

Selena Jones

The Hunt

Featuring Sherlock Holmes

Jacquelyn Applegate

Selena Jones

The Hunt

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To my family: In support of my desire to spend all of my free time writing and researching for my books. Love you guys!

*In memory of my grandmother and father:
Sara Allen Jones
December 25, 1922- November 19, 2008*

*Jack Allen Jones
September 1, 1955- December 11, 1998*

I am always reminded through them, and all my fond memories I still have of my father and grandmother, that nothing is impossible no matter how improbable, and you never give up.

Dear Reader,

It is with great pride, joy and sadness, that I compile my collections once again. I say these words only because they bring back fond memories as well as harsh ones. Memories that shall forever be ingrained into my mind as well as all involved and those that may read these compilations of my scribbles, or so I felt compelled to call them. I am once again indebted to Dr Watson for passing on his writings to me, and allowing me to use them as I see fit in order to make my story whole.

I will continue from Selena's last ordeal and advance into what I shall call 'The Hunt'. This is where my more bitter memories come into play. Parts I wish I could forget but, alas, I cannot. Mind you, they were not all unpleasant. As I stated above, I was filled with pride and joy for a time. But what can be found can easily be lost and much harder to find once misplaced.

We must all have our secrets, and we must all have our true friends whom we may always rely on. We must have that one solid rock that shall never fail. The wall that is always there to hold us up if we shall ever start to fall. That feeling that there is always light behind those grey clouds no matter how much rain may pour. We, as humans, need that support even if we try to deny it. Sometimes we hide the truth to protect others, and sometimes we hide the truth to protect ourselves. The truth, however, can be just as deadly as a weapon if not handled properly and with care.

I leave you with this my friends: Can a wound from a harsh truth be healed with time? Can faith alone get a soul through all evils thrown to him or her? Ah, that is what you must find out on your own. We all must face this at one point in our time on Earth. And so did Selena and Mr Holmes. And no, I shall not reveal my identity just yet—in due time, my friends.

Respectfully yours,
J.H.

Prologue

Taken from the journal of Selena Jones

My mind continued to wonder and dream, if one would call it dreaming, throughout my unconsciousness. I would hear voices conversing around me; occasionally the voices would make sense and other times they would not. I could not tell if the voices were trying to have a conversation with me, to me, or simply to someone else. Quite honestly, I did not know if I were among the living or dead. What I had thought to be dreams may very well have been my reality. The passing of time could have been minutes or years, for all I knew. I had neither perception of time nor of being alive. I will not repeat what I believed I had heard, for I do not fancy saying words that I know may not be of truth and may be just a figment of my imagination. Perhaps, one day, I shall speak of the words I believed I had heard, but as of now, I see it to be unnecessary. I am quite certain what I had heard was not real for the words were words I know I shall never hear from anyone.

I recall feeling as if I were in a dark room with occasional light slipping in and being allowed to leave only on a few occasions. This, again, was all in my mind while my body remained in the bed with no movement to show any signs of life. The feeling was quite eccentric because I had no sensations of pain when I knew something had happened to me. In my mind, I only existed; mainly on my own with not a soul in sight except for a few occurrences that I thought I saw figures I knew but could not be entirely positive. At one instant, I believed someone had grabbed my hand and held on; the feeling of touch was far too genuine to think I had imagined it. I yearned to call out to whoever it was but could not. I faintly heard Holmes's voice, and I recall the soft words saying, 'hold on'. Hold on to what or for what I could not be sure.

I tried to grasp the hand that held mine, but my body simply refused to respond. I was not accustomed to having no control over my mind and body. I found it quite irksome only being able to lie still in an uncontrollable state of mind. This was surely a nightmare I was having. I had found my fear; not fear of death but of loss of control. I had always had control over my mind and knew all that I was doing and desired to do. And now I was at a loss as to what would transpire next.

