

# NIGHT WORK

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GLITTERING WITH  
INTELLIGENCE."

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Sentinel

# LAURIER.

Edgar and Creasey Award-winning  
author of *A Darker Place*

# KING

A Kate Martinelli Mystery



A KATE MARTINELLI MYSTERY

*by*

**Laurie R. King**



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## NIGHT WORK

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## NIGHT WORK

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TO PLAY THE FOOL  
WITH CHILD  
NIGHT WORK

A DARKER PLACE

*And coming soon in hardcover:*

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*To Linda Allen,  
friend and agent,  
who believed*



With thanks to Gretchen Tom, who deciphers the King hieroglyphs better than their creator does, and to Bob Pori, for sharing his pharmacological expertise.

And with deep gratitude to the members of the San Francisco Police Department, especially Captain Kevin Dillon, Inspector Holly Pera of the Homicide Detail, and Inspector Pamela Hofsass, who took pity on a poor novelist and tried their best to inject a little reality into the following story. They are not to be held responsible for the stubborn insistence of a weaver of fiction, who values the textures of storytelling over the actualities of on-call schedules and promotion priorities.

But I got the gun right.

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## THE BEEKEEPER'S APPRENTICE

*A Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes Mystery*

*In 1915, long since retired from his observations of criminal humanity, Sherlock Holmes is engaged in a reclusive study of honeybee behavior on the Sussex Downs. Never did he think to meet an intellect to match his own—until his acquaintance with Miss Mary Russell, a very modern fifteen-year-old whose mental acuity is equaled only by her audacity, tenacity, and penchant for trousers and cloth caps, unthinkable in any young lady of Holmes's own generation. . . .*

I was fifteen when I first met Sherlock Holmes, fifteen years old with my nose in a book as I walked the Sussex Downs, and nearly stepped on him. In my defence I must say it was an engrossing book, and it was very rare to come across another person in that particular part of the world in that war year of 1915. In my seven weeks of peripatetic reading amongst the sheep (which tended to move out of my way) and the gorse bushes (to which I had painfully developed an instinctive awareness) I had never before stepped on a person.

It was a cool, sunny day in early April, and the book was by Virgil. I had set out at dawn from the silent farmhouse, chosen a different direction from my usual, and spent the intervening hours wrestling with Latin verbs, climbing unconsciously over stone walls, and unthinkingly circling hedgerows, and would probably not have noticed the sea until I stepped off one of the chalk cliffs into it.

As it was, my first awareness that there was another soul in the universe was when a male throat cleared itself loudly not four feet from me. The Latin text flew into the air, followed closely by an Anglo-Saxon oath. Heart pounding, I hastily pulled together what dignity I could and glared down through my spectacles at this figure hunched up at my feet: a gaunt, greying man in his fifties wearing a cloth cap, ancient tweed greatcoat,

and decent shoes, with a threadbare Army rucksack on the ground beside him. A tramp perhaps, who had left the rest of his possessions stashed beneath a bush. Or an Eccentric. Certainly no shepherd. . . .

*"The Beekeeper's Apprentice has power to charm the most grizzled Baker Street Irregular."*—*Daily News*, New York.

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## TO PLAY THE FOOL

### *A Kate Martinelli Mystery*

*When a band of homeless people cremate a beloved dog in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, the authorities are willing to overlook a few broken regulations. But three weeks later, when the dog's owner gets the same fiery send-off, the SFPD has a real headache on its hands. The autopsy suggests homicide, but Inspector Kate Martinelli and her partner have little else to go on. They have a homeless victim without a positive ID, a group of witnesses who have little love for the cops, and a possible suspect, known only as Brother Erasmus, whose history leads Kate along a twisting road to a disbanded cult, long-buried secrets, the thirst for spirituality, and the hunger for bloody vengeance.*

**H**is breath huffing in clouds and the news announcer still jabbering against his unemployed ears, the currently unemployed former Bank of America vice presidential assistant was slogging his disconsolate way alongside Kennedy Drive in the park when, to his instant and unreasoning fury, he was attacked for a second time by a branch-wielding bearded man from the shrubbery. Three weeks of ego deflation blew up like a rage-powered air bag. He instantly took four rapid steps forward and clobbered the unkempt head with the only thing he carried, which happened to be a Walkman stereo. Fortunately for both men, the case collapsed

the moment it made contact with the wool cap, but the maddened former bank assistant stood over the terrified and hungover former real estate broker and pummeled away with his crumbling handful of plastic shards and electronic components. A passing commuter saw them, snatched up her car telephone, and dialed 911.

