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AudioBooks

CLASSIC
FICTION

UNABRIDGED



Sir Arthur
Conan Doyle

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes III

Read by
David Timson

NA319112D

The Man with the Twisted Lip

1	An addiction to opium	8:46
2	“Walk past me, and then look back at me”	7:05
3	The facts of the case of Neville St Clair	9:30
4	‘Mrs St Clair had fainted at the sight of blood’	4:18
5	The outskirts of Lee	10:16
6	‘A large and comfortable double-bedded room’	3:26
7	“It has been in some points a singular case,” said Holmes’	7:13
8	““You are the first who have ever heard my story””	7:48

The Musgrave Ritual

9	‘A most untidy man’	4:58
10	‘A small wooden box’	6:24
11	Reginald Musgrave tells his story	8:02
12	“For two days after this, Brunton was most assiduous...”	4:43
13	‘You can imagine, Watson, with what eagerness I listened’	4:13
14	‘The same afternoon saw us both at Hurlstone’	4:46
15	Simple calculations	5:58
16	Need for thought	10:23

The Adventure of the Cardboard Box

17	'A fair field for his talents'	7:17
18	Miss Sarah Cushing, of Cross Street, Croydon?'	3:21
19	Croydon, Inspector Lestrade and Miss Cushing	8:02
20	'I have a few questions to ask Miss Cushing'	6:28
21	A Stradivarius purchased for fifty-five shillings – and an explanation'	10:34
22	'Two days later he received a bulky envelope'	2:44
23	'A clean breast of it'	9:12
24	'Misery and ruin'	6:24

The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

25	'I had called upon my friend Sherlock Holmes upon the second morning after Christmas'	7:13
26	""I can see nothing," said I, handing it back to my friend'	6:11
27	""The goose, Mr Holmes! The goose, sir!" he gasped'	9:06
28	'A tall man in a Scotch bonnet'	4:52
29	""Follow up this clue while it is still hot""	7:49
30	A hearty, noiseless laugh peculiar to Holmes	6:17
31	""The game's up Ryder," said Holmes quietly'	4:40
32	""The pick of her geese""	5:30

Total time: 3:32:56

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Adventures of Sherlock Homes III

THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP

Appearances are deceptive in this story shrouded in the mists of opium. 'I cannot recall any case...which looked at the first glance so simple, and yet which presented such difficulties...'

We first meet Holmes in the sordid world of the opium den disguised as an addict. It is perhaps surprising to us that drugs we consider harmful and antisocial were readily available to the Victorians. Holmes' 'little weakness', cocaine, could be bought over the chemist's counter without prescription, as could laudanum, without which many a respectable elderly lady would have complained of a sleepless night. Opium, for the trade of which England had fought a war with China, was almost an addiction of epidemic proportions. But by far the most widely used drug was tobacco. Holmes, with his old brier pipe and 'an ounce of shag tobacco' to consume, solves this mystery, and Conan Doyle himself was a prodigious smoker, though he tended to smoke and eat less when writing. Even women by the 1890s were known to indulge in a discreet cigarette.

As a doctor, Watson's distaste for drug

abuse sets the tone for the opening of this tale of disguise, false names and deception. To help sustain the unreal atmosphere Doyle, unusually for him, creates a fictional London. 'Upper Swandam Lane', 'Fresno St' and their environs do not exist.

But why does Mrs Watson call her husband James, when we all know he is John? It adds to the air of uncertainty in the story, but was it deliberate? Conan Doyle was notorious for not revising his stories, which were often written in a rush of creativity. But whether it was a mistake or not, it has spawned amongst Sherlockian scholars a score of explanations including Dorothy Sayers' brilliant invention that Watson's middle name was Hamish, which his wife anglicised to her pet name for him, James.

THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL

'A collection of my trifling experiences would certainly be incomplete which contained no account of this very singular business...'

