

Sherlock Holmes and The Hound of the Baskervilles:

Holmes: Hmm, very interesting. I assume these are all the public facts. Please now let me have the private ones.

Mortimer: In doing so, I am telling you that which I have confided in no one. I did not put them in the coroner's inquiry so as not to endorse a popular superstition. And I was concerned about frightening Sir Henry from taking up residence in Baskerville Hall.

Holmes: We will, of course, hold what you say in strict confidence.

Mortimer: The moor is sparsely populated, and those with education are few and thus thrown together. There is Mr. Frankland of Lafter Hall, a rather cranky and eccentric old man, Mr. Stapleton, a naturalist and his sister of Merripit House, Sir Charles and myself. Sir Charles and I, as men of science, shared a closer friendship than with the others.

Watson: Did you see any changes in Sir Charles in the weeks before his death?

Mortimer: A few months ago, I noticed that Charles was becoming more and more stressed. Concerned about his heart, I confronted him about his health, and he admitted being preoccupied, almost to the point of obsession with the Baskerville curse. He refused to go out on the moor at night, and admitted to hearing the eerie baying of a hound, and glimpses of the shadow of a huge animal staring at him as he looked out his window.

Holmes: Did you examine the area as well as Sir Charles the night of his death?

Mortimer: Yes, Barrymore, the butler sent the groom to fetch me, and I was at the scene within an hour. I noted all the things Barrymore had stated: Sir Charles' footprints at the gate, as if he had waited there; the difference in the shape of the footprints from that point, and no other footprints around the body, save those of Barrymore. When I examined the body, I noted he lay on his stomach with his fingers dug in the soil, and a convulsed expression on his face. There was no physical injury.

However, there was one false statement made by Barrymore at the inquest. He said there were no other footprints around the body, but I did observe, some little distance off, some fresh footprints.

Holmes: A man or woman's?

Mortimer: **Neither!** Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!

Holmes: You saw this?

Watson: And no one else did?

Mortimer: Yes. The prints were about 20 yards from the body, and I suppose no one else gave them any thought, but since I knew the story of the legend...

Holmes: Could it have been a sheep-dog; you say they were large. And they did not approach the body?

Mortimer: The prints were enormous, too large for a sheep dog, and no, they did not approach the body.

Holmes: What sort of night was it? Rainy?

Mortimer: Damp and raw, but no rain.

Holmes: And the alley: what was it like?

Mortimer: There are two lines of old yew hedge, 12 feet high and impenetrable. The walk
in the center is about 8 feet across, and a 6 foot strip on grass on either side.

Holmes: Hmm, impossible to know if there were prints on the grass. And the moor-gate you mentioned? Tell me about it and any other openings?

Mortimer: There are no other openings. The moor gate is about 4 feet high. To enter the yew alley, one can come down from the house or enter through the moor-gate. But it was closed and padlocked.

Watson: Yes, but anyone could have gotten over it.

Holmes: And the marks you saw at the gate?

Mortimer: It was evident by the prints that someone had been moving around as they waited there. Sir Charles had to have been there for at least 5 or 10 minutes.

Watson: How do you know that?

Mortimer: Because the ash had twice dropped from his cigar.

Holmes: Excellent! This is a colleague, Watson, after our own hearts! If only I had been there.

This case presents immense opportunities to the scientific expert. Oh Dr. Mortimer, Dr. Mortimer, why did you not call me in sooner?

Mortimer: Well, sir, I feared this situation could not be solved by mortal detectives, since it may be in the realm of the supernatural.

Holmes: As a man of science, do you believe that is so?

Mortimer: I no longer know what I believe, but before Sir Charles' death, several terrible events occurred that are hard to reconcile with the order of Nature.

Holmes: Such as?

Mortimer: Three people, respectable citizens all, have seen or heard a creature upon the moor, which corresponds with Baskerville's demon and could not possibly be any animal known to science. They all agreed that it was a huge creature, luminous, ghastly and spectral like a ghost. It corresponds exactly to the hellhound of the legend. There is a reign of terror in the district, and very few will cross the moor at night.