

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes
Adventure XXVI -- The
Adventure of the Final Problem

THE FINAL PROBLEM
DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*
(The Struggle at Reichenbach Falls)

CLUES:

1. Accounts appeared in the public press on “May 6th, 1891” (469)
2. Holmes walked into Watson’s consulting-room “ ... upon the evening of April 24th.” (469)
3. Watson says, “ ... on the afternoon of the fourth we set off together ... (towards) ... Rosenloui.” (478)
4. The struggle at Reichenbach Falls was on the day the trip to Rosenloui began
5. May 1, 1891 was Friday

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 implies the meeting at Reichenbach Falls took place shortly before May 6, 1891
- B. A and 2 imply that the case started after April 24, 1891
- C. B and 3 imply the trip to Rosenloui was on May 4, 1891
- D. C and 4 imply that the struggle at Reichenbach Falls was on May 4, 1891
- E. D and 5 imply that the struggle at Reichenbach Falls was on Monday, May 4, 1891

**The struggle at Reichenbach Falls was on
Monday, May 4, 1891**

*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 FINAL PROBLEM VOCABULARY WORDS

- singular (469, 473) – **beyond what is ordinary or usual; remarkable**
- perversion (469) – **incorrect interpretation**
- air-gun (470) – **gun in which condensed air is used to propel the bullet**
- garden (470, 474) – **lawn**
- the Continent (470, 474) – **land area where the rest of Europe lies**
- placid (470) – **pleasantly calm, peaceful, tranquil**
- treatise (470) – **extensive, systematic written discourse on a subject**
- binomial theorem (470) – **theorem that specifies the expansion of the sum of two terms to any power without requiring the explicit multiplication of the terms**
- army coach (471) – **private tutor who prepares men for entrance examinations into the officer corps**
- malefactor (471) – **one who does evil**
- my toils (471) – **snares or traps**
- thrust-and-parry (471) – **stab and defend**
- ascetic (472) – **one who practices self-denial or leads an austere, simple life**
- you stand fast (472) – **refuse to change your position**
- incommoded (472) – **inconvenienced**
- dock (473) – **place where prisoner stands in a courtroom**
- foot-path (473) – **sidewalk**
- pavement (473) – **sidewalk**
- slates (473) – **pieces of fine-grained metamorphic rock cut for use as roofing material**

- rough (473) – **a crude, unmannered person; a rowdy bludgeon**
- bludgeon (473, 475) – **short, heavy club with a weighted end**
- hansom (474) – **two-wheeled, one horse carriage seating two with the driver mounted behind and reins going over the roof of the hood; invented by J. A. Hansom, a Yorkshire architect who patented the cab in 1834**
- brougham (474, 475) – **one-horse enclosed carriage with four wheels and an open driver's seat in front, named for the Scottish-born jurist, Henry Peter Brougham, First Baron Brougham and Vaux (1778-1868)**
- Continental express (474) – **fast train from London across the English Channel to the rest of Europe**
- first-class carriage (474) – **railway car providing the best accommodations**
- lithe (474) – **supple; flexible**
- venerable (474) – **commanding respect by virtue of age or dignity**
- porter (474, 475) – **railway worker who assists people with luggage and performs other duties at the railway station**
- decrepit (475) – **weakened and worn out from old age or illness**
- ecclesiastic (475) – **clergyman**
- cassock (475) – **long, close-fitting gown**
- coachman (475) – **driver of any carriage**
- mercenary (475) – **someone who acts for money**
- special (476) – **private train**
- carpet-bags (476) – **traveling bags made of carpet**
- ruefully (476) – **sorrowfully; regretfully**
- points (476) – **switches**
- coup-de-maitre* (476) – **master stroke**
- buffet (476) – **dinette at a railway station**

salle-à-manger (477) – **dining room**

virgin (477) – **unsullied; in a natural, unblemished state**

lofty pinnacle (477) – **high point**

exuberant (477) – **full of unrestrained enthusiasm**

equanimity (477) – **mental or emotional stability, composure, calmness**

hamlet (478) – **small village**

abyss (478) – **deep gulf or chasm**

chasm (478, 479) – **deep, steep-sided opening in the earth's surface; a gorge**

consumption (478) – **tuberculosis**

Alpine-stock (479) – **long staff, pointed with iron, used in climbing mountains**

brambles (479) – **prickly shrub or bush**

boulder (479) – **boulder**

cauldron (480) – **large kettle or boiler**

THE FINAL PROBLEM OPEN QUESTIONS

1. What can explain the strange behavior by Holmes described by the following ?
 - a. Holmes knew that Moriarty would follow him to the Continent yet he (Holmes) claimed that Moriarty should be in England on Monday to be arrested.
 - b. Holmes was disturbed when he received a telegram saying Moriarty had escaped, yet he knows that the Professor is not in England (476).
 - c. Holmes used a disguise at the train station but Watson was not in disguise. Surely anyone who was at the station would recognize Watson and infer what was happening.
 - d. Holmes knew that Moriarty would follow Watson. After all Holmes gave Watson explicit instructions on how to get to the train station. Why would Holmes be so careful if he did not expect Watson to be followed?

**Perhaps Holmes was deliberately luring Moriarty to his death so that he (Holmes) could take the law into his own hands. OR
Perhaps Holmes was fooling Watson.**

2. Why was Holmes so concerned that "We should catch the big fish, but the smaller would dart right and left out of the net"? (476)

While capturing Moriarty was a primary goal, it was not the only goal. See also the answer to 1. above.

THE FINAL PROBLEM SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. Who did Holmes call “the Napoleon of Crime”?
 - a. Colonel Sebastian Moran
 - b. Colonel James Moriarty
 - c. Professor Moriarty
 - d. None of the above

2. When Holmes and Watson escaped to the Continent, Holmes was disguised as
 - a. a French diplomat
 - b. an Italian priest
 - c. an English workman
 - d. none of the above

3. Who drove the brougham that took Dr. Watson to the train station?
 - a. Inspector Lestrade
 - b. Sherlock Holmes
 - c. Mycroft Holmes
 - 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 FINAL PROBLEM INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. In what town in Switzerland did Holmes and Watson stay at the Englischer Hof?
 - a. Geneva
 - b. Meiringen
 - c. Zurich
 - d. none of the above
2. What did Holmes call Moriarty?
 - a. the King of crime
 - b. the Mastermind of crime
 - c. the Napoleon of crime
 - d. none of the above
3. Which one of the following events was NOT one that Moriarty used to try to injure or kill Holmes?
 - a. a furiously driven two-horse van
 - b. a brick falling from a roof
 - c. a bullet fired from an air-gun
 - d. an attack by a rough with a bludgeon
4. Where did Holmes and Watson get out of their train and watch Moriarty's special fly by?
 - a. Canterbury
 - b. Liverpool
 - c. Strasbourg
 - 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 FINAL PROBLEM ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. How wide was the path above Reichenbach Falls?
 - a. three feet
 - b. five feet
 - c. six feet
 - d. none of the above

2. Where did Peter Steiler the elder spend three years as a waiter?
 - a. the Grosvenor Hotel
 - b. the Langham Hotel
 - c. the Northumberland Hotel
 - d. none of the above

3. Which first-class carriage on the train was the one reserved for Holmes and Watson?
 - a. first at the front
 - b. second from the front
 - c. third from the front
 - d. none of the above

4. On what date did the account of Holmes's death appear in the *Journal de Genève*?
 - a. April 30th, 1891
 - b. May 6th, 1891
 - c. May 10th, 1891
 - 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