

# A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

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His Last Bow  
Adventure XLVII -- His  
Last Bow

**HIS LAST BOW**  
**DATE OF THE ADVENTURE\***  
(Date when Holmes captured Von Bork)

**CLUES:**

1. “It was ... the second of August – the most terrible August in the history of the world.” (970)
2. At the close of the story (980) Holmes says, “There’s an east wind coming, Watson” and follows with “... such a wind as never blew on England yet ... and a good many of us may wither before its blast.”
3. Germany invaded Belgium on August 4, 1914 and that night England entered World War I.
4. August 1, 1914 was Saturday.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

- A. 1 implies that it was August 2.
- B. 2 implies that World War I was just about to begin.
- C. A, B, and 3 imply it was August 2, 1914
- D. C and 4 imply it was Friday, August 2, 1914

**Holmes captured von Bork on Friday, August 2, 1914**

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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.

## HIS LAST BOW VOCABULARY WORDS

- parapet (971) – **low protective wall along the edge of a balcony**  
gabled (971) – **having triangular sections of walls at the end of a pitched roof and occupying the space between the two slopes of the roof**  
chalk cliff (971) – **cliff consisting of soft, white rock**  
the Kaiser (971) – **title given to the King of Prussia, in 1914 it was Kaiser Wilhelm II**  
manifest (971) – **obvious; clearly apparent**  
legation (971) – **diplomatic mission in a foreign country ranking below an embassy**  
insular (971) – **relating to an island**  
four-in-hand (971) – **four horse team driven by one person**  
astute (971) – **shrewd; discerning**  
aquiline (972) – **eagle like**  
Furies (972) – **three goddesses in Greek mythology who used secret stings to punish the crimes of those who escaped public justice**  
Mr. John Bull (972, 975) – **the British equivalent of Uncle Sam**  
country squire (973) – **lord of a country manor**  
dossier (973) – **collection of papers giving detailed information**  
guttural (973) – **harsh, grating sound produced in the back of the mouth**  
sparking plugs (973) – **spark plugs for an automobile**  
Junker (973) – **narrow-minded, overbearing member of the Prussian aristocracy**  
tokay (974, 977) – **wine made from grapes grown in Tokay, a town in eastern Hungary**  
salver (974) – **tray for serving food or drinks**

Zeppelin (974) – **Count Von Zeppelin (1838-1917) inventor and builder of the dirigible airship – a controlled balloon – capable of longrange flights and used by the Germans in World War I for the bombing of Britain**

ruddy-faced (974, 976) – **having a face with a healthy, reddish color**

Britannia (974) – **female personification of Great Britain or the British Empire**

somnolence (974) – **state of drowsiness; sleepiness**

valise (974, 977, 980) – **small piece of hand luggage**

semaphore (975) – **messages sent by the use of flags**

Marconi (975) – **codes used in wireless telegraphy**

mug (975) – **dummy; jerk**

ramping (975) – **jumping up and down**

the racket (976) – **take the punishment**

a cross (976) – **underworld slang for ‘a thief’**

boodle (976) – **money**

nitsky (976) – **next to nothing**

Franz Joseph (977) – **(1830 – 1916) emperor of Austria from 1848 to 1916**

stertorously (977) – **snoring heavily**

his lights (977) – **his standards; his ways**

the Solent (978) – **body of water between England and the Isle of Wight; connects the Atlantic Ocean with the English Channel**

defiled (978) – **polluted**

*magnum opus* (978) – **Latin for ‘great work’; the greatest single work of a writer**

pensive (978) – **deeply thoughtful**

deigned (978) – **condescended**

Skibbareen (978) – **town on the south coast of Ireland**

invective (979) – **abusive language**

Nihilist (979) – **member of the Russian revolutionary party  
professing extreme anti-social principles and  
destruction of political institutions**

ignoble (980) – **not noble in quality**

amenities (980) – **things that contribute to physical or material  
comfort**

## HIS LAST BOW OPEN QUESTIONS

1. In what year was Sherlock Holmes born?

**He was a 'tall, gaunt man of 60' (975). This was August 2, 1914, so Holmes was born in 1854.**

2. What is unusual about the writing style in this story?

**It is told by an unnamed third person, not by Watson**

3. On page 979 Holmes said "It was I who brought about the separation between Irene Adler and the late King of Bohemia ... ". What did he mean by that?

**He could have meant that he released the King from Irene's hold on him.**

4. On page 980 it says that "... the two friends walked him (von Bork) very slowly down the garden walk ... " and then later "... he (von Bork) was hoisted, still bound hand and foot, into the spare seat of the little car." What is unusual about that sequence of events?

**Have you ever tried to walk 'bound hand and foot'?**

## HIS LAST BOW SIMPLE QUIZ\*

1. What alias did Sherlock Holmes use in this story?
  - a. Birdy Edwards
  - b. Altamount
  - c. Baron Von Herling
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Holmes was disguised as a
  - a. a German
  - b. an American
  - c. a Frenchman
  - d. none of the above
  
3. The war associated with this story was
  - a. the Crimean War
  - b. the Boer War
  - c. World War I
  - 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.

## HIS LAST BOW INTERMEDIATE QUIZ<sup>#</sup>

1. Who wrote this story?
  - a. Holmes
  - b. Watson
  - c. an unidentified third person
  - d. none of the above
  
2. What occupation did Holmes claim for himself in this story?
  - a. a motorcar expert
  - b. an American manufacturer of munitions
  - c. a gambler
  - d. none of the above
  
3. When von Bork opened the package that he expected to contain the British naval signals, what did he find instead?
  - a. a book on bee keeping
  - b. blank papers
  - c. a list of French wines
  - d. none of the above
  
4. Where was von Bork at the end of the story?
  - a. on his way to Germany
  - b. in the spare seat of a little car
  - c. in prison
  - 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.

## HIS LAST BOW ADVANCED QUIZ<sup>&</sup>

1. In Holmes' code, what did a radiator stand for?
  - a. a battleship
  - b. a cruiser
  - c. a submarine
  - d. none of the above
  
2. Which one of the following was NOT among the German spies who had been captured and imprisoned?
  - a. Hollis
  - b. Jack Jones
  - c. Steiner
  - d. von Herling
  
3. What kind of wine did Holmes and Watson drink after subduing von Bork?
  - a. champagne
  - b. merlot
  - c. tokay
  - d. none of the above
  
4. At what hotel was Martha supposed to report to Holmes the day after the capture of von Bork?
  - a. Claridge's
  - b. Langham
  - c. Northumberland
  - 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