Sherlock Holmes

# The Sign of Four

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This edition is an easy-to-read adaptation of *The Sign of Four* by Arthur Conan Doyle, which was first published by Spencer Blackett in 1890.

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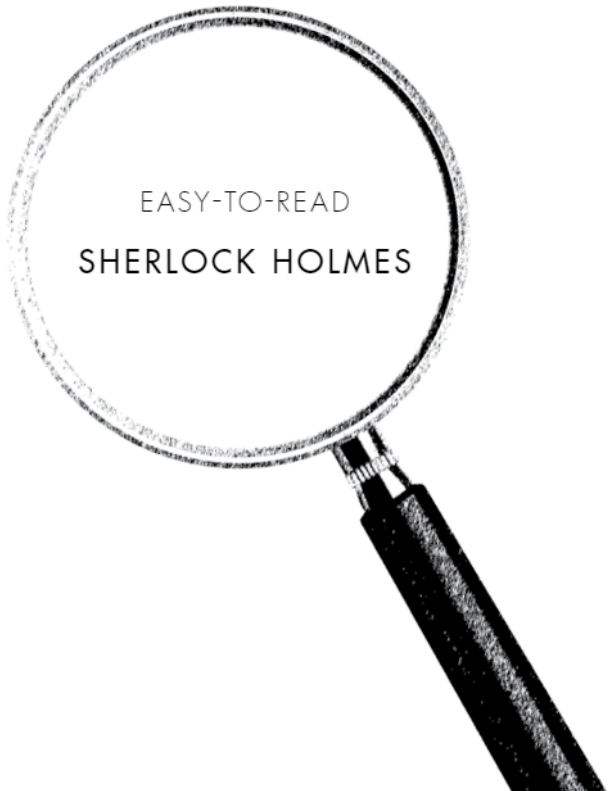
Sherlock Holmes

# The Sign of Four

The famous story by Arthur Conan Doyle,
retold by Helene Bakker



*Sherlock Holmes was a famous English private detective. He didn't really exist, but the writer Arthur Conan Doyle wrote so well that many people think he did.*

*Sherlock Holmes started work as a detective about 150 years ago in the city of London, along with his friend Doctor Watson. The way Holmes solved attacks and murders has made him famous all over the world. Even today, films are still made about his detective work. A film was made recently about the mysterious case you will read about in this book.*

# CHAPTER 1
# A mysterious letter

Holmes and Watson have been living in the same house for many years.

One day the doorbell rings. Watson opens the door.

A young woman is standing there.

Such beautiful blue eyes, and what a sweet face, he thinks.

'I'm Mary Morstan. I've heard you can solve difficult cases.'

Watson chuckles. 'Oh no, you're looking for my friend Sherlock Holmes, but come on in. You can tell him yourself what's up.'

Watson takes her to the living room.

She walks over to Holmes, introduces herself and says, 'Help me, please, Mr Holmes. Strange things are happening. I don't understand it at all.'

She turns to Watson and asks if he will stay.

'It's very important that you hear what happened too,' she says.

'Of course I'll stay – gladly,' says Watson.

He pulls up a chair for her, near to Holmes, and sits down himself.

'My father,' the woman begins, 'Was a captain in the British army in India.* I was still a small child when my mother died there.

'My father decided it was best for me to return to England. I had no family here at all, so he arranged very good lodgings for me.

'Ten years ago my father retired. He came back to England. When he arrived in London, he let me know immediately which hotel he was staying in, and invited me to come and see him. I went, but he wasn't there. He had gone out the evening before and had not returned.

'I waited all day at the hotel, but he didn't come. That evening I called the police.

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* India was a British colony at this time, which is why the British army was there.

'When he was still missing a day later, I put a notice in all the newspapers.'

'When was that exactly?' Holmes wants to know.

'He disappeared on 3rd December 1878, almost 10 years ago.'

'Was there anything left at the hotel?' Holmes asks.

'Only a suitcase with some clothes and a couple of souvenirs from India.'

'Did he have friends in London too?'

'One. An old colleague from the army. Major Sholto. But he didn't even know my father was in England.'

'Strange.'

'Yes, but six years ago it became even stranger. In *The Times* newspaper on 4th May 1882, I read my name in an advertisement. *Where does Mary Morstan live? This is important*, it read.

'I placed a notice in the same newspaper with my address. Soon afterwards a package came for me in the post.