

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

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The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes
Adventure XIX -- The Adventure
of the Gloria Scott

THE 'GLORIA SCOTT' DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*

(Victor Trevor's Father's death)

CLUES:

1. Holmes says, "... I accepted his (Victor Trevor's) hospitality for a month of the long vacation." (374)
2. Holmes says, "One day ... when ... the vacation was drawing to a close, I received a telegram ... imploring me to return ... " (377)
3. The long summer vacation ended towards the end of September.
4. Holmes was born in 1854 (see "His Last Bow")
5. Holmes says, "He (Victor Trevor) was the only friend I made during the two years I was at college." (374)

NOTE: The date can be determined only to within the month and year.

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1, 2, and 3 imply the elder Trevor's death was from the middle to the end of September.
- B. 4 implies that Holmes started to college in 1872
- C. 5 implies that Holmes second visit to Donnithorpe, that is, when the elder Trevor died was between Holmes's first and second year's at college
- D. B and C imply the elder Trevor died in 1873
- E. A and D imply that the elder Trevor died towards the end of September 1873

The elder Trevor died sometime in the last half of Sept. 1873

*The story may contain other clues to the date of the adventure. However, use only the clues shown here. Your only goal should be to use logical reasoning to find a date based on the clues shown here.

THE 'GLORIA SCOTT' VOCABULARY WORDS

- enigmatical (374) – **puzzling, ambiguous, or inexplicable**
- prosaic (374) – **matter-of-fact; straightforward**
- a J.P. (374) – **a Justice of the Peace; a magistrate appointed to preserve the peace in a county; often a local landowner**
- the Broads (374, 378) – **low land near the sea in the east of Norfolk where the rivers widen**
- lime-lined avenue (374) – **road lined with linden trees**
- fens (374) – **marshes; wet boggy lands**
- fastidious (374) – **difficult to please; exacting**
- grizzled (375) – **flecked with gray**
- port (375) – **rich sweet fortified wine usually drunk after dinner**
- poaching (375) – **trespassing on someone else's property to fish or hunt**
- callosities (375) – **calluses; local areas of skin that have become thick**
- wizened (376) – **withered or shriveled**
- shambling (376) – **walking in an awkward or lazy way**
- salt meat (377) – **meat preserved in salt**
- harness cask (377) – **a cask fastened to the deck of a ship and used to keep the salt meat for the current day's use**
- forelock (377) – **a lock of hair that falls over the forehead**
- eight-knot tramp (377) – **a cargo ship that with a maximum speed of eight knots (about 9.2 mph)**
- the long vacation (377) – **July 1 through October 1 when universities are closed**
- dog-cart (377) – **a cart with two seats placed back-to-back; named for the box used to carry dogs under the rear seat**

apoplexy (377) – **a stroke**

flagstaff (378) – **flag pole**

insolent (378) – **insulting in manner; arrogant**

livid (378) – **extremely angry; furious**

venomous (378) – **malicious; spiteful**

pugilist (379) – **prize fighter; boxer**

half-effaced (379) – **partially rubbed out or partially erased**

ingenious (379) – **something that arises from an inventive or
cunning mind; clever**

ardent shot (380) – **enthusiastic hunter**

preserves (380) – **land used for breeding and preserving small
game**

conjure (381) – **call on or entreat solemnly**

transportation (381) – **sending a convict to a penal colony in
another country**

felon (381) – **someone who has committed a grave crime,
such as murder, rape, or burglary**

warders (381, 382, 383, 384) – **men who guard prisoners**

aft side (381) – **back side**

quay (381) – **wharf**

the Book (382) – **the Bible**

dibbs (382) – **slang for money**

keel (382) – **a structural member running lengthwise along
the bottom centerline of the ship**

main-truck (382) – **piece of wood placed at the top of the
main mast**

jaundice (383) – **a disease causing a yellowish discoloration
of the whites of the eyes, skin, and mucous
membranes**

brace (383) – **a pair**

settee (383) – **sofa**

poop (383) – **structure at the stern of a ship**

junk (384) – **salted meat**

painter (384) – **rope attached to the bow of a boat**

fore-yard (384) – **lowest beam on the forward mast of a ship;
a square sail is supported by the beam**

bark (384) – **sailing ship with from three to five masts**

starboard (384) – **The right-hand side of a ship as one faces
forward**

spars (384) – **poles used to support sails on a ship**

after-hold (385) – **storage place beneath the deck and towards
the rear of a ship**

brig (385) – **a two-masted sailing ship**

diggings (385) – **lodgings**

THE 'GLORIA SCOTT' OPEN QUESTIONS

1. On page 384, Trevor says the “ ... ship foundered in Lat. 15° north and Long. 25° west ... “. Later on that same page Trevor says, “ ... the Cape Verdes were about five hundred miles to the north of us, and the African coast about seven hundred to the east.” Look at a map of the west coast of Africa and check the position of the Cape Verde Islands themselves. In particular check the latitude of the islands and the distance of the islands from the west coast of Africa. What conclusions can you draw?

The Cape Verde Islands lie approximately between 15° and 17° north latitude so if the ship were at 15° north latitude, it could not have also been 500 miles to the south of the Cape Verdes. Moreover, the west coast of Africa is not more than 150 miles from the nearest of the Cape Verde Islands so if the ship was at a latitude of 15° north and a longitude of 25° west, it could not have been 700 miles west of the African coast. Trevor was not a professional sailor so it is understandable that he got either the latitude and longitude or the distances wrong. Moreover, when he wrote the document Trevor was under great stress and might have not paid close attention to some of the details.

