The Hound of the Baskervilles. Summary.

Chapters 1-5 (1-57pp).

Chapter 1.

As the narration begins we can see Sherlock Holmes having breakfast. Meanwhile, his friend Dr. Watson examines a cane that was left behind by their visitor the night before. As Holmes notices his friend’s interest of the cane he inquires Watson of his inferences about it and its owner. After the inference is heard, Holmes claims Watson to be a little bit erroneous and makes his own. And yet Holmes appears to be not completely precise in the end and the visitor’s request remains unclear because he has left no notion of his errand. The mystery reveals after the owner of the cane has appeared.

The man turns out to be Mr. James Mortimer who is a former consulting practitioner at Charing Cross Hospital and owner of a curly-haired spaniel. He left the hospital due to the occasion of his marriage. James Mortimer is a very tall, thin man with a nose like a beak. Though young, his long back was already bowed. He was happy to find the cane he thought had been lost.

Chapter 2.

James Mortimer brings an old manuscript along. It was committed to his care by Sir Charles Baskerville before his death. Mr. Mortimer used to be his friend and medical attendant. The manuscript contains a tale of the origin of the Hound of Baskervilles. It says there once was the foulest man called Hugo Baskerville. The man came to fall in love with the daughter of the yeoman who held lands near the Baskerville estate. But the maiden would ever avoid him, for she feared his evil name.

One night, when the maiden’s father and brothers were away, Hugo and his friends kidnapped her. Later the lass managed to escape as Hugo and his lads were carousing. Once the fact of her escape was revealed Hugo became furious and swore that he would give his body and soul to the Powers of Evil, if he could capture the girl. Hugo then began the hunt astride his horse along his hounds. Hugo and the maiden’s bodies were found together along with a huge dog-like monster, plucking at Hugo’s throat, that night.

After the story we get to know that Charles wanted to restore Baskervilles’ grandeur. Sadly, his health had been impaired for some time. He also had a habit of walking down the famous yew alley of Baskerville Hall every night before going to bed. One night he never returned. That night Barrymores, the Hall’s staff, came alarmed when they noticed the hall’s door still open and went out to look for their master. His body was found a bit further from the moor gate. A cardiac exhaustion was stated as the public death cause due to the absence of any traces of violence.

However, one evening when James Mortimer was driving to the Baskerville Hall he saw Sir Baskerville at the gate. After James had stopped and came to Charles he noticed his friend looking behind him with an expression of the most dreadful fear. When James whisked round he saw a glimpse of something that looked like a black calf. He investigated the place where it had been spotted, but the creature was gone forever. James withheld it during the judicial interrogation. Then he tells Holmes that he found unnoticed footprints of a gigantic hound a bit further from Charles’ body.

Chapter 3.

After the announcement Holmes asks Mortimer about details of the place where Charles’s body was found. In the end of their conversation James wants Holmes to advise him whether he should bring Charles’s heir, his brother’s son Henry Baskerville who has recently returned from Canada, to the Baskerville Hall. He is afraid of Henry sharing Charles’s fate. He believes the tragedy to have the supernatural origin. Yet Holmes advises to tell Henry nothing. Then he makes an appointment for next morning and asks Mortimer to bring the heir along. After Mortimer left to meet Henry at Waterloo station, Holmes asks Watson to leave so he can make up his mind in seclusion and solitude. Watson returns in the evening. He and Holmes discuss the case, Devonshire landscape features in particular, make some deductions, then postpone the rest until the morning appointment.

Chapter 4.

In the morning, Holmes and Watson finally meet sir Henry Baskerville, who was brought in by James Mortimer. Apparently, Sir Baskerville received a letter he thought as of some kind of joke last evening. The letter contains a message telling the addressee to keep out of the moor if one cares for his life and reason. The letter consists of words cut out of a newspaper and glued together with the word ‘moor’ hand-written. Holmes deduces the composer to be a well-educated man pretending to be the opposite.

After the letter’s examination had been complete Henry demanded answers. Holmes requests Mortimer to tell the young Baskerville the story he told him and Watson. Henry decides to go to the Hall despite the probable danger. After declaring his decision Henry invites Holmes and Watson to lunch a bit later and then departs to the hotel with Mortimer.

As they left, Holmes and Watson begin to secretly follow them. Suddenly they spot a man spying on their acquaintances from one of the street cabs. Unfortunately, they get noticed as well and the spy escapes unrevealed. Since the spy has departed, they stop following the men and head to a messenger office. There they hired a man and gave him orders to search out all the hotels near Charing Cross in order to find the newspaper from which the words in the letter had been cut out.

Chapter 5.

When the lunch time comes the fellows meet at the hotel. Baskerville complains about two of his boots being stolen. Holmes notifies Henry and James that they have been followed by the spy earlier this morning. Henry unconditionally intends to go to the Baskerville Hall despite the danger. Holmes then tells Watson to go with him for Mortimer and himself would not be able to be by Henry’s side constantly due to their duties. It makes Henry happy. He finally finds one of the boots though the room was completely searched out earlier.

Later in the evening Holmes and Watson are visited by the driver who drove the cab which had been hired by the spy. They inquire the man about the spy. He tells them that the spy is a man with a pale skin, a shovel-like solid beard, about 40 years old. When Holmes asks the driver if he knows his customer’s name the driver answers that the man called himself Sherlock Holmes.

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Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle.

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle is a Scottish and English doctor and writer. He was born on May 22nd, 1859 in Edinburgh. In year 1881, he graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of the Edinburgh University and travelled to Africa as a ship’s medic.

Sir Doyle became a medical practitioner in one of London’s districts after his return. He defended dissertation and became a doctor of medicine. Gradually, he began to write stories and essays for local magazines.

He once remembered an eccentric man called Joseph Bell who had taught in The Edinburgh University. He fascinated his students with his enormous observation and skill of solving the most difficult problems with his “deductive method”. Later Joseph bell became a prototype for Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes.

Doyle travelled a lot. He travelled to Arctic aboard a whaler, to Southern and Western Africa, and served as a field surgeon during the Anglo-Boer War.

During his last years, Sir Doyle practiced spiritualism and even published “The History of Spiritualism” in two volumes at his own expense. Also, three volumes of his poems were published.

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle died in 1930 at the age of 71.