

КАРМАННОЕ ЧТЕНИЕ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ



INTERMEDIATE

Arthur Conan Doyle

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES



Артур Конан Дойл

СОБАКА БАСКЕРВИЛЕЙ

Артур Конан Игнатиус Дойл
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Аннотация

Внезапная смерть сэра Чарльза Баскервиля, произошедшая при загадочных обстоятельствах, дает начало одному из самых необычных дел, с которыми когда-либо приходилось сталкиваться Шерлоку Холмсу. Текст произведения адаптирован и сопровождается словарем. Предназначается для продолжающих изучать английский язык средней ступени (уровень Intermediate).

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Chapter 1

Mr. Sherlock Holmes

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who usually got up very late in the mornings, except on those occasions when he was up all night, was sitting at the breakfast table. I stood near the fireplace and picked up the stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before. It was a fine, thick piece of wood. Under the head was a broad silver band. "To Dr. James Mortimer, from his friends of the C.C.H.," was engraved upon it, with the date "1884." It was just such a stick as old-fashioned family doctors carried.

"Well, Watson, what do you make of it?" Holmes was sitting with his back to me.

"How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head."

"I have a well-polished, silver coffee-pot in front of me," said he. "But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of our visitor's stick? Since we have missed him and have no idea why he came, this souvenir becomes of importance."

"I think," said I, following as far as I could the methods of my companion, "that Dr. Mortimer is a successful, elderly medical man, since those who know him give him this mark of their respect."

"Good!" said Holmes. "Excellent!"

"I think also that he is probably a country doctor who does a good deal of his visiting on foot."

"Why so?"

"Because this stick has been so worn out that I can hardly imagine a town doctor carrying it. It is evident that he has done a lot of walking with it."

"Perfect!" said Holmes, pushing back his chair and lighting a cigarette. "I must say that in all the accounts which you have given of my investigations you have written very little about yourself. It may be that you do not have genius yourself, but you are very good at stimulating it. My dear fellow, I am very much in your debt."

He had never said as much before, and his words gave me keen pleasure. I was proud, too, to think that I had mastered his system. He now took the stick from my hands and examined it for a few minutes, then he carried it to the window and looked over it again with a lens.

"Interesting, though elementary," said he. "There are one or two marks on the stick, which allow us to make several deductions."

"I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were wrong. When I said that you stimulated me I meant, that your mistakes guided me towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this case. The man is certainly a country doctor. And he walks a good deal."

"Then I was right."

“No, no, my dear Watson. A present to a doctor is more likely to come from a hospital, and when the initials ‘C.C.’ are placed before that hospital the words ‘Charing Cross’ very naturally occur to you.”

“You may be right.”

“Now, you will see that he could not be a doctor at the hospital, since only a man with a good London practice could have such a position, and such a man would not go to live in the country. What was he, then? A student. And he left five years ago—the date is on the stick. So your middle-aged family doctor turns into a young fellow under thirty, with a favourite dog, larger than a terrier and smaller than a mastiff.”

“A dog?”

“A dog has been in the habit of carrying this stick behind his master. The marks of his teeth are very well seen. These marks are too broad for a terrier and not broad enough for a mastiff. It may be—yes, it is a spaniel.”

I looked at him in surprise. He was now standing at the window.

“How can you be so sure of that?”

“For the very simple reason that I see the dog himself at our door, and there is the ring of its owner. Don’t go away, Watson. He is a professional brother of yours, and your presence may help me. What does Dr. James Mortimer, the man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, the specialist in crime? Come in!”

The appearance of our visitor was a surprise to me, since I

had expected a typical country doctor.

He was a very tall, thin man, with a long nose like a beak, keen, gray eyes, sparkling brightly from behind a pair of glasses. Though he was young, his long back was already bowed. As he entered his eyes fell upon the stick in Holmes's hand, and he ran towards it with an exclamation of joy. "I am so very glad," said he. "I was not sure that I had left it here. I would not like to lose that stick."

"A present, I see," said Holmes.

"Yes, sir."

"From Charing Cross Hospital?"

