

Selena Jones

The Hunt

Featuring Sherlock Holmes

Jacquelyn Applegate

# Selena Jones

## The Hunt

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our leave into the hall where we then proceeded to the room across, which was unoccupied other than a few chairs.

Lestrade took a chair and pulled it across from mine as if he was preparing an interrogation. "So, Dr Watson. Let me hear your details of the matter." He was now leaning forward with his pencil and pad to take notes.

"Well, I had received a telegram from Holmes stating that Miss Jones and he feared my life was in danger. They had both been on a case, of the matter I do not know. I do know that it related back to the Chatham case. I was just preparing to leave Baker Street when two men came up and held a gun to my back. I was told to go with them, and if I fought back, then they would shoot. I didn't know where Holmes and Miss Jones were, or what was underway.

"I was taken to Cambridge and tied to a chair; the men questioned me about Holmes and Jones and what I knew about the entire matter, of which I knew nothing, so I could tell them nothing. They were none too thrilled with my response and began to beat the answers out of me. Again, I didn't know what they wanted. I was nearly unconscious when Jones entered the room. I must admit I was relieved to see her person. Somehow I knew I would be in safe hands. A strange feeling to have, I mean towards a woman who is about to face a handful of men. I always knew things would work out, when Holmes was around, but I did not expect to feel the same with her.

"She truly is remarkable. She was able to talk the man into letting me go and then the rest you know."

"That's all you have Dr Watson? Nothing else to say?" cried Lestrade with a look of anger.

I suppose he wanted a detailed journal, which I did not have. I don't think he understood that I had nothing to do with the case and was merely taken into it all in order to get to Holmes and Jones.

"Yes, Lestrade. That is all I have. I had nothing to do with the case."

His face began to turn a deep shade of crimson out of his frustration and his voice rose loud enough to be heard down the hall. "That's all. I have come here to talk to someone who knows *something* and can give detailed events of the matter and all you can say is—" Lestrade was cut off by a sharp voice that pierced straight through the air and put his to an abrupt halt.

"Lestrade!" roared the voice that could be none other than Holmes.

His features were tightly drawn and his eyes pierced straight through Lestrade. The inspector's jaw fell open and he turned swiftly to face the tall approaching man.

"Mr Holmes," came Lestrade's voice with barely an ounce of power.

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“How dare you raise your voice, in such a manner, to the good doctor, or to anyone for that matter. I told you I would give you all you needed to know in due time; yet here you are like a vulture on its prey and you can’t leave it be.”

Lestrade stood abruptly with a firm stance. “Now listen here Mr—”

Holmes’ stance was just as firm, and truth be told much more powerful than Lestrade’s. Holmes had a way of showing his authority and persuading others to bow down to his words.

“*No! You listen,*” demanded Holmes’ voice as he pointed his finger directly to Lestrade. This seemed to have just as much command as his words. Lestrade’s voice stopped dead in its tracks. “I have had about enough of Scotland Yard, at the moment. Miss Jones and I have given you vast amounts of information on this case, throughout the past month. You would be nowhere without our help, especially hers. She could have easily kept the documents and you would have been none the wiser. Instead, you choose to hound her and treat her as if *she* is the criminal, and now Watson. You will show some respect for my colleagues and treat them as beings, or you will get no more from myself or Miss Jones when she wakes.”

Holmes’ voice now softened and he seated himself across from where Lestrade had been sitting. Holmes gestured for Lestrade to take his seat, as well.

“I admit that I too have had my moments of not treating people as human beings, and Watson has had to remind me of that. I am reminding *you*, Lestrade, as a friend.”

Lestrade’s demeanour soon softened as Holmes’ words sunk in. The inspector’s gaze fell upon me and then back to Holmes; his eyes then gazed down for a moment as if in thought. “I ... I’m sorry Mr Holmes, Dr Watson. It’s just hard having Scotland Yard breathe down my collar every second about more information. I’m sure you understand Mr Holmes,” said Lestrade as he fiddled with his pencil.

“I do, but you must set things aside and be patient. Now that I am wide-awake from your vociferous words from earlier, I shall venture to tell you all I know of the events. Perhaps we could have a meal over the matter as seeing I have not eaten for some time.”

“Yes, that would be quite all right.”

I was not sure of the wounds my friend had and how well he had slept. I was concerned for his well being as well as Miss Jones. I know quite often Holmes will conceal his pain and feelings and push on as if nothing were ever wrong. Sometimes I wonder how much longer my dear friend will last if he continues this style of life. Quite often, I find myself believing that the

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man is immortal, yet I fear, and it is with deep in my heart, either one of his perilous cases or his lack of care for his own health will be the cause of an early death for him.

“Holmes, are you sure?” I inquired.

Holmes placed one hand upon my shoulder and softly smiled. “I shall be fine, Watson. You stay and care for Jones. I shall return in an hour. Lestrade, shall we?”

