

# A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



**The Return of Sherlock Holmes  
Adventure XXXVIII -- The  
Adventure of the Missing  
Three-Quarter**

**THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER  
DATE OF THE ADVENTURE\***  
(Date when Cyril Overton first visited Holmes)

**CLUES:**

1. The story was first published in August 1904.
2. Watson says, "... I have a recollection of one (this case) which reached us ... some seven or eight years ago ..." (622)
3. The Varsity Match (Oxford vs. Cambridge) was held on the second Wednesday of December except in 1903.
4. December 1, 1896 was on Tuesday.
5. December 1, 1897 was on Wednesday.
6. The evening paper said, "The defeat of (Cambridge) may be ... attributed to ... the lack of combination in the three-quarter line ..." (633)
7. Whitaker's Almanack says that in the 1897 Varsity Match " ... the Cambridge three-quarter line did not come off."
8. When Cyril Overton came to visit Holmes, he said, "To-morrow we play Oxford." (623)

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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.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 and 2 imply the case was in 1896 or 1897
- B. 3 implies it was December
- C. A and B imply it was December 1896 or December 1897
- D. C, 4, and 5 imply the Varsity Match in question was December 9, 1896 or December 8, 1897
- E. D, 6 and 7 imply the Varsity Match in question was December 8, 1897
- F. E and 8 imply Overton's visit was Tuesday, December 7, 1897.

**Cyril Overton visited Holmes on Tuesday, December 7, 1897**

## THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER VOCABULARY WORDS

ascetic (622, 629) – **A person who renounces material comforts and leads a life of austere self-discipline**

inscrutable (622) – **difficult to understand; impenetrable**

enigmatic (622) – **puzzling**

sixteen stone (622) – **one stone equals 14 pounds, so 16 stone would be 224 pounds**

the pack (622) – **rugby players who participate in a scrum**

touchline (623) – **out of bounds line**

drop (623) – **a drop-kick, that is, where the player drops the ball and kicks it just after it touches the ground**

porter (623) – **door keeper**

marrow (624) – **soft, fatty, vascular tissue that fills most bone cavities**

gout (624) – **painful inflammation of the joints, especially of the feet and hands**

grizzled (625) – **flecked with grey**

hieroglyphic (625) – **difficult to read or decipher**

counterfoil (626) – **part of a check or other commercial paper retained by the issuer as a record of a transaction.**

hack (626) – **cough**

querulous (626) – **grumbling**

plate (627) – **household articles covered with a precious metal such as silver or gold**

dour (629) – **silently ill-humored**

sardonic (631) – **scornfully or cynically mocking**

acumen (632) – **keenness of judgment**

publicans (632) – **keepers of public houses or taverns**

the Cam (633) – **the river that flows through the town of Cambridge**

impunity (634) – **exemption from punishment, penalty, or harm**

compunction (635) – **strong uneasiness caused by a sense of guilt**

virulent (635) –**extremely infectious**

## THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER OPEN QUESTIONS

1. On page 623 Holmes says, "... amateur sport ... is the best and soundest thing in England." Later on page 628 Holmes also says, "... a good deal of betting (on amateur sport) goes on among the public ... " and adds "... it might be worth someone's while to get at a player ... " and then finally "... it is not impossible that a plot to hold (Godfrey Staunton) for ransom might be concocted." This last contains the implication that someone else, connected with the Cambridge side, would pay such a ransom. How can you reconcile the characterization of amateur sport as 'best and soundest' with the later accusations?

**Holmes might have meant that the amateur athletes and their coaches and sponsors were 'the best and soundest thing in England' especially compared with the professional athletes. However, he also must have known that people outside the sports often placed bets on the sports and were not above criminal activity to assure their bets.**

2. What crime was Holmes guilty of in this case?

**Invasion of privacy**

## THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER SIMPLE QUIZ\*

1. The missing three-quarter was
  - a. a cricket player
  - b. a rugby player
  - c. a jail breaker
  - d. none of the above
  
2. When the missing three-quarter was found he was
  - a. being held for ransom
  - b. with his wealthy uncle
  - c. with his dead wife
  - d. none of the above
  
3. Leslie Armstrong, who was a friend of the missing three-quarter, was
  - a. a coach of the team
  - b. a physician
  - c. a detective
  - 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 MISSING THREE-QUARTER INTERMEDIATE QUIZ<sup>#</sup>

1. What was the name of Godfrey Staunton's uncle?
  - a. Lord Armstrong-Stevenson
  - b. Lord Mount-James
  - c. Lord Morton-Johnson
  - d. none of the above
  
2. What was the name of Godfrey Staunton's friend to whom he sent a telegram asking the friend to "Stand by us for God's sake"?
  - a. Leslie Armstrong
  - b. Cyril Overton
  - c. Jeremy Dixon
  - d. none of the above
  
3. Why did Godfrey Staunton keep his marriage a secret?
  - a. he would no longer be able to play rugby for his university
  - b. his uncle would disinherit him
  - c. his scholarship money would be discontinued
  - d. none of the above
  
4. How was Holmes able to follow Dr. Armstrong's carriage?
  - a. he perched on the back of Dr. Armstrong's carriage
  - b. he watched Dr. Armstrong's carriage from the top of a nearby hill
  - c. he put aniseed on the wheels of Dr. Armstrong's carriage
  - d. none of the above

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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 MISSING THREE-QUARTER ADVANCED QUIZ <sup>&</sup>

1. Who advised Cyril Overton to consult Holmes?
  - a. Stanley Hopkins
  - b. Mrs. Farintosh
  - c. the rector of Trinity College
  - d. none of the above
  
2. What breed of dog was Pompey, the dog Holmes used to track Dr. Leslie Armstrong's carriage?
  - a. something between a bulldog and a spaniel
  - b. a cross between a blood hound and a mastiff
  - c. something between a beagle and a foxhound
  - d. none of the above
  
3. In what college and university was Cyril Overton a student?
  - a. Magdalene College, Oxford University
  - b. Trinity College, Cambridge University
  - c. St. Luke's College, Cambridge University
  - d. none of the above
  
4. Where were Godfrey Staunton's teammates staying in London?
  - a. Bentley's private hotel
  - b. a private hotel near Trafalgar Square
  - c. the Northumberland Hotel
  - 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