"From one or two friends there on the day of my marriage."

"Your marriage, you say?"

"Yes, sir. I married, and so left the hospital. It was necessary to make a home of my own."

"We are not so wrong, after all," said Holmes. "And now, Dr. James Mortimer—"

"I think that it is Mr. Sherlock Holmes to whom I am speaking —"

"Yes, and this is my friend Dr. Watson."

"Glad to meet you, sir. I have heard your name and that of your friend. You interest me very much, Mr. Holmes."

Sherlock Holmes asked our strange visitor to take a seat.

"I came to you, Mr. Holmes, because I have a very serious and extraordinary problem. I called here last night and again today —"

“Indeed, sir! I would like to know, Dr. Mortimer, what your problem is in which you want my help.”

Chapter 2

The Curse of the Baskervilles

“I have a manuscript in my pocket,” said Dr. James Mortimer.

“The exact date is 1742.” Dr. Mortimer drew it from his pocket. “This family paper was given to me by Sir Charles Baskerville, whose sudden and tragic death three months ago was much talked about in Devonshire. I may say that I was his personal friend as well as his doctor. He was a shrewd, practical man, but he took this document very seriously, and his mind was prepared for just such a death as he met.”

Holmes took the manuscript and looked at it.

I looked over his shoulder at the yellow paper where it was written: “Baskerville Hall,” and below: “1742.”

“It is a legend of the Baskerville family.”

“But I understand that it is something more modern and practical upon which you wish to consult me?”

“Very modern. A very practical, pressing matter, which must be decided within twenty-four hours. But the manuscript is short and is connected with it. With your permission I will read it to you.”

Holmes leaned back in his chair, and closed his eyes. Dr. Mortimer turned the manuscript to the light and started reading:

“There have been many stories about the Hound of the

Baskervilles. I come in a direct line from Hugo Baskerville, and I had the story from my father, who also had it from his. I have written it down with all belief that it occurred as is written here

“About a hundred years ago Baskerville Hall was owned by Hugo, a most wild, and godless man. It so happened that this Hugo fell in love (if, indeed, so dark a passion may be known under so bright a name) with the daughter of a farmer who had land near Baskerville Hall. But the young girl avoided him, for she feared this evil man. So it happened that one day this Hugo, with five or six of his idle and wicked companions, came to the farm and carried off the girl, as he knew that her father and brothers were away from home. When they had brought her to the Hall the girl was locked in a room upstairs, while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long dinner, as was their custom. Now, the poor girl upstairs was frightened by the wild singing and shouting and terrible cursing which came up to her from below, for they say that the words used by Hugo Baskerville, when he was in wine, were really terrible. And in her fear she did what could only be done by the bravest man. With the help of the ivy which covered (and still covers) the wall she came down, and ran across the moor to her father’s farm.

“It so happened that some little time later Hugo left his guests to carry food and drink to the girl, and so found the cage empty and the bird escaped. Then he rushed down the stairs into the dining-hall, sprang upon the great table, and he cried aloud before all the company that he would give up his body and soul

to the Powers of Evil if he caught the girl. And while the guests stood frightened at the fury of the man, one more wicked or, it may be, more drunken than the rest, cried out that they should put the hounds upon her. At once Hugo ran from the house, crying to his grooms that they should saddle his horse. And giving the hounds a kerchief of the girl's, he put them on the scent, and off they went over the moor.

“For some time the guests stood still, unable to understand what had been done. But soon thirteen of them took horses and followed Hugo and the hounds.

“They had gone a mile or two when they passed a man, and they cried to him to know if he had seen the girl. And the man, as the story goes, said that he had seen the unhappy girl, with the hounds on her track. ‘But I have also seen,’ said he, ‘Hugo Baskerville on his black horse, and a hound of hell ran behind him.’ The drunken squires cursed the man and rode on. But they saw Hugo's horse soon galloping across the moor, with an empty saddle. They came at last upon the hounds. They were standing and whimpering. The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there lay the unhappy girl where she had fallen, dead of fear and of exhaustion. But it was neither her body, nor the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of the men. A great, black beast, looking like a hound, but larger than any hound in the world was standing over Hugo and biting at his throat. And as they looked the beast tore the throat out of Hugo Baskerville, as it turned its blazing eyes upon them,

the men shrieked with fear and rode, still screaming, across the moor. One, it is said, died that very night of a heart attack, and the others were broken men for the rest of their days.

