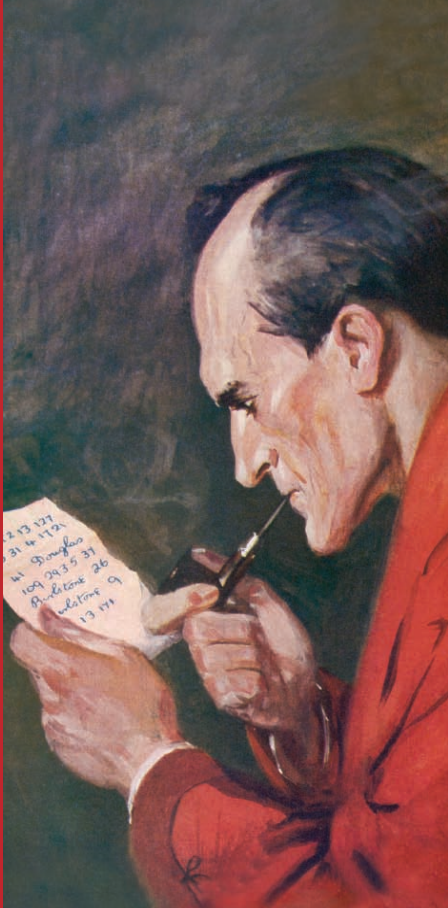



NAXOS
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**CLASSIC
FICTION**



**THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS**

UNABRIDGED

Sir Arthur
Conan Doyle

The Valley of Fear

Read by
David Timson

NA542412D

1	The Valley of Fear Part 1: The Tragedy of Birlstone	
	Chapter 1 The Warning	4:33
2	'May I be there to see!'	6:02
3	Sherlock Holmes had pushed away...	5:30
4	'We pay the price, Watson...'	5:59
5	Chapter 2 Sherlock Holmes Discourses	5:23
6	The inspector's eyes grew abstracted	6:07
7	'Queer, certainly! But what do you gather from it?'	6:37
8	Chapter 3 The Tragedy of Birlstone	5:58
9	It was remarked, sometimes...	5:28
10	The country policeman was unnerved and troubled...	5:38
11	'When the lamps were lit,' said the butler.	4:15
12	Chapter 4 Darkness	4:10
13	White Mason gazed at my friend...	4:38
14	'I have worked with Mr Holmes before,'...	4:33
15	He impressed me this country specialist.	4:05
16	'That's all clear enough.'	4:01
17	'It gives me the impression of a secret society...'	4:04
18	Chapter 5 The People of the Drama	4:56
19	Cecil Barker succeeded Mrs Allen as a witness.	5:08
20	'I should like these dates a little clearer,' said MacDonald	4:13

21	'I don't know that I've anything else...'	5:45
22	'The Valley of Fear,' the lady answered.	6:27
23	Chapter 6 A Dawning Light	4:30
24	'I beg – I implore that you will, Dr Watson!'	3:59
25	'How do I know that they are lying?'	4:54
26	'There is an appalling directness about your questions...'	5:06
27	'Well now, to continue our supposititious case...'	4:46
28	MacDonald referred to his notebook.	6:31
29	Chapter 7 The Solution	4:21
30	'You are making fools of us, Mr Holmes!'	2:52
31	'Well, we're bound to take you on your own terms...'	5:47
32	We all had good reason to join in the aspiration...	4:21
33	Sherlock Holmes put the sopping bundle upon the table...	4:39
34	The man stood blinking at us...	4:27
35	'I'm not going to begin at the beginning.'	4:45
36	'It was at that instant that the idea came to me.'	5:23
37	The Valley of Fear Part 2: The Scowrers Chapter 1 The Man	4:37
38	The iron and coal valleys of the Vermissa district...	4:47
39	'All right, mate, no offence meant.'	4:39
40	The country had been a place of terror...	3:17

41	It was opened at once by someone very different...	3:19
42	Chapter 2 The Bodymaster	4:33
43	Scanlan looked at him long and fixedly.	4:15
44	'I can but tell you vat the whole world knows, mister.'	5:24
45	Again there was the struggle upon McMurdo's face...	4:12
46	For a few moments, McMurdo and the girl stood in silence.	4:14
47	All else in the man – his noble proportions...	3:30
48	There was a small room there...	5:19
49	'You seem to have a good nerve.'	6:37
50	Chapter 3 Lodge 341, Vermissa	4:22
51	McMurdo shrank away from him.	2:48
52	On a Saturday night...	4:28
53	It was pitch dark and very oppressive under his hood.	4:32
54	When the drinks which followed the ceremony of initiation...	4:23
55	There was great applause at this.	4:46
56	There was a hush at these ominous words...	4:39
57	'I protest against that,' said Brother Morris...	3:55
58	The company broke up with shouts and yells...	3:55
59	Chapter 4 The Valley of Fear	4:54
60	McMurdo, who had been watching his companion...	4:25

