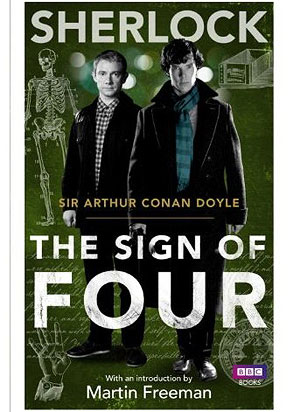
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**The Abridged Version**

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**Characters**

 **Sherlock**

Good detective

Best friends with John Watson

 **Doctor John Watson**

**Helps** Sherlock solve crimes

Best friends with Sherlock

Interested in Mary Morstan



**Mary Morstan**

Goes to Sherlock and Watson to help solve mystery

Daughter to Captain Morstan

 **Captain Morstan**

Father to Mary Morstan

Friends with Major Sholto



**Major Sholto**

Father to Thaddeus + Bartholomew Sholto

Friends with Captain Morstan



**Thaddeus Sholto**

Son of Major Sholto

Twin brother – Bartholomew Sholto



**Bartholomew Sholto**

-Thaddeus’s twin brother

-Major Sholto’s son

 **Athelney Jones**

Represents the police force



**Jonathan Small and Tonga**

Convict + islander from Andaman Islands

**Other characters**

* The Smith Family – Own The Aurora
* McMurdo – Keeps watch at Pondicherry Lodge
* Mrs Hudson – Sherlock and Watson’s land lady
* Mrs Bernstone – housekeeper at Pondicherry Lodge
* The Baker Street Irregulars – homeless children who help Sherlock – led by Wiggins
* Mrs Cecil Forrester – Mary Morstan’s employer

**Chapter 1 – The Science of Deduction**

**Sherlock’s skills are shown in examples to Watson – foreshadows his ability.**

Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantelpiece and his needle from a case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he rolled up his shirt. He sat and looked at all of the marks on his arm. Then he pushed the needle into his arm and sat back, happy and satisfied.

I had watched him do this every day for three months and still had not got used to it. It annoyed me more every day but I didn’t know what to do about it! Sherlock had so many good points that I didn’t want to make him cross.

However, today, I had to say something. ‘What is it today?’ I asked, ‘morphine or cocaine?’

He looked lazily at me and said, ‘it is cocaine – would you like to try it’?

‘Definitely not – I am not feeling better from being at war yet’ I answered.

He answered, ‘I know it is physically bad but it feels so good that I can’t help it’.

‘But you are destroying your wonderful brain! How can you risk losing your great skills? I am a doctor remember,’ I said.

Sherlock answered thoughtfully ….. ‘ My brain hates to be bored. Give me any puzzle to solve and I am happy. I can then do without drugs. But I hate having nothing to do and life being ordinary. That’s why I have made up this job’.

‘The only unofficial detective?’ I replied.

‘The only unofficial consulting detective’, he answered. I am the best detective. When the police don’t know what to do – which is normal – they come to me for help. I can solve the mystery for them. My name doesn’t appear in the newspaper. I am happy by solving the mystery. You have seen how well I can do this’.

‘Yes,’ I answered. ‘I am really impressed with your work. I even wrote a book about it called ‘The Study in Scarlett’.

He shook his head sadly. ‘I looked at it quickly but I was not happy about it. You have included too much romance and not kept it to the facts! This was all that is needed in a case’.

I was annoyed that he didn’t like my book because I wanted him to be happy with this. He has been used by people across the world to help him solve crimes and is now even writing books about what he knows.

‘You are very good at looking at the small details’, I said.

‘They are very important but I think you are bored with me’, he replied.

‘Not at all,’ I stated. ‘I love watching how you solve crimes. But how is seeing something different to using deduction?’

Sherlock answered, ‘Well, I can see that you went to the Wigmore Street Post-Office this morning, but deduction tells me you sent a telegram there’.

‘Right!’ I said. ‘But how did you know that because I was not planning to?’

He laughed. ‘I can see you have red mud on your shoe. Just opposite Wigmore Street Post Office they are digging up the ground. So I knew you were there.’

‘How did you know I sent a telegram?

‘I didn’t see you write a letter this morning. Take away everything else and what is left must be the truth’.

‘Can you show me another example?’

‘Of course, it would stop me taking another dose of cocaine. I will answer any problem you have’.

‘You have said that you can take an item and figure out facts about the person who knew this. I have recently been given a watch. Can you work out anything about the person who owned it before?

He looked at it closely and answered ‘It is very hard to tell – there is not a lot of information with it’.

I answered, ‘You are right. It was cleaned before it was given to me’. I was surprised that he couldn’t come up with anything.

He then said, ‘I can tell however that the watch belonged to your older brother who got it from your father.’

‘You can figure that out from the H.W. on the back?’

‘Yes, the W is from your name – Watson. The date is nearly 50 years old. Items are normally given to the oldest in the family’.

‘That is right. Anything else you can figure out?’

‘He was very untidy and careless. Sometimes he was very poor but sometimes he had a lot of money. He also liked to drink alcohol a lot.’

I was very unhappy. ‘That is very unkind of you to have found out things about my brother and use them to make me believe you figured that out from the watch! I am shocked you would do that’.

‘Sorry,’ he replied. ‘I didn’t mean to upset you. I didn’t actually know anything about your brother before. I just figured it out from looking at the watch. Look at all of the cuts and dents in this – it has hit off keys and money. He did not look after this expensive watch very well so he must have been careless. I can tell that he pawned it in exchange for money from these marks from pawnbrokers – there are lots of marks so he did this more than once but would get it back when he could afford it. Finally, look at all the marks around the keyhole. His hands have slipped a lot when winding it up which shows he may have been drunk.’

‘Yes I see what you mean,’ I answered him. ‘I am sorry I did not believe you. Do you have any mysteries you are trying to solve now?’

‘No,’ he answered, ‘which is why I am taking cocaine. I am bored without a mystery. What else is there to live for? What is the point in my powers when I can’t use them?’

Mrs Hudson came in. ‘A young lady is here to see you’ and handed him a card.

‘Miss Mary Morstan’, he read. ‘Send her in, Mrs Hudson.’