I am, once again, grateful for Watson permitting me to utilize his writings from his journal. I would be at a loss as to what had transpired during my stay at the hospital had it not been for his notes, and yes, even the words from Holmes and his brother. They have filled the void I had while unconscious. I now know what must be done. Most women would cower in fear from such an ordeal, but I was not most women. Instead, I would embrace the gift I was given and build my knowledge to a greater strength. When I felt the time was right, I would grasp the beast by its horns and take it down with great force.

Chapter One

From the writings of Dr. John H. Watson

For the police, the day had been a fruitful one but for my friends and myself it had not. I was fairing much better and only sore from my bruised ribs and jaw. I knew Holmes was still in pain from his injuries, but I knew he would not rest until he saw Miss Jones through the morning hours. I also knew I would need my rest if I were going to take on the task of being Jones's doctor, so I returned to my room for sleep after I made arrangements for Holmes to stay in her room.

The night would prove to be a long one for my dear friend. Only once did he leave the room or talk to anyone, other than the nurse, until morning came. Holmes was not well; he needed rest and food, but as usual, would not have it. He had not given his injuries any chance to rest and heal during the night. The nurse had told me he was constantly up and down tending to Miss Jones's needs as he saw fit. The nurses learned rather quickly to leave Holmes to his ways and not suggest anything to him, for he would not listen and would only snap back at them about what he would do.

"Mr Holmes, it is nearly four in the morning. You should get some rest," the nurse urged with slight caution in her voice.

"I shall do no such thing. I am going to keep an eye on Miss Jones for as long as I see fit. I need more cold water and a fresh cloth."

"Yes, sir. Right away, sir."

The nurse stepped out of the room to bring the items Holmes had requested. He checked her dressing as the nurse returned.

"Cold water and a fresh cloth, sir."

"Thank you. Her dressing will need to be changed again," added Holmes as he soaked the fresh cloth in the chilled water.

"Yes, sir. I will tend to that right away."

Holmes gently dabbed the freshly cold cloth upon her face and

allowed the cool water to run onto her lips to keep them moist. He then soaked the cloth once again, folded it in half, and placed it gently onto her forehead to continue to keep her cool and bring her temperature down. When the nurse approached to change her dressing, Holmes stepped out to take his smoke. This was certainly not a sight for a gentleman to see unless he was a doctor. I decided to stay in the same room as Miss Jones. I had every intention of trying to stay awake and tend to Miss Jones, but I found myself dozing off and eventually had fallen into a deep sleep. Holmes had noticed my exhaustion, but had no intention of waking me unless he deemed it necessary.

Minutes later, the nurse had finished with Miss Jones's freshly dressed wounds. "You may step back in Mr Holmes."

Holmes turned around and put his cigarette out as he replied, "Thank you. How are the wounds looking?"

"Not to well, in my opinion, sir, but I am no doctor. She's bleeding quite a bit. Losing too much blood rather fast."

"I see," Holmes stated as he turned and entered back into the room.

For the next several hours, Holmes paced back and forth; he went from sitting by her side to tending to her fever and glancing at the dressing to check for excessive blood loss. I continued to wake and go through spells of heavy sleep, which was understandable after the days we had had. I did ask Holmes how Miss Jones was doing and even proceeded to rise out of the adjacent bed to check on her, but Holmes rested his hands upon my shoulders and said it would not be necessary for me to get up.

Daylight began to seep through the drawn curtains and display its rays upon the wall. I was now awake and went to see if my patient had died, as the other doctor had anticipated, or had lived as I had prayed.

"Holmes?" I asked in a whisper as I stepped over to find him sitting by the bedside still awake.

"She's still here, Watson," responded Holmes in a soft, weary voice. "She made it through the night but has continued to lose a fair amount of blood. Her fever has broke, however."

I was relieved to hear the news of Miss Jones, but I was also concerned for my friend. I moved to the front of the bed and glanced over at Holmes. His face came up to meet mine. The days were showing wear on him. His eyes had lost their gleam and his face had gone unshaved for several days.

