

## Mystery on the River

'I'm very sorry to hear that, Mrs Smith,' said Holmes. 'Tell me, was this wooden-legged man alone?'

'I don't know, sir. I didn't see anyone else. But it was very dark – it was three o'clock in the morning. I could not be sure.'

'What does the *Aurora* look like?' asked Holmes.

'The *Aurora* is black, sir, with two red stripes down each side. It has a black funnel<sup>28</sup> with a white stripe. The *Aurora* is the fastest boat on the river,' answered Mrs Smith.

Holmes looked worried.

'That's very interesting,' he said. 'Try not to worry about your husband, Mrs Smith. I am going up the river myself. If I see Mr Smith, I will tell him that I have seen you. Goodbye.'

'Goodbye and thank you,' said Mordecai Smith's wife. She had stopped crying. She went inside her house and closed the door.

'Watson, we must find Mordecai Smith and the *Aurora* as soon as possible,' said Holmes. 'Mordecai Smith and the wooden-legged man are working together. Smith has taken the two murderers in his steam launch. They are all hiding somewhere on the river.'

'It will be easy to find them,' I said. 'You must tell the police at once.'

Holmes shook his head.

'No. I don't want these criminals to know that anyone is looking for them. They will try to escape again.'

'I have a better idea,' Holmes went on. 'I have many agents everywhere up and down the river. These agents are clever. I pay them to bring me information. They always know what is happening on the river. I will ask my agents to look for Mordecai

Smith and the *Aurora*. But you look tired, Watson. Let's go home and have breakfast.'

It was now nearly eight o'clock in the morning. I did feel very tired. I was glad to go home to Baker Street.

When I had had a bath and changed my clothes, I came downstairs to breakfast. Holmes was drinking coffee and reading a newspaper. 'Look, Watson,' he said. 'Here is a report about the murder of Bartholomew Sholto at Pondicherry Lodge. And about the arrest of Thaddeus Sholto by Inspector Jones last night.'

I took the paper and read the report. I felt sorry for Thaddeus Sholto. Inspector Jones had made a stupid mistake by arresting him. I knew that Sholto was not guilty of the murder of his brother. I hoped that we would be able to help Thaddeus. But would we be able to find the murderers?

Suddenly there was a loud knock on the door. A few minutes later, twelve children ran into the room.





Their clothes were dirty and ragged. They had no shoes on their feet. Their hair was untidy and their faces had not been washed for a very long time. But they seemed happy and cheerful.

'Good morning, Mr Holmes,' said the children together. 'Who are these children, Holmes?' I asked in astonishment. Holmes laughed.

'These are my agents,' he said. 'I sent a message for them to come. Look at them. They can go anywhere, see everything, hear everything. Nobody is afraid of children.'

Holmes gave each of the children some money. Then he told them what he wanted them to do.

'You must find a steam launch called the *Aurora*,' he said. 'It is on the river somewhere and belongs to Mordecai Smith. The *Aurora* is black with two red stripes down each side. It has a black funnel with a white stripe. You must find it. Now go!'

The children ran out of the room, all talking together. They went down the stairs and out into the street.

'My agents will find Mordecai Smith and the *Aurora*,' said Holmes. 'Now we must wait.'

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## Inspector Jones Receives a Telegram

We had not slept all night and I was very tired. I went to bed and woke late in the afternoon. I felt much better. I went downstairs. Holmes was reading a book. I saw at once that he was worried.

'Is there any news?' I asked.

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'Nothing at all. I can't understand it. I am very surprised and disappointed. My agents say that they cannot find the *Aurora*.'

'Can I do anything to help?' I asked.

'Nothing.'

'Then I'll take Toby back to Pinchin Lane. Then I'll go and see Miss Morstan and tell her what has happened.'

I went to Miss Morstan's house. She looked very pleased to see me. I told her that we had not found the treasure yet. But she did not look disappointed. I was surprised about this but I was also very pleased. I said goodbye to her and drove back to Baker Street.

I went to bed, but I could not sleep. I was thinking about Miss Morstan. I wanted to ask her to marry me. All night, I heard Holmes walking up and down in his room. Next morning, he looked tired and ill.

'My agents cannot find the *Aurora*,' he said impatiently. They have searched the whole river. The *Aurora* has disappeared.'

We waited all that day, but there was no news.

The next day, I woke early. It was still dark. To my surprise Sherlock Holmes was standing by my bed. He was dressed and ready to go out.

'I have had an idea, Watson,' he said. 'I am going up the river myself. Perhaps I can find the launch. You must stay here. There may be some messages.' Holmes left without another word.

That day, the time passed very slowly. I picked up a book but was unable to read it. I was thinking all the time about the wooden-legged man and the pygmy. Where were they? Why could Holmes not find them? I was worried about my friend. I knew that he was a clever detective. But perhaps this time he would not be able to catch the murderers.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, I had a visitor. It was Inspector Jones, the police officer.

I was astonished. Inspector Jones had changed completely. Two days ago, he had been very rude to Holmes. He had not wanted his help. Now he was very quiet and polite.

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'Good afternoon, Doctor Watson,' said Inspector Jones. 'I'm afraid that I made a bad mistake. I have had to let Thaddeus Sholto go. Sholto has proved that he was at a friend's house when his brother died.'

Inspector Jones looked so sad that I began to feel sorry for him.

'I've received a telegram from Sherlock Holmes,' the Inspector went on. 'Here it is.'



I took the telegram and read it.