**Chapter 2 – The Statement of the Case**

**Mary Morstan introduces her case – her father has disappeared and she has been sent pearls.**

Miss Morstan came into the room very calmly. She was a blonde young lady, small and dressed very simply which made her look as if she did not have a lot of money. She was not extremely beautiful but looked very pretty. I have met a lot of women but none like her before. As she sat down, her lip trembled and her hands shook.

‘I have come to see you, Mr Holmes’, she said, ‘because you helped my employer, Mrs Cecil Forrester, with a mystery and she was very happy with you’.

‘What is your case?’ he asked. I was going to leave the room but the girl asked me to stay.

‘My father was an officer in the Indian regiment. My mother was dead and I had no family in England so I was sent to a boarding school until I was 17. In 1878 my father was given leave from the army and was planning on coming back to England. He sent me a letter to meet him in London but he wasn’t there! I went to the police but he was never found.’

‘What about his belongings? Did he have any friends here?’ Sherlock asked.

‘There was no clues in his belongings. The only person I could think of to help was Major Sholto who was in the army in India with him and lived at Upper Norwood. However, he didn’t even know he was back in England.

However, my case gets stranger. 6 years ago, a newspaper advertisement asked for my address which I gave in. The next day a very expensive pearl was sent to me with no other information. I have been sent one on the same date ever since. Then, this morning I got this letter –

Come to the Lyceum Theatre tonight at 7 pm. You can bring 2 friends with you but not the police. You have been treated badly and shall have justice. Your unknown friend’.

‘This is very strange,’ said Sherlock. ‘Would you like us to come with you?’

‘Yes please, that would be wonderful. Shall I come back here at 6pm? Here is all of the evidence I have from my story’, said Mary.

‘Thank you – you are a perfect client. I will look at these clues more and we will see you tonight at 6pm. Goodbye’. At this, Mary then left Sherlock’s home.

‘What an attractive woman!’ I said, watching her from the window.

‘Is she?’ Sherlock replied. ‘I didn’t notice’.

‘Are you really a person? You act more like a machine!’ I answered.

Sherlock smiled. ‘It is very important to not let your feelings get in the way of solving a case. Feelings mean you can’t think clearly. I am going to go and look into this case further’.

I sat at the window and thought about what Sherlock said and about Mary. Who was I, a doctor with a weak leg and not much money, to think about her?

**Chapter 3 – In Quest of a Solution**

**Major Sholto is dead, we see the first Sign of Four note + they travel through a dark London.**

When Holmes came back he was no longer sad or depressed but in a very good mood.

‘I have found out that Major Sholto, who served in the army in India died in 1882.’

‘How is that important?’ I asked.

‘You don’t see how it is important? Captain Morstan disappears. The only person who he could have visited is Major Sholto but he said he didn’t see him. Four years later, Major Sholto dies. In that week, Mary is given an expensive pearl and she has been told she has been treated badly. The letter must connect to what happened to her father.’

Mary’s carriage arrived and we joined her. She was looking very calm but pale and gave clear answers to what Sherlock asked her.

‘Major Sholto was a good friend to my Father – they both were in charge of troops at the Andaman Islands. I have a strange piece of paper which I found in my Father’s belongings’.

Sherlock took the paper and looked closely at it. ‘It is paper from India,’ he said. ‘It also looks like a map. There are also 4 crosses all marked with these words – ‘The Sign of the four – Jonathan Small, Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan, Dost Akbar. I don’t know what it means but I think it is very important’.

It was not yet 7pm but the day was rather dark and there was a fog across London. Mud coloured clouds filled the muddy streets which were lit up with very dim lights. It was very ghostlike and made me rather nervous. I could see that Mary felt the same.

Once we got the theatre, a man asked if we were there with Mary Morstan before getting us to change into another carriage. We then started driving quickly through the dark streets. I tried to cheer Mary up from this strange journey to distract her from it but my mind was not focused as I didn’t know where we were. Sherlock however knew exactly where we were and said each street name as we passed through different parts of London. We did eventually stop at a row of houses and told to get out. A Hindoo servant told us to come in………..

**Chapter 4 - The Story of the Bald Headed Man**

**A rich Thaddeus Sholto tells how Captain Morstan + Major Sholto died. The treasure is found although Thaddeus and Bartholomew have argued about splitting it.**

We followed the Indian servant down to meet a small man with red hair but bald on top.

The room was richly decorated with expensive curtains and pictures. There was paintings and an Oriental vase. The carpet was so soft and so thick. Two great tiger skins gave the impression of Eastern luxury and there was a lamp in the shape of a silver dove.

We introduced ourselves and he said his name was Thaddeus Sholto. He seemed very happy I was a doctor and started asking me lots of questions about his heart which I answered.

‘Thank you,’ he replied. ‘I am very careful about my heart. Perhaps if your father had been the same Mary, he wouldn’t have died.’

I was shocked at the sudden way he told Mary that her father was dead as her face turned white. ‘I knew he was dead’, she said.

‘I have more information for you and can do you justice, whatever my brother Bartholomew may say. I will tell you the details and then we must go and see him at Norwood to settle this case. He is very angry at me for doing what I felt was right’, said Thaddeus.

‘Maybe we should go’, I suggested.

Thaddeus laughed. ‘No, I must tell you the facts first before we go’.

With that, he started to tell us his story.

‘My father was in the Indian Army. He retired 11 years ago and came back to England a very rich man. We were very well off.

I remember when Captain Morstan went missing as he was our Father’s friend but we didn’t know my Father knew what happened to him.

Our father was very frightened of a danger and always had people watching our house. He was also afraid of men with wooden legs. We thought this was strange but events became stranger.

In 1882 he got a letter from Indian and was so shocked from it he became sick. He got worse and worse until he was about to die.

Just before he died, he told me and my brother that he was unhappy that his greediness stopped him giving Mary Morstan her share of treasure. Once he had died, we were to give her a share of the treasure. He told us that Captain Morstan had gone to see him but they had argued over how to split the money. In his anger, Captain Morstan had a heart attack, fell and hit his head on the treasure chest and died. My father and his servant hid his body as they didn’t want people to think they killed him. He was then about to tell us where the treasure was hidden when a face was seen at the window. We ran after to find his man but we couldn’t and my father died.

The next day, someone had broken into our house and left a page with ‘The Sign of the Four’ written on it. We thought this had something to do with what scared my father.

