



*An Inquiry into:
The Valley of Fear*

The Valley of Fear was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in September 1914-May 1915.

There are considerable inconsistencies and widespread disagreement among Canon scholars regarding the dating and dates involved in this case, particularly due to the fact that Professor Moriarty is alive and fully involved (and staffed) in the practice of his profession.

Watson’s awareness of Moriarty is a problem. In 1888—the year of this case—Holmes remarked to

Watson, “You have heard me speak of Professor Moriarty?” to which our worthy biographer replied in the affirmative. However, in FINA, which takes place years later, in 1891, Watson appears to have had no idea who Moriarty is.

One must doubt that our biographer could have been so absent-minded, which could lead to the conclusion that he did not wish to provide dates that were sufficiently exact to allow his readers to connect them to actual events.

Nonetheless, if one accepts the year in which the majority of our chronologists conclude the case took place, in 1888 Sherlock Holmes was 34 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 36.

Untypically, our chronologists are in agreement regarding the year—1898—in which this adventure took place. If the year agreed upon is correct, then at the time Sherlock Holmes was 44 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 46.

Main Characters:

John “Jack” Douglas, an intrepid, pleasant Irish-American living in Sussex who has a mysterious past and has had multiple identities. Ivy Douglas, John’s attractive second wife. Inspector Alan MacDonald, a young Scot, Scotland Yard detective. Fred Porlock, a member of Professor Moriarty’s organization, one of Sherlock Holmes’ informers. Cecil James Baker, a wealthy English friend of John Doug-

<i>The Valley of Fear</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	<i>Late 1880s, or January 7, 1895</i>
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	<i>Saturday, January 7, 18</i>
<i>Bell</i>	<i>Friday, January 7, 1887</i>
<i>Blakeney</i>	<i>Tuesday, January 7, 1890</i>
<i>Brend</i>	<i>January 1900</i>
<i>Christ</i>	<i>Monday, January 7, 1889</i>
<i>Dakin</i>	<i>Saturday, January 7, 1888</i>
<i>Folsom</i>	<i>Saturday, January 7, 1888</i>
<i>Hall</i>	<i>January 7, 1889</i>
<i>Keefauver</i>	<i>Saturday, January 7, 1888</i>
<i>Klinger</i>	<i>1888</i>
<i>Zeisler</i>	<i>Saturday, January 7, 1888</i>

Please note that Canon chronologists may differ on pivotal dates and comparative periods between cases, thus a simple majority is not necessarily correct. Most Canon scholars settle on a single chronologist’s results for their research framework.

las who is staying with him as a houseguest. Ted Baldwin, a member of the Scowrers who attempts to murder Douglas. Professor James Moriarty, Holmes' archenemy, working with the Scowrers. Ettie Schaffer, John's first wife.

Notable Quotes:

"Porlock is important, not for himself, but for the great man with whom he is in touch. Picture to yourself the pilot fish with the shark, the jackal with the lion—anything that is insignificant in companionship with what is formidable: not only formidable, Watson, but sinister—in the highest degree sinister. That is where he comes within my purview."

"You are developing a certain unexpected vein of pawky humour, Watson, against which I must learn to guard myself."

"[I]n calling Moriarty a criminal you are uttering libel in the eyes of the law—and there lie the glory and the wonder of it! The greatest schemer of all time, the organizer of every deviltry, the controlling brain of the underworld, a brain which might have made or marred the destiny of nations—that's the man! But so aloof is he from general suspicion, so immune from criticism, so admirable in his management and self-effacement, that for those very words that you have uttered he could hale you to a court and emerge with your year's pension as a solatium for his wounded character. Is he not the celebrated author of *The Dynamics of an Asteroid*, a book which ascends to such rarefied heights of pure mathematics that it is said that there was no man in the scientific press capable of criticizing it? Is this a man to traduce? Foul-mouthed doctor and slandered professor—such would be your respective roles! That's genius, Watson. But if I am spared by lesser men, our day will surely come."



Courtesy of ITV Granada

"When you have one of the first brains of Europe up against you, and all the powers of darkness at his back, there are infinite possibilities."

"There is an appalling directness about your questions, Watson. They come at me like bullets."

The Long-Suffering Mortal

At the beginning of this story, we see Sherlock Holmes at his irritating worse. There was absolutely no reason for him to blast poor Watson over a completely innocent remark. His retort that Holmes at is a "little trying at times" was extremely mild. However, later he has an opportunity to "get back a little of my own," as Eliza Doolittle might have put it, when he tweaks the Great Detective's pride:

"You have heard me speak of Professor Moriarty?"

