

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

(1859–1930)

Arthur Conan Doyle was born in 1859 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He grew to be an avid sportsman and athlete, and attended medical school. He was particularly drawn to one professor, Dr. Joseph Bell, who taught his students how keen observation can help a doctor make an accurate medical diagnosis. He would later draw upon this characteristic for inspiration for his most famous fictional character. With his medical degree, Doyle traveled the seas from Greenland to South Africa as a ship's surgeon, and in 1885 married Louise Hawkins.

After several years of private medical practice failed to excite his passion, he turned to his longtime interest in writing. In 1887, his first story featuring a crafty detective named Sherlock Holmes—*A Study in Scarlet*—was published. The character was a big hit, and Doyle went on to write a total of 68 stories about the clever detective, whose razor-sharp powers of observation

enabled him to outwit even master criminals. “The Hound of the Baskervilles,” published in 1902, is one of Doyle’s best-loved stories featuring Sherlock Holmes; other favorites include “The Sign of Four” in 1890, “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes” in 1892, and “His Last Bow” in 1917.

Doyle returned briefly to medicine to serve as a physician in England’s Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902). His books on this conflict, *The Great Boer War* (1900) and *The War in South Africa* (1902), earned him the honor of knighthood and the title “Sir” in 1902. His autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, was published in 1924, six years before his death. His immortal character Sherlock Holmes has never diminished in popularity; hundreds of societies, clubs, and associations around the world and on the Internet devote themselves to a continuing study of the Holmes stories.

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

FACTS ABOUT THE TIMES

In 1859, when Arthur Conan Doyle was born . . .

The U.S. population was around 32 million, while the population of Great Britain was around 23 million...Abraham Lincoln was campaigning to be the 16th U.S. president on the eve of the Civil War... French inventor Lenoir was constructing the first practical internal combustion engine ...American inventor Christopher Sholes was assembling the world's first typewriter ...French daredevil Charles Blondin crossed Niagara Falls on a tightrope.

In 1902, when Doyle's *Hound* was published . . .

His contemporaries were publishing their acclaimed work, including Kipling's

Just So Stories, Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, and Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*... J.M. Bacon became the first man to cross the Irish Channel in a balloon...5,774 British soldiers and 4,000 Boers became casualties of the Boer War.

In 1930, when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle died . . .

The last Allied troops from WWI left the Rhineland...Sigmund Freud wrote *Civilization and Its Discontents*...the "Blondie" comic strip began to boom in popularity...Dashiell Hammett was thought to inherit the mantle of best mystery writer from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with his publication of *The Maltese Falcon*.

FACTS ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

SHERLOCK HOLMES

The famous 19th-century London detective, known to solve mysterious crimes with his extraordinary powers of observation

DR. WATSON

Sherlock Holmes's trusted assistant, who narrates the story

DR. MORTIMER

The man who brings the case to Sherlock Holmes, relating the legend of "The Hound of the Baskervilles"

SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE

The last resident of a large country estate called Baskerville Hall, whose mysterious death Holmes will investigate

SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE

The heir to Sir Charles, who comes to England to claim Baskerville Hall

MR. AND MRS. BARRYMORE

Caretakers of Baskerville Hall

MR. STAPLETON

A naturalist and a neighbor to Baskerville Hall

BERYL STAPLETON

The neighbor claiming to be Mr. Stapleton's sister, in whom Sir Henry develops a romantic interest

MR. FRANKLAND

Another neighbor of Baskerville Hall, who keeps his telescope trained on strange sightings in the moor

LAURA LYONS

The estranged daughter of Mr. Frankland

SELDEN

The escaped convict who is on the loose in the moor

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

CHAPTER 1

The famous detective Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson playfully speculate about what sort of person might have left a walking stick outside their door. When Dr. Mortimer returns the next day, grateful to find his treasured walking stick, he presents an unusual case to Sherlock Holmes.

CHAPTER 2

Dr. Mortimer tells the story of how his friend and patient Sir Charles Baskerville died of a heart attack outside his home, Baskerville Hall. For generations, this family estate has been cursed by a mysterious legend about a giant hound-like beast who haunts the surrounding marsh, or moor, with its fearsome moan. The beast is said to bring misfortune to the family. With the arrival of the only heir to the Baskerville estate due in London soon, Dr. Mortimer hopes Sherlock Holmes can look into this case immediately.

CHAPTER 3

As soon as Sir Henry arrives from North America to claim Baskerville Hall, the plot thickens. A note found at his hotel warns him to stay away from Baskerville Hall, and strangely, one of his new boots disappears. Holmes enthusiastically agrees to take up the case. The detective tracks down a cab that appeared to be following Sir Henry, directs a young boy to search London hotels for the source of the threatening note, and sends a telegram to Baskerville Hall to discover the whereabouts of the caretaker.

