

The Hound

Holmes's plan is beginning to be evident. He wants to use Sir Henry to convince the Stapletons that they are going to return to London.

When they arrive at Mrs Lyons', Holmes informs her that they are investigating about Sir Charles Baskerville's murder and that Mr Stapleton and his wife are implicated in it.

The fact that Stapleton is married ¹upsets Mrs Lyons, who decides to say what she knows: "This man offered to marry me after the divorce from my husband. He has always lied² to me. I was only a tool³ in his hands. Ask me what you like and I will tell you all. He dictated to me the letter that fixed an appointment with Sir Charles at the gate at 10 o'clock in the evening when he died. Sir Charles could help me with the expenses connected with the divorce, but later on Stapleton dissuaded me from going to the appointment and from speaking about it."

"What did he tell you?" asks Holmes.

"He told me that he didn't want another man to give me help and that he was a poor man but he wanted to give me all his money to remove the obstacles that divided us," answers Mrs Lyons.

"You are lucky to be still alive," concludes Holmes.

It's five-forty. The London Express bringing Lestrade to Coombe Tracey comes into the station.

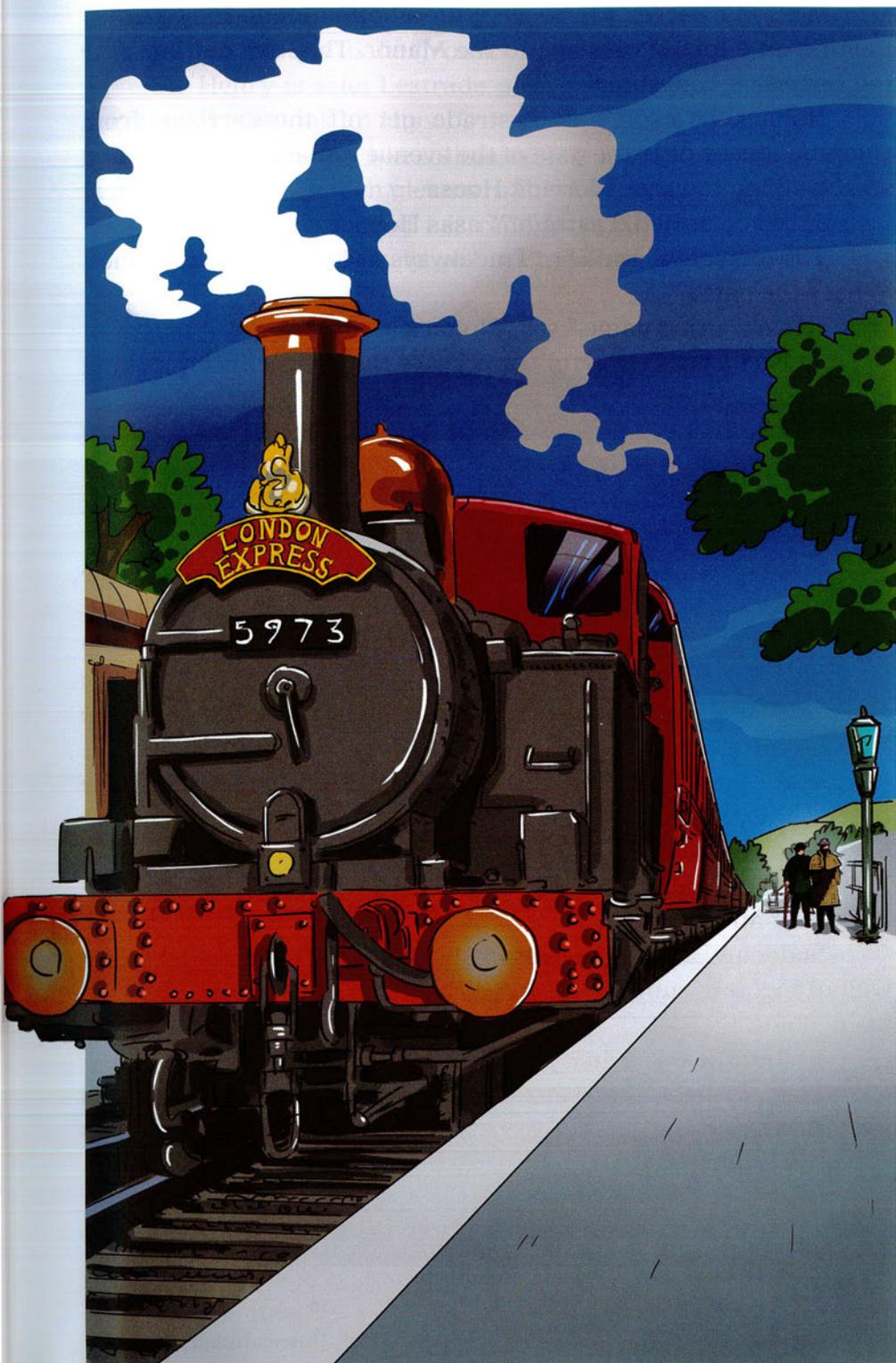
"I'm sure you won't forget your first visit to Dartmoor," says Holmes to the police officer.

