

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

THE SIGN OF THE FOUR



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ENGLISH

DETECTIVE STORY

Подготовка текста, комментарии и словарь

К. Ю. Михно

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«Знак четырех» — один из четырех романов Артура Конан Дойла о знаменитом сыщике Шерлоке Холмсе и его друге и соратнике докторе Ватсоне.

В книге приводится полный неадаптированный текст романа, снабженный комментариями и словарем. Для учащихся старших классов языковых школ, студентов младших классов языковых вузов и всех любителей детективного жанра.

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Об авторе



Сэр Артур Игнатиус Конан Дойл (1859–1930) — знаменитый английский писатель, автор всемирно известных детективных произведений о Шерлоке Холмсе, а также приключенческих и научно-фантастических романов о профессоре Челленджере, юмористических произведений о бригадире Жераре, исторических романов («Белый отряд» и др.).

Будущий писатель родился в семье ирландских католиков. Его отец Чарльз Алтамонт, архитектор и художник, совсем молодым женился на юной Мэри Фоули, страстно любившей литературу. Именно мать привила мальчику любовь к сочинительству — он всю жизнь писал ей подробные письма обо всем, что с ним происходило.

Семья испытывала серьезные финансовые трудности, и богатые родственники предложили оплачивать обучение мальчика в иезуитском колледже, где он провел долгие семь лет и откуда вынес ненависть к религиозным и классовым предрассудкам, а также к телесному наказанию.

В 1876 г., окончив колледж, молодой человек вернулся домой и переписал на себя имущество отца, к тому времени потерявшего рассудок. Решая, чем ему заниматься в жизни, Артур, не без влияния Чарльза Уоллера, молодого врача, снимавшего комнату у миссис Дойл,

выбрал карьеру врача и поступил в Эдинбургский университет.

С 1881 г. Конан Дойл занялся врачебной практикой, сначала совместной, затем индивидуальной. В 1891 г. он решил сделать литературу своей основной профессией.

В 1884 г. Конан Дойл начал работу над социально-бытовым романом с криминально-детективным сюжетом «Торговый дом Гердлстон» (сказывается влияние Диккенса) про циничных и жестоких негоциантов-стяжателей. Весной 1886 г. появился «Этюд в багровых тонах», и с этого времени писатель приобрел мировую славу.

«Скандал в Богемии», первый рассказ из серии «Приключения Шерлока Холмса», вышел в свет в 1891 г. В течение двух лет писатель создавал рассказ за рассказом и в конце концов начал тяготиться собственным персонажем. Его попытка «покончить» с Холмсом в схватке с профессором Мориарти оказалась неудачной: полюбовавшегося читающей публике героя пришлось «воскресить». Холмсовская эпопея увенчалась романом «Собака Баскервиль» (1900), который относят к классике детективного жанра.

Современники Конан Дойла были склонны преуменьшать значение Холмса, усматривая в нем некий гибрид Дюпена (героя Эдгара По), Лекока (героя Эмиля Габорио) и Каффа (героя Уилки Коллинза). С течением времени стало ясно, насколько Холмс отличается от предшественников: сочетание необычных качеств подняло его над временем. Необычайная популярность Шерлока Холмса и доктора Ватсона постепенно переросла в отрасль новой мифологии, центром которой по сей день остается квартира в Лондоне на Бейкер-стрит, 221-б.

Chapter I

THE SCIENCE OF DEDUCTION



Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantel-piece and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle, and rolled back his left shirt-cuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined arm-chair with a long sigh of satisfaction.

Three times a day for many months I had witnessed this performance, but custom had not reconciled my mind to it. On the contrary, from day to day I had become more irritable at the sight,

and my conscience swelled nightly within me at the thought that I had lacked the courage to protest. Again and again I had registered a vow that I should deliver my soul upon the subject, but there was that in the cool, nonchalant air of my companion which made him the last man with whom one would care to take anything approaching to a liberty. His great powers, his masterly manner, and the experience which I had had of his many extraordinary qualities, all made me diffident and backward in crossing him.