So Holmes introduced to Watson one of his very first cases, from the 1870s, which he undertook on behalf of an old university

friend, Reginald Musgrave. The case centres round the hidden meaning of the ancient Musgrave family ritual, with its echoes of Freemasonry. Doyle had joined the Freemasons early in his medical career at Portsmouth, presumably in an attempt to make contacts, but although references are made to the Masonic Craft elsewhere in the Holmes stories, he does not seem to have taken an active part in their proceedings.

Doyle makes splendid use of his sense of history in this story. He always felt his historical novels were of more literary value than the 'trivial' Holmes stories. They were meticulously researched, and he once declared the most influential book he had ever read was Macaulay's *Essays*.

Here Doyle creates atmosphere with glimpses of the complicated political times that followed the execution of Charles I. The opening description of the Bohemian lifestyle at Baker Street is one of the best of the whole canon, and fixes forever the popular image of the rented rooms, and Holmes' 'queer humours'. Though his antics with his hair-trigger pistol would probably, according to the experts, have demolished the decor!

THE CARDBOARD BOX

This deeply sinister and disturbing story comes from the early years of Holmes and

Watson's partnership. Holmes himself makes reference in this story to their first recorded case together, **A Study in Scarlet**.

Watson is still a struggling general practitioner, not yet having established himself sufficiently to afford a holiday by 'the shingle of Southsea'. This suburb of Portsmouth was in fact where Conan Doyle struggled as a young man to make a living as a GP and where he met his future wife. Doyle uses his medical knowledge here, as in many other stories, with a clinical assessment of the two grisly severed ears.

Dr Doyle undoubtedly put a lot of himself into Dr Watson, and it is surprising that, like Watson, he did not become a soldier. His height, six feet, and athletic prowess acquired during his schooldays, not to mention his innate sense of patriotism, would surely have given him a sound military career. He was certainly tempted to join up when he moved his practice to London, and still met with little success. Fortunately the might of his pen saved him from the sword.

The tale begins with one of Holmes' characteristic displays of his powers as he minutely describes Watson's unspoken train of thought. The archetype of the fictional detective, Edgar Alan Poe's Dupin, was similarly gifted with close observation, and Doyle pays homage to him here through the mouth of his own creation.

Watson's thoughts are dwelling on General Gordon, a soldier and administrator of the Egyptian Sudan, who perished at the siege of Khartoum in 1885 – redoubtable Victorian hero of the British Empire. But he also thinks of Henry Ward Beecher, an American, who eloquently preached the anti-slavery cause of the North in the American Civil War of 1861-5. His message, however, fell on deaf ears when he visited England in 1863. Clearly, Doyle, despite his patriotism, wishes to remind us of the disgrace.

Holmes finds time in the investigation for a musical reminiscence: he describes how he used his powers to detect a true Stradivarius in a junk shop, and reflects on the artistry of Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840). This violinist, whose skills were so astounding it was rumoured he was in league with the devil, was an early 'star', performing everywhere and making a fortune. His published *Caprices* require considerable proficiency for an amateur player, like Holmes, to perform.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLUE CARBUNCLE

This seasonal 'whimsical' tale is the only time we see our two heroes in a Christmas setting. Holmes has a positive twinkle in his eye as he proceeds on this literal wild-goose chase through central London. Doyle provides a detailed description of the streets they traverse, and it would be an easy journey to reconstruct today, as London has changed so little, though Covent Garden Market is no more.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Arthur Conan Doyle was born in 1859, in Edinburgh, a city soaked in history, which gave him a strong sense of the past which he never lost. He was educated at Stonyhurst School, where he excelled at sport, a lifelong interest, and developed a passion for reading. The ideals he read about in his history books influenced him all his life. He trained to be a doctor at Edinburgh University, and before qualifying signed on as ship's surgeon aboard a whaler. The hardened crew's tough stories of life at sea were to have a strong influence on his own burgeoning skill as a writer. Doyle began in medical practice at Southsea, in 1882, where he met his wife Louise Hawkins. Later they moved to London.