Three minutes later, the eyes of the two responding police officers were greeted by the sight of a pair of men seated side by side on the frost-rimed grass: One was shocked, bleeding into his shaggy beard, and even at twenty feet stank of cheap wine and old sweat; the other was clean-shaven, clean-clothed, and wore a pair of two-hundred-dollar running shoes on his feet.

The two officers never were absolutely certain about what happened, but they filled out their forms and saw the two partners in adversity safely tucked into the ambulance. Just before the door closed, the female officer thought to ask why the homeless man had been dragging branches out of the woods in the first place.

By the time the two officers pounded up the pathway into the baseball clearing, the second funeral pyre had caught and flames were roaring up to the gray sky in great billows of sparks and burning leaves. It was a much larger pile of wood than had been under the small dog Theophilus three weeks earlier, but then, it had to be.

On the top of this pyre lay the body of a man.

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## **A MONSTROUS REGIMENT OF WOMEN**

*A Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes Mystery*

*The dawn of 1921 finds Mary Russell, Sherlock Holmes's brilliant young apprentice, about to come into a considerable inheritance. Nevertheless, she still enjoys her nighttime prowls in disguise through London's grimy streets, where one night she encounters an old friend, now a charity worker among the poor.*

*Veronica Beaconsfield introduces Russell to the New Temple of God, a curious amalgam of church and feminist movement, led by the enigmatic, electrifying Margery Childe. Part suffragette, part mystic, she lives quite well for a woman of God from supposedly humble origins. Despite herself, Russell is drawn ever deeper into Childe's circle . . . far closer to heaven than Mary Russell would like. . . .*

**T**he door closed behind Veronica, and I was half-aware of her voice calling out to Marie and then fading down the corridor as I sat and allowed myself to be scrutinised, slowly, thoroughly, impassively. When the blonde woman finally turned away and kicked her shoes off under a low table, I let out the breath I hadn't realised I was holding and offered up thanks to Holmes's tutoring, badgering, and endless criticism that had brought me to the place where I might endure such scrutiny without flinching—at least not outwardly.

She padded silently across the thick carpet to the disorder of bottles and chose a glass, some ice, a large dollop from a gin bottle, and a generous splash of tonic. She half-turned to me with a question in her eyebrow, accepted my negative shake without comment, went to a drawer, took out a cigarette case and a matching enamelled matchbox, gathered up an ashtray, and came back to her chair, moving all the while with an unconscious feline grace—that of a small domestic tabby rather than anything more exotic or angular. She tucked her feet under her in the chair precisely like the cat in Mrs Hudson's kitchen, lit her cigarette, dropped the spent match into the ashtray balanced on the arm of the chair, and filled her lungs deeply before letting the smoke drift slowly from nose and mouth. The first swallow from the glass was equally savoured, and she shut her eyes for a long moment.

When she opened them, the magic had gone out of her, and she was just a small, tired, dishevelled woman in an expensive dress, with a much-needed drink and cigarette to hand. I revised my estimate of her age up-

ward a few years, to nearly forty, and wondered if I ought to leave.

"Why are you here, Mary Russell?"