INSPECTOR JONES – GO TO BAKER STREET AT ONCE.  
WAIT FOR ME THERE. I KNOW WHERE SHOLTO'S  
MURDERERS ARE HIDING. COME WITH US TONIGHT  
IF YOU WANT TO CATCH THEM.

HOLMES

'That's excellent!' I cried. 'Forget about Thaddeus Sholto. You'll soon have some other prisoners, Inspector Jones.'

At that moment, the door opened and Holmes came into the room. He was smiling.

'What news?' we asked together.

'I know where the *Aurora* is,' Holmes replied. 'It wasn't on the river at all. The *Aurora* has been hidden in a boatyard<sup>29</sup> near the river for two days. I knew the launch at once. Mordecai Smith, the owner, was there too. He was talking to someone and he was speaking very loudly. He said that he had to have the *Aurora* ready for eight o'clock tonight. His two gentlemen were leaving for America. Their ship was waiting for them out at sea and they must not be late.'

'I knew immediately what they were planning to do,' went on Holmes. 'And I know what we must do. Inspector Jones, will you help me?'

'I was wrong before and you were right,' said Jones sadly. 'I didn't listen to you then. But I'll help you now.'

'Good,' said Holmes. 'We need a fast police launch – as fast as the *Aurora*. It must be ready this evening. And two or three strong policemen to come with us.'

'I'll arrange all this,' said Jones.

'Excellent,' said Holmes. 'Tonight the three of us – you and me and Doctor Watson – will be on the police launch. We will be waiting outside the boatyard at eight o'clock. We'll be ready for the *Aurora* when she comes out. We'll catch the murderers and we'll get the treasure!'



## The Chase on the River

At seven o'clock that evening, the three of us – Inspector Jones, Holmes and I – went down to the river. Both Holmes and I had guns in our pockets.

Inspector Jones had promised to let us use the police launch. This launch was now waiting. Four strong men were on board the launch.

Soon we were moving quickly down the River Thames. The police launch was very fast. We passed all the other boats on the river without difficulty. This pleased Holmes very much.

By eight o'clock, we had arrived opposite the boatyard where the *Aurora* was hidden. It was now dark. We waited. Ten minutes passed.

Suddenly a launch came out of the boatyard. It was black with two red stripes. It was moving very quickly.

'That's the *Aurora*!' cried Holmes. 'Follow it quickly! Faster, faster! We must catch them!'

We were going so fast that the police launch started to shake. But we could not get near to the *Aurora*.

The chase became more and more exciting. We went in and out between other boats. Many times I closed my eyes. I was sure that we would hit something.

At last we got closer to the *Aurora*. Inspector Jones turned on a light and shone it on the *Aurora*.

'Stop!' he said. 'Stop. We are the police!'

In the lamplight we could see some men on board the *Aurora*. One man was sitting at the back of the launch. Beside him was a strange dark shape.

We could also see Mordecai Smith, the owner of the *Aurora*.



'Stop!' he cried. 'Stop. We are the police!'



He was working as hard as he could. He was trying to make the engine of the launch go faster.

Inspector Jones shouted again. 'Stop!'

Suddenly, the man at the back of the *Aurora* stood up. He shouted at us angrily. He was a big strong man. Then I noticed that his right leg was missing. There was a wooden stump in its place. This was the wooden-legged man!

At the sound of the man's voice, the strange dark shape beside him moved. It was a small dark man – the smallest man I have ever seen. But the pygmy's head was large. His face was hard and cruel.

As soon as Holmes saw the pygmy, he took out his gun. I did the same.

'Shoot him if he moves his hand,' said Holmes.

At that moment, the pygmy put a short piece of wood to his lips.

We fired our guns together. The pygmy fell backwards into the water with a terrible cry.

The wooden-legged man turned the *Aurora* towards the bank of the river. As soon as the *Aurora* touched the bank of the river, he jumped out. It happened so quickly that we were not able to slow down and stop the police launch. The man had landed in the soft, wet mud of the river bank. But his wooden leg had stuck in the mud. He could not move.

We managed to turn the police launch round. We went towards the wooden-legged man and threw him a rope. Then we pulled him up over the side of our launch.

Mordecai Smith was still on the *Aurora*. But he did not try to escape. We tied the *Aurora* to our launch. The chase was over.

On the deck of the *Aurora* there was a big, heavy chest. We were sure that it contained the Agra Treasure. We carried the heavy box onto the police launch.

Suddenly Holmes stopped and pointed.

'Look,' he said.

I looked where Holmes was pointing. I saw one of the pygmy's

poisoned thorns. It was fixed in the wood where Holmes and I had been standing. The poisoned thorn had passed through the air between us.

Holmes was smiling, but I felt cold and sick. We had escaped a horrible death.

As we went back up the river, we shone our light on the water. We were looking for the body of the pygmy. But we saw nothing. His body still lies somewhere at the bottom of the River Thames.

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The Treasure is Lost

The wooden-legged man was our prisoner. He was sitting in the police launch opposite the treasure chest.

He was about fifty years old. He had black, curly hair and a black beard. He did not look angry any more. He was not interested in anything.

'What's your name?' Holmes asked him.

'Jonathan Small,' replied the man.

'Jonathan Small,' repeated Holmes. He took out the piece of paper which had been found in Captain Morstan's luggage.

Holmes read out what was written on the piece of paper, "Jonathan Small, Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan, Dost Akbar. The Sign of Four".

'Give me that paper,' said the man. Holmes gave it to him.

