Przerażające zagadki

Kurs języka angielskiego dla żądnych wrażeń

ZESTAW 9 EBOOKÓW

PRZERAŻAJĄCE ZAGADKI

Kurs języka angielskiego dla żądnych wrażeń

Wydawnictwo Wymownia

www.wymownia.pl

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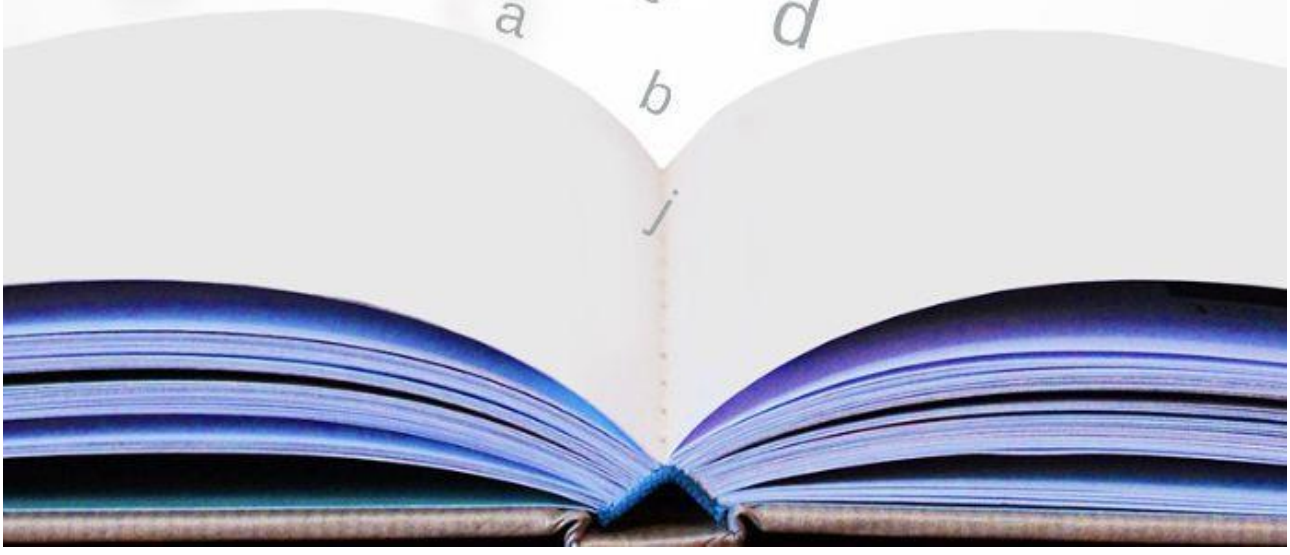
ZAWARTOŚĆ

Marta Owczarek

Nauka języka angielskiego z książką dwujęzyczną



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Nauka języka angielskiego z książką dwujęzyczną

Uniwersalne ćwiczenia metodą samodzielnego kształcenia

- wskazówki
- wzór
- zagadnienia gramatyczne

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Zawartość

WSTĘP

Drodzy czytelnicy i miłośnicy języka angielskiego!

Pragniemy zachęcić Was do samokształcenia opartego na dwujęzycznych wydaniach klasyki angielskiej. Są one kierowane szczególnie do osób, dla których język angielski jest pasją i którym zależy na ciągłym rozwoju umiejętności posługiwania się nim.

W czasach, gdy wiedza podawana jest na tacy, niekiedy zapominamy o tym, jaką wartość ma samodzielne dążenie do niej. Wytrwałe zdobywanie informacji i umiejętności sprawia, że doceniamy ich prawdziwą wartość i nie mamy wrażenia, że nasz wysiłek idzie na marne. Dawanie uczniom gotowych odpowiedzi pozbawia ich okazji do wykazania się i odczuwania satysfakcji z osiągniętych efektów – lepiej być ich przewodnikiem. Prawdziwa edukacja to przede wszystkim samodzielność działania, umiejętność logicznego myślenia, rozwijanie wyobraźni, szukanie, wytrwałość, determinacja, odpowiedzialność za samego siebie. Wiąże się z tym również umiejętność zapamiętywania zdobytej wiedzy i praktycznego wykorzystywania jej w życiu.

Dwujęzyczne wydania literatury angielskiej to praktyczne i elastyczne źródła wiedzy dla ambitnych osób chcących rozwijać się językowo, czy to na poziomie średnio zaawansowanym, czy też zaawansowanym.

Lektura klasyki angielskiej nie tylko pozwala zapoznać się z samą literaturą, ale również umożliwia naukę gramatyki i słownictwa z uwzględnieniem ich praktycznego zastosowania; uczy prawidłowego używania słów, zwrotów oraz struktur gramatycznych. Dzięki nauce opartej na tekście angielskim pisanym przez anglojęzycznych autorów czytelnik poznaje nowe słowa, a także dowiaduje się, jak je stosować. Szczególnie istotna jest naturalność wypowiedzi. Uczenie się słów umieszczonych w konkretnym kontekście zaznajamia czytelnika z szeregiem kolokacji – ma to ogromny wpływ na jakość wypowiedzi. Kolokacje to sposoby łączenia słów przez rodowitych użytkowników języka – mają oni tendencję do używania stałych kombinacji słów, tworzących właśnie kolokacje. W wydaniach dwujęzycznych z ćwiczeniami można łatwo poznawać typowe połączenia słów angielskich i sprawdzać, jak zostały one przetłumaczone, wykonując zamieszczone w nich zadania.

Tłumaczenia oferowane przez wydawnictwo Wymownia są rezultatem pracy wielu tłumaczy literatury. To przekłady znane na rynku, dzięki czemu stanowią godne polecenia odpowiedniki wersji oryginalnych, a do tego były jednymi z pierwszych powszechnie dostępnych, dlatego wiele użytych tu słów może wydawać się nieaktualnych ze względu na zmiany w pisowni – np. zamiast „teoria”

znaleźć tam można zapis „teorya”. Nie jest to błąd, lecz pisownia aktualna wówczas, gdy te przekłady powstawały. Nie ujmuje to w żaden sposób wartości tłumaczenia, ponieważ klasyka angielska również pochodzi z nieco innych czasów, kiedy to poszczególne słowa wyglądały i brzmiały trochę inaczej. W tym rozumieniu polskie przekłady pokrywają się ze specyfiką języka angielskiego sprzed lat. Niewątpliwie łatwiej jest odczuć inność czasów, w których tworzyli autorzy oferowanej przez nas literatury, jeśli przekład odzwierciedla tę odmienność i nie zmienia słów na bardziej współczesne. Z drugiej strony, można samemu pokusić się o znalezienie współczesnych odpowiedników i tym samym poznawać język angielski od podszewki.

Ponadto, jeśli interesuje Was historia języka angielskiego, warto wiedzieć, że wiele słów z biegiem czasu się zmieniło. Dawniej współczesne „you”, czyli drugą osobę liczby pojedynczej, zapisywano w formie „thou”, co może się mylnie kojarzyć z przyimkiem „though”. Warto zatem wiedzieć, że dawne „thou” wymawia się identycznie jak „you” i to samo oznacza. Dla wielu osób może nie być istotne, co kiedyś oznaczało dane słowo albo że inaczej się je zapisywało, ale sięgając do literatury, sięgamy w przeszłość i musimy być świadomi, że tak jak czasy się zmieniają, tak też zmienia się język. Nie jest on czymś stałym i niepodlegającym żadnym modyfikacjom, wręcz przeciwnie – język ewoluuje i te zmiany zachodzą ciągle, choć być może nie zwracamy na nie uwagi.

Należy zatem podkreślić, że dzięki oferowanym przez wydawnictwo Wymownia dwujęzycznym wydaniom czytelnicy, zwłaszcza studenci anglistyki oraz miłośnicy literatury angielskiej, mają możliwość zapoznania się z dorobkiem kultury języka angielskiego w łatwy i przystępny sposób, jednocześnie wzbogacając swoje umiejętności językowe za pomocą dostosowanych do ich poziomu zaawansowania ćwiczeń opartych na treści tekstów literackich. Ułatwienie stanowi to, że zarówno teksty, jak i ćwiczenia wydane zostały w dwóch językach, dzięki czemu czytelnik nie jest pozostawiony samemu sobie z tekstem, którego nie rozumie. Może zapoznać się z treścią po polsku, a następnie skorzystać z wersji angielskiej, mając już pojęcie, o czym pisał autor. Natomiast rozwiązywanie ćwiczeń do tekstów wymaga pewnego wysiłku, by materiał nie został jedynie przejrzany i „odhaczony”. Są one przewodnikiem służącym temu, by można się było osobiście przekonać, że warto samodzielnie szukać rozwiązań i uczyć się języka tak, aby ta wiedza rzeczywiście została w umyśle.

Wydawnictwo Wymownia, wychodząc naprzeciw potrzebom ambitnych studentów i miłośników języka angielskiego, oferuje szereg różnych klasyków literatury angielskiej i amerykańskiej wraz z ich polskim przekładem, zapewniając czytelnikom dobrą jakość samoedukacji. Celem tych wydań jest również promowanie literatury i jej wartości dydaktycznej. Więcej pozycji dwujęzycznych do kupienia na stronie wydawnictwa Wymownia https://kursyonline.wymownia.pl

ĆWICZENIA Z PRZYKŁADAMI

Większość ćwiczeń wymaga pracy z tekstem. Staraj się wykonywać je stopniowo przez kilka dni. Zasada *często a mało* sprzyja zapamiętywaniu.

Nauczysz się:

- opisywać ludzi / bohaterów
- opisywać miejsca
- opisywać rzeczy
- relacjonować wydarzenia

Poznasz:

- praktyczne wyrażenia / zdania
- nowe pojęcia oraz nowe słownictwo

Ponadto:

- Możesz tworzyć tak zwane drzewka leksykalne, czyli szukać zwrotów rodzimych dla danego słowa*.

*Najlepiej, gdy jest to rodzina wyrazów, która często pojawia się w tekście np. słowa wyrażające pośpiech. Słowa te występują często np. w powieści „Grecki tłumacz" (ebook A.C.Doyle'a został załączony do samouczka). W zależności od tekstu, nad jakim pracujesz, mogą to być różne typy wyrazów powiązanych ze sobą. Dobrze skorzystasz z lektury ucząc się słownictwa w konkretnym kontekście, bo dzięki temu dowiesz się, jak to słownictwo wykorzystywać.

- Możesz poszukać informacji na temat nowych pojęć, np.

atawizm – atavism

- występowanie u osobnika cechy jego odległych przodków, od dawna już niedziedziczonej
- the reappearance of an ancestral characteristic in an organism after several generations of absence

- Ciekawe może być również zanotowanie fragmentów tekstu, które przykuły Twoją uwagę.

Na przykład:

To the logician all things should be seen exactly as they are, and to underestimate one's self is as much a departure from truth as to exaggerate one's own powers.

Przykłady pochodzą z powieści detektywistycznej „Grecki tłumacz" Arthura Conana Doyle'a.

CZĘŚĆ 1: DIALOGI / DIALOGUES

ZADANIE 1. Zwróć uwagę na dialogi. Przekształć je w mowę zależną. Skorzystaj z rozdziału „Mowa zależna i niezależna". Staraj się używać innych czasowników niż „say" (said).

Na przykład:
Wypowiedź z dialogu: *You can do no good by this obstinacy. Who are you?*
Tłumaczenie: *Uporem tym nic dobrego nie zrobisz. Kim jesteś?*
Mowa zależna: ***He told him that*** *he* ***could*** *do no good by* ***that*** *obstinacy, and* ***asked him*** *who he* ***was****.*

ZADANIE 2. Czy są w dialogach zdania przydatne w życiu codziennym? Zanotuj je i wymyśl dialog (lub dialogi), w którym takie zdanie lub nawet krótkie wyrażenie będzie występować.

Na przykład:
Wypowiedź z dialogu: ***We could not get on without you***
Tłumaczenie: *Nie mogliśmy się obejść bez pana*
Przykładowy dialog: *'The presentation has worked out so well'.*
'Yes, I'm happy we've made it'.
'You know, ***we couldn't get on without you'.***
'Oh, don't exaggerate. It was team work'.
'But it was your idea'.

ZADANIE 3. Do powstałych dialogów dopisz sposoby ich wypowiedzenia, których możesz użyć zamiast standardowych czasowników „said" albo „answered" (chyba, że z określeniem sposobu) oraz gesty. Wypisz sobie wszystkie możliwe alternatywy występujące w tekście (znajdziesz je głównie przy dialogach). Jeśli żadna nie pasuje, poszukaj odpowiednich w słowniku.

Przykładowe alternatywy:

suggested	said, speaking English with a broken accent
observed	screamed out
remarked	said blandly
answered thoughtfully	shook one's head
said, smiling / laughing	said in a rasping way
giggled	said, shrugging his shoulder
cried abruptly	asked suddenly
gasped	said in a nervous, jerky fashion
said in a wailing voice	motioned (that I should sit in)

Dopasuj do dialogu. Ewentualnie znajdź inne w słowniku.
Na przykład: *"The presentation has worked out so well,"* ***he admitted.***
"Yes, I'm happy we've made it," ***she said, smiling.***

“You know, we couldn’t get on without you,” ***he added thoughtfully.***
“Oh, don’t exaggerate. It was team work,” ***she replied, surprised.***
“But it was your idea.”

CZĘŚĆ 2: BOHATEROWIE / CHARACTERS

ZADANIE 4.
a) Podkreśl wszystkie fragmenty mówiące o jednym bohaterze (nie próbuj opisywać wszystkich na raz od razu). Następnie dopasuj informacje w tabeli, tak jak na przykładzie (części informacji może w tekście nie być).

Na przykład:
Mycroft Holmes

INFORMACJE OGÓLNE / BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Who is s/he?	*Sherlock's brother, one of the character of the Greek Interpreter story, helps Sherlock solve the case of Mr. Melas*

WYGLĄD ZEWNĘTRZNY / APPEARANCE

WZROST / HEIGHT	
BUDOWA CIAŁA / BUILT	*much larger and stouter man than Sherlock, absolutely corpulent body,*
WIEK / AGE	*seven years older than Sherlock*
CERA / COMPLEXION	
TWARZ / FACE	*massive face*
WŁOSY / HAIR	
OCZY / EYES	*his eyes of a peculiarly light, watery gray;*
NOS / NOSE	
USTA / MOUTH	
CECHY SZCZEGÓLNE / DISTINGUISHING FEATURES	
UBIÓR / CLOTHING	

ZACHOWANIE / BEHAVIOUR

SPOSÓB MÓWIENIA / GŁOS WAY OF SPEAKING / VOICE	
SPOSÓB PATRZENIA / WAY OF LOOKING	*far-away, introspective look (when exerting his full powers)*
SPOSÓB CHODZENIA / WAY OF WALKING	
GESTY / GESTURES	

MIMIKA TWARZY / FACE EXPRESSION	*His face preserves something of the sharpness of expression which was so remarkable in that of his brother*

OSOBOWOŚĆ / UMIEJĘTNOŚCI / STYL ŻYCIA
PERSONALITY / SKILLS / LIFESTYLE

CECHY CHARAKTERU / PERSONALITY TRAITS	*He has no ambition and no energy (will not even go out of his way to verify his own solutions, and would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right)*
UMIEJĘTNOŚCI / TALENTY SKILLS / TALENTS	*He has better powers of observation than Sherlock; one of the queerest man; Sherlock's superior in observation and deduction. If he does not content with reasoning from an arm-chair, he would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived. Sherlock has taken a problem to him, and has received an explanation which has afterwards proved to be the correct one. And yet he was absolutely incapable of working out the practical points which must be gone into before a case could be laid before a judge or jury. For him, it is not a mean of livelihood, but the merest hobby of a dilettante. He has an extraordinary faculty for figures.*
STYL ŻYCIA, POGLĄDY / LIFESTYLE AND BELIEFS	*He audits the books in some of the government departments. He is very well-known in his own circle, the Diogenes Club. Mycroft lodges in Pall-Mall, and he walks round the corner into Whitehall every morning and back every evening. From year's end to year's end he takes no other exercise, and is seen nowhere else, except only in the Diogenes Club, which is just opposite his rooms. He is one of the founders.*

b) Dodaj brakujące informacje na temat wyglądu według swojego wyobrażenia o tym, jak bohater może wyglądać i spróbuj go zobrazować. Następnie opisz wygląd tej osoby.

c) Na podstawie zgromadzonych informacji utwórz zdania, którymi uzasadnisz cechy wewnętrzne bohatera. Najpierw je nazwij (wiele cech może nie być wprost określonych w treści). Odpowiedz na pytanie: Co dowodzi, że ma właśnie taką cechę? Dzięki takim ustaleniom opisy są dużo ciekawsze.

Przykład:

W treści znajdujemy poniższe informacje o bohaterze:
no ambition, no energy, powers of observation, faculty for figures

Jak na tej podstawie nazwiesz jego cechy? Wielu z nich możesz poszukać w słownikach, co rozwinie twój zasób słów jeszcze bardziej.

Nazwij cechy charakteru: *unambitious, lazy, perceptive, accurate*

Przykładowe zdania:

He is unambitious since he never goes out of his way to verify his own solutions.
He is lazy because he would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right.
He is exceptionally perceptive as he could give explanation to problems which Sherlock Holmes had taken to him, and they proved to be the correct ones.
He must be accurate since he audits the books in one of the government departments.

d) Zwróć uwagę na informacje o bohaterze dotyczące jego stylu życia, zainteresowań czy poglądów. Zadaj pytania adekwatne do tych informacji. Do jednej informacji możesz zadać pytanie na różne sposoby. Zadanie to można też wykonać na podstawie fragmentu o wyglądzie oraz osobowości bohatera.

Na przykład:

Informacja:	*He audits the books in some of the government departments.*
Pytanie:	*What is his job?* *How does he earn his living?* *What does he do to make money?*
Informacja:	*Mycroft lodges in Pall-Mall.*
Pytanie:	*Where does he live?*
Informacja:	*He walks round the corner into Whitehall every morning and back every evening.*
Pytanie:	*Which way does he usually take to get to the club?* *Where does he usually walk every day?*

a) Patrząc na charakterystykę bohatera, odpowiedz na pytania. Czy to postać pozytywna czy negatywna? Uzasadnij. Wymień jego pozytywne i negatywne cechy. Tym razem nie podawaj przymiotników, tylko rzeczowniki.

POSITIVE QUALITIES	NEGATIVE QUALITIES
perceptiveness *accurateness*	~~*unambitious*~~ *lack of ambition* *laziness*

CZĘŚĆ 3: MIEJSCE / PLACE

ZADANIE 5.

a) Wybierz miejsce opisane w tekście i zaznacz o nim informacje. Wypisz: co się tam znajduje? Jakie to jest? Co się z tym dzieje? Co to „robi"? – według wzoru poniżej.

What is it like?	**What is there?**	**"What is done to this?"**	**"What is it doing?" "What does it do?"**
large, dark, deserted	*house*		*it's standing back from the road*
dark	*windows*		
	doorway	*it's swung open*	
	lamp[1]		*it's burning*
	lawn		
	trees		
coloured	*gas-lamp*	*it's turned low*	
	pictures		*they are hanging*
easy-to-force	*door*		
richly-furnished, large	*room / chamber*		
of some size, well-lit	*hall*	*it's hung with pictures*	
rich	*carpet*		
velvet	*chairs*		
high, white, marble	*mantel-piece*		
	suit of Japanese armour		
	lamp[2]	*it's half-turned down*	*affords light**
small, brass, brazen	*tripod*		
	stairs		
	catch		
	knocker		
	bell		
	curtain		
	lantern		
	gate-lamp		

* „*the only light was afforded by a single lamp*"

b) Dopisz czasowniki, które będą pasować do tych podanych we wcześniejszym ćwiczeniu podmiotów (mogą to być czasowniki z tekstu lub te, które sam odnajdziesz w innych źródłach).

Na przykład: knocker (kołatka) > What can you do with the knocker? (Co można zrobić z kołatką?) > You can knock at the knocker (Możesz pukać kołatką [do drzwi])

bell (dzwonek) > What can you do with the bell? > You can pull at the bell or ring the bell.

Inne przykłady:
force back the catch, light the lantern, fling open the door, sink into/ step across the carpet, sit down into a chair, step into the room, stand in the doorway, hurry through the hall, draw the curtain across the glass

CZĘŚĆ 4: PRZEDMIOTY / OBJECTS

ZADANIE 6.

a) Wyobraź sobie, że chcesz odnaleźć rzecz lub ją sprzedać. Wybierz kilka przedmiotów opisanych w tekście i wpisz ich charakterystykę w tabelę.

WSKAZÓWKA: Opis rzeczy może obejmować słownictwo określające opinię o niej, jej stan, jej rozmiar, ciężkość, wiek, kształt, wzór/dekorację, kolor, pochodzenie, materiał. Możesz też opisać części tej rzeczy i jej charakterystyczne cechy.

Na przykład: *four-wheeled disgrace*

DANE Z TEKSTU/ INFORMATION FOUND IN THE TEXT	*frayed but rich quality fittings, blue curtain, windows with paper over the glass impenetrable to light*

b) Opisz rzecz, którą chciałabyś sprzedać (np. obuwie, meble, samochód). Zachęć do kupna. Skorzystaj ze wskazówki podanej w ramce powyżej. Być może, dzięki opisywaniu różnych przedmiotów z tekstu, znasz już więcej słów i masz więcej pomysłów.

c) Wyobraź sobie, że zaginęła ci jakaś rzecz, a następnie uzupełnij tekst tak, aby mogła zostać rozpoznana. Wybierz odpowiednią rzecz z tekstu i dopasuj do treści poniżej.

I am writing to inquire about an item which was left
...
On (day) I was (where) about (exact time). When I ...
I realised that ... was missing.
It was a ... (describe it)
In the event of the ... being found, I can be contacted
on ... (phone number) from ... to ... (time) every day.

CZĘŚĆ 5: WYDARZENIA / EVENTS

ZADANIE 7.

a) Napisz plan wydarzeń. Skup się na samych faktach.

WSKAZÓWKA
Pamiętaj, że plan wydarzeń pisze się w równoważnikach zdań, czyli czasowniki są w stronie biernej, np. „Holmes' visit at Mr Melas'" (Odwiedziny Holmesa u pana Melasa) zamiast „Holmes visits Mr Melas" (Holmes odwiedza pana Melasa). Strony czynnej używa się w streszczeniach.

Przykład planu wydarzeń:

1. *Presentation of Sherlock Holmes by Watson*
2. *Watson's conversation with Holmes about the faculty of observation*
3. *Meeting Mycroft, Sherlock Homes' brother, in Diogenes Club and taking note of his peculiar faculty of observation and deduction*
4. *Listening to the account of Mr. Melas, the Greek Interpreter:*
   a) *Travelling with Mr. Latimer to an unknown place*
   b) *Caution against disclosing the case to third persons*
   c) *Ordering the interpreter to talk to a Greek, Paul Kratides*
   d) *Refusal of the Greek man to sign certain documents*
   e) *Unexpected occurrence of a woman, Sophy Kratides, surprised to see the Greek man*
   f) *Returning home*
5. *Searching for the kidnapped Greeks – Mycroft's advertisement in the paper*
6. *Conversation between Sherlock and Watson about presumed solution of the case*
   - *The woman kidnapped for her heritage by Harold Latimer*
   - *Her brother's interference and kidnapping of him by conspirators and their associates*
   - *Attempts to make the man sign some documents in order to get the heritage managed by the brother*
7. *Answer to the advertisement about the place of the stay in Myrtles*
8. *Decision of taking the interpreter to help them*
9. *Absence of the interpreter due to his leaving with a suspicious man*
10. *Decision of going to Myrtles with the inspector Gregson*
11. *Breaking into the house and discovering gas spreading around in one of the rooms*
12. *Finding the interpreter and resolving the case*

b) Mając plan wydarzeń, spróbuj napisać historię własnymi słowami, tak, jak ją pamiętasz, używając słownictwa obejmującego:

a) Wyrazy dźwiękonaśladowcze, np. *mumble, hiss, shrill*, itp.
b) Słownictwo związane z ruchem, np. *dart, rush into, bustle into, crouch* itp.
c) Słownictwo związane z mówieniem / głosem, np. *stammer, scream out, whine, giggle, speak in a jerky fashion*, itp.
d) Słownictwo związane z patrzeniem, np. *peer in, catch a glimpse, with eyes fixed upon (something/someone)*, itp.

e) Słowa określające sposób, czas i miejsce (przysłówki), np. s*uddenly, utterly, terribly, imprudently,* itp.
f) Słowa opisujące ludzi, miejsca, przedmioty, sytuacje, atmosferę, pogodę, np. *deserted, conjested, delighted, hopeless, dim, menacing,* itp.
g) Czasowniki, np. *come to believe, form a guess, starve, make out*, itp.

(powyższe przykłady zaczerpnięte z angielskich klasyk)

Każdy punkt z planu wydarzeń traktuj jako tytuł, który następnie trzeba rozwinąć, tworząc historię „swoimi słowami".

Wybierz typ narracji: pierwszoosobowa / trzecioosobowa

Zastanów się, jaka treść będzie potrzebna do opisu. W poniższym przykładzie będzie to połączenie opisu bohatera Sherlocka i jego znajomości z Watsonem. Spróbuj opowiedzieć wydarzenia w zindywidualizowany sposób, nie powielaj.

Przypuśćmy, że charakterystyka Sherlocka Holmesa została już wykonana w części „Opis bohatera" (ramka pomocnicza obok przykładu, poniżej). Nie musisz użyć wszystkich podanych informacji albo używać dokładanie tych samych. Szukaj synonimów. Traktuj to jak zabawę. Przede wszystkich chodzi o rozwinięcie słownictwa i poziomu wypowiedzi.