Sherlock Holmes likes to dominate and surprise those who are around him and is also very cautious, so he is reluctant to communicate his plans in advance. The result is that Watson always suffers when he feels that they are near the solution of a case but he doesn't know what course of action Holmes will take.

¹ upsets: sconvolge

² has... lied: ha... mentito

³ tool: strumento



Watson's nerves are tense with emotion while they are returning on a hired⁴ carriage to the Manor. They are getting near their supreme⁵ adventure.

Holmes, Watson and Lestrade get off the carriage from Coombe Tracey near the gate of the avenue to Baskerville Hall and start walking towards Merripit House.

"Are you armed, Lestrade?" asks Holmes.

The detective smiles: "I'm always ready for emergencies. What's the game?"

"It's a waiting game," says Holmes.

"It isn't a very cheerful place," says the police officer, looking at the fog⁶ over the moor.

When they are about two hundred yards⁷ from the house and can see its lights, they stop.

"We will wait here. You, Watson, move quietly and see what they are doing," says Holmes.

Watson reaches the window of the dining room and sees Sir Henry and Stapleton sitting at the table.

Suddenly, Stapleton stands up and goes out to a shed⁸ in the orchard.⁹ A key turns in a lock and after that there is a strange noise of a fight. Then, Stapleton comes out of the shed and into the house again.

Watson reaches his colleagues. Holmes is impatient because the fog is moving towards them. "If Sir Henry isn't out in a quarter of an hour, we won't be able to see our hands!"

At last, a sound of quick steps breaks the silence. It's Sir Henry, swift¹⁰ and uneasy.

Suddenly, a huge, dreadful¹¹ black hound emerges from the wall of fog. It is running after Sir Henry and fire comes out of its open mouth.

At first the three men are paralysed with terror.

Then, Holmes and Watson shoot at the monster, which gives a horrible howl but doesn't stop. It reaches Sir Henry and jumps

- 4** hired: a noleggio
5 supreme: la più grande
6 fog:



- 7** yards: iarde
(1 yard = 0,914 m)
8 shed: casotto, baracca

- 9** orchard:



- 10** swift: rapido
11 dreadful: terrificante

upon him, but Holmes shoots at its flank.¹² With a last howl the gigantic hound falls to the ground. It is dead.

Sir Henry is safe! Lestrade gives him some brandy and two frightened eyes look up at us.

The hound looks like a lioness, terrible and savage, covered with phosphorus, which gleams in the darkness.

Holmes, Watson and Lestrade leave Sir Henry sitting on a rock, pale and trembling, to go back to Merripit House.



¹² flank: fianco