We were really excited about the treasure but we searched and searched and couldn’t find it. I wanted to send her the pearls to allow her to have something of the treasure. However, my brother had my father’s greed and wasn’t happy with me doing this. We had plenty of money so it was only fair we shared. We argued so much that I moved out but I have just heard that my brother Bartholomew has found the treasure!

He measured up the house and discovered a secret room in the roof where the treasure was hidden. I went to house last night and we figured out there is about half a million pounds’.

We were shocked at this – this would make Mary one of the richest women in England. But I am afraid despite wanting to be a loyal friend, I felt selfish at this and my heart was heavy and my head fell at this news.

We headed back to the carriage to go to Pondicherry Lodge to get the treasure.

**Chapter 5 - The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge**

**They discover the dead body of Bartholomew Sholto in his room.**

It was nearly 11 o’clock when we arrived to Pondicherry Lodge. We had left the bad weather of the city behind but there were still heavy clouds in the sky.

Pondicherry Lodge sat on large grounds and was surrounded by a very high stone wall topped with broken glass. A single narrow iron-clamped door formed the only means of entrance. Thaddeus knocked the door.

‘Who is there?’ asked a rough voice from within.

‘It is I, McMurdo’, said Thaddeus, ‘surely you know me by now?’

The door swung back heavily but the man looked at us with distrust.

‘That you, Mr Thaddeus? But who are the others? I wasn’t told anyone was coming’.

‘No? I did tell my brother I would be bringing friends tonight’.

‘He hasn’t left his room today so I have no orders to let anyone else in. You know I must obey my rules. You can come in but your friends can’t’, answered McMurdo.

‘You are prepared to let a young lady stand out here on a road?’ Thaddeus responded.

‘Very sorry, they may be your friends, but I don’t know them’, he stated.

‘Oh yes you do, McMurdo’, cried Sherlock. ‘I don’t think you can have forgotten me! Don’t you remember our boxing match one night?’

‘Not Mr Sherlock Holmes!’ roared the guard. ‘How could I have not recognised you? If you had used that cross-hit again, I would definitely have known it was you! You are wasting your gifts at boxing!’

‘You see, Watson, if all else fails me I still have another skill’, said Holmes, laughing. ‘Our friend won’t keep us out in the cold now.’

‘In you come, sir and your friends,’ he responded. ‘Very sorry, Mr Thaddeus, but orders are strict. Had to be certain who they were before letting them in’.

Inside, a gravel path led us through the depressing grounds to a huge house. The size of the building and the silence around us caused fear in us all – even Thaddeus Sholto’s hand shook carrying his lamp.

‘I don’t understand’, he said. ‘There must be some mistake. I definitely told Bartholomew that we would be here but there’s no light in his window.’

‘Does he always have a guard about?’ asked Sherlock.

‘Yes, he has just like my father. I can see a light in the housekeeper, Mrs Bernstone’s room. I’ll go up and see her so not to scare her’.

As we got nearer, we could hear the cries of a frightened woman.

Knowing it must be Mrs Bernstone, he went to the door and we could see how pleased she was to see him when she opened the door.

‘I am so glad you are here, Sir!’ she cried.

During this time, Mary and I stood together, and her hand was in mine. A wonderful thing is love – we had not met before today but we both reached for each other’s hands. It was the most natural thing to do and it was my instinct to comfort and protect her. We stood there holding hands like two children and there was peace in our hearts despite the dark things that surrounded us.

Thaddeus headed to his brother’s room but came running back, his eyes wide with terror.

‘There is something wrong with Bartholomew!’ he cried. ‘I am so frightened!’

Mrs Bernstone also looked terrified but the sight of Mary seemed to calm her down as she explained, ‘Sir has locked himself into his room and will not answer me. I have waited all day and haven’t heard from him. He likes to be alone but I was worried that something was wrong so I went and looked through the keyhole. I have known Mr Bartholomew Sholto a long time and I have never seen such a look on his face’.

We headed to the room and Sherlock bent down to look in. However, once he saw in the room, he took a sharp breath and jumped up again.

‘There is something very devilish here – Watson, what do you think?’

I looked in and jumped back in horror. Looking straight at me was a face which was exactly like that of Thaddeus. However, the face was not moving and was fixed in one horrible expression.

We pushed hard against the door and forced it open. The door crashed open and brought us into a room with a window on one side and an opening into the ceiling.

Sitting on an armchair was Bartholomew with the horrible fixed smile. His body was stiff and cold and he had clearly been dead for many hours. Beside him was a strange stick with a stone head and a sheet with some words written on them – ‘The Sign of the Four’.

‘What does this mean?’ I asked.

‘It means murder,’ replied Sherlock. ‘Look at this thorn stuck in his head above his ear – it is poisoned’.

‘This is a real mystery – it is becoming more confusing rather than clearer!’ I stated.

‘Rather, it is become clearer to me’, replied Sherlock.

We had forgotten about Thaddeus until we heard his cry – ‘The treasure is gone! They have taken the treasure! That is the hole in the ceiling we took the treasure down from last night! I was the last person who saw him! I left him and I heard him lock the door! Now the police are going to think it was me murdered him! Please don’t tell me you think I did it! Oh no, I shall go mad!’

‘Do not worry,’ said Sherlock calmly. ‘Go and get the police and offer to help them. We will wait here for you’.

Thaddeus headed off into the dark.

**Chapter 6 – Sherlock Holmes gives a demonstration**

**Sherlock investigates the room + realises that someone small has helped with the break in. Jones, the policeman arrives but arrests Thaddeus without investigating the room.**

‘Now, Watson’, said Sherlock, rubbing his hands, ‘we have half an hour and we need to use it. The case is almost solved but I need to be sure there is nothing more to it’.

‘What!’ I cried’.

‘Sit in the corner so your footprints don’t make this more complicated. Now to work! Firstly, how did they come and get in? The door was locked. The window is closed from the inside. It hasn’t been broken. Let’s open it. No water pipe near. Roof too far away. Yet there is a footprint on the window ledge. And a circular muddy mark and more over here. Do you see, Watson?’

I looked at the round muddy marks. ‘This is not a footmark!’

‘It is more important – it is from a wooden stump. Look, you can see the footprint and mark from the wood’.

‘It is the wooden legged man!’

‘Yes! But there has been someone else too who has been very helpful. Could you climb that wall?’

I looked out at the wall. ‘That would be impossible’, I answered.

‘Without help, yes. But suppose you had a friend up here who lowered a rope down. Any man would then be able to climb it and get in through the window once opened from inside and go back out before it is locked again’.