Na przykład:

TITLE: Presentation of Sherlock Holmes by Watson

Sherlock Holmes was a sober man, particularly concerned with his detective work. Watson had known him long enough to observe his unemotional character as he did not seem to like making new friends or dating a woman. In addition, he had never referred to his relatives which made Watson come to believe he was an orphan deprived of parental love and care, until one day he started talking about his brother Mycroft.

SHERLOCK HOLMES:	
reticence	powściągliwość w słowach
isolated phenomenon	odosobniony fenomen
a brain without a heart	mądrość pozbawiona uczucia
deficient in human sympathy	pozbawiony sympatii do ludzi
pre-eminent in intelligence	wyróżniający się inteligencją
aversion to women	wstręt do kobiet
disinclination to form new friendships	niechęć do zawierania nowych przyjaźni
unemotional character	charakter nieulegający wzruszeniom
complete suppression of reference to his own people	całkowity zanik wszelkich stosunków z własną rodziną
art in the blood	zdolności artystyczne odziedziczone „we krwi"

ZADANIE 8. Odpowiedz na pytania i wykonaj polecenia. Sprawdź, ile pamiętasz.

Do you like the characters which you have described?
What do you think about the protagonist?
Which situation or event did especially attract your attention?
Which place is frequently mentioned and why? Describe the place

(What is there? What is the atmosphere there? What impression does it give?)
What is the text about? Is it interesting or boring? Why?
What is the genre of the book? What is typical of the genre?
Which character would you choose to be if you had to, and why?
What a message does the story convey in your opinion?
Choose one sentence which could encourage someone to read the book/story.
Explain your choice.
Would you recommend the book to a particular audience?
Who would you recommend it to?

GRAMATYKA

CZĘŚĆ 1: MOWA ZALEŻNA I NIEZALEŻNA / REPORTED AND DIRECT SPEECH

Mowa zależna i niezależna polega na przekazaniu czyichś lub swoich wypowiedzi.

Na przykład:

I said that he **was superior** in …
Powiedziałem, że on przewyższa mnie w …

Po polsku użyjemy najpierw czasu przeszłego, a potem teraźniejszego. W języku angielskim, szczególnie w formie literackiej, zastosujemy regułę: jeśli w „oryginale" wypowiedź była w czasie teraźniejszym, przekażemy ją w czasie przeszłym.

Na przykład:

I began to understand what my friend meant when **he said that** his brother **possessed** even keener faculties that he did himself.
Zacząłem pojmować, co mój przyjaciel rozumiał przez to, kiedy **mówił, że** brat jego posiada bystrzejsze zdolności, niż on sam.

Omówmy tę kwestię na przykładzie wypowiedzi Sherlocka Holmesa. Poniżej znajduje się jego wypowiedź:

*'Mycroft **has better powers** of observation than I'*

Następnie rozważmy dwa typy mowy, czyli jak ta sama wypowiedź została wspomniana w dalszej relacji opowiadania.

Mowa niezależna – dosłownie przytaczamy wypowiedź	**Mowa zależna** – zależy jak ją przekażemy
I said, 'Mycroft **has better powers** …'	I said that Mycroft **had better powers** … I said that he **was superior in** … He said that his brother **possessed even keener faculties** …

W opowiadaniu została użyta mowa zależna.

Gdyby jednak w dosłownej wypowiedzi użyto czasu Past Simple, czyli np.

He said, „He **was** superior in …”, wtedy w mowie zależnej należałoby użyć czasu Past Perfect, czyli: He said that his brother **had been** superior in …

Reasumując, cofamy wypowiedź o jeden czas do tyłu. Jeśli jednak nie ma takiej możliwości, nie zmieniamy czasu.

Wypowiedź dosłowną z użyciem:	**zmieniamy na … w mowie zależnej:**
Present Continuous	Past Continuous
Present Simple	Past Simple
Present Perfect	Past Perfect
itd.	
will	would
shall	should
can	could
may	might

oraz wyrażenia czasu	**zamieniamy na … w mowie zależnej:**
now	then
today	that day
tonight	that night
tomorrow	the next day
yesterday	the day before
the day before yesterday	two days before
this week/month/year	that week/month/year
last …	the … before
next	the following
ago	before
this	that
here	there

W mowie zależnej oczywiście nie trzeba ciągle mówić „powiedział, że…”. Można użyć też czasowników typu: ***order, ask, recommend, admit, insist***, itd.

Zatem, zamiast powiedzieć:

*He **said that** his brother had better powers …*

można powiedzieć:

*He **admitted** that his brother had better powers …*

He said he had stolen the ring.	*He **admitted (to) stealing** the ring.* *He **admitted having stolen** the ring.*

W tym przypadku musimy trzymać się następujących zasad:

Po *agree, demand, offer, promise, refuse, threaten, claim* znajduje się bezokolicznik,

np. ***agreed to come*** *– zgodziła się przyjść*

Po *advise, allow, ask, beg, command, encourage, forbid, instruct, invite, order, permit, remind, urge, warn, want* znajduje się osoba i bezokolicznik,

np. ***He advised me to*** … – doradził mi, abym …

Po *accused someone of, apologise for, admit (to), boast about, complain to someone about, deny, insist on, suggest* znajduje się czasownik z -ing,

np. ***She apologised me for having told him*** – Przeprosiła mnie za to, że mu powiedziała.

Po *agree, boast, claim, complain, deny, exclaim, explain, inform someone, promise, suggest* znajduje się zdanie składowie z “that”,

np. ***He suggested that I change my decision*** – Zasugerował, bym zmienił decyzję.

CZĘŚĆ 2: PRZYMIOTNIKI ZŁOŻONE I KOLOKACJE / COMPOUND ADJECTIVES AND COLLOCATIONS

PRZYMIOTNIKI ZŁOŻONE

Przymiotniki złożone mogą składać się:

z imiesłowu czasu teraźniejszego, czyli np.

*hard-**working***	*pracowity*

z imiesłowu czasu przeszłego, czyli np.

*densely-**populated***	*gęsto zaludniony*

z liczebnika głównego + rzeczownika, np.

***six-foot** tall*	*wysoki na 6 stóp (ok. 180 cm)*

oraz z *well / badly /poorly / ill* + imiesłowu czasu przeszłego:

ill-conceived	*nieprzemyślany*

KOLOKACJE

Jeśli rozwijasz się na poziomie zaawansowanym i zamierzasz na przykład przystąpić do egzaminu CAE, czytanie literatury może być szczególnie pomocne. Zwróć uwagę na poniższe przykłady:

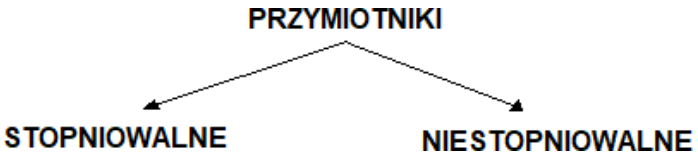
bitterly disappointed	gorzko rozczarowany
deeply moved	głęboko poruszony
excruciatingly painful	potwornie bolesny

Teraz wróć uwagę na kolejne przykłady:

incredibly hilarious
extremely enormous
very delicious
a bit exhausted

Mogłoby się wydawać, że to połączenie jest poprawne. Jednak tak nie jest. Dlaczego?

Nie wszystkie przymiotniki mogą być intensyfikowane tak samo.



Czy, jako Polak, powiedziałbyś:

niesamowicie przezabawny
strasznie olbrzymi
bardzo wyśmienity
nieco wyczerpany

?

Z pewnością nie, gdyż te połączenia nie są logiczne z punktu widzenia gramatyki. Odniesienie się do własnego języka może znacznie ułatwić zrozumienie tej kwestii.

Zmieńmy te połączenia na poprawne i zobaczmy, jaka jest różnica:

niesamowicie zabawny
strasznie duży
bardzo smaczny
nieco zmęczony

Czy teraz widzisz różnicę?

Pierwsze przykłady zawierają przymiotniki niestopniowalne, a dalsze stopniowalne. Oba można intensyfikować, ale ich intensyfikacja ma zupełnie inny wymiar. To znaczy: *bardzo smaczny* = *wyśmienity*, a *wyśmienity* należy do przymiotników, które określają już maksymalny stopień przymiotnika *smaczny*. Oczywiście ma on swoje synonimy, takie, jak *wyborny* czy *pyszny*. Podobnie w języku angielskim: istnieje podstawowy przymiotnik (można go stopniować), ale są też takie, które określają już maksimum swojego znaczenia. Ich intensyfikacja polega bardziej na podkreśleniu swojej pewności, niż na nadaniu stopnia wyższego, na przykład:

bardzo smaczny i *absolutnie wyśmienity* – *absolutnie* nie znaczy bardzo, ale coś w rodzaju *naprawdę* – używając go jeszcze bardziej podkreślamy swoje przekonanie. I taki oto jest sens tego podziału.

Skupmy się teraz tylko na języku angielskim:

Przymiotnik stopniowalny (podstawowe znaczenie) VERY	**Przymiotnik niestopniowalny (maksimum znaczenia) ABSOLUTELY**
hot	boiling, scorching
cold	freezing
hungry	starving / ravenous
dirty	filthy
big	huge / enormous / massive
small	tiny
sure	positive
pleased	delighted
surprised	astonished / amazed
scared	horrified / terrified / petrified
wet	soaking / drenched
ugly	hideous
important	crucial / vital
old	ancient
interesting	fascinating
beautiful	gorgeous / stunning
angry	furious
excited	thrilled
afraid	terrified
good	great, awesome
bad	awful, terrible
clean	spotless

Aby poznać, który przymiotnik jest stopniowalny a który nie, można zadać sobie pytanie, czy do danego przymiotnika pasuje słowo *BARDZO*. Weźmy przymiotnik *crucial*, czyli *kluczowy*. Czy może coś być *bardzo kluczowe*? Raczej nie. Może być *bardzo ważne*. Dlatego *ważne* to przymiotnik stopniowalny, a *kluczowy* niestopniowalny. Inny przykład: *excited* (*podekscytowany*) i *thrilled* (*zachwycony*) – choć oba te przymiotniki mogą być tłumaczone jako *podekscytowany*, to jednak różnią się stopniem intensywności, i taka intensywność jest wyczuwalna, szczególnie dla tych, którzy uczą się języka angielskiego lub mają z nim regularny kontakt od lat.

Zatem, jakimi przysłówkami będziemy stopniować stopniowalne, a jakimi niestopniowalne przymiotniki?

Stopniowalne		Niestopniowalne	
Intensyfikujemy z	Łagodzimy z	Intensyfikujemy z	Łagodzimy z
really	**pretty**	**really**	**pretty**
very	fairly / quite	absolutely,	almost
extremely	slightly	completely / quite	nearly
incredibly	a (little) bit	totally	practically
rather	somewhat	utterly	virtually
		entirely	

Powyżej znajdują się najpopularniejsze.

Niestety, wielu takich kombinacji trzeba się uczyć w praktyce. Nazywa się je **KOLOKACJAMI** – gdy konkretne przysłówki łączą się w sposób naturalny z konkretnymi przymiotnikami.

Pomaga w tym czytanie książek – szczególnie, że nawet w tłumaczeniu przysłówek może zmienić swoje znaczenie, jak w przypadku „*bitterly*" – *gorzko*, lub *przejmująco*.

Niestopniowalność wielu przymiotników jest oczywista, np. *pregnant*, *dead*, *alive*, itp.
Nie można być *very pregnant* albo *very alive*. Tej kwestii nie trzeba tłumaczyć. Ale można powiedzieć, że ktoś jest *utterly dead*, *almost dead*. *Almost pregnant*? Brzmi raczej absurdalnie.

Przykłady:

bitterly cold	przejmująco zimny
bitterly disappointed	gorzko rozczarowany
completely alone	zupełnie sam
deeply attached	mocno przywiązany
entirely absent	zupełnie nieobecny
heavily built	dobrze zbudowany
utterly destroyed	doszczętnie zniszczony

Zapewne wiele z nich już znasz.

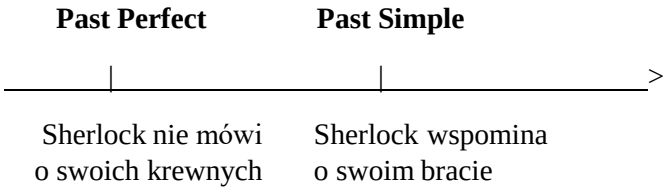
CZĘŚĆ 3: CZASY A OPISYWANIE WYDARZEŃ / TENSES AND DESCRIBING EVENTS

O przeszłych wydarzeniach mówimy na różne sposoby. W języku angielskim użyjemy do tego odpowiednich czasów gramatycznych. Są to przede wszystkim Past Perfect (czas zaprzeszły) i Past Simple (czas przeszły prosty).

Oba te czasy używa się w relacjonowaniu przeszłych wydarzeń. Rozważymy ich użycie na przykładzie „Greckiego Tłumacza" A.C. Doyle.

During my long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Sherlock Holmes **I had never heard** him refer to his relations, and hardly ever to his own early life. … but one day, to my very great surprise, he began to talk to me about his brother.
Podczas mojej długiej i zażyłej przyjaźni z Mr. Sherlockiem Holmesem **nie słyszałem nigdy**, żeby on kiedy wspominał o swoich krewnych, a prawie nigdy nie mówił o swym dawniejszym życiu. (…) aż jednego dnia zaczął on, ku mej wielkiej niespodziance, mówić o swoim bracie.

Z tego wynika, że autor nigdy wcześniej nie słyszał, by Sherlock mówił o swoich krewnych (Past Perfect), aż w końcu zaczął mówić o swoim bracie (Past Simple). Past Perfect określa, co było najpierw. Dlatego na początku autor używa tego czasu, tzn. opowiada, co działo się ZANIM Sherlock zaczął mówić o swoim bracie.



Aby ułatwić sobie zrozumienie tej kwestii, można tłumaczyć HAD jako WCZEŚNIEJ, np.

I had never heard można przetłumaczyć jako ***Nigdy wcześniej nie słyszałem***. To pozwala nam rozumieć logikę tego czasu.

Kolejny przykład:

It was after tea on a summer evening, and the conversation, which **had roamed** in a desultory, spasmodic fashion from golf clubs to the causes of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic, **came round** at last to the question of atavism and hereditary aptitudes.
Było to po herbacie, jednego wieczoru letniego. Rozmowa, która **wlekła się** bezładnie i dorywczo, przechodząc od klubów golfowych do przyczyn zboczenia ekliptyki, **zeszła** w końcu na kwestię atawizmu i dziedzicznych zdolności.

Konwersacja najpierw się „wlekła” (had roamed) podkreślamy trwanie czynności (Past Perfect), a następnie „zeszła” (came around) - tryb dokonany (Past Simple)

Następny przykład:

If there were another man with such singular powers in England, how was it that neither police nor public had heard of him?
Jeżeli istniał człowiek o takich osobliwych zdolnościach w Anglii, to jak to było możliwe, żeby ani policja ani publiczność o nim **nie wiedziała**.

W tym zdaniu słowo HAD można zamienić na WCZEŚNIEJ. Powyższe zdanie miałoby wówczas taki sens: *jak to możliwe, że był taki człowiek, a policja o nim WCZEŚNIEJ nie słyszała*. To samo odnosi się do poniższego przykładu:

It seemed to me to be obvious that this Greek girl **had been carried off** by the young Englishman named Harold Latimer.
Zdaje mi się, że prawdopodobnie ta dziewczyna grecka **została uprowadzona** przez młodego Anglika, nazwiskiem Harold Latimer.

We **had reached** Pall Mall as we talked, and were walking down it from the St. James’s end.
W rozmowie doszliśmy do Pall-Mall i szliśmy wzdłuż tej ulicy od końca St. James.

Dlaczego Past Perfect? Rozmawiając **zdążyli już (HAD)** dojść do Pall-Mall i dalej rozmawiali. Zatem Past Perfect może też być rozumiane jako:

zdążyć już coś zrobić + mówimy, co się działo następnie

Podobną logikę można zauważyć w innych fragmentach:

Introspective look which **I had only observed** in Sherlock’s when he was exerting his full powers.
Introspektywny wygląd, który **wtedy tylko zauważyłem** u Sherlocka, kiedy on wytężał wszystkie swoje siły.

To oznacza, że ***już (wcześniej)*** *zaobserwował* albo ***zdążył (już wcześniej)*** *zaobserwować.*

Zatem HAD rozumiemy jako *zdążyć wcześniej coś zrobić*.

The carriage which **had brought** me was already out of sight.
Powóz, który mnie **przywiózł**, znikł już z oczu.

Ostatni praktyczny przykład:

It was locked, but the key **had been left** on the outside.

Zwracamy uwagę na zaprzeszłość – wcześniej ktoś zostawił klucz w drzwiach.

Czynność jedna po drugiej – Past Simple

Jeśli widzimy wyraźnie, że coś działo się jedno po drugim, używamy czasu Past Simple. Często wtedy obie czynności są wyraźnie oddzielone spójnikiem **AND**, albo przysłówkiem, który tym bardziej podkreśla następowanie wydarzeń po sobie: **then, after that** (potem, następnie), itp. Możemy to zobaczyć w następujących przykładach:

Sherlock Holmes **stopped** at a door some little distance from the Carlton, **and**, cautioning me not to speak, **he led the way** into the hall.
Sherlock Holmes **zatrzymał się** przy jednej bramie w pewnej odległości od Carlton **i** ostrzegając mnie, bym się nie odzywał, **wprowadził mnie** do sieni.

Holmes **showed** me into a small chamber which looked out into Pall Mall, **and then**, leaving me for a minute, he **came back** with a companion whom I knew could only be his brother.
Holmes **zaprowadził** mnie do małego pokoju, który wychodził na Pall Mall, **a potem** pozostawiwszy mnie na chwilę, **powrócił** z jakimś mężczyzną, o którym wiedziałem, że mógł to być tylko jego brat.

Opisywanie wydarzeń może obejmować przytaczanie wypowiedzi bohaterów (dialogi), które przeważnie tworzy się z użyciem czasów teraźniejszych.
W tym celu bohaterowie dość często używają czasu Present Perfect by wskazać na związek przeszłości z teraźniejszością. Dlatego kolejna część tego rozdziału jest poświęcona właśnie tym istotnym czasom gramatycznym - Present Perfect (czas teraźniejszy dokonany) i Present Perfect Continuous (czas teraźniejszy niedokonany).

Różne oblicza czasu Present Perfect

GDY COŚ WŁAŚNIE MIAŁO MIEJSCE

“In your own case,” said I, “from all that **you have told** me, it seems obvious that your faculty of observation and your peculiar facility for deduction are due to your own systematic training.”
- Co się ciebie tyczy – mówiłem – z tego wszystkiego, **coś opowiadał**, zdaje [się to oczywiste], że twoja zdolność obserwacji i specjalna łatwość dedukcji, zależą od twego własnego systematycznego ćwiczenia.

„You have told me” można zrozumieć jako „co właśnie mi powiedziałeś”.

Present Perfect ściśle łączy się z teraźniejszością, dlatego często będzie występował w dialogach.

“**I have asked** Mr. Melas to step across,” said he.
- Poprosiłem Mr. Melasa, aby przyszedł – rzekł (właśnie to zrobił)

DOŚWIADCZENIE – coś działo się wielokrotnie

Again and again I have taken a problem to him, and have received an explanation which has afterwards proved to be the correct one.
Kilka razy przedkładałem mu różne problemy i otrzymywałem rozwiązania, które, jak się potem okazało, były prawdziwe.

Present Perfect używamy, gdy chcemy powiedzieć, ile razy ktoś coś zrobił.
W tym przypadku mamy wyrażenie „again and again", czyli „raz po raz".

NIEDAWNO

"That he **has not left** the service **long** is shown by his still wearing his ammunition boots, as they are called," observed Mycroft
To, że **niedawno opuścił** służbę, widać z tego, że nosi jeszcze buty komiśne, jak się to one nazywają – zauważył Mycroft

Present Perfect Continuous

Czas ten zazwyczaj tłumaczymy na język polski jako czas teraźniejszy, niemal porównywalny do czasu Present Continous, który poznajemy na początku nauki języka angielskiego. Zatem omówmy różnicę.

Warto zwrócić uwagę na poniższy fragment:

his complete mourning shows that he has lost some one very dear. The fact that he is doing his own shopping looks as though it were his wife. **He has been buying things for children**, you perceive. There is a rattle, which shows that one of them is very young.
zupełna jego żałoba świadczy o tym, że stracił kogoś bardzo drogiego. Fakt, że robi sam zakupy, wygląda na to, jakby to była jego żona. Ma grzechotkę, co wskazuje na to, że jedno z dzieci jest bardzo małe.

Ciekawe jest to, że zdanie **He has been buying things for children**, zostało pominięte w tłumaczeniu. Być może dlatego, że wcześniej niemalże to samo opisuje czas Present Continuous (podkreślony fragment). Tłumaczenie było zbyteczne, ponieważ tłumacz musiałby powtórzyć dokładnie to samo.

Jednak, w języku angielskim, zdania te się różnią.

1) **Present Continuous** wskazuje, że teraz robi zakupy (w tym momencie).
2) Zdanie w **Present Perfect Continuous** natomiast wskazuje na skutek. Dalej mowa jest o zabawkach, jakie zostały kupione (skutek).

Zatem, podsumowując, **Present Perfect Continuous używamy:**

1) gdy czynność się skończyła, ale wyraźnie widać lub odczuwa się jej skutki, np. *Have you been crying? What happened? (Płakałaś? Co się stało?)*

Jeśli więc mamy zdanie: *He has been buying things for children*, mówca chce podkreślić skutek tej czynności, czyli co zostało kupione. Można też ten przykład przyrównać do sytuacji, w której widzimy torby z zakupami w domu i wnioskujemy:

„You have been shopping” albo *“Someone has been shopping”*

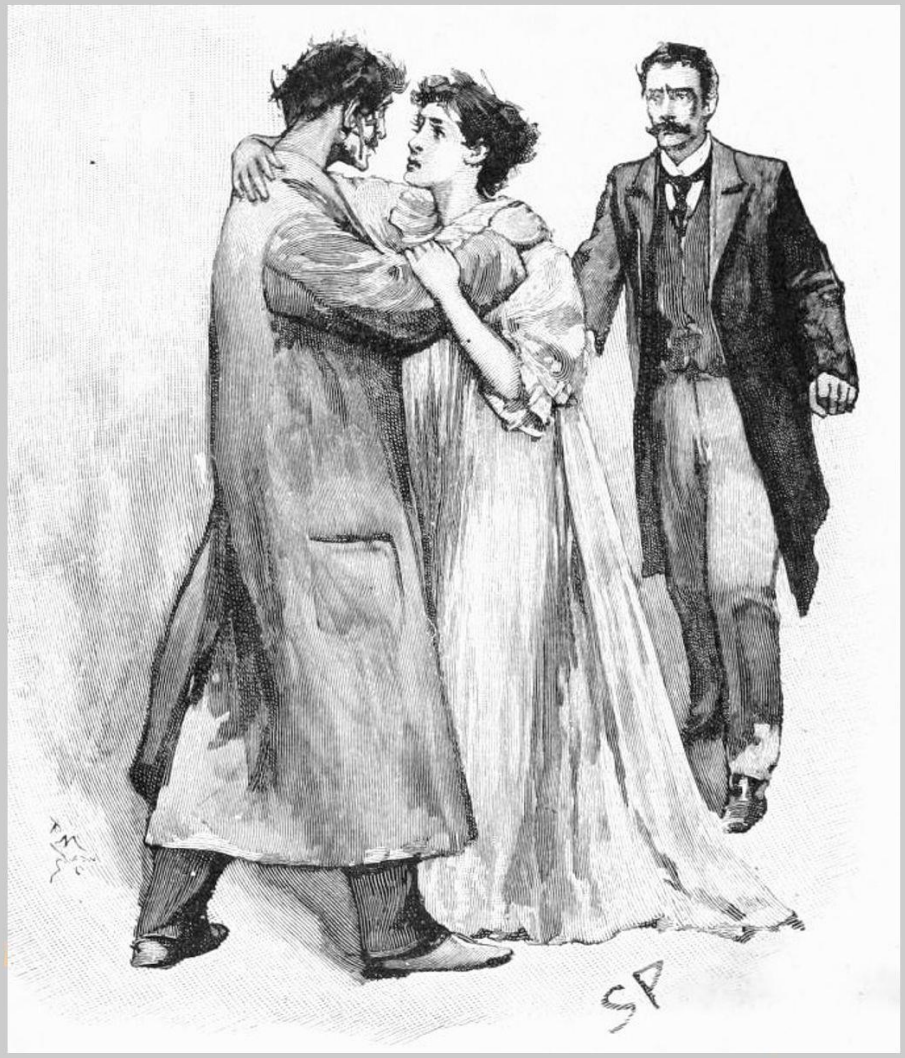
2) by wskazać, że coś trwa od dłuższego czasu, np. *I've been learning English for 5 years.* (Uczę się angielskiego od 5 lat)

If **they have been living** in the same place during this time, it is probable that we shall have some answer to Mycroft's advertisement.”
Jeżeli **oni przebywają** w tym samym miejscu przez ten czas, to prawdopodobnie otrzymamy odpowiedź na ogłoszenie Mycrofta.

Po zapoznaniu się z wiedzą teoretyczną oraz przykładami, zapraszamy do samodzielnych ćwiczeń w oparciu o wydania dwujęzyczne klasyk angielskich dostępne na stronie wydawnictwa: www.kursyonline.wymownia.pl

Z przygód Sherlocka Holmesa

Tłumacz grecki



WYDANIE DWUJĘZYCZNE

Arthur Conan Doyle

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The Greek Interpreter

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Z przygód Sherlocka Holmesa

Tłumacz grecki

Ilustracja na okładce: Sidney Paget
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Wydawnictwo Wymownia

Polska wersja językowa w tłumaczeniu anonimowym
Angielska wersja językowa zgodna z wydaniem z roku 1892

The Greek Interpreter

During my long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Sherlock Holmes I had never heard him refer to his relations, and hardly ever to his own early life. This reticence upon his part had increased the somewhat inhuman effect which he produced upon me, until sometimes I found myself regarding him as an isolated phenomenon, a brain without a heart, as deficient in human sympathy as he was pre-eminent in intelligence. His aversion to women and his disinclination to form new friendships were both typical of his unemotional character, but not more so than his complete suppression of every reference to his own people. I had come to believe that he was an orphan with no relatives living, but one day, to my very great surprise, he began to talk to me about his brother.