'Yes,' Small said, 'I am one of The Sign of Four. This paper is a plan of the fortress<sup>30</sup> at Agra in India. My three friends and I found the treasure many years ago. Tonight I have lost the Agra Treasure and you have killed my dear friend, Tonga. I am not sorry about the deaths of Sholto and his son. I'm not sorry about anything. Do what you like with me.'



'You will tell us your story later,' said Holmes. 'But first, Watson, would you take the treasure to Miss Morstan?'

'I shall be pleased to do that,' I said.

But I was not speaking the truth. I did not want to take the treasure to Miss Morstan. I did not want her to become a rich woman.

'Inspector Jones and I will take our prisoner to Baker Street,' said Holmes. 'We'll meet you there, Watson.' Then Holmes turned to Jonathan Small. 'But where is the key of the treasure chest?'

'At the bottom of the river,' replied Jonathan Small.

'Why did you throw it away?' cried Inspector Jones angrily. 'You have made things very difficult for us.'

Jonathan Small did not speak. He did not care what Jones said.

When we got to the jetty, I got out of the launch with the treasure chest. I found a cab and drove to Miss Morstan's house.

Miss Morstan was sitting by the window. She was wearing a pretty, white dress and her hair was shining brightly in the lamplight.

'How nice to see you,' she said when she saw me. 'Do you have any news?'

'I have brought something better than news,' I said, trying to speak happily. 'I have brought the Agra Treasure.'

I put the heavy chest down on the table. Miss Morstan did not look very excited.

'So, this is the famous Agra Treasure,' she said.

'Yes,' I replied. 'Half of it belongs to you and half to Thaddeus Sholto. You are a rich woman now, Miss Morstan.'

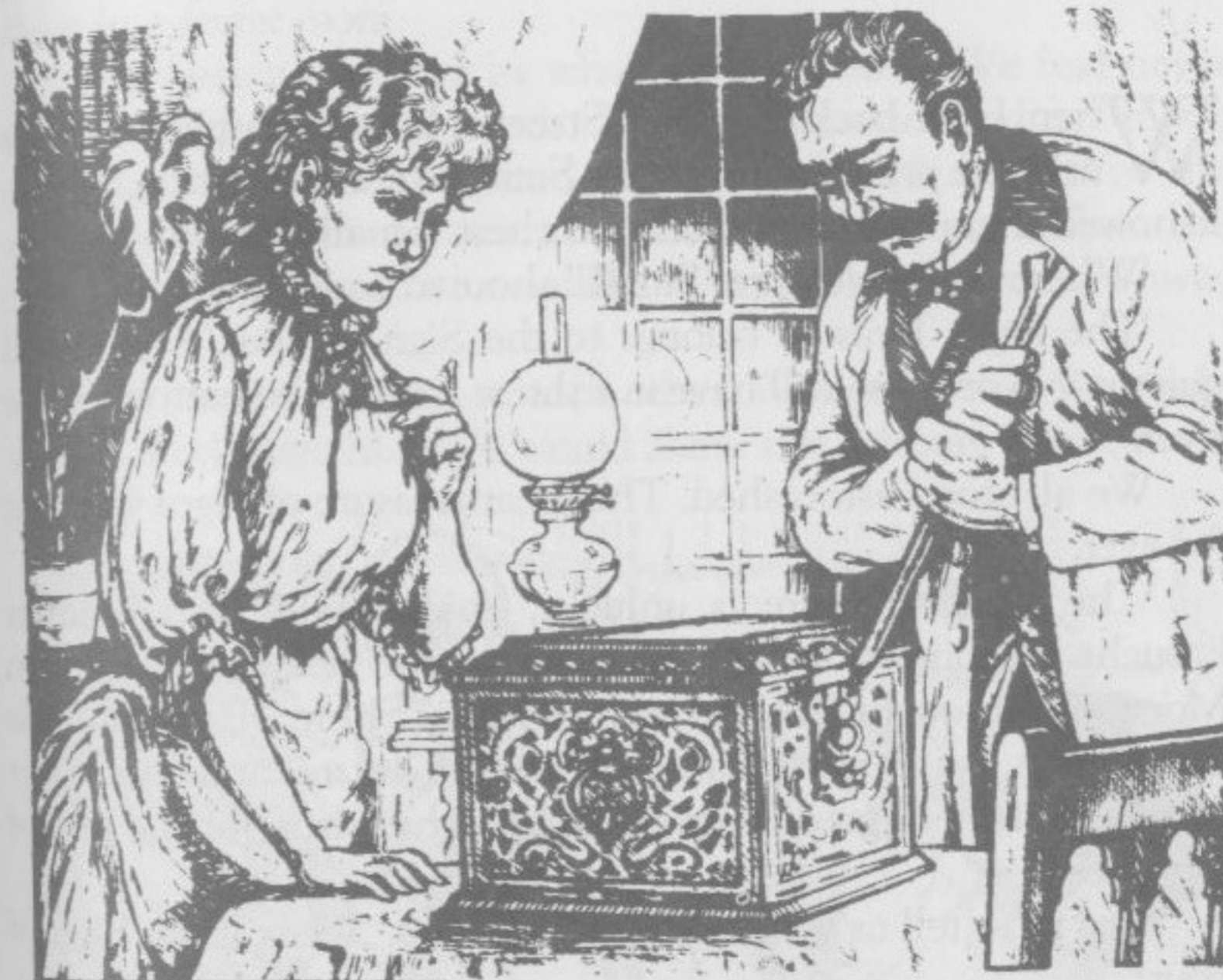
'The treasure can wait,' she said. 'First, I want to hear all about your adventures. Please sit down and tell me everything.'