"The famous scientific criminal, as famous among crooks as—"

"My blushes, Watson!"

"I was about to say, as he is unknown to the public."

"A touch! A distinct touch! You are developing a certain unexpected vein of pawky humour, Watson, against which I must learn to guard myself."



Courtesy of ITV Granada

Good for you, Doctor!

The Paradoxical Porlock

Porlock has always been somewhat of an enigma. He seems to have been someone who had to be fairly high in Professor Moriarty's organization; otherwise, he would not have been knowledgeable enough to warn Holmes about the Napoleon of Crime's nefarious plans and activities. Possibly he was involved in the day-to-day business function as an accountant or office worker of some sort. Had he have been a low-level minion with very limited access to information, it is unlikely that he would have been able to pass intelligence of interest and—most importantly—of value to the Great Detective.

A major piece which does not appear to fit in the puzzle is that, knowing as he obviously must have what the consequences would be were he to be discovered crossing the Professor, he nonetheless was still willing to do it—and for a measly £10! According to Holmes, the Professor followed the American example and paid his "talent" well—Colonel Sebastian Moran earned £6,000 (≈\$2,400,000)! It is not farfetched to think that that level of pay rate must have applied to all members of the organization.

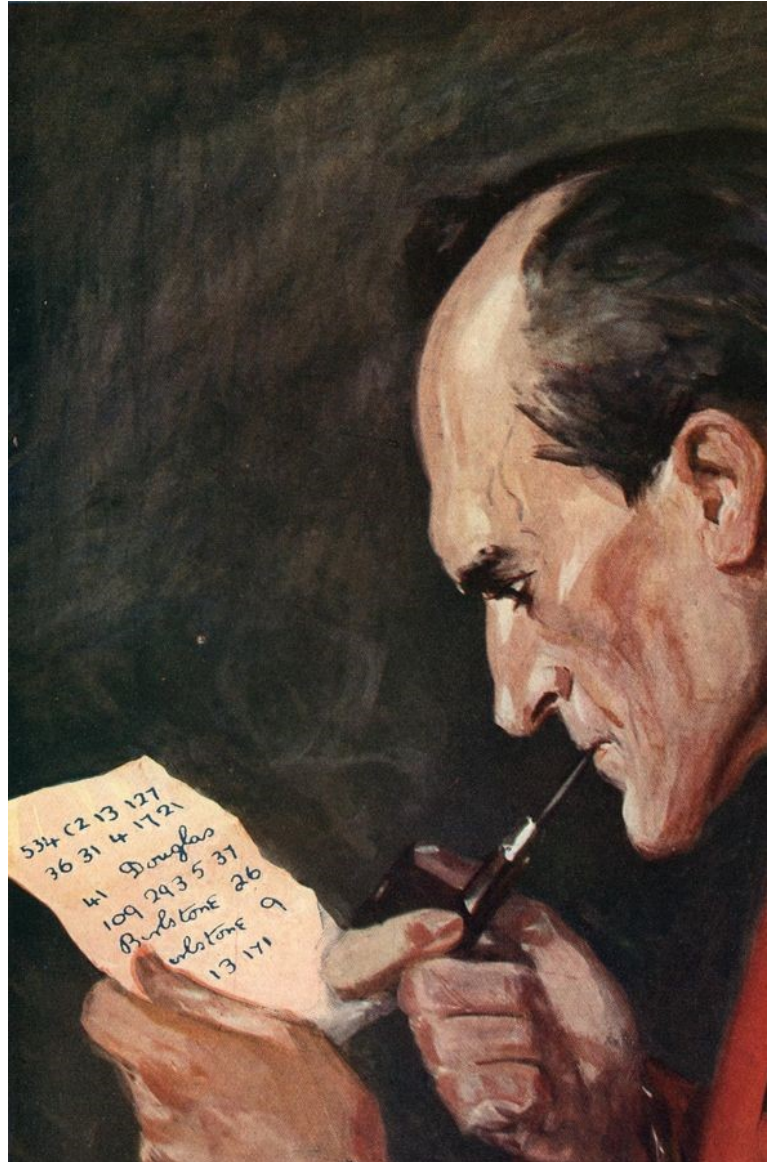
So what could possibly have prompted him to act in such a reckless manner? It certainly was not the money; his salary must have been above the average for the age. Would any of Don Corleone's men be willing to double-cross the Godfather for a mere occasional \$4,000? Doubtful.

