



The Sign of the Four

Arthur Conan Doyle (1859 - 1930)

Read by:	David Clarke	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	4 hours and 26 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1103
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Genre:	Detective Fiction		

The Sign of the Four is the second of four full-length novels featuring the brilliant Sherlock Holmes. Published in 1890 and sometimes titled *The Sign of Four*, the story begins with the mysterious disappearance of British Army Captain Arthur Morstan and proceeds to unravel a complex plot that centers on a stolen treasure, a secret pact among four convicts, and corrupt prison guards, with much of the action set in India beginning at the time of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The story humanizes and deepens the character of Holmes, partly by introducing us to his use of cocaine. It also introduces Morstan's daughter, Mary, who eventually becomes Watson's bride. The book was originally serialized in *Lippincott's* magazine before publication in book form and has been adapted for the cinema thirteen times.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a Scottish writer and physician best known for his novels and stories featuring consulting detective Sherlock Holmes. He was born in Edinburgh to a family of Irish Catholic descent that struggled with poverty and alcoholism. Arthur was supported by wealthy uncles and educated at Jesuit schools before attending the University of Edinburgh Medical School, where he began writing and submitting both fiction and non-fiction to periodicals. The character of Sherlock Holmes is partly modeled on university instructor Joseph Bell. He served as a ship's doctor on two voyages before establishing private practices in Plymouth and then Portsmouth. The first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study In Scarlet*, appeared in 1886 and was followed by *The Sign of Four* in 1890, establishing his literary career. Seeking to pursue more serious work, he famously attempted to end the Holmes series in 1893 with his death in "The Final Problem", but was summoned back by public acclaim. Doyle was an active sportsman, fathered five children in two marriages, and was known for his work in attempting to correct injustices and for his lively interest in spiritualism.