“I believe there is not much more I can do but to check on her, clean the wounds, and change the dressings. I shall join you for lunch, if you don’t mind?” I was quite ready for some nourishment of some sort.

“Of course, how thoughtless of me, dear fellow. You must be famished. Forgive me. Yes, please join us. We shall wait until you have checked on your patient.”

“Thank you, Holmes. I shall not be long.”

Holmes and Lestrade waited outside the room as I tended to Miss Jones. Her breathing seemed to become more regular and still no signs of fever returning. Her skin was still rather pale due to the amount of blood loss, but her vitals were fair. I could only hope that she would awake by the end of the week.

We were now headed out to a quaint little tavern down the road.

“Good afternoon. What can I get you gen’lemen?” asked a heavysset elderly lady as she clutched a pitcher of water in her hand.

“Sandwich and a pint of ale for all three. That is if that is suitable enough for you Lestrade?” asked Holmes as he glanced his way.

“Why—yes. Thank you, Mr Holmes.”

“Very well gents. I’ll have it out in a jiffy.”

I was indeed quite famished and could not wait to get some nourishment into my stomach. I pulled up a chair next to Holmes and took my seat. I was so hungry that I didn’t even pay attention to what my friend had ordered for us. I decided to say nothing at the moment. Holmes merely looked my way and back to Lestrade as he spoke.

“Mr Holmes, I thought you were—”

Holmes cut him off as he said, “Starving? No. I just need a little something on my stomach. Just enough to help me think but not so much as to weight me down. Let’s see. Where would you like me to start?” Holmes leaned back in his chair and put his fingertips together as he awaited Lestrade’s answer.

“Hmm—well to begin with, how did you stumble upon these men again? I mean, we read the information that Miss Jones gave us, and quite some letters indeed. I just don’t see how you came back upon these men?”

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Lestrade asked with quite a stern, yet bewildered, look as he leaned over the table to glare into Holmes' eyes.

"I had stayed at Duprey Manor for several days to ensure Miss Jones would be fine and able to cope after her ordeal. I had instructed Watson to send any letters or cases, directed to me, to the manor. Miss Jones and I had had a lengthy discussion about my career and her future of becoming a consulting detective, such as myself."

"I don't know if that was wise, Mr Holmes. Telling a woman to go into such a business—well, it simply isn't proper."

"Such a business? Look at what she has done that a man would not have been able to do in such a field as ours."

"I suppose you are correct, but did she understand what dangers she could get herself into?"

"Of course she understands, Lestrade. She lives for the thrill; that's why she couldn't decide on what she wanted out of life. Her calling was not one that women lean towards. She knows the danger that I have put myself in as well as others."

"Your food and drinks gentlemen."

"Ah, thank you," Holmes replied with a grin as he took his mug.

I was quite ready to eat, but was somewhat disappointed to only seeing a sandwich. Still, it was food and I took it rather quickly to my mouth.

"Beg your pardon, sir, but I couldn't help but over hear your conversation."

Holmes turned around to look back up at the landlord's wife who had been waiting on us.

"Would you happen to be talking about that lady who found those evil men?"

Holmes gazed to Lestrade and then back to her before he gave his answer. "Why yes—Miss Jones to be precise."

"Oh what a brave soul she is. Everyone has been talkin' bout her. Good things, that is. She's done the town a favour. Why, those men have brought nothin' but trouble."

Holmes snickered at Lestrade as he said, "She's already making a name for herself." He whirled around to the women, once again. "What trouble do you mean?"

"Well, the look about them, sir. The folks come in and see them, and they just leave. Business has been slow since they come about. Women folk didn't want to be around at all. One of them was quite hateful to the women folk, he was. Makin' comments on how they should be at home workin' instead of hangin' round here."

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“That would be my client’s husband, whom Miss Jones shot in the leg and put him in his place,” pronounced Holmes as he smiled to Lestrade.

“Ah, I see now,” Lestrade, muttered.

“Is Miss Jones goin’ to be all right? We’re all concerned for her, after what she did and all,” asked the woman as she clutched her apron tightly in her hands.

Holmes’ eyes turned to me for a look of assurance. I gave a slight nod of approval as he spoke, “We can’t be for certain but she is over the worse now. It may be several more days before we know for sure.”

“Thank you, sir. When she’s well, please tell her the folks here are grateful for her help. She’s welcome anytime, and we’d be glad to help in any way.”

“Thank you Mrs—?”

“Mrs Larkins. But how did you—?”

“Your wedding band, Mrs Larkins. You are most undoubtedly the wife of the landlord. Your hard work and kind words are much appreciated,” replied Holmes as he smiled gently to her.

“Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Quite the observant one, aren’t you.” She gave a gracious smile and was soon off to her next table.