Because Porlock appears to have climbed to a position within Moriarty's criminal organization that allowed him at least a glimpse of the Professor's plans, he had to have been aware of the nature of the business from the very moment he started. Therefore, it is very doubtful that he would be passing information to Holmes out of a sense of justice. The only explanation that seems to fit and make any sense is revenge. Perhaps Moriarty was responsible for some painful or humiliating episode that affected Porlock himself or someone close to him.

The fact that we hear about Porlock but briefly and never again might indicate that he was discovered and subjected to the consequences of his treachery; then again, perhaps for some reason or another, his decision to abandon his deadly game came in time.

Did Holmes Blunder?

The way Holmes determined which book Porlock used as the cipher for his message was absolutely brilliant. It was what we have grown to always expect from our master of detection; it is for me, one



of the reason why one never tires of the Canon. One can only admire that sort of inspired deduction! However, as far as this case is concerned, it seems to have been his sole best moment.

Our sleuth does not seem to have been at his best throughout, however. He missed an important clue, and arrived at a seemingly unexplainable conclusion.

In the case of the missing wedding ring that supposedly was torn out of the dead man's finger, leaving the larger nugget ring it should have been obvious to Holmes that a ring which supposedly was continuously worn for five years would have left some sort of a mark. One wonders how someone as observant as Holmes could have missed this.

Every time that we have considered this case (and I realize I am repeating myself) I am eternally puzzled by Holmes' justification regarding the unusual deafness that appears to have afflicted everyone in Douglas' household: "the sound from a shotgun is to some extent muffled when the discharge is at very close range It would not be very loud."

This is a result of personal experience. Although I have not discharged a sawed-off double-barreled



shotgun, I have some acquaintance with shotguns; in the case of a double-barreled weapon, a somewhat painful one. Being used to the single-barreled version, I once was given a double-barreled one to fire. Until that time, I had only used single-triggered shotguns, so when the time came I pulled *both* triggers simultaneously. The expression, "kicks like a mule" does not come even close to describing the effect. But, most importantly, the sound made by both barrels blasting off at the same time was nothing short of deafening.

I find it extremely difficult to believe that in this case the weapon's detonation would have been that muffled, regardless of the range. Even if the barrels had been in direct contact with, say, the abdomen, the resulting sound would still approach that of an explosion.

While undeniably Moriarty was a criminal mastermind of the first water, there is a tendency on the part of Canon students to endow him with an almost supernatural talent where it comes to his activities. This would appear to be justified when considering this case, considering that in the end the Professor got his man: Douglas perished under extremely suspicious conditions.

There are some, however, who view this sad ending as having been Holmes' fault. When one considers how he reacted to the guilt of Captain Crocker and Dr. Sterndale, why would he have been so decidedly in favor of Douglas revealing all to the authorities? Why take things to the extreme of a public trial, considering the attention that such an event would attract? Clearly, the man had acted out of self-defense, which was later officially confirmed when he was not charged with a crime.

There is every indication that had Holmes left Douglas to carry out his plan and let the world assume that the corpse was his and not Baldwin's, in all likelihood he could have been able to end the pursuit that haunted him so, enabling him to escape with his life.

It would seem, therefore, that Holmes deserved Moriarty's very sarcastic note.

What else happened in 1888:

Empire

Mashonaland and Matabeleland declared British sphere of influence.

Suez Canal Convention signed: Suez Canal declared open to ships of all nations and free from blockade.

Sarawak and Brunei placed under British protection.

British East Africa Company founded.

Britain

County Councils' Act establishes representative county-based authorities.



Jack the Ripper has murder spree in Whitechapel.

Annie Besant leads the London match factory girls on strike.

◀ English Priory of Knights Hospitalers authorized by Royal Charter.

Commission formed to examine charges against Parnell.

General Buller founds RASC (Royal Army Service Corps).

County Councils Act: elects councils to take over administrative duties of JPs.

Miners Federation of Great Britain formed; demand for minimum wage.

Foundation of Scottish Labour Party.

Final report on Commission on Elementary Education Acts in England.

Foundation of London General Omnibus Company.

World

French Indochina formed.

Phil Sheridan, who fought as a Union General against the South during the American Civil War dies.

Clashes in Paris between Radicals and Monarchists. Anarchists riot in favor of weavers of Lille and glass blowers of Lion. Paris stone masons and waiters strike for higher wages and shorter work schedules.



◀ Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany dies; Frederick III becomes Emperor from March to June, dies, and is succeeded by Wilhelm II.

