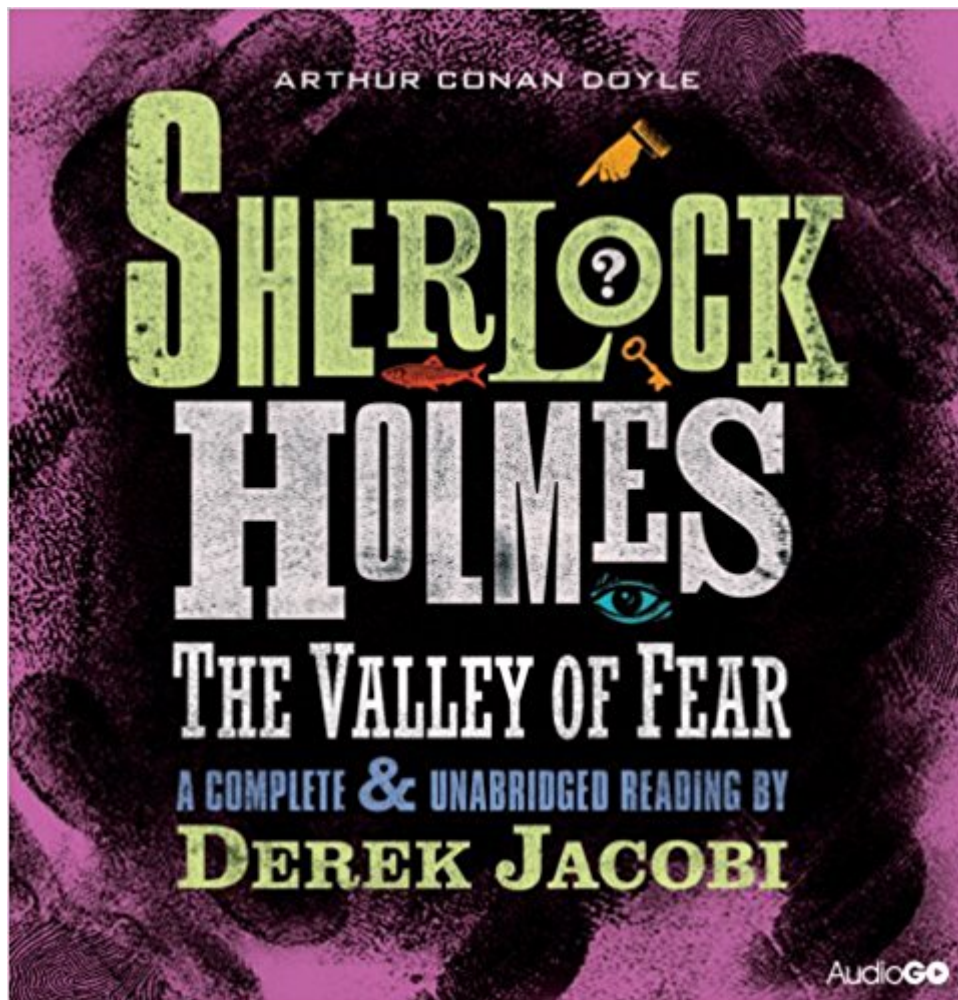


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# Sherlock Holmes: The Valley Of Fear



## Synopsis

"It is the Valley of Fear, the Valley of Death. The terror is in the hearts of the people from the dusk to the dawn. Wait, young man, and you will learn for yourself." Sherlock Holmes is intrigued and disturbed when he receives an ominous coded message: a Mr. Douglas of Birlstone House is in terrible danger. Before Holmes can act, shocking news arrives. Douglas has been found dead—his face blown off by a shotgun. Scotland Yard is stumped. Was this suicide or murder? But Holmes is in no doubt. For he recognizes the calling card of his nemesis: Professor James Moriarty. In this thrilling tale of fear and tyranny, stretching from the stark American coal valleys to an English country manor, Holmes must battle his greatest—and most lethal—enemy. 6 CDs. 6 hrs 17 mins.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up-A coded warning of imminent danger sends Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson to the country house of the reclusive Jack Douglas. When they arrive too late to prevent a tragic death, they must follow bewildering clues and find a murderer. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

'Holmes is a mesmerising creation and Conan Doyle a master storyteller' The Times 'The immense talent, passion and literary brilliance that Conan Doyle brought to his work gives him a unique place in English letters' --Stephen Fry --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

