The Hound of Baskervilles

By
Frederick Gaines

Based on the Stories of
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Hound of Baskervilles was originally produced by the Children’s Theatre Company in Minneapolis for the 1979-80 season.

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Characters (in order of appearance):
SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE
BERYL STAPLETON
SHERLOCK HOLMES
DR. JOHN WATSON
SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE
JACK STAPLETON
CARTWRIGHT
INSPECTOR HIRAM LESTRADE
MRS. BARRYMORE
ARTHUR BARRYMORE
HENRY CLAYTON
SELDEN
MR. FRANKLAND

Sequence of Scenes:
Act One:
Prologue: Baskerville Hall; Dartmoor in Devonshire
Scene One: 221 B, Baker Street; London
Scene Two: On the Moor
Scene Three: 221 B, Baker Street
Scene Four: Baskerville Hall
Scene Five: Baskerville Hall
Scene Six: Baskerville Hall

Act Two:
Scene One: Frankland’s
Scene Two: The Stone Hut
Scene Three: On the Moor
Scene Four: Baskerville Hall
Scene Five: On the Moor
PROLOUGUE

The Act Curtain is a scrim: a painted landscape depicting the moors of Devonshire, England with Baskerville Hall standing silently on a hill overlooking the bleak, cruel countryside. As the house lights dim, we hear ominous organ and piano music. The sudden cry of a man and the scrim bleeds through to reveal the massive stone and wrought iron gates of Baskerville Hall and the fog-shrouded shadowy outlines of the Yew Alley behind. Another cry, and the snarling of a vicious canine. SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE appears, running, from SR. With labored breath, he clutches at the bars of the gate, mans, and slowly crumples to the ground. The vague outline of an enormous mastiff peers over a rock US of SIR CHARLES, growling, and the cloaked figure of a woman emerges from the shadows DS of the gate, runs toward the lifeless body of SIR CHARLES, halts, then emits a bloodcurdling scream. The baying of a spectral hound as lights quickly fade and the organ crescendos. Upon the scrim appear the projected faces - one by one - of MR. BARRMORE, MR. FRANKLAND, DR. MORTIMER, SELDEN and then - in the center - the head of a snarling hound. The baying once again fills the theatre and the images fade.

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Act Curtain rises on the Baker Street flat of SHERLOCK HOLMES. Morning. HOLMES and DR. WATSON are present with SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE. HOLMES finishes the reading of a document and hands it to WATSON.

HOLMES An interesting document, Sir Henry, but surely that is not the reason you have come to consult Sherlock Holmes.

SIR HENRY No, sir. I had not planned to come at all, Mr. Holmes, not with this or for any other reason, and would not have come save for the rather unsettling incidents of today.

HOLMES What do you make of it, Watson?

WATSON (Studying the document.) It seems to be authentic.

SIR HENRY It is, Dr. Watson - of that much I'm certain. My late uncle's trusted friend, Dr. John Mortimer, forwarded it to me with the letter I've already mentioned.

WATSON But, surely, sir, it's no more than a rather curious family heirloom.
HOLMES Good for you, Watson, and quite right. A curiosity, Sir Henry - no more.

SIR HENRY I regarded it as the same, Mr. Holmes, when it arrived -despite Dr. Mortimer's rather ominous letter with its warning to me, but the day’s events have made me reconsider.

HOLMES Let us summarize it then, sir, as that sometimes aids the powers of deduction. Your family’s progenitor - Sir Hugo Baskerville - kidnapped a young woman for evil purposes. The woman escaped and he set his hounds upon her and ran her to the ground. His companions, when they found her body -and Sir Hugo's - discovered not the household hounds, but a beast of fearsome dimensions busily engaged in "plucking" - I think that is the expression used –Sir Hugo's throat from his body. Does that contain all of it?

SIR HENRY All, Mr. Holmes, but the curse: that all future male heirs to Baskerville Hall will die a violent death upon the moors.

HOLMES When I said "Does that contain all of it," I meant "Does it contain all of the facts," Sir Henry. I hope that you will agree that prophecies and curses fall somewhat outside that realm of exactness.

WATSON nods in agreement. SIR HENRY grows agitated at their skepticism.

SIR HENRY But all male heirs - including my late uncle - have died such a death, Mr. Holmes!

HOLMES A historical coincidence, Sir Henry. Now let us focus not on possible fancy, but on present-day facts. The letter said what?

SIR HENRY In a word, sir, that I should never return to Baskerville Hall.

HOLMES A warning I would not have expected from John Mortimer.

SIR HENRY You know him, sir?

HOLMES Not in person, but in his writings. A scientist of singular thoroughness. We are interested in similar studies.
SIR HENRY Then surely, sir, that should convince you that there might be some truth to his conjectures.

HOLMES Or will convince me that he had a reason to make such a conjecture.

SIR HENRY (Offended by his statement.) I hope our family friend and physician is not to be considered a suspect of any kind, Mr. Holmes!

HOLMES "Suspect?" I was not aware that a crime had been committed. Your late uncle died, as I recall, from heart failure.

WATSON But died in the presence of an unknown woman -or men -and with a large hound in the near premises.

HOLMES Ah, Watson - observant as always! As to the prints of the woman's shoe, we have no way of knowing when those prints appeared. They could have as easily been made by your uncle's cook: "Mrs. Barrymore, I' I believe you said? (SIR HENRY nods, disgruntled.) And the prints of the hound could have been those of any number of shepherd's dogs, for the Dartmoor is known for that industry. No, Sir Henry, facts do not always tell the complete story, and even such a scientist as Dr. Mortimer could, unwittingly, misread them.

SIR HENRY And are you implying that I am doing so, now?

HOLMES I try never to imply, Sir Henry, but I do question. You have brought us three facts; let us look at them. First: a boot was stolen from your hotel.

WATSON An old boot.

HOLMES Quite right, Watson, Second: you believe you have been followed since your arrival in England.

SIR HENRY (Irritated.) I know that I have...!

HOLMES First we shall list them, and then we shall look a t them. Third: a letter arrived at your hotel.
SIR HENRY: That seems hardly worth your concern, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES: Do you have it on you?

SIR HENRY: I'm nearly certain, Mr. Holmes, that it is simply the work of some young nuisance. It's not even properly written...

HOLMES: (Holding out his hand. ) May I? (SIR HENRY, reluctantly, hands it over. HOLMES quickly scans it.) As I thought.

WATSON: Something, Holmes?

HOLMES lifts it closer to his face, as if to examine it more closely.

HOLMES: Possibly. (He hands it to WATSON, who reads it.)

WATSON: "As you value your life or reason, keep away from the moor."

HOLMES: And as Sir Henry has observed, not even properly written.

WATSON: The words seem to be cut from a newspaper and pasted onto the paper.


SIR HENRY: How can you possibly know that sort of thing?!

HOLMES: You have come to me sir, precisely because I know "that sort of thing." The Times style of print is quite recognizable and you will notice that the ink is quite fresh. Your correspondent is in London even now.

SIR HENRY: I should say it's one of the men following me.

HOLMES: "Men?" More than one?

SIR HENRY: One of them is a fellow with a mustache in a loud plaid suit who works extremely hard at not being seen and is, as a consequence, seen constantly. The other I'm not sure of... (Defensive.)... but I am sure there is one. I've seen the same horse cab on the street too.
many times for it to be a coincidence. (A knock at the door. Slight hesitation. WATSON goes off SL.)

MORTIMER (Off stage. ) Mr. Holmes?

WATSON (Off stage. ) No. This way, sir.

(MORTIMER enters, followed by WATSON. )

MORTIMER Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES I am Sherlock Holmes.

MORTIMER Forgive me for intruding, sir, but I have reason to believe Sir Henry Baskerville is visiting here.

SIR HENRY I, sir, am. . .

MORTIMER (Extending his arm to shake SIR HENRY’S hand.) I was nearly sure you were the man from your late uncle’s picture, but you have changed, sir, since it was taken.

SIR HENRY And you, sir, are . . . ?

MORTIMER Dr. John Mortimer. I had hoped to be at the dock when your ship arrived yesterday.

SIR HENRY Dr. Mortimer, how very good of you to have come all this way!

MORTIMER Not at all! I only wish I could have been the first to welcome you back to England.

HOLMES May I take your stick and hat, sir? (HOLMES takes them, examining them as he places them in the racks.)

