

## Catholic Girl's Guide to Summer Reading

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The Beekeeper's Apprentice, by Laurie R. King 

**STORY:** When 15 year-old Mary Russell nearly walks right over a middle-aged Sherlock Holmes in a field, a heated argument arises, in which he is shocked that someone her age can have the deductive reasoning skills she has. As they begin to study together as teacher and apprentice, an interesting friendship begins. A few years later, when Russell begins attending Oxford, they become partners in investigations ranging from two missing hams to a kidnapping, which seems to be linked to a larger plot intent on ending more than their partnership.

**GOOD:** The movie-like and absorbing descriptions draw the reader into the story instantly, and Mary Russell's knowledgeable banter with the much older Holmes clearly defines the character's personality. The many action sequences are depicted so clearly that the reader is left with little doubt as to the danger facing the characters. The Holmes of this story is different in many ways from the traditional Baker Street character, which is justified by the mention of Watson and Doyle's "romanticism."

**BAD:** Although in general a very enjoyable and absorbing story, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* is much more a character novel with a satisfying bit of action than a mystery novel. Holmes rarely uses his reasoning skills, which were the heart and soul of Doyle's stories. The mystery is generally flimsy, with more hidden clues than logical thought.

**MORALITY:** Despite some mildly frightening situations and a handful of phrases that employ the same relatively mild curse word, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* is close to being free of objectionable material. Despite some flaws, it is an enjoyable summer read.