

The Moor

Preface by Laurie R. King

This is the fourth manuscript to be recovered from a trunk full of whatnot that was dropped on my doorstep some years ago. The various odds and ends—clothing, a pipe, bits of string, a few rocks, some old books, and one valuable necklace—might have been taken for some eccentric's grab bag or (but for the necklace) a clearing-out of attic rubbish intended for the dump, except that at the bottom lay the manuscripts.

I thought that they had been sent to me because the author was dead, and for some unknown reason chose to send me the memorabilia of her past. However, since the publication of the first Mary Russell book, I have received a handful of communications as ill assorted as the original contents of the trunk, and I have begun to suspect that the author herself is behind them.

It should be noted that in the course of her story, Ms. Russell tends to combine the actual names of people and places with other names that are unknown. Some of these thinly disguise true identities; others are impenetrable. Similarly, she seems to have taken some pains to conceal actual sites on the moor while at the same time referring to others, by name or description, that are easily identifiable. A walker on Dartmoor, therefore, will not find Baskerville Hall in the area given, and the characteristics of the Okemont River do not correspond precisely with those in the manuscript. I can only assume she did it deliberately, for her own purposes.

--Laurie R. King