"Holmes! You haven't slept all night have you? Never mind. I know

the answer. You need to rest, dear friend. You are exhausted both mentally and physically. I can see you are still having pain from your chest. I will tend to her and you will go and rest in the next room.”

“Watson, I thank you for being such a caring friend but—”

“No, Holmes. I am giving an order for you to rest. I am not asking. You have done a great deal for Miss Jones, but there is no more for you to do. Now, please, go get some rest.”

Holmes stood slowly and stared at her bedside.

“Holmes, she probably would not be here, at this moment, if you had not cared for her during the night. I know she would be thankful, as am I. I will take good care of her and will let you know if there is any change,” I stated as I laid my hand upon his shoulder.

“Thank you, Watson. I suppose I am of no use if my mind begins to falter. I shall take your order and go rest.” Holmes smiled softly as his weary eyes turned downward, and he left for the next room.

Holmes slept for most of the day. The time was four in the afternoon before he awoke. I felt he needed every bit of rest he could have, and I had no intention of interrupting his sleep. He had had a long past few days, and he still showed signs of his injury troubling him. I had half a mind to slip him so as to force him to rest, but I did not.

Miss Jones was doing far better than the previous night. Holmes had made a superb doctor. He never ceases to amaze me at his capabilities and knowledge. Her fever was now gone and the bleeding had slowed, which was a good sign, indeed. I had worried that the bleeding would continue to flow as much as it had when she was brought into the hospital. I must admit that I was surprised to see she had survived during the night. Her injuries were quite severe but could have been far worse if the bullet had completely entered her lung. She was extremely lucky that the bullet only grazed her lung, although the other bullet did leave more major damage. Only time would tell if the injuries would heal correctly and not cause any complications. Jones was still not out of harms way yet. There was no sign of her regaining consciousness anytime soon, and I guessed it to be days before she would come round.

I continued to monitor her heart, any signs of fever, tend to her injuries and change her dressing every few hours. Her skin was a very pale tint, which was uncommon for her completion seeing that she spent a fair amount of time outside. The hour was a quarter past three when the nurse informed me of someone wishing to speak to either Holmes or myself.

“Dr Watson, there is someone here who wishing to speak to you or

Mr Holmes immediately,” said the nurse as she fiddled with the chart she held in her hand.

“Who is here?” I asked being a little sceptical of letting anyone in to see Jones or speak in the room. I certainly did not want the person to wake Holmes. I knew he was not all in his right mind to speak at the moment.

“He says his name is Inspector Lestrade, sir.”

Precisely the last person any of us needed to speak to at the current time. I knew I needed to let him in or he’d go to Holmes. “Tell him to come in but remain quiet.”

“Very well, sir.” She stepped out into the hall still clutching her chart.

I could tell she was fairly new at nursing and was somewhat uncomfortable. I’m glad Holmes and I had been around.

“Inspector, you may enter, but you must be quiet.”

“Well it’s about time.” Lestrade entered the room with a look of determination upon his face. “Mr Holm... Oh, Dr Watson! I though Mr Holmes may be...”

I turned to look him in the eye with a stern gaze as to let him know he would not be entering the room where Holmes was resting. “Inspector Lestrade, Holmes has been up all night and is now resting. He needs to rest and allow his injuries to recoup. I will answer what I can for you, but I will not allow you to trouble him at this moment.”

“All right Dr Watson. Am I able to speak to Miss Jones?” asked Lestrade as he gazed about the room and peered around me to see my patient on the bed.

I responded hastily with exasperation, “Lestrade, are you mad? Of course she is not awake. She barely made it through the night, and it will be days before she regains consciousness, if she does at all.”

“I apologise, doctor. It’s just she has given us such impressive information. I could see the information coming from Mr Holmes but not from a woman. The Yard is in a tizzy over the matter and breathing down my neck as to how this all slipped by. You can understand my predicament.”

“Well...I suppose I can understand, but you will get no answers from her anytime soon. I’ll tell you all I can of the matter.”

