the world around me; and then I saw it, in its dark, forbidding glory: Baskerville Hall.

(As they approach Baskerville Hall, the landscape becomes darker and more threatening. Suddenly, with a blast of discordant sound, the façade of Baskerville Hall looms up before them.)

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