"King has a gift for the rich, decisive detail and the narrative crispness that distinguished Conan Doyle's writing."—*The Washington Post Book World*

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## WITH CHILD

### A Kate Martinelli Mystery

*Adrift in mist-shrouded San Francisco mornings and alcohol-fogged nights, homicide detective Kate Martinelli can't escape the void left by her departed lover, who has gone off to rethink their relationship. But when twelve-year-old Jules Cameron comes to Kate for a professional consultation, Kate's not sure she's that desperate for distraction. Jules is worried about her friend Dio, a homeless boy she met in a park. Dio has disappeared without a word of farewell, and Jules wants Kate to find him. Reluctant as she is, Kate can't say no—and soon finds herself forming a friendship with the bright, quirky girl. But the search for Dio will prove to be much more than either bargained for. . . .*

**A**nd still, all that fall, she looked for Dio. Once a week, she made the rounds of the homeless, asking about him. Always she asked among her network of informants, the dealers and hookers and petty thieves, and invariably received a shake of the head. Twice she heard rumors of him, once at a house for runaway teenagers, where one of the current residents had a friend who had met a boy of his description; and a second time, when one of her informants told her there was a boy-toy of that name in a house used by pederasts over near the marina. She phoned a couple of old friends in the Berkeley and Oakland departments to ask them to keep an ear out, and she arranged to be in on the raid of

the marina house, but neither came up with anything more substantial than the ghost she already had. She doubted he was in the Bay Area, and told Jules that, but she also kept looking.

That autumn, in one of those flukes that even the statistician will admit happens occasionally, it seemed for a while that every case the Homicide Department handled involved kids. A two-year-old with old scars on his back and broken bones in various states of mending died in an emergency room from having been shaken violently by his eighteen-year-old mother. Three boys aged sixteen to twenty died from gunshot wounds. Four bright seventeen-year-old students in a private school did a research project on explosives, using the public library, and sent a very effective pipe bomb to a hated teacher. It failed, but only because the man was as paranoid as he was infuriating. A seven-year-old in a pirate costume was separated from his friends on Halloween; he was found the next morning, raped and bludgeoned to death. Kate saw two of her colleagues in tears within ten days, one of them a tough, experienced beat cop who had seen everything but still couldn't bring himself to look again at the baby in the cot. The detectives on the fourth floor of the Department of Justice made morbid jokes about it being the Year of the Child, and they either answered the phone gingerly or with a snarl, according to their personalities. . . .

**"Like a slow-burning fire, the story makes you hurt deeply for King's characters before you realize what's happening to you."**—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred)

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## **A LETTER OF MARY**

*A Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes Mystery*

*Late in the summer of 1923, Mary Russell Holmes and her husband, the illustrious Sherlock Holmes, are en-*



*sconced in their home on the Sussex Downs, giving themselves over to their studies: Russell to her theology, and Holmes to his malodorous chemical experiments. Interrupting the idyllic scene, amateur archaeologist Miss Dorothy Ruskin visits with a startling puzzle. Working in the Holy Land, she has unearthed a tattered roll of papyrus with a message from Mary Magdalene. Miss Ruskin wants Russell to safeguard the letter. But when Miss Ruskin is killed in a traffic accident, Russell and Holmes find themselves on the trail of a fiendishly clever murderer.*

The next day, *The Times* arrived at one o'clock in the afternoon. It still lay folded when I turned off the lights and went upstairs, and it had not moved when I came back through the house on Friday for an early cup of tea. Two hours later, Holmes came down for breakfast and picked it up absently as he passed. So it was that nearly forty hours had elapsed between the time I saw Miss Ruskin off on the train and the time Holmes gave a cry of surprise and sat up straight over the paper, his cup of tea forgotten in one hand.

"What is it? Holmes?" I stood up and went to see what had caught his attention so dramatically. It was a police notice, a small leaded box, inserted awkwardly into a middle page, no doubt just as the paper was going to press.

IDENTITY SOUGHT OF LONDON  
ACCIDENT VICTIM

Police are asking for the assistance of any person who might identify a woman killed in a traffic accident late yesterday evening. . . .

I sat down heavily next to Holmes.

"No. Oh surely not. Dear God. What night would that have been? Wednesday? She had a dinner engagement at nine o'clock."