



The Mary Russell Companion

Laurie R. King

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The world of Mary Russell, apprentice-turned-partner of the great detective Sherlock Holmes, has long fascinated her followers. Over the course of ten Memoirs and a number of short stories, Russell has revealed much about her life—but far more has gone unexplored.

Filled with new and original material, *The Mary Russell Companion* helps to close that gaping chasm of ignorance. With lavish illustrations and a firm commitment to academic formalities, the Companion serves as a guide to all things Russell.

First and foremost, it is an Entertainment. Fun and informative essays alternate with the words of Miss Russell herself, with supplemental material that appears here in print for the first time.

Second, it is an aid to scholarship. Key elements of the Memoirs are brought together in one place: maps of Russell's travels, a detailed chronology of the books, biographies of the central players (those known to Arthur Conan Doyle, those known to the world at large, and those seen exclusively in the Russell Memoirs), and reviews of this remarkable woman's extraordinary set of skills: all that is known about Russell's history through the first ten of her Memoirs.

In the interest of scrupulous scholarship, the first two chapters of *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* are given a close and detailed series of annotations with the assistance of the Crime world's preeminent Annotator, Leslie S. Klinger, focusing on everything from a description of gorse to an analysis of the number of times Sherlock Holmes laughs, chuckles, and expresses amusement in the Conan Doyle stories.

Beyond a compilation of facts, however, the Companion aims at context and analysis, with commentaries on many aspects of Mary Russell's life. Is Russell a feminist? What are her thoughts about God? Why did she choose Laurie R. King as an agent to publish the Memoirs—and what does she think about their being called "novels" "by" Laurie R. King? How do Russell's thoughts and experiences intersect with those of her literary agent, and how much did King borrow from Miss Russell's academic work when it came to writing her Master's Thesis?

Yes, there's even a discreet chapter on the Russell-Holmes love life.

A floor plan of the Sussex house Russell shares with Sherlock Holmes and Mrs Hudson is joined by a review of what generations of Holmes scholars have said about its location. There are three interviews between Miss Russell and her literary agent, one of which, new for the Companion, celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the first Russell/King collaboration, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*. There are even recipes contributed by Mrs Hudson, and her musings on the comparative stimulants of tea and coffee in the Holmes household.

Until Miss Russell chooses to pen her own Companion, *The Mary Russell Companion* is the definitive guide to the world of Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes.

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