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AudioBooks

CLASSIC
FICTION

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Hound of the Baskervilles

THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

Read by **David Timson**



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| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1 | Mr Sherlock Holmes, who was usually very late in the mornings | 3:59 |
| 2 | He now took the stick from my hands | 3:23 |
| 3 | I laughed incredulously | 2:59 |
| 4 | The appearance of our visitor was a surprise to me | 4:42 |
| 5 | "I have in my pocket a manuscript" | 2:23 |
| 6 | "Of the origin of the Hound of the Baskervilles..." | 4:07 |
| 7 | "Now, for some space the revellers stood agape..." | 5:07 |
| 8 | When Dr Mortimer had finished reading | 3:21 |
| 9 | "The facts of the case are simple." | 3:02 |
| 10 | "I must thank you," said Sherlock Holmes | 2:57 |
| 11 | "I can well remember..." | 3:36 |
| 12 | I confess at these words a shudder passed through me. | 3:19 |
| 13 | Sherlock Holmes struck his hand against his knee | 4:20 |
| 14 | "Why should he not go to the home of his fathers?" | 3:09 |
| 15 | Holmes returned to his seat | 4:39 |
| 16 | "It must be a wild place." | 3:51 |
| 17 | Our breakfast-table was cleared early | 4:13 |
| 18 | Dr Mortimer looked at Holmes | 4:30 |

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| 19 | "We are coming now rather into the region of guesswork" | 3:58 |
| 20 | "And, now, gentlemen" | 3:29 |
| 21 | We heard the steps of our visitors descend | 2:25 |
| 22 | "There now!" said Holmes bitterly | 2:42 |
| 23 | We had been sauntering slowly down Regent Street | 3:37 |
| 24 | Sherlock Holmes had, in a very remarkable degree | 4:57 |
| 25 | We had a pleasant luncheon | 5:13 |
| 26 | "Well, Sir Henry, I am of one mind with you..." | 4:44 |
| 27 | The ring at the bell proved to be something | 5:54 |
| 28 | Sir Henry Baskerville and Dr Mortimer | 4:29 |
| 29 | The journey was a swift and pleasant one | 4:00 |
| 30 | The wagonette swung round into a side road | 3:23 |
| 31 | We had left the fertile country behind | 3:51 |
| 32 | The wheels died away down the drive | 3:09 |
| 33 | A square balustraded gallery ran round the top | 4:10 |
| 34 | The fresh beauty of the following morning | 6:08 |
| 35 | Suddenly my thoughts were interrupted | 4:32 |
| 36 | We had come to a point where a narrow grassy path | 4:28 |

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| 37 | “Halloa!” I cried. “What is that?” | 4:00 |
| 38 | I could not doubt that this was the Miss Stapleton | 3:39 |
| 39 | A short walk brought us to it | 3:58 |
| 40 | It seems, however, that there must have been some short cut | 4:41 |
| 41 | From this point onward | 4:34 |
| 42 | He came over to call upon Baskerville | 4:22 |
| 43 | One other neighbour I have met since I wrote last. | 3:36 |
| 44 | Mrs Barrymore is of interest to me. | 3:40 |
| 45 | Baskerville Hall, October 15th | 4:01 |
| 46 | The baronet has been in communication | 4:13 |
| 47 | Our friend, Sir Henry, and the lady | 5:53 |
| 48 | I tried one or two explanations | 4:29 |
| 49 | Very stealthily we heard it pass along | 4:29 |
| 50 | “No, no, sir; no, not against you!” | 4:05 |
| 51 | When they were gone we looked out of the window again. | 2:10 |
| 52 | In five minutes we were outside the door | 5:07 |
| 53 | We stumbled slowly along in the darkness, | 3:35 |
| 54 | And it was at this moment | 3:14 |
| 55 | So far I have been able to quote from the reports | 5:28 |

