

'How do you do, Dr Mortimer? May I introduce my good friend, Dr John Watson, who helps me with my cases. I hope you will allow him to listen to our conversation.'

'Of course,' said Mortimer, as he turned to me and shook hands. 'I need your help very badly, Mr Holmes. If it will be useful for Dr Watson to hear what I have to say, please let him stay and listen.'

Mortimer did not look like a country doctor. He was very tall and thin. He had a long thin nose. His grey eyes were bright, and he wore gold glasses. His coat and trousers were old and worn. His face was young, but his shoulders were bent like an old man's and his head was pushed forward. He took some papers from his pocket, and said:

'Mr Holmes, I need your help and advice. Something very strange and frightening has been happening.'

'Sit down, Dr Mortimer,' said Holmes, 'and tell us your problem. I'll help you if I can.'

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*The Baskerville Papers*

'These papers were given to me by Sir Charles Baskerville,' said Dr Mortimer. 'He asked me to take good care of them. You may remember that Sir Charles died suddenly three months ago. His death caused much excitement in

Devonshire, the county where Baskerville Hall is. Sir Charles was a sensible man, but he believed the story which is told in these papers.'

Dr Mortimer went on: 'The story is about the Baskerville family. I have come to see you because I need your help. I think that something terrible is going to happen in the next twenty-four hours. But you can't help me unless you know the story in these papers. May I read them to you?'

'Please continue, Dr Mortimer,' said Holmes, and sat back in his chair with his eyes shut.

Mortimer began to read in his high, rather strange, voice:

I, William Baskerville, write this for my sons in the year 1742. My father told me about the Hound of the Baskervilles. He told me when it was first seen, and I believe his story was true. I want you, my sons, to read this story carefully. I want you to know that God punishes those who do evil. But never forget that He will forgive those who are sorry for any evil they have done.

A hundred years ago, in 1640, the head of the Baskerville family was Sir Hugo Baskerville. He was a wild and evil man. He was cruel and enjoyed hurting people. Sir Hugo fell in love with the daughter of a farmer who was a neighbour of his. The young woman was afraid of the evil Hugo, and avoided him. One day, Hugo heard that her father and brothers