61	'It was a lonely house, twenty miles from here...'	4:42
62	The question came so suddenly that it was as well...	5:57
63	So determined was the appearance of the captain...	4:04
64	Chapter 5 The Darkest Hour	4:36
65	'It's to another woman...'	4:53
66	It was the most that Ettie could obtain...	4:18
67	In spite of the reticence of their guests...	4:43
68	There was high revel in the lodge room...	3:10
69	It had been a great day for the Scowrers.	4:21
70	Two nights later they met outside the town...	4:34
71	Chapter 6 Danger	4:27
72	But his words had moved McMurdo deeply.	4:21
73	And yet it was clear from his actions...	4:11
74	'Indeed, it's glad we are to see you, Brother!'	5:23
75	'Now, McMurdo!' said McGinty when they were alone.	4:26
76	Chapter 7 The Trapping of Birdy Edwards	5:20
77	McMurdo shrugged his shoulders.	5:32
78	Their host had placed whisky upon the table...	3:51
79	There were ten seconds after that brief speech...	4:48
80	'You blasted traitor!'	5:13
81	Epilogue	5:42

Total time: 6:25:00

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Valley of Fear

There can be no doubt that Conan Doyle had a long-lasting love-affair – with America. The Sherlock Holmes stories teem with Americans on both sides of the law and in *The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor*, Conan Doyle in his zeal even goes so far as to suggest a union between the two countries: ‘It is always a joy to me to meet an American,’ (says Sherlock Holmes) ... for I am one of those who believe that the folly of a monarch and the blundering of a Minister in far gone years will not prevent our children from being some day citizens of the same world-wide country under a flag which shall be a quartering of the Union Jack with the Stars and Stripes.’

He first visited the USA in 1894 on a lecture tour. The schedule proved to be frenetic, Conan Doyle sometimes lecturing in three widely separated cities within 24 hours. It was more work than leisure, but despite his many engagements he did find time to pay homage at the grave of Edgar Allan Poe, the father of the detective novel, and tactfully remarked: ‘His detective is the best in fiction.’ Conan Doyle returned to England exhausted, but with many

favourable impressions of the United States.

In May 1914 he once again embarked on an American tour, travelling across the Atlantic in the *Olympic*, sister ship of the ill-fated *Titanic*, whose captain he had so valiantly supported against the odds only two years previously. He was to tour Canada’s National Parks at the invitation of the Government, but spent the first week in New York, a city that had changed out of all proportion since his visit twenty years earlier. He was awestruck by the proliferation of skyscrapers and noted with approval: ‘America is a wonderful country, with a big future.’

The Americans in their turn had taken to Conan Doyle, or perhaps in reality had taken to Mr. Sherlock Holmes, as one of their own. The *New York Times* went so far as to suggest that perhaps Holmes might be considering emigrating to New York, quoting his creator: ‘It seems that Sir Arthur finds New York a not unworthy field for the exercise of the great detective’s abilities...’ Maybe it was this article that persuaded Conan Doyle, if he hadn’t already thought of it, to set a large part of his next Holmes

novel in America, though not specifically in New York.

He seems to have spent his few days in New York with a view to gleaning information that would figure prominently in his forthcoming novel. He met William J. Burns, who had founded a successful detective agency, and was known as 'the Sherlock Holmes of America'. Doyle was eager to hear details of his early career as a member of the famous Pinkerton Detective Agency. Trips were arranged to Sing Sing prison, where he tried out the electric chair for size and experienced a brief confinement in a cramped prison cell, all experiences which no doubt contributed to the grim tone of his next novel.

He had begun work on what was to be the last Holmes novel, towards the end of 1913, and for its structure he returned to his first great success *A Study in Scarlet*. In this, the first Holmes novel, the detective is removed from the stage after investigating a brutal murder of a man with American connections, so the reader may learn of the tangled back-story that led to the crime. 'Of course,' wrote Conan Doyle to his editor at *The Strand*, referring to *The Valley of Fear* 'in this long stretch we abandon Holmes. That is necessary.' Necessary or not, despite its initial success, the public resented the disappearance of their hero Holmes for

more than half the novel, and *The Valley of Fear* has suffered in its popularity as a result. Notwithstanding, a first edition of the novel was sold at Sotheby's in July 2006 for £4,800. Conan Doyle would no doubt have been amused.

A month before the serialisation of *The Valley of Fear* began in *The Strand* in September 1914, World War I had started. The new Holmes novel had an escapist appeal to the British public; it was set in times and a country outside the European conflict, but as a result of the war, Doyle considered it impossible to present a sympathetic German in the story, so Ettie and her father who were originally German and appeared as such in the American edition of the book, became Swedish.

In *The Valley of Fear* Conan Doyle found a happy compromise for the two opposing strands of his literary output that had always given him so much anguish; he pleases his Holmes fans with a new case, *The Tragedy of Birlstone*, and pleases himself in the flashback section, *The Scowrers* by writing an atmospheric and gripping tale set in the recent past history of America. It is really two novels, and each can be read almost independently of the other. Despite its relative unpopularity with Sherlockians, the novel is what Inspector White-Mason, one of its characters, would call 'a snorter!'