2. Why didn't the captain of the *Hotspur* know that there was no passenger ship that foundered near where he picked up the convicts who had been on the *Gloria Scott*?

Communications between ships and from ship to shore were not very good in the middle of the 19th century.

The captain of the Hotspur probably did find out but not until his return to England.

3. On page 379, Victor Trevor says that upon receipt of Beddoes encoded letter, his father immediately had a stroke and was put to bed by Victor and Dr. Fordham. Yet on page 385, Holmes says, "Underneath (the account of the mutiny) is written in a hand so shaky as to be hardly legible, 'Beddoes writes in cipher to say H. has told all. Sweet Lord, have mercy on our souls!'" If the elder Trevor had a stroke and was incapacitated upon receipt of the letter, how could he have written anything at the end of the document much less have returned it to the back drawer of the Japanese cabinet (see page 379)?

Perhaps the elder Trevor did not collapse. Indeed, perhaps he did not even have a stroke. His illness and supposed death might have been a conspiracy between Victor Trevor and Dr. Fordham to deceive Holmes and hence Hudson and everyone else.

THE 'GLORIA SCOTT' SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. The 'Gloria Scott' was
 - a. a cruise ship
 - b. a prison ship
 - c. a cargo ship
 - d. none of the above

2. At the time of the adventure Holmes was
 - a. working in chemistry laboratory
 - b. a student at a university
 - c. looking for a job
 - d. none of the above

3. At the end of the story Victor Trevor's father was
 - a. dead
 - b. in prison
 - c. on board a ship
 - d. none of the above

* The Simple Quiz is designed to determine if the student has read the story. Anyone who has read the story through should have no trouble in completing this quiz. The Intermediate and Advanced Quizzes are more challenging.

THE 'GLORIA SCOTT' INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. What was the key to deciphering the enigmatic message that struck Justice of the Peace Trevor dead with horror when he read it?
 - a. read every second word
 - b. read every third word
 - c. read the first letter of each word
 - d. none of the above

2. How many children did the elder Trevor have?
 - a. one
 - b. two
 - c. four
 - d. none of the above

3. How did Holmes know that the elder Trevor had boxed earlier in his life?
 - a. his nose was knocked a little out of the straight
 - b. his ears had the peculiar flattening and thickening which marks the boxing man
 - c. the knuckles on both hands were enlarged from excessive hard contact
 - d. none of the above

4. How was the planned mutiny of the Gloria Scott discovered?
 - a. one of the prisoners confessed to the ship's captain
 - b. the sham chaplain's identity was discovered
 - c. the ship's doctor felt the outline of a pistol in bed of one of the prisoners
 - d. none of the above

[#] The Intermediate Quiz is designed to test whether the student has read the story with reasonable attention to detail. The Simple Quiz is an easier test while the Advanced Quiz is much more challenging.

THE 'GLORIA SCOTT' ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. Which one of the following was NOT among the provisions given to the eight prisoners who left the Gloria Scott in a small boat?
 - a. a compass
 - b. a cask of biscuits
 - c. two rations of rum
 - d. none of the above

2. What was the name of the sham chaplain on the Gloria Scott?
 - a. Fordham
 - b. Evans
 - c. Wilson
 - d. none of the above

3. How long had the elder Trevor had the very handsome walking stick he had made into a weapon?
 - a. not more than a year
 - b. less than six months
 - c. since his son was born
 - d. none of the above

4. Which one of the following was NOT one of the things each prisoner had stowed away at the foot of his bed?
 - a. a brace of pistols
 - b. a pound of powder
 - c. a pair of knives
 - d. none of the above

[&] The Advanced Quiz is designed for aficionados of the Canon. The questions are quite challenging. The Intermediate and Simple Quizzes are designed for the more casual reader of the stories.

ANSWERS TO QUIZZES

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Silver Blaze				
Simple	c	b	d	xx
Intermediate	c	a	a	b
Advanced	c	c	b	a
The Yellow Face				
Simple	b	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	a
Advanced	c	b	b	c
Stock-Broker's Clerk				
Simple	a	b	c	xx
Intermediate	c	c	a	a
Advanced	a	a	b	b
'Gloria Scott'				
Simple	b	b	a	xx
Intermediate	b	a	b	c
Advanced	c	c	a	c
Musgrave Ritual				
Simple	b	d	a	xx
Intermediate	b	a	a	c
Advanced	a	b	c	a
Reigate Puzzle				
Simple	c	b	b	xx
Intermediate	a	c	b	c
Advanced	b	a	c	b
Crooked Man				
Simple	b	b	a	c
Intermediate	b	a	c	c
Advanced	c	d	a	b
Resident Patient				
Simple	c	b	c	xx
Intermediate	c	a	b	d
Advanced	b	c	c	a

Answers to Quizzes

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Greek Interpreter				
Simple	b	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	a
Advanced	c	a	b	b
Naval Treaty				
Simple	c	a	b	xx
Intermediate	b	a	c	a
Advanced	c	b	c	b
Final Problem				
Simple	c	b	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	c	a
Advanced	a	a	b	b