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| 56 | We had a small scene this morning after breakfast | 3:03 |
| 57 | With a few broken words of gratitude | 4:54 |
| 58 | October 17th. All day today the rain poured down. | 5:00 |
| 59 | I have only one other incident to record | 4:18 |
| 60 | The extract from my private diary | 4:08 |
| 61 | “It was about the late Sir Charles Baskerville...” | 4:24 |
| 62 | Again and again I cross-questioned her | 5:14 |
| 63 | Luck had been against us again and again | 5:02 |
| 64 | Here was luck indeed! | 3:58 |
| 65 | The sun was already sinking | 3:18 |
| 66 | For a minute I stood there with the paper | 3:30 |
| 67 | For a moment or two I sat breathless | 4:26 |
| 68 | “But why keep me in the dark?” | 4:14 |
| 69 | The shape of some monstrous villainy | 3:07 |
| 70 | A terrible scream | 5:51 |
| 71 | We stood with bitter hearts | 4:59 |
| 72 | A figure was approaching us over the moor | 4:54 |
| 73 | “We’re at close grips at last,” said Holmes | 3:43 |
| 74 | Sir Henry was more pleased than surprised | 3:24 |
| 75 | He stopped suddenly and stared fixedly | 5:26 |
| 76 | I was up betimes in the morning | 3:11 |

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| 77 | “One more direction!” | 3:04 |
| 78 | Mrs Laura Lyons was in her office | 3:42 |
| 79 | The sending of this letter was suggested | 4:08 |
| 80 | One of Sherlock Holmes’s defects | 4:18 |
| 81 | As I watched them Stapleton rose | 4:03 |
| 82 | A sound of quick steps broke the silence | 5:12 |
| 83 | In mere size and strength it was a terrible creature | 3:19 |
| 84 | The room had been fashioned into a small museum | 4:23 |
| 85 | And now I come rapidly to the conclusion | 6:14 |
| 86 | It was the end of November | 4:31 |
| 87 | “We now come to that portion of his life...” | 4:10 |
| 88 | “Driving back in the evening...” | 4:57 |
| 89 | “Then we had the visit from our friends...” | 3:40 |
| 90 | “It was my game to watch Stapleton.” | 3:03 |
| 91 | “It only remains to indicate...” | 5:17 |

Total time: 6:16:54

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Hound of the Baskervilles

It was the book that Arthur Conan Doyle did not want to write. As far as he was concerned, after two novels and twenty-four short stories, Holmes was definitely dead, and unquestionably buried beneath the gallons of water produced by the Reichenbach Falls, as related in **The Adventure of The Final Problem**. Conan Doyle was happy to have buried a troublesome and demanding creation who threatened to keep him from his 'serious' literary efforts, but he had not reckoned with the collective will of the reading public. Since Holmes's watery death in 1893, Doyle had received a relentless barrage of requests from the public, as well as from magazine proprietors, to resurrect the world's leading fictional detective. To all entreaties, and sometimes threats, Doyle was impervious. But the barrage showed no signs of weakening; after nearly ten years of silence on the subject of Holmes, Doyle finally relented, and as a compromise reluctantly agreed to relate an early case of Holmes's involving a monstrous beast and the terrible consequences of its appearance on

Dartmoor – **The Hound of the Baskervilles**.

The gestation of the book had been quietly taking place for two years before its publication in 1902. The year before, in 1901, Conan Doyle had taken a golfing holiday in Cromer, on the Norfolk coast, where coincidentally he had previously had the idea for the plot of **The Adventure of the Dancing Men**. He had just returned from the Boer War, where having been unceremoniously turned down as a participant (he was 41), and had served, in what was to him, the less appealing job of supervisor in a field hospital. On the return journey, he had met a young and energetic war correspondent, Bertram Fletcher Robinson, and, liking his youthful enthusiasm, Doyle invited Robinson to join him on the links at Cromer. During their holiday together, on a windy day unsuitable for golf, they sat in a private sitting room of the Royal Links Hotel regaling each other with stories. Robinson told Doyle of the legend of a great black demon dog which had terrorised the West Country – he may

have also mentioned a local Norfolk legend: Black Shuck, who was 'the size of a calf, easily recognisable by his saucer-shaped eyes weeping green or red fire.' Doyle's imagination was always fired by the bizarre, and within hours, the two had concocted the outlines of a sensational story. Doyle wrote to his mother that it would be 'a real creeper'.

