

# A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



The Casebook of Sherlock  
Holmes  
Adventure LVII -- The  
Adventure of the Lion's  
Mane

**THE LION'S MANE  
DATE OF THE ADVENTURE\***  
(Date Holmes killed the *Cyanea capillata*)

**CLUES:**

1. Holmes says it was "Toward the end of July, 1907, there was a severe gale ..." (1083)
2. Maud Bellamy says, "Tuesday is to-day ..." (1089)
3. There was no gale in England in the summer of 1907. Moreover, there was only one strong wind in the summer of 1907, and it occurred on Tuesday, June 25.
4. Holmes says, "A week passed ..." (1089)
5. "Sad story this, sir, about Mr. McPherson's dog", said she (Holmes's housekeeper) one evening (1089)
6. 'One evening' indicates that this was several days, perhaps two days, after Holmes's previous comment that a week had passed.
7. Holmes says, "... I retired ... eagerly awaiting ... the morrow" (1090)

**CONCLUSIONS:**

- A. 1, 2 and 3 imply that the first day was Tuesday, June 25, 1907
- B. A, 4, 5, and 6 imply the housekeeper's comment was on Thursday, July 4, 1907
- C. B and 7 imply that Holmes returned to the beach on Friday, July 5, 1907 and killed the lion's mane that morning

**Holmes killed the *Cyanea capillata* on Friday, July 5, 1907**

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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.

## THE LION'S MANE VOCABULARY WORDS

ken (1083) – **understanding**

shingle (1083, 1085) – **beach gravel consisting of large smooth pebbles unmixed with finer material**

Blue (1083) – **equivalent to a letter in athletics in the United States**

rheumatic fever (1084) – **infectious disease characterized by fever and painful inflammation of the joints and frequently resulting in permanent damage to the valves of the heart**

scourge (1084, 1085, 1087, 1091) – **whip used to inflict punishment**

weals (1084, 1091) – **welts; ridges on the flesh raised by a blow**

paroxysm (1084, 1093) – **sudden outburst of action**

taciturn (1084) – **habitually untalkative**

surds (1084) – **irrational numbers, such as the square root of 2**

conic sections (1084) – **curves obtained by passing a flat plane through a cone; circles, ellipses, parabolas, and hyperbolas**

swarthy (1084) – **dark complexion**

marl (1084) – **crumbly mixture of clays and remnants of shells**

grotto (1085) – **small cave or cavern**

ginger-moustached (1085) – **with a strawberry blond moustache**

downs (1087) – **hills**

nebulous (1087) – **hazy; vague**

florid (1087) – **flushed with rosy color; ruddy**

gainsaying (1088) – **denying**

spoor (1090) – **track or trail of an animal**

bovine (1090) – **resembling a ruminant mammal such as an ox, cow, or buffalo**

phlegmatic (1091) – **calm; unemotional**

extravasated (1091) – **blood that has flowed from a blood vessel out into surrounding tissue**

cat-o'-nine-tails (1091) – **whip consisting of nine knotted cords and fastened to a handle**

pallid (1092) – **abnormally pale or wan**

reticulated (1092) – **resembled a net or network**

Indian file (1093) – **single file**

pellucid (1093) – **transparent or translucent**

miscreant (1093) – **evildoer; villain**

pustules (1094) – **small swellings similar to blisters**

exonerates (1094) – **frees from blame**

omnivorous (1094) – **devouring everything available**

## THE LION'S MANE SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Harold Stackhurst, who ran the coaching establishment, said, "He (Ian Murdoch) would insist upon some algebraic demonstration before breakfast." (1086) What does this tell you about Murdoch?

**Murdoch was a strange man and a hard taskmaster to ask students to do their mathematics before breakfast. He appears to have had severe mental problems.**

2. Holmes says, "I saw the faithful little creature (McPherson's dog), an Airedale terrier, laid out upon the mat in the hall." (1090) However, an Airedale is quite a large dog measuring almost two feet at the shoulder. Moreover, Murdoch was reported to have picked up the dog and hurled it through a plate-glass window. (1084) It would take an incredibly strong man to do such a thing. How can you explain these diverse statements about McPherson's dog?

