

OR

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 3 and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract Holmes, Watson and Mary are on their way to their first mysterious meeting.

5	At first I had some idea as to the direction in which we were driving; but soon, what with our pace, the fog, and my own limited knowledge of London, I lost my bearings and knew nothing save that we seemed to be going a very long way. Sherlock Holmes was never at fault, however, and he muttered the names as the cab rattled through squares and in and out by tortuous by-streets.
10	"Rochester Row," said he. "Now Vincent Square. Now we come out on the Vauxhall Bridge Road. We are making for the Surrey side apparently. Yes, I thought so. Now we are on the bridge. You can catch glimpses of the river."
	We did indeed get a fleeting view of a stretch of the Thames, with the lamps shining upon the broad, silent water; but our cab dashed on and was soon involved in a labyrinth of streets upon the other side.
15	"Wordsworth Road," said my companion. "Priory Road. Lark Hall Lane. Stockwell Place. Robert Street. Cold Harbour Lane. Our quest does not appear to take us to very fashionable regions."
20	We had indeed reached a questionable and forbidding neighbourhood. Long lines of dull brick houses were only relieved by the coarse glare and tawdry brilliancy of public-houses at the corner. Then came rows of two-storied villas, each with a fronting of miniature garden, and then again interminable lines of new, staring brick buildings – the monster tentacles which the giant city was throwing out into the country. At last the cab drew up at the third house in a new terrace. None of the other houses were inhabited, and that at which we stopped was as dark as its neighbours,
25	save for a single glimmer in the kitchen-window.

1 3

Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle creates a sense of mystery.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle uses places to create a sense of mystery in this extract
- how Conan Doyle creates a sense of mystery in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]**END OF QUESTIONS**

OR

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 6 of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Holmes is investigating the death of Bartholomew Sholto at Pondicherry Lodge.

	"My dear Watson, try a little analysis yourself," said he with a touch of impatience. "You know my methods. Apply them, and it will be instructive to compare results."
5	"I cannot conceive anything which will cover the facts," I answered. "It will be clear enough to you soon," he said, in an offhand way. "I think that there is nothing else of importance here, but I will look."
10	He whipped out his lens and a tape measure and hurried about the room on his knees, measuring, comparing, examining, with his long thin nose only a few inches from the planks and his beady eyes gleaming and deep-set like those of a bird. So swift, silent, and furtive were his movements, like those of a trained bloodhound picking out a scent, that I could not but think what a terrible criminal he would have made had he turned his energy and sagacity against the law instead of exerting them in its defence. As he
15	hunted about, he kept muttering to himself, and finally he broke out into a loud crow of delight.
20	"We are certainly in luck," said he. "We ought to have very little trouble now. Number One has had the misfortune to tread in the creosote. You can see the outline of the edge of his small foot here at the side of this evil-smelling mess. The carboy has been cracked, you see, and the stuff has leaked out."

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Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents Holmes as an interesting and unusual investigator.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents Holmes as an interesting and unusual investigator in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents Holmes as an interesting and unusual investigator in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

or

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 6 of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

At the beginning of this extract, Holmes comments on the arrival of the police who have come to investigate the death of Bartholomew Sholto.

- ‘But here are the regulars, so the auxiliary forces may beat a retreat.’
- As he spoke, the steps which had been coming nearer sounded loudly on the passage, and a very stout, portly man in a grey suit strode heavily into the room. He was red-faced, burly, and plethoric, with a pair of very small twinkling eyes
- 5 which looked keenly out from between swollen and puffy pouches. He was closely followed by an inspector in uniform and by the still palpitating Thaddeus Sholto.
- ‘Here’s a business!’ he cried in a muffled, husky voice. ‘Here’s a pretty business! But who are all these? Why, the house seems to be as full as a
- 10 rabbit-warren!’
- ‘I think you must recollect me, Mr Athelney Jones,’ said Holmes quietly.
- ‘Why, of course I do!’ he wheezed. ‘It’s Mr Sherlock Holmes, the theorist. Remember you! I’ll never forget how you lectured us all on causes and inferences and effects in the Bishopsgate jewel case. It’s true you set us on the
- 15 right track; but you’ll own now that it was more by good luck than good guidance.’
- ‘It was a piece of very simple reasoning.’
- ‘Oh, come, now, come! Never be ashamed to own up. But what is all this? Bad business! Bad business! Stern facts here – no room for theories. How lucky that I happened to be out at Norwood over another case! I was at the
- 20 station when the message arrived. What d’you think the man died of?’
- ‘Oh, this is hardly a case for me to theorize over,’ said Holmes dryly.
- ‘No, no. Still, we can’t deny that you hit the nail on the head sometimes. Dear me! Door locked, I understand. Jewels worth half a million missing. How was the window?’
- 25 ‘Fastened; but there are steps on the sill.’
- ‘Well, well, if it was fastened the steps could have nothing to do with the matter. That’s common sense. Man might have died in a fit; but then the jewels are missing. Ha! I have a theory. These flashes come upon me at times. – Just step outside, Sergeant, and you, Mr Sholto. Your friend can remain. – What do
- 30 you think of this, Holmes? Sholto was, on his own confession, with his brother last night. The brother died in a fit, on which Sholto walked off with the treasure? How’s that?’
- ‘On which the dead man very considerably got up and locked the door on the inside.’
- 35 ‘Hum! There’s a flaw there. Let us apply common sense to the matter. This Thaddeus Sholto was with his brother; there was a quarrel: so much we know. The brother is dead and the jewels are gone. So much also we know. No one saw the brother from the time Thaddeus left him. His bed had not been slept in. Thaddeus is evidently in a most disturbed state of mind. His appearance is –
- 40 well, not attractive. You see that I am weaving my web round Thaddeus. The net begins to close upon him.’

