

## The Hound of the Baskervilles

BY SIR A. CONAN DOYLE

A terrible scream—a prolonged yell of horror and anguish burst out of the silence of the moor. That frightful cry turned my blood to ice in my veins.

"Oh, my God!" I gasped. "What is it? What does it mean?"

Holmes had sprung to his feet, and I saw his dark, athletic outline at the door of the hut, his shoulders stooping, his head thrust forward, his face peering into the darkness.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Hush!"

The cry had been loud on account of its vehemence, but it had pealed out from somewhere far off on the shadowy plain. Now it burst upon our ears, nearer, louder, more urgent than before.

"Where is it?" Holmes whispered, and I knew from the thrill of his voice that he, the man of iron, was shaken to the soul. "Where is it, Watson?"

"There, I think," I pointed into the darkness.

"No, there!"

Again the agonized cry swept through the silent night, louder and much nearer than ever. And a new sound mingled with it, a deep, muttering rumble, musical and yet menacing, rising and falling like the low, constant murmur of the sea.

"The hound!" cried Holmes. "Come, Watson, come! Grit your teeth, if you are too late!"

He had started running swiftly over the moor, and I had followed at his heels. But now from somewhere among the broken ground immediately in front of us there came one last despairing yell, and then a dull, heavy thud. We halted and listened. No other sound broke the heavy silence of the windless night.

I saw Holmes put his hand to his forehead like a man distracted. He stamped his feet upon the ground.

"He has beaten us, Watson! We are too late."

"No, not surely not!"

"Fool that I was, to hold my hand!"

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this man down. There is one very singular thing, however: How came Selden, in the darkness, to know that the hound was on his trail?"

"He heard him?"

"To hear a hound upon the moor would not work a hard man like this convict into such a paroxysm of terror that he would risk recapture by screaming wildly for help. By his cries he must have run a long way after he knew the animal was on his track. How did he know?"

"A greater mystery to me is why this hound, presuming that all our conjectures are correct—"

"I presume nothing."

"Well, then, why this hound should be tonight, I suppose that it does not always run loose upon the moor. Stapleton would not let it go unless he had reason to think that Sir Henry would be there."

"My difficulty is the more formidable of the two, for I think that he shall very shortly get an explanation of yours, while mine may remain forever a mystery. The question now is, What shall we do with this poor wretch's body? We cannot leave it here to the foxes and the ravens."

"I suggest that we put it in one of the huts until we can communicate with the police."

"Exactly. I have no doubt that you and I could carry it so far. Halloa, Watson, what's that?"

Watson, what's that? The man himself, by all that's wonderful and audacious. Not a word to show your suspicions—not a word, or my plans crumble to the ground."

A figure was approaching us over the moor and the dull red glow of a cigar. The moon shone upon him and I could distinguish the dapper shape and jaunty walk of the naturalist. He stopped when he saw us and then came on again.

"Why, Dr. Watson, that's not you, is it? You are the last man that I should have expected to see out on the moor at this time of night. But, dear me, what's this? Somebody hurt? Not—don't tell me that it is our friend Sir Henry?"

"He hurried past me and stood over the dead man. I heard a sharp intake of his breath and the cigar fell from his fingers."

"Who—whose this?"

"It is Selden, the man who escaped from Princetown."

Stapleton turned a ghastly face upon us, but by a supreme effort he had overcome his amazement and his disappointment. He looked sharply at Holmes.

"Dear me! What a very shocking affair! How did he die?"

"He appears to have broken his neck by falling over these rocks. My friend and I were strolling over the moor when we heard a cry."

"I heard a cry also. That was what brought me out. I was uneasy about Sir Henry."

"Why about Sir Henry in particular?"

"Because I had suggested that he should come over. When he did not come I was surprised, and I naturally became alarmed for his safety when I heard cries upon the moor. By the way—his eyes darted again from my face to Holmes—'did you hear anything else?' he cried."

"No," said Holmes. "Did you?"

"No."

"What do you mean, then?"

"Oh, you know the stories that the peasants tell about a phantom hound and so on. I was sure to be heard of at night upon the moor. I was wondering if there were any evidence of such a sound tonight."

"We heard nothing of the kind."

"And what is your theory about the poor fellow's death?"

"I have no doubt that anxiety and exposure have driven him off his head. He has rushed about the moor in a crazy state and eventually fallen over here and broken his neck."

"That seems the most reasonable theory," said Stapleton, and he gave a sign which I took to indicate his relief. "What do you think about it, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

My friend bowed his compliments. "You are quick at identification," he said.

"We have been expecting you in these parts since Dr. Watson came down. You are in time to see a tragedy."

"Yes, indeed. I have no doubt that my friend's explanation will cover the facts. I will take an unpleasant remembrance back to London with me tomorrow."

"Oh, you return tomorrow?"

"That is my intention."

"I hope your visit has cast some light upon those occurrences which have puzzled us?"

Holmes shrugged his shoulders. "One cannot always have a successful case for which one hopes. An investigator needs facts, and not legends or rumors. It has not been a satisfactory case."

My friend spoke in his frank and most unconcerned manner. Stapleton still looked hard at him. Then he turned to me.

"I would suggest carrying this poor fellow to my home, but it would give my sister such a fright that I do not feel justified in doing it. I think that the best plan is to return alone and be safe until morning."

And so it was arranged. Resisting Stapleton's offer of hospitality, Holmes and I set off to Baskerville Hall, leaving the naturalist to return alone. Looking back we saw the figure moving slowly away over the broad moor, and behind him that one black smudge on the silvered slope which showed where the man was lying who had come so horribly to his end.

CHAPTER XIII.

"We're at close grips at last," said Holmes, as we walked together across the moor. "What a nerve the fellow has! How he pulled himself together in the face of what must have been a paralyzing shock when he found that the wrong man had fallen a victim to his plot. I told you in London, Watson, and I tell you now again, that we have never had a foe more worthy of our steel."

"I am sorry that he has seen you."

"And so was I at first. There is no getting out of it."

"What effect do you think it will have upon his plans, now that he knows you are here?"

"It may cause him to be more cautious, or it may drive him to desperate measures at once. Like most clever criminals he may be too confident in his own cleverness and energetic. But he has completely deceived us."

"Why should we not arrest him at once?"

"My dear Watson, you were born to be a man of action. Your instinct is always to do something energetic. But supposing, for argument's sake, that

we had him arrested tonight, what on earth the better off should we be for that? We could prove nothing against him. There's the devilish cunning of it! If he were acting through a human agent we could get some evidence, but if we were to drag this great dog to the light of day it would be no use in putting a rope around the neck of its master."

"Surely we have a case."

"Not a shadow of one—only surmise and conjecture. We should be laughed at and held the brute overtook him."

"There is Sir Charles' death."

"Found dead without a mark upon him. You and I know that he died of sheer fright, and we know also what frightened him; but how are we to get twelve stolid jurymen to know it? What signs are there of a hound? Of course, we know that a hound does not bite a dead body, and that Sir Charles was dead before the brute overtook him. But we have to prove all this, and we are not in a position to do it."

"What, then, tonight?"

"We are not much better off tonight. Again, there is no direct connection between the hound and the man's death. We never saw the hound. We heard it; but we could not prove that it was running upon this man's trail. There is a complete absence of motive. No, my dear fellow, we must console ourselves to the fact that we have no case at present, and that it is worth our while to run any risk in order to establish one."

"And how do you propose to do so?"

"I have great hopes of what Mrs. Laura Lyons may do for us when the position of affairs is made clear to her. And I have my own plan as well. Sufficient for tomorrow is the evil thereof; but I hope before the day is past to have a more definite and last."

"I could have sworn nothing further from him, and he walked, lost in thought, as far as the Baskerville gates."

"Are you coming up?"

"Yes; I see no reason for further concealment. And now, if we are to be ready for our supper."

Sir Henry was more pleased than surprised to see Sherlock Holmes, for he had for some days been expecting that recent visitor. He did raise his eyebrows, however, when he found that my friend had neither any luggage or any explanations for its absence. Between us we soon supplied his wants, and then over a belated supper we exchanged views upon the case.

"I have been hoping to see you," said Holmes, "but I have been so busy with my work that I have not had time to do so. I am glad to hear that you are well, and that you have not been troubled by any of your old ailments."

"I am well, thank you," said Holmes, "but I have been very busy with my work. I have been hoping to see you, but I have been so busy with my work that I have not had time to do so. I am glad to hear that you are well, and that you have not been troubled by any of your old ailments."

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## AIRSHIP TO POLE; WELLMAN'S PLAN

PARTY NOW AT SPITZBERGEN—THE AIRSHIP DESCRIBED.

The London Times of a recent date says: Mr. Walter Wellman left for Norway, recently, en route for Spitzbergen on his second year's work in connection with his project for reaching the North Pole by means of his airship America, which is now on its way to Norway. In a statement made to Reuters' representative, he said all the members of the expedition will meet at Tromsø, from which place they will sail on June 10 on board the expedition steamer Framjof for Spitzbergen, where they will arrive on June 5 or 6. The rest of that month will be occupied in installing gas apparatus, including the great balloon house, and assembling the car, motor, etc. At the end of June the balloon will be inflated. In the week of July there will be trials of the airship until it is demonstrated that it is ready for the voyage. The start for the Pole will be made on the first favorable opportunity afterwards, probably between July 20 and August 10, but, if necessary, Mr. Wellman is prepared to start as late as August 20. The members of the expedition are: Mr. Walter Wellman; Major Hearnsey, executive officer and scientific observer, who has been lent by the United States Government; Chief Engineer Vannerman, who is already in Norway; Mr. Fowler, an aeronautical engineer. Hearnsey, 30 men, sailors, mechanics, etc., will be embarked at Tromsø, making a total expeditionary force of 40 men, including Mr. Felix Riesenberg, the navigator of the expedition, who, together with two Norwegian companions, has spent all the winter at the base at Spitzbergen.

Discussing his plans, the American explorer said: "In some quarters there seems to be a misunderstanding with regard to last season's operations. The plan of the expedition was from the outset that it would probably last two or three years. I proposed to start last year if possible, if I could do so with all my equipment in the proper condition for such an undertaking. If not, my plan was to return, as I did, last autumn, and employ the winter and spring in perfecting my airship and equipment for the campaign of 1967. That programme has so far been followed. There is, therefore, no question of last year's operations having been a failure. An enormous amount of work had to be done at Spitzbergen, which we found was too much for one short Arctic summer. This year, on arriving at Spitzbergen, there is comparatively little construction work to be done, and when we reach our base of operations we shall find that our immense balloon house, together with the various buildings connected with the start, is ready for use. I believe the modern airship has now been developed to a point of practicality where it should be used for something actually useful in this world. Our airship has been made 18 feet longer and its lifting power increased by 3,000 pounds, giving a total lifting force of 19,500 pounds. The balloon is 18 feet long and 52 feet in its greatest diameter, its cubic volume being 25,000 cubic feet. With the single exception of Count Zeppelin's airship, this is the largest ever built. We have also built an entirely new car and mechanical equipment. The new car consists of a framework of steel tubing, 115 feet long, 10 feet high, and 8 feet broad, suspended close under the balloon at such a distance that those standing on the top of the car can easily reach the balloon. The keel or backbone of the airship consists of a steel tank 18 inches in diameter and 115 feet in length, with a capacity for holding 1,200 gallons of petrol. At the stern of the vessel is a rudder of some 900 square feet, in the form of a bicycle wheel, which, despite its great size, only weighs 3,000 pounds. A little forward of the center is placed a very heavy motor, built for endurance and safety, of 70-horsepower, and having a weight of 900 pounds. In this new airship the propellers are placed in the center on either side of the vessel. They consist of two blades of steel, 11 feet in diameter, and capable of 350 revolutions per minute. The living quarters of the airship are in triangular bunk-like spaces within the enclosed steel car. These are capable of accommodating 10 or 12 dogs, together with our provisions and equipment. The total weight of the steel car and tank is 2,300 pounds. The motors, screws and machinery weigh 1,350 pounds. We carry in our tank 6,800 pounds of petrol, capable of running the motor for 150 hours at a normal speed of 14 knots per hour. The weight of the cargo we carry diminishes as the petrol is consumed, but we have an average of 450 pounds to 500 pounds of lifting force no longer required. Ordinarily, the surplus gas would be allowed to escape through the valves, but inasmuch as hydrogen has a very high calorific power, we have thought it a pity to waste good fuel, and by actual experiment we have found that we can burn the surplus hydrogen in our motor, with the result that we have a further 30-hours motorizing from the waste gas, giving a total of 180 hours at 14 knots per hour. That is to say, we have a total radius of action of 2,500 miles, or double the distance from our base to the Pole and back again. We shall never ascend more than 300 to 500 feet, and our guide-rope will trail over the surface of the earth. This guide-rope is absolutely essential to the safety of our navigation, and is of considerable weight. Instead of employing a steel line, we have made what I may call a leather serpent, 15 inches in diameter and 130 feet long, and weighing 1,400 pounds. This is a rope of reserve food, weighing 1,200 pounds and is suspended from the airship by means of a steel rope. We shall be able to carry 3,000 pounds of food, or enough to enable the crew to subsist on its own stores for a period of ten months. If the airship fails at a true crisis, we could descend upon the icepack, make a snug hut of the fabric and material, and pass the winter at or in the vicinity of the

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Pole, returning by sledge the following year. I should add that we carry 12 Siberian dogs, sledges, and small boats and complete sledging equipment with this possibility in view. I anticipate that our airship-journey to the Pole will take from ten to twenty days."

## COST OF A NAVY.

The total first cost of the ships which compose the British navy as it stands today amounts to the substantial total of £133,556,679, or \$667,783,395.