It was after tea on a summer evening, and the conversation, which had roamed in a desultory, spasmodic fashion from golf clubs to the causes of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic, came round at last to the question of atavism and hereditary aptitudes. The point under discussion was, how far any singular gift in an individual was due to his ancestry and how far to his own early training.

"In your own case," said I, "from all that you have told me, it seems obvious that your faculty of observation and your peculiar facility for deduction are due to your own systematic training."

"To some extent," he answered, thoughtfully. "My ancestors were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class. But, none the less, my turn that way is in my veins, and may have come with my grandmother, who was the sister of Vernet, the French artist. Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms."

"But how do you know that it is hereditary?"

"Because my brother Mycroft possesses it in a larger degree than I do."

This was news to me indeed. If there were another man with such singular powers in England, how was it that neither police nor public had heard of him? I put the question, with a hint that it was my companion's modesty which made him acknowledge his brother as his superior. Holmes laughed at my suggestion.

"My dear Watson," said he, "I cannot agree with those who rank modesty among the virtues. To the logician all things should be seen exactly as they are, and to underestimate one's self is as much a departure from truth as to exaggerate one's own powers. When I say, therefore, that Mycroft has better powers of observation than I, you may take it that I am speaking the exact and literal truth."

"Is he your junior?"

"Seven years my senior."

"How comes it that he is unknown?"

"Oh, he is very well known in his own circle."

"Where, then?"

"Well, in the Diogenes Club, for example."

I had never heard of the institution, and my face must have proclaimed as much, for Sherlock Holmes pulled out his watch.

"The Diogenes Club is the queerest club in London, and Mycroft one of the queerest men. He's always there from quarter to five to twenty to eight. It's six now, so if you care for a stroll this beautiful evening I shall be very happy to introduce you to two curiosities."

Five minutes later we were in the street, walking towards Regent's Circus.

"You wonder," said my companion, "why it is that Mycroft does not use his powers for detective work. He is incapable of it."

"But I thought you said--"

"I said that he was my superior in observation and deduction. If the art of the detective began and ended in reasoning from an arm-chair, my brother would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived. But he has no ambition and no energy. He will not even go out of his way to verify his own solution, and would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right. Again and again I have taken a problem to him, and have received an explanation which has afterwards proved to be the correct one. And yet he was absolutely incapable of working out the practical points which must be gone into before a case could be laid before a judge or jury."

"It is not his profession, then?"

"By no means. What is to me a means of livelihood is to him the merest hobby of a dilettante. He has an extraordinary faculty for figures, and audits the books in some of the government departments. Mycroft lodges in Pall Mall, and he walks round the corner into Whitehall every morning and back every evening. From year's end to year's end he takes no other exercise, and is seen nowhere else, except only in the Diogenes Club, which is just opposite his rooms."

"I cannot recall the name."

"Very likely not. There are many men in London, you know, who, some from shyness, some from misanthropy, have no wish for the company of their fellows. Yet they are not averse to comfortable chairs and the latest periodicals. It is for the convenience of these that the Diogenes Club was started, and it now contains the most unsociable and unclubable men in town. No member is permitted to take the least notice of any other one. Save in the Stranger's Room, no talking is, under any circumstances, allowed, and three offences, if brought to the notice of the committee, render the talker liable to expulsion. My brother was one of the founders, and I have myself found it a very soothing atmosphere."

We had reached Pall Mall as we talked, and were walking down it from the St. James's end. Sherlock Holmes stopped at a door some little distance from the Carlton, and, cautioning me not to speak, he led the way into the hall. Through the glass panelling I caught a glimpse of a large and luxurious room, in which a considerable number of men were sitting about and reading papers, each in his own little nook. Holmes showed me into a small chamber which looked out into Pall Mall, and then, leaving me for a minute, he came back with a companion whom I knew could only be his brother.

Mycroft Holmes was a much larger and stouter man than Sherlock. His body was absolutely corpulent, but his face, though massive, had preserved something of the sharpness of expression which was so remarkable in that of his brother. His eyes, which were of a peculiarly light, watery grey, seemed to always retain that far-away, introspective look which I had only observed in Sherlock's when he was exerting his full powers.

"I am glad to meet you, sir," said he, putting out a broad, fat hand like the flipper of a seal. "I hear of Sherlock everywhere since you became his chronicler. By the way, Sherlock, I expected to see you round last week, to consult me over that Manor House case. I thought you might be a little out of your depth."

"No, I solved it," said my friend, smiling.

"It was Adams, of course."

"Yes, it was Adams."

"I was sure of it from the first." The two sat down together in the bow-window of the club. "To any one who wishes to study mankind this is the spot," said Mycroft. "Look at the magnificent types! Look at these two men who are coming towards us, for example."

"The billiard-marker and the other?"

"Precisely. What do you make of the other?"

The two men had stopped opposite the window. Some chalk marks over the waistcoat pocket were the only signs of billiards which I could see in one of them. The other was a very small, dark fellow, with his hat pushed back and several packages under his arm.

"An old soldier, I perceive," said Sherlock.

"And very recently discharged," remarked the brother.

"Served in India, I see."

"And a non-commissioned officer."

"Royal Artillery, I fancy," said Sherlock.

"And a widower."

"But with a child."

"Children, my dear boy, children."

"Come," said I, laughing, "this is a little too much."

"Surely," answered Holmes, "it is not hard to say that a man with that bearing, expression of authority, and sunbaked skin, is a soldier, is more than a private, and is not long from India."

"That he has not left the service long is shown by his still wearing his ammunition boots, as they are called," observed Mycroft.

"He had not the cavalry stride, yet he wore his hat on one side, as is shown by the lighter skin of that side of his brow. His weight is against his being a sapper. He is in the artillery."

"Then, of course, his complete mourning shows that he has lost some one very dear. The fact that he is doing his own shopping looks as though it were his wife. He has been buying things for children, you perceive. There is a rattle, which shows that one of them is very young. The wife probably died in childbed. The fact that he has a picture-book under his arm shows that there is another child to be thought of."

I began to understand what my friend meant when he said that his brother possessed even keener faculties that he did himself. He glanced across at me and smiled. Mycroft took snuff from a tortoise-shell box, and brushed away the wandering grains from his coat front with a large, red silk handkerchief.

"By the way, Sherlock," said he, "I have had something quite after your own heart--a most singular problem--submitted to my judgement. I really had not the energy to follow it up save in a very incomplete fashion, but it gave me a basis for some pleasing speculation. If you would care to hear the facts--"

"My dear Mycroft, I should be delighted."

The brother scribbled a note upon a leaf of his pocket-book, and, ringing the bell, he handed it to the waiter.

"I have asked Mr. Melas to step across," said he. "He lodges on the floor above me, and I have some slight acquaintance with him, which led him to come to me in his perplexity. Mr. Melas is a Greek by extraction, as I understand, and he is a remarkable linguist. He earns his living partly as interpreter in the law courts and partly by acting as guide to any wealthy Orientals who may visit the Northumberland Avenue hotels. I think I will leave him to tell his very remarkable experience in his own fashion."

A few minutes later we were joined by a short, stout man whose olive face and coal-black hair proclaimed his Southern origin, though his speech was that of an educated Englishman. He shook hands eagerly with Sherlock Holmes, and his dark eyes sparkled with pleasure when he understood that the specialist was anxious to hear his story.

"I do not believe that the police credit me--on my word, I do not," said he in a wailing voice. "Just because they have never heard of it before, they think that such a thing cannot be. But I know that I shall never be easy in my mind until I know what has become of my poor man with the sticking-plaster upon his face."

"I am all attention," said Sherlock Holmes.

"This is Wednesday evening," said Mr. Melas. "Well then, it was Monday night--only two days ago, you understand--that all this happened. I am an interpreter, as perhaps my neighbour there has told you. I interpret all languages--or nearly all--but as I am a Greek by birth and with a Grecian name, it is with that particular tongue that I am principally associated. For many years I have been the chief Greek interpreter in London, and my name is very well known in the hotels. It happens not infrequently that I am sent for at strange hours by foreigners who get into difficulties, or by travellers who arrive late and wish my services. I was not surprised, therefore, on Monday night when a Mr. Latimer, a very fashionably dressed young man, came up to my rooms and asked me to accompany him in a cab which was waiting at the door. A Greek friend had come to see him upon business, he said, and as he could speak nothing but his own tongue, the services of an interpreter were indispensable. He gave me to understand that his house was some little distance off, in Kensington, and he seemed to be in a great hurry, bustling me rapidly into the cab when we had descended to the street.

"I say into the cab, but I soon became doubtful as to whether it was not a carriage in which I found myself. It was certainly more roomy than the ordinary four-wheeled disgrace to London, and the fittings, though frayed, were of rich quality. Mr. Latimer seated himself opposite to me and we started off through Charing Cross and up the Shaftesbury Avenue. We had come out upon Oxford Street and I had ventured some remark as to this being a roundabout way to Kensington, when my words were arrested by the extraordinary conduct of my companion.

"He began by drawing a most formidable-looking bludgeon loaded with lead from his pocket, and switching it backward and forward several times, as if to test its weight and strength. Then he placed it without a word upon the seat beside him. Having done this, he drew up the windows on each side, and I found to my astonishment that they were covered with paper so as to prevent my seeing through them.

"'I am sorry to cut off your view, Mr. Melas,' said he. 'The fact is that I have no intention that you should see what the place is to which we are driving. It might possibly be inconvenient to me if you could find your way there again.'

"As you can imagine, I was utterly taken aback by such an address. My companion was a powerful, broad-shouldered young fellow, and, apart from the weapon, I should not have had the slightest chance in a struggle with him.

"'This is very extraordinary conduct, Mr. Latimer,' I stammered. 'You must be aware that what you are doing is quite illegal.'

"'It is somewhat of a liberty, no doubt,' said he, 'but we'll make it up to you. I must warn you, however, Mr. Melas, that if at any time to-night you attempt to raise an alarm or do anything which is against my interests, you will find it a very serious thing. I beg you to remember that no one knows where you are, and that, whether you are in this carriage or in my house, you are equally in my power.'

"His words were quiet, but he had a rasping way of saying them which was very menacing. I sat in silence wondering what on earth could be his reason for kidnapping me in this

extraordinary fashion. Whatever it might be, it was perfectly clear that there was no possible use in my resisting, and that I could only wait to see what might befall.

"For nearly two hours we drove without my having the least clue as to where we were going. Sometimes the rattle of the stones told of a paved causeway, and at others our smooth, silent course suggested asphalt; but, save by this variation in sound, there was nothing at all which could in the remotest way help me to form a guess as to where we were. The paper over each window was impenetrable to light, and a blue curtain was drawn across the glass work in front. It was a quarter-past seven when we left Pall Mall, and my watch showed me that it was ten minutes to nine when we at last came to a standstill. My companion let down the window, and I caught a glimpse of a low, arched doorway with a lamp burning above it. As I was hurried from the carriage it swung open, and I found myself inside the house, with a vague impression of a lawn and trees on each side of me as I entered. Whether these were private grounds, however, or bona-fide country was more than I could possibly venture to say.

"There was a coloured gas-lamp inside which was turned so low that I could see little save that the hall was of some size and hung with pictures. In the dim light I could make out that the person who had opened the door was a small, mean-looking, middle-aged man with rounded shoulders. As he turned towards us the glint of the light showed me that he was wearing glasses.

"'Is this Mr. Melas, Harold?' said he.

"'Yes.'

"'Well done, well done! No ill-will, Mr. Melas, I hope, but we could not get on without you. If you deal fair with us you'll not regret it, but if you try any tricks, God help you!' He spoke in a nervous, jerky fashion, and with little giggling laughs in between, but somehow he impressed me with fear more than the other.

"'What do you want with me?' I asked.

"'Only to ask a few questions of a Greek gentleman who is visiting us, and to let us have the answers. But say no more than you are told to say, or--' here came the nervous giggle again--'you had better never have been born.'

"As he spoke he opened a door and showed the way into a room which appeared to be very richly furnished, but again the only light was afforded by a single lamp half-turned down. The chamber was certainly large, and the way in which my feet sank into the carpet as I stepped across it told me of its richness. I caught glimpses of velvet chairs, a high white marble mantel-piece, and what seemed to be a suit of Japanese armour at one side of it. There was a chair just under the lamp, and the elderly man motioned that I should sit in it. The younger had left us, but he suddenly returned through another door, leading with him a gentleman clad in some sort of loose dressing-gown who moved slowly towards us. As he came into the circle of dim light which enables me to see him more clearly I was thrilled with horror at his appearance. He was deadly pale and terribly emaciated, with the protruding, brilliant eyes of a man whose spirit was greater than his strength. But what shocked me more than any signs of physical weakness was that his face was grotesquely criss-crossed with sticking-plaster, and that one large pad of it was fastened over his mouth.

"'Have you the slate, Harold?' cried the older man, as this strange being fell rather than sat down into a chair. 'Are his hands loose? Now, then, give him the pencil. You are to ask the questions, Mr. Melas, and he will write the answers. Ask him first of all whether he is prepared to sign the papers?'

"The man's eyes flashed fire.

"'Never!' he wrote in Greek upon the slate.

"'On no condition?' I asked, at the bidding of our tyrant.

"'Only if I see her married in my presence by a Greek priest whom I know.'

"The man giggled in his venomous way.

"'You know what awaits you, then?'

"'I care nothing for myself.'

"These are samples of the questions and answers which made up our strange half-spoken, half-written conversation. Again and again I had to ask him whether he would give in and sign the documents. Again and again I had the same indignant reply. But soon a happy thought came to me. I took to adding on little sentences of my own to each question, innocent ones at first, to test whether either of our companions knew anything of the matter, and then, as I found that they showed no signs I played a more dangerous game. Our conversation ran something like this:

"'You can do no good by this obstinacy. Who are you?'

"'I care not. I am a stranger in London.'

"'Your fate will be upon your own head. How long have you been here?'

"'Let it be so. Three weeks.'

"'The property can never be yours. What ails you?'

"'It shall not go to villains. They are starving me.'

"'You shall go free if you sign. What house is this?'

"'I will never sign. I do not know.'

"'You are not doing her any service. What is your name?'

"'Let me hear her say so. Kratides.'

"'You shall see her if you sign. Where are you from?'

"'Then I shall never see her. Athens.'

"Another five minutes, Mr. Holmes, and I should have wormed out the whole story under their very noses. My very next question might have cleared the matter up, but at that instant the door opened and a woman stepped into the room. I could not see her clearly enough to know more than that she was tall and graceful, with black hair, and clad in some sort of loose white gown.

"'Harold,' said she, speaking English with a broken accent. 'I could not stay away longer. It is so lonely up there with only--Oh, my God, it is Paul!'

"These last words were in Greek, and at the same instant the man with a convulsive effort tore the plaster from his lips, and screaming out 'Sophy! Sophy!' rushed into the woman's arms. Their embrace was but for an instant, however, for the younger man seized the woman and pushed her out of the room, while the elder easily overpowered his emaciated victim, and dragged him away through the other door. For a moment I was left alone in the room, and I sprang to my feet with some vague idea that I might in some way get a clue to what this house was in which I found myself. Fortunately, however, I took no steps, for looking up I saw that the older man was standing in the door-way with his eyes fixed upon me.

"'That will do, Mr. Melas,' said he. 'You perceive that we have taken you into our confidence over some very private business. We should not have troubled you, only that our friend who speaks Greek and who began these negotiations has been forced to return to the East. It was quite necessary for us to find some one to take his place, and we were fortunate in hearing of your powers.'

"I bowed.

"'There are five sovereigns here,' said he, walking up to me, 'which will, I hope, be a sufficient fee. But remember,' he added, tapping me lightly on the chest and giggling, 'if you speak to a human soul about this--one human soul, mind--well, may God have mercy upon your soul!"

"I cannot tell you the loathing and horror with which this insignificant-looking man inspired me. I could see him better now as the lamp-light shone upon him. His features were peaky and sallow, and his little pointed beard was thready and ill-nourished. He pushed his face forward as he spoke and his lips and eyelids were continually twitching like a man with St. Vitus's dance. I could not help thinking that his strange, catchy little laugh was also a symptom of some nervous malady. The terror of his face lay in his eyes, however, steel grey, and glistening coldly with a malignant, inexorable cruelty in their depths.

"'We shall know if you speak of this,' said he. 'We have our own means of information. Now you will find the carriage waiting, and my friend will see you on your way.'

"I was hurried through the hall and into the vehicle, again obtaining that momentary glimpse of trees and a garden. Mr. Latimer followed closely at my heels, and took his place opposite to me without a word. In silence we again drove for an interminable distance with the windows raised, until at last, just after midnight, the carriage pulled up.

"'You will get down here, Mr. Melas,' said my companion. 'I am sorry to leave you so far from your house, but there is no alternative. Any attempt upon your part to follow the carriage can only end in injury to yourself.'

"He opened the door as he spoke, and I had hardly time to spring out when the coachman lashed the horse and the carriage rattled away. I looked around me in astonishment. I was on some sort of a heathy common mottled over with dark clumps of furze-bushes. Far away stretched a line of houses, with a light here and there in the upper windows. On the other side I saw the red signal-lamps of a railway.

"The carriage which had brought me was already out of sight. I stood gazing round and wondering where on earth I might be, when I saw some one coming towards me in the darkness. As he came up to me I made out that he was a railway porter.

"'Can you tell me what place this is?' I asked.

"'Wandsworth Common,' said he.

"'Can I get a train into town?'

"'If you walk on a mile or so to Clapham Junction,' said he, 'you'll just be in time for the last to Victoria.'

"So that was the end of my adventure, Mr. Holmes. I do not know where I was, nor whom I spoke with, nor anything save what I have told you. But I know that there is foul play going on, and I want to help that unhappy man if I can. I told the whole story to Mr. Mycroft Holmes next morning, and subsequently to the police."

We all sat in silence for some little time after listening to this extraordinary narrative. Then Sherlock looked across at his brother.

"Any steps?" he asked.

Mycroft picked up the Daily News, which was lying on the side-table.

"'Anybody supplying any information to the whereabouts of a Greek gentleman named Paul Kratides, from Athens, who is unable to speak English, will be rewarded. A similar reward paid to any one giving information about a Greek lady whose first name is Sophy. X 2473.' That was in all the dailies. No answer."

"How about the Greek Legation?"

"I have inquired. They know nothing."

"A wire to the head of the Athens police, then?"

"Sherlock has all the energy of the family," said Mycroft, turning to me. "Well, you take the case up by all means, and let me know if you do any good."

"Certainly," answered my friend, rising from his chair. "I'll let you know, and Mr. Melas also. In the meantime, Mr. Melas, I should certainly be on my guard, if I were you, for of course they must know through these advertisements that you have betrayed them."

As we walked home together, Holmes stopped at a telegraph office and sent off several wires.

"You see, Watson," he remarked, "our evening has been by no means wasted. Some of my most interesting cases have come to me in this way through Mycroft. The problem which we have just listened to, although it can admit of but one explanation, has still some distinguishing features."

"You have hopes of solving it?"

"Well, knowing as much as we do, it will be singular indeed if we fail to discover the rest. You must yourself have formed some theory which will explain the facts to which we have listened."

"In a vague way, yes."

"What was your idea, then?"

"It seemed to me to be obvious that this Greek girl had been carried off by the young Englishman named Harold Latimer."

"Carried off from where?"

"Athens, perhaps."

Sherlock Holmes shook his head. "This young man could not talk a word of Greek. The lady could talk English fairly well. Inference--that she had been in England some little time, but he had not been in Greece."

"Well, then, we will presume that she had come on a visit to England, and that this Harold had persuaded her to fly with him."

"That is more probable."

"Then the brother--for that, I fancy, must be the relationship--comes over from Greece to interfere. He imprudently puts himself into the power of the young man and his older associate. They seize him and use violence towards him in order to make him sign some papers to make over the girl's fortune--of which he may be trustee--to them. This he refuses to do. In order to negotiate with him they have to get an interpreter, and they pitch upon this Mr. Melas, having used some other one before. The girl is not told of the arrival of her brother, and finds it out by the merest accident."

"Excellent, Watson!" cried Holmes. "I really fancy that you are not far from the truth. You see that we hold all the cards, and we have only to fear some sudden act of violence on their part. If they give us time we must have them."

"But how can we find where this house lies?"

"Well, if our conjecture is correct and the girl's name is or was Sophy Kratides, we should have no difficulty in tracing her. That must be our main hope, for the brother is, of course, a complete stranger. It is clear that some time has elapsed since this Harold established these relations with the girl--some weeks, at any rate--since the brother in Greece has had time to

hear of it and come across. If they have been living in the same place during this time, it is probable that we shall have some answer to Mycroft's advertisement."

We had reached our house in Baker Street while we had been talking. Holmes ascended the stair first, and as he opened the door of our room he gave a start of surprise. Looking over his shoulder, I was equally astonished. His brother Mycroft was sitting smoking in the arm-chair.

"Come in, Sherlock! Come in, sir," said he blandly, smiling at our surprised faces. "You don't expect such energy from me, do you, Sherlock? But somehow this case attracts me."

"How did you get here?"

"I passed you in a hansom."

"There has been some new development?"

"I had an answer to my advertisement."

"Ah!"

"Yes, it came within a few minutes of your leaving."

"And to what effect?"

Mycroft Holmes took out a sheet of paper.

"Here it is," said he, "written with a J pen on royal cream paper by a middle-aged man with a weak constitution. 'Sir,' he says, 'in answer to your advertisement of to-day's date, I beg to inform you that I know the young lady in question very well. If you should care to call upon me I could give you some particulars as to her painful history. She is living at present at The Myrtles, Beckenham. Yours faithfully, J. Davenport.'

"He writes from Lower Brixton," said Mycroft Holmes. "Do you not think that we might drive to him now, Sherlock, and learn these particulars?"

"My dear Mycroft, the brother's life is more valuable than the sister's story. I think we should call at Scotland Yard for Inspector Gregson, and go straight out to Beckenham. We know that a man is being done to death, and every hour may be vital."

"Better pick up Mr. Melas on our way," I suggested. "We may need an interpreter."

"Excellent," said Sherlock Holmes. "Send the boy for a four-wheeler, and we shall be off at once." He opened the table-drawer as he spoke, and I noticed that he slipped his revolver into his pocket. "Yes," said he, in answer to my glance; "I should say from what we have heard, that we are dealing with a particularly dangerous gang."

It was almost dark before we found ourselves in Pall Mall, at the rooms of Mr. Melas. A gentleman had just called for him, and he was gone.

"Can you tell me where?" asked Mycroft Holmes.

"I don't know, sir," answered the woman who had opened the door; "I only know that he drove away with the gentleman in a carriage."

"Did the gentleman give a name?"

"No, sir."

"He wasn't a tall, handsome, dark young man?"

"Oh, nor, sir. He was a little gentleman, with glasses, thin in the face, but very pleasant in his ways, for he was laughing al the time that he was talking."

"Come along!" cried Sherlock Holmes, abruptly. "This grows serious," he observed, as we drove to Scotland Yard. "These men have got hold of Melas again. He is a man of no physical courage, as they are well aware from their experience the other night. This villain was able to terrorise him the instant that he got into his presence. No doubt they want his professional services, but, having used him, they may be inclined to punish him for what they will regard as his treachery."

Our hope was that, by taking train, we might get to Beckenham as soon or sooner than the carriage. On reaching Scotland Yard, however, it was more than an hour before we could get Inspector Gregson and comply with the legal formalities which would enable us to enter the house. It was a quarter to ten before we reached London Bridge, and half past before the four of us alighted on the Beckenham platform. A drive of half a mile brought us to The Myrtles--a large, dark house standing back from the road in its own grounds. Here we dismissed our cab, and made our way up the drive together.

"The windows are all dark," remarked the inspector. "The house seems deserted."

"Our birds are flown and the nest empty," said Holmes.

"Why do you say so?"

"A carriage heavily loaded with luggage has passed out during the last hour."

The inspector laughed. "I saw the wheel-tracks in the light of the gate-lamp, but where does the luggage come in?"

"You may have observed the same wheel-tracks going the other way. But the outward-bound ones were very much deeper--so much so that we can say for a certainty that there was a very considerable weight on the carriage."

"You get a trifle beyond me there," said the inspector, shrugging his shoulder. "It will not be an easy door to force, but we will try if we cannot make some one hear us."

He hammered loudly at the knocker and pulled at the bell, but without any success. Holmes had slipped away, but he came back in a few minutes.

"I have a window open," said he.

"It is a mercy that you are on the side of the force, and not against it, Mr. Holmes," remarked the inspector, as he noted the clever way in which my friend had forced back the catch. "Well, I think that under the circumstances we may enter without an invitation."

One after the other we made our way into a large apartment, which was evidently that in which Mr. Melas had found himself. The inspector had lit his lantern, and by its light we could see the two doors, the curtain, the lamp, and the suit of Japanese mail as he had described them. On the table lay two glasses, and empty brandy-bottle, and the remains of a meal.

"What is that?" asked Holmes, suddenly.

We all stood still and listened. A low moaning sound was coming from somewhere over our heads. Holmes rushed to the door and out into the hall. The dismal noise came from upstairs. He dashed up, the inspector and I at his heels, while his brother Mycroft followed as quickly as his great bulk would permit.