The Scowrers which reveals the past history of the murdered American and his associates, is written in a distinctly different style from the rest of the book. It is a personal journey for Conan Doyle through the genres of American popular literature which he had loved since boyhood. In *The Valley of Fear* there are echoes of Mark Twain; Bret Harte's stories of life in the Californian gold-mining camps; the Western; and the Gangster mob story.

There was nothing Conan Doyle enjoyed more than turning history into fiction. His historical novels, which he prized more highly than his Sherlock Holmes stories, were renowned for the meticulous research their author carried out to get every period detail in them correct. In *The Valley of Fear* he recreated the actual terror and violence experienced in the coal-fields of Pennsylvania USA in the 1870s. Conditions of labour for the miners in the coal and iron foundries were poor and the men suffered much abuse from ruthless employers. By way of redressing this injustice the miners formed themselves into gangs that retaliated against the mine-owners with violence, sabotage and intimidation. As many in the work force were Irish immigrants these gangs became known as the 'Molly Maguires' recalling similar organisations that had existed in Ireland to

combat unfair rent increases and evictions. One such evicted tenant was apparently called Molly Maguire who led and gave her name to violent rioters in Ireland in the 1840s. They evolved into secret societies such as the 'Ancient Order of Hibernians', which acted as a respectable front to their activities. Their motto was 'Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity', and they were influential in the formation of the IRA in the early 20th century. The structure and power of these societies was transferred to America in the mid-19th century, and Conan Doyle reflects accurately in every detail of his fictitious 'Scowrers', the systematic and cold-blooded approach to revenge and the elimination of their opponents.

In 1877 several top detectives of the Pinkerton Agency infiltrated the organisation and succeeded in bringing to justice many of the key leaders. One such, James McParlan, was Conan Doyle's model for 'Birdy Edwards' in the story, who through his personal testimony sent ten men to the gallows.

The Pinkerton Detective Agency was world-famous by the time Conan Doyle wrote his novel. The Scottish-American Allan Pinkerton had founded his National Detective Agency in Chicago in 1850. One of its earliest successes was the foiling of an

assassination attempt on President Lincoln in 1861. The Agency's motto was 'we never sleep' and their logo was an open unblinking eye – hence the nickname for their agents, 'private eyes.' Pinkerton dreamed that one day his organisation would achieve world-wide control. Its efficiency inspired the founding of a similar body, the FBI, which eventually superseded it. Pinkerton invented the 'mug shot' and developed a file system on criminals that was the envy of the world's police forces. They were relentless in their pursuit of criminals, and represented in their methods the detective of the future.

In a superb *coup de théâtre* Conan Doyle, in *The Valley of Fear*, allows his detective, Holmes, to outwit the best detective in the seemingly invincible Pinkerton Agency, who proves his own outstanding abilities in the flashback sequence of the book. By way of tribute to the American's skills, Holmes reproduces his methods, when, disguised as the American Altamont in *His Last Bow*, he infiltrates the German spy ring led by Von Bork.

Pinkerton himself had a literary bent, and in 1877 had written an account of the Molly Maguires case, to which Conan Doyle was extremely indebted for a number of the facts used in his fictionalisation of the events. In later life, Pinkerton took to writing

detective stories – one wonders if he had heard of Sherlock Holmes, and what he thought of him.

'I fancy this is my swan-song in fiction,' Conan Doyle had written to his editor on sending him the manuscript of *The Valley of Fear* in 1914. The implication was that his Baker Street days were finally over, but Holmes was not to release his creator yet. *His Last Bow* was still to come in 1917, and *The Casebook* in 1927.

Notes by David Timson

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Music programmed by Roy McMillan

Cover picture courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Valley of Fear

Read by **David Timson**

In *The Valley of Fear*, first published in *The Strand* magazine in 1914, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson investigate the brutal murder of a wealthy American, Douglas, living in rural Sussex. A sinister tale of mystery and intrigue is revealed about Douglas's past life as one of the infamous gang called 'The Scowrers', who ruled with terror the coal-fields of Pennsylvania in the 1870s. Part-thriller, part-western, part-gangster story, Conan Doyle excelled himself with this gripping and thrilling novel.



David Timson has made over 1,000 broadcasts for BBC Radio Drama. For Naxos AudioBooks he wrote *The History of the Theatre*, which won an award for most original production from the Spoken Word Publishers Association in 2001. He has also directed for Naxos AudioBooks four Shakespeare plays, including *King Richard III* (with Kenneth Branagh), which won Best Drama Award from the SWPA in 2001. In 2002 he won the Audio of the Year Award for his reading of *A Study in Scarlet*. He also reads *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes I, II, III, IV, V and VI* and *The Return of Sherlock Holmes I, II and III*

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