

PROSE FICTION (SAT)

This passage is adapted from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles. Detective Sherlock Holmes and his sidekick, Dr. Watson, listen as Dr. James Mortimer shares details of the death of his friend and neighbor, Sir Charles Baskerville.

“On the night of Sir Charles’s death, Barrymore the butler, who made the discovery, sent Perkins the groom on horseback to me, and as I was sitting up late
5 I was able to reach Baskerville Hall within an hour of the event. I checked and corroborated all the facts which were mentioned at the inquest. I followed the footsteps down the yew alley,* I saw the
10 spot at the moor-gate where he seemed to have waited, I remarked the change in the shape of the prints after that point, I noted that there were no other footsteps save those of Barrymore on the soft gravel, and
15 finally I carefully examined the body, which had not been touched until my arrival. Sir Charles lay on his face, his arms out, his fingers dug into the ground, and his features convulsed with some strong
20 emotion to such an extent that I could hardly have sworn to his identity. There was certainly no physical injury of any kind. But one false statement was made by Barrymore at the inquest. He said that there
25 were no traces upon the ground round the body. He did not observe any. But I did—some little distance off, but fresh and clear.”

“Footprints?”

30 “Footprints.”

“A man’s or a woman’s?”

Dr. Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered.

35 “Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!”

Holmes leaned forward in his

excitement and his eyes had the hard, dry glitter which shot from them when he was
40 keenly interested.

“You saw this?”

“As clearly as I see you.” . . .

“How was it that no one else saw it?”

45 “The marks were some twenty yards from the body and no one gave them a thought. I don’t suppose I should have done so had I not known this legend.”

“There are many sheep-dogs on the moor?”

50 “No doubt, but this was no sheep-dog.”

“You say it was large?”

“Enormous.”

“But it had not approached the body?”

“No.”

55 “What sort of night was it?”

“Damp and raw.”

“But not actually raining?”

“No.”

“What is the alley like?”

60 “There are two lines of old yew hedge, twelve feet high and impenetrable. The walk in the centre is about eight feet across.” . . .

65 “I understand that the yew hedge is penetrated at one point by a gate?”

“Yes, the wicket-gate which leads on to the moor.” . . .

“And what marks did you see by the wicket-gate?”

70 “None in particular.”

“Good heaven! Did no one examine?”

“Yes, I examined, myself.”

“And found nothing?”

75 “It was all very confused. Sir Charles had evidently stood there for five or ten minutes.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because the ash had twice dropped from his cigar.”

80 “Excellent! This is a colleague, Watson, after our own heart. But the marks?”

“He had left his own marks all over that small patch of gravel. I could discern no others.”

85 Sherlock Holmes struck his hand

against his knee with an impatient gesture.

"If I had only been there!" he cried.

90 "It is evidently a case of extraordinary
interest, and one which presented immense
opportunities to the scientific expert. That
95 gravel page upon which I might have read
so much has been long ere this smudged by
the rain and defaced by the clogs of curious
peasants. Oh, Dr. Mortimer, Dr. Mortimer,
to think that you should not have called me
in! . . . " . . .

"There is a realm in which the most
acute and most experienced of detectives is
helpless."

100 "You mean that the thing is
supernatural?"

"I did not positively say so."

"No, but you evidently think it."

105 "Since the tragedy, Mr. Holmes, there
have come to my ears several incidents that

are hard to reconcile with the settled order
of Nature."

"For example?"

110 "I find that before the terrible event
occurred several people had seen a creature
upon the moor which corresponds with this
Baskerville demon, and which could not
possibly be any animal known to science.
They all agreed that it was a huge creature,
115 luminous, ghastly, and spectral. . . ."

"And you, a trained man of science,
believe it to be supernatural?"

"I do not know what to believe."

120 Holmes shrugged his shoulders. "I have
hitherto confined my investigations to this
world," said he.

*a pathway between rows of hedges

Source: Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Project
Gutenberg. 1902. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2852/2852>

1. Which choice best describes the overall structure
of the passage?

- A) A rapid exchange between two old acquaintances
- B) A spirited debate between two friendly adversaries
- C) A dynamic discussion between two attentive spectators
- D) A vigorous conversation between two wise intellectuals

2. The purpose of the description of Sir Charles's
body in lines 17-21 ("Sir Charles . . . identity") is
mainly to

- A) connect an element of horror to the demise of Sir Charles.
- B) illustrate the depth of Dr. Mortimer's medical knowledge.
- C) hint that the body belonged to someone other than Sir Charles.
- D) suggest that Dr. Mortimer missed evidence during his examination.

3. Which choice best explains how lines 29-34
contribute to the passage a whole?

- A) They negate a point made earlier in Dr. Mortimer's narrative.
- B) They suggest that Sherlock Holmes's interest has been aroused.
- C) They build suspense in preparation for Dr. Mortimer's revelation.
- D) They foreshadow events to come in Sherlock Holmes's investigation.

4. What caused Dr. Mortimer to be more keenly
aware of the hound footprints near Sir Charles's
body than others were?

- A) His shrewd attention to detail
- B) His extensive training as a physician
- C) His previous knowledge of the Baskerville hound legend
- D) His familiarity with the Baskerville estate

5. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 4-6 (“as I . . . event”)
- B) Lines 15-17 (“I carefully . . . arrival”)
- C) Lines 24-26 (“He said . . . body”)
- D) Lines 46-47 (“I don’t . . . legend”)

6. Lines 48-49 (“There are . . . moor”) mainly serve to

- A) ridicule a peculiar idea.
- B) analyze a piece of evidence.
- C) propose a practical explanation.
- D) question a misleading statement.

7. As used in lines 90-92, “That gravel page upon which I might have read so much has been long ere this smudged” most nearly means

- A) stories about Sir Charles’s death contain errors that will hamper solving the case.
- B) there is no reason to think that clues related to Sir Charles’s death have been missed.
- C) it is unwise to believe that Sir Charles’s death was caused by anything out of the ordinary.
- D) evidence that may have been gathered from the location of Sir Charles’s body has been corrupted.

8. As used in line 115, “luminous” most nearly means

- A) enlightening.
- B) glowing.
- C) noble.
- D) straightforward.

9. The question in lines 116-117 (“And you . . . supernatural?”) most nearly implies that Sherlock Holmes is

- A) curious to know what Dr. Mortimer thinks about the matter.
- B) impressed to know that Dr. Mortimer is trained in the sciences.
- C) suspicious that Dr. Mortimer knows more than he has revealed.
- D) incredulous that Dr. Mortimer would give the bizarre story merit.

10. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 100-101 (“You mean . . . supernatural!”)
- B) Line 103 (“No, but . . . it”)
- C) Line 114-115 (“They all agreed . . . spectral”)
- D) Lines 110-121 (“Holmes . . . said he”)