Yet upon that afternoon, whether it was the Beaune¹ which I had taken with my lunch, or the additional exasperation produced by the extreme deliberation of his manner, I suddenly felt that I could hold out no longer.

“Which is it to-day?” I asked, — “morphine or cocaine?”

He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had opened. “It is cocaine,” he said, — “a seven-per-cent solution. Would you care to try it?”

“No, indeed,” I answered, brusquely. “My constitution has not got over the Afghan cam-

¹ **the Beaune** — красное французское вино, произведенное в регионе г. Бон

paign yet.¹ I cannot afford to throw any extra strain upon it.”

He smiled at my vehemence. “Perhaps you are right, Watson,” he said. “I suppose that its influence is physically a bad one. I find it, however, so transcendently stimulating and clarifying to the mind that its secondary action is a matter of small moment.”

“But consider!” I said, earnestly. “Count the cost! Your brain may, as you say, be roused and excited, but it is a pathological and morbid process, which involves increased tissue-change and may at last leave a permanent weakness. You know, too, what a black reaction comes upon you. Surely the game is hardly worth the candle. Why should you, for a mere passing pleasure, risk the loss of those great powers with which you have been endowed? Remember that I speak not only as one comrade to another, but as a medical man to one for whose constitution he is to some extent answerable.”

He did not seem offended. On the contrary, he put his finger-tips together and leaned his elbows

¹ **My constitution has not got over the Afghan campaign yet.** — Мой организм еще не вполне оправился после афганской кампании.

on the arms of his chair, like one who has a relish for conversation.

"My mind," he said, "rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, — or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world."

"The only unofficial detective?" I said, raising my eyebrows.

"The only unofficial consulting detective," he answered. "I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection. When Gregson or Lestrade or Athelney Jones are out of their depths — which, by the way, is their normal state — the matter is laid before me. I examine the data, as an expert, and pronounce a specialist's opinion. I claim no credit in such cases. My name figures in no newspaper. The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is my highest reward. But you have yourself had some experience of my methods of work in the Jefferson Hope case."

"Yes, indeed," said I, cordially. "I was never so struck by anything in my life. I even embodied it

in a small brochure with the somewhat fantastic title of '*A Study in Scarlet*.'"

He shook his head sadly. "I glanced over it," said he. "Honestly, I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid.¹"

"But the romance was there," I remonstrated. "I could not tamper with the facts."

"Some facts should be suppressed, or at least a just sense of proportion should be observed in treating them. The only point in the case which deserved mention was the curious analytical reasoning from effects to causes by which I succeeded in unraveling it."

I was annoyed at this criticism of a work which had been specially designed to please him. I confess, too, that I was irritated by the egotism which seemed to demand that every line of my pamphlet should be devoted to his own special

¹ as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid — как если бы вы включили историю о сбежавшей с любовником жене в пятый постулат Эвклида

doings. More than once during the years that I had lived with him in Baker Street I had observed that a small vanity underlay my companion's quiet and didactic manner. I made no remark, however, but sat nursing my wounded leg. I had a Jezail¹ bullet through it some time before, and, though it did not prevent me from walking, it ached wearily at every change of the weather.

"My practice has extended recently to the Continent," said Holmes, after a while, filling up his old brier-root pipe. "I was consulted last week by Francois Le Villard, who, as you probably know, has come rather to the front lately in the French detective service. He has all the Celtic power of quick intuition, but he is deficient in the wide range of exact knowledge which is essential to the higher developments of his art. The case was concerned with a will, and possessed some features of interest. I was able to refer him to two parallel cases, the one at Riga in 1857, and the other at St. Louis in 1871, which have suggested to him the true solution. Here is the letter which I had this morning acknowledging my assistance." He tossed over, as he spoke, a crumpled sheet of

¹ **Jezail** — длинноствольный кремневый мушкет, оружие пуштунов (самоназвание афганцев)

foreign notepaper. I glanced my eyes down it, catching a profusion of notes of admiration, with stray “magnifiques,” “coup-de-maîtres,” and “tours-de-force,¹” all testifying to the ardent admiration of the Frenchman.