‘That’s all very well,’ I responded. ‘But who has helped? Who is the friend?’

‘Yes, the helper,’ Sherlock said thoughtfully. ‘There are some features that are interesting. I can think of some similar cases from India like this’.

‘How did he get in though?’ I asked. ‘The door is locked, the window was opened from the inside. Was it through the chimney?’

‘I thought about it,’ replied Sherlock, ‘but it is too small’.

‘How then?’ I asked again.

‘Think,’ he replied. ‘What am I always saying – when you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. He didn’t come in through the door, the window or the chimney. So how did he get in?’

‘He came in through the roof!’ I cried.

‘Of course. He must have done.’

Sherlock then climbed up into the hole there was into the ceiling – here there was a trapdoor that led out onto the roof. I followed him up and noticed a trail of footprints in the dust in this chamber. Small footprints – only half the size of a man.

‘A child has done this horrid thing!’ I whispered.

Sherlock started to examine them – his eyes were gleaming like a bird. He was so quick in his actions and looked like a bloodhound picking out a scent. I couldn’t help thinking what a terrible criminal he would be if he wanted to. Finally, he let out a cry of delight.

‘We are in luck! He has stepped in creosote! I know a dog that would be able to follow his scent. But I can hear the police arriving’.

With this, there was the sound of loud voices and a loud crash below.

‘Before they come’, said Sherlock, ‘what can you tell about the body?’

‘The muscles are as stiff as a board. Looks like death from tetanus.’

‘I agree - I knew that poison must have entered his body straightaway. I noticed the thorn hadn’t been forced it. Look at the angle – it has been shot from that hole in the ceiling where the friend has climbed in from’.

‘It is an English thorn?’ I asked. ‘No’, Sherlock answered.

At that, a heavy, stout man came into the room, puffing from effort, followed by Thaddeus.

‘What’s going on here?’ he asked.

‘I am sure you remember me, Mr Athelney Jones,’ said Sherlock.

‘Of course I do!’ he wheezed. ‘It’s Sherlock Holmes! I remember you lectured us on a case before. You may have put us on the right track but that was more luck’.

‘It was simple reasoning.’

‘Now, now, don’t be ashamed to own up! But what’s going on here. What’s the facts here – no room for theories. How lucky I was in the area! What do you think the man died of?’

‘Hardly for me to say,’ replied Sherlock.

‘No, no, but sometimes you can be right. Dear me! Door locked, I understand. Jewels worth half a million missing. How was the window?’

‘Locked but there are footsteps on the ledge’.

‘Well, then the steps have nothing to do with it. That’s common sense. Man might have died in a fit, but the jewels are missing. I have a theory! I get these good ideas. Please wait outside, Mr Sholto. Sherlock, what do you think of this – Sholto said he was here last night. His brother died in a fit and he took the treasure. What about that?’

‘Then the dead man got up and locked the door?’ replied Sherlock.

‘Hhhmm. That’s a problem. Let’s apply common sense. There was a quarrel. The brother is dead. The treasure is gone. This much we know. No one saw the brother after Thaddeus left him. You can see I am closing in on Thaddeus here’.

‘You don’t have all the facts yet’ said Sherlock. ‘This thorn, which I believe is poisoned, was in his head. There is also this strange stick and note here. How do they fit in then?’

‘Completely ties in. The stick fits in with the other Indian items in the house. Thaddeus may have brought it up and he may have used the poisonous wood. The card isn’t important. But how did he get out? Ah, of course, here is a hole in the roof.’

Climbing up, he shouted down ‘Ah, there is a trapdoor out onto the roof half open’.

‘I opened it,’ replied Sherlock.

‘It still shows us how he got away,’ Jones answered.

He called Thaddeus back into the room. ‘Mr Sholto, it’s my duty to inform you that anything which you may say will be used against you. I arrest you for being involved in the death of your brother’.

‘I knew this would happen!’ cried Thaddeus.

‘Don’t worry’, stated Sherlock, ‘I can clear you of this’.

‘Don’t make promises,’ snapped Jones. ‘You may find that harder than you thought’.

‘Not only will I clear him, Mr Jones, I will also give you the name and description of the two people who were in this room last night. I believe his name was Jonathan Small. He is a poorly educated man, small, active, with a wooden leg. He is middle aged man who was sunburnt and a convict’.

‘And the other person,’ asked Jones, sneering but still impressed.

‘A rather strange person,’ he replied, ‘I hope to find him soon’. With that he walked out and I followed.

‘This is unexpected – this has moved us away from our original mystery’, he said.

‘I was thinking that. Mary should not be here in this’, I answered.

‘No, you should bring her home again. Once you have done that, go to No 3 Pinchin Lane. Knock old Sherman and tell him I would like Toby at once. I would rather use that dog and his amazing power of scent to help than all the police in London. Bring him back here and I will see what I can learn from the other servants’. I will also watch the wonderful Jones at work!’

**Chapter 7 – The Episode of the Barrel**

**After updating Mary, Watson collects Toby the dog to follow the scent as Sherlock explains how he has fitted the evidence together so far to link the deaths to The Sign of Four.**

I then took Mary back home. Like an angel, she had taken the previous troubles with a calm face and supported Mrs Bernstone at the house. However, once in the cab she burst into tears. She later told me she found me rather cold but I had been trying to control my feelings at the time and did not want to take advantage of the situation. If the treasure was found, what chance did I have with her? Would she look at me as someone using her for her money? The Agra treasure had created a barrier between us.

It was nearly 2am but Mrs Cecil Forrester had sat up until she came home and welcomed her in. It was clear she was a good friend and she invited me, wanting to hear what had happened. I explained I must go but would report back and let them know what was happening.

I made my way to the address given but a voice shouted that his dogs would attack me.

‘It’s your dog I’ve come for!’ I answered however he continued to shout at me to leave.

‘Mr Sherlock Holmes –‘ I started, but these magic words caused the man to open the door and ask me what I wanted. I passed on the message and was given the dog Toby. I eventually managed to get him back to Pondicherry Lodge to find out McMurdo had also been arrested along with the other servants working there.

We headed back up to the room again. Holmes inspected the small footprints again.

‘Look at these – do you notice anything important about them?’ he asked.

‘They belong to a child or small woman’, I responded.

