

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

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**The Return of Sherlock Holmes
Adventure XXX -- The
Adventure of the Dancing Men**

THE DANCING MEN DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*

(Date of Hilton Cubitt's first visit to 221B Baker Street)

CLUES:

1. Hilton Cubitt says "Last year I came up to London for the Jubilee ... " (512)
2. Queen Victoria celebrated two Jubilees, a Golden Jubilee in 1887 and a Diamond Jubilee in 1897.
3. Hilton Cubitt says " ... about a month ago, at the end of June ... " (513)
4. Hilton Cubitt says "About a week ago ... it was Tuesday of last week." (513)
5. Hilton Cubitt says "None (no messages) did come for a week, and then yesterday morning I found this paper ... " (513)
6. It is unlikely that the message referred to in 5 appeared on Sunday
7. In 1888, July 25 and August 1 were on Wednesday, while in 1898, July 27 and August 3 were on Wednesday.
8. Cubitt says "When I got back from my visit to you ... the next morning" a second message appeared (514)
9. Cubitt says "... two mornings later ... " he saw a third message (515)
10. Cubitt says "Three days later a message ... " appeared (515)
11. Hilton Cubitt says "About two in the morning ... all being dark save for the moonlight outside" (515). This was said early in the morning on the 7th day after the first message.

*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.

12. The moon set at the following times on the dates shown:

Tuesday, July 31, 1888	well before midnight
Tuesday, August 7, 1888	well before midnight
Tuesday, August 2, 1898	well after 4 am
Tuesday, August 9, 1898	shortly before 2 am

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 and 2 imply 1888 or 1898
- B. 3 implies late July or very early August
- C. Because in 4 Cubitt says about a week ago, 4 implies that his visit was on Monday or Wednesday
- D. 5 and 6 imply Cubitt's visit was not Monday
- E. C and D imply Cubitt's visit was on Wednesday
- F. E and 7 imply Cubitt's visit was one of
 - July 25, 1888
 - August 1, 1888
 - July 27, 1898
 - August 3, 1898
- G. 8, 9 and 10 imply that last of three new messages appeared six days after Cubitt's visit.
- H. G and 11 imply that there was moonlight early in the morning following the 6th day after Cubitt's visit
- I. H and 12 imply that 6th day after Cubitt's visit was August 2, 1898
- J. I implies that Cubitt's visit was July 27, 1898

**Hilton Cubitt's first visit to 221B Baker Street was on
Wednesday, July 27, 1898**

THE DANCING MEN VOCABULARY WORDS

- malodorous (511) – **having a bad odor**
- inference (511) – **process of arriving at a logical conclusion from known premises**
- meretricious (511) – **showily attractive, based on insincerity**
- nettled (511) – **irritated**
- conundrum (512) – **riddle whose solution involves a play on words or a pun**
- florid (512) – **ruddy; rosy colored**
- the Jubilee (512) – **celebration of either the 50th or 60th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign as Queen of Great Britain**
- vicar (512) – **priest of a parish in the Church of England who receives a stipend or salary but does not receive the tithes of a parish**
- parish (512) – **area served by one particular church of the Church of England**
- registry office (512) – **office where legal documents were recorded; registrars could perform civil marriages and carry out some other legal proceedings**
- allude, allusion (513, 514, 523) – **to make an indirect reference; such a reference**
- squire (513, 517, 519) – **courtesy title of a chief landowner, usually the lord of the manor**
- copper (513) – **a penny**
- comely (513) – **pleasing in appearance; attractive**
- watering places (514) – **drinking establishments**
- fortnight (514) – **two weeks**

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hansom (514) – **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**

convulsive strength (515) – **strength beyond normal for that person**

skulking (516) – **stealthily sneaking about**

hiding (516) – **beating**

frieze (517) – **decorative horizontal strip along the upper part of a wall in a room**

haggard (517) – **worn and exhausted**

singular (517, 522) – **beyond what is ordinary or usual; remarkable**

surgeon (517, 518, 519) – **physician**

German Ocean (517) – **the North Sea**

gable (517) – **triangular section of wall at the end of a peaked roof in the space between the two sloping lines of the roof**

portico (517) – **roof supported by columns**

dapper (517) – **neatly or stylishly dressed**

dog-cart (518) – **a cart with two seats placed back-to-back; name is derived from box under rear seat originally used to carry dogs**

constable (518, 519) – **lowest rank of police officer**

inexorable (518) – **inflexible, relentless**

stolid (519) – **showing little emotion**

groom (519) – **man or boy employed to take care of horses**

draught (520) – **current of air in an enclosed area**

guttered (520) – **with the wax melted away through the side of the hollow formed by a burning wick**

consigned (521) – **given over to; in this context ‘addressed to’**

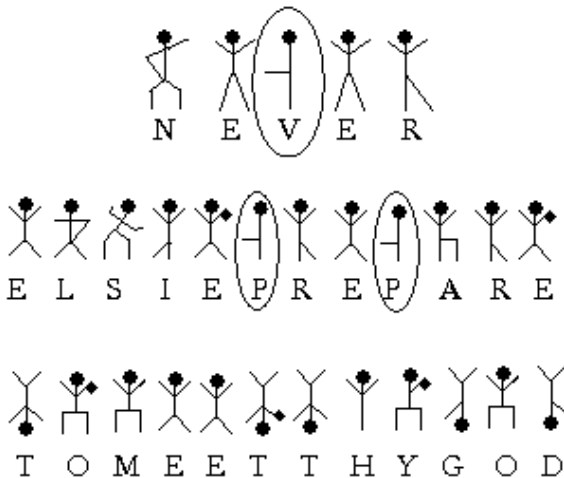
drawing-room (521) – **large room in which guests are entertained**