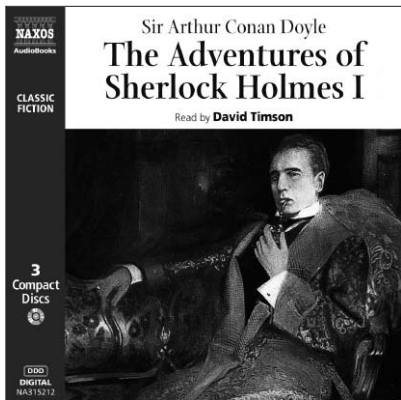
His lack of success as a doctor was balanced by his growing reputation as an author. His future was assured after the creation of the scientific detective Sherlock Holmes, though Doyle was always of the opinion that his historical novels were his true life's work. These included **The White Company** (1891), and **The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard** (1896). He also ventured into science fiction, having a great success with **The Lost World** (1912).

His interest in history encouraged his patriotism, and at the time of the Boer War

(1900) he published a pamphlet explaining the causes and true course of the war. It made him 'the most famous man in England'. His first wife died in 1906, and he married Jean Leckie with whom he had had a platonic relationship for some time. In his later years, Doyle developed a deep interest in Spiritualism, and espoused many minority causes. He travelled the world furthering the cause of Spiritualism, and died peacefully, convinced his spirit was eternal, in 1930.

His simple philosophy of life was caught perfectly in the epitaph on his tombstone 'Steel true, blade straight'. But Conan Doyle will always be remembered as the creator of the greatest fictional detective in the world, in those works his spirit is truly immortal.

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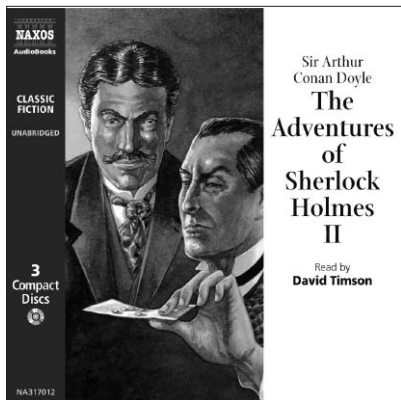


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The Man with the Twisted Lip

HOLBROOKE SEXTET IN D MAJOR/PIANO QUARTET

8.223736

Endre Hegedüs, New Haydn Quartet, Sándor Papp, violin; János Devic, cello

The Musgrave Ritual

BRIDGE NOVELLETTEN/PHANTASIE QUARTET

8.553718

Maggini String Quartet

The Cardboard Box

MOERAN STRING QUARTETS/TRIO

8.554079

Maggini String Quartet

PAGANINI CAPRICE NO. 9

8.556680

Ilya Kaler

The Blue Carbuncle

BRIDGE SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY

8.553718

Maggini String Quartet

Music programmed by David Timson

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes III

The Man with the Twisted Lip • The Musgrave Ritual
The Adventure of the Cardboard Box
The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

Read by **David Timson**

In this collection are four more individual cases for Mr Sherlock Holmes, narrated by his faithful friend and admirer, Dr Watson. They dive into the opium dens of London in **The Man with the Twisted Lip**, recall the curious history of **The Musgrave Ritual**, come face to face with the grisly evidence contained in **The Cardboard Box** and go on a wild-goose chase in **The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle**. The powers of Sherlock Holmes prevail.



David Timson has performed in modern and classic plays across the country and abroad, including *Wild Honey* for Alan Ayckbourn, *Hamlet*, *The Man of Mode*, and *The Seagull*. He has been seen on TV in *Nelson's Column* and *Swallows and Amazons*, and in the film *The Russia House*. A familiar and versatile audio and radio voice, he reads *The Middle Way* and performs in *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Naxos AudioBooks. This is his third volume of Sherlock Holmes stories for Naxos AudioBooks.

"The versatile David Timson."

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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Total time
3:32:56

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