

# A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



**The Return of Sherlock Holmes  
Adventure XVIII -- The  
Adventure of the Empty House**

**THE EMPTY HOUSE**  
**DATE OF THE ADVENTURE\***  
(Date of the capture of Colonel Moran)

**CLUES:**

1. Watson says, "It was the spring of the year 1894 ... " (483)
2. Ronald Adair was murdered on March 30, 1894 (484)
3. On the night Col. Moran was captured, Watson says, "It was a bleak and boisterous night ... " (490)
4. The only bleak and boisterous night in early April of 1894 was April 5.
5. In 1894 the first day of April was on Sunday.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

- A. 1 implies it was spring of 1894
- B. 2 implies it was shortly after March 30, 1894
- C. 3 and 4 imply it was April 5, 1894
- D. C and 5 imply it was Thursday, April 5, 1894

**Colonel Moran was captured on  
Thursday, April 5, 1894**

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\*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 EMPTY HOUSE VOCABULARY WORDS

whist (484) – **card game, a predecessor to bridge, played by two teams of two players, in which the last card dealt indicates trump; tricks of four cards are played, and a point is scored for each trick over six won by each team.**

bibliophile (485) – **lover of books**

wizened (485) – **withered, shriveled**

inexorable (486) – **relentless, inflexible**

baritsu (486) – **selected methods of ju-jitsu**

abyss (487) – **deep gulf or chasm**

sardonic (488) – **disdainful, sneering, bitter**

ascetic (488) – **one who practices self-denial or leads an austere life**

garroter (490) – **strangler**

jew's harp (490) – **small metal instrument consisting of a lyre-like shaped frame and metal tongue, plucked while holding against the teeth; now called a mouth harp**

asperity (490) – **sharpness of tone**

sibilant (491) – **hissing**

shikari (492) – **sportsman or hunter**

gibes (492) – **mocking words, jeers**

## THE EMPTY HOUSE OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Colonel Moran had seen Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls and therefore knew that Holmes was still alive. Moran must have told all of criminal London. Why then did Holmes vanish for three years?

**Perhaps Holmes thought that Moran would no longer have any influence after Moriarty's death or perhaps he was trying to discredit Moran among the rest of criminal London.**

2. What difference would it make if the public thought that Holmes was dead?

**Perhaps no difference at all.**

3. Was the later Holmes an imposter?

**Many people think he was. After all, the 'new' Holmes never used drugs as the earlier one did.**

4. On page 469 (The Final Problem) there is a reference to Colonel James Moriarty. On page 494 (The Empty House) we see the name Professor James Moriarty. What was the Professor's name? (HINT: See the name Norman Neruda on pages 34 and 36 of "A Study in Scarlet".)

**On a previous occasion, Watson forgot to hyphenate a last name when he wrote Norman Neruda (34) which should have been Norman-Neruda. The last name of the colonel and the professor was James Moriarty and should have been hyphenated as James-Moriarty.**

5. On page 487 Holmes says "There were at least three others whose desire for vengeance upon me would only be increased by the death of their leader." However, at the time all Holmes knew was the news in the wire from the London police saying that "They have secured the whole gang with the exception of him (Moriarty)." (see page 476). Who then were the three?

**Moran and two others.**

6. On page 487 Holmes says, "I might... have reversed my boots ...". How would he do that? Have you ever tried to put on your shoes with the toes at the back?

**Perhaps Holmes did not mean 'putting your feet in backwards' but merely walking backwards.**

## THE EMPTY HOUSE SIMPLE QUIZ\*

1. At the beginning of the story Holmes was disguised as
  - a. a Scotland Yard detective
  - b. a priest
  - c. a bibliophile
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Who moved the bust of Sherlock Holmes every quarter of an hour?
  - a. Mycroft Holmes
  - b. one of the Baker Street Irregulars
  - c. Mrs. Hudson
  - d. none of the above
  
3. What did Colonel Moran use to try to kill Holmes?
  - a. a brick thrown from a rooftop
  - b. a horse drawn carriage careening down the street
  - c. an air-gun
  - d. none of the above

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\* 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 EMPTY HOUSE INTERMEDIATE QUIZ<sup>#</sup>

1. What type of wrestling did Holmes say he had “ ... some knowledge of ... “?
  - a. baritsu
  - b. jujitsu
  - c. hand-to-hand
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Who was the one confidant that Holmes had during his three year absence?
  - a. Mrs. Hudson
  - b. Mycroft
  - c. Lestrade
  - d. none of the above
  
3. What name did Holmes use during his three year absence?
  - a. Altamount
  - b. Parker
  - c. Sigerson
  - d. none of the above
  
4. Which one of these four places did Holmes NOT visit during his three year absence?
  - a. France
  - b. Khartoum
  - c. Switzerland
  - d. Tibet

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<sup>#</sup> 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 EMPTY HOUSE ADVANCED QUIZ<sup>&</sup>

1. To whom was the Honourable Ronald Adair engaged?
  - a. Violet de Merville
  - b. Grace Milner
  - c. Edith Woodley
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Which one of the following was NOT playing whist with Ronald Adair on the afternoon of his death?
  - a. Lord Balmoral
  - b. Sir John Hardy
  - c. Colonel Moran
  - d. Mr. Murray
  
3. Who made the air gun that Colonel Moran used to kill Ronald Adair?
  - a. a blind German mechanic
  - b. a French inventor
  - c. an ex-British spy
  - d. none of the above
  
4. In what year was Colonel Moran born?
  - a. 1820
  - b. 1840
  - c. 1860
  - d. none of the above

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<sup>&</sup> 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
<b>Empty House</b>				
Simple	c	c	c	xx
Intermediate	a	b	c	c
Advanced	c	a	a	b
<b>Norwood Builder</b>				
Simple	c	a	b	xx
Intermediate	a	a	b	c
Advanced	a	a	a	b
<b>Dancing Men</b>				
Simple	b	b	a	xx
Intermediate	b	c	a	a
Advanced	b	b	a	b
<b>Solitary Cyclist</b>				
Simple	a	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	c	b
Advanced	b	c	a	c
<b>Priory School</b>				
Simple	b	a	c	xx
Intermediate	c	b	a	b
Advanced	d	a	c	b
<b>Black Peter</b>				
Simple	b	a	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	c
Advanced	b	c	b	d
<b>Charles Augustus Milverton</b>				
Simple	b	a	a	xx
Intermediate	c	c	a	b
Advanced	b	c	b	a

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