So I told her everything that had happened. I told her how Holmes found the *Aurora*. I told her about Inspector Jones and Thaddeus Sholto. I told her about the chase on the river, the death of the pygmy and how we had caught Jonathan Small.

'How brave you are,' she said. 'I didn't know that you were in such terrible danger.'

'It's finished now,' I said. 'Let's open the treasure chest. There isn't a key. How can we open the chest?'

Miss Morstan left the room and came back with a heavy metal bar. I took the bar and put it under the lid of the chest.



Then I turned it and the lid opened. It lifted up the lid. My hands were shaking. We both looked inside. Then we looked at each other in astonishment. The chest was empty! The chest was made of very thick iron. This was why it was so heavy.

'The treasure is lost,' said Miss Morstan quietly.

'Thank God!' I said.

'Why do you say "Thank God"?' asked Miss Morstan.

'Because now I can ask you to marry me,' I replied, holding her hand. 'Because I love you, Mary. Now you are not going to be rich.'



So I can tell you my feelings. That is why I said "Thank God".'  
'Then I say "Thank God" too,' she whispered.

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## The Sign of Four

When I got back to Baker Street, Holmes, Inspector Jones and the prisoner, Jonathan Small, were all waiting for me. I showed them the empty treasure chest. Small began to laugh.

'Where is the treasure, Small?' shouted Jones angrily.

'The Agra Treasure belongs to the Sign of Four,' said Small quietly. 'No one else will have it. I threw it all to the bottom of the river.'

We all stood astonished. The great treasure of Agra was lost for ever.

'The Agra Treasure is unlucky,' said Small. 'It has never brought happiness to anyone. It brought death to Captain Morstan. It brought fear and guilt to Major Sholto. Bartholomew Sholto was murdered because of it. And to me and the other members of the Sign of Four, it has brought prison for the rest of our lives.'

'You must tell us your story,' said Holmes. 'What is the Sign of Four?'

Jonathan Small began his strange story and we listened.

'I went to India as a soldier in the British Army,' said Small. 'One day, soon after I arrived, I had an accident and lost my leg. After that, I could not fight any more.'

'Then there was terrible fighting between the Indians and the British. The British all hid in an old fortress at Agra. They shut themselves inside. The walls of this fortress were very thick. The Indians could not get in.'

'I also went to Agra. I had three Indian friends who had fought

for the British. They came to Agra with me. These men were Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan and Dost Akbar. When we were in the Agra fortress, we heard a strange story. It was about a great treasure which had been hidden in the fortress. It had been hidden for many years. The four of us decided to look for this treasure. And one day we found it. It was hidden under the floor in a secret room.

'We were astonished by what we had found. We had never seen so many beautiful jewels. The four of us decided not to say anything about what we had found. We decided to leave the treasure hidden in the secret room in the fortress. When the fighting was finished, we would be able to take the treasure away with us.'

'We made a promise to each other. We agreed that we would always work together. We would share the treasure between us.'





We became the Sign of Four. But a terrible thing happened. Two British soldiers were killed in a fight. We had not killed them but we were arrested for their murder. We were sent to prison in the Andaman Islands.'

'Is that where you met Major Sholto and Captain Morstan?' asked Holmes.

'Yes,' said Small. 'Sholto and Morstan were the officers in charge of the prisoners there.'

'We were in a terrible situation. We knew where the Agra Treasure was. But we were not able to go and get it. We were prisoners. Also, we were afraid that someone else might find the treasure. We did not know what to do. At last we told Sholto and Morstan about the great treasure. We asked them to help the four of us to escape. When we were free, we would get the treasure and share it with them. But Sholto said that he did not believe us. He said he did not know if we were speaking the truth. Sholto did not know if the treasure would be there. He said he would go to India. If he found the treasure, he would come back. He would help us escape from prison. Sholto asked the four of us to give him a plan of the fortress at Agra.'

'We did not want to give Sholto the plan. I didn't trust him. But in the end we had to agree. We gave one plan to Sholto and another to Morstan. Sholto went to India. But he never came back. He found the treasure and took it to England. He stole it from the Sign of Four and also from his friend Morstan. And from that day, I decided to have revenge on Sholto.'

Small was silent for a few moments. He was thinking about what Sholto had done. Then he went on with his story.

'I made friends with one of the people of the Andaman Islands,' he said. 'The people there are pygmies. They are very small, but they are very brave.'

'One day, I found one of these pygmies lying under a tree. He

was very ill. I looked after him. He slowly got better. He became my friend. His name was Tonga.

'Tonga helped me to escape from the islands. He had a small boat. One dark night, we put lots of food into the boat and we sailed together from the Andaman Islands.'

Holmes had been listening carefully while Small told his story. Now he spoke, 'Ah - I understand,' he said, 'Major Sholto received a letter. What was written in the letter frightened him to death. It must have been the news of your escape which killed him.'

Small went on with his story. 'At last Tonga and I reached London. But I was too late to have revenge on Sholto. Sholto was dying. He saw my face at the window. That night I got into his room and left a message. It was from The Sign of Four.'

'Tonga and I waited six years. We watched Pondicherry Lodge and Bartholomew Sholto carefully. When Bartholomew Sholto found the treasure, we knew about it immediately. With Tonga's help, I got into his room. Tonga killed Bartholomew Sholto with a poisoned thorn. We took the treasure, left the paper and went.'