‘Apart from their size, what else do you notice about them? Look at them against my footprint here’.

‘Your toes are all cramped together. The other print has a divide between each toe’, I stated.

‘Quite so. Remember that. Now, let’s get this scent to follow’.

He held the handkerchief soaked in creosote to the dog’s nose and after sniffing this, the dog broke off into a run as we followed him.

‘Do not think that I am depending on this to solve the case but it is too important to not follow’.

‘How have you figured out so much so far to be so sure who the wooden-legged man is though?’

‘It is simple,’ Sherlock responded. The two officers – Major Sholto and Captain Morstan are in charge of a group of convicts and learn about secret buried treasure. A map is drawn for them by an Englishman called Jonathan Small. You remember we saw that name on the map Mary had belonging to her father? The officers – or one of them – used the map to get the treasure and bring it to England leaving without fulfilling a promise I imagine. Now, why did Jonathan Small not get the treasure himself? The answer is clear. The map is dated at the time when Morstan was brought into association with the convicts. Jonathan Small and the other men were convicts who couldn’t get away.’

‘That is just guessing’, I responded.

‘It’s more than that. It’s the only solution that coves the facts. Let’s see how that fits with what else we know. Major Sholto lives happily in England with the treasure when he returns. Then he gets a letter which causes him fear. What was in the letter?’

‘A letter to say the man he had wronged by taking the treasure had been set free’.

‘Or had escaped, more likely. What would Sholto do? He would guard himself against a wooden legged man. He must have been white because Major Sholto had thought another white man with a wooden leg had been him. Remember the other names on the map? There was no other white man there. So we know that the wooden legged man was Jonathan Small. Does that not make sense?’

‘Yes, it does’.

‘Now, let’s look from Jonathan Small’s point of view. He comes to England wanting to regain the treasure he believes is his and get revenge on the man who wronged him. He found out where Major Sholto lived and perhaps made links with someone who works there. We didn’t meet the butler, Lal Rao. But he couldn’t find out where the treasure was. Then he hears that Major Sholto is on his death bed. In a rage, he runs to his room, past the guards, stopped only by the sight of the two sons. However, in rage, he enters the room that night looking for clues where the treasure is. He had planned to leave the note to show that this was not a common murder but there was a reason behind it.

Does this make sense?’

‘Completely’, I answered.

‘Now what could he do? He could only keep watch as the brothers tried to find the treasure. Perhaps he left and came back again. Then comes the news that the treasure is found – someone must have told him this. However, he couldn’t reach Bartholomew’s room on his own. He takes a rather strange friend with him who does help but stands in the creosote which is allowing us to follow him’.

‘But it was the friend and not Jonathan who committed the crime.’

‘Yes. Jonathan appears to be annoyed by that given the way he seems to have stamped around the room. He didn’t have a problem with Bartholomew but the savage instincts of the friend took over so Jonathan Small left his note and they took the treasure. He must be sunburned after serving his time on the Andaman Islands and we can tell his height from the distance between the footprints.’

‘What about the friend?’

‘Ah, there is no mystery there. That will become clear soon. But look at the morning starting all around us as we are on this strange mission. Do you have a gun on you?’

‘Just my stick’.

‘We might just need something if we come up against them. Jonathan Small I will leave to you but if the other turns nasty I shall shoot him dead’, taking a gun from his pocket.

We continued to follow Toby as he led us through several streets before he started to show signs of confusion. He then started making his way forwards again. He finally brought us down to a large timber yard and raced through it. Finally he stopped beside a large barrel – full of creosote.

We looked blankly at each other - then burst out laughing!

**Chapter Eight- The Baker Street Irregulars**

**They meet the Smiths who own the boat lined up for an escape, call on The Baker Street Irregulars + see the praise in the newspaper for Jones. They consider the small companion.**

‘What now?’ I asked.

‘He acted as he thought – just think how much creosote much be in London every day. He’s not to blame. We’ll go back to the last point he was unsure and go from there’.

We did so and Toby dashed off in the new direction which took us to a boat house. The name ‘Mordecai Smith’ was printed as well as a sign saying ‘Boats for Hire’. Sherlock looked very worried – ‘They have been smarter than I thought in covering their tracks’.

He knocked on the door and a young boy answered, followed by his mother – Mrs Smith. Sherlock asked if he could speak to Mr Smith.

‘He’s been away since yesterday morning – I’m a bit frightened about where he is actually. If it is about a boat, I could maybe help you’, she replied.

Sherlock stated that he wanted to hire the steam launch.

She answered, ‘That’s the boat that he’s out in. But he didn’t have enough coal to take him very far for the amount of time he’s been away. I didn’t like the look of that wooden-legged man that he was with and a brown, monkey—faced chap he was with. They have called a few times and we had the boat ready for him yesterday. It doesn’t sit easy on my mind’.

‘I’m sorry to hear that – it was the steam launch I was after. What is the name of it?

‘It is The Aurora. It has also been freshly painted black with two red streaks’.

Sherlock replied, ‘Thanks. I hope you hear from him. I will keep going down the river and if I see him I shall let him know you are worried.’

We headed off. Sherlock said to me ‘The main thing with people of that sort is to never let them think that their information is important to you or they will never tell you anything’.

‘Shall we go and ask about the boat – if anyone has seen it?’ I asked.

‘No, it could be anywhere,’ he answered.

‘Shall we call the police now then?’

‘No, I shall probably call in Athelney Jones at the last moment – I wouldn’t do anything that would hurt him professionally but I want to work it out for myself first.

‘Shall we advertise then asking for information?’

‘No! That is worse! Then they will know that we are after them. If they think they are safe they will not in a hurry away’.

‘What then do we do?’ I asked.

‘Go home and sleep – we could have a long night ahead’.

On the way he stopped to send a wire.

‘You remember the Baker Street division of the detective police force who helped me before? They could be of help again. I’ve sent for my lieutenant Wiggins – he and his gang should be with us soon.’

As we walked, my thoughts turned back to Mary and the treasure that belonged to her. I would give everything to trying to return it to her but this would mean she was out of my reach. If Holmes could work to find the criminals, I had a stronger reason to find the treasure.

Once we got home, there was a story about the case in the paper. I read it, noticing how Athelney Jones was constantly praised during this. It focused on his good work, his quick actions and the swift arrest he had made. It was trying to make a strong case for praising the police.

At this the doorbell rang.

