

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

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The Casebook of Sherlock
Holmes
Adventure LX -- The
Adventure of Shoscombe
Old Place

SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE
DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*
(Date when Lady Beatrice Falder died)

CLUES:

1. Watson says, "... it was that on a bright May evening Holmes and I found ourselves ... bound for ... Shoscombe." (1107)
2. Watson says, "Sherlock Holmes had been bending ... over a low-power microscope ... " (1102)
3. Holmes retired from active practice in 1903. (1071, 1080)
4. Watson says, "It was ... without a moon ... " when he and Holmes encountered Sir Robert Norberton at the crypt. (1109)
5. On the night he was encountered by Holmes and Watson, Sir Robert Norberton says, "... my sister (Lady Beatrice Falder) did die just a week ago." (1111)
6. On the night he was encountered by Holmes and Watson, Sir Robert Norberton also says that when his sister died, "What could I do? ... If I could stave things off for three weeks all would be well." (1111) This, no doubt, meant that he could use his winnings from the Derby to satisfy his debtors.

*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.

7. The dates when the Derby was run and the new moon immediately preceding the Derby were:

Year	Derby Day	Preceding New Moon
1897	June 9	May 31
1898	June 1	May 20
1899	May 24	May 9
1900	June 6	May 29
1901	May 29	May 18
1902	May 21	May 7

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1 implies the case opened in May
- B. 2 implies it was late in Holmes career, 1897 or later.
- C. A, B, and 3 imply it was May between 1897 and 1902
- D. 4 implies there was a new moon when Holmes and Watson encountered Sir Robert Norberton at the crypt.
- E. 5 and 6 imply that the Derby would be run two weeks from the day on which Holmes and Watson encountered Sir Robert Norberton at the crypt.
- F. 7 implies that the only year in which a new moon preceded the Derby by exactly two weeks was 1902.
- G. E and F imply it was 1902
- H. C and G imply it was May, 1902
- I. 7 and H imply that Holmes and Watson encountered Sir Robert Norberton at the crypt on May 7, 1902
- J. 5 and I imply that Lady Beatrice Falder died on April 30, 1902

Lady Beatrice Falder died on April 30, 1902

SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE
VOCABULARY WORDS

epithelial (1102) – **composed of one or more layers of cells separated by very little intercellular substance**

coiner (1102) – **counterfeiter**

buck (1103) – **fashionable man**

the Regency (1103) – **1810 to 1820; when the insanity of George III required that his son, the future George IV, govern as Regent**

plunger (1103) – **a reckless gambler**

Queer Street (1103) – **imaginary place where people in financial difficulty lived**

austere (1103) – **severe or stern**

Harley Street (1103) – **London street where consulting physicians and specialists had their offices**

touts (1104, 1107) – **people who sell information on the condition of horses to bettors**

two lengths (1104) – **two times the length of a horse**

furlong (1104) – **one-eighth of a mile**

the Jews (1104, 1108, 1111) – **disparaging and vulgar term for a tight-money lenders**

dropsy (1104, 1111) – **accumulation of water in body tissues**

jumpy work (1104) – **dangerous work**

bad job (1104) – **trouble**

condyle of the human femur (1106) – **rounded prominence at the end of the femur; the femur has no such prominence at its upper end**

“halt-on-demand” station (1107) – **station where train does not customarily stop but will stop if asked to do so**

extirpation (1107) – **extermination**

a lead (1107, 1109) – **a leash**

sold up (1108) – **forced to pay up**

carrion crow (1108) – **bird that feeds on dead and decaying
flesh**

coup (1108) – **brilliantly executed strategy; a masterstroke**

confidante (1108) – **woman to whom secrets or private matters
are disclosed**

dace (1108) – **small, fresh-water game-fish**

spoon-bait (1108) – **spoon-shaped metallic lure used to catch
certain fish**

jack (1108) – **pike fish**

heraldic (1108) – **relating to a coat-of-arms**

griffin (1108, 1109) – **mythical beast with the body of a lion and
the head and wings of an eagle**

barouche (1109) – **four-wheeled carriage with a low body, two
inside seats facing one another front-to-back
and an outer seat for the driver**

shafts (1109) – **parallel poles between which the horse is
harnessed**

highroad (1109) – **main road**

groined roof (1110) – **curved roof formed by the intersection of
two arches crossing at right angles**

coronet (1110) – **small crown worn by princes and princesses**

Saxon (1110) – **member of the Teutonic race that crossed from
Europe into Britain in the fifth century**

