



Adventure XLVIII -- The Valley of Fear

1. What is the significance of the use of humor in the first chapter? Does this further the plot or establish something...or is there another reason?
2. How does Holmes' relationship with Inspector MacDonald strengthen the reader's belief in the role of Moriarty in this crime?
3. Why is it necessary that we not see the third chapter of the story from the point of view of Dr. Watson?
4. What classic detective story traditions are supported by the physical setting and the clues in chapters three and four? Knowing these detective traditions, as well as the canon, what inferences should we draw? Are we justified in doing so?
5. Does the friendship between Cecil Barker and Mrs. Douglas shed any light on the mystery or does it appear to be a "red herring?"
6. Explain how the Author could have created this code using Whitaker's Almanac and create a code using a current source (not necessarily Whitaker's) to demonstrate your answer.
7. Chapter 6 contains many conventions of Golden Age Detective Fiction. Enumerate as many as you can and indicate those incidents you consider to belong to the convention known as the "red herring."
8. What does Holmes expect to accomplish by his taunting of Inspector MacDonald and White Mason before revealing the solution? What other case (or cases) does the denouement in Chapter 7 resemble?



9. What is gained by presenting the story of the Scowrers in third-person narrative instead of the point of view of John Douglas in conversation or interrogation?
10. How does the author establish and develop the characters of McMurdo and Boss McGinty and their roles in the drama played out in Vermissa Valley?
11. What are the incidents that help McMurdo pass the test of allegiance to the Scowrers? Do you see any significance in his claim to be from Chicago?

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