MORTIMER I really hadn't intended to stay . . .

HOLMES Nonsense; after coming all this way and going to all this trouble?

MORTIMER It was my pleasure.
(Gesturing for MORTIMER to sit.) And your luck, I hasten to add. You are very fortunate to locate Sir Henry so quickly in a city the size of London.

MORTIMER

I never trust to fortune, sir; it is against my nature. Much prefer simple hard work and logic. I asked for him at his hotel.

HOLMES

And they gave you this address . . . how fortunate. I observe, sir, that you are an admirer and keeper of that useful species canis familiaris.

MORTIMER

Sir?

HOLMES

A dog, Dr. Mortimer. I believe you have one.

MORTIMER

Ah . . .yes . . . a setter, as a matter of fact.

HOLMES

A favorite of mine as well. As is your field of study, Dr. Mortimer - "comparative pathology," I believe?

MORTIMER

I confess that your knowledge of my few accomplishments flatters me, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES

I particularly enjoyed your treatise on the subtle differences between the parietal fissures of the different racial groupings.

MORTIMER

A subject perhaps too specialized to go into in this company.

HOLMES

Perhaps not; Dr. Watson has had some training in that area . . .

WATSON

I'd hardly be called an expert, Holmes . . .

HOLMES

I have tried to advise my colleague to be less self-effacing, Dr. Mortimer. Perhaps a spirited exchange with an expert like yourself will convince him for me.

MORTIMER

I would be more than happy to send you a copy of my article, Dr. Watson.
WATSON Yes, perhaps that is best. I am particularly interested in your hypothesis concerning the dominant frontal lobes of homo sapiens.

MORTIMER Thank you. I hope not to seem rude, Mr. Holmes, but I am more concerned at the moment with our present.

HOLMES Forgive me for taking us away from the purpose of your visit.

MORTIMER I wanted only to ease any concerns my letter to you, Sir Henry, might have caused. I know now that it was ill advised.

SIR HENRY I will admit to some measure of concern, Dr. Mortimer.

MORTIMER My sincerest apologies, sir. Not only ill advised, but premature in the worst sort of way. I assume your visit to Mr. Holmes was prompted by those concerns?

SIR HENRY In part, sir.

MORTIMER I trust, Mr. Holmes, you have correctly identified the family legend as little more than fiction.

HOLMES We have examined the legend together . . . and your account of the death scene.

MORTIMER Written, I assure you, in a confusion caused by sorrow.

SIR HENRY And the footprints left near the body?

MORTIMER Left by two very identifiable creatures, Sir Henry: a sheep dog wandered in from the moors and Mrs. Barrymore, your uncle’s cook, who’d come looking for your uncle at his dinner hour.

WATSON Exactly, as you said, Holmes.

HOLMES (Under his breath.) Yes . . .

MORTIMER I feared my letter would have exactly the effect it has had, Sir Henry, and hoped to be here when you arrived. Perhaps I can, in part, repay you by accompanying you on your return to Baskerville
Hall. I have a coach reserved on the morning train and a man hired to meet me at the station.

SIR HENRY That’s very good of you, sir! I confess that I am a bit of a stranger to my new home and would appreciate your introduction to it.

HOLMES Unfortunately, that will be impossible.

SIR HENRY I’m sorry?

HOLMES There are several things we must complete here in London, Sir Henry, before we make the trip to Baskerville Hall.

SIR HENRY You’re to accompany me, sir . . . ? But I thought . . .

HOLMES I hope, sir, that I am never partially involved in an investigation. You have engaged me; I will accept that engagement.

MORTIMER (Standing.) Well, then - I look forward to the arrival of the three of you.

SIR HENRY Baskerville Hall will always be open to you, sir.

MORTIMER (Collecting his hat and walking stick.) You are very kind, sir, and I thank you for it. Gentlemen - good day.

_The men nod, and WASON shows “MORTIMER” out. HOLMES quickly steps to the window UISC and makes an unseen signal. WATSON returns and HOLMES steps back DS._

WATSON A very conscientious gentleman.

HOLMES Exceedingly so. Sir Henry, I trust you can be prepared to leave on the morrow?

SIR HENRY I can, of course, but I understood you to say there were yet some matters to be completed here in London . . .

HOLMES The matter of greatest importance is to acquaint as few as possible with our actual course of action.
SIR HENRY (Angry.) I will not have you cast aspersions upon the character of such a trusted family friend!

HOLMES (Responding in kind.) You will have me, Sir Henry, protect your life and property! And I assure you that it needs protection. You will do one thing for me, and that is to trust me. I am a man of honor, as your investigation must have told you before you sought me out, and I will not disgrace you or injure your true friends.

SIR HENRY (After a moment’s pause; with a weak, nervous laugh.) Now you do make me frightened, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES (Grave.) Good. You have reason to be. (To WATSON, still looking at SIR HENRY.) Open the door, Watson.

WATSON But no one knocked . . .

A knock at the door. WATSON gives HOLMES a look, then answers it. CARTWRIGHT—a young street urchin—enters, followed by WATSON.

HOLMES (To CARTWRIGHT, as he takes SIR HENRY by the arm and leads him SL.) A trusted cabbie to take this man to his hotel. Have his hotel watched, have this address watched. Return here.

CARTWRIGHT This way, sir.

SIR HENRY looks at the boy, then to HOLMES; he is about to protest. HOLMES hands SIR HENRY his hat and coat.

HOLMES Goodbye, Sir Henry.

SIR HENRY is speechless. CARTWRIGHT exits. HOLMES turns away. SIR HENRY exits. HOLMES goes to bookshelf US, removes a large volume, and quickly thumbs through it.

WATSON I say, Holmes - a bit too brusque with a peer of the realm, I am forced to say.

HOLMES What? Oh -Sir Henry. Gentlemen of quality quickly forgive us our work-a-day demands. They have so few of their own that they quickly recognize ours. (Reading.) "Mortimer, John. Resident in
surgery, Charing Cross hospital, 1871." (He reads for a moment more, then shuts the volume, takes his pipe, and walks DS.)

WATSON Good of him to come all this way to put Sir Henry at ease. Few would do that.

HOLMES Few of that age, at any rate.

WATSON "Age?" I would think a professional man of that age is just the sort who might have concern for others.

HOLMES If my Guide to the Official Medical Dictionary is correct - and it is - our Dr. Mortimer can't be a man much above forty.

WATSON Oh, much above, I would say.

HOLMES Yes, but then extreme age can more easily hide one's true age, can't it -when painted on, as an actor might?

WATSON (A gasp.) Are you implying the man was in disguise?

HOLMES I am certain of it.

WATSON But he confirmed your theory about the footprints to the letter.

HOLMES Yes, too close to the letter. He was listening outside the door and assumed that agreement with me would lead me off the scent.

WATSON But why was there a scent at all?

HOLMES For shame, Watson -your studies are not so far in the past as all of that. Homo sapiens -you are that, sir, as are all men of our time, and we do not have dominant frontal lobes. Cro-Magnon man may have, but we do not. Nor- my good man of medicine -are there marked differences in the parietal fissures.

WATSON And how did you get onto him?

HOLMES His walking stick.
WATSON  His walking stick?!

HOLMES  The man who owned that stick was not the owner of an Irish setter, but of a curly-headed spaniel.

WATSON  (Amazed.) How can you be sure of that?

HOLMES  The stick was quite heavy. The man who owned it was in the habit of giving the stick to his dog to carry, and that dog, because it was a small, curly-headed spaniel, gripped it tightly in the center of the stick for balance and left small but distinct teeth marks upon the wood. The teeth were too close together to have ever belonged to a setter.

WATSON  Brilliant, sir! (WATSON grin fades when he realizes the implication.) But we do know there is a real Dr. Mortimer.

HOLMES  We do, Watson, and I fear for him as I now do for Sir Henry. But I think it best that we do not alarm Sir Henry with our concern for Dr. Mortimer.

WATSON  Very good, sir. (A knock at the door.)

HOLMES  Let Master Cartwright in.

WATSON  Cartwright, Sir Henry’s escort. (HOLMES sees WATSON’s confusion.) He works for us, Watson - one of our Baker Street Irregulars.

WATSON  Do you mean that young boy who was just . . . those lads who are always about in the streets . . . ?

