



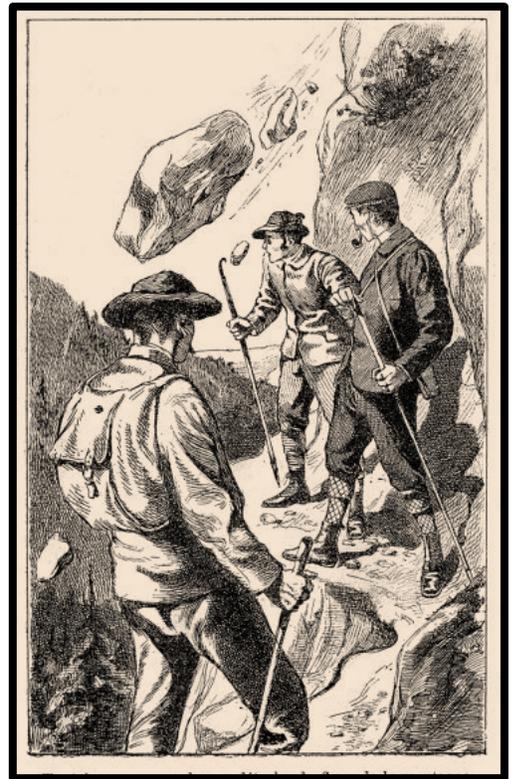
The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXVI -- The Adventure of Final Problem

“It is, indeed, a fearful place. The torrent, swollen by the melting snow, plunges into a tremendous abyss, from which the spray rolls up like the smoke from a burning house. The shaft into which the river hurls itself is an immense chasm, lined by glistening coal-black rock, and narrowing into a creaming, boiling pit of incalculable depth. . . .”

It seems only last week that Holmes was playing tricks on Percy Phelps and musing on the goodness of Providence. How can it be that our hero has come so suddenly to that fearful place by the Reichenbach Falls? Who is this villain Moriarty and why hadn't we heard of him before? There are puzzles aplenty in this story, so fill your carpet-bags with ideas, and join the Hounds as we spend a charming week on the chilling story of “The Final Problem.”

Letting the grass grow: Once we learn of Professor Moriarty's existence, it seems only logical to find that he was trying to get rid of Sherlock Holmes, the only man with enough intelligence and energy to track him down. But why did the Professor wait so long to go after Holmes? Why did he come to warn Holmes before sending out his thugs? And why were his thugs such a clumsy lot? Could it be that Moriarty was telling the truth when he said that Holmes's death would be “a grief” to him?



Having tracked Holmes to Meiringen and lured Watson away by means of the spurious note, why did Moriarty advance alone to meet Holmes? Later, we learn that Colonel Sebastian Moran was waiting above the Falls to deal with Holmes if Moriarty failed, but it is incredible that the two villains should not have acted in concert. Is it possible that Moriarty did not know Moran was there?

Do you think that Holmes deliberately lured Moriarty into a trap?

Mycroft Holmes sheltered his brother for a night, and Mycroft also drove the brougham for Watson. Was Mycroft putting himself in danger? Why didn't Moriarty ever strike at Sherlock Holmes through his brother, especially after Sherlock left England?

Along with Irene Adler and Mycroft Holmes, Professor Moriarty is one of the legends of the Canon who have imprinted themselves upon our memories with only the briefest of acquaintances. All three are intelligent and fascinating, but which one has impressed you the most?

Other problems: Holmes instructed Watson to send his luggage to Victoria Station by a "trustworthy messenger," and he also referred to "your man" when discussing the procedure Watson should use to obtain a safe cab. Who was this trustworthy and useful person who assisted Watson?

In *The Valley of Fear*, Holmes said "You can tell an old master by the sweep of his brush. I can tell a Moriarty when I see one." Which of the stories we have covered so far in the *Adventures* and the *Memoirs* might suggest the Moriarty brush-work?

When did Holmes write the note that Watson found under his cigarette case? Was it while Moriarty was standing there, as Holmes later indicated? Or did he write the note after Moriarty was dead?

Rosemary Michaud