“Very well. I’m sure you would rather step outside her room?” Muttered Lestrade as he continued with his gaze upon Miss Jones.

I was rather not in the mood to spend any amount of time in conversation with Lestrade, but I knew if I did not then he would go to

Holmes. Lestrade was already uptight about being put off for a day when he needed answers the day the he took those men in. I was not sure of all I could tell him since I was not aware of all the details that Holmes and Miss Jones had. I nodded and gave a response to Lestrade. "Yes, it would be better suited if we were to step out of the room." We both turned to take 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 at or what was underway.

"I was taken to Cambridge and tied to a chair; the men questioned me about Holmes and Miss Jones and what I knew about the entire matter, of which I knew nothing, so I could tell them nothing. They were none to thrilled with my response and began to beat the answers out of me. Again, I did not know what they wanted. I was nearly unconscious, when Jones entered to 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 Jones.

"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.

"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 it's prey and you can't leave it be."

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

Holmes's 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's 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's voice now softened and he took a seat 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's words sunk in. His 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 was ever wrong. Sometimes I wonder how much longer my dear friend will last if he continues this style of life for years to come.

“Holmes, are you sure?”

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 in on your patient.”

“Thank you, Holmes. I shouldn’t 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?" Lestrade asked with quite a stern, yet bewildered, look as he leaned over the table to glare into Holmes's 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 talk about my career and her future of becoming a consulting detective, such as myself."

"I don't know if that was wise, Mr Holmes. I mean telling a woman to go into such a business."

"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."

"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's 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 that nothing has changed for the worst."

I could see that Holmes did not wish to converse a great deal about Jones 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 to the inspector. Lestrade then spoke out, and Holmes's 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 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’s 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 eyebrows and give a slight nod to my look as if saying '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.

"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 aren't prepared for Holmes's straightforwardness, which he does most of the time. 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 him. 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's 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's words.

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 be 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 brows drew down over his eye 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 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 placed his napkin on his plate 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 on 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 gleamed upon me with a twinkle in them. He swiftly moved his focus back to his fingers, as a mischievous smile came about his face and followed by 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 along, Holmes.”

Holmes 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,” he quickly stressed while hastily leading me away by the elbow.

“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 her and searched the house. There was not a sufficient amount of time for her to have gone anywhere else to look for the papers, therefore I deduced that she found them at the house.”

“So you don’t know for a fact?”

“I did not see her find the papers, no, but I am positive they came from there. I have no doubt and would be willing to wager on it.”

“Well, it does make sense, but why didn’t you tell Lestrade?”

“And have him tromping all about Barrington’s house like a goat set free from its pasture? I think not. He would only upset Mrs Barrington and perhaps stir the pot in which he knows not its contents. Not wise, my dear fellow. There are far too many pieces of the puzzle still missing to have Lestrade go around and scatter what little there is all over the place. No, he will have to wait to find his answer.” Holmes gave his usual playful grin he displays when he has enjoyed keeping something from Scotland Yard.

I must confess I enjoy seeing his amusement from deceiving Scotland Yard and the inspectors. He has never had bad intentions from doing so; only to keep things the way they are until he is able to handle the case further, or he is certain they will not make matters worse.

We had soon returned to Miss Jones’s room. No changes had occurred during our absence, which was good to hear. I checked her vitals and her wounds. Holmes had taken a seat across from the bed and sat in silence, with his legs crossed and eyes closed in thought. At that moment, a man entered the room. The voice was certainly familiar.

“Sherlock! Sherlock old boy, wake up!” spouted the man as his hand tapped Holmes’s shoulder.

“Mycroft, I am not asleep,” voiced Holmes as his eyes wondered up to meet his brother.

“Of course not. I forgot you never sleep.”

“What brings you here?” Holmes asked as he sat up and turned to face the elder Holmes.