CHAPTER 4

Sir Henry's new boot shows up, but now one of his *old* boots is missing. Sherlock Holmes' initial leads go nowhere, but Sir Henry will not be kept from going to his family's country estate. Holmes regrets he cannot go with him, saying business keeps him in London. Holmes does, however, volunteer Dr. Watson to go with Sir Henry. A surprised Watson promises to search for clues and report back to Sherlock Holmes.

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

CHAPTER 5

Dr. Watson and Sir Henry head to the country estate. Arriving at the nearby train station, they learn that an escaped murderer is on the loose in the area. At Baskerville Hall, the two are welcomed by the Barrymores, the caretakers. Dr. Watson hears a woman crying in the middle of the night. The next morning he questions Mr. Barrymore about it, but the caretaker strongly denies that it was his wife. When Mrs. Barrymore appears with red eyes and a tear-stained face, Dr. Watson suspects her husband of lying.

CHAPTER 6

Dr. Watson meets the Stapletons, neighbors of Baskerville Hall. Mr. Stapleton appears to be an avid naturalist, who goes off chasing a rare moth into remote parts of the moor. A beautiful woman identifying herself as the sister of Mr. Stapleton warns Dr. Watson of grave danger. She pleads for him to leave Baskerville Hall. Upon Mr. Stapleton's return, the woman pretends that everything is normal.

CHAPTER 7

Dr. Watson reports back to Sherlock Holmes on what has been happening at Baskerville Hall. Sir Henry has taken up a romance with neighbor Beryl Stapleton, which, strangely to Dr. Watson, her brother finds highly objectionable. Dr. Watson continues to watch the Barrymores very closely. Late one night, he discovers them signaling out to the marsh. Caught in the act, they confess that they were signaling to Mrs. Barrymore's brother, who turns out

to be the escaped convict. They have been trying to care for him from a distance. Dr. Watson and Sir Henry try to pursue the shadowy figure into the marsh, but he gets away from them.

CHAPTER 8

The Barrymores reveal an important clue they had kept from the police. They give Dr. Watson a half-burnt letter found near Sir Charles the night of his death. The letter is from Laura Lyons, the estranged daughter of Mr. Frankland, another neighbor. When Dr. Watson questions Mrs. Lyons, she is reluctant to give him any information. Dr. Watson learns from Mr. Frankland that a child has been seen taking food out to the moor. Dr. Watson heads into the moor and discovers a set of primitive stone huts. He waits to see who has been hiding out there. He hears a familiar voice.

CHAPTER 9

Dr. Watson is much relieved to discover it is Sherlock Holmes, who has been secretly on the case for weeks. He surprises Watson by revealing that the peculiar Stapletons are actually not brother and sister as they claim, but husband and wife. Holmes explains that Mr. Stapleton has presented Beryl as his sister as a lure to Sir Henry. Also, by appearing as a single man, Mr. Stapleton could romance Laura Lyons to do his bidding. The detectives conclude that Mr. Stapleton must have been the man in the cab following Sir Henry in London. All of a sudden they hear the haunting hound's moan, and they race off to find a

body wearing Sir Henry's clothes—face down in the marsh! Turning the body over, they discover it is not Sir Henry, but the missing convict, dressed in hand-me-downs Mrs. Barrymore had taken from Sir Henry. Mr. Stapleton turns up on the scene and is likewise surprised—and somehow disappointed—to learn that the victim is not Sir Henry.

CHAPTER 10

After examining the uncanny likeness of an old Baskerville family portrait to Mr. Stapleton, the wily Holmes becomes convinced that the strange Mr. Stapleton may actually be related to the Baskervilles. Holmes plans a trap for Mr. Stapleton: Sir Henry will go to visit the Stapletons and announce that the detectives have returned to London—but in fact, they will be hiding out to protect Sir Henry on his lonesome walk home. If only the fog doesn't ruin all of Holmes's careful plans!

CHAPTER 11

Sir Henry heads out alone, when from out of the fog bounds a fearsome hound, a huge creature with its mouth glowing unnaturally. The detectives spring into action, and Holmes is able to shoot the beast before it causes any harm. The detectives run to the Stapleton House and are shocked to find Beryl tied up and eager to relate how villainous her husband has been. Mr. Stapleton is nowhere to be found. Beryl directs the detectives to the dreaded Grimpen Mire to find him. The detectives head out to the abandoned tin

mine, but find nothing but Sir Henry's lost boot. Nevertheless, the mysterious legend of the Hound of the Baskervilles is laid to rest at last.