Doyle went to stay with Robinson at his family home near Dartmoor in Devon for further research. The wild and desolate moorland had many mysterious legends of black dogs attached to it; not least the story of Sir Richard Cabell of Buckfastleigh who murdered his wife, and was so evil, that on the night of his death in 1677, black hounds breathing fire and smoke raced over Dartmoor and howled around his manor house. This legend appeared in the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould's *Little Guide to Devon*, and it was the Reverend's later guide, *A Book of Dartmoor*, which was to prove invaluable to Doyle as he developed his plot.

The Cabell legend, and others, sparked the fertile imagination of Conan Doyle. His mind was always at its most alert when he was writing, and he seized on anything that came to hand to flesh out the story – the coachman, for instance who drove Doyle

and Robinson around Dartmoor on their researches was called Harry Baskerville, and much of the geographical and geological detail of Dartmoor, that gives the tale so much atmosphere, was copied almost word for word from Baring-Gould's Guide.

At first Doyle intended to use the real names of locations on the moor, but perhaps to give himself a greater opportunity to fantasise the moor, which appears almost as a main character in the story, he changed them. Thus, Newton Abbot became the fictional 'Coombe Tracey'; Laughter Tor was converted to Lafter Hall; the Fox Tor Mire was transformed into the treacherous Grimpen Mire, and so on. As so often in his stories, Doyle liked to mix fact and fiction, and the prehistoric huts, the Belliver and Vixen Tors, not to mention the famous prison at Princetown, all real places, feature significantly in the story. It is difficult to ascertain for certain the house Doyle used as a model for Baskerville Hall, but it is interesting to note that the makers of the 1932 film version of the novel used the Manor House at North Bovey for the ancestral home.

As the novel began to take shape in Doyle's mind, there was a large question looming that he was avoiding having to

answer. A story involving death, mystery, suspense and legend needed a strong protagonist to bind all these elements together – a brilliant detective perhaps? It was foolish to avoid the obvious solution. Nevertheless Doyle seems eager to show that his great creation, about whom there had been so much fuss, has feet of clay; Holmes is not always at his best in this novel. He underestimates the power of the Hound, despite Sir Charles and the convict having been literally frightened to death by it, and consequently puts his client Sir Henry Baskerville in danger of attack. For a moment, when he believes that it is Sir Henry's corpse he and Watson have discovered on the moor, he has a nasty turn: 'It is the greatest blow which has befallen me in my career.' His actions in **The Hound of the Baskervilles** are consistent with **The Adventure of the Five Orange Pips** and **The Adventure of the Dancing Men**, where he recklessly puts his clients' lives in danger with tragic results, seemingly for the aesthetic satisfaction of neatly tying up the loose ends of a case before cornering the suspect. Doyle, by giving so much of the investigation over to Dr Watson, seems to emphasise that the success of their cases, was in fact the result of teamwork, rather

than Holmes's singular powers.

If Holmes at times misjudges, we can put it down to the fact that this is described as one of his early investigations. Yet it cannot be *that* early. Watson describes himself as 'fleet of foot' as he sprints across the moor after the convict – but what has happened to Watson's infamous Afghan war wound that was causing him so much trouble when he and Holmes first met? We must believe that the Doctor has been in training, and that Holmes, who outruns Watson at one point, is not yet suffering from the effects of his cocaine habit. Weaknesses aside, Holmes shines and reminds us of his intensely scientific approach by noting the differences between typefaces used by newspapers and his knowledge of the fragrances of 75 different perfumes!

