

Laurie R. King interviews Mary Russell

Previously, Miss Mary Russell—Oxford theologian, sleuth extraordinaire, wife and partner to Sherlock Holmes—sat down to interview Laurie R. King (available on the press page of www.LaurieRKing.com.) Now, Ms King now returns the favor.

LRK: Thank you for meeting with me today, here in your Sussex home. I had rather hoped to meet your husband this time, but—

MR: Holmes is away on an investigation.

LRK: At his age?

MR: (coolly) His body has slowed, his mind is quite nimble, thank you.

LRK: Yes, of course. And you, Miss Russell, I wonder—

MR: (coldly) I trust you are not going to ask me about my age.

LRK: Er, no. Of course not. Perhaps we should get straight to the focus of the interview. Next April, volume ten of your memoirs will be published.

MR: Yes, **The God of the Hive**. Although I persist in thinking of it with the name I had suggested, **The Green Man**. Extraordinary, what these publishers will do.

LRK: It sure is. And this volume—

MR: Which will be published as fiction, I presume?

LRK: I'm afraid so. Now, your...memoirs are generally told in the first person, with the very occasional dip into objective narration to clarify an episode. However, **The God of the Hive** is told from multiple points of view. Did you find this difficult to accomplish?

MR: Well, having all the principals to hand made things easier. I believe it would have been more difficult to explain how I had come to learn of all the things that took place when I was elsewhere. It was a complex tale.

LRK: And it includes a great deal about your brother-in-law, Mycroft, who was central to the British Intelligence community.

MR: One might even say that Mycroft *was* British Intelligence. In both meanings of the word, come to think of it.

LRK: The story includes a number of disturbing revelations about—

MR: I shall have to ask you to take care with your questions. Some of the material in the book remains to this day under the Secrets Act.

LRK: Which is why this book, in particular, was presented to the world as fiction.

MR: Precisely: a fable. And like many fables, the truths it contains may be unsettling.

LRK: Even if it's somewhat... embroidered.

MR: I do not embroider.

LRK: Oh come now, surely Robert Goodman, the "Green Man" of the woods, was not *exactly* as you present him? He's a creature of mythic fantasy.

MR: Ms King, *you* are the writer of fiction; *I* could never have made up such a man as Goodman. A fantastic creature he was indeed. I shall never forget the first time I saw him—or rather, his boots—waving from the shrubbery.

LRK: You're claiming he's true to life?

MR: (even more coldly) I write memoirs, not fantasy.

LRK: If you say so. Okay, so, in the book we also see a great deal about Mr Holmes and his artist son, introduced in **The Language of Bees**, who—

MR: I don't care to speak about personal matters, if you please.

LRK: No politics, no family. What does that leave us—religion?

MR: Reverend Thomas Brothers? Unpleasant fellow.

LRK: Well, maybe we could talk about your online experiences. You're active on MySpace, and you have several thousand Twitter followers.

MR: Yes?

LRK: Not many women your—of your era, are quite so technologically savvy.

MR: It takes less mechanical acumen than changing the ink in a pen. And the demands of brevity are amusing—Holmes was fond of telegrams.

LRK: Where you had to pay by the word, yes.

MR: *I?* Or by "you" do you mean "one"?

LRK: I guess. And on MySpace, you're continuing the tale of how you came to give me the stor—the memoirs.

MR: Which you post on your "Mutterings" blog. Clever, that.

LRK: Thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us, about the book, or—

MR: All I choose to reveal lies within my memoirs. If you wish to know about Holmes, or Damian, or Robert Goodman, or Mycroft, I suggest you read the book.

LRK: **The God of the Hive.** Available in April.

MR: Quite.