

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



The Return of Sherlock Holmes
Adventure XXXVI -- The
Adventure of the Six
Napoleons

THE SIX NAPOLEONS DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*

(Date when Holmes recovered the Black Pearl of the Borgias)

CLUES:

1. Beppo was “ ... paid last on May 20th.” (589)
2. Paydays were usually every Saturday.
3. The only years between Holmes’s active career, that is 1881 to 1903, when May 20 was on Saturday were 1882, 1893, and 1899.
4. Beppo’s manager says, “ ... he (Beppo) got off with a year.” (589)
5. Holmes says, “If ever I permit you (Watson) to chronicle any more of my little problems.” (593)
6. *A Study in Scarlet* was published at the end of 1887.
7. Holmes says, “I myself was consulted upon the case (the disappearance of the Pearl of the Borgias) ... “ (594)
8. The Pearl of the Borgias was stolen just before Beppo was arrested.
9. Holmes vanished at Reichenbach Falls in May 1891 and returned in April 1894.
10. The stabbing for which Beppo was jailed was after his last payday but before the next one would have occurred.
11. It is likely that Beppo’s trial was delayed for a week to see if the victim survived so that at the trial the fate of the victim would be known.
12. Beppo’s sentence would have been passed on the Monday of the week following the start of the trial.
13. Beppo would have started to serve his sentence the day after the sentence was made.

*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.

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14. Beppo was released one year after his sentence started. (589)
15. Beppo would have broken the first bust on the day after he was released.
16. Lestrade says, "The first case (of a broken bust) was reported four days ago." (583)
17. "... the next morning ..." after the narrative began, a telegram was received from Lestrade. (585)
18. Holmes asked Lestrade to appear at Baker Street "... at six o'clock the next morning ...". (593)

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1, 2, and 3 imply the year Beppo was last paid was 1882, 1893, or 1899.
- B. A and 4 imply that the year the case took place was 1883, 1894, or 1900.
- C. 5 and 6 imply that the case did not take place in 1883.
- D. 7 and 8 imply that Holmes was in active practice the year before the case took place.
- E. D and 9 imply that the case did not take place in 1894.
- F. B, C and E imply the case took place in 1900.
- G. 1 and 10 imply the stabbing took place between Sunday, May 21 and Friday, May 26.
- H. G and 11 imply Beppo's trial started between Monday, May 29 and Friday, June 2.
- I. H and 12 imply that sentence was passed on Monday, June 5.
- J. I and 13 imply that Beppo started to serve his sentence on Tuesday, June 6.
- K. J and 14 imply that Beppo was released from prison on Wednesday, June 7, 1900.
- L. K and 15 imply that the first bust was broken on Thursday, June 8, 1900.

- M. L and 16 imply that the narrative began on Monday, June 11, 1900.
- N. M and 17 imply that Holmes received the telegram from Lestrade on Tuesday, June 12, 1900
- O. N and 18 imply that the case ended on Wednesday, June 13, 1900.

**Holmes recovered the Black Pearl of the Borgias on
Wednesday, June 13, 1900.**

THE SIX NAPOLEONS VOCABULARY WORDS

surgery (584) – **doctor's office**

iconoclast (584) – **someone who attacks and seeks to overthrow
traditional or popular ideas or institutions**

monomania (584) – **pathological obsession with one idea or
subject**

idée fixe (584) – **obsession**

horn-handled clasp knife (586) – **pocketknife with a folding
blade and a handle made of
dark plastic or ceramic**

simian (586) – **resembling an ape or a monkey**

foolscap (586) – **sheet of writing paper measuring approxi-
mately 13 by 16 inches with a watermark of a
fool's cap with bells**

shards (587) – **pieces of broken pottery**

red lamp (587) – **night time sign of a doctor's consulting room**

rates (588) – **locally assessed property taxes**

Nihilist (588) – **participant in a revolutionary movement of
mid 19th-century Russia that advocated scorn
for authority and tradition**

gild (588) – **to cover with a thin layer of gold**

Teutonic (589) – **Germanic**

cruet-stand (589) – **stand holding small glass bottles which hold
a condiment, such as vinegar or oil**

