



## FROM PAGE TO STAGE:

### A Conversation with L.B. Morse

How do you bring a gritty, Victorian world to life? That was the challenge for Seattle Rep's resident scenic designer **L. B. Morse**.

#### scenic de-sign-er noun

1. one who works in tandem with a director to create an overall visual concept for the production and designs the environment of the stage.
2. one who devises scenery, often for theatre.

L.B. Morse. Photo: Alan Alabastro.

#### What is your overall design concept for this show?

We follow Sherlock and Watson to so many different locations in the show that we wanted to create an environment that has a sense of period and place, but can transform gracefully and quickly. We came up with the idea of framing the whole space with brick and iron-work that is reminiscent of the more industrial side of Victorian England, in particular Victoria Station. With the combination of shifting scenic elements and very period-specific props, we flow from one location to another. We're also very interested in seeing the events of the play unfold onstage from the perspective of Sherlock, and the manner in which we move from place to place will reflect that. It will be fun, surprising, and suspenseful!

#### How did you adapt your design to fit the fast-paced scenes for the show?

From the very beginning we knew that keeping the momentum of the show moving forward is key, and the way we achieve that is through the use of the flexible space we have created. We are able to shift the geography of our locations using a series of moving columns, and we set the specific location through the sparing use of period props and furniture, making sure that nothing we use is extraneous.

For example, 221B Baker Street could be a fully furnished Victorian drawing room, with large bookshelves, period carpets, fireplace, paintings and wall hangings, and so on. Instead of filling the stage with all of that dressing, we boil it down to the essentials: Holmes' desk and armchair, a breakfast table with two chairs, and a pair of windows that look out onto the street.

This minimum of stage dressing sends a very clear message about where we are, but doesn't clutter the stage with a bunch of unnecessary elements that would slow down our transitions between locations.

#### How are you keeping new technology [projections] in line with your design concept?

It is important to us that we keep a sense of the late Victorian era in all of our design elements, and the projections are no exception. All of the projections will have a very period, analog feel to them. All moving images will mimic early film... black and white, grainy and a little stuttery.

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" THE WORLD IS FULL OF OBVIOUS THINGS WHICH NOBODY BY ANY CHANCE EVER OBSERVES."  
—SHERLOCK HOLMES IN *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*

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Expect suspense and laughter alike in this popular Sherlock Holmes tale. Brash Canadian Henry Baskerville has inherited a British manor...and a mystery. Strange things are happening on the moor and someone is trying to kill him. Could it be tied to the legend of a fearsome diabolical hound? Can you solve the case before the world's most famous detective? Join us for this classic Victorian whodunit.

# STUDY GUIDE

Written by Elizabeth Ingram, Education Intern.

## THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

NOVEMBER 15-DECEMBER 15, 2013

A SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERY

BASED ON THE ORIGINAL STORY BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
ADAPTED BY DAVID PICHETTE AND R. HAMILTON WRIGHT  
DIRECTED BY ALLISON NARVER

Darragh Kennan and Andrew McGinn. Photo by Andry Laurence

# THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

## THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE

Sherlock Holmes remains one of the most famous fictional characters of the past century and his popularity continues on to this day. Perhaps you've seen the recent films or television series. Arthur Conan Doyle created a detective who relied heavily on a form of observation known as "abductive reasoning," which is to create a criminal hypothesis based on observable clues. This form of crime solving came to be known as "Holmsian deduction."

Holmes first came into real fame with serialized stories in *The Strand*, a monthly magazine. Each month, a new short story reached its audiences, and subscriptions to *The Strand* skyrocketed, reaching their peak with the serialization of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Later, Doyle's short stories were condensed into larger anthologies that could be purchased individually.

SHERLOCK HOLMES



DR. MORTIMER



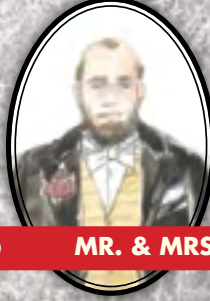
MR. FRANKLAND



HANK BASKERVILLE



MR. & MRS. BARRYMORE



DR. WATSON



JACK & BERYL STAPLETON



## ENGLISH MANNERS for DUMMIES

Hank, or as his English counterparts prefer to call him, Sir Henry, struggles to fit in and make sense of many of the English idiosyncrasies around him. Born and raised in Canada, many of the social terms and obligations remain a mystery to him. Check out some odd late 19th century etiquette advice:

**NEVER** refer to another adult by his or her first name in public.

**ALWAYS** wear gloves in public and formal situations, unless one is eating.

**LADIES**, never sit with crossed legs.

**ALWAYS** be punctual for a dinner party; food may not be served until all are seated.

**NEVER** wear anything but a silk top hat with your frock coat.

**ALWAYS** bow upon introduction; one must never offer one's hand to a lady.

### SHERLOCK HOLMES

London's finest detective, Holmes' inquisitive nature and need for adventure seem to make this the perfect case. But somehow, he finds himself tied up in business in London.