HOLMES  Yes - my assistants, and invaluable they are. Don’t leave him waiting. (WATSON steps out. CARTWRIGHT enters, WATSON follows.) Sir Henry safely off?

CARTWRIGHT  In Benjie Costen’s cab, sir. We can trust him.

HOLMES  And are there any in the street watching this door?
CARTWRIGHT Two, sir. One fell all over himself trying to keep himself hidden.

HOLMES Excellent. There was another cab outside, was there not?

CARTWRIGHT At the end of the street, sir. Number eleven-fourteen.
HOLMES A woman waiting in the cab? A man joined her?

CARTWRIGHT Right as always, sir.

HOLMES Two things: hire that cab tomorrow morning -passengers from Baker Street to Waterloo Station.

CARTWRIGHT Done, sir.

HOLMES Discover the area where number eleven-fourteen picked up his passengers and canvas that area for all middle-class hotels. You're to ask to see the waste baskets of every room occupied by a man and woman.

CARTWRIGHT And what'll be in them baskets, sir?

HOLMES A copy of today's morning edition of The Times with scissored holes cut into it. When that is found, I'll want the names of the couple who occupied that room.

CARTWRIGHT Take some hard grease to manage all of that, sir.

HOLMES Supply him with that, Watson.

WATSON "Grease?"

CARTWRIGHT Coin, guvnor. Filthy lucre. (CARTWRIGHT sighs at WATSON'S dullness.) Pounds and shillings. To grease a few palms and doors with; makes the answers slide out faster.

WATSON Oh. Of course. A pound sufficient?

CARTWRIGHT A fiver, sir.

WATSON Five pounds . . . ?!
HOLMES  It's not the time to be economical, Watson. Our quarry is worth it.

WATSON  (Complaining, as he reluctantly gives CARTWRIGHT the money.) I don't know how you can have deduced all of that from a man's walking stick.

HOLMES  Not from the stick, Watson - from the letter. The letter bore the faint traces of a perfume. I detected it when I examined it more closely. Therefore, a man - and a woman. A middle-class hotel because - The Times is seldom found in the hands of any but the educated. The address on the letter was written in something like a child's scrawl; an obvious attempt by the writer - a woman - to disguise the fact of her education. A man and a woman because even in these days of loosening morality, a woman would hardly occupy a room in such a hotel alone. They would have signed the register as man and wife.

Violent pounding on the door.

LESTRADE  (Off stage.) Open up! Police!

HOLMES  And now I believe we shall learn the identity of Sir Henry's "man in the loud, plaid suit." (LESTRADE bursts into the room.) Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard! How good of you to call.

LESTRADE  The Sir Henry you were just referring to has the family name of Baskerville and I'm here to discover the reason occasioning his visit.

HOLMES  And what reason have you to ask for that?

LESTRADE  Sorry. Police business.

HOLMES  Watson, I believe the inspector wishes you to leave our presence.

LESTRADE  (With a sidelong glance at CARTWRIGHT.) No, no, not Dr. Watson.

HOLMES  Could you be implying that my young colleague is not to be trusted?
LESTRADE (A laugh.) "Colleague?!" The likes of this one? I wouldn'ta thought it! The great Sherlock Holmes lookin' to a street urchin to solve his investigatory puzzles?!

HOLMES (Hiding a smile.) The man is a veritable dictionary, Watson. (To CARTWRIGHT.) You may go Cartwright. (CARTWRIGHT tips his cap to HOLMES and exits. HOLMES addresses LESTRADE who is poking about.) You were about to tell us the reason for your visit?

LESTRADE (Pompous.) The Crown is interested.

HOLMES (Tongue-in-cheek impressed.) Oh, my - the "Crown!"

LESTRADE As she is interested in all newly-elevated members of the aristocracy. His uncle recently died; Sir Henry's the new baronet.

HOLMES Oh, yes?

LESTRADE "Follow him." Those were my orders and I did and they led me here.

HOLMES Then why not away from here, for Sir Henry is no longer here as you will notice.

LESTRADE Oh, this address is known, Mr. Holmes. We're not completely ignorant to your meddling ways.

HOLMES Forgive me, sir.

LESTRADE And now, if you don't mind, the full details of the investigation you've been hired to perform. (LESTRADE takes out his notebook and waits for HOLMES' response.)

HOLMES Found out again, Watson!

LESTRADE (Proud of himself.) Sorry to spoil your little game.

HOLMES (Playing along.) Give him the details, Watson.
WATSON (Unsure of HOLMES' game.) What?

HOLMES The details. The crime as we know it.

WATSON Crime?

HOLMES (A meaningful look at WATSON.) Sir Henry reported it to us.

WATSON He did?

HOLMES It was stolen from his hotel room.

WATSON (Suddenly understanding the joke.) Ah! Yes, of course!

HOLMES (To LESTRADE.) We are calling this . . . oh, what is the term used by the Yard, Inspector?

LESTRADE Caper?

HOLMES Absolutely! We are calling this "The Caper of the Missing Boot."

LESTRADE (Writing it down laboriously.) "The Caper . . . Missing . . . Boot..." (Waking up.) Missing boot?! That's the whole of it?

WATSON The whole of it.

LESTRADE (Starting to laugh uncontrollably.) Sherlock Holmes trading in a missing boot?

WATSON It was an old one.

LESTRADE New or old, I couldn't care less! Why would anyone care to steal a single boot?

HOLMES There, Inspector, is the crux of it.

LESTRADE (Suddenly stopping his laugh.) What?

HOLMES I haven't the beginning of an idea. I hoped that you might. (LESTRADE is both stunned and flattered.)
LESTRADE  You're asking me? Hiram Lestrade? He's asking me! (Pulling his trousers up and putting on an official air.) Well, sir - coming to the Yard at last are you, Mr. Holmes? Finally seeing that there might be some advantage in us, are you? Highly trained, Mr. Holmes; every modern technique. So. To the question: why . . . Some would stop there and see it as nothing more than that: a missing boot. But having been long in the legion of specialists in the art of crime detection, I will not be so easily mollified.

HOLMES  (Showing signs of boredom with the game.) Oh, never be mollified, Inspector.

LESTRADE  Fact: a boot is missing. So --what does that tell us? (Pause. LESTRADE furrows his brow in deep thought.) Why would anyone want just one boot? (Another pause. HOLMES and WATSON look at each other, pained.) Solved! (WATSON and HOLMES lean into LESTRADE.) A one-legged man would! (LESTRADE grins, most pleased with himself. HOLMES jaw drops.)

HOLMES  Amazing.

LESTRADE  We call it deduction, Mr. Holmes, normally a very lengthy process involving trial theses, hypotheses -but, of course, with years of experience . . .

HOLMES  (Taking LESTRADE by the shoulder and leading him SL.) We'll leave the matter completely in your hands, Inspector.

LESTRADE  Rest assured, Mr. Holmes . . . (HOLMES and LESTRADE are off.)

HOLMES  I am, sir, completely assured. (The sound of the door shutting firmly. HOLMES returns.) The only question is how long will that puzzle him.

WATSON  (Chuckling, despite the following statement.) I must tell you, sir, that I am not entirely comfortable with making Scotland Yard into something laughable.

The Hound of Baskervilles by Frederick Gaines  17
HOLMES The Yard is never laughable, Watson, but Lestrade often is. (Pause.) I suggest you begin packing, Watson. You’ll be on the morning train to Dartmoor.

WATSON (Surprised.) “I?”

HOLMES With Sir Henry. Other matters will keep me here for a time.

WATSON Do you mean to tell me that you’re sending me off with no other explanation than that?

HOLMES The explanation is quite simple. You are to be my eyes and ears on the moor. I will expect daily letters from you containing all that you observe and all that you surmise.

WATSON But to what end, sir? If you are truly unafraid of the family prophecy…

HOLMES But I am not, Watson. You shall be there to prevent the death of Sir Henry Baskerville.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

The organ continues and dim evening light illumines the orchestra pit, which also represents the fog-shrouded, rocky moor. MRS. BARRYMORE enters from DSR of Act Curtain, carrying a lamp and a telegram. BARRYMORE appears up the path from the pit, carrying a basket.

MRS. BARRYMORE        Hurry!

BARRYMORE           Patience, woman! What is it?

MRS. BARRYMORE       This came by messenger - for you. (BARRYMORE reaches his wife and takes the telegram. He reads it.) What does it say?