Holmes briefly turned in his chair to look my way. I knew what the look upon his face was asking, so I proceeded to answer before he asked. “She is as well as to be expected, Holmes. The bleeding seems to have lessened, but no other change.”

“Ah, well thank you, Watson. It is good to hear her condition has not worsened.”

I could see that Holmes did not wish to converse a great deal about her in front of Lestrade; however, I knew he would rather deal with Lestrade than to put him off on Jones when she was well enough. If Holmes could tell enough to satisfy Lestrade, then Jones would very likely not need to speak with the inspector. Lestrade then spoke out, and Holmes’ gaze softly went upward to meet his.

“Well, I must admit, Mr Holmes, that I was wrong. We owe Miss Jones an apology, if she comes around.”

“*When* she comes around,” Holmes blurted with a cold and vacant stare to Lestrade.

“Yes. Erm ... so, you got a letter from Mrs Barrington, asking about her missing husband, eh?”

“You are correct, Lestrade. He had begun to show some odd behaviour and had disappeared for some time, raising some concerns. I asked Miss Jones to accompany me on the case, which turned out she actually had an

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acquaintance with Mrs Barrington and a brief altercation with the husband as well. You can imagine how well her demeanour sat with him.” Holmes finished his sandwich and the last sip of his ale.

“Yes, I could see them clashing horns after hearing him yell all the way back to the Yard.”

“Barrington, as you know, worked for a bank; hence the connection back to our previous case. We knew something was out of place when he had left nothing behind.”

Lestrade’s eyes narrowed as he spoke. “You mean he had nothing at the bank or at home?”

“Nothing. He had a vacant safe box at his home, no papers to be found anywhere, or even a small inkling of working as a banker.”

“So what made you suspicious? And what about the papers that Miss Jones found?” Lestrade leaned over the table with anticipation.

“No logs were found at the bank, and his empty safe was surely a decoy to make his wife think he had kept important papers; she had not even looked in the safe.”

Holmes’ voice stopped as his eyes slowly fixed themselves upon the mug he had been holding between both hands. He appeared to be studying the mug as his fingers slowly rubbed around the rim and handle. I knew Holmes did not answer Lestrade’s question of the papers, and I knew Lestrade would not let that go seeing how important the papers must have been.

Lestrade leaned forward as he propped his elbows onto the surface of the worn table. “Mr Holmes?”

Holmes continued his gaze upon his mug. I cocked my eyes in his direction to see if he would respond, but nothing.

“Mr Holmes, the papers?” Lestrade’s eyes narrowed as he gazed intently at Holmes.

Holmes still said not a word. I did not know if his mind was truly engaged with the mug he appeared to be studying or if he was trying to think of words to say. Perhaps even Holmes did not know the answer—or, perhaps, he was just wishing to not answer Lestrade. I certainly could not answer being that I was not present at the event and had been told nothing. I once again turned my gaze to Holmes. His head did not move, but I saw his eyes gleam up to meet mine; then I noticed Lestrade’s eyes were tightly fixed upon myself. His fingers began to tap furiously upon the tabletop in hopes of getting his response. I raised my eyes to meet his, only to see him raise his brows and give a slight nod to my look as if asking ‘well?’ Of course, I had no answer, so I merely raised my eyebrows in return and shrugged my shoulders to his motions. Lestrade’s patience had worn out.

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“Blast it, Mr Holmes!” cried Lestrade as his fist pounded upon the table. Everyone in earshot turned to see what the commotion was about.

Holmes spoke out. “Really, Lestrade. There is no need to raise your voice in such a quaint little place as this. I can hear you quite well.” I saw my friend’s eyes give a quick smile in my direction.

“Well, then why in the blazes don’t you answer me? What of the papers Miss Jones found?”

Holmes was not one to customarily dance around questions and infuriate people unless he, himself, did not know or have the complete answer, and the person had given a cause for him to react so straight forward. Holmes was certainly never one to simply go around making guesses. As for his infuriating people in his company, it is a reaction he generally receives by his frankness; typically from clients who withhold information or do not like to hear the truth of the matters at hand. Holmes has always had a way of speaking his mind, as well as the truth, in the most inopportune times. He is normally correct with the words he chooses, but most people simply are not prepared for Holmes’ straightforwardness, which he somehow manages to achieve quite often. On rare occasions, Holmes will venture out to test a person’s patience with snide remarks in order to get his way or to break down their mind long enough to see their personality and, optimistically, what they might be hiding. I suppose it would seem he plays with their minds, which has proven helpful on many occasions. I don’t always agree with this method, and I must say that I still find myself off guard, many times, when Holmes points out the basic facts or makes a snide remark of some sort, but he does what is best for himself. I suppose it can’t be helped when one with his mental capabilities knows so much and sees and hears the little trifles that we common people miss; not that I am saying I’m a very common person. I would like to think I had a little more sense than most.

