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## No Advance in Prices at Kingsmill's

### The Hound of The Baskervilles

BY SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.

The baronet and I were both upon our feet. "Do you know how he died?" "No, sir, I don't know that."

"What then?" "I know why he was at the gate at that hour. It was to meet a woman."

"To meet a woman! He?" "Yes, sir."

"And the woman's name?" "I can't give you the name, sir, but I can give you the initials. Her initials were L. L."

"How do you know this, Barrymore?" "Well, Sir Henry, your uncle had a letter that morning. He had usually a great many letters, for he was a public man, and well known for his kind heart, so that everyone who was in trouble was glad to turn to him. But that morning, as it chanced, there was only this one letter, so I took the more notice of it. It was from Combe Tracey, and it was addressed in a woman's hand."

"Well?" "Well, sir, I thought no more of the matter, and never would have done had it not been for my wife. Only a few weeks ago she was cleaning out Sir Charles' study—it had not been touched since his death—and she found the ashes of a burned letter in the back of the grate. It was charred to pieces, but one little slip, the end of a page, hung together, and the writing could still be read, though it was gray on a black ground. It seemed to me to be a postscript at the end of the letter, and it said: 'Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock.' Beneath it were signed the initials L. L."

"Have you got that slip?" "No, sir, it crumbled all to bits after we moved it."

"Had Sir Charles received any other letters in the same writing?" "Well, sir, I took no particular notice of his letters. I should not have noticed this one, only it happened to come alone."

"And you have no idea who L. L. is?" "No, sir. No more than you have. But I expect if we could lay our hands upon that lady we should know more about Sir Charles' death."

"I cannot understand, Barrymore, how you came to conceal this important information."

"Well, sir, it was immediately after that our own trouble came to us. And then, again, sir, we were both of us very fond of Sir Charles, as we well might be, considering all that he had done for us. To take this up couldn't help our poor master, and it's well to go carefully when there's a lady in the case. Even the best of us."

"You thought it might injure his reputation?" "Well, sir, I thought no good could come of it. But now you have been kind to me, and I feel as if it would be treating you unfairly not to tell you all that I know about the matter."

"Very good, Barrymore; you can go. When the butler had left us Sir Henry turned to me. 'Well, Watson, what do you think of this new light?'"

"It seems to leave the darkness blacker than before."

"So I think. But if we can only trace L. L. it should clear up the whole business. We have gained that much. We know that there is someone who has the facts if we can only find her. What do you think we should do?"

his crimes, he has suffered something to atone for them. And then I thought of that other one—the face in the cab, the figure against the moon. Was he also out in that deluge—the unseen watcher, the man of darkness? In the evening I put on my waterproof and I walked far upon the sodden moor, full of dark imaginings, the rain beating upon my face and the wind whistling about my ears. God help those who wander into the great mire now, for even the firm uplands are becoming a morass. I found the black tor upon which I had seen the solitary watcher, and from its craggy summit I looked out myself across the melancholy downs. Rain squalls drifted across their russet face, and the heavy, slate-colored clouds hung low over the landscape, trailing in gray wreaths down the sides of the fantastic hills. In the distant hollow on the left, half-hidden by the mist, the two thin towers of Baskerville Hall rose above the trees. They were the only signs of human life which I could see, save only those prehistoric huts which lay thickly upon the slopes of the hills. Nowhere was there any trace of that lonely man whom I had seen on the same spot two nights before.

As I walked back I was overtaken by Dr. Mortimer driving in his dogcart over a rough moorland track, which led from the outlying farmhouse of Foulmire. He has been very attentive to us, and hardly a day has passed that he has not called at the Hall to see how we were getting on. He insisted upon my climbing into his dogcart, and he gave me a lift homewards. I found him much troubled over the disappearance of his little spaniel. It had wandered on to the moor and had never come back. I gave him such consolation as I might, but I thought of the pony on the Grimpen Mire, and I do not fancy that he will see his little dog again.

"By the way, Mortimer," said I, as we jolted along the rough road, "I suppose there are few people living within driving distance of this whom you do not know?"

"Hardly any, I think."

"Can you tell me, then, the name of any woman whose initials are L. L.?" He thought for a few minutes.

"No," said he. "There are a few gypsies and laboring folk for whom I can't answer, but among the farmers or gentry there is no one whose initials are those. Wait a bit, though."

He added, after a pause, "There is Laura Lyons—her initials are L. L.—but she lives at Combe Tracey."