BARRYMORE (Clutching the telegram in his fist.) The new lord of Baskerville Hall will arrive tomorrow.

MRS. BARRYMORE        (Frightened.) Then, we're . . .

BARRYMORE           Silence! Give me quiet to think.

MRS. BARRYMORE        But what are we to do? He'll know at once that . . .

BARRYMORE       He'll know nothing! He was hardly a boy when he left here. He remembers not our faces or voices. Nothing has happened to change our plans.

MRS.
BARRYMORE  But tomorrow . . .

BARRYMORE  Carefully and quietly - that's the answer. None suspect us and we will give them no cause to suspect us. Trusted family retainers, no more.

MRS. BARRYMORE  I'm frightened . . .

BARRYMORE  Quiet! Do nothing and trust me. The telegram was a courtesy, not a warning. Nothing is known. We will meet the carriage tomorrow, we'll smile and say "welcome" and then we'll wait to act.

MRS. BARRYMORE  I wish that we'd never started this . . .

BARRYMORE  And do you think I started it for my own profit?! It was you and your family . .

MRS. BARRYMORE  I know! I know!

BARRYMORE  And won't - I hope - forget it! We're in this now and there's no turning back. Watch your step, my dear -and every word you say. No one must think to look at us.

The organ music swells as the two exit SR, Lights shift and music fades as Act Curtain rises.

ACT 1, SCENE 3

HOLME’S at the Baker Street flat. HOLMES stands at window. WATSON enters from SL with his traveling bags.

HOLMES  Have you your pistol with you?

WATSON  Yes.
HOLMES  (Walking toward WATSON.) You should not need it on the train down, but I would advise you to carry it on your person while in Dartmoor.

WATSON  You’re being devilishly secretive about this whole affair, Holmes; surely you don’t believe in that family curse?

HOLMES  It is my habit, Watson, to believe nothing until proven. The reverse is true: I do not disbelieve anything until it is disproved.

WATSON  But a hound of hell . . . ?!

HOLMES  Do this one thing for me, Watson, and never vary from it; disregard all that you assume you know of this and accept it. Promise me that.

WATSON  I will, of course, but . . .

HOLMES  Avoid the moor at those hours of darkness when the powers of evil have their influence.

WATSON  (Shocked at HOLMES’ superstitious manner.) Good heavens, Holmes!

HOLMES  (A knock at the door.) Shh! (Another knock.) Come in, Cartwright. (CARTWRIGHT slips in.) He’s with you?

CARTWRIGHT  His name’s Clayton, sir: Henry Clayton.

HOLMES  And he lives where?

CARTWRIGHT  Water Street in Cheapside.

HOLMES  Good. Send him up.

CARTWRIGHT turns to leave, then stops.

CARTWRIGHT  Sorry about that other matter, sir. *The Times* copy.

HOLMES  Can’t be helped.
CARTWRIGHT    As if they covered their tracks, sir. Not a trace.

WATSON        And my five pounds?

CARTWRIGHT    (Grins.) Gone the way of all good things, doctor. (WATSON grunts. CARTWRIGHT exits.)

HOLMES        I’ll need another bit of change, Watson.

WATSON        Not another five pound note?

HOLMES        Half a crown, no more.

WATSON        (Digging in his pocket, muttering.) As if a man were made of gold... a simple medical doctor, I might add... hardly a man of means... (He hands HOLMES the money; a knock on the door. WATSON exits to answer.) (Off stage.) In here, sir.

CLAYTON       (Entering, followed by CARTWRIGHT and WATSON.) You sent for a cab, sir?

HOLMES        Indeed, yes. Cartwright, will you help Dr. Watson to get his things down the steps? (CARTWRIGHT and WATSON exit with the bags. HOLMES smiles at CLAYTON.) Well, sir, a Londoner, unless my ear is mistaken.

CLAYTON       That I am, sir, and proud of it.

HOLMES        Born to the parish of the Good Shepherd, perhaps?

CLAYTON       How could you know that?

HOLMES        And you now reside at... oh, Water Street in Cheapside.

CLAYTON       Say, what kind of man are you?

HOLMES        A man interested in facts - in very small details like accents. (Holding out the half crown. CLAYTON takes it.) I hope this will persuade you to assist me in uncovering a fact or two.
CLAYTON And what do I know worth this?

HOLMES You know that you had a fare that asked you to wait outside this address for nearly an hour yesterday.

CLAYTON I do what I'm paid to do.

HOLMES And have now been paid, I think.

CLAYTON Beggin' your pardon, sir, but your coin ain't half enough to pull any information about that fare from me. *(CLAYCON tries to give the coin back; HOLMES refuses it.)*

HOLMES And why is that?

CLAYTON Because that fare was police business.

HOLMES I see. *(HOLMES goes to window and shouts down.)* Watson - if Lestrade is still lurkin' about, I want him up here! *(Turning back to CLAYTON.)* I hope you will release your information to an Inspector of Scotland Yard.

CLAYTON If he can identify himself. *(LESTRADE enters the room, a bit embarrassed.)*

LESTRADE Police business ain't "lurkin'," Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES Your identification, Inspector.

LESTRADE You know who I am.

HOLMES This cabbie does not.

CLAYTON Oh, him I know, sir. Every cabbie in London does.

LESTRADE *(Proudly.)* There, Holmes - hear that?!

CLAYTON A good laugh or two over a pint about Ol' Lestrade...

LESTRADE *(Glaring at CLAYTON.)* That'll be enough of that!
HOLMES I assume he will qualify as police, Mr. Clayton?

CLAYTON Close enough... (Regarding the coin.) ... but this ain't.

WATSON enters.

HOLMES More grease is needed, Watson.

WATSON, grumbling, gives more money to CLAYTON, who nods and puts it away.

CLAYTON You might just get one small bit of fact for that.

HOLMES You wouldn't know his name?

CLAYTON Now you'll see who you're dealing with. That fare, sir - the one what had me wait out there while he investigated the comin's and goin's in here - was none other than Mr. Sherlock Holmes! (Slight pause. HOLMES laughs.)

HOLMES A touch! An undeniable touch!

LESTRADE But this man is Sherlock Holmes!

CLAYTON I only know what he told me, sir, and that was the name.

HOLMES Thank you for coming, Mr. Clayton. (CLAYTON tips his hat and exits.)

WATSON But why would he do that: call himself "Holmes?" What could he gain?

HOLMES Gain? Nothing. It is a challenge, Watson; the man is unafraid of me. He stood there as Dr. Mortimer and practically challenged me to uncover his true identity. I urge you again, trust no one; guard Sir Henry’s life with your own. God speed.

WATSON (Pausing at the door.) There is no way that you... ?
HOLMES I will be there when my duty here releases me, Watson. Do not fail me. (They shake hands and WATSON exits. HOLMES turns back to LESTRADE.) Well, Inspector?

LESTRADE (Pulling his notebook from his pocket.) There are -you might wish to know -two thousand, seven hundred and forty-one one-legged men in the city of London.

HOLMES (After a slight pause.) You, sir, are a detective!

LESTRADE (With great pride.) I knew the day would come, sir!

HOLMES What day is that, sir?

LESTRADE Uhm...

Lights fade and Act Curtain falls.

ACT 1, SCENE 4

Dim light rises on the moor DS. A man dressed in ragged clothing - SELDEN -moves furtively among the rocks. He hears the sound of another man - FRANKLAND - muttering to himself. SELDEN ducks back into the depths of the pit and FRANKLAND enters from SL. He is an old Scotsman, dressed in practical country clothes. He is agitatedly speaking to himself as he crosses the moor on his way to Baskerville Hall.

FRANKLAND Aristocracy, is it? Aristocracy! And didn't my own sweet Carlisle say it best. "The aristocracy of feudal parchment has passed away with a mighty rushing and now we arrive at aristocracy of the money-bag." Well, he shant buy this Scotsman off. A battle he'll have; a battle royal! Fair Bannockbourn'1 one came to England and then shall we see which is the final victor. More ways than one to strip an upstart from his land and power. The new laird is he? Not for long, my bonny one -not while I've power left in my own two hands!
FRANKLAND exits SR. Act Curtain bleeds through to reveal the wrought iron gates and stone wall from the Prologue, USR, and the enormous stone entrance to Baskerville Hall SL. It is a foggy night. The sound of a carriage pulling away off SR. BARRYMORE enters through the gate with two bags as MRS. BARRYMORE enters from Baskerville Hall. BARRYMORE crosses to his wife and hands her the two bags. Act Curtain out.