Three doors faced up upon the second floor, and it was from the central of these that the sinister sounds were issuing, sinking sometimes into a dull mumble and rising again into a shrill whine. It was locked, but the key had been left on the outside. Holmes flung open the door and rushed in, but he was out again in an instant, with his hand to his throat."

"It's charcoal," he cried. "Give it time. It will clear."

Peering in, we could see that the only light in the room came from a dull blue flame which flickered from a small brass tripod in the centre. It threw a livid, unnatural circle upon the floor, while in the shadows beyond we saw the vague loom of two figures which crouched against the wall. From the open door there reeked a horrible poisonous exhalation which set us gasping and coughing. Holmes rushed to the top of the stairs to draw in the fresh air, and then, dashing into the room, he threw up the window and hurled the brazen tripod out into the garden.

"We can enter in a minute," he gasped, darting out again. "Where is a candle? I doubt if we could strike a match in that atmosphere. Hold the light at the door and we shall get them out, Mycroft, now!"

With a rush we got to the poisoned men and dragged them out into the well-lit hall. Both of them were blue-lipped and insensible, with swollen, congested faces and protruding eyes. Indeed, so distorted were their features that, save for his black beard and stout figure, we might have failed to recognise in one of them the Greek interpreter who had parted from us only a few hours before at the Diogenes Club. His hands and feet were securely strapped together, and he bore over one eye the marks of a violent blow. The other, who was secured in a similar fashion, was a tall man in the last stage of emaciation, with several strips of sticking-plaster arranged in a grotesque pattern over his face. He had ceased to moan as we laid him down, and a glance showed me that for him at least our aid had come too late. Mr. Melas, however, still lived, and in less than an hour, with the aid of ammonia and brandy I had the satisfaction of seeing him open his eyes, and of knowing that my hand had drawn him back from that dark valley in which all paths meet.

It was a simple story which he had to tell, and one which did but confirm our own deductions. His visitor, on entering his rooms, had drawn a life-preserver from his sleeve, and had so impressed him with the fear of instant and inevitable death that he had kidnapped him for the second time. Indeed, it was almost mesmeric, the effect which this giggling ruffian had produced upon the unfortunate linguist, for he could not speak of him save with trembling hands and a blanched cheek. He had been taken swiftly to Beckenham, and had acted as interpreter in a second interview, even more dramatic than the first, in which the two Englishmen had menaced their prisoner with instant death if he did not comply with their demands. Finally, finding him proof against every threat, they had hurled him back into his prison, and after reproaching Melas with his treachery, which appeared from the newspaper advertisement, they had stunned him with a blow from a stick, and he remembered nothing more until he found us bending over him.

And this was the singular case of the Grecian Interpreter, the explanation of which is still involved in some mystery. We were able to find out, by communicating with the gentleman who had answered the advertisement, that the unfortunate young lady came of a wealthy Grecian family, and that she had been on a visit to some friends in England. While there she had met a young man named Harold Latimer, who had acquired an ascendancy over her and had eventually persuaded her to fly with him. Her friends, shocked at the event, had contented themselves with informing her brother at Athens, and had then washed their hands of the matter. The brother, on his arrival in England, had imprudently placed himself in the power of Latimer and of his associate, whose name was Wilson Kemp--that through his ignorance of the language he was helpless in their hands, had kept him a prisoner, and had endeavoured by cruelty and starvation to make him sign away his own and his sister's property. They had kept him in the house without the girl's knowledge, and the plaster over the face had been for the purpose of making recognition difficult in case she should ever catch a glimpse of him. Her feminine perception, however, had instantly seen through the disguise when, on the occasion of the interpreter's visit, she had seen him for the first time. The poor girl, however, was herself a prisoner, for there was no one about the house except the man who acted as coachman, and his wife, both of whom were tools of the conspirators. Finding that their secret was out, and that their prisoner was not to be coerced, the two villains with the girl had fled away at a few hours' notice from the furnished house which they had hired, having first, as they thought, taken vengeance both upon the man who had defied and the one who had betrayed them.

Months afterwards a curious newspaper cutting reached us from Buda-Pesth. It told how two Englishmen who had been travelling with a woman had met with a tragic end. They had each been stabbed, it seems, and the Hungarian police were of opinion that they had quarrelled and had inflicted mortal injuries upon each other. Holmes, however, is, I fancy, of a different way of thinking, and holds to this day that, if one could find the Grecian girl, one might learn how the wrongs of herself and her brother came to be avenged.

Tłumacz grecki.

Podczas mojej długiej i zażyłej przyjaźni z Mr. Sherlockiem Holmesem nie słyszałem nigdy, żeby on kiedy wspominał o swoich krewnych, a prawie nigdy nie mówił o swem dawniejszem życiu. Milczenie jego o tem powiększyło wrażenie czegoś nieludzkiego, jakie on wywarł na mnie, tak, że poczynałem uważać go czasem za jakiś odosobiony fenomen, za mądrość, pozbawioną czucia, za człowieka, któremu brak było sympatyi dla ludzi o tyle, o ile wyróżniał się z pośród nich inteligencyą. Wstręt do kobiet i niechęć do zawierania nowych przyjaźni, cechowały jego charakter nieulegający wzruszeniom, ale nie więcej, jak kompletny zanik wszelkich stosunków z własną rodziną. Przyszedłem już do przekonania, że był on sierotą, niemającym żadnych krewnych, którzyby jeszcze żyli, aż jednego dnia zaczął on, ku mej wielkiej niespodziance, mówić o swoim bracie.

Było to po herbacie, jednego wieczoru letniego. Rozmowa, która wlekła się bezładnie i dorywczo, przechodząc od klubów golfowych do przyczyn zboczenia ekliptyki, zeszła w końcu na kwestyę atawizmu i dziedzicznych zdolności. Przedmiotem dyskusyi była kwestya, jak daleko sięga na potomstwo specyalna jakaś zdolność w pewnym osobniku, i o ile ona zależy od wczesnego ćwiczenia.

— Naprzykład co się ciebie tyczy, mówiłem, z tego wszystkiego, coś opowiadał, zdaje mi się być widocznem, że twoja zdolność do obserwacji i specyalna łatwość w dedukcji, zależą od twego własnego systematycznego ćwiczenia.

— W pewnej mierze, odparł zamyślony. Moi przodkowie byli szlachtą wiejską i wiedli taki żywot, jaki jest właściwy ich klasie. Ale nie mniej zawód mój leży w moich żyłach i może pochodzi od babki, która była siostrą Verneta, malarza francuskiego. Zdolności artystyczne odziedziczone z krwią, mogą się wcielać w najdziwniejsze kształty.

— Ale skąd wiesz, że to jest dziedziczne?

— Ponieważ brat mój, Myeroft posiada to w wyższym stopniu, niż ja.

Było to rzeczywiście nowością dla mnie. Jeżeli istniał człowiek o takich osobliwych zdolnościach w Anglii, to jak to było możliwem, żeby ani policya, ani publiczność o nim nie wiedziała. W zadanem pytaniu zauważyłem, że to skromność kazała memu przyjacielowi uznać wyższość swego brata. Holmes roześmiał się na to przypuszczenie.

— Kochany Watsonie, mówił, nie mogę się zgodzić z tymi, co zaliczają skromność do cnót. Logik powinien widzieć wszystkie rzeczy ściśle takiemi, jakiemi są, a niedocenianie siebie samego jest takiem odstąpieniem od prawdy, jak przecenianie zdolności drugiego. Kiedy więc mówię, że Myeroft posiada lepsze zdolności obserwacyjne, niż ja, to mówię tylko ścisłą prawdę.

— Czy on młodszy od ciebie?

— Starszy odemnie o 7 lat.

— Jak to możliwe, że nikt go nie zna?

— O! Jest on bardzo dobrze znany w swoim kółku.

— Gdzież więc?

— No! Naprzykład w klubie Dyogenesa.

— Nigdy nie słyszałem o takiem towarzystwie — a moja twarz musiała to tak wyrażać, że Holmes wydobył swój zegarek i rzekł:

— Klub Dyogenesa jest najdziwaczniejszym klubem w Londynie, a Myeroft najosobliwszym człowiekiem. Bywa on tam zawsze od kwadrans na piątą do siódmej i 40 minut. Teraz jest szósta, jeżeli więc wybierzesz się na przechadzkę w ten cudny wieczór, to z przyjemnością zapoznam cię z temi dwoma osobliwościami.

W pięć minut potem byliśmy na ulicy i szliśmy w kierunku Cyrku Regenta.

— Dziwisz się, mówił mój przyjaciel, jak to się dzieje, że Myeroft nie używa swych zdolności w zawodzie detektywa? On nie nadaje się do tego.

— Ale, zdaje mi się, mówiłeś...

— Powiedziałem, że on przewyższa mnie w obserwacyi i dedukcyi. Gdyby sztuka śledcza...

poczynała się i kończyła na rozumowaniu w fotelu, mój brat byłby największym agentem kryminalnym, jaki kiedy żył. Ale on nie ma ambicyi i energii. Jemu się nawet nie chce sprawdzić swoich własnych nawiązań i wolałby raczej źle rozstrzygnąć sprawę, niż podjąć się trudu, aby się poprawić. Kilka razy przedkładałem mu różne problemy i otrzymywałem rozwiązania, które, jak się potem okazało, były prawdziwe. A mimo to jest on zupełnie niezdolny, by w praktyce wyszukiwać szczegóły, co musi się zrobić, zanim sprawę można przedłożyć sędziemu lub sądowi przysięgłych.

— Więc to nie jest jego zawód?

— Wcale nie. To, co dla mnie jest środkiem do życia, jest dla niego tylko przedmiotem dyletantyzmu. Zajmuje on poważne stanowisko, bo jest kontrolorem w pewnym departamencie ministeryum. Myeroft mieszka na Pall-Mall i idzie do White-Hall codzień rano i wraca wieczorem. Z roku na rok nie ma innego zajęcia i nigdzie go nie widać, tylko w klubie Dyogenesa, który znajduje się właśnie naprzeciw jego mieszkania.

— Nie mogę przypomnieć sobie tej nazwy.

— Bardzo możliwe. Jest wielu ludzi w Londynie, wiesz, z których jedni z nieśmiałości, inni z mizantropii nie życzą sobie towarzystwa swoich bliźnich. Ale nie mają oni wstrętu do wygodnych foteli i najświeższych czasopism. Więc dla ich wygody założono Klub Dyogenesa, który obecnie skupia najbardziej nietowarzyskie i najbardziej nienadające się do klubu jednostki. Żadnemu członkowi nie wolno zwracać najmniejszej uwagi na drugiego. Z wyjątkiem pokoju gościnnego rozmowa jest niedozwolona, tylko w pewnych okolicznościach, a trzy przekroczenia, doniesione komitetowi, powodują wykluczenie rozmawiającego. Mój brat był jednym z założycieli, a i ja przyszedłem do przekonania, że panuje tam bardzo przyjemna atmosfera.

W rozmowie doszliśmy na Pall-Mall i szliśmy wzdłuż tej ulicy od końca St. James. Sherlock Holmes zatrzymał się przy jednej bramie w pewnej odległości od Carlton i ostrzegając mnie, abym się nie odzywał, wprowadził mnie do sieni. Przez taflę szklaną spostrzegłem wielki, zbytkownie urządzony pokój, w którym znaczna liczba mężczyzn siedziała w koło, każdy na swojem własnem miejscu, i czytała gazety. Holmes zaprowadził mnie do małego pokoju, który wychodził na Pall-Mall, a potem pozostawiwszy mnie na chwilę, powrócił z jakimś mężczyzną, o którym wiedziałem, że mógł to być tylko jego brat.

Myeroft Holmes był większym i tęższym mężczyzną, niż Sherlock. Był dosyć otyły, ale twarz jego jakkolwiek pełna, zachowała ten ostry wyraz, który tak charakteryzował jego brata. Oczy, które miały specyalną barwę siwą, zdawały się posiadać zawsze ten introspektywny wygląd, który wtedy tylko zauważałem u Sherlocka, kiedy on wytężał wszystkie swoje siły.

— Przyjemnie mi, że pana spotykam, sir, przemówił, wyciągając swą rękę szeroką i płaską, jak pieczęć. Słyszałem często od Sherlocka o panu, odkąd pan został jego biografem. Swoją drogą Sherlocku, spodziewałem się ciebie widzieć w ostatnim tygodniu w nadziei, że będziesz się mnie radził w sprawie Maner-House. Myślałem, żeś się trochę w swoich głębokich przypuszczeniach pomylił?

— Nie, rozwiązałem tę sprawę, odpowiedział mój przyjaciel z uśmiechem.

— Czy był to Adams?

— Tak, to był Adams.

— Pewny byłem tego od początku. — Usiedli obaj razem we wielkiem oknie klubowem. — Dla człowieka, który pragnie studyować rodzaj ludzki, jest tu najdogodniejsza sposobność, zauważył Myeroft. Popatrz na te wspaniałe typy! Spójrz naprzykład na tych dwu ludzi, którzy się zbliżają do nas.

— Markier od bilardu i ten drugi?

— Tak. Co sądzisz o tym drugim?

Dwaj ludzie zatrzymali się naprzeciw okna. Kilka znaków od kredy na kieszeni od kamizelki

były jedynymi śladami bilardu, jakie mogłem zauważyć na jednym z nich. Drugi był bardzo małym i opalonym mężczyzną, z kapeluszem na bakier i kilku pakunkami pod pachą.
— Spostrzegam, że to stary żołnierz, rzekł Sherlock.
— I bardzo niedawno ustąpił ze służby, zauważył brat.
— Widzę, że służył w Indyach.
— Jako podoficer.
— Zdaje mi się w artyleryi królewskiej, powiedział Sherlock.
— I wdowiec.
— Ale ma dziecko.
— Dzieci, mój chłopcze, dzieci.
— Proszę cię, odezwałem się śmiejąc, to trochę zadużo.
— Naprawdę, odpowiedział Holmes, nie jest trudno oznaczyć, że człowiek tak ubrany, z rozkazującą miną i spaloną od słońca skórą, jest czemś więcej jak prywatnym człowiekiem i niedawno wrócił z Indyi.
— A to że niedawno opuścił służbę, widać z tego, że nosi jeszcze buty komiśne, jak się to one nazywają, zauważył Myeroft.
— Niema kawalerżyskiego chodu, pomimo, że nosił kapelusz na bakier, jak to wskazuje jaśniejszy kolor skóry po tej stronie jego czoła. Postać jego przemawia przeciw temu, żeby był saperem. Służył więc w artyleryi. A dalej, na przykład, zupełna jego żałoba świadczy o tem, że stracił kogoś bardzo drogiego. Fakt, że robi sam zakupy, wygląda na to, jakby to była jego żona. Ma grzechotkę, co wskazuje na to, że jedno z dzieci jest bardzo małe. Żona zapewne umarła w połogu. A fakt, że pod pachą trzyma książkę z obrazkami, mówi, że jest i drugie dziecko, o którem ma pamiętać.
Zacząłem pojmować, co mój przyjaciel rozumiał przez to, kiedy mówił, że brat jego posiada bystrzejsze zdolności, niż on sam. Rzucił na mnie okiem i uśmiechnął się... Myeroft zażył tabaki z tabakierki szyldkretowej i strzepnął rozsypany proszek ze surduta czerwoną jedwabną chustką do nosa.
— Mimochodem mówiąc, Sherlocku, powiedział, dano mi pod rozwagę bardzo osobliwy problem, coś zupełnie w twoim guście. Ale ja nie mam w istocie energii, aby go śledzić, chyba, że bardzo pobieżnie, ale dało mi to podstawę do bardzo zajmujących dociekań. Jeżeli będziesz tak łaskaw posłuchać.
— Kochany Myerofcie, będzie to dla mnie przyjemnością.
Brat jego napisał kilka wierszy na kartce z notesu i zadzwoniwszy oddał ją lokajowi.
— Poprosiłem Mr. Melasa, aby przyszedł, rzekł. Mieszka on nademną i znam go trochę, co go też skłoniło do tego, że udał się do mnie ze swoim kłopotem. Mr. Melas jest z pochodzenia Grekiem i jest sławnym lingwistą. Zarabia na życie częścią jako tłumacz w sądach, częścią jako przewodnik dla podróżnych, którzy zajeżdżają do hotelów na Northumberland Avenue. Pozwolę mu samemu opowiedzieć swoją bardzo ciekawą przygodę.
W kilka minut później przybył do nas tęgi, nizki człowiek, którego oliwkowa cera i czarne jak węgiel włosy, świadczyły o południowem pochodzeniu, chociaż mówił jak wykształcony Anglik. Gwałtownie uścisnął rękę Sherlocka i jego czarne oczy zaiskrzyły się radością, kiedy się dowiedział, że specyalista ten pragnął usłyszeć jego historyę.
— Nie myślę, żeby mi policya wierzyła, skarżył się, na honor nie myślę. Właśnie dlatego, że oni nic o tem przedtem nie słyszeli, są przekonani, że taka rzecz nie może się wydarzyć. Ale wiem, że nigdy nie będę spokojny, aż się nie dowiem, co się stało z tym biednym człowiekiem z przylepionym plastrem na twarzy.
— Słucham z całą uwagą, wtrącił Sherlock Holmes.
— Stało się to we środę wieczór, mówił Mr. Melas, nie, to było w poniedziałek w nocy — dwa tylko dni temu, rozumie pan. Ja jestem tłumaczem, jak to może panu mój sąsiad powiedział. Znam wszystkie języki, albo prawie wszystkie, ale ponieważ z urodzenia jestem

Grekiem i mam greckie nazwisko, więc tylko z tym jednym językiem mam głównie do czynienia. Przez wiele lat byłem głównym tłumaczem greckim w Londynie, a moje imię jest bardzo dobrze znane w hotelach. Bardzo często się trafia, że używają mnie o późnej godzinie cudzoziemcy, którzy popadną w jakieś kłopoty, albo podróżni, którzy przyjeżdżają późno i życzą sobie moich usług. Nie było więc dla mnie niespodzianką, kiedy Mr. Latimer, młody człowiek, ubrany bardzo elegancko, przybył do mego mieszkania i prosił mnie, abym pojechał z nim dorożką, która czekała przed drzwiami. Mówił on, że do niego przyszedł w interesie jakiś przyjaciel, Grek, a ponieważ on zna tylko swój ojczysty język, więc pomoc tłumacza jest niezbędną. Dał mi też do zrozumienia, że dom znajduje się w pewnej odległości, w Kensington i jakem to widział, z wielkim pospiechem wsadził mnie do dorożki, kiedy wyszedł na ulicę.

Mówię do dorożki, ale szybko zacząłem powątpiewać o tem, co to był za powóz, w którym się znalazłem. Był on z pewnością obszerniejszy, niż pospolita jednokonka londyńska, a obicie jakkolwiek zużyte, było z kosztownej materyi. Mr. Latimer usiadł sobie naprzeciw mnie i pojechaliśmy przez Charing Cross i na Shaftesbury Avenue. Wyjechaliśmy na Oxford Street i już odważyłem się zrobić uwagę, że było to kołowanie dokoła Kensington, gdy słowa moje powstrzymało nadzwyczajne zachowanie się mego towarzysza.

Wyjął on z kieszeni okropnie wyglądający kastet (cassetéte) obciążony ołowiem, i machnął nim kilka razy w tył i naprzód, jakby chciał wypróbować jego ciężar i siłę. Potem położył go obok siebie na siedzeniu, nie mówiąc ani słowa. Zrobiwszy to, zamknął okienka po obu stronach, a ja spostrzegłem ze zdziwieniem, że były one pokryte papierem, jakby na to, by mi przeszkodzić w patrzeniu przez nie.

— Przykro mi, żem panu zasłonił widok, Mr. Melas, odezwał się. Sprawa jest tego rodzaju, że nie jest mi na rękę, żebyś pan widział miejsca, do którego się udajemy. Mogłoby być dla mnie niedogodnem, gdybyś pan mógł odnaleźć tę drogę napowrót.

Jak pan sobie może wyobrazić, byłem prawie porażony taką mową. Towarzysz mój był silnym, młodym człowiekiem o potężnych ramionach i pominąwszy nawet broń, nie miałem najmniejszej szansy do walki z nim.

— To jest bardzo dziwne postępowanie, Mr. Latimer, wyjąkałem. Pan musisz wiedzieć, że to, co pan czynisz, jest całkiem nieprawne.

— Bez wątpienia, przekracza to nieco granice wolności, odpowiedział, ale my to zrobimy bez pana. Jednak muszę pana ostrzedz, Mr. Melas, jeżeli pan tylko raz będzie usiłował krzyknąć, lub uczynić coś, co jest wbrew moim planom, to będzie pan widział, że sprawa weźmie groźny obrót. Proszę pamiętać, żo nikt nie wie, gdzie się pan znajduje, i czy to w tym powozie, czy w moim domu, zawsze pan jesteś w mojej mocy.

Słowa jego brzmiały spokojnie, ale mówił je jakoś tak chrapliwie, że były groźne. Siedziałem w milczeniu, dziwiąc się, jaki mógł być u dyabła powód porwania mnie w tak oryginalny sposób. Cokolwiek by to było, wiedziałem dobrze, że nie miałem się co opierać i że mogłem tylko czekać, aby zobaczyć, co się stanie.

Prawie przez dwie godziny jechaliśmy, a ja nie miałem najmniejszego pojęcia, dokąd zmierzamy. Czasem turkot kół po kamieniach mówił mi, że jedziemy po bruku, a innym razem jazda gładka i cicha zdradzała ulicę asfaltowaną, lecz oprócz tych różnych odgłosów nie było niczego zupełnie, coby mogło mi dopomódz do odgadnięcia miejsca, gdzieśmy się znajdowali. Papier na obu szybach nie przepuszczał światła, a niebieska firanka zapuszczona była na przedniem oknie. Kwadrans na ósmą opuściliśmy Pall-Mall, a zegarek wskazywał mi za 10 minut dziewiątą, gdyśmy się ostatecznie zatrzymali. Towarzysz mój spuścił szybę, a ja ujrzałem nizką sklepioną bramę wjazdową z lampą palącą się u góry. Gdym wysiadł z powozu, brama otworzyła się i znalazłem się wewnątrz domu, zauważywszy wchodząc do środka jakieś drzewa i łąkę po obu stronach. Nie mógłbym oznaczyć z wszelką dokładnością, czy to była prywatna posiadłość, czy też wieś.

Wewnątrz była kolorowa lampa gazowa, ale paliła się tak ciemno, że mało co mogłem widzieć, tylko to, że sień miała pewna wielkość i że była obwieszona obrazami. W ciemnem świetle mogłem zobaczyć, że osoba która otworzyła drzwi, była małym mężczyzną, w średnim wieku, nędznie wyglądającym i trochę przygarbionym. Kiedy się zwrócił ku nam, poznałem po odblasku światła, że nosił okulary.

— Czy to jest Mr. Melas, Haraldzie? zapytał.

— Tak.

— Wybornie! wybornie! Spodziewam się, że pan nie będziesz się gniewał, Mr. Melas, ale nie mogliśmy się obejść bez pana. Jeżeli pan grzecznie z nami postąpisz, to nie pożałujesz tego, ale jeżeli pan spróbujesz jakich sztuczek, to niech pana Bóg ma w swojej opiece.

Mówił on głosem urywanym i nerwowym, chichocząc i napełnił mnie większą obawa niż tamten człowiek.

— Czego panowie życzycie sobie odemnie? zapytałem.

— Abyś pan zadał kilka tylko pytań gentlemanowi greckiemu, który nas odwiedził, i abyś pan dał nam odpowiedzi. Ale niech pan nie mówi więcej, niż się panu poleci, bo — tu znowu powrócił ten nerwowy chichot — bo lepiej żebyś pan wcale nie przyszedł na świat.

Mówiąc to, otworzył drzwi i wprowadził mnie do pokoju, który zdaje się był bogato umeblowanym, ale znowu oświetlała go tylko jedna lampa na pół skręcona. Pokój pewnie był wielki i wytwornie umeblowany, jakem się przekonał, przechodząc przez dywan. Spostrzegłem fotele aksamitne, wysoki biały marmurowy kominek, a po jednej jego stronie coś w rodzaju zbroi japońskiej. Fotel stał tuż pod lampą, a stary mężczyzna wskazał mi go, abym na nim usiadł. Młodszy nas opuścił, ale nagle powrócił innemi drzwiami, wiodąc ze sobą odzianego w jakiś wolny szlafrok mężczyznę, który powoli postępował ku nam. Kiedy wszedł w krąg światła przyćmionego, które pozwalało mi widzieć go wyraźniej, wygląd jego przeraził mnie. Był on śmiertelnie blady i strasznie wychudły, a wytrzeszczone jego oczy błyszczały, jak u człowieka, którego duch jest silniejszy niż ciało. Ale co mnie bardziej przeraziło, niż te oznaki słabości, to to, że twarz jego była dziwacznie pooblepiana plastrami, a jeden wielki kawałek umieszczony był na ustach.

— Masz tabliczkę, Haroldzie? zawołał starszy, gdy ta dziwna postać upadła raczej niż usiadła na fotel. Czy ręce jego są wolne? Teraz daj mu ołówek. Pan masz zadawać pytania, Mr. Melas, a on będzie pisał odpowiedzi. Zapytaj się go przedewszystkiem, czy zdecydował się podpisać papiery.

Oczy człowieka tego zabłysnęły ogniem.

— „Nigdy“, napisał po grecku na tabliczce.

— Pod żadnym warunkiem? zapytałem na rozkaz naszego tyrana.

— Tylko wtedy, gdy da jej ślub w mojej obecności kapłan grecki, którego znam.

Stary zachichotał się zjadliwie.

— Wiesz, co ciebie czeka?

— Nie dbam wcale o siebie.

