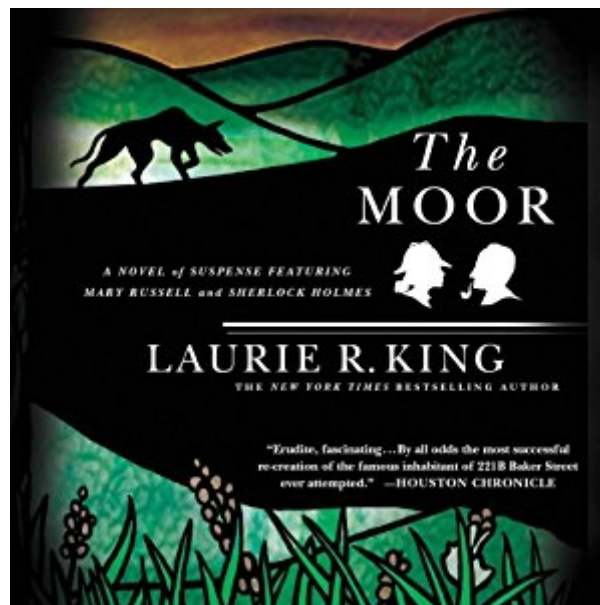


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The Moor: A Novel Of Suspense Featuring Mary Russell And Sherlock Holmes: Mary Russell, Book 4



Synopsis

In the eerie wasteland of Dartmoor, Sherlock Holmes summons his devoted wife and partner, Mary Russell, from her studies at Oxford to aid the investigation of a death and some disturbing phenomena of a decidedly supernatural origin. Through the mists of the moor there have been sightings of a spectral coach made of bones carrying a woman long-ago accused of murdering her husband - and of a hound with a single glowing eye. Returning to the scene of one of his most celebrated cases, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes and Russell investigate a mystery darker and more unforgiving than the moors themselves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first two books in this series were excellent, the last one decent enough. But this book (number four) was, well...boring. The tedious and frequent descriptions of the moor were mind-numbing. If King was trying to invoke suspense with the setting, she missed the mark, merely inducing me towards slumber. Two other mystery books set on the moors evoked much stronger reactions and the books were more thoroughly enjoyed. "Silent on the Moor" by Deanna Raybourn and "A Bitter Truth" by Charles Todd. King failed where these authors succeeded. There was little action in the story with a lot of telling instead of showing. The action only picked up near the very end. I don't want to read a book merely to enjoy the last thirty or forty pages. I hope this is a fluke and the rest of the series lives up to the promising start.

This took a while to get through and it required a bit of effort. Lengthy descriptions of a number of long trips (via foot and horseback) through unfriendly and unfamiliar terrain in cold, wet weather were followed by descriptions of overnight stays outdoors, in homes of a host and inns along the way. The mystery Holmes and Mary Russell set out to solve came together quickly at the end. I really enjoy Laurie R. King's Mary Russell series; but if I had to rank them, this one would not make my list of "favorites".

These books in this series are great: I am an addict now. The author spends a lot of time in the first half of the book laying the groundwork and setting up the story and history. (There are always interesting details, too...) Then, about halfway, zoom! Things really start to move, "the plot thickens...", and I just can't put the book down!! I have a fantasy, that Robert Downey Jr. and some cute actress about 10-15 years younger than him will make some of these into movies.... :)

Mary Russell is reluctantly dragged away from her studies after receiving a telegram from Holmes requesting her presence in Dartmoor. Holmes had been in Dartmoor visiting an old friend, but got drawn into an investigation after a local is killed. The case in question involves a ghostly carriage made of bones and a spectral hound haunting the Moor. Rather begrudgingly, Mary helps to scout for clues in the foggy, cold, and damp Moor. What both her and Holmes find are a handful of supernatural sightings that draw suspicious parallels between this case and one of Holmes' most famous investigations, The Hound of the Baskervilles. Like a lot of Sherlock Holmes fans, The Hound of the Baskervilles holds a special place in my heart. So revisiting the setting of that mystery with Mary and Holmes had my geeky heart all a titter. The pacing here was a lot faster than in some of the other Mary Russell books, which was a relief after slogging through the slow moving A Letter of Mary. My only complaint is pretty mild, Mary was going through a bit of a mid-life crisis that involved a hesitance to fully join Holmes in the case until near the end. So she sort of emotionally checked out during the first half of the investigation. While she was still physically involved, there was a lot of background noise involving her reluctance to be there at all. King did a good job of attributing this to a psychological backlash due to the events of the previous three books but, with such an awesome mystery going on, I got frustrated that Mary wasn't getting into it. However, Holmes more than made up for Mary's standoffish attitude. He was, luckily, more present here than he had been in the previous books and seemed really in his element. It was great seeing Holmes get to dash about and really get into the mystery, which is something we hadn't fully gotten to see in the first three novels. Most of the action takes place in a huge echoing mansion and the chilly moor,

which seems so far removed from the London/Sussex settings of the previous novels that it was a refreshing change. I also really adored the moor atmosphere because I'm a huge fan of Gothic mysteries. The moor offered a great eerie and isolated feeling typically found in that genre and it really upped the suspense. This is, by far, my favorite out of the series so far. I highly recommend it.

It's quite an amazing description, evocation, of Dartmoor post WW I. King is able to capture fine details of nature, and convey the somewhat ominous, but also beautiful qualities of the moor. It becomes a grim, foreboding character, adding to the fascination of the tale, with its echoes of the "Hound of the Baskervilles". Mary Russell emerges as a fascinating woman, with a strong mind (and constitution) of her own.

I do love the Mary Russell Sherlock Holmes stories and try reading them in chronological order. This is not the absolute best of those I read so far, I think "the beekeepers apprentice" is my favourite. But this one deserves the five stars I have given. The authors wit and complex language is as present as ever. Lots of expressions and words appropriate for the time of the history, are used in such a way as to be perfectly natural. Making it very easy to believe the story was really written by Mary Russell herself. Hope I will like all the books equally well.

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