'I had paid Mordecai Smith to take us to a ship. We were planning to go to America. But now everything has changed. Tonga is dead and I am your prisoner. And the Agra Treasure is lost for ever.'

We were all silent. We were thinking of the great treasure which was lost in the mud at the bottom of the River Thames. Perhaps it was better there.

'Doctor Watson,' said Holmes, when Inspector Jones had taken Small away, 'that is the end of our adventure.'

'Yes,' I said. 'But I have some very good news. Miss Morstan and I are going to get married.'

'Excellent,' said Holmes. 'The Agra Treasure has at last brought happiness to someone.'



## Points for Understanding

1

- 1 Why did Doctor Watson return to England?
- 2 How did Sherlock Holmes help his clients?
- 3 Why was Holmes bored?
- 4 Who was Holmes' new client?

2

- 1 Miss Morstan went to a hotel in London and asked for her father. What did the hotel manager tell her?
- 2 What was Captain Morstan's job in India?
- 3 Who was Major Sholto?
- 4 The next day Miss Morstan received a small cardboard box.
  - (a) What was in the box?
  - (b) How many times did she receive the same sort of box?
- 5 Miss Morstan had come to see Sherlock Holmes because she had received a note.
  - (a) Where was she to go that night at seven o'clock?
  - (b) Who could she bring with her?
  - (c) How was the note signed?
- 6 What did Holmes decide to do?

3

- 1 Why did Holmes think that Major Sholto's death was important?
- 2 Miss Morstan showed Holmes a piece of paper.
  - (a) Where had she found it?
  - (b) What was drawn on the paper?
  - (c) How was the paper signed?
- 3 Who did Holmes, Watson and Miss Morstan meet at the Lyceum Theatre?
- 4 Where did they go?

4

- 1 Why was Doctor Watson angry with Thaddeus Sholto?
- 2 Thaddeus Sholto and his brother, Bartholomew, knew that their father was afraid of something. Who did their father think was following him?
- 3 Why did their father become very ill?
- 4 When Captain Morstan and Major Sholto were in India they found a great treasure.
  - (a) What was the name of this treasure?
  - (b) Why did Captain Morstan and Major Sholto argue?
  - (c) How did the argument end?
- 5 What did Major Sholto ask his sons to do?
- 6 Thaddeus and his brother, Bartholomew found a note on the bed beside their father's body. What words were written on the note?

5

- 1 Why did Thaddeus Sholto send the letter to Miss Morstan?
- 2 Where was the treasure?
- 3 Why was Doctor Watson unhappy?
- 4 Where did Thaddeus Sholto take Miss Morstan, Holmes and Watson?
- 5 Where had Bartholomew Sholto found the treasure chest?
- 6 When they arrived at Pondicherry Lodge, the house was dark.
  - (a) What noise did they hear?
  - (b) Who opened the door?
  - (c) What did she say to Thaddeus Sholto?

6

- 1 What did Holmes and Watson see through the keyhole?
- 2 How did Bartholomew Sholto die?
- 3 What else made Thaddeus Sholto upset?

7

- 1 How did Holmes know that a man with a wooden leg had been in the room?
- 2 How did Watson think the wooden-legged man had got into the room?
- 3 What was strange about the footprints in the thick dust?
- 4 Describe murderer Number One.



8

- 1 Why did the murderers kill Major Sholto and Bartholomew Sholto?
- 2 Why was Holmes pleased that one of the murderers had stepped in the creosote?
- 3 Why did Inspector Jones not want to listen to Sherlock Holmes?
- 4 Who did Inspector Jones think the murderer was?

9

- 1 What two things did Holmes ask Watson to do?
- 2 What was special about the dog, Toby?
- 3 How did the pygmy get up onto the roof of the Pondicherry Lodge?
- 4 'He's on the trail!' cried Holmes. What trail had Toby found?

10

- 1 Why was Toby not able to follow the trail when they got to the River Thames?
- 2 Where had Mordecai Smith gone?
- 3 Who had gone with him?
- 4 Why was Mrs Smith worried?

11

- 1 Why did Holmes not want to contact the police?
- 2 What did Holmes show Watson in the newspaper?
- 3 Why did the ragged children make such good agents for Holmes?

12

- 1 Doctor Watson went to tell Miss Morstan that they had not found the treasure. That night he could not sleep. What was Watson thinking about?
- 2 How had Inspector Jones changed?
- 3 Where was the *Aurora* hidden?
- 4 What were the murderers planning to do?

13

- 1 Suddenly a launch came out of the boatyard. How did they know that it was the *Aurora*?
- 2 'We fired our guns together.' Why did Holmes and Watson shoot at the pygmy?
- 3 What happened to the pygmy?
- 4 Why was the wooden-legged man not able to escape?
- 5 What did Holmes and Watson think was in the big, heavy chest?
- 6 How had Holmes and Watson escaped a horrible death?

14

- 1 Who was Jonathan Small?
- 2 Why did Watson not want to take the treasure to Miss Morstan?
- 3 Why was Watson much happier after the chest had been opened?

15

- 1 What had happened to the Great Agra Treasure?
- 2 Who were the Sign of Four? Where did they meet?
- 3 How did Jonathan Small meet Captain Morstan and Major Sholto?
- 4 Holmes said, 'The Great Agra Treasure has at last brought happiness to someone.' To whom had it brought happiness?



## Glossary

- 1 **private detective** (page 4)  
someone who finds out how a crime happened and then tries to find the criminal. Sherlock Holmes is not a policeman, he is a private detective. But sometimes he helps the police solve crimes or find criminals.
- 2 **client** (page 4)  
someone who comes to Sherlock Holmes and asks for help.
- 3 **impatiently** (page 5)  
Holmes is bored. He wants something exciting to happen.
- 4 **housekeeper** (page 5)  
a woman who looks after a house and the people living in it.
- 5 **tray** (page 5)  
the people in this story lived in the nineteenth century. When a visitor arrived at someone's house he or she gave the servant a card. The visitor's name and address was on the card. The servant then put the card on a tray and took it to the owner of the house. In this story, the housekeeper brings the card to Sherlock Holmes on a silver tray.
- 6 **advertised** (page 7)  
the police printed special messages in newspapers. These messages asked Captain Morstan to come to them.
- 7 **ornaments** (page 7)  
ornaments are small objects which are put in a room to make it beautiful. Captain Morstan had collected many beautiful things on his travels in the world.
- 8 **old copies of the newspaper** (page 10)  
newspaper offices usually keep one copy of every newspaper they have printed. People can find out what happened in the past by looking at these old copies.
- 9 **cab** (page 11)  
a carriage pulled by a horse. There were no motor vehicles at the time of this story.
- 10 **magnifying glass** (page 11)  
a glass you look through that makes things seem larger.
- 11 **astonished** (page 14)  
very surprised.
- 12 **share** (page 17)  
Morstan is asking for the part of the treasure he thinks he should have.
- 13 **guilt** (page 17)  
a feeling of fear and worry because you have done something wrong.
- 14 **treasure chest** (page 20)  
a large, strong box containing valuable jewels and gold.
- 15 **thorn** (page 23)  
a sharp point that grows on the branches of some trees and bushes.
- 16 **poisoned** (page 23)  
poison is something which can kill a person if it gets into their body. Poison has been put on the sharp end of the thorn. If the thorn cuts someone, the poison will get into their blood and kill them.
- 17 **window sill** (page 25)  
a flat shelf at the bottom of a window.
- 18 **set of steps** (page 26)  
wooden stairs that can be carried from one place to another. See illustration on page 24.
- 19 **dwarf** (page 27)  
a person who is smaller than normal.
- 20 **pygmy** (page 28)  
pygmies are a group of people who are unusually small. Pygmies live in parts of Africa and Asia.
- 21 **revenge** (page 28)  
the Sign of Four have agreed that they will find and kill the Sholto family because the family stole the treasure.
- 22 **creosote** (page 29)  
a dark brown liquid with a very strong smell. Creosote is used to protect wood.
- 23 **arrest – I arrest you . . .** (page 31)  
the words used by a policeman when he catches a criminal.
- 24 **lead** (page 34)  
a long, thin piece of leather. A lead is fixed to a collar on the neck of a dog to stop it running away.
- 25 **drain pipe** (page 34)  
a long pipe on the side of a house. Drain-pipes carry the water off the roof of the house when it rains.



- 26 **jetty** (page 37)  
a strong wooden platform built from the land into the water. People step from the jetty into boats.
- 27 **steam launch for hire** (page 37)  
a steam launch is a boat whose engine is driven by steam. Steam comes from water heated by burning coal. People pay Mordecai Smith to use his boats and steam launch.
- 28 **funnel** (page 40)  
the smoke from the burning coal on a steam launch comes out through the funnel. See illustration on page 47.
- 29 **boatyard** (page 45)  
a large building where boats are built or repaired.
- 30 **fortress** (page 49)  
a strong building used by soldiers during wars.

## Exercises

### True or False?

Write T (True) or F (False).

- 1  F Sherlock Holmes was a policeman.
- 2  Sherlock Holmes was a private detective.
- 3  Sherlock Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street, London.
- 4  Dr Watson was a police inspector.
- 5  Sherlock Holmes never had anything to do with the police.