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Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents the police force as ineffective and foolish in *The Sign of Four*.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents Athelney Jones as ineffective and foolish in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents the police force as ineffective and foolish in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

or

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 12 of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Jonathan Small has been captured and is being questioned by the police about his involvement in the crime.

‘This is a very serious matter, Small,’ said the detective. ‘If you had helped justice, instead of thwarting it in this way, you would have had a better chance at your trial.’

5 ‘Justice!’ snarled the ex-convict. ‘A pretty justice! Whose loot is this, if it is not ours? Where is the justice that I should give it up to those who have never earned it? Look how I have earned it! Twenty long years in that fever-ridden swamp, all day at work under the mangrove-tree, all night chained up in the filthy convict-huts, bitten by mosquitoes, racked with ague, bullied by every cursed black-faced policeman who loved to take it out of a white man. That was how I

10 earned the Agra treasure, and you talk to me of justice because I cannot bear to feel that I have paid this price only that another may enjoy it! I would rather swing a score of times, or have one of Tonga’s darts in my hide, than live in a convict’s cell and feel that another man is at his ease in a palace with the money that should be mine.’

15 Small had dropped his mask of stoicism, and all this came out in a wild whirl of words, while his eyes blazed, and the handcuffs clanked together with the impassioned movement of his hands. I could understand, as I saw the fury and the passion of the man, that it was no groundless or unnatural terror which had possessed Major Sholto when he first learned that the injured convict was upon

20 his track.

‘You forget that we know nothing of all this,’ said Holmes quietly. ‘We have not heard your story, and we cannot tell how far justice may originally have been on your side.’

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Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents ideas about justice in *The Sign of Four*.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents ideas about justice in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents ideas about justice in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

or

1 3

Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 10 (The End of the Islander) of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Holmes and Watson are on the River Thames in pursuit of Jonathan Small.

- ‘And there is the *Aurora*,’ exclaimed Holmes, ‘and going like the devil! Full speed ahead, engineer. Make after that launch with the yellow light. By heaven, I shall never forgive myself if she proves to have the heels of us!’
- 5 She had slipped unseen through the yard-entrance and passed between two or three small craft, so that she had fairly got her speed up before we saw her. Now she was flying down the stream, near in to the shore, going at a tremendous rate. Jones looked gravely at her and shook his head.
- ‘She is very fast,’ he said. ‘I doubt if we shall catch her.’
- ‘We *must* catch her!’ cried Holmes between his teeth. ‘Heap it on, stokers! Make her do all she can! If we burn the boat we must have them!’
- 10 We were fairly after her now. The furnaces roared, and the powerful engines whizzed and clanked like a great metallic heart. Her sharp, steep prow cut through the still river-water and sent two rolling waves to right and to left of us. With every throb of the engines we sprang and quivered like a living thing. One
- 15 great yellow lantern in our bows threw a long, flickering funnel of light in front of us. Right ahead a dark blur upon the water showed where the *Aurora* lay, and the swirl of white foam behind her spoke of the pace at which she was going. We flashed past barges, steamers, merchant-vessels, in and out, behind this one and round the other. Voices hailed us out of the darkness, but still the *Aurora*
- 20 thundered on, and still we followed close upon her track.
- ‘Pile it on, men, pile it on!’ cried Holmes, looking down into the engine-room, while the fierce glow from below beat upon his eager aquiline face. ‘Get every pound of steam you can.’
- ‘I think we gain a little,’ said Jones with his eyes on the *Aurora*.
- 25 ‘I am sure of it,’ said I. ‘We shall be up with her in a very few minutes.’

1 3

Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle creates an atmosphere of tension and excitement in *The Sign of Four*.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle creates an atmosphere of tension and excitement in this extract
- how Conan Doyle creates an atmosphere of tension and excitement in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

or

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Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 11 (The Great Agra Treasure) of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Watson has brought the treasure chest to Mary Morstan.

