

3. a. What magic power does the Ghost's torch have?
- b. The Ghost says he has more than 1800 brothers. What does he mean?
- c. Why does the ghost say to Scrooge just before he leaves: 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?'
4. a. Do the businessmen plan to go to the dead man's funeral?
- b. Describe the contrast between Tiny Tim's grave and Scrooge's.

To Think About

1. How do the scenes from Scrooge's past (in the schoolroom) help us to understand him and his attitude towards Christmas?
2. Some readers dislike Dickens because, they say, he is too sentimental. Other readers delight in the warm emotions in his stories. What is your opinion?
3. Is this a religious story?

19. THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1902)

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Author

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) was born in Edinburgh of an Irish family. He took his medical degree at Edinburgh University. As his practice was not successful, he turned to writing detective fiction. In *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) he introduced the famous detective Sherlock Holmes. Conan Doyle, like the detective he created, helped the police to solve murder cases. He was knighted in 1902.

Genre

The Hound of the Baskervilles is a detective story. The American writer Poe is usually regarded as the first writer in this genre. But it was Conan Doyle's stories about Sherlock Holmes that made the genre popular. These detective stories have become famous for their suspense and for the way Holmes solves mysteries by means of his scientific method of deduction. Readers also like the Victorian atmosphere of the stories with their fogs and hansom cabs (*tweevelige huurrijtuigen*).

Setting

The first five chapters and the last one are situated in London; the rest of the story takes place in and near Baskerville Hall, a gloomy estate on the moors of Devonshire. The landscape contains rocky fields and dangerous bogs and has an unearthly, dreary atmosphere.

Point of View

The story, like most of the Sherlock Holmes stories, is told by Holmes' friend and assistant, Dr Watson.

Main Characters

Sherlock Holmes, private detective of Baker Street, London.

Dr Watson, his friend and assistant.

Sir Henry Baskerville, heir of Baskerville Hall.

Dr Mortimer, Sir Henry's friend and neighbour.

Mr Stapleton of Merripit House, a naturalist.

Beryl Stapleton, his pretended sister.

Other Characters

Mrs Laura Lyons, a woman separated from her husband.

Lestrade, a Scotland Yard detective.

John Barrymore, the butler at Baskerville Hall.

Eliza Barrymore, his wife.

Selden, an escaped convict, Mrs Barrymore's brother.

The Story

1. Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson receive a visit from a certain Dr Mortimer, who comes to ask Holmes' advice.
2. Mortimer tells Holmes and Watson about the legend of the curse (*vloek*) of the Baskervilles, an enormous dog that is supposed to live on the Devonshire moors. This hound is said to be connected with the deaths of many members of the Baskerville family. The previous owner of the estate, Sir Charles Baskerville, has recently been found dead near the Hall with a horrible expression on his face and the footprints of an enormous beast not far away.
3. Dr Mortimer explains that he is afraid that something will also happen to Sir Henry, the new heir of the estate who is just arriving from Canada. For the rest of the day Holmes smokes and thinks about the matter.
4. The next day Dr Mortimer brings Sir Henry to meet Holmes and Watson. Sir Henry has received a mysterious note warning him to stay off the moor, and one of his new boots has been stolen. Later he is followed by a man in a black beard.
5. In spite of these events and the legend, Sir Henry decides to leave for his estate, accompanied by Dr Mortimer and by Dr Watson, who is to keep an eye on him.
6. At Baskerville Hall they are greeted by Barrymore, the servant, who informs Sir Henry that he and his wife want to leave as soon as possible.
7. Watson meets some neighbours, Mr Stapleton of Merripit House and his beautiful sister Beryl. Since his boarding school proved unsuccessful, Stapleton has become a naturalist. He has come to know the moors very well while collecting insects.
8. In a letter to Holmes, Watson reports that Sir Henry is falling in love with Beryl Stapleton. Watson also describes another neighbour, Mr Frankland, and writes that Barrymore has been acting mysteriously at night.
9. In a second letter to Holmes, Watson describes how Sir Henry meets Beryl on the moor and proposes marriage to her, but Stapleton interrupts them angrily and takes Beryl home. Later Stapleton comes to apologize to Sir Henry for his conduct.
- By spying on Barrymore in the night, Sir Henry and Watson discover that Mrs Barrymore's brother, an escaped convict by the name of Selden, is hiding from the police on the moors. Barrymore provides him with food at night. Sir Henry and Watson go after the man, but cannot catch him.
10. Barrymore appeals to Sir Henry not to turn Selden in. To show his gratitude Barrymore tells them that, on the day of his death, Sir Charles had received a letter from a woman who signed herself L.L., asking him to

meet her that night. Mortimer suggests that the woman could have been Laura Lyons, Mr Frankland's unhappily married daughter. Barrymore also tells Watson that Selden has often seen a mysterious man hiding in one of the stone huts on the moor.

11. Watson visits Laura Lyons, who reluctantly admits that she wrote to Sir Charles on the day of his death, asking him to meet her. But she did not go to meet him, she says, because the financial help she needed was meanwhile promised by someone else. Then Watson goes to the stone hut on the hill, determined to find out who the mysterious stranger is.

12. It turns out to be Sherlock Holmes, who is keeping an eye on things in his own way. He tells Watson that Beryl is really Stapleton's wife. He suspects the naturalist of being the person they are looking for. At that moment they hear a horrible cry and then the howl of a dog. On the moor they find a dead man who turns out to be Selden.

13. The next morning Holmes tells Sir Henry that he must dine with Stapleton at Merripit House as planned, and walk home alone across the moor afterwards. Then Holmes and Watson say goodbye to Sir Henry, telling him they have to return to London. However, they do not leave. Instead they pay a visit to Laura Lyons. Laura is shocked by the news that Stapleton is married; she confesses that she had planned to marry him after her divorce. He had dictated to her the letter asking Sir Charles to meet her on the moor, near the place where he was found dead later.

14. That night Holmes and Watson, together with Lestrade, a reliable police detective, wait for Sir Henry to leave Merripit House. A fog makes it difficult for the three men to see him. Suddenly they hear the howl of an enormous dog, and a moment later they see a huge, terrible hound chasing Sir Henry. Holmes succeeds in killing the beast with his revolver. Sir Henry is not wounded, but suffers a severe shock and Stapleton is drowned in the bog. They find Beryl, who had refused to help her husband in the murder attempt, tied up in an upstairs room.

15. Back in London, Sherlock Holmes explains the entire case to Dr Watson, revealing also that Stapleton was actually a Baskerville who would have inherited the estate in case of Sir Henry's death.

Questions (The numbers refer to the chapters.)

1. Sherlock Holmes is famous for his scientific method of deduction. What example of this is given in the first chapter?
2. How did Hugo Baskerville die, according to the legend?
3. Why does Holmes conclude that Sir Charles must have been very frightened when he died?
4. Why was 'moor' the only word in the note written in ink?
5. What has been stolen from Sir Henry this time?
6. How has Barrymore got the money to go into business for himself?
7. What mistake does Beryl make?

9. What do Watson and Sir Henry hear on the moor when they set out to catch the convict?
11. How does Watson find out in which stone hut the stranger is living?
12. At first, Holmes and Watson think the dead man is Sir Henry. Why?
13. How does Holmes discover that Stapleton is a Baskerville?
14. How has the hound been made to seem supernatural?
15. How did Holmes first know that the hound was a real one?

To Think About

Is the story realistic, do you think? That is to say, could it possibly have happened?

20. THE TIME MACHINE (1895)

by H.G. Wells

Author

Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) was trained as a scientist, but became well known as a writer, social critic and prophet. His first novel *The Time Machine* (1895) was followed by *The Invisible Man* (1897) and his best-known work of science fiction *The War of the Worlds* (1898). He also wrote a number of realistic social novels, including *Kipps* (1905) and *Tono-Bungay* (1909).

Genre and Theme

The Time Machine is a Science Fiction (SF) novel. SF novels and stories deal with the achievements (*prestaties*) or the possible future achievements of science, such as spacecraft, robots, and time machines. Wells, however, like most of the better science fiction writers, is concerned not so much with the scientific inventions themselves as with the effect of developments in science and technology on human beings.

He tries to imagine in his books how these achievements would influence human beings individually and the human race as a whole.

Setting

The story takes place in England near the estuary (*monding*) of the Thames. The Time Traveller lives in Wells' own time. His journey in time takes him far into the future, to the year 802,701, and then even further.

Point of View

The first two chapters and the last one are told by a narrator. Chapters 3 to 11 are the story told by the Time Traveller after his return.

Main Characters

The *Time Traveller*, an adventurous scientist who travels through time in his time machine.

Weena, a girl of the race of the Eloi.

Other Characters

The *Narrator*, a friend and frequent guest of the Time Traveller.
Filby, the *Provincial Mayor*, the *Psychologist*, the *Medical Man*, the *Very Young Man*, the *Editor*, the *Silent Man* and the *Journalist*, the Time Traveller's guests.

The *Eloi*, an overcivilized race, childlike and mindless, but beautiful and friendly.

The *Morlocks*, an intelligent but brutal and savage race, living underground.