BARRYMORE      Keep your head.

MRS. BARRYMORE  They'll know.

BARRYMORE      They will know nothing. Go!

MRS. BARRYMORE exits with bags into the house; BARRYMORE turns and crosses back out the gate. SIR HENRY enters from gate, followed by WATSON, and then BARRYMORE with two more bags.

BARRYMORE      I hope you had a pleasant journey, Sir Henry?

SIR HENRY       A very long one, Barrymore, and not uneventful.

BARRYMORE      Sir?

SIR HENRY       Delayed twice by police road blocks. Some sort of escaped convict in the neighborhood. Oh, yes - this is Dr. Watson, Barrymore.

BARRYMORE      (Nods to WATSON.) Sir. (To SIR HENRY.) Your rooms are prepared, sir, but my wife thought a bit of warm supper before retiring.

WATSON          That is the best news we've had today.

BARRYMORE      nods and turns toward the house.

SIR HENRY       (To WATSON.) Imposing place, isn't it?

BARRYMORE      (Stopping, turning back to SIR HENRY.) It is now your home, sir.

SIR HENRY       That will take some getting used to. (BARRYMORE grunts and takes the bags inside. Suddenly FRANKLAND appears from SR and descends upon SIR HENRY.)
FRANKLAND  So! I see your face!

SIR HENRY  What... ?!

FRANKLAND  (Circling SIR HENRY.) Yes - a Baskerville; the same face . . .

SIR HENRY  And who might -you be, sir?

FRANKLAND  No one you would know, sir. A common man. Not one of your titled aristocrats, but a man who knows the meaning of hard work and the law and how it protects him.

SIR HENRY  Should I know you, sir?

FRANKLAND  You will, sir; that I can guarantee you. Frankland. There -now you know me and will hear of me sooner than you might wish to! (FRANKLAND exits as swiftly as he appeared. BARRYMORE and MRS. BARRYMORE enter; MRS. BARRYMORE crosses out the gate.)

WATSON  (To SIR HENRY.) How extraordinary! I believe the man was threatening you.

SIR HENRY  Do you know the man, Barrymore?

BARRYMORE  A near neighbor, sir.

SIR HENRY  And did my uncle know him?

BARRYMORE  More than knew him, sir -opposed him -or, to hear Mr. Frankland tell of it - did damage to him.

SIR HENRY  In what way?

BARRYMORE  Boundary lines, sir; something in that order. Will you go in now, Sir Henry?

SIR HENRY  What? (BARRYMORE gestures to the door.) Oh, yes. (Walking to door, followed by WATSON.) Damned unnerving, Watson. This place at night could put a fright in any man.
WATSON and SIR HENRY are inside. MRS. BARRYMORE reappears, carrying a bag.

BARRYMORE I'll get them settled to their supper. You see to it.

MRS. BARRYMORE (Nearly hysterical.) I can't! I can't...!

BARRYMORE Must I do everything?

MRS. BARRYMORE Don’t ask it of me!

BARRYMORE Their supper then. I'll see to it. It must be done.

MRS. BARRYMORE I pray to God this night will end soon.

BARRYMORE Quickly! They mustn't suspect.

MRS. BARRYMORE hands her husband a small parcel from beneath her shawl, then exits into the Hall. BARRYMORE exits through gates. Act Curtain in and lights shift to DS moor. BARRYMORE enters from SR. SELDEN appears among the rocks and BARRYMORE goes to him. BARRYMORE gives SELDEN the parcel and whispers quickly to him, then exits again. SELDEN disappears as lights shift.
ACT 1, SCENE 5

Act Curtain up on Baskerville Hall, exterior. Same as preceding scene. It is early afternoon. WATSON is setting up a box camera on the lawn. He turns the lens toward the audience, then gets beneath the cloth. A man in his late twenties - STAPLETON - appears US of gate and notices WATSON. He crosses behind Baskerville Hall and reappears DS of wall and crosses DS to WATSON. STAPLETON is dressed in what might be described as "safari" khakis; he carries a butterfly net and a pair of binoculars hangs from his neck.

STAPLETON Hello there!

WATSON (Surprised.) What...?

WATSON peeks out from beneath the cloth, then continues with his work.

STAPLETON Dr. Watson?

WATSON Yes?

STAPLETON An amateur photographer? (WATSON says nothing.) I'm sorry. I'm Jack Stapleton, a neighbor. Barrymore mentioned you would be arriving with Sir Henry.

WATSON (Coming out from beneath the cloth; resigned to the fact that he must converse with STAPLETON.) Worse than an amateur, I'm afraid. A beginner.

STAPLETON Trying to capture the look of the moor?

WATSON It's a glorious place.

STAPLETON Yes - fascinating. I can't think of a better place to live. Sir Henry has, I hope, no superstitious fears about it?

WATSON I think that's unlikely.

STAPLETON It's extraordinary how credulous the peasants are abut here. They were sure the "hound" would keep him at a distance.

WATSON It's common talk, then?
STAPLETON  Too common. Unfortunately, the story took a great hold upon the imagination of Sir Charles. I’m sure it led to his tragic end.

WATSON  And how could it have done that?

STAPLETON  His heart, sir. His nerves were so worked up that the appearance of any dog might have had a fatal effect upon it. Has Mr. Sherlock Holmes come to a different conclusion?

WATSON  I beg your pardon?

STAPLETON  (A laugh.) It’s useless for us to pretend we do not know you, sir. We are remote here on the moor, but even here we have read your accounts of your colleague’s exploits. Is the camera to illustrate the next one?

WATSON  Which one is that?

STAPLETON  I assume he is investigating the death of Sir Charles.

WATSON  I see. (Slight pause.)

STAPLETON  I’ve been too forward. You’re perfectly right to say no more. (STAPLETON steps DS and looks out over the audience.) The moors are an apt subject for any man’s camera. Beautiful, mysterious, but – unfortunately – dangerous.

WATSON  (Joining STAPLETON.) Dangerous? In what way?

STAPLETON  The mires, sir – the Great Grimpen Mire. There, sir – do you see where the land seems to gleam with an unhealthy, rich color?

WATSON  Can any penetrate it?

STAPLETON  There are one or two paths a very active man may take. I have followed one of them.

WATSON  If it is as deadly as you say, why would you wish to do so?
STAPLETON My passion, Dr. Watson: Lepidoptera. Those hills within the mire are like islands. And there, the most exotic butterflies of England find shelter.

WATSON Amazing.

STAPLETON Yes, an uncanny place altogether. *(Pointing in another direction.)* Those stones -can you see them? *(STAPLETON offers Watson the binoculars.)*

WATSON Much like Stonehenge.

STAPLETON And possibly as old. Those are the homes of our worthy ancestors; pre-historic. Neo-lithic is the best guess . . .

*From the back of the auditorium, a horrible scream of a moor pony. WATSON drops the binoculars down from his eyes.*

WATSON Good heavens!

STAPLETON The very thing I referred to, sir -the Grimpen Mire. The moor ponies get in the way of going there in dry weather and don’t realize until it’s too late and the mire has them in its grip.

WATSON Ghastly.

STAPLETON Nature taking its course, sir. Been going on for years.

WATSON That’s all very well to say, but still - all in all - death by quicksand must be a terrifying way to die.

STAPLETON *(Suddenly, gently.)* Don't move!

WATSON *(Obeying, nervous.)* What?

STAPLETON On your camera. Quietly . . . *(STAPLETON slowly raises his net and tiptoes toward the camera.)* . . . quietly . . . *(Snaps his fingers in disappointment.)* . . . oh, now it’s flown off. Won’t be a moment.
STAPLETON bounds off SR after the butterfly. WATSON watches him exit, shrugs, looks out at the moor, then goes to his camera and moves it DS to take a picture of the mire. He puts his head beneath the cloth and adjusts the lens. He does not see a young woman silently enter from UIS of Baskerville Hall and stand behind him.

MISS STAPLETON  Go back. Leave for London at once.

WATSON, surprised, comes out from beneath the cloth and sees the beautiful, but anxious, young lady.

WATSON  I beg your pardon?

MISS STAPLETON  (Nervously looking off SR. ) Do what I ask of you. Leave! Never set foot on the moor again, if you value your life or reason.