‘It’s the unofficial force – the Baker Street Irregulars’, stated Sherlock.

As he said this, a number of children who lived on the street came in, led by a taller and older looking one who was clearly in charge.

He stepped forwards and asked Sherlock for money which he handed over.

Sherlock told them that he wanted them to look out for the steam launch called The Aurora owned by Mordecai Smith and to return when they had news.

As they left, Sherlock remarked ‘They can go everywhere, see everything, over-hear every one. I think we will hear from them soon. Now I plan to think over everything we have learned so far. Consider it so far. Strange footmarks, bare feet, a stone headed object, small poisoned darts. What do you think about this all?’

‘A savage!’ I exclaimed. ‘Perhaps one of those Indians who were the associates of Jonathan Small.’

‘Hardly that’, he responded, ‘although that’s what I first thought too. But the footmarks caused me to re-think.’

He picked up a book and looked up the Andaman Islands and read the following information from it:

‘The aborigines of the Andaman Islands are the smallest race on Earth. The average height is around 4 foot, although many full grown men are smaller. They are very fierce and angry people but are capable of forming strong friendships when their confidence has been gained. They are naturally hideous with large misshapen head and odd features. Their feet and hands are very small. They have caused terror by beating people with their stone headed clubs or shooting them with poisoned arrows.’

‘We have already figured out that Small has come from the Andaman Islands so it’s very likely he met this creature there. I’m sure all will soon become clear.’

With this, I drifted off to sleep, thinking of the sweet face of Mary Morstan.

**Chapter Nine – A Break In The Chain**

**After Holmes updates Mary, Sherlock is so frustrated he disguises as a sailor, calls Jones back to go out that night to catch Jonathan Small.**

I woke up that afternoon to find out there had been no more news. I told Sherlock I would go and see Mrs Forrester. ‘On Mrs Forrester’, Sherlock replied, with a twinkle. ‘Well, Miss Morstan too, of course. They will want to know what is happening’.

‘I wouldn’t tell them too much – women are never to be entirely trusted’, stated Sherlock. ‘You could return Toby too on your way’.

I did so and headed to see Mary Morstan. I filled them in on what had happened – leaving out the more dreadful parts of the story. What I told them was still enough to startle them.

‘It is a romance!’ cried Mrs Forrester.

‘With two knights to the rescue’, replied Mary.

‘Mary, your fortune depends on this search – you don’t seem excited enough. Imagine what it will be like to be so rich!’ I responded to her.

It gave me joy that she seemed to show no happiness at this - she just shook her head. ‘It is Thaddeus I am more anxious about. He has been so kind – it is our duty to see him safe’.

When I returned home, Sherlock was gone. Mrs Hudson had no idea where he was but was worried about him and his low mood.

The next morning he still looked worn out saying he couldn’t sleep as he had been thinking about the mystery so much. He had planned to see if any news came through that day and if not would go out to see what he could find. He tried to keep busy all day but no news came.

The next morning I found him dressed up as a sailor. ‘I’m going to see what I can find out,’ he said. ‘I don’t want to miss any news that comes in so if anything does, please use your judgement to deal with it.’

I got up and read the paper. There was another article which said that Thaddeus had been released due to an alibi but continued to praise Jones for his work on the case.

There was also an advertisement asking if anyone had any information on Mordecai Smith and The Aurora as his wife was worried. However, it had our address on it so I knew it was Sherlock who had placed it to stop anyone being suspicious.

Later that day, Athelney Jones arrived. However, he was very different to how he acted before – his arrogance had gone and he seemed almost sorry.

He came in and we had a drink.

‘I’ve had to reconsider my original thoughts about the case. It couldn’t have been Thaddeus killed Bartholomew due to his alibi. My professional reputation is at stake and I would be very glad of Sherlock’s help. He is a wonderful man and would make a good police officer. He sent me a message saying to come here and wait for him as he has nearly solved the case and that I could come with you’.

At this, another man appeared in the room. He was an old sailor and asked to see Sherlock, stating that he had information for him. Even when I told him I would pass this on, he refused to tell me. We told him he would then have to wait until Sherlock returned and we all sat down. I lit a cigar and at that heard Sherlock’s voice asking for one! The old sailor man had been him!

He explained that the disguise helped him find out more information as he couldn’t be recognised with this.

Sherlock said, ‘We can capture the men for you. But I must be in charge. You can take credit but you must do what I need’.

He asked Jones for a police boat on hand for that evening in order to chase and capture Small.

His other requests were that I should be the one to bring the treasure to Mary and that he could interview Small once he was arrested.

‘Not the regular way,’ replied Jones, ‘but the whole thing has been irregular. I can’t see how I can say no if you capture him’.

‘Then we shall have some dinner before the chase begins’, answered Sherlock.

**Chapter 10 - The End of the Islander**

**Sherlock explains how he knew the escape was tonight. They chase the boat, shoot Tonga and arrest Jonathan Small.**

Once dinner was over, Sherlock said to find a gun to bring with us that evening.

We headed for Westminster to get on the police’s steam launch boat that was waiting for us. Sherlock looked at it closely and asked for the green light to be removed so it didn’t look like a police boat. It was a very fast boat and we made our way down the river to get to our watch out point that Sherlock had set up with the Baker Street Irregulars.

As we made our way there, Sherlock explained how he had come up with this plan.

‘I was thinking about what was going on – the Baker Street Irregulars had been up and down the river and couldn’t find the boat. I knew that Small had a certain amount of cunning but didn’t think he would have too deep a plan – this is normally only those who have a higher education. He had been watching Pondicherry Lodge for a while so he couldn’t leave immediately. He also knew his friend would be noticed quickly due to his strange appearance and given that they killed Bartholomew at night and saw Smith then, they wouldn’t have gone too far. They would have paid Smith not to say anything, hold the boat for when they wanted to go. They waited a couple of nights to see what the papers would say and then escape – they would have already arranged a further boat to America or the Colonies.’

‘But what about the boat?’ I asked.

‘I believe it couldn’t have been too far away. I put myself in their shoes to see what they might do. I would give the launch in to be repaired so it could be hidden there.

I decided to act on this idea – I went down the river and at one yard I learned that The Aurora had been brought in by a man with a wooden leg with some small directions to fix it even though there was nothing wrong with it. Then Mordecai Smith, the owner, arrived rather drunk. He said that he needed the boat back that night by 8 as two men needed it. I then got one of the Baker Street Irregulars to keep watch and give us a signal – waving a handkerchief – when the boat moved. We can then get the men and the treasure.’

