

It was a cold and stormy night in the late 1890s. The patrons of the Buxton Inn in Maine were sitting around a roaring fire in the taproom.

Suddenly, a young man entered. His rich clothes were trimmed with gold lace and he carried a cape over his arm. He shook the snow from his tall beaver hat, stamped his booted feet, and strode to the fireplace. The others looked up with interest, admiring his elegance, but also noting that his clothes were old-fashioned and a bit strange. Undoubtedly, they thought, he was a traveller from some distant city. One of them offered him a place close to the fire and suggested that he joined them in a game of cards. With a cheerful smile he agreed. As the evening and the game progressed, the young man had uncanny good luck in every deal of the cards. The other players all felt that there was something familiar about the handsome young man, as though they had seen him many times before but couldn't place him. Oddly enough, he knew many of them by name, but never introduced himself.

It was nearly morning when another patron entered. As he removed his coat and boots, he called to the innkeeper. "What's happened to your sign? I thought I had the wrong tavern." The others, surprised, looked out the window to see

**patron:** customer  
**cape:** cloak  
**beaver:** castor  
stride, **strode**, stridden:  
to step  
**old-fashioned:** outdated  
**uncanny:** mysterious  
**handsome:** good-looking

the swinging sign outside the door. They saw with astonishment that there was nothing upon the sign but the words "Buxton Inn." The painting of a young cavalier was gone. Then they knew.



With wonder and fright, they turned back to the fireplace, but the elegant young card player was gone, leaving nothing but a small puddle of melted snow beneath the chair where his boots had rested. No wonder he had looked familiar. Almost fearfully they turned again to look at the tavern's sign. Was it a trick of the storm? For now, as clearly as ever, they could see the painting of young Sir Charles in his tall beaver hat and flowing cape, as he had stood for many years. Then something else caught their eye - something they had never noticed before. One of the pockets of his breeches seemed to be bulging as though with many coins, and a smile played about the painted mouth - the kind of smile a young man might wear when he has been lucky at cards.

**puddle:** pool, pond  
**bulging:** swollen  
**familiar:** well-known  
**breeches:** trousers

<b>LUCKY AT CARDS</b> Comprehension questions	<b>right</b>	<b>wrong</b>
1. An inn is the same as a tavern.	x	
2. The story happened in the US-State of Maine		
3. Maine is in the south of the United States where it never rains.		
4. There was a sign outside the tavern. It showed a gentleman in old-fashioned clothes.		
5. You usually get your water from a tap. But the taproom of a tavern is the place where the beer comes out of the taps.		
6. A cape is a sort of coat.		
7. The man who came into the Buxton Inn looked very poor.		
8. The stranger had parked his car right outside the tavern under the sign.		
9. The stranger was dressed after the latest fashion.		
10. When the stranger entered, he asked for a room to stay overnight. He wanted to have a shower to make himself fresh.		
11. The stranger didn't like to sit near the fire. Probably he thought his elegant clothes could burn.		
12. When the stranger introduced himself, he said that his name was Charles Buxton.		
13. The patrons and the stranger played cards.		
14. The stranger wasn't very lucky at cards. He lost all his money.		
15. The name of the innkeeper was Sir Charles.		
16. The inn closed at midnight and all the patrons had to leave for their homes.		
17. When all the patrons were standing outside the inn, they saw that the tavern sign wasn't there anymore.		
18. It seemed that the stranger had stolen the tavern sign in revenge for his lost money.		
19. At the end, the tavern sign looked exactly as it did before. The men couldn't find any difference.		
20. And what was extraordinary: Sir Charles had left his boots under his chair.		
21. Breeches are a sort of trousers.		
22. When you have no money in your pockets, then they are bulging.		
23. Sir Charles had a red painted mouth because he liked to use lipstick.		
24. The stranger had looked familiar to the patrons because he looked like the man on the tavern sign.		
25. It seems that the young cavalier thought that he was in the wrong tavern.		