Benjamin Harrison elected President of United States; even though Cleveland received more popular votes, the Electoral College gives the election to Harrison.

Unemployment demonstration in Rome suppressed by the military.

Marshal Bazaine, French officer in charge of the Foreign Legion in Mexico during Emperor Maximilian's rule, dies.

Agricultural depression causes Sweden to abandon free trade.

Slavery abolished in Brazil.

More liberal constitution granted to Serbia by Milan.

Use of Danish language forbidden in schools in German N. Schleswig.

Founding of the Dutch shipping line Koninklijke Paketvaart-Maatschappij (KPM). It supports the unification and development of the colonial economy.



Reconstructed free port of Hamburg opens.

Revolution in Haiti culminates in the destruction of public buildings and the flight of President Salomon.

◀ Ferdinand de Lesseps attempts to issue a fresh series of 1,000,000 bonds “to finish the Panama Canal.” Proposal is withdrawn, de Lesseps resigns his directorship.

Italians near Alite relieved by the withdrawal of the Abyssinians.

Dr. Fitz, Boston surgeon, advocated the removal of the vermiform appendix in certain intestinal disorders, after several post-mortem operations. His ad-

vice is followed.

New York State establishes electric chair for method of death penalty.

Boulanger supported by Monarchists in France; popularity threatens Third Republic.

Main portion of Bremen incorporated into German Customs Union; parts of Wesser estuary remain free port.

Art

Van Gogh in Arles, Holland, paints *Sunflowers*, *Portrait of Armand Roulin*, *La Mousme*, and *Drawbridge at Arles*.

Oscar Wilde publishes *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*.

Casey at the Bat is recited publicly for the first time.

John Phillip Sousa composes the military march *Semper Fidelis* for the U.S. Marine Corp.

Tchaikovsky performs *Symphony No. 5 in E Minor* at St. Petersburg.

George Moore publishes *Confessions of a Young Man*.

Cézanne paints *Peasant in a Blue Smock*.

Gilbert and Sullivan debut *The Yeomen of the Guard*.



Iannis Psichari, one of the creators of modern Greek literary language, publishes *My Journey in Demotic Greek*.

Morris publishes *Dream of John Bull*, on a socialist commonwealth.

◀ Matthew Arnold, critic, essayist, and poet dies.

Fontane publishes *Irrungen, Wirungen*.

Monet paints *Cap d'Antibes*.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch publishes *Troy Town*, a novel about Cornwall.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec paints *Trace Horse of the Bus Line, Place Clichy*.

Stevenson publishes *The Black Arrow*, a novel about the War of the Roses.

Rimsky-Korsakov composes *Scheherazade*.

Charles Doughty publishes *Travels in Arabia Deserta*.

Seurat paints *Fishing Fleet at Port-en-Bessin*.

Thomas Hardy publishes *Wessex Tales*.

Kipling publishes *Soldiers Three*, and *Plain Tales from the Hills*; short stories of India.

Science and Technology

Dunlop's pneumatic tire developed, principle still unproven.

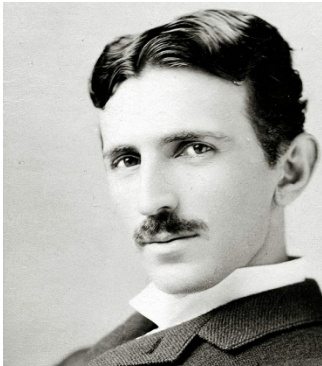
Clinton Merriam establishes the National Geographical Society and they release their first magazine.

Drinking straws are invented.

George Eastman perfects the "Kodak" box camera, which uses photographic paper roll-film.

Emile Berliner improves the gramophone.

Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer, crosses the Greenland icefield.



Hudson and Sclater publish *Argentine Ornithology*.

Mercerizing process introduced into cotton manufacture; facilitates later development of the artificial silk industry.

◀ Nikola Tesla makes first AC motor.

Incubators are first used for premature infants.

Institut Pasteur for the treatment of hydrophobia founded.

Sir J. Dewar and Sir F. Abel invent cordite.

William Burroughs patents the adding machine.

Louis Le Prince films the *Roundhay Garden Scene*, the earliest surviving film.

Heinrich Hertz produces electromagnetic waves, proves light and heat are both forms of electromagnetic radiation. Sir Oliver Lodge makes same discovery independently. Hertz used an induction coil; Lodge Leyden jars.

Next week's case: LAST

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly..."

If you would like to join the Hounds of the Internet, email us at CourageousMurray@aol.com.