- ‘That is all over,’ I answered. ‘It was nothing. I will tell you no more gloomy details. Let us turn to something brighter. There is the treasure. What could be brighter than that? I got leave to bring it with me, thinking that it would interest you to be the first to see it.’
- 5 ‘It would be of the greatest interest to me,’ she said. There was no eagerness in her voice, however. It had struck her, doubtless, that it might seem ungracious upon her part to be indifferent to a prize which had cost so much to win.
- ‘What a pretty box!’ she said, stooping over it. ‘This is Indian work, I suppose?’
- 10 ‘Yes; it is Benares metalwork.’
- ‘And so heavy!’ she exclaimed, trying to raise it. ‘The box alone must be of some value. Where is the key?’
- ‘Small threw it into the Thames,’ I answered. ‘I must borrow Mrs. Forrester’s poker.’
- 15 There was in the front a thick and broad hasp, wrought in the image of a sitting Buddha. Under this I thrust the end of the poker and twisted it outward as a lever. The hasp sprang open with a loud snap. With trembling fingers I flung back the lid. We both stood gazing in astonishment. The box was empty!
- No wonder that it was heavy. The ironwork was two-thirds of an inch thick all
- 20 round. It was massive, well made, and solid, like a chest constructed to carry things of great price, but not one shred or crumb of metal or jewellery lay within it. It was absolutely and completely empty.
- ‘The treasure is lost,’ said Miss Morstan calmly.
- As I listened to the words and realized what they meant, a great shadow
- 25 seemed to pass from my soul. I did not know how this Agra treasure had weighed me down until now that it was finally removed. It was selfish, no doubt, disloyal, wrong, but I could realize nothing save that the golden barrier was gone from between us.
- ‘Thank God!’ I ejaculated from my very heart.
- 30 She looked at me with a quick, questioning smile.
- ‘Why do you say that?’ she asked.
- ‘Because you are within my reach again,’ I said, taking her hand. She did not withdraw it. ‘Because I love you, Mary, as truly as ever a man loved a woman. Because this treasure, these riches, sealed my lips. Now that they are gone I
- 35 can tell you how I love you. That is why I said, “Thank God.”’
- ‘Then I say, “Thank God”, too,’ she whispered, as I drew her to my side. Whoever had lost a treasure, I knew that night that I had gained one.

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Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents attitudes towards treasure and wealth in *The Sign of Four*.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents attitudes towards treasure and wealth in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents attitudes towards treasure and wealth in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

or

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Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 1 (The Science of Deduction) of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Holmes is talking to Watson about a French detective who asked for his help.

‘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.’

5 ‘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
10 enumerate a hundred and forty forms of cigar, cigarette, and pipe tobacco, with coloured plates illustrating the difference in the ash. It is a point which is 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
15 narrows your field of search. To the trained eye there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly and the white fluff of bird’s-eye 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
20 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, cork-cutters, 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
25 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.’

30 ‘Why, hardly,’ he answered, leaning back luxuriously in his armchair 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
35 arrived at it. It was a sudden impulse upon my part, and I have mentioned it to no one.’

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Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents Holmes as an extraordinary detective.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents Holmes in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents Holmes as an extraordinary detective in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

or

1 3

Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Sign of Four*

Read the following extract from Chapter 11 (The Great Agra Treasure) of *The Sign of Four* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Jonathan Small has just been captured after the chase down the River Thames.

Our captive sat in the cabin opposite to the iron box which he had done so much and waited so long to gain. He was a sunburned reckless-eyed fellow, with a network of lines and wrinkles all over his mahogany features, which told of a hard, open-air life. There was a singular prominence about his bearded chin which marked a man who was not to be easily turned from his purpose. His age may have been fifty or thereabouts, for his black, curly hair was thickly shot with grey. His face in repose was not an unpleasing one, though his heavy brows and aggressive chin gave him, as I had lately seen, a terrible expression when moved to anger. He sat now with his handcuffed hands upon his lap, and his head sunk upon his breast, while he looked with his keen, twinkling eyes at the box which had been the cause of his ill-doings. It seemed to me that there was more sorrow than anger in his rigid and contained countenance. Once he looked up at me with a gleam of something like humour in his eyes.

‘Well, Jonathan Small,’ said Holmes, lighting a cigar, ‘I am sorry that it has come to this.’

‘And so am I, sir,’ he answered frankly. ‘I don’t believe that I can swing over the job. I give you my word on the book that I never raised hand against Mr Sholto. It was that little hell-hound, Tonga, who shot one of his cursed darts into him. I had no part in it, sir. I was as grieved as if it had been my blood-relation. I welted the little devil with the slack end of the rope for it, but it was done, and I could not undo it again.’

‘Have a cigar,’ said Holmes; ‘and you had best take a pull out of my flask, for you are very wet. How could you expect so small and weak a man as this black fellow to overpower Mr Sholto and hold him while you were climbing the rope?’

‘You seem to know as much about it as if you were there, sir. The truth is that I hoped to find the room clear. I knew the habits of the house pretty well, and it was the time when Mr Sholto usually went down to his supper. I shall make no secret of the business. The best defence that I can make is just the simple truth. Now, if it had been the old major I would have swung for him with a light heart. I would have thought no more of knifing him than of smoking this cigar. But it’s cursed hard that I should be lagged over this young Sholto, with whom I had no quarrel whatever.’

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Starting with this extract, explore how far Conan Doyle presents Jonathan Small as a villain.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents Jonathan Small in this extract
- how far Conan Doyle presents Jonathan Small as a villain in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS