

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



**The Return of Sherlock Holmes
Adventure XXXII -- The
Adventure of Black Peter**

BLACK PETER
DATE OF ADVENTURE*
(Date when Patrick Cairns was arrested)

CLUES:

1. Watson says, "In this memorable year '95" (559)
2. Watson says, "during the first week of July, ... " when Stanley Hopkins called upon Holmes (559)
3. Stanley Hopkins says, "... the crime was done upon the Wednesday" (561)
4. Holmes says, "It would have been an easier task (for Holmes) a week ago." (563)
5. July 1, 1895 was Monday
6. Watson says, "... we travelled back (to London) next morning." (567)
7. Holmes wired to Stanley Hopkins to "Come to breakfast to-morrow at nine-thirty" (568)
8. Patrick Cairns was arrested at the nine-thirty meeting. (569-571)

*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.

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 and 2 imply Hopkins called upon Holmes the first week of July 1895.
- B. A, 3, and 4 imply the murder was Wednesday of the last week in June 1895.
- C. B and 5 imply the murder was on Wednesday, June 26, 1895
- D. C and 4 imply Hopkins called upon Holmes on Wednesday, July 3, 1895
- E. D and 6 imply Holmes and Watson returned to London on Thursday, July 4, 1895
- F. E, 7 and 8 imply Patrick Cairns was arrested on Friday, July 5, 1895

Patrick Cairns was arrested on Friday, July 5, 1895

BLACK PETER VOCABULARY WORDS

- capricious (559) – **impulsive and unpredictable**
swarthy (561) – **having a dark complexion**
outhouse (561, 564) – **a building separated from the main building**
high road (561) – **a main road; a highway.**
public-house (561) – **a tavern or bar that is licensed to sell alcoholic beverages; a pub**
droning (561) – **making a continuous low, dull humming sound**
harmonium (561) – **organlike keyboard instrument that produces tones with free metal reeds actuated by air forced from a bellows**
brindled (561) – **grayish with streaks or spots of a darker color**
tantalus (562) – **stand holding three cut-glass decanters that cannot be removed until a bar that restricts the stoppers is raised**
drab (562) – **dull light brown**
weald (564) – **woodland**
smelt (564) – **melt or fuse ores to separate the metallic constituents**
furtive (564) – **surreptitious; shifty**
skulking (565) – **lying in hiding; lurking**
knickerbockers (565) – **breeches gathered and banded just below the knee; knickers**
absconding (566) – **leaving quickly and secretly**
anaemic (568) – **listless and weak**
hobnobbed (568) – **associated with familiarly**
Ribston pippen (569) – **variety of winter apple**
side-whiskers (569) – **side burns**
sovereign (569) – **gold coin worth one pound**

lank (569) – **long, straight, and limp**

sallow (569) – **sickly yellowish color**

dinghy (570) – **small rowboat**

Shetland Lights (570) – **the numerous lighthouses surrounding
the Shetland Islands, the most northerly
of the British Isles**

BLACK PETER OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Young Neligan's father was lost at sea in August 1883 (567) which was 12 years before the adventure took place. Since young Neligan was searching for the securities, apparently nothing had been done about the missing securities during all those years. Why?

Perhaps something had been done about the securities, and young Neligan was looking for something else. That is, young Neligan was lying.

2. Holmes says, "I spent three days in wiring to Dundee ..." (571) to get the names of the crew of the *Sea Unicorn* in 1883. The police had access to telephones in 1895, so why didn't Holmes ask Hopkins to use the telephone to call the Dundee police?

Holmes didn't like to rely on the police; they were supposed to rely in him.

3. Why did Holmes ask the first two seamen who called at Baker Street to wait in another room while he was interviewing subsequent applicants (569)?

Holmes was concerned that one of them might tell Cairns that the berth was full and that as a result Cairns would leave before his interview.

4. What happened to Patrick Cairns? Was he tried for murder? If so, what was the jury's verdict?

The story ends before we know Cairns fate, but it is certain that he was tried. However, it seems likely that he would not be convicted of murder because his actions were in self-defense. On the other hand, he might be convicted of manslaughter because he was engaged in blackmail at the time of Peter Carey's death.

5. At the end of the story (572) Holmes says, "If you want me for the trial, my address ... will be somewhere in Norway ... ". Why were Holmes and Watson going to Norway?

The only clue is that is where the older Neligan was headed some 12 years earlier, and that is not much of a clue.

BLACK PETER SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. What was Holmes doing in Allardyce's back shop at the start of the story?
 - a. looking for information on sailing vessels
 - b. stabbing at a dead pig with a harpoon
 - c. thawing out a frozen animal
 - d. none of the above

2. What name did Sherlock Holmes use when he was disguised as a seaman?
 - a. Captain Basil
 - b. Peter Carey
 - c. John Neligan
 - d. none of the above

3. What was John Hopley Neligan's father carrying with him when he sailed for Norway?
 - a. cash
 - b. stolen jewels
 - c. securities
 - 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.

BLACK PETER INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. What did the initials P.C. on the inside flap of the tobacco pouch stand for?
 - a. Peter Carey
 - b. Patrick Cairns
 - c. Paul Captains
 - d. none of the above

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

3. Why was Holmes convinced that the initials P.C. on the inside flap of the tobacco pouch were not those of the murdered man?
 - a. the pouch was found on top of the body
 - b. the murdered man seldom smoked
 - c. the tobacco in the pouch was not the type smoked by seamen
 - d. none of the above

4. Why wasn't the murder discovered until midday although the victim had been murdered at about 2 a.m.?
 - a. there was nobody at home during the morning
 - b. it rained heavily in the morning
 - c. everybody was terrified of the murdered man
 - 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.

BLACK PETER ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. How old was Peter Carey at the time of his death?
 - a. 45
 - b. 50
 - c. 56
 - d. none of the above

2. Which one of the following cases was NOT mentioned in this story?
 - a. the case of Wilson, the notorious canary-trainer
 - b. the case of the sudden death of Cardinal Tosca
 - c. the adventure of the Cardboard Box
 - d. the adventure of the Priory School

3. What was the occupation of the man named Slater who was passing Woodman's Lee and saw a square of light shining among the trees with the shadow of a man's head clearly visible?
 - a. a green grocer
 - b. a stone mason
 - c. a farmer
 - d. none of the above

4. Which one of the following men was not one of the ones who Holmes – as Captain Basil –interviewed for a fictitious post on a ship?
 - a. Patrick Cairns
 - b. James Lancaster
 - c. Hugh Pattins
 - d. George Sumner

[&] 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