“Well, to see how my brother is fairing and his friend, of course.” Mycroft walked over to glance swiftly at Miss Jones. A frown came upon his face as his heavy eyes puckered tightly. “Doctor, good to see you, although not the circumstances I care for.”

I acknowledged his greeting and returned my own. He crept his way back to where Holmes sat and pulled up a chair next to him. “I am glad to see she has made it through the night, Sherlock. I am sure she will come out of this soon. She is quite a remarkable woman. Everyone, in and around London, will read about the exceptional Miss Jones and how she solved the murders of Chatham. I believe I wrote a most exquisite article for the papers; you shall find it quite satisfactory, Sherlock,” Mycroft declared as he shook his finger to his brother.

Holmes gently waved his hands in the air as he responded, “Mycroft, you never cease to amaze me. Thank you.”

“You need not thank me, Sherlock. It was only the proper thing to do. Credit should be given where due, and it matters not that she is a woman. I remember how tedious it was when you first started to get your name out, and I know it shall not be easy for her. All matters have been taken care of at Scotland Yard. I merely wanted to check in on Miss Jones, Dr Watson, and yourself. Make sure you do rest, old boy. I can only do so much at my age. Well, my dear brother, I must be off. Do take care of yourself and let me know if you are in need of anything. Good-bye.”

“You are most sincere, Mycroft. Thank you, and good-bye.”

Mycroft and I said our farewells, and he was soon out the door to retreat back to his club in London. As for Holmes and myself, the day had moved swiftly and darkness soon fell. No changes had occurred that night, good or bad.

The days came and went, and I soon found myself needing to return to my practice in London. There was nothing more I could do but pray for the best. No medicine would bring her out of her coma. Holmes had continued to stay, despite my arguing that he could do nothing more for

her and would be better off back at Baker Street keeping his mind occupied on other events or even a case. He would not hear of it and insisted that he was staying at the hospital until she came round. I occasionally boarded a train and returned to see how Miss Jones was fairing, and upon each return, there would be no change. The date was the eleventh of October when I decided to visit that evening. I was quite exhausted from a long day and decided to stay the evening with Holmes at the hospital. Not much was said between us, and Holmes quite frequently strolled outside take his pipe. I was seated across the room and had reclined myself back to relax. I had closed my eyes but with no intentions of falling asleep. Occasionally I found myself dozing off and coming round again.

I was sitting quietly and reading a book I had picked up at a local bookshop while Holmes was standing next to the window gazing out into the dark, bitter night. The weather was certainly changing as each day became cooler and the sky remained more overcast than usual. I had only glanced up at Holmes on a few occasions to see if he had moved. Several times he would pace by Miss Jones's bed and sit in the chair between the bed and the window and then return to gaze back upon the darkness as if there had been a vast amount of commotion about the streets. I could see in Holmes's face that he had slept very little, but I knew my words would matter not. I finally decided to break the silence.

"Holmes, are you going to pace by the window all night?" I asked, as I looked up over my book.

Holmes returned a confused look and then grinned as he replied, "Of course not, dear fellow. I'm merely thinking."

I knew what about, so I did not respond with another question. I simply nodded and returned to the comfort of my book. The sheets had rustled softly on the bed, but I thought nothing of it and continued with my book. I assumed Holmes had leaned or sat on the bed, so I did not look. I then heard him step quickly across the room, and I only peered over my book for a second to see why he had rushed so. Holmes was now to the side of the bed and swiftly pulled the chair up against it. He was now leaning forward and had lifted Miss Jones's hand into his. I believe at that point he had forgotten about my presence. With a smile, I returned to my reading, but then came a soft faint sound in the room. I couldn't make it out, but the sound was undoubtedly not Holmes. I instantly sat my book down and looked to Holmes. He leaned closer to Miss Jones's face, and I then heard Holmes speak.

“Yes—Yes, Selena, I am here,” whispered Holmes.

I sat erect in my chair and called out, “Holmes? Did she speak?” He did not respond as his mind was fully focused on her.