



my literary agent whom I put in charge

of my memoirs needed to be, first of all a woman. She needed to be strong-minded enough to resist the blandishments and threats unleashed upon her once the nature of these manuscripts came to light. And since I thought it best to begin with someone with links to Mary Russell above any links to Sherlock Holmes, I cast my mind over my relatives: cousins of various stripe abound, but search as I might, I could find no combination of literary interest and common sense.

Next, I sought out the descendants of my university friend, Veronica Beaconsfield, only to find that the current generation lacked the wit of their grandparents.

So I went further back, to my childhood in San Francisco, and there, in the early weeks of 1992, I found the person I sought. The granddaughter of a childhood friend, she was in the early stages of a literary career—her first novel had been accepted at a New York publisher—but she was also sensible enough to balance the demands of children, travel, a husband with his own career, and a complex household. And an untold benefit: She had a background in Old Testament theology! Without delay, I began to assemble the manuscripts and prepared to send them off to Ms King in California—but before I could do so, catastrophe struck.

