

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

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The Casebook of Sherlock
Holmes
Adventure LII -- The
Adventure of the Sussex
Vampire

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*

(Date when Holmes revealed Jacky Ferguson was the villain)

CLUES:

1. *A Study in Scarlet* begins with Watson saying, “In the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine ...” (15)
2. Watson would have been 24 years old when he received his Doctor of Medicine degree.
3. The postscript to Bob Ferguson’s letter to Holmes says, “ ... your friend Watson played Rugby for Blackheath when I was three-quarter for Richmond.” (1036)
4. Gentlemen usually first married when they were between 25 and 29 years old.
5. It is quite likely that Ferguson’s first child was born the year after he married.
6. In his letter to Holmes, Bob Ferguson says that his son by his first marriage “ ... was now fifteen ...” (1035)
7. Holmes’s letter to Ferguson’s lawyers was dated “Nov 21st”. (1044)
8. “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans” took place between Thursday, November 21, 1895 and Thursday, November 22, 1895.
9. Holmes would not write to Ferguson’s lawyers on Sunday.
10. November 21, 1897 was a Sunday.
11. The letter from Bob Ferguson’s lawyers to Holmes was written on “Nov. 19th”. (1934)
12. Ferguson’s lawyers would not have written on Sunday.

*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.

13. November 19, 1899 was a Sunday.
14. Holmes would have received the letter from Ferguson's lawyers on November 20.
15. A letter would not be received on Sunday.
16. November 20, 1898 was Sunday.
17. The letters from Ferguson and Ferguson's lawyers arrived on the same day (1034)
18. Watson says, "Promptly at ten o'clock the next morning (the day after Holmes received Ferguson's letter) Ferguson strode into our room." (1037)
19. Watson says, "It was evening (of that same day) ... when ... we drove through Sussex ... and finally reached ... the ... farmhouse in which Ferguson dwelt." (1039)
20. It was on that visit that Holmes solved the case and identified Jacky Ferguson as the villain.
21. November 1 was on Friday in 1895, Sunday in 1896, Monday in 1897, Tuesday in 1898, and Wednesday in 1899

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 and 2 imply that Watson was born in 1854.
- B. 3 implies that Watson and Ferguson were born in the same year.
- C. A and B imply that Ferguson was born in 1854.
- D. C, 4 and 5 imply that Ferguson's first child was born between 1880 and 1884.
- E. D and 6 imply that the case opened between 1895 and 1899.
- F. 7 and 8 imply that the case did not open in 1895.
- G. 7, 9 and 10 imply that the case did not open in 1897.
- H. 11, 12, and 13 imply that the case did not open in 1899.
- I. 13, 14, 15, and 16 imply that the case did not open in 1898.
- J. E, F, G, H, and I imply that the case opened in 1896.

- K. J, 14, and 17 imply that Holmes received the letters from Ferguson and from Ferguson's lawyers on November 20, 1896.
- L. K and 18 imply that Ferguson visited Holmes and Watson on November 21, 1896.
- M. L, 1, and 20 imply that the case ended on November 21, 1896.
- N. M and 21 imply it was Saturday, November 21, 1896

**Holmes revealed Jacky Ferguson was the villain on
Saturday, November 21, 1896.**

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE VOCABULARY WORDS

- purview (1034) – **range of competence**
make a long arm (1034) – **reach as far as you can**
perusal (1034) – **careful reading**
reverie (1035) – **daydream**
docketed (1035) – **filed away**
nitrates (1035) – **fertilizers**
weal (1035) – **ridges on the flesh raised by a blow; welts**
cot (1036) – **baby's crib**
demented (1036) – **insane**
slab-sided (1037) – **tall and slim; lanky**
gaunt (1037, see also 1041 below) – **haggard or drawn**
circumscribed (1038) – **narrowly limited; restricted**
lichen (1039) – **fungus that forms a crust like growth on rocks
or tree trunks**
rebus (1039) – **representation of words in the form of pictures
or symbols**
yeoman farmer (1039) – **a member of the small freeholding
farmers in England**
flaxen (1041) – **pale grayish-yellow color**
shambling (1041) – **shuffling the feet while walking**
gaunt (1041, see also 1037 above) – **thin and bony; angular**
Saxon (1041) – **the Germanic traits seen in some of the English**
cherub (1041) – **a child with an innocent or chubby face**
entrée (1042) – **permission to enter**
quiver (1043) – **portable case for holding arrows**
curare (1043) – **dark extract obtained from tropical American
trees; used as an arrow poison by some Indian
peoples of South America**

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Holmes says, "Was there not a queen in English history who sucked such a wound to draw poison from it?" (1043) Who was that queen?

Eleanor of Castile, Queen of England, 1272 to 1290, sucked poison from the arm of her husband, Edward I, on his Palestine expedition.

2. How did Jacky Ferguson manage to abstract the curare poison and try it on the dog without anyone noticing?

The curare must have already been on the arrowheads and Jacky simply stuck an arrowhead into the side of the dog.

3. How did Jacky Ferguson manage to get to the baby twice each time being spotted by his stepmother but nobody else?

Jacky must have been a very careful planner to avoid being seen by the nurse and the maid. His timing was perfect.

4. Why did Ferguson's wife think that her husband would be devastated if he learned that his son had tried to kill the baby but would not be equally heartbroken by thinking his wife was a vampire?

Ferguson's wife might have been blinded by her rage at the boy for clearly she was mistaken in not taking her husband into her confidence. She also might have thought that her husband would not have believed her and would dismiss her story out of hand. Finally, she had witnessed the bond between her husband and his son and, for that reason, felt he would choose him over her.

5. Holmes says, "I think a year at sea would be my prescription for Master Jacky ... " (1044). Did Holmes really think that Jacky, who was severely crippled, could withstand the harsh life of a cabin boy on a sailing vessel?

Holmes might have meant that Jacky should be a passenger on a long pleasure voyage, or he might have simply meant that the boy needed to be sent away from home for a while.

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. How many times had Bob Ferguson been married?
 - a. once
 - b. twice
 - c. three times
 - d. none of the above

2. Ferguson's present wife was from
 - a. Australia
 - b. Europe
 - c. South America
 - d. none of the above

3. Jacky Ferguson tried out the curare poison on
 - a. the cat
 - b. the dog
 - c. one of the sheep
 - 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.

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. What was the name of Mrs. Ferguson's maid?
 - a. Mrs. Mason
 - b. Dolores
 - c. Juanita
 - d. none of the above

2. Other than her maid, who was the first person Mrs. Ferguson was willing to allow into her room?
 - a. Holmes
 - b. Watson
 - c. the local doctor
 - d. none of the above

3. In what sport did Bob Ferguson and Dr. Watson oppose each other?
 - a. cricket
 - b. football (soccer)
 - c. rugby
 - d. none of the above

4. Who delivered the note that Holmes wrote to Mrs. Ferguson?
 - a. Dolores
 - b. Mrs. Mason
 - c. Dr. Watson
 - 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.

THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. Which one of the following was NOT one of the eight entries Holmes cited as appearing under 'V' in his index?
 - a. Vandermere, the Hammersmith murderer
 - b. Victor Lynch, the forger
 - c. Voyage of the Gloria Scott
 - d. Vittoria, the circus belle

2. What was the name of the law firm that wrote to Holmes on behalf of Bob Ferguson?
 - a. Blackheath and Richmond
 - b. Morrison, Morrison, and Dodd
 - c. Muirhead and Mason
 - d. none of the above

3. At what park did Bob Ferguson throw Watson over the ropes in a rugby match?
 - a. Twickenham
 - b. McPherson Park
 - c. Old Deer Park
 - d. none of the above

4. What was the breed of dog that Bob Ferguson owned and on which his son had tested the poisoned arrows?
 - a. beagle
 - b. corgi
 - c. spaniel
 - d. none of the above

[&] 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 CASEBOOK

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Illustrious Client				
Simple	c	a	b	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	a
Advanced	c	a	b	c
Blanched Soldier				
Simple	a	a	b	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	a
Advanced	b	a	b	c
Mazarin Stone				
Simple	c	a	c	xx
Intermediate	c	c	b	a
Advanced	a	b	b	c
Three Gables				
Simple	b	b	c	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	b
Advanced	b	c	a	b
Sussex Vampire				
Simple	b	c	b	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	c
Advanced	a	b	c	c
Three Garridebs				
Simple	a	a	b	xx
Intermediate	b	b	a	a
Advanced	b	a	a	c

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Thor Bridge				
Simple	b	a	b	xx
Intermediate	a	a	c	c
Advanced	a	b	a	b
Creeping Man				
Simple	b	b	c	xx
Intermediate	c	a	c	b
Advanced	d	a	b	c
Lion's Mane				
Simple	b	c	b	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	a
Advanced	c	a	a	a
Veiled Lodger				
Simple	a	a	c	xx
Intermediate	c	b	b	c
Advanced	c	b	b	a
Shoscombe Old Place				
Simple	c	a	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	a	a
Advanced	b	a	a	a
Retired Colourman				
Simple	a	a	a	xx
Intermediate	a	c	b	b
Advanced	b	c	a	b