"Who is she?" "I ask you."

"She is Frankland's daughter."

"What! Old Frankland, the crank?" "Exactly. She married an artist, named Lyons, who came sketching on the moor. He proved to be a blackguard and deserted her. The fault from what I hear may not have been entirely on one side. Her father refused to have anything to do with her, because she married without his consent, and perhaps for one or two other reasons as well. So, between the old sinner and the young one the girl has had a pretty bad time."

"How does she live?" "I fancy old Frankland allows her a pittance, but it cannot be more, for his own affairs are considerably involved. Whatever she may have deserved one could not allow her to go hopelessly to the bad. Her story got about, and several of the people here did something to enable her to earn an honest living. Stapleton did for one, and Sir Charles for another. I gave a trifle myself. It was to set her up in a type-writing business."

"He wanted to know the object of my inquiries, but I managed to satisfy his curiosity without telling him too much. For there is no reason why we should take anyone into our confidence. Tomorrow I shall find my way to Combe Tracey, and if I can see this Mrs. Lyons, of equivocal reputation, a long step will have been made towards clearing one incident in this chain of mysteries. I am certainly developing the wisdom of the serpent, though for an innocent extent I asked him casually to what type Frankland's skull belonged, and so heard nothing but craniology for the rest of our drive. I have not lived for years with Sherlock Holmes for nothing."

Mortimer had stayed to dinner, and he and the baronet played cards afterwards. The butler brought me my coffee into the library, and I took the chance to ask him a few questions. "Well," said I, "has this precious relation of yours departed, or is he still lurking out yonder?"

"I don't know, sir. I hope to heaven that he has gone, for he has brought nothing but trouble here. I've not heard of him since I left out food for him last, and that was three days ago."

"Did you see him then?" "No, sir, but the food was gone when next I went that way."

"Then he was certainly there?" "So you would think, sir, unless it was the other man who took it."

I sat with my coffee-cup half-way to my lips and stared at Barrymore. "You know that there is another man, then?"

"Yes, sir; there is another man upon the moor?" "Have you seen him?" "No, sir."

"How do you know of him, then?" "Selden told me of him, sir, a week ago or more. He's in hiding, too, but he's not a convict as far as I can make out. I don't like it, Dr. Watson—I tell you straight, sir, that I don't like it."

He spoke with a sudden passion of earnestness.

"Now, listen to me, Barrymore! I have no interest in this matter, but that of your master. I have come here with no object except to help him. Tell me, frankly, what it is that you don't like."

Barrymore hesitated for a moment, as if he regretted his outburst, or found it difficult to express his own feelings in words.

"It's all these goings-on, sir," he cried at last, waving his hand towards the rain-slashed window which faced the moor. "There's foul play somewhere, and there's black villainy brewing, to that I'll swear! Very glad should be, sir, to see Sir Henry on his way back to London again!"

"But what is it that alarms you?" "Look at Sir Charles' death! That was bad enough, for all that the corner said. Look at the noises on the moor at night. There's not a man would cross it after sundown if he were paid for it. Look at this stranger hiding out yonder, and watching and waiting. What's he waiting for? What does it mean? It means no good to anyone of the name of Baskerville, and very glad I'll be to be quit of it all on the day that Sir Henry's new servants are ready to take over the Hall."

"But about this stranger," said I. "Can you tell me anything about him? What did Selden say? Did he find out where he hid, or what he was doing?"

"He saw him once or twice, but he is a deep one and gives nothing away. At first he thought that he was the police, but soon he found that he had some lay of his own. A kind of gentleman he was, as far as he could see, but what he was doing he could not make out."

"And where did he say that he lived?" "Among the old houses on the hillside—the stone huts where the old folk used to live."

"But how about his food?" "Selden found out that he has got a lad who works for him and brings him a tray. I daresay he gives to Combe Tracey for what he requires."

"Very good, Barrymore. We may talk further of this some other time. When the butler had gone I walked over the black window, and I looked through a blurred pane at the driving clouds and at the tossing outline of the wind-swept trees. It is a wild night indoors, and what must it be in a stone hut upon the moor. What passion of hatred can it be which leads a man to lurk in such a place at such a time! And what deep and earnest purpose can he have which calls for such a trial! There, in that hut upon the moor seems to lie the very center of that problem which has vexed me so sorely. I swear that another day shall not have passed before I have done all that man can do to reach the heart of the mystery."

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