Jones replied, ‘You have planned this all very well but I would have just arrested Small when he arrived at the boat’.

‘He is clever than that – he would have sent someone ahead to check the coast was clear before he arrived. Smith also wouldn’t have known where they staying if he was getting well paid’.

Then we saw the handkerchief waving and The Aurora speeding down the river.

‘We must catch her!’ cried Watson.

We were fairly after then. The furnaces roared and the powerful engines whizzed and clanked like a great metallic heart. We flashed past the surroundings but still The Aurora thundered on and we followed close behind.

‘Pile it on, men, pile it on!’ cried Sherlock.

As we grew nearer, Jones shone his light on the boat. We could see a boy at the tiller and Smith shovelling coal for dear life. We were gaining closer and closer – in all my chases in many countries in my life but this was one of the most exciting. Nearer and nearer we got and Jones shouted at them to stop. We could see Small jump up and shook his fists at us, shouting. He was a strong, powerful man. At this, we saw a little black man – the smallest I have ever seen – with a misshapen head and tangled hair. His features were beast like and cruel and his teeth chattered at us with a half animal fury.

We both grabbed our gun at the sight of him.

‘Fire if he raises his hand’, said Holmes quietly.

We were getting closer and closer. We had a clear view of them and could see the small man take out a small piece of wood. Both of us fired our guns. He fell into the river with a shout.

At this, Small turned the boat towards the bank so that we went past them. We turned back to them in a deserted, muddy area. Small jumped out to try to run but got stuck in the mud and couldn’t get away.

We pulled him out and could see the treasure chest on their boat. There was no sign of the islander, his acquaintance but we could see the dart he had shot at us on our boat. We knew we had just escaped death.

**Chapter 11 - The Great Agra Treasure**

**Small explains he didn’t mean Bartholomew to die and Watson brings the treasure chest to Mary. On discovering the treasure is missing, they declare their love.**

Small sat in our cabin opposite the treasure. I could see more sorrow than anger in him and when he looked up I could see some humour in his eyes.

‘Well, Jonathan Small’, said Sherlock, lighting a cigar, ‘I’m sorry it’s come to this’.

‘So am I, Sir,’ he answered. ‘I know I can’t lie so I tell you the truth that I never hurt Mr Bartholomew Sholto. It was Tongo, my companion. I was really upset and was very cross at him for it’.

‘Have a cigar,’ said Sherlock. ‘How do you think that so small and weak a man could overpower Bartholomew and hold him as you climbed up?’

‘You seem to already know what happened like you were there, sir. I hoped the room would be empty – I knew the house really well and thought he would be downstairs eating. If it was his father, Mr Sholto, I wouldn’t have thought twice about murdering him but I had nothing against his son.’

‘Jones will arrest you and I will be asking you everything that happened. I hope you do and then I think I can help prove you didn’t kill Bartholomew’.

‘It really shook me seeing him dead and I was so angry with Tonga. He ran away which is how his club and darts where left behind. I take it these helped you find me but I am not annoyed at you for this.

However is it strange that I have rights to half a million but have spent my first half of life in prisoned and am likely to spend the second half too. It was an evil day I first saw the merchant and the Agra treasure – it has been a curse to any man who has owned it. To him it brought murder, to Major Sholto it brought fear and guilt, to me it has brought slavery’.

At that Jones arrived with the treasure chest which I was to bring to Mary. Jones asked Small for the key but he replied that he had thrown it in the river. I was given instructions to make sure I brought everything back again once I had seen Mary.

When I arrived, Mary was sitting at the window in a white dress with a soft light falling over her. When I arrived, she jumped up and there was a bright flush of surprise and pleasure on her pale face.

I tried to sound happy. ‘I have brought your fortune’.

She glanced at the treasure chest. ‘Is that the treasure?’ she asked coolly.

‘Yes, this is the great treasure. Half of it is yours and half is Thaddeus Sholto’s. You will be one of the richest ladies in England. Isn’t that glorious!’

‘If I have it, I owe it to you and Sherlock. Please tell me all about it’, she replied.

I briefly told her about our adventures. She listened with eyes shining, turning pale at points.

‘Let us turn to something brighter. There is the treasure. I have brought the treasure thinking it would be of interest to you to see it first’.

‘It would be of the greatest interest’, she said. But there was no eagerness in her voice but she didn’t want to seem ungrateful after all we had done. ‘What a pretty box!’

I used a poker to get the treasure chest open and opened the lid. We both stood looking in amazement. The box was empty!

‘The treasure is lost’, said Mary calmly.

I heard her words and realised how much the thought of the treasure had been weighing me down but now that golden barrier was gone between us.

‘Thank God!’ I cried.

She looked at me, questioning, ‘Why?’

‘Because you are now in my reach’, I said, taking her hand. ‘Because I love you Mary. The treasure sealed my lips so I couldn’t tell you. But now it is gone I can tell you I love you’.

‘Then I say ‘thank God’ too,’ she replied as I hugged her.

Whoever had lost a treasure, I knew I had gained one.

**Chapter 12 - The Strange Story of Jonathan Small**

**Small explains his involvement with the treasure. Watson says he will marry Mary + Sherlock returns to his drugs now the mystery is solved.**

I travelled back to Baker Street. Small laughed when I revealed the treasure was gone.

Small answered ‘I have put it where no-one can get it. It is my treasure and if I can’t have it I’ll make sure no one can unless it is my other three men. I acted for them too and that is what they would rather I did than let anyone from the Morstan or Sholto family have it. The treasure is where Tonga is – the bottom of the river. You will not get anything’.

‘You are fooling us’, replied Jones. ‘Why not have just thrown the whole treasure chest in?’

‘That would have been really easy for you to find. You can’t find them scattered’, he replied. ‘It was really hard to do but there is no point being upset. I’ve had ups and downs in life but I’ve learnt not to cry over spilt milk’.

‘This is really serious, Small’, stated Jones. ‘You should have helped justice’.

‘Justice?’ snarled Small. ‘Justice! Whose treasure is it, if not ours? I earned it over 20 years and you speak to me of justice because I won’t allow others to enjoy what I’ve earnt?’

Sherlock reminded him, ‘We don’t know your story-we don’t know if justice was yours’.