The cold grey eyes from Holmes’ face looked my way, once more, without a movement from his head. I knew then that Holmes did not have the answer, and he had merely been trying to stall long enough to conceive words.

Holmes let out a sigh as he slowly sank back into his chair and put his fingertips together. His eyes rose up to focus on Lestrade. “Yes, the papers that Miss Jones found.” Holmes fell silent as his eyes peered down to his hands.

“Mr Holmes?” demanded Lestrade as he crossed his arms in wait of Holmes’ words.

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My old friend gazed up once more and spoke softly. "Lestrade, I am not usually one to be found without words, but I must confess I don't have your answer."

Lestrade's eyes narrowed and his mouth fell open with no words, for several moments. Finally his voice managed to come out. "What? You—don't . . . what do you mean you don't have an answer?" Lestrade finally managed to get out.

"I mean just as I said. I have no answer. I was not there when Miss Jones found the papers; nor do I know where she found them or how. For all I know, she could have found them at Barrington's house, in Cambridge, or even on someone's person. I am quite baffled, but if I were to make an educated guess, I would say Barrington's house. Merely due to the fact that nothing was out in the open, Morrison had been there on numerous occasions, and the place was too spotless."

"But what of his wife? Surely she was holding back something."

"No, she knew nothing of the matter at all. Miss Jones said Barrington never gave her a chance to speak freely of matters and that her place was in the home, cleaning and cooking, and whatever else he felt a woman should do. He would never dare to tell her of his affairs in the matter."

"How can she be married to a man like that? Surely he doesn't care for her?" I asked quite promptly. I could not fathom how two people, in such ways as they were, could possibly love one another.

"Oh, but he does, old fellow," said Holmes with a swift turn of his head in my direction. "Quite so. He loves her very deeply, and she has nothing but great passion for him. Unusual, yes, but it is love, nonetheless. I suppose love comes in diverse forms, not that I would know anything of the subject at hand."

"How can you be so sure he loves her?" Lestrade asked in return.

"The look in his wife's face and Barrington's lack of communication with his wife on his matters. If he did not care for her, he would not have been concerned if she knew or was arrested for part of the scheme. He was protecting her at all cost. True love, perhaps?"

"Yes, I suppose so," mumbled Lestrade. "So, I still have nothing on the papers. I suppose I will have to wait, eh Mr Holmes?"

"Yes, you will have to wait for the truth of the papers at question."

"And—you have nothing else?" Lestrade leaned upon the table. His eyebrows drew down over his eyelids as if suggesting he felt Holmes might have been holding back more evidence.

I knew Holmes was in no mood to continue the conversation with Lestrade as he sighed heavily and sat fully upright in his chair. "Lestrade, I

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have told you all I know and there is nothing more. I do not have answers to everything, despite what you might think. I cannot read minds or foresee the future.”

“Very well, then. I suppose—if that is all, then I must return to London.” Lestrade put away his writing utilities and stood.

“Inspector, I do tend to see this case through. I have questions of my own that cannot be answered until I find all the pieces. But until Miss Jones is well, I will not be looking into anything further.”

“Yes, of course. Good day, Mr Holmes, Dr Watson,” replied Lestrade as he prepared to leave.

Both Holmes and I bid Lestrade a good day and prepared to leave as well.

Lestrade turned back to face Holmes as he put his hand upon the chair. “Oh, by the way, Mr Holmes. You will inform me—”

“Inform you when Miss Jones is able to speak with you? Yes. Good day Inspector Lestrade.”

Lestrade put on his hat and coat and was soon out the door. Holmes raised his hand up and began to fiddle with his nails. His eyes focused upon his fingers for several seconds, and then they gleamed up to me with a twinkle in them. He swiftly moved his focus back to his fingers, as a smile came about his face and soon a soft chuckle. I knew then that Holmes had held something back. Holmes could certainly be deceiving when he wished to be.

“All right dear chap. I know that look and your chuckle. What are you keeping back?”

Holmes gazed towards me and gave a smirk as his brows knitted inward. “*Moi?*”

“Yes you, Holmes. Well? Oh, come on, Holmes.”

He stood up and gathered his hat and coat. I proceeded to do the same. As I did, Holmes leaned in towards me and rested his fist upon my shoulder. “I do know that the papers did, in fact, come from Barrington’s house.”

“You do?” I blurted out loud.

“Shh! Quiet yourself, Watson.”

“Sorry. But how?”

Holmes paid for our meal and we were back upon the street making our way to the hospital.

“Miss Jones and I had discussed, the previous day, as to what our plans would be. I was to go to Cambridge while she to Barrington’s house to examine it more closely. We both had an odd feeling about the house and Barrington. Since she knew Mrs Barrington, she felt it best if she talked to