Norman (1110) – **Scandinavian people who settled in northern
France in the tenth century and later
invaded Britain**

jemmy (1110) – **short crowbar with curved ends; used to pry
something open**

Gothic (1110) – **style of architecture characterized by pointed
arches, rib vaulting, and flying buttresses**

cudgel (1110) – **short, heavy stick**

baronet (1110, 1112) – **hereditary title just below a baron**

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sarcophagus (1110) – **stone coffin**

truculent (1110) – **disposed to fight; pugnacious**

florid (1111) – **flushed with rosy color**

furtive (1111) – **appearing to have hidden motives or purposes;**
shifty

personate (1111) – **impersonate**

SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Watson says, “There are the Shoscombe spaniels. ... The most exclusive breed in England.” (1103). However, spaniels are quite common in England as well as in many other parts of the world and are not exclusive in any sense of the word. What could Watson have meant?

Watson must have meant ‘the most exclusive *strain* in England’.

2. Watson says, “It’s the upper condyle of a human femur “ (1106) A condyle is a protuberance on the end of a bone and joins the bone with a joint. There is no ‘upper’ condyle of the femur (the thighbone) although there is a ‘lower’ condyle at the knee. What did Watson mean?

Apparently Watson was using the term condyle loosely and merely meant the upper end of the femur.

3. Sir Robert Norberton says, “My chief creditor is ... Sam Brewer, whom I was once compelled to horsewhip ... “. (1112) We do not know whether Sir Robert borrowed the large sums of money from Brewer before or after he horsewhipped the latter. Regardless, why would Brewer lend money to someone who horsewhipped him? Conversely, why would Brewer let Sir Robert horsewhip him and not then immediately require repayment of the loans?

Upper class gentlemen habitually acted as though they could mistreat and impose upon those of the lower class with no repercussions. Similarly, lower class people acted as if this was a right that the upper class had.

SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. The Prince was
 - a. a dog
 - b. a friend of Sir Robert Norberton
 - c. a horse
 - d. none of the above

2. When the case opens Sir Robert Norberton's sister was
 - a. dead
 - b. missing
 - c. sick
 - d. none of the above

3. Sir Robert Norberton was
 - a. a quiet, retiring man
 - b. a carefree, always smiling man
 - c. a man with a violent temper
 - 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.

SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. At the beginning of the story Holmes was using a microscope. What did he say the material was that he was looking at under the microscope?
 - a. blood
 - b. glue
 - c. human hairs
 - d. none of the above
2. What was the name of Sir Robert Norberton's sister?
 - a. Lady Eva Norberton
 - b. Lady Carrie Evans
 - c. Lady Beatrice Falder
 - d. none of the above
3. What position did John Mason hold?
 - a. horse trainer
 - b. gardener
 - c. butler
 - d. none of the above
4. Who was Sir Robert Norberton's chief creditor?
 - a. Sam Brewer
 - b. Ben Norlett
 - c. Henry Stephens
 - 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.

SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE ADVANCED QUIZ[&]

1. Early in the story Holmes says he will make Watson his 'Handy Guide to' what?
 - a. Newmarket Heath
 - b. the Turf
 - c. women
 - d. none of the above

2. What was the name of Lady Beatrice Falder's maid?
 - a. Carrie Evans
 - b. Lucy Parr
 - c. Mrs. Marker
 - d. none of the above

3. What position did Stephens hold at Shoscombe Old Place?
 - a. butler
 - b. caretaker
 - c. horse trainer
 - d. none of the above

4. What did Holmes say you occasionally find among the eagles?
 - a. a carrion crow
 - b. a scavenger
 - c. a vulture
 - 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