WATSON  Why would you say that?

MISS STAPLETON  (With the utmost urgency.) Can you not tell when a warning has come to you?! Go back; start now! (Quickly looking SR again.) Hush - my brother is coming. (Loudly, for STAPLETON to overhear. ) I'll sit here, then, if it's all right. (Sitting at edge of stone pond DSR. A whisper for WATSON alone.) Not a word of what I've said. (MISS STAPLETON arranges herself in a pose as STAPLETON returns.)

STAPLETON  Hello, Beryl.

MISS STAPLETON  Jack, hello.

WATSON  (To STAPLETON.) Did you manage it?

STAPLETON  What? Oh -missed, unfortunately; a beautiful specimen - cyclopides. (To MISS STAPLETON. ) Dr. Watson seems to have prevailed where I cannot . . . (MISS STAPLETON reacts surprised, but quickly smiles to cover it.) . . . my sister sitting patiently.

MISS STAPLETON  Because you refused to flatter me.

STAPLETON  Did Dr. Watson do that?
WATSON Only that she would make a handsome memento to send to Mr. Holmes.

STAPLETON He will not be traveling down, then?

WATSON I’m afraid not. Business in the city.

MISS SWLETON You must snap the lens, or be satisfied with the moors, Dr, Watson.

WATSON I could never be satisfied, after the present view. (WATSON slips beneath the cloth. STAPLETONS exchange looks. MISS STAPLETON smiles for the camera. WATSON takes the photo and emerges.) Beauty forever captured!

MISS STAPLETON (Standing.) There -do you see, brother, how it is done? Now I really must get back, I think.

WATSON (Taking her hand.) I do hope we’ll have an opportunity to speak again, Miss Stapleton. I found your remarks . . . intriguing.

MISS STAPLETON (With a quick glance at STAPLETON.) You mustn’t listen to me, Dr. Watson. My brother says I babble. Goodbye.

WATSON (Following her to the gate.) Au Revoir. (MISS STAPLETON exits behind the wall USL.)

STAPLETON It would be good of you to join us one day, Doctor. My sister does miss the opportunity to converse, here on the moors.

WATSON Then we must do so at once. You must join Sir Henry and me for dinner. I’m sure he would like some company other than mine.

STAPLETON I think we would like that very much. Consider the invitation extended. I will speak to Sir Henry and have Barrymore bring you confirmation.

STAPLETON And again I thank you. It is so good to have company again on the moor. We will do our best not to disappoint you. Good day.
They shake hands. STAPLETON exits as his sister did. WATSON ponders the behavior of his new acquaintances, then goes back under the camera cloth. LESTRADE enters SR, disguised as a Londoner’s bad notion of a country policeman. LESTRADE approaches WATSON and steps into the pond.

WATSON (Spying Lestrade through the lens; waving his hand.) Oh - hello, Lestrade.

LESTRADE (Annoyed at having stumbled into pond, and at being discovered.) How’d you know it was me?

WATSON It never occurred to me that it wasn’t you.

LESTRADE But I . . . (The baying of the hound echoes on the moor. WATSON comes out from beneath the cloth. Both MEN stare out, frightened, over audience.) What in God’s name was that?!

WATSON I don't know.

LESTRADE From that direction.

WATSON The Great Grimpen Mire . . . It sounded almost like . . .

LESTRADE What?

WATSON Nothing. My imagination. (Brief pause.) So, Lestrade - the missing boot has brought you to Dartmoor!

LESTRADE Oh, your Mr. Holmes was clever about that boot all right; threw poor old Inspector Lestrade off the track. For how long do you think?

WATSON I shudder to think.

LESTRADE Overnight, sir. Eight hours, no more. And then I happened to think. (LESTRADE sits at edge of pond and removes wet shoes and stockings.) Took a minute out and thought back to one or two criminal cases of antiquity, and there I found the answer soon enough.

WATSON Do you want to share it with me?
LESTRADE    Poison.

WATSON      Ingenious.

LESTRADE    The Borgias.

WATSON      *(Amusing him.)* How could I have forgotten?!

LESTRADE    In those sorts of days, sir -of the Borgias and Caesars -a wise potentate kept himself an official taster.

WATSON      I'm afraid you've lost me, Inspector.

LESTRADE    To see if the wine was poisoned.

WATSON      You'll have to help me a little more.

LESTRADE    *(Impatient.)* Tasters, sir. To keep 'em from imbibin' the poisoned wine!

WATSON      Wine?

LESTRADE    Not wine, sir - the *boot*!

WATSON      *(Pretending to understand.*) Ah!

LESTRADE    The boot was lifted to lace it with Italian poison.

WATSON      *(Now understanding.*) So that when Sir Henry put it on...

LESTRADE    Finito, as the Borgias were wont to say.

WATSON      But surely - if that were the case -the boot would have been returned for Sir Henry to put on.

LESTRADE    Ah, but you see . . .

WATSON      Yes?
LESTRADE (After a long pause. ) It seemed right in London.

_The doors to Baskerville Hall open and BARRYMORE appears. Lestrade quickly gathers his shoes and stockings and disappears off SR. WATSON has turned to BARRYMORE at the sound of the door opening._

BARRYMORE Tea is set, sir.

WATSON Oh, good. Could you help me with this, Lestrade . . . ? (WATSON turns and notices that LESTRADE has disappeared. WATSON shrugs and chuckles to himself.) Barrymore, would you? (BARRYMORE moves DS to help disassemble the camera.) There was a sound a moment ago - from the moor. Did you hear it?

BARRYMORE One often hears such sounds upon the moor, sir.

WATSON It seemed to come from the Grimpen Mire.

BARRYMORE The locals, sir, say it is the cry of the Baskerville hound. (A brief pause. WATSON looks out over the moor and shudders slightly.)

WATSON I almost wish Dr. Mortimer were here to give me a scientific explanation of it.

BARRYMORE Did you say "Dr. Mortimer?"

WATSON Yes. Did you know him?

BARRYMORE Do know him, sir. He was the personal physician to Sir Charles. We are all greatly worried for him.

WATSON And why are you that?

BARRYMORE None have seen him, sir; not since shortly after the death of Sir Charles. It is most unlike him. (BARRYMORE carries the camera toward the Hall. WATSON quickly follows.)

WATSON Did he, by chance, own an Irish setter?
BARRYMORE  No, sir. A spaniel. A curly-headed spaniel. (SIR HENRY appears in the doorway.)

SIR HENRY  (A smile, gently chiding WATSON.) You Londoners are very casual about tea.

WATSON  Forgive me. Delayed a moment.

SIR HENRY  Mrs. Barrymore will be at me if we're another minute late and her fresh scones another minute colder.

WATSON  Scones! We must indeed hurry. (WASON quickly enters the Hall. SIR HENRY turns to follow, then stops.)

SIR HENRY  Oh, Barrymore - I've laid out some of my heavier woolens from Canada. I won't be needing them further. Do as you wish with them.

BARRYMORE  Certainly, sir.

SIR HENRY  And shut up the windows will you, Barrymore? There seems to be a bit of a draft coming in from the moor.

SIR HENRY exits. BARRYMORE glances out a the moor as the lights begin to fade. He slowly enters the Hall and shuts the door as Act Curtain falls.
Act One, Scene Six

Lights rise on moor, dusk. A cloaked figure enters from SR and takes the path into the pit. He goes to DSL and, with great effort, pulls aside a tablet of stone, revealing a crypt. From within the hole comes the snarling of a large dog. The figure throws something into the crypt; the growls turn to the sounds of a starved beast devouring its food. The figure observes for a moment, then closes the crypt and exits SR.

Through the Act Curtain, the light of a candle. BARRYMORE moves about the stage, lighting candelabra. A vast interior room of Baskerville Hall is illumined. A staircase lined with family portraits is SL. Two large upholstered chairs and a table C; USC is a large stone fireplace flanked by two sets of French doors which lead out onto the moor. An entrance to the dining room is DSR. BARRYMORE lights two lanterns which hang on either side of the fireplace. Act Curtain rises. WATSON and STAPLETON enter the room DSR, making cigars and chatting.

WATSON Had I known what the climate of the evening would be, I would have tried to find another night for you and your sister to join us. I hope Mr. Frankland’s manner hasn’t completely upset her.

