

Tenth Essay Assignment: The Hound of the Baskervilles

Topic: Reason vs. The Supernatural

The Prompt

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle pit the world's most famous detective against a "hell-hound" that seems to defy the laws of nature.

Write a 5-paragraph analytical essay exploring the tension between superstition and logic. How does the bleak setting of the Dartmoor moors amplify the characters' fears of the supernatural, and how does Sherlock Holmes eventually prove that "man-made" evil is behind the legend?

Requirements

- Introduction: Discuss the legend of the Baskerville curse. End with a thesis statement about how Holmes's reliance on facts and evidence triumphs over the fear of the unknown.
 - Body Paragraph 1: The Power of Setting. Analyze how the moor (the fog, the Grimpen Mire, the eerie sounds) creates an atmosphere where people are willing to believe in ghosts.
 - Body Paragraph 2: The Red Herrings. Discuss how Dr. Mortimer and the neighbors (like the Barrymores or Selden) distract Watson from the logical truth.
 - Body Paragraph 3: The Reveal of the Villain. Analyze Stapleton's methods. How did he use the *appearance* of the supernatural (phosphorus, the giant dog) to commit a very "human" crime?
 - Conclusion: Summarize how the mystery is solved. Reflect on why readers are so drawn to stories where logic conquers superstition.
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Grading Rubric: The Hound of the Baskervilles

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (90–100%)	Meets Expectations (75–89%)	Needs Improvement (<75%)
Logic vs. Mystery	Clearly explains how Holmes uses deduction to dismantle the supernatural theory.	Identifies that the hound was fake but lacks depth on the deductive process.	Confused by the plot; treats the ghost stories as facts.
Atmospheric Analysis	Strong focus on how the moor acts as a "character" to influence the plot.	Mentions the setting but doesn't connect it to the characters' fear.	Ignores the importance of the setting/mood.
Textual Evidence	Quotes specific "clues" (the boot, the warning note, the phosphorus).	Includes general references to the hound or the mire.	Lacks specific details or quotes from the text.
Tone & Flow	Uses a formal, detective-like analytical tone with smooth transitions.	Clear writing with a standard essay structure.	Informal tone or disorganized ideas.