The Hound of the Baskervilles is considered by many, the distinguished crime writer P.D. James among them, to be the finest detective story ever written. It is Conan Doyle's inspired mix of the supernatural, the unexplained, with the entirely rational approach of his detective that gives the book a tension that excites. The moor is presented as Nature uncontrolled, something primeval, prehistoric, where man's nature becomes

uncivilised too from a close association with it. The convict living rough on the moor is described as an animal; Stapleton, whose intimate knowledge of the moor and its ways, has a brutal nature, sadistically torturing his innocent wife. Other women in the vicinity are victims too – the yeoman's daughter in the 17th-century legend, and Laura Lyons who suffers 'incessant persecution' from her husband. The manly virtues, exemplified by Holmes and Watson, and the fresh American values of Sir Henry eventually redress the balance. The city subdues the country.

Conan Doyle, as usual, worked fast when he knew he had a good story, and what had started as a mere idea in March 1901, was a completed manuscript by August. That manuscript suffered a strange fate. The American publishers of **The Hound of the Baskervilles**, McLure Phillips in New York,

gave away individual sheets to booksellers all over the country for display to publicise the novel, and very little of the original manuscript has survived.

The worldwide success of **The Hound of the Baskervilles** established Holmes as an international icon. William Gillette's play '*Sherlock Holmes*', sanctioned by Conan Doyle, which was playing at the Lyceum in London as the story was being serialised by '*The Strand*' magazine, contributed to its success. Conan Doyle would bow to the inevitable; he wrote to '*The Strand*' editor, Greenhough Smith: 'As far as I can judge the revival of Holmes would attract a great deal of attention.' He dutifully resurrected his hero therefore in **The Adventure of the Empty House** in 1903, and went on to write a further novel: **The Valley of Fear** and 31 more short stories.

The music on this recording is taken from the MARCO POLO catalogue

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| SALTER, DESSAU House of Frankenstein Film Score Moscow Symphony Orchestra / William T Stromberg | 8.223748 |
| SKINNER Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror – Film Score Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava) / William T Stromberg | 8.225124 |

Music programmed by Sarah Butcher



David Timson has appeared in classic and modern plays all over the country. He has had a long and fruitful association with The Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond, appearing in more than 25 plays there, including Dickens' *Hard Times*, Molière, Shakespeare and Vaclav Havel. In 1996 he worked with Alan Ayckbourn at Scarborough in Michael Frayn's *Wild Honey*. He has worked extensively in BBC Radio, ever since winning the BBC Student Prize (now the Carleton Hobbs Award) in 1971. He has made over 1,000 broadcasts ranging from the title role in *Nicholas Nickleby* and Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* to numerous readings of short stories and serials for Radio 3 and 'Woman's Hour'. He has been a member of the Radio Drama Company five times. He has recorded many audio-books and poetry compilations including *Barchester Towers* and some of Agatha Christie's *Poirot* and *Miss Marple* stories; frequently appeared on television in *Casualty*, *The Bill*, *Eastenders* and *Poirot*, and was in the film *The Russia House* with Sean Connery.

He has also co-written and produced with the musician Jeremy Barlow, a one-man show about the eighteenth-century English composer Charles Dibdin. It was premiered at Greenwich in January 2001.

Since 1997, he has frequently worked for Naxos AudioBooks recording poetry and prose compilations, and is currently engaged to record the complete Sherlock Holmes stories for them. He has directed four of the successful series of Shakespeare plays recorded in conjunction with Cambridge University Press. In 2001 he won the Spoken Word Publishers Association Award for Best Original Production: *The History of Theatre* (which he wrote), and the Best Drama Production: *Richard III* (with Kenneth Branagh) – which he directed. In 2002 he won the Audio-Book of the Year Award for his reading of *A Study in Scarlet*.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
**The Hound of
the Baskervilles**

Read by **David Timson**

"Footprints?"

"Footprints."

"A man or a woman's?"

Dr Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered:

"Mr Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

Sometimes called the greatest detective story ever written, **The Hound of the Baskervilles**, set on wild and desolate Dartmoor, with its menacing Tors, treacherous mires and enveloping mists, pits the supernatural in the form of a spectral Hound against the rational mind of Sherlock Holmes, who with his companion Dr Watson attempts to solve the savage murder of the local squire, and save his successor from the curse of the Baskervilles.

The award-winning Sherlock Holmes narrator David Timson leads us through Conan Doyle's most famous story.

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