STAPLETON Oh, I think not. Frankland is rather infamous in our parts. None of us are ever very surprised by his manner.

WATSON (Pouring two brandies from the tray on table; offering one to STAPLETON.) Sir Henry hopes to heal old wounds, or prevent new ones, but that strategy seems hardly to have worked. The man does little but examine the antiquities of Baskerville Hall.

STAPLETON Probably anticipating future residence here. (WATSON laughs.) It is not, unfortunately, as laughable as all of that. The man has succeeded in more than one eviction case and has an unfortunate attitude towards any in the aristocracy.

WATSON Then it’s actually very sad.

STAPLETON For those who cross swords with him, yes -but for those of us who are, as yet, unscathed, more of a comic relief. One case in particular I must tell you about.
WATSON (WATSON notices that BARRYMORE has lingered behind after his work was completed.) That will be all, Barrymore. (BARRYMORE nods and exits DSR.)

STAPLETON It concerns the man who was physician to Sir Charles - Dr Mortimer. Have you met him?

WATSON is about to reply, but FRANKLAND enters the room from DSR. He nods gruffly to WATSON and STAPLETON, then moves quickly to the staircase and examines the line of portraits. WATSON and STAPLETON share a look and shrug about FRANKLAND’S peculiar behavior. Then SIR HENRY enters with MISS STAPLETON on his arm.

SIR HENRY (In conversation with MISS STAPLETON.) Actually, it all seems more like a dream. I had been in the Hall when I was a child, before I left for Canada, and so I do have some vague memories about the place. But it really is rather like walking about in one’s own memory. (He has led MISS STAPLETON to a chair and she sits. SIR HENRY sees FRANKLAND on the staircase.) Ah, Mr. Frankland! Does portraiture interest you? (FRANKLAND looks at SIR HENRY grunts, and turns back, moving up the staircase. SIR HENRY turns away, rolls his eyes, and comments “tongue-in-cheek” to his other guests.) A happy fellow.

WATSON You’ve said very little tonight, Miss Stapleton. I hope the presence of three men hasn't intimidated you.

MISS STAPLETON Three men are just what does not intimidate me. (WATSON and SIR HENRY exchange a brief look; unsure of her meaning.)

STAPLETON Truly a marvelous evening! Good stimulating conversation. We haven't had an opportunity like this since my teaching days in the north of England.

WATSON I didn't know you had been a teacher.

STAPLETON A rather sad story, Dr. Watson. I won't mire the evening down with it. Suffice it to say, the teaching is now over and I am happily established here on the moor.
SIR HENRY And lucky for us. A very dull time for Watson and I would have of it here alone.

WATSON *(Lifting his brandy glass.)* Hear, hear!

SIR HENRY Actually, I had hoped to have Dr. Mortimer join us this evening. It's odd that, we've seen nothing of him.

*FRANKLAND, near the top of the staircase, suddenly turns and speaks.*

FRANKLAND A remarkable portrait, Dr. Watson.

WATSON What? *(FRANKLAND indicates the portrait of Sir Hugo Baskerville.)* Oh, I'm afraid I'm not much good in that area, sir.

FRANKLAND You should learn to be so, sir.

FRANKLAND turns away again, then slowly descends the steps and eventually exits DSL as the others continue their conversation.

WATSON *(Under his breath, to SIR HENRY.)* and what do you make of that?

SIR HENRY *(Also hushed.)* A rather bored man attempting to be sociable, I suspect. Peculiar way to do it.

WATSON Perhaps I ought to join him at the portraits?

SIR HENRY Nonsense. We are here to enjoy each other, not to placate one such as him.

WATSON Well, then, if that is the case . . . *(Turning to STAPLETONS and speaking in his normal volume.)* . . . I have rather a large favor to ask of Mr. Stapleton.

STAPLETON Anything.

WATSON Knowing of your expertise, and having noticed that Sir Charles has a Small collection of some rare species of butterflies, I would - if you don't mind - prevail upon you for a bit of an appreciation lesson.
STAPLETON Oh, I don’t know that would make for a very interesting time for the four of us.

WATSON Selfishly, it would for me.

MISS STAPLETON Oh, do go, Jack. You know you would enjoy it.

STAPLETON Well, then, shall we? *(He gestures for SIR HENRY and WATSON to join him.)*

SIR HENRY I’m afraid I would only reveal my ignorance. Perhaps I can find a topic more general in nature to keep your sister amused.

*A dark look passes over STAPLETON’S face at the mention of leaving his sister alone with SIR HENRY. He abruptly alters his countenance with a smile again.*

STAPLETON I don’t know as I could give a complete explanation without Beryl; she is, actually, something like my own instructor in the field.

MISS STAPLETON Nonsense! Pure flattery. Go on, the two of you. We will manage.

STAPLETON *(Uneasily. )* I . . . I’ll do my best. *(He and WATSON turn toward the staircase. STAPLETON halts.)* If you need anything, Beryl, we’ll just be a word away.

MISS STAPLETON Don’t worry over me. *(STAPLETON and WATSON exit up the stairs. Slight pause. SIR HENRY and MISS STAPLETON blurt simultaneously.)*

MISS STAPLETON You must think me . . .

SIR HENRY You’ve a very unusual . . . *(Laughs. )* I’m sorry. Please. *(MISS STAPLETON hesitates, seeming to wait until she’s sure that her brother is out of earshot.)*

MISS STAPLETON Dr. Watson told you of my talk with him yesterday?

SIR HENRY That he’d met you, yes.
MISS STAPLETON  But not that I mistook him for you?

SIR HENRY  (With a smile, trying to flatter her.) I’m sure he thought of nothing but that he had you all to himself.

MISS STAPLETON  (Ignoring the compliment, increasing urgency.) Nor that I pled with him to leave here?

SIR HENRY  (Sudden concern at her behavior.) But why would you do that?

MISS STAPLETON  Because of the danger.

SIR HENRY  (A small laugh at her seriousness.) I’m happy that he didn’t. (Resolute.) No, I shan’t listen. I hope for a new beginning for all future Baskervilles.

MISS STAPLETON  That can never happen.

SIR HENRY  But why?

MISS STAPLETON  Too much has happened; too much waits to happen.

SIR HENRY  (Trying to lighten the mood, but a bit annoyed.) Now, if you’re going to deliver that sort of dire warning, you really must give me a few more "facts," as Mr. Holmes says . . .

MISS STAPLETON  (Standing and taking his hands in hers. A plea.) I can’t! But you must believe me when I . . . (STAPLETON enters at the top of the landing.)

STAPLETON  As luck would have it, the very first specimen . . . (He sees MISS STAPLEION and SIR HENRY in their intense pose. ) . . . in the case eludes me. Is there something wrong?

SIR HENRY  (Removing his hands from MISS STAPLETON’S; awkwardly trying to make light of the moment.) I have finally decided to call the bluff of all who deliver messages of foreboding.

STAPLETON  (Moving to MISS STAPLETON, unamused.) And did you do that, Beryl?
MISS STAPLETON  No! I . . . I only meant to say that . . .

STAPLETON  (Taking her arm, a bit roughly.) Yes?

MISS STAPLETON  (Trembling in fear.) The mire! The Grimpen Mire. one should not...

STAPLETON  But that warning has already been given to Dr. Watson.

MISS STAPLETON  I . . . had forgotten . . .

STAPLETON  Are you tired, Beryl? (He squeezes her arm: a signal for her to say "yes." SIR HENRY is aware of most strange goings-on, but can simply stand amazed.)

MISS STAPLETON  I'm afraid that I am, rather.

STAPLETON  I'll see you home.

SIR HENRY  (To STAPLETON.) I hope that I have not . . .

STAPLETON  (curtly) No, no -please don't worry yourself on my sister's account. I kept her on the moor for far too long this afternoon. My sister is not entirely well, Sir Henry. She becomes . . . "distracted" . . . at times. But I'm sure that Beryl does want to say something to you before we take our leave. Beryl? (He nudges MISS STAPLETON roughly forward.)

MISS STAPLETON  Yes, I . . . (Extending her hand in farewell, but looking desperately in his eyes.) It's so good of you to have us and . . . we're so very glad to have you here, finally, at Baskerville.

SIR HENRY  (Taking her hand. ) I assure you the pleasure is mine. It will give me even greater pleasure as the days wear on.

MISS STAPLETON  Good night, then.