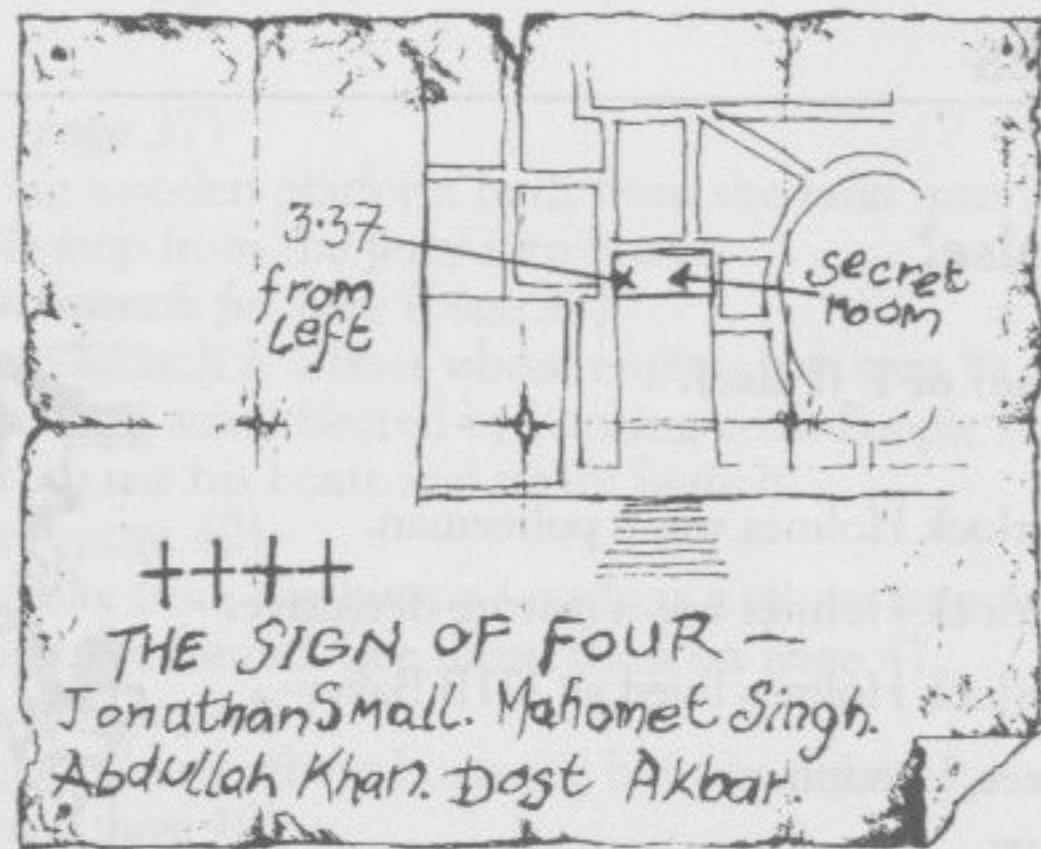


### Unanswered Questions

- a) After talking to Miss Morstan, Holmes made some notes. How many questions could he answer before he met Thaddeus Sholto? Complete the gaps.

	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	When did Captain Morstan disappear?	
2	Where did Captain Morstan live and work?	
3	Is Captain Morstan dead?	
4	Did Captain Morstan have a friend in London?	
5	Has Mary tried to find this friend?	
6	Who sends a pearl to Mary every year?	
7	What paper was in Captain Morstan's luggage?	





8	How many names are on the paper?	
9	Are they English names?	
10	Was something hidden in the secret room?	

b) Which questions could Holmes answer by the end of the story?  
Complete the gaps.

	QUESTION	ANSWER

### Multiple Choice 1

Tick the best answer.

- 1 Who worked with Captain Morstan in the Andaman Islands?
- a  Major Sholto.
- b  Jonathan Small.

- 2 Who returned to London first?
- a  Major Sholto.
- b  Captain Morstan.
- 3 Where did Captain Morstan go as soon as he returned to London?
- a  To visit his daughter.
- b  To visit Major Sholto.
- 4 What information did Sherlock Holmes find from *The Times* newspaper?
- a  The date of death of Captain Morstan.
- b  The date of death of Major Sholto.
- 5 What connection did Holmes make between the date of death and the pearls?
- a  The pearls arrived around the anniversary of Captain Morstan's death.
- b  The pearls arrived around the anniversary of Major Sholto's death.
- 6 How did Thaddeus Sholto explain Captain Morstan's disappearance?
- a  He said he went to Agra in India.
- b  He said he died in Major Sholto's house.
- 7 Why did Captain Morstan go to Major Sholto's house?
- a  To kill Major Sholto.
- b  To claim his share of the Agra Treasure.
- 8 Why did Thaddeus Sholto want Miss Morstan to go to Pondicherry Lodge?
- a  To claim her share of the Agra Treasure.
- b  To meet his brother.



## The Death of Bartholomew Sholto

Complete the gaps. Use each word in the box once.

died murder been hours stiff ear killed picked  
thorn treasure showed read pain could sticking  
face poisoned piece ~~dead~~ table

Bartholomew Sholto was <sup>1</sup>..... *dead*..... He was sitting in a chair by a  
<sup>2</sup>..... His body was <sup>3</sup>..... and cold. I  
<sup>4</sup>..... see that he had <sup>5</sup>..... dead for  
many <sup>6</sup>..... The dead man's body was twisted with  
<sup>7</sup>..... There was a horrible smile on his <sup>8</sup>.....  
There was a <sup>9</sup>..... of paper on the body. Holmes  
<sup>10</sup>..... it up and read it.

He <sup>11</sup>..... it to me. In the light of the lamp, I  
<sup>12</sup>..... with horror - The Sign of Four. 'What does  
it mean?' I asked.

'It means <sup>13</sup>.....,' Holmes replied. He pointed to  
Bartholomew Sholto's <sup>14</sup>..... 'Look.'  
I looked. I saw something <sup>15</sup>..... in the dead  
man's skin near his ear.

'It looks like a <sup>16</sup>.....,' I said.

'It is a thorn,' said Holmes. 'You can take it out, but be careful. It is  
<sup>17</sup>.....'

'So this is how Bartholomew Sholto <sup>18</sup>.....,' I  
said. 'What a terrible death. But who <sup>19</sup>.....  
him? And why?'

We had forgotten about Thaddeus Sholto. He was still standing in the  
doorway. Suddenly he gave a cry. 'The <sup>20</sup>.....  
has gone!' he cried. 'They have stolen the treasure.'

## Multiple Choice 2

Tick the best answer.

- How did Holmes and Watson get into the room where Bartholomew Sholto had been murdered?
  - Thaddeus Sholto let them in.
  - The housekeeper opened the door.
  - They broke the door down.
  - They climbed through the window.
- How did murderer 'Number One' get into the room?
  - He had a key.
  - He climbed through the hole in the ceiling.
  - He came down the chimney.
  - He came up through the floor.
- What strange marks did Holmes see on the floor of the secret room?
  - The number 4 written in blood.
  - The footprints of a dog.
  - The imprint of large boots.
  - Some very small footprints.
- What did Holmes conclude from these marks?
  - That one of the murderers was a pygmy.
  - That one murderer had big feet.
  - That a child had climbed into the room.
  - That the murderer had used a monkey.
- What was the strong smell in the room?
  - Blood.
  - Perfume.
  - Paint.
  - Creosote.