- atonement (521) – **apology for a wrong**
recapitulated (522) – **repeated in concise form; summarized**
hypothesis (522) – **tentative explanation that accounts for a set of facts**
swarthy (524) – **having a dark complexion**
swaggered (524) – **walked arrogantly; strutted**
deftly (524) – **quickly and skillfully**
settee (524) – **small or medium-sized sofa**
the Joint (525) – **meeting place for persons engaged in illegal activities**
reparation (525) – **something done to repair an injurious act**
wrought (525) – **brought about; past participle of the verb ‘to work’**
the cross (525) – **anything dishonest or illegal**
heeled (525) – **armed**
like a jay (526) – **like a stupid person or a simpleton**
assizes (526) – **trial sessions, civil or criminal, held periodically in specific locations by a judge or court which moves from place to place**

THE DANCING MEN OPEN QUESTIONS

1. What is peculiar about the code used by Abe Slaney and Elsie? Examine particularly the code for the word "NEVER" on page 515 and the code for "ELSIE PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD" on page 516. Recall that on page 522 Holmes said "... this (the code) is entirely new to me."

The dancing man for V in NEVER is identical with the dancing men for the two Ps in PREPARE (see ovals in figure below). Moreover, the O in TO and GOD are identical with the M in MEET. Evidently when Holmes said "... this (the code) is entirely new to me", he meant that it was not a simple substitution code as he said it was. That raises the question, why did Holmes lead Watson to believe that it was a simple substitution code? Could it be that Holmes thought Watson incapable of understanding the real code?



THE DANCING MEN SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. The dancing men were
 - a. a troop of gypsies who camped at Riding Thorp Manor
 - b. a secret code used by criminals in Chicago
 - c. a joke played on Elsie Cubitt by a friend from America
 - d. none of the above

2. At the end of the story, Hilton Cubitt
 - a. presents Holmes with a check
 - b. is dead
 - c. is recovering from a gun shot wound
 - d. none of the above

3. The man who fired a shot at Hilton Cubitt was
 - a. an American
 - b. previously married to Elsie Cubitt
 - c. a British soldier
 - 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 DANCING MEN INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. What relative of Elsie Cubitt had been in the same gang with Abe Slaney?
 - a. her brother
 - b. her father
 - c. her former husband who was now dead
 - d. none of the above

2. The encryption of what one word was the key to Holmes unlocking the secret of the dancing men?
 - a. Elsie
 - b. the
 - c. never
 - d. none of the above

3. What was the name of the farm where Abe Slaney was staying?
 - a. Elrige's
 - b. Parker's
 - c. the Myrtles
 - d. none of the above

4. How serious were Elsie Cubitt's injuries?
 - a. serious but not fatal
 - b. fatal
 - c. superficial
 - 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 DANCING MEN ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. Who was the only person with whom Watson played billiards?
 - a. Parker
 - b. Thurston
 - c. Walker
 - d. none of the above

2. What was the name of the vicar of the Hilton Cubitt's parish?
 - a. Acton
 - b. Parker
 - c. Thurston
 - d. none of the above

3. What was the name of the Cubitts' cook?
 - a. Mrs. King
 - b. Mrs. Parker
 - c. Mrs. Walker
 - d. none of the above

4. What was Elsie Cubitt's maiden name?
 - a. Adams
 - b. Patrick
 - c. Venucci
 - 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 FOR THE RETURN

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Empty House				
Simple	c	c	c	xx
Intermediate	a	b	c	c
Advanced	c	a	a	b
Norwood Builder				
Simple	c	a	b	xx
Intermediate	a	a	b	c
Advanced	a	a	a	b
Dancing Men				
Simple	b	b	a	xx
Intermediate	b	c	a	a
Advanced	b	b	a	b
Solitary Cyclist				
Simple	a	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	c	b
Advanced	b	c	a	c
Priory School				
Simple	b	a	c	xx
Intermediate	c	b	a	b
Advanced	d	a	c	b
Black Peter				
Simple	b	a	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	c
Advanced	b	c	b	d
Charles Augustus Milverton				
Simple	b	a	a	xx
Intermediate	c	c	a	b
Advanced	b	c	b	a

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Six Napoleons				
Simple	a	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	b
Advanced	c	a	a	b
Three Students				
Simple	c	a	d	xx
Intermediate	a	b	c	b
Advanced	b	c	a	b
Golden Pince-Nez				
Simple	a	b	a	xx
Intermediate	c	c	c	a
Advanced	b	b	c	c
Missing Three-Quarter				
Simple	b	c	b	xx
Intermediate	b	a	b	c
Advanced	a	c	b	a
Abbey Grange				
Simple	a	c	c	xx
Intermediate	c	b	b	c
Advanced	b	b	a	b
Second Stain				
Simple	a	a	b	xx
Intermediate	c	a	b	c
Advanced	a	b	a	c