**Holmes must have been mistaken about the breed. Perhaps it was a Welsh Terrier which is similar in appearance to an Airedale but much smaller.**

3. Holmes says, "I was slow at the outset – culpably so. It was the towel which misled me. The poor fellow had never thought to dry himself, and so I in turn was led to believe that he had never been in the water." (1094-1095) Holmes was clearly not only slow but also unobservant. While Murdoch's towel was dry, his hair, the inside of his coat, and his canvas shoes undoubtedly were damp if not downright wet. How could the great detective have missed these clues that Murdoch had been in the water?

**Retirement and perhaps age must have adversely affected Holmes's powers of observation.**

4. Murdoch was beat out by McPherson for the hand of Maud Bellamy. He also had a ferocious temper and was capable of throwing a dog, albeit a small dog, through a plate-glass window. All of this made him a prime suspect in the murder of McPherson. Although Holmes believed Murdoch to be innocent, can you think of a scenario that would make Murdoch, while not the murderer, the architect of the death of McPherson?

**Perhaps Murdoch imported a *Cyanea capillata* and placed it in the pool where he knew McPherson would bathe. When Murdoch went down to remove the *Cyanea*, he was stung himself.**

5. What is a *Cyanea capillata*?

**It is a giant jellyfish found in the deeper regions of the North Atlantic Ocean and the Arctic Ocean. It is a predator that stalks fish, plankton, and even other jellyfish. The venom of a *Cyanea capillata* causes paralysis of the breathing muscles and the victim can die from suffocation. Its sting could be fatal to a human but seldom is because this jellyfish does not generally come near the surface.**

## THE LION'S MANE SIMPLE QUIZ\*

1. Who wrote this story?
  - a. Dr. Watson
  - b. Sherlock Holmes
  - c. an unnamed third person
  - d. none of the above
  
2. What was the lion's mane?
  - a. a vicious whip
  - b. a branding iron
  - c. a sea animal
  - d. none of the above
  
3. What was Fitzroy McPherson doing when he was attacked?
  - a. fishing
  - b. swimming
  - c. walking on the beach
  - 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 LION'S MANE INTERMEDIATE QUIZ<sup>#</sup>

1. What subject did Ian Murdoch, the man who once threw Fitzroy McPherson's little dog through a plate glass window, teach at Harold Stackhurst's coaching establishment?
  - a. history
  - b. mathematics
  - c. science
  - d. none of the above
2. What was the name of the man who later in the story was also attacked by "the lion's mane"?
  - a. Bellamy
  - b. Murdoch
  - c. Stackhurst
  - d. none of the above
3. What was the name of the woman who both Ian Murdoch and Fitzroy McPherson courted?
  - a. Mary Anderson
  - b. Violet Fulworth
  - c. Maud Bellamy
  - d. none of the above
4. What was the name of Harold Stackhurst's coaching establishment?
  - a. the Gables
  - b. the Haven
  - c. the Sussex
  - 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 LION'S MANE ADVANCED QUIZ<sup>&</sup>

1. On which slope of the downs was Holmes's villa situated?
  - a. western
  - b. eastern
  - c. southern
  - d. northern
  - e. none of the above.
2. What type of coat had Fitzroy McPherson been wearing when Holmes and Stackhurst discovered him on the beach?
  - a. Burberry
  - b. Macintosh
  - c. Inverness cape
  - d. none of the above
3. What was the name of the village constable who was in charge of the case?
  - a. Anderson
  - b. Bellamy
  - c. McMurdo
  - d. none of the above
4. What breed was McPherson's dog?
  - a. airedale
  - b. cocker spaniel
  - c. mastiff
  - 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 CASEBOOK

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

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