### HANK BASKERVILLE

A cattle-herder born and raised in rural Canada, Hank finds himself thrown into the life and times of the English gentry. Though on the surface the neighboring families seem to wish him well, are there darker inclinations hidden below the surface?

### DR. JAMES MORTIMER

This country doctor first brings the legend of the "Hound of the Baskervilles" to the attention of Holmes and Watson. According to one of the residents of the moors, he stood as a "paid minion" of Charles [Baskerville], who left him a surprising sum in his will.

### MR. AND MRS. BARRYMORE

Late Sir Charles' butler and cook, the Barrymores served Sir Charles for years. However, with the promise of a large sum in his will, could even his most loyal servants be induced to murder?

### MR. FRANKLAND

A rash, quick-tempered man, Frankland makes his dislike of any and all Baskervilles known. He feels the Baskerville family has stolen and looked down upon his own for generations and refuses to forget it.

### DR. JOHN WATSON

Holmes' trusted partner and friend, Watson agrees to look closely at the Baskerville case. Charged with protecting Hank, Watson finds himself hard-pressed to keep Hank from following in the footsteps of his uncle.

### SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE

A nervous, seemingly charitable man, Charles, the Lord of Baskerville Hall, is found dead just outside the dark moors. Is the fateful "Hound of the Baskervilles" to blame, or could it be one of his jealous, scheming neighbors?

### JACK AND BERYL STAPLETON

Seemingly good-natured, this brother and sister duo is relatively new to the moors. Stapleton, an eccentric naturalist, and his sister Beryl seem to have a deep knowledge of the many secrets of the moors.

Costume sketches courtesy of Deb Trout.

## A MYSTERY INSPIRED BY THE MOORS

When Arthur Conan Doyle decided he needed to write another Holmes story, he headed off to Devon to explore the Dartmoor, a rural region in Southwest England. While traveling, he may have been inspired by the many myths and legends of the area including tales of pixies, a headless horseman, and even one involving a large black dog.

According to one local 17th century tale, Squire Richard Cabell chased after his wife in a jealous rage on the moor and stabbed her to death. Moments after her murder, her faithful hound attacked Cabell and ripped out his throat. Every year on the anniversary of his death, he and his vengeful hellhounds sweep across the moor terrorizing the countryside. It's said that if one runs around his tomb thirteen times and sticks one's finger between the iron bars to the keyhole, that Richard Cabell himself will chew it off.

It's all conjecture on our part, but we do know one source of Doyle's inspiration for certain: his coachman for the trip, Harry Baskerville, provided Doyle with a name for his protagonist!

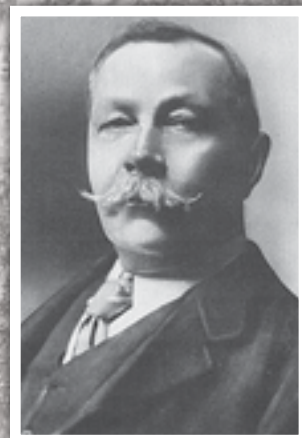
## HIS CREATOR

Originally educated as a doctor, Arthur Conan Doyle began writing merely as a way to pad his income. A somewhat unexceptional doctor, Doyle turned to writing as his sole profession in 1891. Doyle had written two previous Holmes novels, *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of the Four*. Once Doyle secured a monthly contract with *The Strand* magazine, serialized or monthly chapters of stories featuring Sherlock Holmes took off.

Over the course of two years, Doyle published 23 short stories for *The Strand*. In 1893, having grown tired of Holmes, Doyle had him plummet to his death, much to the outrage of his audience: one woman wrote to him, "You brute!" In 1901, he resurrected Holmes, writing another serialized story, this one entitled *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The immense success of *Hound* encouraged Doyle to return Holmes from the dead, continuing his adventures for his final 33 short stories and one novel, bringing his total to 56 short stories and 4 novels.

## FUN FACT:

Doyle never had Holmes say, "Elementary, my dear Watson." That phrase originated in later Sherlock Holmes films in the late 1920's.



Left: Arthur Conan Doyle, 1914. Right: Pichette and Wright at *The Hound of the Baskervilles* reading, 2013. Photo: Andry Laurence.

## THE ADAPTORS: DAVID PICHETTE AND R. HAMILTON WRIGHT

Before this commission for the Rep, Pichette and Wright had success with an adaptation of a crime noir classic *Double Indemnity*. (Google the film, you won't be sorry!) Buoyed by that success, they turned to Sherlock Holmes.

The two share an easy camaraderie when it comes to the writing process, and according to Pichette: "We share the same kind of boy's true adventure literature tastes. We read basically the same things as kids:

Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs, H. Rider Haggard—all of those big, epic adventure stories."

How do two people write one scene? They each take a stab at it, read each other's drafts, discuss, and rewrite. Often times, they end up liking each other's scenes better than their own. Because this adaptation is a world premiere, rewrites will continue throughout the rehearsal process.