‘Sir, you have been fair to me. If you want to hear my story, I’ll tell you the God’s truth’.

‘I am from a big family in Worcester – all steady farmers and respectable church goers. But I was never a credit to them and at 18 got into trouble over a girl. The only way out was to join the army in the Third Buffs which was heading to India.

I wasn’t a very good soldier and lost my leg when a crocodile bit it off when swimming. This left me in hospital for months and unable to be in the Army.

I was down on my luck – 20 and a cripple. However, my misfortune became a blessing. A man, Abel White had an indigo planter and needed someone to oversee the work. I was able to ride a horse around and was happy in the job.

Suddenly the great mutiny broke out. People were leaving around us to head to Agra where the nearest troops were. But Abel White was stubborn and didn’t think things were that bad so didn’t leave. But then one night I came home to find Dawson’s wife, other employers, both killed. White’s house was on fire and a bullets came towards me. I fled to the Agra walls for safety. However, I soon realised it was not that safe either.

A group of volunteers had formed to help keep things safe and I joined them as there was danger all around.

I was placed at an old fort in the great city of Agra full of old twisting corridors. There was so many entrances that we set up a station in the middle of the fort.

Each white man was in charge of a gate with two natives. I was in charge of two Sikh troopers. If anything went wrong, I was to fire my gun to get help from the central guard. However, he would be too far away with the passages to arrive in time to help in an attack.

My two Punjabee men, Mahomet Singh and Abdullak Khan were fierce fighting men who spoke English well but preferred to talk between them. One night, they grabbed me and held a knife to my throat. They told me that they were not rebels but I must decide to be with them or against them. Did I want to live or die?

I told them I didn’t know what they wanted but I wouldn’t bring danger to the fort. They replied they had nothing against the fort. They only asked I did what my countrymen came here to do – get rich. If I went along with them, a quarter of treasure would be mine.

They told me about a rich rajah who, when the troubles started, split his treasure. A merchant, Achmet, would be bringing some of this treasure to hide in the fort with Dost Akbar, who is with us. We will kill the merchant and split the treasure.

At home in England, life is a great and sacred thing but it is very different when you are surrounded in fire, blood and death. The merchant’s life was nothing to me but my heart turned to the treasure and going home to my family with it. They asked if I was with them or an enemy.

‘I am with you heart and soul’ I responded.

We went to the gate to watch for them as the rain poured around us. It was strange knowing we were waiting on a man coming to die. We saw the two figures arrive. I called out and they responded it was a friend arriving. Seeing the merchant shiver with fear gave me chills but I thought of the treasure which turned my heart hard as flint.

He said he had family items to leave and I let him on through. I could then hear blows to him but then saw him running back towards me. At first my head softened again but the thought of the treasure made me hard and bitter. I threw a firelock at him so he tripped and fell. The men then stabbed him dead.

At this Jonathan Small noticed the disgust on our faces.

‘I know this is not good,’ he responded. ‘But I would like to know who would have acted differently. It was my life or his. We hid his body in the fort and opened the treasure. It blinded our eyes as we feasted on it and counted the many jewels. We renewed our oath and agreed to keep the treasure hidden until it was peaceful again before splitting it, making careful plan of where it was hidden. But just as we thought that peace was coming, we were arrested for Achmet’s murder. The rajah had been a suspicious man who had made another man follow the merchant with the treasure who then knew about his murder. The rest were given life in imprisonment – I was originally sentenced to death but it was then changed to be the same as their sentence.

I was moved to the Andaman Islands. As there were very few white prisoners, I was given privileges. It was a fever-striken place and lots of wild cannibal natives ready with their poisoned darts. I was on the look out to escape the whole time. I learned to give out drugs for a surgeon and picked up some knowledge. At the surgery where I made up the drugs, young officers would often meet to play cards. Major Sholto and Captain Morstan were part of this group. I quickly noticed that the soldiers would often lose to the civilians, especially Major Sholto who would then drink more after losing a lot. One night I heard him say he was a ruined man after a big loss.

I had a plan to use the knowledge of treasure to get him to help me escape. I asked him what I should do if I knew of treasure – if I handed it over would my sentence be shortened? He paused and said that I should tell the government but the pause showed he had walked into my plan. He asked for all the details and then came back later with Captain Morstan.

They said to me they didn’t think it was a government issue but a private and if they could agree on terms to split it. He tried to sound as if he didn’t care. I told him it would be a fifth of the treasure due to the arrangement with the other three. I suggested a plan to go to the Indian coast but it had to be all of us. The Major said he wanted to test the treasure was there first but I got all of us together first to agree. Major Sholto would go get the treasure then we would all split it so I made another map signed by the Sign of Four.

However, the villain Sholto left for India but never returned – we learned his uncle died, leaving him a fortune and left, taking all our treasure with him. I was so angry, I could only think about revenge.

I then met Tonga – a little Andaman Island. He had been very sick but I looked after him so he became very attached to me. He was a fine boatman and he helped me escape. We drifted around the world, trying to get to London. Eventually we did - I was able to make friends with someone who would help me get close to the Sholtos. I broke into the house the night he died and left our mark. We showed off Tonga at fairs while we kept track of the brothers searching for the treasure. At last we got news it was found. Tonga got in through the roof and thought he was doing something clever killing Bartholomew but I was very angry. We took the treasure and arranged with Smith – the rest you know.

I want to make it clear how badly I was treated by Major Sholto and I am innocent of Bartholomew’s death.’

‘What a remarkable story!’ said Sherlock.

Jones stated, ‘Sherlock, you have heard the story as you wanted. Now he must be arrested. Goodnight.’

‘That is the end of our drama’, I said to Sherlock. ‘I fear it may be my last time investigating with you. Mary has agreed to marry me.

Sherlock groaned. ‘I feared as much. But I can’t congratulate you’. I was hurt. ‘Do you not approve with my choice?’

‘Not at all – I think she is one of the most charming young ladies I have met. She handled everything really well with the case. But love is an emotional thing and emotion is opposed to the cold reason which I place above all things. I will never marry as it would bias my judgement’.

‘It is rather unfair,’ I answered. ‘You’ve done all the work for this. I get a wife, Jones gets the credit, what remains for you?’

‘For me,’ replied Sherlock, ‘there still remains the cocaine bottle’. And he stretched his long white hand to it.