The Sherlock Holmes canon includes a total of 60 stories from the original author, AC Doyle. Of the 60, only four were full novels including this one. The rest are short stories published in five books, totaling 9 books. The first two stories penned by Doyle were the novels, *Study in Scarlet* (where Holmes and Watson first meet), and *A Sign of the Four* (which includes Watson meeting his wife). This is followed by short stories in book 3, the *Adventures of SH*. Ideally the stories are best read in order, but not critical. Unlike the rest of the canon, the two novels, *Hound of the Baskervilles* and *Valley of Fear*, can be read at any time - especially since they each defy the chronology. *Hound* was written about 8 years after the short story, *The Final Solution*, when Holmes died in a mortal struggle with the Napoleon of crime, Professor Moriarty, who was also killed. (But, Holmes doesn't die and is brought back, very cleverly and very credibly, 10 years later, in the story, *The Empty House*, written 2 years after *Hound*. Anyway, 10 years after all that Doyle wrote, *The Valley of Fear* - which is one of two stories that include Prof Moriarty - this is not a spoiler to the story and the Prof is only talked about in present tense. I guess my point is, this novel, and *Hound of the Baskervilles* can be read at any time whereas everything else is slightly better if read in order. Okay, enough of the background on the canon. *Valley of Fear* is simply a great read with wonderful twists at the end that the reader will not likely see coming. I would put *Valley* and *Hound* as the two best novels, with *Hound* perhaps slightly better, but better is all about taste and preference. Anyway, this novel is broken down into two main parts, Part 1 is the Murder mystery, who killed...? Part 2 is a backstory, about 20 years earlier and has nothing to do with Sherlock Holmes. The part 2 story provides the motivation for the murder mystery in part 1. This format is the same as found in the first two novels but the backstory here is probably the best of the three - Doyle now has almost 30 years of writing experience. There is a very short part 3, the Epilogue which brings us back to Baker Street for a final update. *The Valley of Fear* part 1 mystery the reader gets most of the clues the same time as Holmes does and is more or less free to try to figure things out himself but as I mentioned, there are twists and nothing in *Valley of Fear* is what it seems!!!! One noticeable difference for myself, who has now read 7 of the 9 books, and possibly fellow Sherlockians, is that the deep friendship between Holmes and Watson is just not there. The first page was almost disturbing in that regard. Watson is more of an object than a subject to Holmes, more like the modern adaptations. It's just something that jumped out at me since other than the *À Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Granada Television Series* *À series*, which is extremely faithful to the original stories, Holmes and Watson have a deep personal friendship and respect. Watson is a friend, gentlemen, medic, soldier, and chronicler - not the bumbling sidekick of the Basil Rathbone movies. Anyway, the story, both part 1

and 2, are excellent and much better than I expected. Highly recommended.

This is actually one of the better Sherlock Holmes books, as far as I'm concerned, because while reading it, I was very much reminded of just how wonderfully well written and incredibly inventive Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's very first story featuring the famous detective really was. Doyle's 'The Valley of Fear' isn't quite the sterling caliber of the seminal 'A Study in Scarlet,' of course, but it comes awfully close, because, in a similar fashion to the earlier work, the story is divided into two distinctly different parts. Surprisingly enough, the latter portion of the book hardly features the main characters, Holmes and Watson, at all! Even more startling is the fact that the solution of the crime is actually presented at the end of the first half of the book! What's most stunning and truly laudable of all, is that the second half, which is primarily a backstory, manages to be even much, much more of a page turner than the first part. By my way of thinking, that's superb storytelling, no matter how you slice it. I've seen some reviewers deride this book as being of somewhat lesser quality than other volumes in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes collection, but DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT! The Valley of Fear may not be particularly engaging at first, but if you stick with it, the book is more than well worth reading.

How can you ever go wrong with the author who gave us the greatest detective in the world, Sherlock Holmes. I've read this before a short time ago, but I still enjoyed it since I had forgotten some of the details from the original Holmes case that started it all. It's always great to see good triumph over evil; too bad it doesn't always translate to real life situations.

Suspense!! Sherlock Holmes at its best. I love all Sherlock Holmes stories. The Valley of Fear is somewhat unique because it steps back and tells a whole story within a story. It is so captivating the reader is sure to have a hard time getting up in the morning for lack of sleep...

This is the least popular of ACD's four Sherlock Holmes novels, which I've never been able to understand: as somebody who's read and watched far too many mysteries and can usually predict the solutions to them fairly early in the running, I always remember getting surprised twice! I'm surprised in the course of "The Valley of Fear." Sir Arthur, as we all know, could get a bit wobbly on the details (Sherlock would've worn out his eyes rolling them at his biographer:-), but it takes extraordinary narrative coordination and finesse to pull off surprises in a novel without them seeming gimmicky; and they don't here. Give this volume a chance and it'll win

you over *Study in Scarlet* – though in fairness, you should realize that *Study in Scarlet* is like "A Study in Scarlet," and even "The Hound of the Baskervilles" to an extent Doyle sidelines Sherlock in favor of the deeper backstory behind the crime the Great Detective is investigating here. If you want 'all Sherlock, all the time,' really none of the novels will feed your need like the short stories do:-) But if you love good mysteries, "The Valley of Fear" definitely qualifies.

Mrs Holmes and Watson are passed a message from a spy in Prof. Moriarty's nest. Sherlock explains who the professor is, touching on Moriarty's publication 'The Dynamics of an Asteroid' (which is mentioned in another story worth reading as well, 'The Ultimate Crime', I think Mr. Asimov wrote it, and is included in "Another Round at the Spaceport Bar" edited by George Scithers & Darrell Schweitzer, © 1989). The message pertains to a crime to be committed, well here comes a detective, so the crime was carried out and Holmes and Watson are called in. Holmes figures it out while the police chase wild geese, as usual. This story has the arrangement Sir Doyle uses in a 'Study in Scarlet': the crime is solved, the story that preceded the crime is given, much as Mr. King does in some of his short (?) stories.

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