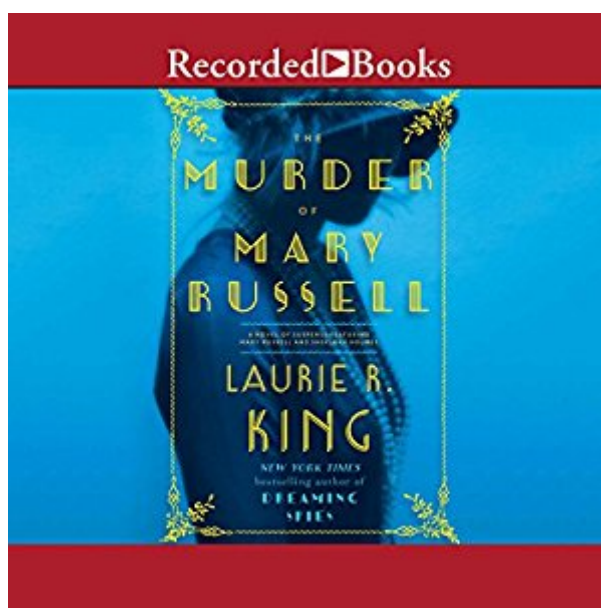


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# The Murder Of Mary Russell: A Novel Of Suspense Featuring Mary Russell And Sherlock Holmes



## Synopsis

Laurie R. King's best-selling Mary Russell-Sherlock Holmes series weaves rich historical detail and provocative themes with intriguing characters and enthralling suspense. Russell and Holmes have become one of modern literature's most beloved teams. But does this adventure end it all? Mary Russell is used to dark secrets - her own and those of her famous partner and husband, Sherlock Holmes. Trust is a thing slowly given, but over the course of a decade together, the two have forged an indissoluble bond. And what of the other person to whom Mary Russell has opened her heart: the couple's longtime housekeeper, Mrs. Hudson? Russell's faith and affection are suddenly shattered when a man arrives on the doorstep claiming to be Mrs. Hudson's son. What Samuel Hudson tells Russell cannot possibly be true, yet she believes him - as surely as she believes the threat of the gun in his hand. In a devastating instant, everything changes. And when the scene is discovered - a pool of blood on the floor, the smell of gunpowder in the air - the most shocking revelation of all is that the grim clues point directly to Clara Hudson. Or rather to Clarissa, the woman she was before Baker Street. The key to Russell's sacrifice lies in Mrs. Hudson's past. To uncover the truth, a frantic Sherlock Holmes must put aside his anguish and push deep into his housekeeper's secrets - to a time before her disguise was assumed, before her crimes were buried away. There is death here, and murder, and trust betrayed. And nothing will ever be the same.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With this mystery, Laurie R. King takes the reader on a detour: The main character is not Mary

Russell or Sherlock Holmes, but their staid, reliable retainer, Mrs. Hudson, who has a past no one would have dreamed. The story starts with Holmes away, Mrs. Hudson on an errand, and Mary working alone in her garden. She hears a car drive up, and a man identifying himself as Mrs. Hudson's long-lost son, Samuel, greets her. When Mrs. Hudson returns, she finds a still-warm teapot on the stove, pools of blood on the sitting room floor, and no sign of Mary. What happened? The story jumps back and forth between that story line -- whose blood was it, anyway? -- and the life history of Clara (Clarissa in her younger years) Hudson. To go into much of the story would give away the plot, and I don't want to do that. Suffice it to say that the respectable matron had quite a different life in her younger days! Holmes isn't really involved until the latter half of the book, as he investigates what happened to his wife. Is she dead? King's recent Holmes/Russell books have had the couple working apart more than together, and this one is no exception. While I prefer the couple to work together, I didn't mind their separation as much with this book as I did with the others because the story of Mrs. Hudson is fascinating. It takes the reader back to the mid- to late 1800s in both Australia and London. This is a worthy addition to King's long series about Holmes and Russell. While it can be read as a stand-alone book, I urge readers to start with the first book, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, where Holmes and Russell meet, and move forward through the series for a richer experience.

I'm not going to lie: I have been disappointed in the diminishing quality of the Mary Russell series since *Locked Rooms*, but a devotion to the character has kept me reading, and wincing. It was with trepidation that I purchased this new entry in the series. But it was elation with which I read its final words. This book is every bit as good as *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, if not better, and will make fans of the series as well as fans of the Holmes canon giddy with joy. King spins out an intricate reimagining of the *Adventure of the Gloria Scott* with every ounce of that perfect mixture of fidelity to the original tale and new emotional insight that she displays at her best. Mrs. Hudson is the central character, and if that seems boring to you (as it did to me), then let me reassure you: the Mrs. Hudson of King's imagination is more complex than you've ever considered. The novel follows her from her parents' courtship to her life in the Sussex Downs, including the fateful interlude when she meets an 18-year-old detective hot on the trail of his first real case. If I had never read a Mary Russell novel, I would have loved this book every bit as much as I do having read every one of them (and some of them until they fell apart). This is Laurie R. King at her best. Read and enjoy.

Endless-seeming exposition opens this story, with a almost a full three-generation backstory to bring

us to the present moment. Like the codas to many a Conan Doyle story, the story that provides the background of the crime is strangely lifeless and boring, however full of incident it may be. These people who create "Mrs Hudson" or are avatars of her younger self--I find it so hard really to care. The moment Holmes comes on the scene, I feel the narrative 'wake up', and I found the use of the 'Case of the Gloria Scott' well done. But I was not very much goaded into dread or suspense by the appearance of Samuel Hudson and his confrontation with Mary, and their much-interrupted and obfuscated confrontation. The final unwinding of the plot frankly was frankly confusing and irritating. No, I did not find this story equalled any of the other Russell narratives up to and including The Great Game one that brings Kimball Ohara back to vivid life. That was the last one I found truly thrilling. I think King has run this thread out beyond its end. I'm tired of it.

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