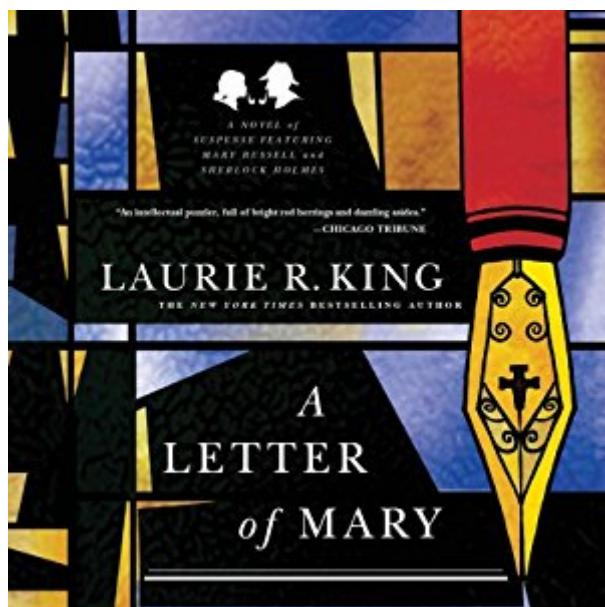


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A Letter Of Mary: A Novel Of Suspense Featuring Mary Russell And Sherlock Holmes: The Mary Russell Series, Book 3



Synopsis

The third book in the Mary Russell-Sherlock Holmes series. It is 1923. Mary Russell Holmes and her husband, the retired Sherlock Holmes, are enjoying the summer together on their Sussex estate when they are visited by an old friend, Miss Dorothy Ruskin, an archeologist just returned from Palestine. She leaves in their protection an ancient manuscript which seems to hint at the possibility that Mary Magdalene was an apostle - an artifact certain to stir up a storm of biblical proportions in the Christian establishment. When Ruskin is suddenly killed in a tragic accident, Russell and Holmes find themselves on the trail of a fiendishly clever murderer. Brimming with political intrigue, theological arcana, and brilliant Holmesian deductions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

None of the books I have read by Laurie King have been nearly as good as her very first in the Sherlock series, "The Beekeeper's Apprentice." This particular book spends far too much time running the main characters up and down false leads and then the murder mystery is suddenly solved by a twist in circumstances the reader could not have foreseen. It's like have a magical mystery fairy fly in in the last few pages to tell the reader what he/she could never have discovered alone.

A Letter of Mary opens with Holmes and Mary enjoying a quiet day at home when archeologist Dorothy Ruskin, an old friend, suddenly appears at their door. In England for a short time on

business, Dorothy has stopped by primarily to give Mary an ancient manuscript that, if proven real, would cause a serious biblical ruckus. A few days later, Mary and Holmes receive word that Dorothy has died in a hit and run accident. Suspicious of the circumstances surrounding her death, Mary and Holmes set out on an investigation that leads them to believe Dorothy's death was pre-meditated murder. Soon the investigation leads to them going separate ways while they work undercover inspecting their two main suspects. This installment was good, but definitely my least favorite out of the Mary Russell series so far. I find the stories that focus primarily on religion bore me. Since a major portion of this one's plot revolved around an item with possible biblical roots, I ended up extremely bored at times. It also doesn't help that Mary tends to nerd-out on religious theory. Also, I wasn't into the undercover bit of this plot. Mary's work while incognito just seemed really... useless. I didn't understand her fear of becoming too much like the person she was pretending to be. Mostly because the woman Mary was impersonating was so opposite to who she actually is, that I didn't believe she would have a real fear of keeping herself separate. In addition, I couldn't comprehend her attraction to the man she was investigating. It's made clear that the person she was pretending to be would be attracted to him, but seriously? The guy was a misogynist douche and Mary noted being put-off by a lot of what he said and did, so I just didn't get her turmoil. However, the resolution of Mary coming to terms with what she felt while undercover was nicely done. The other issue I had with this book came from feeling a little cheated at how much of the main mystery happened off page. I understand what King was trying to do by having it play out this way, but I didn't derive the same thrill from the "who did it" revelation at the end. From this review, it sounds like I didn't like *A Letter of Mary* at all, but I did enjoy it. There's something comforting about King's writing and her characters are always entertaining. I just didn't click very well with the main plot of this book. All in all, it was a good addition to the series, but not one that I'll be revisiting anytime soon.

Am about halfway thru and can't put the series down - such fun summer reading! Totally loving the literary references - the chapter where we meet Lord Peter Wimsey (I thought so and gigglingly looked him up in Wikipedia and yup right timeframe - how fun!) and Tolkien now. Looking forward to whomever else shows up! Who'd I miss so far!!! Loving the stories, the action, the characters, setting, writing style. Marvelous! Highly recommend =).

the Holmes/Russel tales can't get any better, they take the leap to the next level. What a pleasure to open a book that you already know is going to be so well written and find that you have 13 or 14

hours of pure pleasure ahead. I can't read these meaty books fast enough! I loved every one so far.

This book really brings to life the struggles of women for recognition in the early 1900's. It also continues to relate the charming story of Mary Russell's relationship with Sherlock Holmes. Set in a time of stilted English writers Ms. King's prose flows effortlessly, without tripping over too much useless description or getting wrapped up in a too-flowery writing style; yet she remains true to the era. Ms. King has become one of my favorite authors; this is a superb reading experience.

Laurie R. King's titles include several stories about Mary Russell, wife of Sherlock Holmes. This is the only one (a mass-market, used paperback) I've read. Set in 1923, Sherlock Holmes has retired to a farmhouse in the south of England with his much younger wife, Mary Russell, a scholar of history and theology. Dr. Watson is off writing stories for The Strand Magazine of the cases of the famous consulting detective and does not appear as a character. The couple receive a guest for tea -- a highly-regarded Egyptologist/archaeologist -- who gives Russell (as Holmes call his wife) a rare box containing a scrap of papyrus with a letter purported to be written by Mary Magdalene. Within hours their exotic guest is killed. Collecting clues, unraveling riddles, sorting suspects, all with the help of Inspector Lestrade, Mrs. Hudson, various disguises, careful laboratory work are well laid out. Voila! The bad guys are captured and justice is served. Oddly (or gladly) the letter of the Magdalene remains an enigma set aside to be dealt with later. The box that contains it proves much more important. Two passages are particularly pleasing: one tells of an encounter between Russell and a perfectly-described and recognizable Lord Peter Wimsey, the detective/aristocrat authored by Dorothy L. Sayers, and a brief meeting between Russell and J.R.R. Tolkien at Oxford's The Eagle and Child pub. The time frame for both fictional and real-life personages is exactly right. Including these two adds an interesting depth to the tale that I enjoyed. Following Conon Doyle's time-line for Sherlock Holmes makes him a little too old for a young wife, but King has his behavior, voice and attitude absolutely right, in my view. I intend to read more in this series. For those with a taste for a creative and respectful spin on a beloved literary presence that lives and breathes in many media, I say 'read this book.'

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