SIR HENRY  Good night.
STAPLETON (Briskly leading MISS STAPLETON out; her hand virtually pulled away from SIR HENRY’S.) Please give our farewell to Dr. Watson for us. It has gotten rather late.

SIR HENRY (Half-hearted response; knowing that they could not hear him.) Of course.

SIR HENRY stares off after them. FRANKLAND appears, lurking, outside the French doors. WATSON enters on landing.

WATSON I say. I seem to have lost my teacher.

SIR HENRY You’ve no idea what sort of scene I’ve just witnessed.

WATSON (Descending the stairs.) And what was that?

SIR HENRY Miss Stapleton. She told me of her waning to you, and was about to tell me more when her brother appeared.

WATSON I thought it rather strange. We had no more opened the case when he had to dash back in here to her.

SIR HENRY It was almost as if he had some "power" over her.

WATSON Perhaps it was only Mr. Frankland’s rather ominous . . . (Looks about.) I say -what’s became of Frankland?

SIR HENRY I don’t know. Not upstairs with you?

WATSON Not a sign of him.

SIR HENRY There is much about that Frankland I do not like.

WATSON We perfectly agree there. Do you suppose he might be amenable to a man not of the aristocracy?

SIR HENRY I suspect he’s the same to everyone.

WATSON All the same, I think I will pop over there tomorrow. He’s just the sort of man Holmes would want me to have a look at.
SIR HENRY  *(Hopeful.)* No word from Holmes?

WATSON  Nothing. I've sent off several reports, but no answer. Not surprised, really. I seem to have struck several walls in my investigations.

SIR HENRY  *(Almost to himself, with great conviction.)* I wish he were here.

WATSON  Now you make me feel inadequate.

SIR HENRY  *(A warm smile breaks the gloom.)* Not at all, sir - the best companion a man could wish for! Perhaps you will join me in something of a nightcap before turning in?

WATSON  That would just do it. Shall I ring for Barrymore?

SIR HENRY  I shall. *(SIR HENRY steps next to doorway DSR and pulls call rope; then crosses SL toward stairs.)* But I think a smaller room with a bit cozier fire. The library?

WATSON  *(Following SIR HENRY to staircase.)* Smashing idea.

BARRYMORE  *(Entering DSR.)* Sir?

SIR HENRY  *(Stopping midway up the stairs.)* I think we're done here, Barrymore.

BARRYMORE  Very good, sir.

WATSON  *(As he and SIR HENRY climb the stairs and exit.)* Must be something in this brisk moor air that puts a man in mind of nothing so much as a solid sleep beneath his blankets . . .

*They are gone. Pause. MRS.BARRYMORE enters from SL.*

MRS.

BARRYMORE  Are they . . . ?

BARRYMORE  Gone off for the night.

MRS.
BARRYMORE Shouldn't we wait?

BARRYMORE It has to be done; there may not be a better hour.

MRS. BARRYMORE But Dr. Watson . . .

BARRYMORE Will know nothing about it. Fetch the suit.

MRS. BARRYMORE Husband . . .

BARRYMORE Do it – now!

*MRS. BARRYMORE exits DSL. BARRYMORE quickly extinguishes all the candles except the lantern which hangs SR of fireplace. BARRYMORE opens the SR set of French doors and takes a step out onto the patio. He slowly, deliberately, raises and lowers the lantern in a signal. SIR HENRY'S voice can be heard approaching from offstage.*

SIR HENRY *(Off stage.)* Should have remembered that the fire wasn't laid. We'll have to make do in . . . *(They appear on the landing.)*

WATSON Oh, I say. Gone a bit dark, hasn’t it?

SIR HENRY *(Tiptoeing down.)* Careful there, the steps are right there . . . *(Midway down the steps, they both see the signaling.)*

WATSON Sir Henry...!

SIR HENRY *(Whisper.)* I see it.

WATSON Someone trying to break in.

SIR HENRY No . . . outside - signal of some sort. Have you your pistol?

WATSON Right here.

*SIR HENRY quietly descends the remaining steps and begins to cross the room. He recognizes BARRYMORE; then deliberately marches up behind the man.*
SIR HENRY And who will answer your signal, Mr. Barrymore?

BARRYMORE *(Startled.)* What. . . ?

SIR HENRY *(Taking BARRYMORE by the arm and leading him back inside.)* What business have you here?

BARRYMORE Checking the windows is all, sir.

SIR HENRY *(Angry at the lie.)* At midnight?!

BARRYMORE *(Looking SIR HENRY straight in the eye.)* Regardless of the hour, sir.

MRS. BARRYMORE *(MRS. BARRYMORE enters DSL, a parcel in her hands.)* Husband, I have the . . . *(She freezes when she sees SIR HENRY and WATSON.)*

SIR HENRY *(To MRS. BARRYMORE.)* Yes? *(MRS. BARRMORE does not respond, she hangs her head.)* Barrymore, what has she?

BARRYMORE I'm doing no one any harm, sir.

SIR HENRY *(Quaking with rage.)* That was not my question!

BARRYMORE If you've any complaints as to our service, sir, you may feel free to discharge us.

SIR HENRY *(Sighs. A bit softer.)* You've served my family for years. It's not a question of a reprimand; it's a question of the truth.

BARRYMORE I've nothing more to say, sir.

SIR HENRY We'll talk of this in the morning.

BARRYMORE Will there be anything else, sir?

SIR HENRY *(Turning away, disgusted.)* Nothing.

BARRYMORE Good night, sir.
BARRYMORE joins his wife, both pause to look at SIR HENRY and WATSON, then exit. SIR HENRY pounds his fist in his hand.

SIR HENRY  What do you make of that?!

WATSON  He was lifting a signal. I've no doubt of it.

SIR HENRY  (Looking out over the moor. ) I’ve half a mind to . . . (An idea - to WATSON. ) . . . to signal myself.

WATSON  Agreed, sir. I’m with you.

SIR HENRY grabs BARRYMORE’s lantern from the mantle and signals.

SIR HENRY  (Pointing.) There!

WATSON  Not a quarter of a mile away.

SIR HENRY  The Cleft Tor, I think.

WATSON  Near there.

SIR HENRY  Are you still agreed with me, sir?

WATSON  (Stepping away from the doors.) No, sir - here I am not.

SIR HENRY  Ten minutes hard work and we can have our man!

WATSON  (Pulling SIR HENRY back into the room.) Or he could have us! No, sir - not in this darkness.

SIR HENRY  Damn! (Suddenly, the baying of the hound. SIR HENRY freezes in terror Pause. ) What was that?

WATSON  I’ve heard it once before.

SIR HENRY  But what is it? (WATSON is unwilling to answer.) (An angry plea.) Damn it, man! I’m not a child!

WATSON  (A deep breath.) It is said to be . . . the hound of the Baskervilles.
SIR HENRY  
(A swallow. He is suddenly engulfed by the superstition and terror.) Yes?

WATSON  
(Attempting to discount what he, too, fears may be true.) No reasonable man can believe it, sir -but neither could I believe that Mr. Holmes would so earnestly warn me against the powers of the night. And he did that, sir: "Avoid the moor at the hour of darkness."

SIR HENRY  
(Trying to shake his fear and summon his courage.) I refuse to believe it. (A breath. ) I will see it through.

SIR HENRY turns US to start out the doors. WATSON quickly follows and stops him as SIR HENRY steps onto the patio.

WATSON  
Wait, Sir Henry . . . (Suddenly points. ) Look! (SIR HENRY steps back in fear.)

SIR HENRY  
What is it, Watson?

WATSON  
There . . . do you see?

SIR HENRY  
It looks to be a... man...

WATSON  
Watching us! (He pulls SIR HENRY back into the room and closes the doors.) Inside, sir - quickly! It is not cowardly to follow reason.

SIR HENRY  
Are we, then, the hunted?!

WATSON  
Do not think it, sir. Daylight will alter all of it and then we will investigate.

SIR HENRY  
(Nervously. ) I almost fear the answers we will find.

WATSON and SIR HENRY look at one another, frightened. WATSON takes the lantern from SIR HENRY ‘S trembling hand and quickly guides him up the stairs. Only moonlight through the French doors illumines the empty room. A silhouette of a man approaches the doors and tries to open them, but they are locked. The hound bays in the distance, the sound grows and fills the auditorium as the Act Curtain falls.

INTERMISSION