Tego rodzaju były pytania i odpowiedzi, które tworzyły naszą dziwną na pół mówioną, na pół pisaną rozmowę. Ciągle musiałem go pytać, czy zgodzi się i podpisze dokument. Ciągle otrzymywałem tę samą odmowną odpowiedź. Lecz szybko wpadłem na szczęśliwą myśl. Zacząłem od siebie dodawać małe zdanie do każdego pytania, z początku niewinne, aby się przekonać, czy kto z moich towarzyszy się na tem połapie, a gdy zobaczyłem, że oni nie zwrócili na to uwagi, zapuściłem się w niebezpieczniejszą grę. Rozmowa nasza toczyła się ten sposób:

— Uporem tym nic dobrego nie zrobisz. Kto pan jesteś?

— Nie troszczę się o to. Cudzoziemiec w Londynie.

— Skutki weźmiesz na siebie. Jak długo pan tu przebywasz?

— Niech tak będzie. Od trzech tygodni.

— Majątek nie będzie nigdy twoim. Co panu jest?
— Nie pójdzie w ręce łotrów. Oni mnie morzą głodem.
— Pójdziesz wolno, jeżeli podpiszesz. Jak się pan nazywasz?
— Nie podpiszę nigdy. Kratides.
— Zobaczysz ją, jeżeli podpiszesz. Skąd pan jesteś?
— Więc nigdy jej nie zobaczę. Z Aten.

Jeszcze 5 minut, Mr. Holmes, a wyciągnąłbym całą tajemnicę popod ich nosem. Najbliższe moje pytanie wyjaśniłoby może całą sprawę, gdy w tej chwili drzwi się otworzyły i jakaś kobieta weszła do pokoju. Nie mogłem widzieć jej dość wyraźnie i nie wiem nic więcej, jak to, że była wysoka, powabna, o czarnych włosach i ubrana w jakąś powłóczystą białą suknię.

— Haroldzie! przemówiła po angielsku obcym akcentem. Nie mogłam dłużej pozostać. Tam tak samotnie, że tylko — o! mój Boże! to jest Paweł!

Te ostatnie słowa wypowiedziała po grecku i w tej samej chwili więzień konwulsyjnym wysiłkiem zdarł plaster z ust i wykrzyknąwszy „Zofia! Zofia!“ rzucił się w objęcia kobiety. Uścisk ich trwał tylko chwilę, bo młodszy pochwycił kobietę i wypchnął ją z pokoju, podczas gdy starszy łatwo pokonał swą wynędzniała ofiarę i wywlókł ją drugiemi drzwiami. Przez chwilę zostałem sam w pokoju i skoczyłem na nogi, zamierzając przecież dowiedzieć się, co to był za dom, w którym się znalazłem. Na szczęście nie przedsięwziąłem żadnego kroku, bo podniósłszy oczy, zobaczyłem, jak stary stał na kurytarzu, utkwiwszy wzrok we mnie.

— To wystarczy, Mr. Melas, odezwał się. widzi pan, żeśmy przypuścili pana do zaufania w sprawie ściśle prywatnej. Nie trudzilibyśmy pana, gdyby nasz przyjaciel, który mówi po giecku i który zaczął te negocyacye, nie był zmuszony powrócić na wschód. Koniecznem więc było dla nas znaleźć kogoś, któryby zajął jego miejsce i mieliśmy przyjemność przekonać się o pańskich zdolnościach.

Ukłoniłem się.

— Oto pięć suwerenów, rzekł przystępując do mnie, spodziewam się, że to będzie dostateczną nagrodą. Ale pamiętaj pan, dodał, dotykając lekko mojej piersi i chichocząc się, jeżeli pan wspomnisz o tem jakiej istocie ludzkiej — uważaj — jednej istocie ludzkiej — to niech się Bóg nad tobą zlituje.

Nie mogę panu wypowiedzieć wstrętu i zgrozy, jaką mnie ten niepokaźny człowiek napełnił. Mogłem go teraz lepiej widzieć, bo światło lampy padało na niego. Twarz miał wychudłą i pożółkłą, a mała szpiczasta broda, była nastrzępiona i źle utrzymana. Wysuwał twarz naprzód, gdy mówił, a wargi i powieki ustawicznie drgały jak u człowieka, który cierpi na taniec św. Wita. Przyszedłem do przekonania, że ten dziwny urywany chichot był także symptomem jego choroby nerwowej. Ale groźny jego wygląd podnosiły oczy stalowo-szare, skrzące się lodowato, a nienawiść i nieubłagane okrucieństwo kryło się w ich głębiach.

— Dowdeimy się, jeżeli pan o tem coś powiesz, powiedział. Mamy już sposób poinformowania się. A teraz czeka na pana powóz, a mój przyjaciel odwiezie pana.

Popędziłem przez sień i wpadłem do powozu, zauważywszy znowu przy wyjściu drzewa jakieś i ogród. Mr. Latimer postępował za mną krok w krok i zajął naprzeciw mnie miejsce, nie mówiąc ani słowa. W milczeniu przejechaliśmy pewną przestrzeń zpodniesionemi oknami, aż w końcu, tuż po północy powóz stanął nagle.

— Pan zechce tu wysiąść, Mr. Melas, rzekł mój towarzysz. Przykro mi, że pana zostawiam tak daleko od pańskiego mieszkania, ale niema innego wyboru. Wszelka próba postępowania za powozem może się skończyć tylko nieszczęściem dla pana.

Podczas gdy mówił, otworzył drzwiczki, a ja ledwie miałem czas wyskoczyć z powozu, gdy stangret zaciął konie i powóz odjechał z turkotem. Obejrzałem się dokoła zdumiony. Znajdowałem się na jakimś wygonie zarosłym wrzosem, tu i ówdzie rysowały się ciemne kształty krzaków jałowcowych. Gdzieś daleko ciągnął się szereg domów, ze światłami tu i ówdzie na górze. Z drugiej strony widziałem czerwone lampy sygnałowe kolei żelaznej.

Powóz, który mnie przywiózł, znikł już z oczu. Stałem, oglądając się dokoła i dziwując się, gdzie też mogłem się znajdować, gdy w ciemności spostrzegłem kogoś zbliżającego się ku mnie. Gdy przyszedł do mnie, poznałem, że to był portyer kolejowy.
— Może mi pan powiedzieć, co to za okolica? spytałem.
— Waudsworth Comman, odpowiedział.
— Czy mogę wsiąść na pociąg do miasta?
— Jeżeli pan pójdzie tak z milę do Glapham Junetion, mówił, to trafi pan właśnie na ostatni pociąg do Wiktoryi.
Taki był koniec mojej przygody, Mr. Holmes. Nie wiem tego gdzie byłem, ani z kim rozmawiałem, oprócz tego, com panu opowiedział. Ale wiem, że tam odgrywa się jakaś haniebna sprawka i pragnę pomódz temu nieszczęśliwemu, jeżeli tylko mogę. Na drugi dzień rano opowiedziałem całą historyę Mr. Mycroftowi Holmesowi, a potem policyi.
Siedzieliśmy wszyscy przez pewien czas w milczeniu po wysłuchaniu tego dziwnego opowiadania. Następnie Sherlock spojrzał na swego brata.
— Zrobiłeś jakie kroki? zapytał.
Myeroft pochwycił „Daily News“, który leżał na bocznym stole.
„Kto poda jaką wiadomość o miejscu, gdzie się znajduje grecki gentleman nazwiskiem Paweł Kratides z Aten, który nie umie po angielsku, będzie wynagrodzony. Podobna nagrodę otrzyma ten, kto doniesie coś o Greczynce, której imię jest Zofia. X 2473.“ Bvło to we wszystkich codziennych gazetach. Odpowiedzi nie dano.
— A w greckiej ambasadzie?
— Dowiadywałem się. Nic nie wiedzą.
— Więc trzeba posłać telegram do szefa policyi ateńskiej. Sherlock posiada energię całej rodziny, rzekł Myeroft zwracajac się ku mnie. Dobrze, ostatecznie ty bierzesz te sprawę na siebie i doniesiesz mi, jeżeli ci się co uda!
— Pewnie, odpowiedział mój przyjaciel podnosząc się z krzesło. Powiem tobie i Mr Melasowi także. Swoją drogą, Mr. Melas, ja na miejscu pana, miałbym się na baczności bo oni mogą się dowiedzieć przez to ogłoszenie, żeś pan ich wydał.
Kiedyśmy wracali razem do domu, Holmes wstąpił do urzędu telegraficznego i wysłał kilka telegramów.
— Widzisz, Watsonie, zauważył, nasz wieczór wcale nie był stracony. Kilka moich najbardziej interesujących spraw przyszło do mnie właśnie tą drogą, przez Mycrofta. Problem, o jakim właśnie dowiedzieliśmy się, chociaż pozwala tylko na jedno przypuszczenie, ma przecież charakterystyczne cechy.
— Masz nadzieję rozwiązać go?
— Tak, byłoby rzeczywiście osobliwą rzeczą, żebyśmy wiedząc tyle, zbłądzili w odkryciu reszty. Musiałeś pewnie ułożyć sobie jakąś teoryę, która ci tłumaczy fakty, o jakich słyszeliśmy.
— Tak, mniej więcej.
— Jakaż jest więc twoja teorya?
— Zdaje mi się, że prawdopodobnie ta dziewczyna grecka została uprowadzona przez młodego Anglika, nazwiskiem Harold Latimer.
— Skąd uprowadzona?
— Może z Aten.
Sherlock Holmes potrząsnął głową.
— Ten młody człowiek nie umie ani słowa po grecku. Ta dama mówi po angielsku zupełnie dobrze. Stąd wniosek, że była w Anglii przez pewien czas, ale on nie był w Grecyi.
— Możemy więc przypuścić, że ona przybyła w odwiedziny do Anglii i że ten Harold namówił ją do ucieczki ze sobą.
— To jest bardziej prawdopodobne.

— Dalej brat — bo także musi zachodzić pokrewieństwo między nimi — przybył z Grecyi, aby interweniować. Nieroztropnie dostał się w ręce tego młodego i starszego jego wspólnika. Oni go pochwycili i gwałtem chcą nakłonić go do podpisania jakichś papierów, oddających im majątek dziewczyny, którym on może zarządza. On wzbrania się tego uczynić. Aby z nim pertraktować, sprowadzili tłumacza i wybrali tego pana Melasa, używszy przedtem kogo innego. Dziewczynie nie powiedziano nic o przybyciu brata i tylko przypadkiem dowiedziała się o tem.

— Wspaniale, Watsonie, krzyknął Holmes. W istocie myślę, że ty nie jesteś tak dalekim od prawdy. Widzisz, że trzymamy wszystkie karty w ręku i możemy się tylko obawiać jakiegoś nagłego gwałtu z ich strony. Jeżeli tylko dadzą nam czas, to musimy ich schwycić.

— Ale jak można znaleźć miejsce, gdzie ten dom się znajduje. Jeżeli nasz domysł jest prawdziwy, a nazwisko dziewczęcia jest albo było Zofia Kratides, to wyśledzenie jej nie powinno być trudnem. Musi to być naszem głównem zadaniem, bo co do brata, to nikt go nie zna. Widocznem jest, że upłynęło trochę czasu, odkąd Harold nawiązał taki stosunek z dziewczyną, a w każdym razie kilka tygodni, zanim brat z Grecyi miał czas się o tem dowiedzieć i tutaj przybyć. Jeżeli oni przebywali w tem samem miejscu przez ten czas, to prawdopodobnie otrzymamy jakąś odpowiedź na ogłoszenie Mycrofta.

Podczas rozmowy przyszliśmy do naszego mieszkania na Baker Street. Holmes pierwszy wszedł na schody, a kiedy otworzył drzwi naszego pokoju, zadziwił się taką niespodzianką. Zaglądając przez ramie, zdumiałem się również. Brat jego Myeroft siedział we fotelu paląc.

— Wejdź, Sherlocku! Wejdź pan! mówił przymilająco, uśmiechając się na widok naszych min zdziwionych. Nie spodziewałeś się tyle energii po mnie, czy tak, Sherlocku? Ale ta sprawa jakoś, mnie zajmuje.

— Jakeś tu przyszedł?

— Wyminąłem was dorożka.

— Czy sprawa wzięła jakiś inny obrót?

— Mam odpowiedź na moje ogłoszenie.

— Ah!

— Tak, przyszła w kilka minut po waszem odejściu.

— A jaki skutek?

Myeroft Holmes wyjął kawałek papieru.

— Oto ona, rzekł, pisana piórem J na królewskim kremowym papierze, przez człowieka w średnim wieku o słabej budowie ciała. Sir, pisze, w odpowiedzi na pańskie ogłoszenie dzisiejszego dnia, mogę panu donieść, że znam młodą damę, o którą chodzi. Jeżeli pan będzie łaskaw przyjść do mnie, to podam panu niektóre szczegóły jej opłakanej historyi. Mieszka ona obecnie w Myrtles, Beckenham. Oddany panu. J. Davenpert.

— Pisze on z Lower Brixton, powiedział Mycroft Holmes. Jak sądzisz, możebyśmy się teraz udali do niego, Sherlocku, i dowiedzieli się o tych szczegółach.

— Mój drogi Mycrofcie, życie brata jest więcej warte niż historya siostry. Zdaniem mojem powinniśmy wstąpić do Scotland-Yardu po inspektora Gregsona i udać się prosto do Beckenham. Wiemy, że ten człowiek jest narażony na śmierć i każda godzina jest droga.

— Lepiej wziąć po drodze Mr. Melasa, zauważyłem, możemy potrzebować tłumacza.

— Świetnie, powiedział Sherlock Holmes. Poślij chłopca po jednokonkę i wyruszymy natychmiast. Gdy to mówił, otworzył szufladę od stołu i zauważyłem, jak wsunął swój rewolwer do kieszeni. — Tak, odpowiedział na moje spojrzenie, mogę oświadczyć z tego cośmy słyszeli, że mamy do czynienia ze szczególnie niebezpieczną bandą.

Było już prawie ciemno, nim znaleźliśmy się na Pall-Mall w pomieszkaniu Mr. Melasa Właśnie go jakiś jegomość zawezwał i on wyszedł.

— Może mi pani powiedzieć, gdzie poszedł? zapytał Mycroft Holmes.

— Nie wiem, panie, odpowiedziała kobieta która otworzyła nam drzwi. Tylko to wiem, że

wyjechał z jakimś panem w powozie.
— Czy on powiedział swoje nazwisko?
— Nie, panie.
— Czy nie był to wysoki, przystojny młodzieniec o czarnych włosach?
— O nie, panie; był to gentleman w okularach, szczupły na twarzy, ale o bardzo przyjemnych manierach, bo śmiał się przez cały czas, jak mówił.
— Chodźcie-no! zawołał nagle Sherlock Holmes. To zaczyna być poważnem, zauważył, gdyśmy jechali do Scontland-Yardu. — Ludzie ci znowu pochwycili Melasa. On nie ma odwagi, jak to oni dobrze wiedzą, bo przekonali się o tem poprzedniej nocy. Łotr ten potrafił go odrazu steroryzować, jak tylko się z nim zetknął. Bezwątpienia potrzeba im usług jego jako tłumacza, ale potem gotowi go ukarać za to, co w ich oczach jest zdradą.
Mieliśmy tę nadzieję, że jadąc pociągiem, będziemy może w Beckenham równie prędko, lub nawet prędzej niż powóz.
Kiedyśmy jednak przybyli do Scotland-Yardu, upłynęła więcej niż godzina, nim dostaliśmy inspektora Gregsona i nim załatwiliśmy się z formalnościami, które pozwalały nam wejść do domu. Było kwadrans na dziesiątą, zanim przybyliśmy na most Londyński, a minęło pół. kiedy czterech nas wysiadło na dworcu w Beckenham. Zrobiwszy pół mili drogi, stanęliśmy w Myrtles koło wielkiego ciemnego domu, stojącego opodal drogi na własnym gruncie. Tu odesłaliśmy dorożkę i stanęliśmy u celu naszej wyprawy.
— We wszystkich oknach ciemno, zauważył inspektor. Dom zdaje się opuszczony.
— Nasze ptaszki uleciały, a gniazdo puste, powiedział Holmes.
— Dlaczego pan to mówisz?
— Ciężko naładowany rzeczami powóz wyjechał stąd w ostatniej godzinie.
Inspektor roześmiał się.
— Widziałem ślady kół w świetle latarni, ale skąd się wzięły bagaże?
— Może pan zauważyłeś, że te same ślady kół ciągną się jeszcze raz. Ale ślady zewnętrzne są o wiele głębsze, tak, że możemy z pewnością powiedzieć, że w powozie był bardzo znaczny ciężar.
— Pan mnie tu zabawiasz fraszkami, mówił inspektor, wzruszając ramionami. Nie będzie to łatwa rzecz dostać się do środka. Ale spróbujemy, czy nas kto nie usłyszy.
Uderzył głośno młotkiem we drzwi i zadzwonił, ale bez żadnego skutku. Holmes zniknął w tyle, lecz wrócił za kilka minut.
— Otworzyłem okno, powiedział.
— To szczęście, że pan jesteś po stronie prawa, a nie przeciw niemu, Mr. Holmes, zauważył inspektor, gdy spostrzegł, jak sprytnie mój przyjaciel wyłamał zamek. Tak, wobec tego sądzę, że możemy wejść, nie czekając na zaproszenie.
Jeden po drugim powłaziliśmy do wielkiego pokoju, który widocznie był tym, w którym znalazł się Mr. Melas. Inspektor zapalił latarnię i przy jej świetle mogliśmy rozpoznać dwoję drzwi, firankę, lampę i trochę zbroi japońskiej, jak on to nam opisał. Na stole stały dwie szklanki, pusta flaszka z wódki i resztki jedzenia.
— A to co? zapytał nagle Holmes.
Stanęliśmy wszyscy cicho, nadsłuchując. Cichy, jęczący głos dobywał się skądś ponad nami. Holmes rzucił się do drzwi i wypadł na kurytarz. Straszny krzyk rozległ się na górze. Popędził na górę, inspektor i ja tuż za nim, podczas gdy brat jego Mycroft postępował tak szybko, jak mu pozwalała na to wielka jego tusza.
Troje drzwi stało przed nami na górze, a ze środkowych wychodził ten przykry głos, zapadający czasem w głuchy pomruk i przechodzący znowu w przeraźliwy jęk. Drzwi były zamknięte, ale klucz tkwił w nich na zewnątrz. Holmes otworzył drzwi na roścież i wpadł do środka, ale w jednej chwili wrócił, ręką trzymając się za gardło.
— To czad! zawołał. Zaczekajcie chwilę, aż się rozejdzie.

Zaglądając do środka, mogliśmy widzieć, że jedyne światło w pokoju pochodziło od przyćmionego błękitnego płomyka, który migał w środku na małym mosiężnym trójnogu. Rzucał on dziwny sinawy krąg światła na podłogę, podczas gdy w cieniu poza tem zobaczyliśmy niewyraźne kształty dwóch osób, które czołgały się pod ścianą. Z otwartych drzwi unosiły się jadowite wyziewy, tak, że zaczęliśmy dyszeć i kaszlać. Holmes rzucił się na schody, aby wpuścić świeżego powietrza, a potem wpadłszy do pokoju, roztworzył okno i wyrzucił mosiężny trójnóg na ogród.

— Za minutę możemy wejść, wyjąkał, wróciwszy znowu. Gdzie jest świeca? Wątpię, czy będziemy mogli zaświecić zapałkę w tej atmosferze. Mycrofcie, trzymaj światło przy drzwiach, a my ich wyniesiemy. Naprzód!

Rzuciliśmy się ku zaczadzonym i wyciągnęliśmyich na kurytarz. Obaj mieli posiniałe wargi i byli nieprzytomni, twarze ich nabiegły krwią, a oczy wylazły na wierzch. W istocie rysy ich były tak wykrzywione, że tylko po czarnej brodzie i krzepkim wyglądzie mogliśmy poznać w jednym z nich greckiego tłumacza, który rozstał się z nami ledwie kilka godzin temu w klubie Dyogenesa. Ręce jego i nogi były silnie związane, a na jednem oku widać było ślad gwałtownego uderzenia. Drugi, ubezwładniony w podobny sposób, był wysokim mężczyzną wynędzniałym do ostateczności, a kilka skrawków plastra nalepionych było dziwacznie na twarzy. Gdyśmy go złożyli, przestał jęczeć, a ja przekonałem się, rzuciwszy tylko okiem, że dla niego już nasza pomoc przyszła zapóźno.

Mr. Melas żył jeszcze jednak i w godzinę niecałą przyszedł do siebie przy pomocy amoniaku i wódki i otworzył oczy ku mojemu zadowoleniu, bo wiedziałem, że to moja ręka wyciągnęła go z tej ciemnej otchłani, do której zdążają drogi wszystkich ludzi.

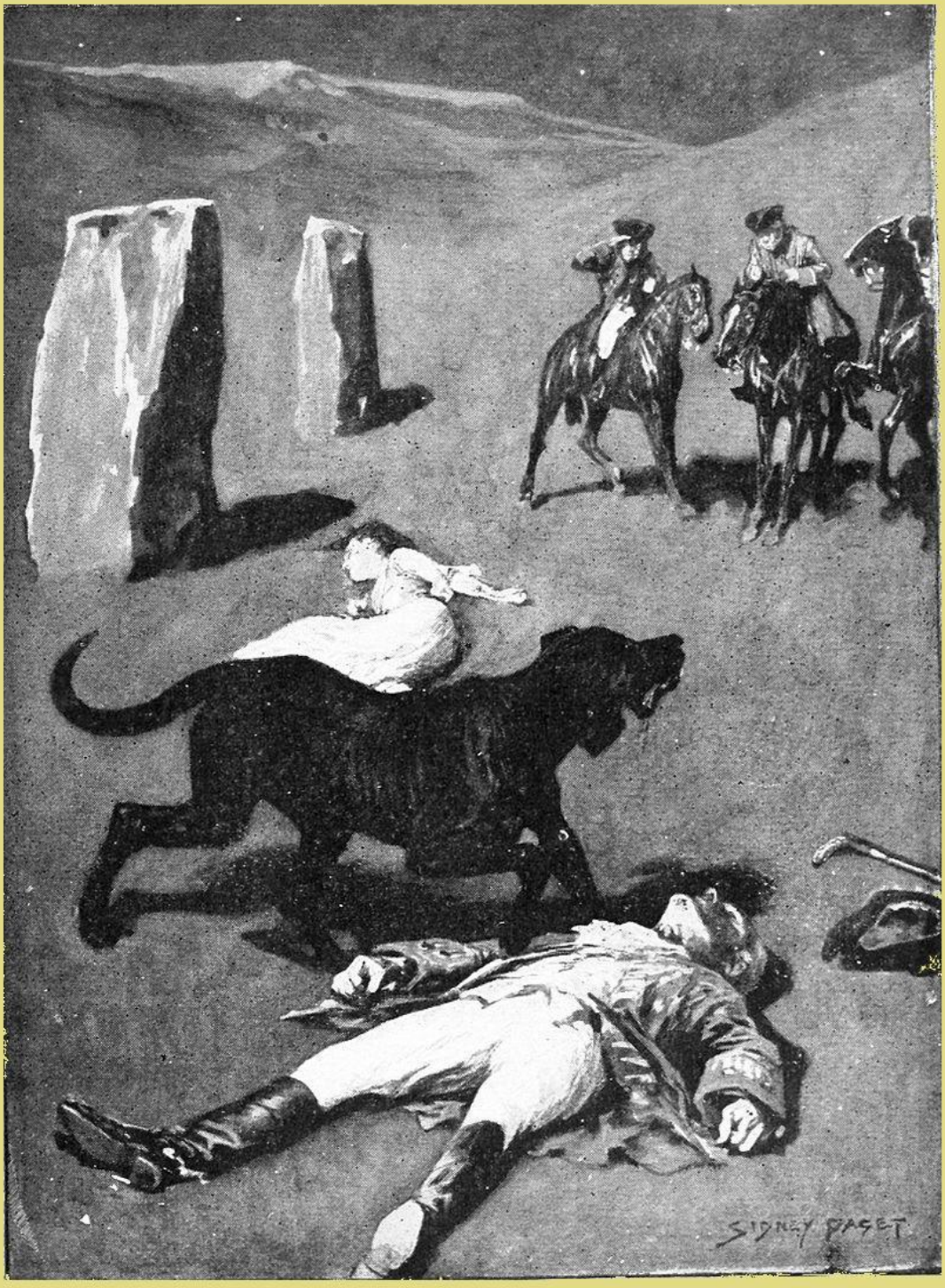
Była to zupełnie prosta historya, którą on nam opowiedział; potwierdziła ona tylko nasze przypuszczenia. Gość jego wszedłszy do pomieszkania, wyjął z rękawa pas i tak przeraził tłumacza groźbą natychmiastowej i nieuniknionej śmierci, że porwał go po raz drugi. W istocie ten chichoczący się łotr wywierał jakby magnetyczny wpływ na nieszczęśliwym lingwiście, tak, że ten nie mógł o nim inaczej mówić jak tylko z drżącemi rękami i pobladłą twarzą. Zawieziono go szybko do Beckenlham, gdzie wystąpił jako tłumacz w drugim interwiewie, bardziej tragicznym niż pierwszy, bo dwaj Anglicy zagrozili więźniowi natychmiastową śmiercią, jeżeli nie zgodzi się na ich żądania. Ostatecznie widząc, że wszelkie pogróżki nie robią na nim żadnego wrażenia, wtrącili go napowrót do więzienia. Melasowi wyrzucali zdradę, która wyszła na jaw z ogłoszenia w dziennikach, ogłuszyli go uderzeniem kija, tak, że nie pamiętał już nic więcej aż do tej chwili, kiedy ujrzał nas pochylonych nad sobą.

Taka to była osobliwa przygoda greckiego tłumacza, której wyjaśnienie łączy się z pewnego rodzaju tajemnicą. Po porozumieniu się z gentlemanem, który odpowiedział na nasze ogłoszenie, mogliśmy określić, że nieszczęśliwa młoda dama pochodziła z bogatej greckiej rodziny i że była w odwiedzinach u jakichś przyjaciół w Anglii. Wówczas spotkała się z młodym człowiekiem nazwiskiem Harold Latimer, który uzyskał wpływ na nią i w końcu namówił ją, aby z nim uciekła. Przyjaciele jej przerażeni tem zajściem, poprzestali na uwiadomieniu o tem jej brata z Aten, a potem umyli ręce z tej sprawy. Brat przybywszy do Anglii, nieuważnie dostał się w moc Latimera i jego wspólnika, który się nazywał Wilson Kemp — człowieka o najhaniebniejszej przeszłości. Ci dwaj widząc, że Grek z powodu nieznajomości języka jest zdany na ich łaskę i niełaskę, uwięzili go i usiłowali okrucieństwem i głodem zmusić go do zapisania im majątku własnego i siostry. Trzymali go w domu bez wiedzy dziewczyny, a plaster na twarzy miał utrudnić poznanie, na wypadek, gdyby go kiedyś spostrzegła. Kobieca intuicya pomogła jej poznać brata mimo przebrania, kiedy zobaczyła go pierwszy raz podczas pierwszej wizyty tłumacza. Ale biedna kobieta była sama więźniem, ponieważ nie było nikogo więcej w domu oprócz człowieka, który występował jako woźnica, i jego żony, a oni oboje byli narzędziami tych łotrów. Przekonawszy się, że

tajemnica wyszła na jaw i że więzień nie da się nakłonić, w kilka godzin, jak się o tem przekonali, obaj łotrzy uciekli z dziewczyna z domu umeblowanego, który najęli, zemściwszy się najpierw na człowieku, który się im oparł, i na tym, który ich zdradził.

W miesiąc później doszła do naszej wiadomości ciekawa notatka dziennikarska z Budapesztu. Pisano tam, jak dwóch Anglików, którzy podróżowali z jakąś kobietą, zginęło tragiczną śmiercią. Zdaje się, że oni się nawzajem pozabijali, a węgierska policja przekonana była, że się pokłócili i zadali sobie nawzajem śmiertelne ciosy. Holmes jednak, zdaniem mojem, inaczej o tem sądzi i do dziś dnia utrzymuje, że gdyby się tylko odnalazło tę grecką dziewczynę, to możnaby się dowiedzieć, jaki sposób pomszczone zostały krzywdy jej i jej brata.

The Hound of the Baskervilles



Pies Baskerville'ów

Arthur Conan Doyle

A. Conan Doyle

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Pies Baskerville'ów

Polska wersja językowa w tłumaczeniu Eugenii Żmijewskiej

Angielska wersja językowa zgodna z pierwszym wydaniem z roku 1902

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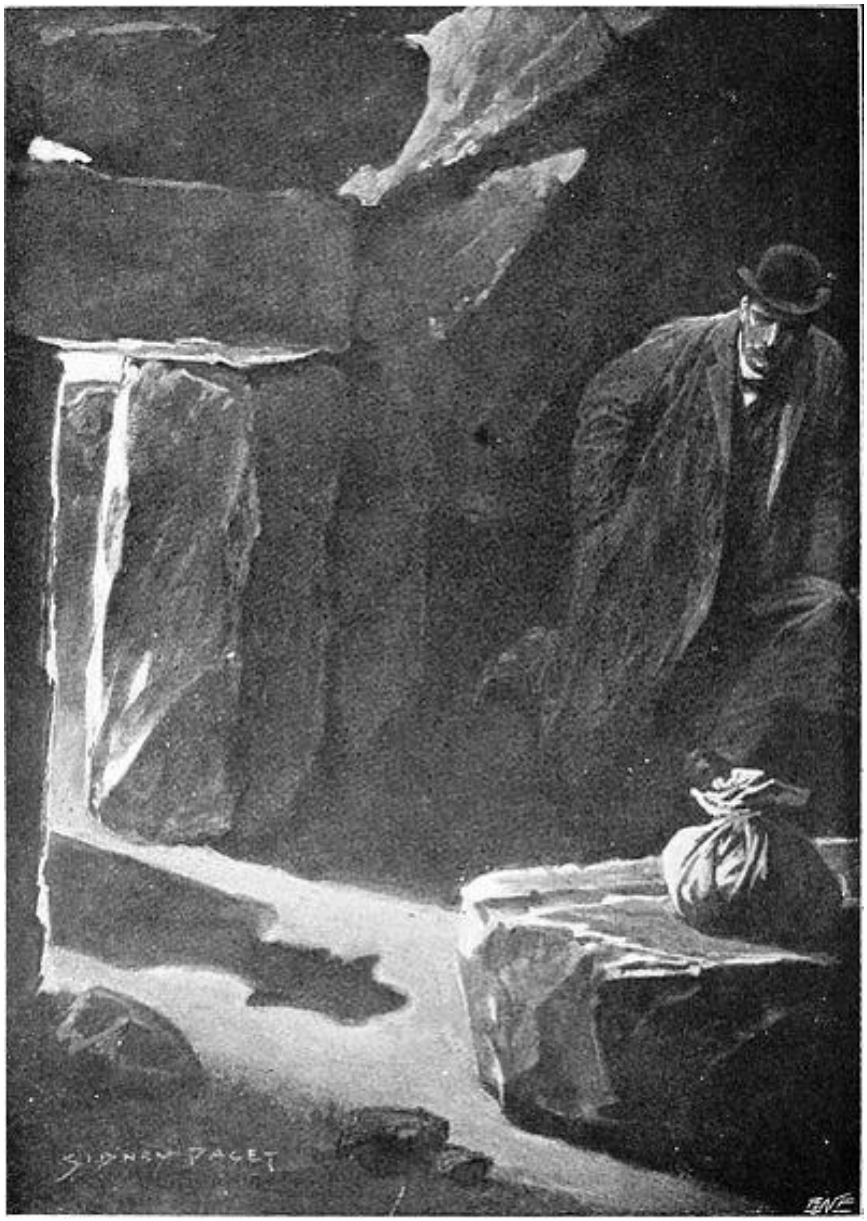


Chapter 1. Mr. Sherlock Holmes

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who was usually very late in the mornings, save upon those not infrequent occasions when he was up all night, was seated at the breakfast table. I stood upon the hearth-rug and picked up the stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before. It was a fine, thick piece of wood, bulbous-headed, of the sort which is known as a "Penang lawyer." Just under the head was a broad silver band nearly an inch across. "To James

Mortimer, M.R.C.S., from his friends of the C.C.H.," was engraved upon it, with the date "1884." It was just such a stick as the old-fashioned family practitioner used to carry—dignified, solid, and reassuring.

"Well, Watson, what do you make of it?"

Holmes was sitting with his back to me, and I had given him no sign of my occupation.

"How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head."

"I have, at least, a well-polished, silver-plated coffee-pot in front of me," said he. "But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of our visitor's stick? Since we have been so unfortunate as to miss him and have no notion of his errand, this accidental souvenir becomes of importance. Let me hear you reconstruct the man by an examination of it."

"I think," said I, following as far as I could the methods of my companion, "that Dr. Mortimer is a successful, elderly medical man, well-esteemed since those who know him give him this mark of their appreciation."

"Good!" said Holmes. "Excellent!"

"I think also that the probability is in favour of his being a country practitioner who does a great deal of his visiting on foot."

"Why so?"

"Because this stick, though originally a very handsome one has been so knocked about that I can hardly imagine a town practitioner carrying it. The thick-iron ferrule is worn down, so it is evident that he has done a great amount of walking with it."

"Perfectly sound!" said Holmes.

"And then again, there is the 'friends of the C.C.H.' I should guess that to be the Something Hunt, the local hunt to whose members he has possibly given some surgical assistance, and which has made him a small presentation in return."

"Really, Watson, you excel yourself," said Holmes, pushing back his chair and lighting a cigarette. "I am bound to say that in all the accounts which you have been so good as to give

of my own small achievements you have habitually underrated your own abilities. It may be that you are not yourself luminous, but you are a conductor of light. Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it. I confess, my dear fellow, that I am very much in your debt."

He had never said as much before, and I must admit that his words gave me keen pleasure, for I had often been piqued by his indifference to my admiration and to the attempts which I had made to give publicity to his methods. I was proud, too, to think that I had so far mastered his system as to apply it in a way which earned his approval. He now took the stick from my hands and examined it for a few minutes with his naked eyes. Then with an expression of interest he laid down his cigarette, and carrying the cane to the window, he looked over it again with a convex lens.

"Interesting, though elementary," said he as he returned to his favourite corner of the settee. "There are certainly one or two indications upon the stick. It gives us the basis for several deductions."

"Has anything escaped me?" I asked with some self-importance. "I trust that there is nothing of consequence which I have overlooked?"

"I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were erroneous. When I said that you stimulated me I meant, to be frank, that in noting your fallacies I was occasionally guided towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this instance. The man is certainly a country practitioner. And he walks a good deal."

"Then I was right."

"To that extent."

"But that was all."

"No, no, my dear Watson, not all—by no means all. I would suggest, for example, that a presentation to a doctor is more likely to come from a hospital than from a hunt, and that when the initials 'C.C.' are placed before that hospital the words 'Charing Cross' very naturally suggest themselves."

"You may be right."

"The probability lies in that direction. And if we take this as a working hypothesis we have a fresh basis from which to start our construction of this unknown visitor."

"Well, then, supposing that 'C.C.H.' does stand for 'Charing Cross Hospital,' what further inferences may we draw?"

"Do none suggest themselves? You know my methods. Apply them!"

"I can only think of the obvious conclusion that the man has practised in town before going to the country."

"I think that we might venture a little farther than this. Look at it in this light. On what occasion would it be most probable that such a presentation would be made? When would his friends unite to give him a pledge of their good will? Obviously at the moment when Dr. Mortimer withdrew from the service of the hospital in order to start a practice for himself. We know there has been a presentation. We believe there has been a change from a town hospital to a country practice. Is it, then, stretching our inference too far to say that the presentation was on the occasion of the change?"

"It certainly seems probable."

"Now, you will observe that he could not have been on the staff of the hospital, since only a man well-established in a London practice could hold such a position, and such a one would not drift into the country. What was he, then? If he was in the hospital and yet not on the staff he could only have been a house-surgeon or a house-physician—little more than a senior student. And he left five years ago—the date is on the stick. So your grave, middle-aged family practitioner vanishes into thin air, my dear Watson, and there emerges a young fellow under thirty, amiable, unambitious, absent-minded, and the possessor of a favourite dog, which I should describe roughly as being larger than a terrier and smaller than a mastiff."

I laughed incredulously as Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his settee and blew little wavering rings of smoke up to the ceiling.

"As to the latter part, I have no means of checking you," said I, "but at least it is not difficult to find out a few particulars about the man's age and professional career." From my small

medical shelf I took down the Medical Directory and turned up the name. There were several Mortimers, but only one who could be our visitor. I read his record aloud.

> "Mortimer, James, M.R.C.S., 1882, Grimpen, Dartmoor, Devon.
> House-surgeon, from 1882 to 1884, at Charing Cross Hospital.
> Winner of the Jackson prize for Comparative Pathology,
> with essay entitled 'Is Disease a Reversion?' Corresponding
> member of the Swedish Pathological Society. Author of
> 'Some Freaks of Atavism' (Lancet 1882). 'Do We Progress?'
> (Journal of Psychology, March, 1883). Medical Officer
> for the parishes of Grimpen, Thorsley, and High Barrow."

"No mention of that local hunt, Watson," said Holmes with a mischievous smile, "but a country doctor, as you very astutely observed. I think that I am fairly justified in my inferences. As to the adjectives, I said, if I remember right, amiable, unambitious, and absent-minded. It is my experience that it is only an amiable man in this world who receives testimonials, only an unambitious one who abandons a London career for the country, and only an absent-minded one who leaves his stick and not his visiting-card after waiting an hour in your room."

"And the dog?"

"Has been in the habit of carrying this stick behind his master. Being a heavy stick the dog has held it tightly by the middle, and the marks of his teeth are very plainly visible. The dog's jaw, as shown in the space between these marks, is too broad in my opinion for a terrier and not broad enough for a mastiff. It may have been—yes, by Jove, it is a curly-haired spaniel."

He had risen and paced the room as he spoke. Now he halted in the recess of the window. There was such a ring of conviction in his voice that I glanced up in surprise.

"My dear fellow, how can you possibly be so sure of that?"

"For the very simple reason that I see the dog himself on our very door-step, and there is the ring of its owner. Don't move, I beg you, Watson. He is a professional brother of yours, and your presence may be of assistance to me. Now is the dramatic moment of fate, Watson, when you hear a step upon the stair which is walking into your life, and you know not whether for

good or ill. What does Dr. James Mortimer, the man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, the specialist in crime? Come in!"

The appearance of our visitor was a surprise to me, since I had expected a typical country practitioner. He was a very tall, thin man, with a long nose like a beak, which jutted out between two keen, gray eyes, set closely together and sparkling brightly from behind a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. He was clad in a professional but rather slovenly fashion, for his frock-coat was dingy and his trousers frayed. Though young, his long back was already bowed, and he walked with a forward thrust of his head and a general air of peering benevolence. As he entered his eyes fell upon the stick in Holmes's hand, and he ran towards it with an exclamation of joy. "I am so very glad," said he. "I was not sure whether I had left it here or in the Shipping Office. I would not lose that stick for the world."

"A presentation, I see," said Holmes.

"Yes, sir."

"From Charing Cross Hospital?"

"From one or two friends there on the occasion of my marriage."

"Dear, dear, that's bad!" said Holmes, shaking his head.

Dr. Mortimer blinked through his glasses in mild astonishment. "Why was it bad?"

"Only that you have disarranged our little deductions. Your marriage, you say?"

"Yes, sir. I married, and so left the hospital, and with it all hopes of a consulting practice. It was necessary to make a home of my own."

"Come, come, we are not so far wrong, after all," said Holmes. "And now, Dr. James Mortimer—"

"Mister, sir, Mister—a humble M.R.C.S."

"And a man of precise mind, evidently."

"A dabbler in science, Mr. Holmes, a picker up of shells on the shores of the great unknown ocean. I presume that it is Mr. Sherlock Holmes whom I am addressing and not—"

"No, this is my friend Dr. Watson."

"Glad to meet you, sir. I have heard your name mentioned in connection with that of your friend. You interest me very much, Mr. Holmes. I had hardly expected so dolichocephalic a skull or such well-marked supra-orbital development. Would you have any objection to my running my finger along your parietal fissure? A cast of your skull, sir, until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological museum. It is not my intention to be fulsome, but I confess that I covet your skull."

Sherlock Holmes waved our strange visitor into a chair. "You are an enthusiast in your line of thought, I perceive, sir, as I am in mine," said he. "I observe from your forefinger that you make your own cigarettes. Have no hesitation in lighting one."

The man drew out paper and tobacco and twirled the one up in the other with surprising dexterity. He had long, quivering fingers as agile and restless as the antennae of an insect.

Holmes was silent, but his little darting glances showed me the interest which he took in our curious companion. "I presume, sir," said he at last, "that it was not merely for the purpose of examining my skull that you have done me the honour to call here last night and again today?"

"No, sir, no; though I am happy to have had the opportunity of doing that as well. I came to you, Mr. Holmes, because I recognized that I am myself an unpractical man and because I am suddenly confronted with a most serious and extraordinary problem. Recognizing, as I do, that you are the second highest expert in Europe—"

"Indeed, sir! May I inquire who has the honour to be the first?" asked Holmes with some asperity.

"To the man of precisely scientific mind the work of Monsieur Bertillon must always appeal strongly."

"Then had you not better consult him?"

"I said, sir, to the precisely scientific mind. But as a practical man of affairs it is acknowledged that you stand alone. I trust, sir, that I have not inadvertently—"

"Just a little," said Holmes. "I think, Dr. Mortimer, you would do wisely if without more ado you would kindly tell me plainly what the exact nature of the problem is in which you demand my assistance."

Chapter 2. The Curse of the Baskervilles

"I have in my pocket a manuscript," said Dr. James Mortimer.

"I observed it as you entered the room," said Holmes.

"It is an old manuscript."

"Early eighteenth century, unless it is a forgery."

"How can you say that, sir?"

"You have presented an inch or two of it to my examination all the time that you have been talking. It would be a poor expert who could not give the date of a document within a decade or so. You may possibly have read my little monograph upon the subject. I put that at 1730."

"The exact date is 1742." Dr. Mortimer drew it from his breast-pocket. "This family paper was committed to my care by Sir Charles Baskerville, whose sudden and tragic death some three months ago created so much excitement in Devonshire. I may say that I was his personal friend as well as his medical attendant. He was a strong-minded man, sir, shrewd, practical, and as unimaginative as I am myself. Yet he took this document very seriously, and his mind was prepared for just such an end as did eventually overtake him."

Holmes stretched out his hand for the manuscript and flattened it upon his knee. "You will observe, Watson, the alternative use of the long s and the short. It is one of several indications which enabled me to fix the date."

I looked over his shoulder at the yellow paper and the faded script. At the head was written: "Baskerville Hall," and below in large, scrawling figures: "1742."

"It appears to be a statement of some sort."

"Yes, it is a statement of a certain legend which runs in the Baskerville family."

"But I understand that it is something more modern and practical upon which you wish to consult me?"

"Most modern. A most practical, pressing matter, which must be decided within twenty-four hours. But the manuscript is short and is intimately connected with the affair. With your permission I will read it to you."

Holmes leaned back in his chair, placed his finger-tips together, and closed his eyes, with an air of resignation. Dr. Mortimer turned the manuscript to the light and read in a high, cracking voice the following curious, old-world narrative:

> "Of the origin of the Hound of the Baskervilles there
> have been many statements, yet as I come in a direct
> line from Hugo Baskerville, and as I had the story from
> my father, who also had it from his, I have set it down
> with all belief that it occurred even as is here set
> forth. And I would have you believe, my sons, that the
> same Justice which punishes sin may also most graciously
> forgive it, and that no ban is so heavy but that by prayer
> and repentance it may be removed. Learn then from this
> story not to fear the fruits of the past, but rather to
> be circumspect in the future, that those foul passions
> whereby our family has suffered so grievously may not
> again be loosed to our undoing.

"Know then that in the time of the Great Rebellion (the history of which by the learned Lord Clarendon I most earnestly commend to your attention) this Manor of Baskerville was held by Hugo of that name, nor can it be gainsaid that he was a most wild, profane, and godless man. This, in truth, his neighbours might have pardoned, seeing that saints have never flourished in those parts, but there was in him a certain wanton and cruel humour which made his name a by-word through the West. It chanced that this Hugo came to love (if, indeed, so dark a passion may be known under so bright a name) the daughter of a yeoman who held lands near the Baskerville estate. But the young maiden, being discreet and of good repute, would ever avoid him, for she feared his evil name. So it came to pass that one Michaelmas this Hugo, with five or six of his idle and wicked companions, stole down upon the farm and carried off the maiden, her father and brothers being from home, as he well knew. When they had brought her to the Hall the maiden was placed in an upper chamber, while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long carouse, as was their nightly custom. Now, the poor lass upstairs was like to have her wits turned at the singing and shouting and terrible oaths which came up to her from below, for they say that the words used by Hugo Baskerville, when he was in wine, were such as might blast the man who said them. At last in the stress of her fear she did that which might have daunted the bravest or most active man, for by the aid of the growth of ivy which covered (and still covers) the south wall she came down from under the eaves, and so homeward across the moor, there being three leagues betwixt the Hall and her father's farm.

"It chanced that some little time later Hugo left his guests to carry food and drink—with other worse things,

perchance—to his captive, and so found the cage empty and the bird escaped. Then, as it would seem, he became as one that hath a devil, for, rushing down the stairs into the dining-hall, he sprang upon the great table, flagons and trenchers flying before him, and he cried aloud before all the company that he would that very night render his body and soul to the Powers of Evil if he might but overtake the wench. And while the revellers stood aghast at the fury of the man, one more wicked or, it may be, more drunken than the rest, cried out that they should put the hounds upon her. Whereat Hugo ran from the house, crying to his grooms that they should saddle his mare and unkennel the pack, and giving the hounds a kerchief of the maid's, he swung them to the line, and so off full cry in the moonlight over the moor.

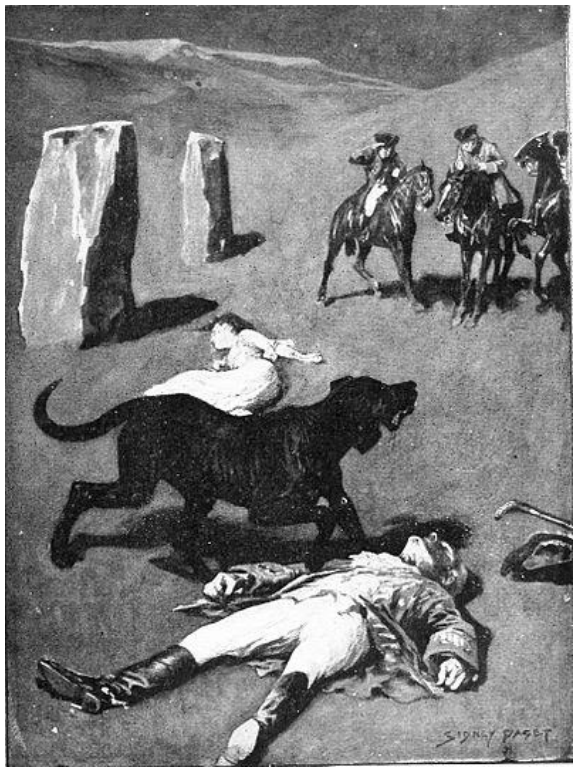
"Now, for some space the revellers stood agape, unable to understand all that had been done in such haste. But anon their bemused wits awoke to the nature of the deed which was like to be done upon the moorlands. Everything was now in an uproar, some calling for their pistols, some for their horses, and some for another flask of wine. But at length some sense came back to their crazed minds, and the whole of them, thirteen in number, took horse and started in pursuit. The moon shone clear above them, and they rode swiftly abreast, taking that course which the maid must needs have taken if she were to reach her own home.

"They had gone a mile or two when they passed one of the night shepherds upon the moorlands, and they cried to him to know if he had seen the hunt. And the man, as the story goes, was so crazed with fear that he could scarce speak, but at last he said that he had indeed seen

the unhappy maiden, with the hounds upon her track. 'But I have seen more than that,' said he, 'for Hugo Baskerville passed me upon his black mare, and there ran mute behind him such a hound of hell as God forbid should ever be at my heels.' So the drunken squires cursed the shepherd and rode onward. But soon their skins turned cold, for there came a galloping across the moor, and the black mare, dabbled with white froth, went past with trailing bridle and empty saddle. Then the revellers rode close together, for a great fear was on them, but they still followed over the moor, though each, had he been alone, would have been right glad to have turned his horse's head. Riding slowly in this fashion they came at last upon the hounds. These, though known for their valour and their breed, were whimpering in a cluster at the head of a deep dip or goyal, as we call it, upon the moor, some slinking away and some, with starting hackles and staring eyes, gazing down the narrow valley before them.

"The company had come to a halt, more sober men, as you may guess, than when they started. The most of them would by no means advance, but three of them, the boldest, or it may be the most drunken, rode forward down the goyal. Now, it opened into a broad space in which stood two of those great stones, still to be seen there, which were set by certain forgotten peoples in the days of old. The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there in the centre lay the unhappy maid where she had fallen, dead of fear and of fatigue. But it was not the sight of her body, nor yet was it that of the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of these three dare-devil roysterers, but it was that, standing over Hugo, and plucking at his throat, there stood a foul thing, a great, black beast, shaped

like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon. And even as they looked the thing tore the throat out of Hugo Baskerville, on which, as it turned its blazing eyes and dripping jaws upon them, the three shrieked with fear and rode for dear life, still screaming, across the moor. One, it is said, died that very night of what he had seen, and the other twain were but broken men for the rest of their days.



"Such is the tale, my sons, of the coming of the hound which is said to have plagued the family so sorely ever since. If I have set it down it is because that which is clearly known hath less terror than that which is but hinted at and guessed. Nor can it be denied that many of the family have been unhappy in their deaths, which have been sudden, bloody, and mysterious. Yet may we shelter ourselves in the infinite goodness of Providence, which would not forever punish the innocent beyond that

> third or fourth generation which is threatened in Holy Writ. To that Providence, my sons, I hereby commend you, and I counsel you by way of caution to forbear from crossing the moor in those dark hours when the powers of evil are exalted.
>
> "[This from Hugo Baskerville to his sons Rodger and John, with instructions that they say nothing thereof to their sister Elizabeth.]"

When Dr. Mortimer had finished reading this singular narrative he pushed his spectacles up on his forehead and stared across at Mr. Sherlock Holmes. The latter yawned and tossed the end of his cigarette into the fire.

"Well?" said he.

"Do you not find it interesting?"

"To a collector of fairy tales."

Dr. Mortimer drew a folded newspaper out of his pocket.

"Now, Mr. Holmes, we will give you something a little more recent. This is the Devon County Chronicle of May 14th of this year. It is a short account of the facts elicited at the death of Sir Charles Baskerville which occurred a few days before that date."

My friend leaned a little forward and his expression became intent. Our visitor readjusted his glasses and began:

> "The recent sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville, whose name has been mentioned as the probable Liberal candidate for Mid-Devon at the next election, has cast a gloom over the county. Though Sir Charles had resided at Baskerville Hall for a comparatively short period his amiability of character and extreme generosity had won the affection and respect of all who had been brought into contact with him. In these days of nouveaux riches it is refreshing

to find a case where the scion of an old county family which has fallen upon evil days is able to make his own fortune and to bring it back with him to restore the fallen grandeur of his line. Sir Charles, as is well known, made large sums of money in South African speculation. More wise than those who go on until the wheel turns against them, he realized his gains and returned to England with them. It is only two years since he took up his residence at Baskerville Hall, and it is common talk how large were those schemes of reconstruction and improvement which have been interrupted by his death. Being himself childless, it was his openly expressed desire that the whole countryside should, within his own lifetime, profit by his good fortune, and many will have personal reasons for bewailing his untimely end. His generous donations to local and county charities have been frequently chronicled in these columns.

"The circumstances connected with the death of Sir Charles cannot be said to have been entirely cleared up by the inquest, but at least enough has been done to dispose of those rumours to which local superstition has given rise. There is no reason whatever to suspect foul play, or to imagine that death could be from any but natural causes. Sir Charles was a widower, and a man who may be said to have been in some ways of an eccentric habit of mind. In spite of his considerable wealth he was simple in his personal tastes, and his indoor servants at Baskerville Hall consisted of a married couple named Barrymore, the husband acting as butler and the wife as housekeeper. Their evidence, corroborated by that of several friends, tends to show that Sir Charles's health has for some time been impaired, and points especially to some affection of the heart, manifesting itself in changes of colour,

breathlessness, and acute attacks of nervous depression. Dr. James Mortimer, the friend and medical attendant of the deceased, has given evidence to the same effect.

"The facts of the case are simple. Sir Charles Baskerville was in the habit every night before going to bed of walking down the famous yew alley of Baskerville Hall. The evidence of the Barrymores shows that this had been his custom. On the fourth of May Sir Charles had declared his intention of starting next day for London, and had ordered Barrymore to prepare his luggage. That night he went out as usual for his nocturnal walk, in the course of which he was in the habit of smoking a cigar. He never returned. At twelve o'clock Barrymore, finding the hall door still open, became alarmed, and, lighting a lantern, went in search of his master. The day had been wet, and Sir Charles's footmarks were easily traced down the alley. Halfway down this walk there is a gate which leads out on to the moor. There were indications that Sir Charles had stood for some little time here. He then proceeded down the alley, and it was at the far end of it that his body was discovered. One fact which has not been explained is the statement of Barrymore that his master's footprints altered their character from the time that he passed the moor-gate, and that he appeared from thence onward to have been walking upon his toes. One Murphy, a gipsy horse-dealer, was on the moor at no great distance at the time, but he appears by his own confession to have been the worse for drink. He declares that he heard cries but is unable to state from what direction they came. No signs of violence were to be discovered upon Sir Charles's person, and though the doctor's evidence pointed to an almost incredible facial distortion—so great that Dr. Mortimer refused at first to believe that it was indeed his friend and patient

> who lay before him—it was explained that that is a symptom which is not unusual in cases of dyspnoea and death from cardiac exhaustion. This explanation was borne out by the post-mortem examination, which showed long-standing organic disease, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence. It is well that this is so, for it is obviously of the utmost importance that Sir Charles's heir should settle at the Hall and continue the good work which has been so sadly interrupted. Had the prosaic finding of the coroner not finally put an end to the romantic stories which have been whispered in connection with the affair, it might have been difficult to find a tenant for Baskerville Hall. It is understood that the next of kin is Mr. Henry Baskerville, if he be still alive, the son of Sir Charles Baskerville's younger brother. The young man when last heard of was in America, and inquiries are being instituted with a view to informing him of his good fortune."

Dr. Mortimer refolded his paper and replaced it in his pocket. "Those are the public facts, Mr. Holmes, in connection with the death of Sir Charles Baskerville."

"I must thank you," said Sherlock Holmes, "for calling my attention to a case which certainly presents some features of interest. I had observed some newspaper comment at the time, but I was exceedingly preoccupied by that little affair of the Vatican cameos, and in my anxiety to oblige the Pope I lost touch with several interesting English cases. This article, you say, contains all the public facts?"

"It does."

"Then let me have the private ones." He leaned back, put his finger-tips together, and assumed his most impassive and judicial expression.

"In doing so," said Dr. Mortimer, who had begun to show signs of some strong emotion, "I am telling that which I have not confided to anyone. My motive for withholding it from the

coroner's inquiry is that a man of science shrinks from placing himself in the public position of seeming to indorse a popular superstition. I had the further motive that Baskerville Hall, as the paper says, would certainly remain untenanted if anything were done to increase its already rather grim reputation. For both these reasons I thought that I was justified in telling rather less than I knew, since no practical good could result from it, but with you there is no reason why I should not be perfectly frank.

"The moor is very sparsely inhabited, and those who live near each other are thrown very much together. For this reason I saw a good deal of Sir Charles Baskerville. With the exception of Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, and Mr. Stapleton, the naturalist, there are no other men of education within many miles. Sir Charles was a retiring man, but the chance of his illness brought us together, and a community of interests in science kept us so. He had brought back much scientific information from South Africa, and many a charming evening we have spent together discussing the comparative anatomy of the Bushman and the Hottentot.

"Within the last few months it became increasingly plain to me that Sir Charles's nervous system was strained to the breaking point. He had taken this legend which I have read you exceedingly to heart—so much so that, although he would walk in his own grounds, nothing would induce him to go out upon the moor at night. Incredible as it may appear to you, Mr. Holmes, he was honestly convinced that a dreadful fate overhung his family, and certainly the records which he was able to give of his ancestors were not encouraging. The idea of some ghastly presence constantly haunted him, and on more than one occasion he has asked me whether I had on my medical journeys at night ever seen any strange creature or heard the baying of a hound. The latter question he put to me several times, and always with a voice which vibrated with excitement.

"I can well remember driving up to his house in the evening some three weeks before the fatal event. He chanced to be at his hall door. I had descended from my gig and was standing in front of him, when I saw his eyes fix themselves over my shoulder and stare past me with an expression of the most dreadful horror. I whisked round and had just time to catch a glimpse of something which I took to be a large black calf passing at the head of the drive. So excited and alarmed was he that I was compelled to go down to the spot where the animal had been and look around for it. It was gone, however, and the incident appeared to make the worst impression upon his mind. I stayed with him all the evening, and it was on that occasion, to

explain the emotion which he had shown, that he confided to my keeping that narrative which I read to you when first I came. I mention this small episode because it assumes some importance in view of the tragedy which followed, but I was convinced at the time that the matter was entirely trivial and that his excitement had no justification.

"It was at my advice that Sir Charles was about to go to London. His heart was, I knew, affected, and the constant anxiety in which he lived, however chimerical the cause of it might be, was evidently having a serious effect upon his health. I thought that a few months among the distractions of town would send him back a new man. Mr. Stapleton, a mutual friend who was much concerned at his state of health, was of the same opinion. At the last instant came this terrible catastrophe.

"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 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 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 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 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 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?"

"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.

"Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

Chapter 3. The Problem

I confess at these words a shudder passed through me. There was a thrill in the doctor's voice which showed that he was himself deeply moved by that which he told us. Holmes leaned forward in his excitement and his eyes had the hard, dry glitter which shot from them when he was keenly interested.

"You saw this?"

"As clearly as I see you."

"And you said nothing?"

"What was the use?"

"How was it that no one else saw it?"

"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?"

"No doubt, but this was no sheep-dog."

"You say it was large?"

"Enormous."

"But it had not approached the body?"

"No."

"What sort of night was it?'

"Damp and raw."

"But not actually raining?"

"No."

"What is the alley like?"

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

"Is there anything between the hedges and the walk?"

"Yes, there is a strip of grass about six feet broad on either side."

"I understand that the yew hedge is penetrated at one point by a gate?"

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

"Is there any other opening?"

"None."

"So that to reach the yew alley one either has to come down it from the house or else to enter it by the moor-gate?"

"There is an exit through a summer-house at the far end."

"Had Sir Charles reached this?"

"No; he lay about fifty yards from it."

"Now, tell me, Dr. Mortimer—and this is important—the marks which you saw were on the path and not on the grass?"

"No marks could show on the grass."

"Were they on the same side of the path as the moor-gate?"

"Yes; they were on the edge of the path on the same side as the moor-gate."

"You interest me exceedingly. Another point. Was the wicket-gate closed?"

"Closed and padlocked."

"How high was it?"

"About four feet high."

"Then anyone could have got over it?"

"Yes."

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

"None in particular."

"Good heaven! Did no one examine?"

"Yes, I examined, myself."

"And found nothing?"

"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."

"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."

Sherlock Holmes struck his hand against his knee with an impatient gesture.

"If I had only been there!" he cried. "It is evidently a case of extraordinary interest, and one which presented immense opportunities to the scientific expert. That 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! You have indeed much to answer for."

"I could not call you in, Mr. Holmes, without disclosing these facts to the world, and I have already given my reasons for not wishing to do so. Besides, besides—"

"Why do you hesitate?"

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

"You mean that the thing is supernatural?"

"I did not positively say so."

"No, but you evidently think it."

"Since the tragedy, Mr. Holmes, there have come to my ears several incidents which are hard to reconcile with the settled order of Nature."

"For example?"

"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, luminous, ghastly, and spectral. I have cross-examined these men, one of them a hard-headed countryman, one a farrier, and one a moorland farmer, who all tell the same story of this dreadful apparition, exactly corresponding to the hell-hound of the legend. I assure you that there is a reign of terror in the district, and that it is a hardy man who will cross the moor at night."

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

"I do not know what to believe."

Holmes shrugged his shoulders. "I have hitherto confined my investigations to this world," said he. "In a modest way I have combated evil, but to take on the Father of Evil himself would, perhaps, be too ambitious a task. Yet you must admit that the footmark is material."

"The original hound was material enough to tug a man's throat out, and yet he was diabolical as well."

"I see that you have quite gone over to the supernaturalists. But now, Dr. Mortimer, tell me this. If you hold these views, why have you come to consult me at all? You tell me in the same breath that it is useless to investigate Sir Charles's death, and that you desire me to do it."

"I did not say that I desired you to do it."

"Then, how can I assist you?"

"By advising me as to what I should do with Sir Henry Baskerville, who arrives at Waterloo Station"—Dr. Mortimer looked at his watch—"in exactly one hour and a quarter."

"He being the heir?"

"Yes. On the death of Sir Charles we inquired for this young gentleman and found that he had been farming in Canada. From the accounts which have reached us he is an excellent fellow in every way. I speak now not as a medical man but as a trustee and executor of Sir Charles's will."

"There is no other claimant, I presume?"

"None. The only other kinsman whom we have been able to trace was Rodger Baskerville, the youngest of three brothers of whom poor Sir Charles was the elder. The second brother, who died young, is the father of this lad Henry. The third, Rodger, was the black sheep of the family. He came of the old masterful Baskerville strain and was the very image, they tell me, of the family picture of old Hugo. He made England too hot to hold him, fled to Central America, and died there in 1876 of yellow fever. Henry is the last of the Baskervilles. In one hour and five minutes I meet him at Waterloo Station. I have had a wire that he arrived at Southampton this morning. Now, Mr. Holmes, what would you advise me to do with him?"

"Why should he not go to the home of his fathers?"

"It seems natural, does it not? And yet, consider that every Baskerville who goes there meets with an evil fate. I feel sure that if Sir Charles could have spoken with me before his death he

would have warned me against bringing this, the last of the old race, and the heir to great wealth, to that deadly place. And yet it cannot be denied that the prosperity of the whole poor, bleak countryside depends upon his presence. All the good work which has been done by Sir Charles will crash to the ground if there is no tenant of the Hall. I fear lest I should be swayed too much by my own obvious interest in the matter, and that is why I bring the case before you and ask for your advice."

Holmes considered for a little time.

"Put into plain words, the matter is this," said he. "In your opinion there is a diabolical agency which makes Dartmoor an unsafe abode for a Baskerville—that is your opinion?"

"At least I might go the length of saying that there is some evidence that this may be so."

"Exactly. But surely, if your supernatural theory be correct, it could work the young man evil in London as easily as in Devonshire. A devil with merely local powers like a parish vestry would be too inconceivable a thing."

"You put the matter more flippantly, Mr. Holmes, than you would probably do if you were brought into personal contact with these things. Your advice, then, as I understand it, is that the young man will be as safe in Devonshire as in London. He comes in fifty minutes. What would you recommend?"

"I recommend, sir, that you take a cab, call off your spaniel who is scratching at my front door, and proceed to Waterloo to meet Sir Henry Baskerville."

"And then?"

"And then you will say nothing to him at all until I have made up my mind about the matter."

"How long will it take you to make up your mind?"

"Twenty-four hours. At ten o'clock tomorrow, Dr. Mortimer, I will be much obliged to you if you will call upon me here, and it will be of help to me in my plans for the future if you will bring Sir Henry Baskerville with you."

"I will do so, Mr. Holmes." He scribbled the appointment on his shirt-cuff and hurried off in his strange, peering, absent-minded fashion. Holmes stopped him at the head of the stair.

"Only one more question, Dr. Mortimer. You say that before Sir Charles Baskerville's death several people saw this apparition upon the moor?"

"Three people did."

"Did any see it after?"

"I have not heard of any."

"Thank you. Good-morning."

Holmes returned to his seat with that quiet look of inward satisfaction which meant that he had a congenial task before him.

"Going out, Watson?"

"Unless I can help you."

"No, my dear fellow, it is at the hour of action that I turn to you for aid. But this is splendid, really unique from some points of view. When you pass Bradley's, would you ask him to send up a pound of the strongest shag tobacco? Thank you. It would be as well if you could make it convenient not to return before evening. Then I should be very glad to compare impressions as to this most interesting problem which has been submitted to us this morning."

I knew that seclusion and solitude were very necessary for my friend in those hours of intense mental concentration during which he weighed every particle of evidence, constructed alternative theories, balanced one against the other, and made up his mind as to which points were essential and which immaterial. I therefore spent the day at my club and did not return to Baker Street until evening. It was nearly nine o'clock when I found myself in the sitting-room once more.

My first impression as I opened the door was that a fire had broken out, for the room was so filled with smoke that the light of the lamp upon the table was blurred by it. As I entered, however, my fears were set at rest, for it was the acrid fumes of strong coarse tobacco which

took me by the throat and set me coughing. Through the haze I had a vague vision of Holmes in his dressing-gown coiled up in an armchair with his black clay pipe between his lips. Several rolls of paper lay around him.

"Caught cold, Watson?" said he.

"No, it's this poisonous atmosphere."

"I suppose it is pretty thick, now that you mention it."

"Thick! It is intolerable."

"Open the window, then! You have been at your club all day, I perceive."

"My dear Holmes!"

"Am I right?"

"Certainly, but how?"

He laughed at my bewildered expression. "There is a delightful freshness about you, Watson, which makes it a pleasure to exercise any small powers which I possess at your expense. A gentleman goes forth on a showery and miry day. He returns immaculate in the evening with the gloss still on his hat and his boots. He has been a fixture therefore all day. He is not a man with intimate friends. Where, then, could he have been? Is it not obvious?"

"Well, it is rather obvious."

"The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes. Where do you think that I have been?"

"A fixture also."

"On the contrary, I have been to Devonshire."

"In spirit?"

"Exactly. My body has remained in this armchair and has, I regret to observe, consumed in my absence two large pots of coffee and an incredible amount of tobacco. After you left I sent

down to Stamford's for the Ordnance map of this portion of the moor, and my spirit has hovered over it all day. I flatter myself that I could find my way about."

"A large-scale map, I presume?"

"Very large."

He unrolled one section and held it over his knee. "Here you have the particular district which concerns us. That is Baskerville Hall in the middle."

"With a wood round it?"

"Exactly. I fancy the yew alley, though not marked under that name, must stretch along this line, with the moor, as you perceive, upon the right of it. This small clump of buildings here is the hamlet of Grimpen, where our friend Dr. Mortimer has his headquarters. Within a radius of five miles there are, as you see, only a very few scattered dwellings. Here is Lafter Hall, which was mentioned in the narrative. There is a house indicated here which may be the residence of the naturalist—Stapleton, if I remember right, was his name. Here are two moorland farmhouses, High Tor and Foulmire. Then fourteen miles away the great convict prison of Princetown. Between and around these scattered points extends the desolate, lifeless moor. This, then, is the stage upon which tragedy has been played, and upon which we may help to play it again."

"It must be a wild place."

"Yes, the setting is a worthy one. If the devil did desire to have a hand in the affairs of men—
"

"Then you are yourself inclining to the supernatural explanation."

"The devil's agents may be of flesh and blood, may they not? There are two questions waiting for us at the outset. The one is whether any crime has been committed at all; the second is, what is the crime and how was it committed? Of course, if Dr. Mortimer's surmise should be correct, and we are dealing with forces outside the ordinary laws of Nature, there is an end of our investigation. But we are bound to exhaust all other hypotheses before falling back upon this one. I think we'll shut that window again, if you don't mind. It is a singular thing, but I find that a concentrated atmosphere helps a concentration of thought. I have not pushed it to

the length of getting into a box to think, but that is the logical outcome of my convictions. Have you turned the case over in your mind?"

"Yes, I have thought a good deal of it in the course of the day."

"What do you make of it?"

"It is very bewildering."

"It has certainly a character of its own. There are points of distinction about it. That change in the footprints, for example. What do you make of that?"

"Mortimer said that the man had walked on tiptoe down that portion of the alley."

"He only repeated what some fool had said at the inquest. Why should a man walk on tiptoe down the alley?"

"What then?"

"He was running, Watson—running desperately, running for his life, running until he burst his heart—and fell dead upon his face."

"Running from what?"

"There lies our problem. There are indications that the man was crazed with fear before ever he began to run."

"How can you say that?"

"I am presuming that the cause of his fears came to him across the moor. If that were so, and it seems most probable, only a man who had lost his wits would have run from the house instead of towards it. If the gipsy's evidence may be taken as true, he ran with cries for help in the direction where help was least likely to be. Then, again, whom was he waiting for that night, and why was he waiting for him in the yew alley rather than in his own house?"

"You think that he was waiting for someone?"

"The man was elderly and infirm. We can understand his taking an evening stroll, but the ground was damp and the night inclement. Is it natural that he should stand for five or ten minutes, as Dr. Mortimer, with more practical sense than I should have given him credit for, deduced from the cigar ash?"

"But he went out every evening."

"I think it unlikely that he waited at the moor-gate every evening. On the contrary, the evidence is that he avoided the moor. That night he waited there. It was the night before he made his departure for London. The thing takes shape, Watson. It becomes coherent. Might I ask you to hand me my violin, and we will postpone all further thought upon this business until we have had the advantage of meeting Dr. Mortimer and Sir Henry Baskerville in the morning."

Chapter 4. Sir Henry Baskerville

Our breakfast table was cleared early, and Holmes waited in his dressing-gown for the promised interview. Our clients were punctual to their appointment, for the clock had just struck ten when Dr. Mortimer was shown up, followed by the young baronet. The latter was a small, alert, dark-eyed man about thirty years of age, very sturdily built, with thick black eyebrows and a strong, pugnacious face. He wore a ruddy-tinted tweed suit and had the weather-beaten appearance of one who has spent most of his time in the open air, and yet there was something in his steady eye and the quiet assurance of his bearing which indicated the gentleman.

"This is Sir Henry Baskerville," said Dr. Mortimer.

"Why, yes," said he, "and the strange thing is, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, that if my friend here had not proposed coming round to you this morning I should have come on my own account. I understand that you think out little puzzles, and I've had one this morning which wants more thinking out than I am able to give it."

"Pray take a seat, Sir Henry. Do I understand you to say that you have yourself had some remarkable experience since you arrived in London?"

"Nothing of much importance, Mr. Holmes. Only a joke, as like as not. It was this letter, if you can call it a letter, which reached me this morning."

He laid an envelope upon the table, and we all bent over it. It was of common quality, grayish in colour. The address, "Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel," was printed in rough characters; the post-mark "Charing Cross," and the date of posting the preceding evening.

"Who knew that you were going to the Northumberland Hotel?" asked Holmes, glancing keenly across at our visitor.

"No one could have known. We only decided after I met Dr. Mortimer."

"But Dr. Mortimer was no doubt already stopping there?"

"No, I had been staying with a friend," said the doctor.

"There was no possible indication that we intended to go to this hotel."

"Hum! Someone seems to be very deeply interested in your movements." Out of the envelope he took a half-sheet of foolscap paper folded into four. This he opened and spread flat upon the table. Across the middle of it a single sentence had been formed by the expedient of pasting printed words upon it. It ran:

As you value your life or your reason keep away from the moor.

The word "moor" only was printed in ink.

"Now," said Sir Henry Baskerville, "perhaps you will tell me, Mr. Holmes, what in thunder is the meaning of that, and who it is that takes so much interest in my affairs?"

"What do you make of it, Dr. Mortimer? You must allow that there is nothing supernatural about this, at any rate?"

"No, sir, but it might very well come from someone who was convinced that the business is supernatural."

"What business?" asked Sir Henry sharply. "It seems to me that all you gentlemen know a great deal more than I do about my own affairs."

"You shall share our knowledge before you leave this room, Sir Henry. I promise you that," said Sherlock Holmes. "We will confine ourselves for the present with your permission to this

very interesting document, which must have been put together and posted yesterday evening. Have you yesterday's Times, Watson?"

"It is here in the corner."

"Might I trouble you for it—the inside page, please, with the leading articles?" He glanced swiftly over it, running his eyes up and down the columns. "Capital article this on free trade. Permit me to give you an extract from it.

> 'You may be cajoled into imagining that your own special trade or your own industry will be encouraged by a protective tariff, but it stands to reason that such legislation must in the long run keep away wealth from the country, diminish the value of our imports, and lower the general conditions of life in this island.'

"What do you think of that, Watson?" cried Holmes in high glee, rubbing his hands together with satisfaction. "Don't you think that is an admirable sentiment?"

Dr. Mortimer looked at Holmes with an air of professional interest, and Sir Henry Baskerville turned a pair of puzzled dark eyes upon me.

"I don't know much about the tariff and things of that kind," said he, "but it seems to me we've got a bit off the trail so far as that note is concerned."

"On the contrary, I think we are particularly hot upon the trail, Sir Henry. Watson here knows more about my methods than you do, but I fear that even he has not quite grasped the significance of this sentence."

"No, I confess that I see no connection."

"And yet, my dear Watson, there is so very close a connection that the one is extracted out of the other. 'You,' 'your,' 'your,' 'life,' 'reason,' 'value,' 'keep away,' 'from the.' Don't you see now whence these words have been taken?"

"By thunder, you're right! Well, if that isn't smart!" cried Sir Henry.

"If any possible doubt remained it is settled by the fact that 'keep away' and 'from the' are cut out in one piece."

"Well, now—so it is!"

"Really, Mr. Holmes, this exceeds anything which I could have imagined," said Dr. Mortimer, gazing at my friend in amazement. "I could understand anyone saying that the words were from a newspaper; but that you should name which, and add that it came from the leading article, is really one of the most remarkable things which I have ever known. How did you do it?"

"I presume, Doctor, that you could tell the skull of a negro from that of an Esquimau?"

"Most certainly."

"But how?"

"Because that is my special hobby. The differences are obvious. The supra-orbital crest, the facial angle, the maxillary curve, the—"

"But this is my special hobby, and the differences are equally obvious. There is as much difference to my eyes between the leaded bourgeois type of a Times article and the slovenly print of an evening half-penny paper as there could be between your negro and your Esquimau. The detection of types is one of the most elementary branches of knowledge to the special expert in crime, though I confess that once when I was very young I confused the Leeds Mercury with the Western Morning News. But a Times leader is entirely distinctive, and these words could have been taken from nothing else. As it was done yesterday the strong probability was that we should find the words in yesterday's issue."

"So far as I can follow you, then, Mr. Holmes," said Sir Henry Baskerville, "someone cut out this message with a scissors—"

"Nail-scissors," said Holmes. "You can see that it was a very short-bladed scissors, since the cutter had to take two snips over 'keep away.'"

"That is so. Someone, then, cut out the message with a pair of short-bladed scissors, pasted it with paste—"

"Gum," said Holmes.

"With gum on to the paper. But I want to know why the word 'moor' should have been written?"

"Because he could not find it in print. The other words were all simple and might be found in any issue, but 'moor' would be less common."

"Why, of course, that would explain it. Have you read anything else in this message, Mr. Holmes?"

"There are one or two indications, and yet the utmost pains have been taken to remove all clues. The address, you observe is printed in rough characters. But the Times is a paper which is seldom found in any hands but those of the highly educated. We may take it, therefore, that the letter was composed by an educated man who wished to pose as an uneducated one, and his effort to conceal his own writing suggests that that writing might be known, or come to be known, by you. Again, you will observe that the words are not gummed on in an accurate line, but that some are much higher than others. 'Life,' for example is quite out of its proper place. That may point to carelessness or it may point to agitation and hurry upon the part of the cutter. On the whole I incline to the latter view, since the matter was evidently important, and it is unlikely that the composer of such a letter would be careless. If he were in a hurry it opens up the interesting question why he should be in a hurry, since any letter posted up to early morning would reach Sir Henry before he would leave his hotel. Did the composer fear an interruption—and from whom?"

"We are coming now rather into the region of guesswork," said Dr. Mortimer.

"Say, rather, into the region where we balance probabilities and choose the most likely. It is the scientific use of the imagination, but we have always some material basis on which to start our speculation. Now, you would call it a guess, no doubt, but I am almost certain that this address has been written in a hotel."

"How in the world can you say that?"

"If you examine it carefully you will see that both the pen and the ink have given the writer trouble. The pen has spluttered twice in a single word and has run dry three times in a short

address, showing that there was very little ink in the bottle. Now, a private pen or ink-bottle is seldom allowed to be in such a state, and the combination of the two must be quite rare. But you know the hotel ink and the hotel pen, where it is rare to get anything else. Yes, I have very little hesitation in saying that could we examine the waste-paper baskets of the hotels around Charing Cross until we found the remains of the mutilated Times leader we could lay our hands straight upon the person who sent this singular message. Halloa! Halloa! What's this?"

He was carefully examining the foolscap, upon which the words were pasted, holding it only an inch or two from his eyes.

"Well?"

"Nothing," said he, throwing it down. "It is a blank half-sheet of paper, without even a water-mark upon it. I think we have drawn as much as we can from this curious letter; and now, Sir Henry, has anything else of interest happened to you since you have been in London?"

"Why, no, Mr. Holmes. I think not."

"You have not observed anyone follow or watch you?"

"I seem to have walked right into the thick of a dime novel," said our visitor. "Why in thunder should anyone follow or watch me?"

"We are coming to that. You have nothing else to report to us before we go into this matter?"

"Well, it depends upon what you think worth reporting."

"I think anything out of the ordinary routine of life well worth reporting."

Sir Henry smiled. "I don't know much of British life yet, for I have spent nearly all my time in the States and in Canada. But I hope that to lose one of your boots is not part of the ordinary routine of life over here."

"You have lost one of your boots?"

"My dear sir," cried Dr. Mortimer, "it is only mislaid. You will find it when you return to the hotel. What is the use of troubling Mr. Holmes with trifles of this kind?"

"Well, he asked me for anything outside the ordinary routine."

"Exactly," said Holmes, "however foolish the incident may seem. You have lost one of your boots, you say?"

"Well, mislaid it, anyhow. I put them both outside my door last night, and there was only one in the morning. I could get no sense out of the chap who cleans them. The worst of it is that I only bought the pair last night in the Strand, and I have never had them on."

"If you have never worn them, why did you put them out to be cleaned?"

"They were tan boots and had never been varnished. That was why I put them out."

"Then I understand that on your arrival in London yesterday you went out at once and bought a pair of boots?"

"I did a good deal of shopping. Dr. Mortimer here went round with me. You see, if I am to be squire down there I must dress the part, and it may be that I have got a little careless in my ways out West. Among other things I bought these brown boots—gave six dollars for them—and had one stolen before ever I had them on my feet."

"It seems a singularly useless thing to steal," said Sherlock Holmes. "I confess that I share Dr. Mortimer's belief that it will not be long before the missing boot is found."

"And, now, gentlemen," said the baronet with decision, "it seems to me that I have spoken quite enough about the little that I know. It is time that you kept your promise and gave me a full account of what we are all driving at."

"Your request is a very reasonable one," Holmes answered. "Dr. Mortimer, I think you could not do better than to tell your story as you told it to us."

Thus encouraged, our scientific friend drew his papers from his pocket and presented the whole case as he had done upon the morning before. Sir Henry Baskerville listened with the deepest attention and with an occasional exclamation of surprise.

"Well, I seem to have come into an inheritance with a vengeance," said he when the long narrative was finished. "Of course, I've heard of the hound ever since I was in the nursery. It's

the pet story of the family, though I never thought of taking it seriously before. But as to my uncle's death—well, it all seems boiling up in my head, and I can't get it clear yet. You don't seem quite to have made up your mind whether it's a case for a policeman or a clergyman."

"Precisely."

"And now there's this affair of the letter to me at the hotel. I suppose that fits into its place."

"It seems to show that someone knows more than we do about what goes on upon the moor," said Dr. Mortimer.

"And also," said Holmes, "that someone is not ill-disposed towards you, since they warn you of danger."

"Or it may be that they wish, for their own purposes, to scare me away."

"Well, of course, that is possible also. I am very much indebted to you, Dr. Mortimer, for introducing me to a problem which presents several interesting alternatives. But the practical point which we now have to decide, Sir Henry, is whether it is or is not advisable for you to go to Baskerville Hall."

"Why should I not go?"

"There seems to be danger."

"Do you mean danger from this family fiend or do you mean danger from human beings?"

"Well, that is what we have to find out."

"Whichever it is, my answer is fixed. There is no devil in hell, Mr. Holmes, and there is no man upon earth who can prevent me from going to the home of my own people, and you may take that to be my final answer." His dark brows knitted and his face flushed to a dusky red as he spoke. It was evident that the fiery temper of the Baskervilles was not extinct in this their last representative. "Meanwhile," said he, "I have hardly had time to think over all that you have told me. It's a big thing for a man to have to understand and to decide at one sitting. I should like to have a quiet hour by myself to make up my mind. Now, look here, Mr. Holmes, it's half-past eleven now and I am going back right away to my hotel. Suppose you and your

friend, Dr. Watson, come round and lunch with us at two. I'll be able to tell you more clearly then how this thing strikes me."

"Is that convenient to you, Watson?"

"Perfectly."

"Then you may expect us. Shall I have a cab called?"

"I'd prefer to walk, for this affair has flurried me rather."

"I'll join you in a walk, with pleasure," said his companion.

"Then we meet again at two o'clock. Au revoir, and good-morning!"

We heard the steps of our visitors descend the stair and the bang of the front door. In an instant Holmes had changed from the languid dreamer to the man of action.

"Your hat and boots, Watson, quick! Not a moment to lose!" He rushed into his room in his dressing-gown and was back again in a few seconds in a frock-coat. We hurried together down the stairs and into the street. Dr. Mortimer and Baskerville were still visible about two hundred yards ahead of us in the direction of Oxford Street.

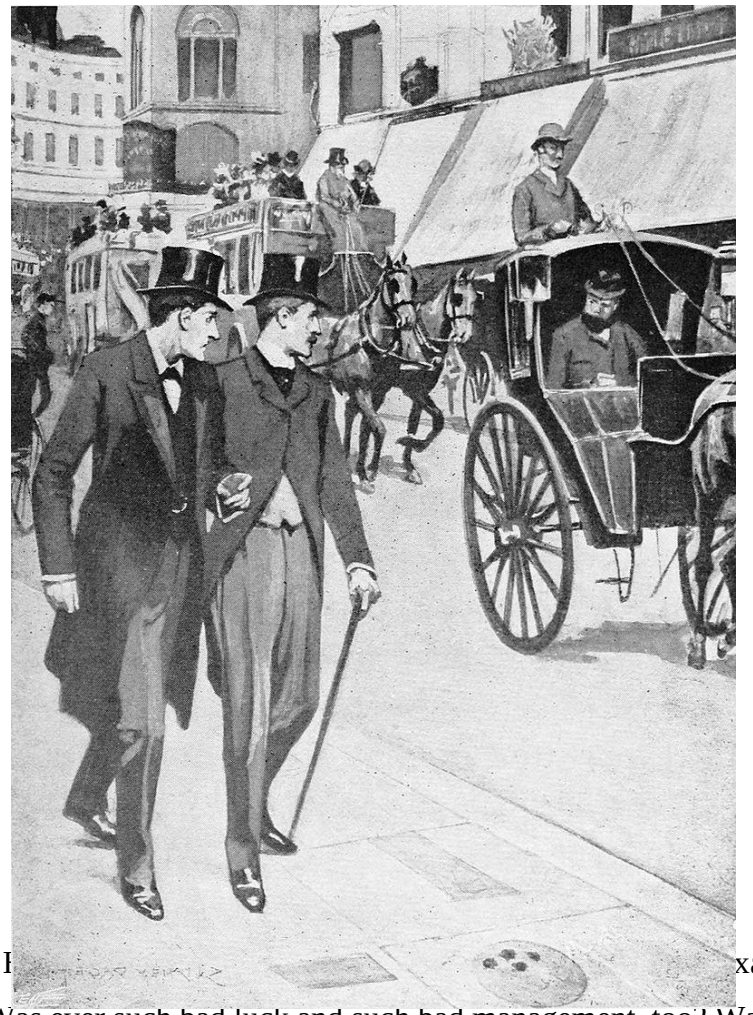
"Shall I run on and stop them?"

"Not for the world, my dear Watson. I am perfectly satisfied with your company if you will tolerate mine. Our friends are wise, for it is certainly a very fine morning for a walk."

He quickened his pace until we had decreased the distance which divided us by about half. Then, still keeping a hundred yards behind, we followed into Oxford Street and so down Regent Street. Once our friends stopped and stared into a shop window, upon which Holmes did the same. An instant afterwards he gave a little cry of satisfaction, and, following the direction of his eager eyes, I saw that a hansom cab with a man inside which had halted on the other side of the street was now proceeding slowly onward again.

"There's our man, Watson! Come along! We'll have a good look at him, if we can do no more."

At that instant I was aware of a bushy black beard and a pair of piercing eyes turned upon us through the side window of the cab. Instantly the trapdoor at the top flew up, something was screamed to the driver, and the cab flew madly off down Regent Street. Holmes looked eagerly round for another, but no empty one was in sight. Then he dashed in wild pursuit amid the stream of the traffic, but the start was too great, and already the cab was out of sight.



"There now!" said H xation from the tide of vehicles. "Was ever such bad luck and such bad management, too? Watson, Watson, if you are an honest man you will record this also and set it against my successes!"

"Who was the man?"

"I have not an idea."

"A spy?"

"Well, it was evident from what we have heard that Baskerville has been very closely shadowed by someone since he has been in town. How else could it be known so quickly that it was the Northumberland Hotel which he had chosen? If they had followed him the first day

I argued that they would follow him also the second. You may have observed that I twice strolled over to the window while Dr. Mortimer was reading his legend."

"Yes, I remember."

"I was looking out for loiterers in the street, but I saw none. We are dealing with a clever man, Watson. This matter cuts very deep, and though I have not finally made up my mind whether it is a benevolent or a malevolent agency which is in touch with us, I am conscious always of power and design. When our friends left I at once followed them in the hopes of marking down their invisible attendant. So wily was he that he had not trusted himself upon foot, but he had availed himself of a cab so that he could loiter behind or dash past them and so escape their notice. His method had the additional advantage that if they were to take a cab he was all ready to follow them. It has, however, one obvious disadvantage."

"It puts him in the power of the cabman."

"Exactly."

"What a pity we did not get the number!"

"My dear Watson, clumsy as I have been, you surely do not seriously imagine that I neglected to get the number? No. 2704 is our man. But that is no use to us for the moment."

"I fail to see how you could have done more."

"On observing the cab I should have instantly turned and walked in the other direction. I should then at my leisure have hired a second cab and followed the first at a respectful distance, or, better still, have driven to the Northumberland Hotel and waited there. When our unknown had followed Baskerville home we should have had the opportunity of playing his own game upon himself and seeing where he made for. As it is, by an indiscreet eagerness, which was taken advantage of with extraordinary quickness and energy by our opponent, we have betrayed ourselves and lost our man."

We had been sauntering slowly down Regent Street during this conversation, and Dr. Mortimer, with his companion, had long vanished in front of us.

"There is no object in our following them," said Holmes. "The shadow has departed and will not return. We must see what further cards we have in our hands and play them with decision. Could you swear to that man's face within the cab?"

"I could swear only to the beard."

"And so could I—from which I gather that in all probability it was a false one. A clever man upon so delicate an errand has no use for a beard save to conceal his features. Come in here, Watson!"

He turned into one of the district messenger offices, where he was warmly greeted by the manager.

"Ah, Wilson, I see you have not forgotten the little case in which I had the good fortune to help you?"

"No, sir, indeed I have not. You saved my good name, and perhaps my life."

"My dear fellow, you exaggerate. I have some recollection, Wilson, that you had among your boys a lad named Cartwright, who showed some ability during the investigation."

"Yes, sir, he is still with us."

"Could you ring him up?—thank you! And I should be glad to have change of this five-pound note."

A lad of fourteen, with a bright, keen face, had obeyed the summons of the manager. He stood now gazing with great reverence at the famous detective.

"Let me have the Hotel Directory," said Holmes. "Thank you! Now, Cartwright, there are the names of twenty-three hotels here, all in the immediate neighbourhood of Charing Cross. Do you see?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will visit each of these in turn."

"Yes, sir."

"You will begin in each case by giving the outside porter one shilling. Here are twenty-three shillings."

"Yes, sir."

"You will tell him that you want to see the waste-paper of yesterday. You will say that an important telegram has miscarried and that you are looking for it. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"But what you are really looking for is the centre page of the Times with some holes cut in it with scissors. Here is a copy of the Times. It is this page. You could easily recognize it, could you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"In each case the outside porter will send for the hall porter, to whom also you will give a shilling. Here are twenty-three shillings. You will then learn in possibly twenty cases out of the twenty-three that the waste of the day before has been burned or removed. In the three other cases you will be shown a heap of paper and you will look for this page of the Times among it. The odds are enormously against your finding it. There are ten shillings over in case of emergencies. Let me have a report by wire at Baker Street before evening. And now, Watson, it only remains for us to find out by wire the identity of the cabman, No. 2704, and then we will drop into one of the Bond Street picture galleries and fill in the time until we are due at the hotel."

Chapter 5. Three Broken Threads

Sherlock Holmes had, in a very remarkable degree, the power of detaching his mind at will. For two hours the strange business in which we had been involved appeared to be forgotten, and he was entirely absorbed in the pictures of the modern Belgian masters. He would talk of

nothing but art, of which he had the crudest ideas, from our leaving the gallery until we found ourselves at the Northumberland Hotel.

"Sir Henry Baskerville is upstairs expecting you," said the clerk. "He asked me to show you up at once when you came."

"Have you any objection to my looking at your register?" said Holmes.

"Not in the least."

The book showed that two names had been added after that of Baskerville. One was Theophilus Johnson and family, of Newcastle; the other Mrs. Oldmore and maid, of High Lodge, Alton.

"Surely that must be the same Johnson whom I used to know," said Holmes to the porter. "A lawyer, is he not, gray-headed, and walks with a limp?"

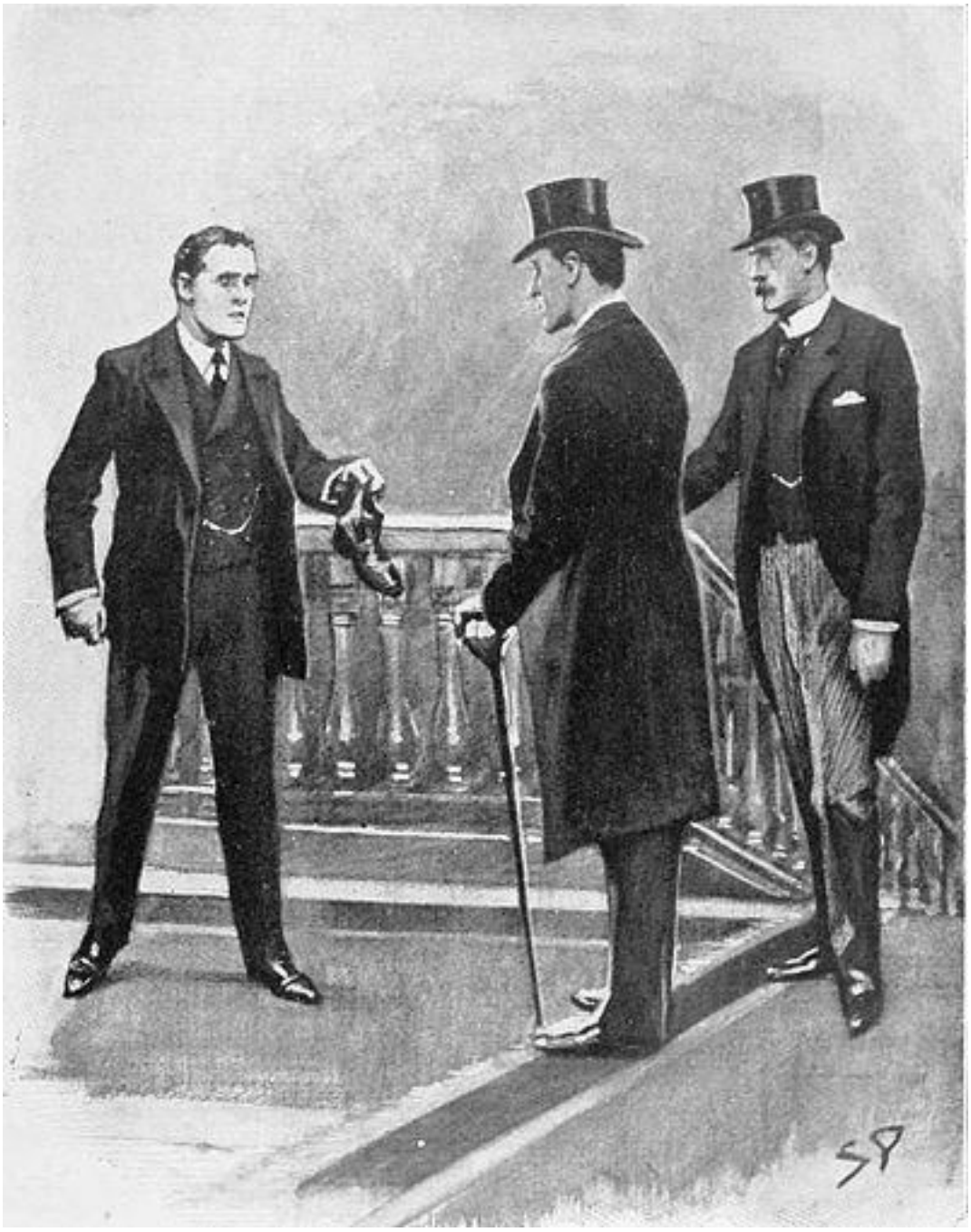
"No, sir, this is Mr. Johnson, the coal-owner, a very active gentleman, not older than yourself."

"Surely you are mistaken about his trade?"

"No, sir! he has used this hotel for many years, and he is very well known to us."

"Ah, that settles it. Mrs. Oldmore, too; I seem to remember the name. Excuse my curiosity, but often in calling upon one friend one finds another."

"She is an invalid lady, sir. Her husband was once mayor of Gloucester. She always comes to us when she is in town."



"Thank you; I am afraid I cannot claim her acquaintance. We have established a most important fact by these questions, Watson," he continued in a low voice as we went upstairs together. "We know now that the people who are so interested in our friend have not settled down in his own hotel. That means that while they are, as we have seen, very anxious to watch him, they are equally anxious that he should not see them. Now, this is a most suggestive fact."

"What does it suggest?"

"It suggests—halloa, my dear fellow, what on earth is the matter?"

As we came round the top of the stairs we had run up against Sir Henry Baskerville himself. His face was flushed with anger, and he held an old and dusty boot in one of his hands. So furious was he that he was hardly articulate, and when he did speak it was in a much broader and more Western dialect than any which we had heard from him in the morning.

"Seems to me they are playing me for a sucker in this hotel," he cried. "They'll find they've started in to monkey with the wrong man unless they are careful. By thunder, if that chap can't find my missing boot there will be trouble. I can take a joke with the best, Mr. Holmes, but they've got a bit over the mark this time."

"Still looking for your boot?"

"Yes, sir, and mean to find it."

"But, surely, you said that it was a new brown boot?"

"So it was, sir. And now it's an old black one."

"What! you don't mean to say—?"

"That's just what I do mean to say. I only had three pairs in the world—the new brown, the old black, and the patent leathers, which I am wearing. Last night they took one of my brown ones, and today they have sneaked one of the black. Well, have you got it? Speak out, man, and don't stand staring!"

An agitated German waiter had appeared upon the scene.

"No, sir; I have made inquiry all over the hotel, but I can hear no word of it."

"Well, either that boot comes back before sundown or I'll see the manager and tell him that I go right straight out of this hotel."

"It shall be found, sir—I promise you that if you will have a little patience it will be found."

"Mind it is, for it's the last thing of mine that I'll lose in this den of thieves. Well, well, Mr. Holmes, you'll excuse my troubling you about such a trifle—"

"I think it's well worth troubling about."

"Why, you look very serious over it."

"How do you explain it?"

"I just don't attempt to explain it. It seems the very maddest, queerest thing that ever happened to me."

"The queerest perhaps—" said Holmes thoughtfully.

"What do you make of it yourself?"

"Well, I don't profess to understand it yet. This case of yours is very complex, Sir Henry. When taken in conjunction with your uncle's death I am not sure that of all the five hundred cases of capital importance which I have handled there is one which cuts so deep. But we hold several threads in our hands, and the odds are that one or other of them guides us to the truth. We may waste time in following the wrong one, but sooner or later we must come upon the right."

We had a pleasant luncheon in which little was said of the business which had brought us together. It was in the private sitting-room to which we afterwards repaired that Holmes asked Baskerville what were his intentions.

"To go to Baskerville Hall."

"And when?"

"At the end of the week."

"On the whole," said Holmes, "I think that your decision is a wise one. I have ample evidence that you are being dogged in London, and amid the millions of this great city it is difficult to discover who these people are or what their object can be. If their intentions are evil they might do you a mischief, and we should be powerless to prevent it. You did not know, Dr. Mortimer, that you were followed this morning from my house?"

Dr. Mortimer started violently. "Followed! By whom?"

"That, unfortunately, is what I cannot tell you. Have you among your neighbours or acquaintances on Dartmoor any man with a black, full beard?"

"No—or, let me see—why, yes. Barrymore, Sir Charles's butler, is a man with a full, black beard."

"Ha! Where is Barrymore?"

"He is in charge of the Hall."

"We had best ascertain if he is really there, or if by any possibility he might be in London."

"How can you do that?"

"Give me a telegraph form. 'Is all ready for Sir Henry?' That will do. Address to Mr. Barrymore, Baskerville Hall. What is the nearest telegraph-office? Grimpen. Very good, we will send a second wire to the postmaster, Grimpen: 'Telegram to Mr. Barrymore to be delivered into his own hand. If absent, please return wire to Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel.' That should let us know before evening whether Barrymore is at his post in Devonshire or not."

"That's so," said Baskerville. "By the way, Dr. Mortimer, who is this Barrymore, anyhow?"

"He is the son of the old caretaker, who is dead. They have looked after the Hall for four generations now. So far as I know, he and his wife are as respectable a couple as any in the county."

"At the same time," said Baskerville, "it's clear enough that so long as there are none of the family at the Hall these people have a mighty fine home and nothing to do."

"That is true."

"Did Barrymore profit at all by Sir Charles's will?" asked Holmes.

"He and his wife had five hundred pounds each."

"Ha! Did they know that they would receive this?"

"Yes; Sir Charles was very fond of talking about the provisions of his will."

"That is very interesting."

"I hope," said Dr. Mortimer, "that you do not look with suspicious eyes upon everyone who received a legacy from Sir Charles, for I also had a thousand pounds left to me."

"Indeed! And anyone else?"

"There were many insignificant sums to individuals, and a large number of public charities. The residue all went to Sir Henry."

"And how much was the residue?"

"Seven hundred and forty thousand pounds."

Holmes raised his eyebrows in surprise. "I had no idea that so gigantic a sum was involved," said he.

"Sir Charles had the reputation of being rich, but we did not know how very rich he was until we came to examine his securities. The total value of the estate was close on to a million."

"Dear me! It is a stake for which a man might well play a desperate game. And one more question, Dr. Mortimer. Supposing that anything happened to our young friend here—you will forgive the unpleasant hypothesis!—who would inherit the estate?"

"Since Rodger Baskerville, Sir Charles's younger brother died unmarried, the estate would descend to the Desmonds, who are distant cousins. James Desmond is an elderly clergyman in Westmoreland."

"Thank you. These details are all of great interest. Have you met Mr. James Desmond?"

"Yes; he once came down to visit Sir Charles. He is a man of venerable appearance and of saintly life. I remember that he refused to accept any settlement from Sir Charles, though he pressed it upon him."

"And this man of simple tastes would be the heir to Sir Charles's thousands."

"He would be the heir to the estate because that is entailed. He would also be the heir to the money unless it were willed otherwise by the present owner, who can, of course, do what he likes with it."

"And have you made your will, Sir Henry?"

"No, Mr. Holmes, I have not. I've had no time, for it was only yesterday that I learned how matters stood. But in any case I feel that the money should go with the title and estate. That was my poor uncle's idea. How is the owner going to restore the glories of the Baskervilles if he has not money enough to keep up the property? House, land, and dollars must go together."

"Quite so. Well, Sir Henry, I am of one mind with you as to the advisability of your going down to Devonshire without delay. There is only one provision which I must make. You certainly must not go alone."

"Dr. Mortimer returns with me."

"But Dr. Mortimer has his practice to attend to, and his house is miles away from yours. With all the goodwill in the world he may be unable to help you. No, Sir Henry, you must take with you someone, a trusty man, who will be always by your side."

"Is it possible that you could come yourself, Mr. Holmes?"

"If matters came to a crisis I should endeavour to be present in person; but you can understand that, with my extensive consulting practice and with the constant appeals which reach me from many quarters, it is impossible for me to be absent from London for an indefinite time. At the present instant one of the most revered names in England is being besmirched by a blackmailer, and only I can stop a disastrous scandal. You will see how impossible it is for me to go to Dartmoor."

"Whom would you recommend, then?"

Holmes laid his hand upon my arm. "If my friend would undertake it there is no man who is better worth having at your side when you are in a tight place. No one can say so more confidently than I."

The proposition took me completely by surprise, but before I had time to answer, Baskerville seized me by the hand and wrung it heartily.

"Well, now, that is real kind of you, Dr. Watson," said he. "You see how it is with me, and you know just as much about the matter as I do. If you will come down to Baskerville Hall and see me through I'll never forget it."

The promise of adventure had always a fascination for me, and I was complimented by the words of Holmes and by the eagerness with which the baronet hailed me as a companion.

"I will come, with pleasure," said I. "I do not know how I could employ my time better."

"And you will report very carefully to me," said Holmes. "When a crisis comes, as it will do, I will direct how you shall act. I suppose that by Saturday all might be ready?"

"Would that suit Dr. Watson?"

"Perfectly."

"Then on Saturday, unless you hear to the contrary, we shall meet at the ten-thirty train from Paddington."

We had risen to depart when Baskerville gave a cry, of triumph, and diving into one of the corners of the room he drew a brown boot from under a cabinet.

"My missing boot!" he cried.

"May all our difficulties vanish as easily!" said Sherlock Holmes.

"But it is a very singular thing," Dr. Mortimer remarked. "I searched this room carefully before lunch."

"And so did I," said Baskerville. "Every inch of it."

"There was certainly no boot in it then."

"In that case the waiter must have placed it there while we were lunching."