“Such is the story, my sons, of the hound which has plagued the family ever since. Many deaths in the family have been unhappy, sudden, bloody, and mysterious. My sons, I ask you, and I advise you not to cross the moor in those dark hours when the powers of evil are the strongest.”

When Dr. Mortimer had finished reading this unusual story he looked at Mr. Sherlock Holmes. “Well?” said he. “Do you find it interesting?”

“To a collector of fairy tales.”

Chapter 3

Sir Charles's Death

Dr. Mortimer drew a folded newspaper out of his pocket.

“Now, Mr. Holmes, we will give you something more recent. This is the paper from Devonshire of May 14th of this year. It is a short account of the death of Sir Charles Baskerville which occurred a few days before that date.”

My friend's expression became interested. Our visitor began:

“The recent sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville has struck everyone in the county. Though Sir Charles had lived at Baskerville Hall for a short period, his good character and generosity had won the love and respect of all who knew him. In these days of nouveaux riches, he was a rare man of an old county family who was able to make his own fortune and to bring it back with him to restore the fallen greatness of his family. Sir Charles, as is well known, made large sums of money in South Africa, and returned to England with them. It is only two years since he came to Baskerville Hall, and we all know how large were his plans of reconstruction. He had no children, and he was generous to many people.

“The circumstances of the death of Sir Charles have not become clear at the inquest. Sir Charles was simple in his tastes, and his servants at Baskerville Hall were a married couple named

Barrymore, the husband was a butler and the wife a housekeeper. Their evidence, like that of several friends, showed that Sir Charles's health had for some time been poor, especially the heart, and he had attacks of nervous depression.

"The facts of the case are simple. Sir Charles Baskerville was in the habit of walking down the famous yew alley of Baskerville Hall every night before going to bed. On the fourth of May Sir Charles said he was starting next day for London. That night he went out as usual for his walk, where he was in the habit of smoking a cigar. He never returned. At twelve o'clock Barrymore, finding the hall door still open, became alarmed, and went to look for his master. The day had been wet, and Sir Charles's footmarks were clearly seen in the alley. At the end of the alley there is a gate which leads out on to the moor. It was clear that Sir Charles had stood for some time there. He then went down the alley, his body was discovered at the far end of it. One thing which has not been explained is the fact that Sir Charles's footprints changed their character from the time that he passed the moor gate to the place of his death. He seemed to have been walking upon his toes. No signs of violence were discovered on Sir Charles's body, and though the doctor said his face was so distorted that Dr. Mortimer at first could not believe that it was his friend and patient who lay before him—it was explained that it was a symptom of heart exhaustion. There was a post-mortem examination, which showed long disease. It is understood that the heir is Mr. Henry Baskerville, if he is still alive, the son of

Sir Charles Baskerville's younger brother. The young man, when he was last heard of, was in America."

Dr. Mortimer put his paper in his pocket. "Those are the public facts, Mr. Holmes, of the death of Sir Charles Baskerville."

"I must thank you," said Sherlock Holmes, "for telling me about a case which certainly may be of interest. This article, you say, contains all the public facts?"

"It does."

"Have you any other facts?"

"I am telling something I have not told anyone," said Dr. Mortimer. "My motive is that a man of science does not want to be associated with superstition. I had another motive that no one would want to live at Baskerville Hall, if anything increased its already rather bad reputation. That was why I said less than I knew."

"Very few people live on the moor, and those who live here know each other very well, so I saw a good deal of Sir Charles Baskerville. With the exception of Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, and Mr. Stapleton, the naturalist, there are no other men of education within many miles. Sir Charles's illness brought us together as well as our interests in science. He had brought back much scientific information from South Africa, and we have spent together many nice evenings discussing scientific problems."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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