“He speaks as a pupil to his master,” said I.

“Oh, he rates my assistance too highly,” said Sherlock Holmes, lightly. “He has considerable gifts himself. He possesses two out of the three qualities necessary for the ideal detective. He has the power of observation and that of deduction. He is only wanting in knowledge; and that may come in time. He is now translating my small works into French.”

“Your works?”

“Oh, didn’t you know?” he cried, laughing. “Yes, I have been guilty of several monographs. They are all upon technical subjects. Here, for example, is one ‘*Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos*.’ In it I enumerate a hundred and forty forms of cigar-, cigarette-, and pipe-tobacco, with colored plates illustrating the difference in the ash. It is a point which is

¹ **magnifiques** — (фр.) великолепные; **coup-de-maître** — (фр.) нечто, проделанное мастерски, искусно; **tours-de-force** — (фр.) блестяще; проявление артистизма, силы

continually turning up in criminal trials, and which is sometimes of supreme importance as a clue. If you can say definitely, for example, that some murder has been done by a man who was smoking an Indian lunkah¹, it obviously narrows your field of search. To the trained eye there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly² and the white fluff of bird's-eye³ as there is between a cabbage and a potato."

"You have an extraordinary genius for minutiae," I remarked.

"I appreciate their importance. Here is my monograph upon the tracing of footsteps, with some remarks upon the uses of plaster of Paris as a preserver of impresses. Here, too, is a curious little work upon the influence of a trade upon the form of the hand, with lithotypes of the hands of slaters, sailors, corkcutters, compositors, weavers, and diamond-polishers. That is a matter of great practical interest to the scientific detective, — especially in cases of unclaimed bodies, or in

¹ **lunkah** — индийская сигара с обрезанными концами

² **Trichinopoly** — город и прилегающая область в Индии; выращиваемый там сорт табака

³ **bird's-eye** — сорт табака, при изготовлении которого используют не только листья, но и стебли

discovering the antecedents of criminals. But I weary you with my hobby."

"Not at all," I answered, earnestly. "It is of the greatest interest to me, especially since I have had the opportunity of observing your practical application of it. But you spoke just now of observation and deduction. Surely the one to some extent implies the other."

"Why, hardly," he answered, leaning back luxuriously in his arm-chair, and sending up thick blue wreaths from his pipe. "For example, observation shows me that you have been to the Wigmore Street Post-Office this morning, but deduction lets me know that when there you dispatched a telegram."

"Right!" said I. "Right on both points! But I confess that I don't see how you arrived at it. It was a sudden impulse upon my part, and I have mentioned it to no one."

"It is simplicity itself," he remarked, chuckling at my surprise, — "so absurdly simple that an explanation is superfluous; and yet it may serve to define the limits of observation and of deduction. Observation tells me that you have a little reddish mould adhering to your instep. Just opposite the Seymour Street Office they have taken up the pavement and thrown up some earth

which lies in such a way that it is difficult to avoid treading in it in entering. The earth is of this peculiar reddish tint which is found, as far as I know, nowhere else in the neighborhood. So much is observation. The rest is deduction."

"How, then, did you deduce the telegram?"

"Why, of course I knew that you had not written a letter, since I sat opposite to you all morning. I see also in your open desk there that you have a sheet of stamps and a thick bundle of post-cards. What could you go into the post-office for, then, but to send a wire? Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth."

"In this case it certainly is so," I replied, after a little thought. "The thing, however, is, as you say, of the simplest. Would you think me impertinent if I were to put your theories to a more severe test?"

"On the contrary," he answered, "it would prevent me from taking a second dose of cocaine. I should be delighted to look into any problem which you might submit to me."

"I have heard you say that it is difficult for a man to have any object in daily use without leaving the impress of his individuality upon it in such a way that a trained observer might read it.

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