emporium (590) – **place where various goods are bought and
sold**

lumber-rooms (591) – **rooms for storing bulky or cumbersome
household items**

impunity (591) – **free from punishment or penalty**

lithe (592) – **effortlessly graceful**

dark lantern (592) – **a lantern with a sliding door to shut off the
light**

sallow (592) – **sickly yellowish**

wont (593) – **accustomed to**

grizzled side-whiskers (593) – **side burns flecked with gray**

carpet-bag (593) – **traveling bag made of carpet**

wrought (594) – **constructed; past participle of the verb ‘to work’**

aperture (595) – **an opening, such as a hole, gap, or slit**

THE SIX NAPOLEONS OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Horace Harker says, “If I had come in here as a journalist I should have interviewed myself and had two columns in every evening paper.” (585) A newspaper column requires about 1,000 words and there were 7 evening newspapers which were on the street by late afternoon. The above statement was made in mid-morning, so it would be quite a challenge to accomplish the feat Harker claimed he could accomplish. How do you suppose Mr. Harker proposed to carry out his boast?

Perhaps Harker overestimated the length of the story he would write. And remember he did manage to get some material in his paper including a remark made by Holmes (589-590).

2. Holmes says, “Until then I should like to keep this photograph (of Beppo) found in the dead man’s pocket.” (588) Why would Lestrade allow Holmes to carry away such important and useful evidence?

Holmes must have had an understanding with Lestrade that in exchange for his (Holmes’s) help on cases, he (Holmes) would be granted certain liberties.

3. The manager of Gelder & Company says, “Beppo was his name – his second name I never knew” (589) and later quite quickly locates Beppo’s name in the pay-list. How could he do that without knowing Beppo’s last name?

Beppo must have been listed on the pay-list only as ‘Beppo’.

4. Holmes asks Mr. Sandeford to sign a paper that he 'transferred every possible right he (Sandeford) had in the bust to (Holmes)' (594) Later Holmes says, "Put the pearl in the safe, Watson" (595). What did Holmes plan to do with the pearl? The only person who had any rightful claim to the pearl was the owner, the Prince of Colonna.

The pearl was placed in the safe only temporarily for safe-keeping. One supposes that Holmes planned to extract a substantial reward for its return to the Prince and wanted to assure himself that he, not Sandeford, received the reward.

THE SIX NAPOLEONS SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. What was the name of the man who destroyed the busts of Napoleon?
 - a. Beppo
 - b. Gorgianno
 - c. Alphonse
 - d. none of the above
2. How was Pietro Venucci killed?
 - a. he was shot
 - b. he was struck on the head with a blunt instrument
 - c. his throat was slit
 - d. none of the above
3. Who had the black pearl of the Borgias at the end of the story?
 - a. Horace Harker
 - b. Lestrade
 - c. Sherlock 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 SIX NAPOLEONS INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. Which one of the following did NOT own one of the six busts of Napoleon?
 - a. Josiah Brown
 - b. Mr. Devine
 - c. Horace Harker
 - d. Dr. Barnicot

2. What was the name of the Scotland Yard detective in the case?
 - a. Gregory
 - b. Lestrade
 - c. Altheney Jones
 - d. none of the above

3. What was hidden in one of the six busts of Napoleon?
 - a. the Crown diamond
 - b. the Great Sapphire of India
 - c. the Black Pearl of the Borgias
 - d. none of the above

4. How did Holmes gain possession of the missing jewel?
 - a. he removed it from Beppo's pocket
 - b. he bought the final bust from Mr. Sandeford
 - c. he searched through the shards of the last bust broken by Beppo
 - 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 SIX NAPOLEONS ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. Which one of the following was not found in Pietro Venucci's pockets?
 - a. an apple
 - b. a map of London
 - c. a knife
 - d. a photograph

2. For whom did Horace Harker work?
 - a. the Central Press Syndicate
 - b. the Daily Telegraph
 - c. the London Times
 - d. none of the above

3. Who was the sculptor who created the original bust of Napoleon that was the model for the plaster copies?
 - a. Devine
 - b. Rodin
 - c. Sandeford
 - d. none of the above

4. In which hotel was the Black Pearl of the Borgias stolen from the Prince of Colonna's bedroom?
 - a. Atheneum
 - b. Dacre
 - c. Langham
 - 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