- 6 How was Holmes able to follow the murderers?
- a  As soon as it was daylight he saw the marks of a wooden leg.
- b  The murderers had dropped jewels in the mud.
- c  He borrowed a dog which followed the smell of creosote to the river.
- d  The treasure chest had left marks in the ground.

## Making Sentences

Write questions for the answers.

- 1 What did Mordecai Smith hire?  
Mordecai Smith hired boats and a steam launch.
- 2 What  
.....  
.....  
The name of the steam launch was the *Aurora*.
- 3 Who  
.....  
.....  
Mordecai Smith took the wooden-legged man with him in the *Aurora*.
- 4 Did  
.....  
.....  
No, Holmes did not tell the police that he was looking for the *Aurora*.
- 5 Who  
.....  
Holmes' agents on the river were children.
- 6 What  
.....  
Holmes wanted the agents to find the *Aurora*.
- 7 What  
.....  
Holmes gave his agents some money.
- 8 Who  
.....  
Holmes sent a telegram to Inspector Jones.



- 9 Where  
.....  
Holmes found the *Aurora* in a boatyard near the river.
- 10 How  
.....  
.....  
Holmes, Watson and Inspector Jones caught the murderers by chasing their boat along the river.

## What Happened Next?

Number the sentences in the correct order to give the outline of the story.

- Small and the other three men were arrested and sent to prison in the Andaman Islands.
- They sent a message to Mary Morstan. They asked her to go to the Lyceum Theatre.
- Small told Morstan and Sholto where the treasure was hidden.
- After six years, the brothers found the treasure in the roof of their father's house.
- Morstan went to London to find Sholto.
- 1 Jonathan Small and three Indian friends found a chest of treasure in Agra.
- Jonathan Small escaped from prison with the help of a pygmy called Tonga.
- Jonathan Small and Tonga broke into the Sholtos' house and killed Bartholomew.
- Sholto hid Morstan's body and the Agra treasure.
- Morstan and Sholto had an argument and Morstan died of a heart attack.
- Sholto took the treasure to London and cheated the others.
- Before Major Sholto died, he told his sons Bartholomew and Thaddeus about the hidden treasure.



## Words From the Story

Complete the gaps. Use each word in the box once.

revenge clients advertised ~~astonished~~ guilt  
poisoned arrest pygmy share

- 1 Mary Morstan was ..... *astonished* ..... when she received a pearl through the post.
- 2 She ..... her address in the newspaper when she read that someone was looking for her.
- 3 Sherlock Holmes liked to have interesting ..... to work for.
- 4 Jonathan Small wanted to take his ..... on Major Sholto because he had deceived him.
- 5 Small made friends with a ..... from the Andaman Islands.
- 6 Tonga killed Bartholomew Sholto with a ..... thorn.
- 7 Morstan went to see Major Sholto to ask him for his ..... of the Agra Treasure.
- 8 Holmes did not want Inspector Jones to ..... Thaddeus Sholto.
- 9 Major Sholto told his sons that he felt great ..... because he had kept the Agra Treasure all for himself.

## Multiple Choice 3

Tick the best answer.

- 1 How did Thaddeus and Bartholomew find Miss Morstan?  
a  They hired a private detective.  
b  They looked in the telephone directory.

- c  They advertised in the newspaper.  
d  They guessed she lived in her father's old house.
- 2 How did Thaddeus and Bartholomew find the treasure?  
a  They dug up the garden.  
b  They looked under all the floor boards in the house.  
c  They found the key to a secret room.  
d  They compared the outside and inside measurements of the house.
- 3 When did Miss Morstan find out that her father was dead?  
a  When Thaddeus Sholto told her.  
b  Three days after he disappeared.  
c  Four years after he disappeared.  
d  When she received the sixth pearl.
- 4 Why did Small leave the message THE SIGN OF FOUR on Bartholomew's body?  
a  It was the name of the four men who had been cheated of the treasure.  
b  It was the name of the poison used by Tonga to kill him.  
c  He wanted to kill four people.  
d  It was the name of the place where he could be found.
- 5 Who shared the Agra Treasure in the end?  
a  Miss Morstan and Thaddeus Sholto.  
b  Tonga and Jonathan Small.  
c  Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.  
d  No one because it was lost in the river.
- 6 For whom did the story end most happily?  
a  For Thaddeus Sholto.  
b  For Jonathan Small.  
c  For Mordecai Smith.  
d  For Dr Watson and Mary Morstan.



'I am afraid,' said Miss Morstan. 'What should I do, Mr Holmes?'

Holmes jumped up excitedly.

'We shall go tonight to the Lyceum Theatre – the three of us – you and I and Doctor Watson. We'll meet your unknown friend. And we'll try to solve the mystery.'

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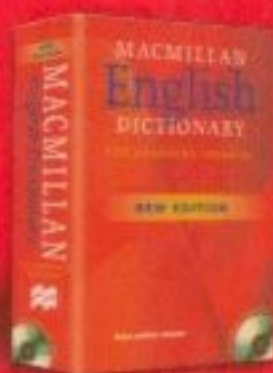
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