

# A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



His Last Bow  
Adventure XLIV -- The  
Adventure of the Red  
Circle

**THE RED CIRCLE**  
**DATE OF THE ADVENTURE\***  
(Date when Gorgiano was killed)

**CLUES:**

1. Holmes says, "There was evidently some mark, some thumb-print, ... " (903)
2. The Galton-Henry system of fingerprint classification was adopted by Scotland Yard in 1901.<sup>#</sup>
3. Holmes retired from active practice in 1903. (1071, 1080)
4. Watson says, " ... a man, muffled in a cravat and greatcoat, was leaning against the railing." (908)
5. On the evening when Gorgiano was killed, Holmes says, " ... it is not eight o'clock, and a Wagner night at Covent Garden!" (913)
6. The only Wagner performances at Covent Garden in 1901 were in the summer.
7. In 1902 the final Wagner performance at Covent Garden was on September 25
8. In 1902, September 1 was Monday

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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.

<sup>#</sup>Source: Baring-Gould, William S., *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, Vol II* (1967 Charles N. Potter) p. 693

## CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 and 2 imply it was 1901 or later.
- B. 3 implies it was before 1903
- C. A and B imply it was 1901 or 1902
- D. 4 implies that it was not summer
- E. D, 5 and 6 imply that it was not 1901
- F. C and E imply that it was 1902
- G. 5 implies that on the night Gorgiano was killed, Holmes was rushing to get to the Wagner performance
- H. G implies that on the night following the night when Gorgiano was killed there was no Wagner performance
- I. F, H, and 7 imply that the night Gorgiano was killed was September 25, 1902
- J. I and 8 imply Gorgiano was killed on Thursday, September 25, 1902

**Giuseppe Gorgiano was killed on  
Thursday, September 25, 1902**

## THE RED CIRCLE VOCABULARY WORDS

- pertinacity (901) – **keeping comments precisely relevant to the matter at hand**
- gum-brush (901) – **paste brush for apply glue**
- shilling (902) – **one twentieth of a pound**
- fortnight (902) – **two weeks**
- matted (903) – **packed into a thick mass**
- laconic (904) – **terse or concise**
- bleat (904) – **worthless whinings**
- conjecture (905) – **an opinion or a conclusion based on guess-work**
- box-room (905) – **storeroom for trunks, luggage, etc.; also called a lumber room**
- pretentious (905) – **marked by an extravagant outward show; ostentatious**
- flat (906, 908, 909) – **apartment**
- surmise (906) – **an inference drawn without sufficiently conclusive evidence**
- gaunt (907) – **thin and bony**
- cavat (908) – **scarf**
- greatcoat (908) – **large heavy overcoat**
- sauntered (908) – **walked at a leisurely pace; strolled**
- deal (909) – **fir or pine wood**
- swarthy (909) – **dark complexioned**
- haft (909) – **handle or hilt**
- horn-handled (909) – **handle made from a natural or synthetic substance resembling the hard, smooth material forming the outer covering of the horns of animals**
- Dio mio* (910) – **My God**
- Vieni* (910) – **come**
- prosaic (910) – **matter-of-fact; straightforward**

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Carbonari (911) – **members of a secret political association formed in the Kingdom of Naples early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; their goal was to introduce a republican form of government in the kingdom**

## THE RED CIRCLE OPEN QUESTIONS

1. On page 907 Holmes says, “A single flash – that is A, surely. Now, then. How many did you make it? Twenty. So did I. That should mean T.” However, the Italian alphabet does not include K, so 20 flashes should be U not T. How can you explain this discrepancy?

**Emilia and Gennaro Lucca thought it likely that they would have to use some English words like street names so they used the English alphabet.**

2. Why did Gennaro Lucca send the message “attenta” meaning “beware” three times when Emilia was already aware of the fact that danger lay ahead? And why did he choose such a cumbersome way of sending the message? It would take 477 waves of his candle to send all the messages, and he knew that Giorgiano was lurking nearby.

**Gennaro wanted to be sure that Emilia saw the message and clearly was preparing to send a more meaningful message when he was interrupted.**

3. Why did Gennaro Lucca send his message in the agony column in English when Emilia’s knowledge of English was limited?

**A message in Italian would have attracted more attention from Giorgiano. Moreover, the newspaper might have balked at accepting messages in languages other than English.**

4. On page 904 Holmes says, “This person is alone and cannot be approached by letter without a breach of that absolute secrecy which is desired.” But why not? Couldn’t Gennaro simply written to ‘Mrs. Warren’s Lodger’ at the address on Great Orme Street?

**The house on Great Orme Street was under surveillance witness the fact that Mr. Warren was abducted (see Question 5). Thus a letter might have been intercepted.**

5. On page 905 Mrs. Warren says, “ ... this morning he (her husband) had not gone ten paces down the road when two men ... threw a coat over his head ... They drove him an hour, and then opened the door and shot him out.” How did the captors know that he was not their intended prey, Gennaro Lucca, without looking at his face?

**It is likely that Mr. Warren cried out for help and his voice was recognized at not being the voice of Gennaro Lucca. Moreover, perhaps in the carriage they noticed that neither his size nor his clothing could belong to Gennaro Lucca.**

## THE RED CIRCLE SIMPLE QUIZ\*

1. Mrs. Warren's mysterious lodger was
  - a. a man
  - b. a woman
  - c. a child
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Mrs. Warren's mysterious lodger was
  - a. French
  - b. Italian
  - c. Spanish
  - d. none of the above
  
3. The signals used by Mrs. Warren's mysterious lodger to send and receive messages were given by using
  - a. a candle
  - b. a torch (flashlight)
  - c. raising and lowering a window blind
  - 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 RED CIRCLE INTERMEDIATE QUIZ<sup>#</sup>

1. What clue did Holmes observe that told him the mysterious lodger in Mrs. Warren's house was not a native speaker of English?
  - a. the wrong tense of a verb was used
  - b. a singular noun was used when a plural one was more appropriate
  - c. a non-British brand of cigarettes was ordered
  - d. none of the above
2. How was Black Gorgiano killed?
  - a. he was shot
  - b. he was stabbed
  - c. he was strangled
  - d. none of the above
3. Who killed Black Gorgiano?
  - a. Tito Castalotte
  - b. Giuseppe Zamba
  - c. Gennaro Lucca
  - d. none of the above
4. How did Holmes and Watson manage to see Mrs. Warren's mysterious lodger?
  - a. they hid in a box-room opposite the door to the lodger's room
  - b. they stood behind a tree on the street and waited until the lodger tried to signal a confederate
  - c. Holmes climbed a fence to peer into the window
  - 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 ADVENTURE OF THE RED CIRCLE ADVANCED QUIZ<sup>&</sup>

1. What was the name of Mrs. Warren's former lodger for whom Holmes arranged an affair the year before this adventure?
  - a. Mrs. Farintosh
  - b. Fairdale Hobbs
  - c. Jeremy Dixon
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Which one of the following did NOT appear in the agony column of the *Daily Gazette* over the fortnight preceding this story?
  - a. Surely Jimmy will not break his mother's heart ...
  - b. If the lady who fainted on the Brixton bus ...
  - c. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of a Robert Granger ...
  - d. Lady with a black boa at Prince's Skating Club ...
  
3. For what firm did Mr. Warren work?
  - a. Coxon and Woodhouse
  - b. Mawson and Williams
  - c. Morton and Waylight
  - d. none of the above
  
4. On what street was Mrs. Warren's boarding house?
  - a. Great Orme Street
  - b. Tottenham Court Road
  - c. Howe Street
  - 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 HIS LAST BOW

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
<b>Wisteria Lodge</b>				
Simple	b	a	a	xx
Intermediate	a	b	a	b
Advanced	b	c	c	a
<b>Cardboard Box</b>				
Simple	b	b	a	xx
Intermediate	b	c	c	a
Advanced	a	b	b	a
<b>Red Circle</b>				
Simple	b	b	a	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	a
Advanced	b	c	c	a
<b>Bruce Partington Plans</b>				
Simple	a	b	a	xx
Intermediate	c	c	a	b
Advanced	a	b	a	a
<b>Dying Detective</b>				
Simple	d	a	b	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	c
Advanced	a	b	c	c
<b>Lady Frances Carfax</b>				
Simple	c	a	b	xx
Intermediate	a	b	b	c
Advanced	b	c	b	a

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Devil's Foot</b>				
Simple	c	c	b	xx
Intermediate	b	a	c	b
Advanced	b	c	c	a
<b>His Last Bow</b>				
Simple	b	b	c	xx
Intermediate	c	a	a	b
Advanced	a	d	c	a