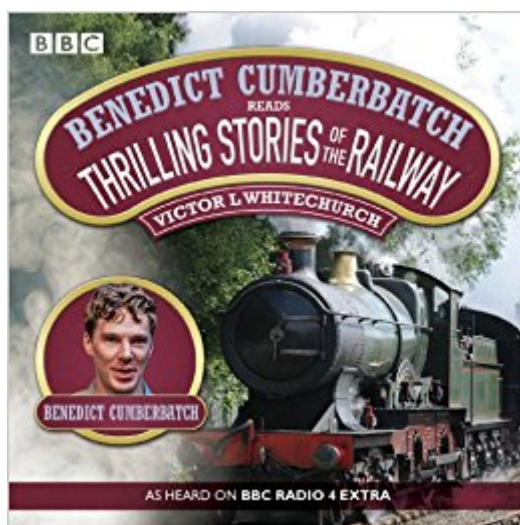


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# Benedict Cumberbatch Reads Thrilling Stories Of The Railway: A BBC Radio Reading



## Synopsis

Benedict Cumberbatch reads five stories featuring the famous vegetarian railway detective, Thorpe Hazell, as heard on BBC Radio 4. In *The Affair of the German Dispatch-Box*, Hazell hatches a daring plan to retrieve a highly sensitive government document before it reaches the German Ambassador. In *Sir Gilbert Murrell's Picture*, when an entire wagon containing valuable paintings disappears from a goods train, Hazell's skill is needed. In *The Affair of the Corridor Express*, a multimillionaire's son disappears from a moving train. Hazell must find the kidnappers before the boy is lost forever. In *The Stolen Necklace*, a lady begs Hazell to help when the diamond necklace that she borrowed is stolen from her suitcase. In *The Affair of the Birmingham Bank*, customers keep drawing money from a Midlands bank, so gold reserves are sent by train. Hazell must guard against train robbery.

## Book Information

Audio CD: 1 pages

Publisher: BBC Books; Abridged edition (July 17, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1471366162

ISBN-13: 978-1471366161

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.4 x 5.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #164,171 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories](#) #18 in [Books > Books on CD > Radio Shows](#) #65 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Radio > General Broadcasting](#)

## Customer Reviews

Victor L. Whitechurch was a British author born in 1868. He became first a curate and then, in 1904, vicar of St Michael's church in Blewbury, Berkshire. In his later career he was Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford and, from 1918, Rural Dean of Aylesbury. His first novel, *The Course of Justice*, was published in 1903, and a prolific writing career followed. Whitechurch's detective Thorpe Hazell was a vegetarian railway detective, written as an antidote to Sherlock Holmes. Stories featuring Hazell were featured in *Strand Magazine*, *Railway Magazine* and *Pearson's* and *Harmsworth's* magazines.

Let's be clear from the get-go: This collection of benign mysteries would be more accurately described as "Pleasantly Sedate Stories of the Railway". The only thing thrilling about it is the narration of Benedict Cumberbatch. He's great. He has a voice that melts you from the inside and reduces you to a pool of adoring liquid on your kitchen floor. By "you" I mean "me". And probably you too. The assorted mysteries are in fact a little hard to follow--because of the writing, not the reading. Cumberbatch voices the various characters with easy precision, but the writing is a bit convoluted and the mysteries about the level I could write. It's not a compliment. Still, the whole thing is very relaxing and nostalgic and harmless. The entire series is G-rated and suitable for anyone (Hazel smokes a cigarette, and that's the extent of the vice. The mysteries involve no murder, just kidnapping and espionage and ladies in distress because they can't find their diamond necklaces and other railway-themed shenanigans.) I do rather like the character of Thorpe Hazel; he's honorable and old-fashioned and a throwback to the heroes of classic fiction. He is described as "book-collector, railway-enthusiast and Gentleman of Independent Means". When offered payment for his considerable services he is insulted, for he is a gentleman in the classic sense, the amateur detective of the Victorian era. No age is given, but since we're listening to Benedict Cumberbatch, it's hard to not imagine him as young and smart and, well, Cumberbatch. And that's a image worth imagining. I can't in all honesty give it five stars, but a very solid four and I certainly enjoy listening to it, usually while doing the dishes. (If you love Cumberbatch be sure to catch his equally deft characterization of Edmund Bertram in the BBC dramatization of "Mansfield Park". Quite possibly history's only sultry take on Edmund Bertram.) "Thrilling Stories of the Railway" is harmless, mildly diverting and rates: GRADE: B/B-PLAN FOR BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH TO BUILD UNIMAGINABLE WEALTH: Step One: Record narration of the entire canon of Classic English Literature. Step Two: Post on . Step Three: Watch the money pour in like the tide. You're welcome, ladies of the world!

I bought this just for the sound of Cumber's voice to lull me to sleep. But at the beginning of every story are train whistles. Wha. He's a better actor in drama and poetry reading than story teller. He's a little too "good eighth grade reader-ish". Art is more than declaration.

4 stories but entire length is only 60 minutes. Not worth the money. This railway  
detective wasn't all that intuitive. Boring actually. Narrator Cumberbatch speaks too quickly--as an American had trouble understanding British accent.

These stories are clever and entertaining. Benedict Cumberbatch does an excellent job narrating them. He's incredibly good at giving each character a distinct voice and reads with lovely expression.

I would gladly listen to this man reading the telephone book! In his speech, he gives individuality to each character.

I could listen to Benedict read the back of a cereal box endlessly. I never get tired of listening to him narrate any story. He is wonderful voicing all the characters of each story. I only wish the CD was longer and had more stories.

Benedict's voice is just simply beautiful.

Mr. Cumberbatch is great in these cd's. I just love listening to him.

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