CHAPTER 12

Holmes fills in the details for a puzzled Dr. Watson. It turns out Stapleton was indeed related to the Baskervilles, and therefore felt he could claim the estate. But he would first have to get rid of Sir Charles and Sir Henry. Knowing Sir Charles believed in the legend of the hound, Stapleton concocted a plan to scare Sir Charles to death. First, Stapleton got Laura Lyons to send a note to lure Sir Charles out to the moor. Then, he set loose the giant beast, its jaws painted with phosphorus, a substance that glows in the dark. After Sir Charles's heart attack, Stapleton then planned to set the hound loose on Sir Henry. Stapleton stole the boots from the London hotel so that the hound could track Sir Henry's scent. The first boot, being new, was not useful for this purpose, however. So Stapleton needed to return for the second, more well-worn boot. Another case solved by the clever detective Sherlock Holmes!

TIMELESS CLASSICS

LITERARY GLOSSARY

action what happens in a story; the acts or events that take place

The war story was full of battle action.

author the writer of a book, story, article, etc.

Ernest Hemingway was an American author.

author's purpose the author's specific goal or reason for writing a certain book

In that novel, the author's purpose was to make readers laugh.

character a fictional person who plays a part in a story or novel

Long John Silver is an important character in *Treasure Island*.

classic excellent artwork, novel, painting, symphony, etc. that remains popular over many years

Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* has become an American classic

climax the outcome of the novel's main conflict

The capture of the criminal was the climax of the detective story.

conclusion the resolution of all plot conflicts, bringing the story to a close

That play's conclusion was very satisfying. Every conflict was resolved.

conflict The struggle between characters or forces at the center of the story

The conflict was resolved when the suspect confessed.

description the parts of a story or novel that tell about the appearance of the setting or characters

His description of the Alps was breathtaking.

dialogue words spoken by the characters in a novel, story, or play

The dialogue in that comedy is very witty and amusing.

effect in literature, an impression created by the writer

Murder mysteries often create a suspenseful, chilling effect.

event a specific occurrence; something that happens

A plane crash is the first event in that adventure novel.

fiction a literary work in which the plot and characters are the products of the author's imagination

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a popular work of fiction.

figurative language colorful wording not meant to be taken literally, but to form a colorful, sharp picture in the mind

A "screaming" headline may be set in large type, but it makes no sound at all.

imagery figures of speech that help the reader to visualize the characters or setting; pictures in words

In Stephen Crane's imagery, the color of blood suggests courage.

introduction a short reading that presents and explains a novel; sometimes the first part of a novel that sets the scene

The introduction to *Frankenstein* is in the form of a letter.

mood the overall feeling or atmosphere the author creates in a story or novel

The author's skillful use of language created a dismal, hopeless mood.

moral the instructive point of a story or novel; the lesson to be drawn by the reader

The moral of the story is to choose your friends carefully.

motive the driving force, either internal or external, that makes a character do something

What was the character's motive for lying?

narrator, narration the character who tells the story in his or her own words; the telling of a story's events

Jim Hawkins is both the narrator of and a character in *Treasure Island*.

novel a long form of fictional literature with a complex plot

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is one of the greatest American novels.

pace the speed at which a story or novel develops and moves along

The pace of the rescue scene was very fast and exciting.

passage a section of a written work; may include just one line or several paragraphs

My favorite passage described the character's childhood.

plot the chain of events in a story that leads to its outcome

The war novel's plot is packed with action.

point of view the mental position from which a character sees the events of the story unfold

The character's great wealth influenced his point of view about the poor.

quotation a passage quoted; the exact words spoken by a character; the words set off between quotation marks

"It was a season of hope. It was a season of despair," is a famous quotation from *A Tale of Two Cities*.

realism the author's emphasis on showing life as it really is, not romanticized or idealized

Stephen Crane used great realism in describing the sights and sounds of battle.

sequence the order in which story events take place

To solve the crime, the detective must determine the exact sequence of events.

setting where and when a story happens; the location and time

The setting of *A Christmas Carol* is London in the mid-1800s.

style the special way a writer uses language to express both literary form and his or her own life experience

Ernest Hemingway's style is famous for his use of short sentences and easy-to-understand words.

symbol a person or thing that stands for, or represents, something else

In Hawthorne's famous novel, the scarlet letter is a symbol for adultery.

theme the central meaning of a story, play, or novel; the main idea, the point

Ambition and revenge are common themes in Shakespeare's plays.

tone the feeling given by the author's voice; the attitude expressed by the author's use of language

Is the tone of her dialogue humorous or formal?

voice the author's unique way of telling a story; a combination of personality and use of literary tools; the quality that sets one writer apart from other writers

Mark Twain's colorful voice is not hard to recognize.