

'Yes, there is a small gate, which leads to the moor.'
'Is there any other opening through the hedge?'

'No.'

'So you can enter or leave the Yew Alley only from the Hall, or through the moor gate?' asked Holmes.

'There is a way out through a summer house at the far end.'

'Had Sir Charles reached the summer house?'

'No. He lay about fifty metres from it,' said Mortimer.

'Now, Dr Mortimer, this is important. You say that the footprints you saw were on the path and not on the grass?'

'No footprints could show on the grass,' said Mortimer.

'Were they on the same side of the path as the moor gate?'

'Yes. They were.'

'I find that very interesting indeed. Another question: was the moor gate closed?'

'Yes. It was closed and locked.'

'How high is it?' asked Holmes.

'It is just over a metre high.'

'Then anyone could climb over it?'

'Yes.'

'What prints did you see by the moor gate?'

'Sir Charles seems to have stood there for five or ten minutes,' said Mortimer. 'I know that because his cigar had burned down and the ash had dropped twice off the end of it.'

'Excellent,' said Holmes. 'This man is a very good detective, Watson.'

'Sir Charles had left his footprints all over that little bit of the path where he was standing. I couldn't see any other prints.'

Sherlock Holmes hit his knee with his hand angrily.

'I like to look closely at these things myself,' he said.

'Oh, Dr Mortimer, why didn't you call me immediately?'

'Mr Holmes, the best detective in the world can't help with some things,' said Mortimer.

'You mean things that are outside the laws of nature – supernatural things?' asked Holmes.

'I didn't say so exactly,' replied Mortimer. 'But since Sir Charles died, I have heard about a number of things that seem to be supernatural. Several people have seen an animal on the moor that looks like an enormous hound. They all agree that it was a huge creature, which shone with a strange light like a ghost. I have questioned these people carefully. They are all sensible people. They all tell the same story. Although they have only seen the creature far away, it is exactly like the hell-hound of the Baskerville story. The people are very frightened, and only the bravest man will cross the moor at night.'

'And you, a man of science, believe that the creature is supernatural – something from another world?' asked Holmes.

'I don't know what to believe,' said Dr Mortimer.

'But you must agree that the footprints were made by a living creature, not a ghost?'

'When the hound first appeared two hundred and fifty