

Dr Mortimer has read a newspaper article to Sherlock Holmes and Mr Watson about the death of Sir Charles Baskerville, a rich landowner. Now he gives his opinion of what happened.

START THINKING ...

1 Work in small groups. Discuss the questions.

- Do you feel scared in the dark when you're in an unfamiliar place? Why or why not?
- Has anything strange ever happened to you that you can't explain?
- Are there any mysteries in your country that can't be explained?

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1902) Arthur Conan Doyle

Dr. Mortimer refolded his paper and replaced it in his pocket.

'Those are the public facts, Mr Holmes, in connection with the death of Sir Charles Baskerville.'

5 'I must thank you,' said Sherlock Holmes, 'for calling my attention to a case which certainly presents some features of interest. This article, you say, contains all the public facts?'

'It does.'

'Then let me have the private ones.'

10 'In doing so,' said Dr Mortimer, 'I am telling that which I have not **confided** to anyone. My motive for withholding it from the coroner's inquiry is that a man of science shrinks from placing himself in the public position of seeming to **endorse** a popular superstition. I thought that I was **justified** in telling rather less than I knew, since no practical good could result from it, but with

15 you there is no reason why I should not be perfectly frank. 'The moor is very **sparsely** inhabited, and those who live near each other are thrown very much together. For this reason I saw a good deal of Sir Charles Baskerville. Sir Charles was a retiring man, but the chance of his illness brought us together, and a common

20 interest in science kept us so. 'Within the last few months it became increasingly plain to me that Sir Charles's nervous system was strained to breaking point. He had taken this legend which I have read you exceedingly to heart – so much so that, although he would walk in his own

25 grounds, nothing would induce him to go out upon the moor at night. The idea of some ghastly presence constantly **haunted** him, and he asked me whether I had on my medical journeys at night

ever seen any strange creature or heard the baying of a hound.

30 'I can remember driving up to his house in the evening three weeks before the fatal event. He chanced to be at his hall door. I was standing in front of him, when I saw his eyes fix themselves over my shoulder, and stare past me with an expression of the most dreadful horror. I whisked round and had just time to catch a **glimpse** of something which I took to be a large black animal

35 passing at the head of the drive. So excited and alarmed was he that I was compelled to go down to the spot where the animal had been and look around for it. It was gone, and the incident appeared to make the worst impression upon his mind. I stayed with him all evening, and it was on that occasion that he confided

40 to my keeping that narrative which I read to you when first I came. I mention this small episode because it assumes some importance in view of the **tragedy** which followed, but I was convinced at the time that the matter was entirely **trivial** and that his excitement had no justification. 'On the night of Sir Charles's death, Barrymore the **butler**, who made the discovery, sent Perkins the groom on horseback to me, and I was able to reach Baskerville Hall within an hour of the event. I checked all the facts which were mentioned at the **inquest**. I followed the footsteps down the Yew Alley, I saw the spot at

50 the moor-gate where he seemed to have waited, I remarked the change in the shape of the prints after that point, I noted that there were no other footsteps save those of Barrymore on the soft gravel, and finally I carefully examined the body, which had not been touched until my arrival. Sir Charles lay on his face, and his

55 features twisted with some strong emotion to such an extent that I could hardly have sworn to his identity. There was certainly no physical injury of any kind. But one false statement was made by Barrymore at the inquest. He said that there were no traces upon the ground round the body. He did not observe any. But I did –

60 some little distance off, but fresh and clear. 'Footprints?'

'Footprints.'

'A man's or a woman's?'

Dr Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his

65 voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered. 'Mr Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!'

Glossary

confide to tell something secret or personal to someone who you trust not to tell anyone else

endorse to make a public statement of your approval or support for something or someone

justified to give or to be a good reason for

sparse small in numbers or amount, often spread over a large area

haunt if an unpleasant memory or feeling haunts you, you think about or feel it often

glimpse a look at something or someone for a very short time

tragedy something very sad that happens, usually involving death

trivial small and not important

butler the most important male servant in a house, usually responsible for organising the other servants

inquest an official process to discover the cause of someone's death

2 **▶▶3A.1** Read the text and listen.

3 Read the text again. Answer the questions.

- 1 What did Dr Mortimer and Sir Charles Baskerville have in common?
- 2 Why was Sir Charles afraid to walk outside of his garden at night?
- 3 What did Dr Mortimer think he saw outside Sir Charles's house?
- 4 What did Dr Mortimer initially think of Sir Charles's belief in the legend?
- 5 How many sets of footprints were near the body?

4 **▶▶3A.1** **READ BETWEEN THE LINES** Answer the questions. Give reasons and examples from the text.

- 1 Why didn't Dr Mortimer give his opinion at the coroner's enquiry?
- 2 Why do you think Sir Charles's 'features twisted with some strong emotion'?
- 3 When did Dr Mortimer start to believe in the legend?

5 **VOCABULARY** Complete the sentences with the correct words from the glossary in the correct form.

- 1 By the time war was declared in 1914, most British people believed that fighting was _____.
- 2 _____ were more important than cooks and cleaners in early 20th century households.
- 3 Britain was much more _____ populated in the early 20th century than it is now.
- 4 When Queen Victoria died in 1901, people stood in the streets to get a last _____ of her body.
- 5 Local historians often use reports from coroners' _____ to find out more about how people died.
- 6 The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 was a _____ in which many people lost their lives.

6 **VOCABULARY** Underline five words in the text that are new to you. Look them up in a dictionary and then write each of them in a sentence.

7 **▶▶3A.1** **ROLE PLAY** Work in pairs. Barrymore, the butler, tells Dr Mortimer what he thinks happened to Charles Baskerville. Student A is Barrymore, Student B is Dr Mortimer. Read the beginning of the conversation and then continue it with your own ideas. Use *must*, *can't*, *could* and *might*.

BARRYMORE Dr Mortimer! You won't believe what happened! I was walking in the grounds when I found his body ...

8 **▶▶3A.2** **LISTENING** Listen to the next part of the story. Put the words in the order you hear them. There are two words that you do not hear.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> assure | <input type="checkbox"/> prisoner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conspiracy | <input type="checkbox"/> safe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> harmful | <input type="checkbox"/> shadows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> plot | <input type="checkbox"/> signal |

9 **▶▶3A.2** Listen again. Answer the questions.

- 1 What is causing the shadows?
- 2 What type of light does Watson see?
- 3 How long has Barrymore's family worked for the Baskerville family?
- 4 Who is Eliza?
- 5 What do the two lights signify?

WRITING An article

10 **▶▶3A.2** **WRITING** Write an article for the local newspaper about Sir Charles Baskerville's death.

- Heading: Keep this short and try to use words that start with the same sounds (*Wet and windy weather wrecks Wimbledon*).
- Think of answers to *Wh-* questions (*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How*) when you're writing your introduction. Divide the article into short paragraphs – one for each key event.
- Remember to include facts, not opinions. Include quotes from witnesses.

THINK STYLE

Cliffhangers

The Hound of the Baskervilles wasn't originally written as a novel; it appeared in a magazine one chapter at a time. Chapters of stories that were *serialised* in this way often ended with a *cliffhanger*, a dramatic and exciting event, which encouraged readers to buy the next edition so that they could find out what happened.

11 Read the last line of the reading text or listen again to the last two lines of the listening text. What happens next? Make notes and present your ideas to the class. Remember to end your presentation with a cliffhanger to encourage others to want to read the next chapter.