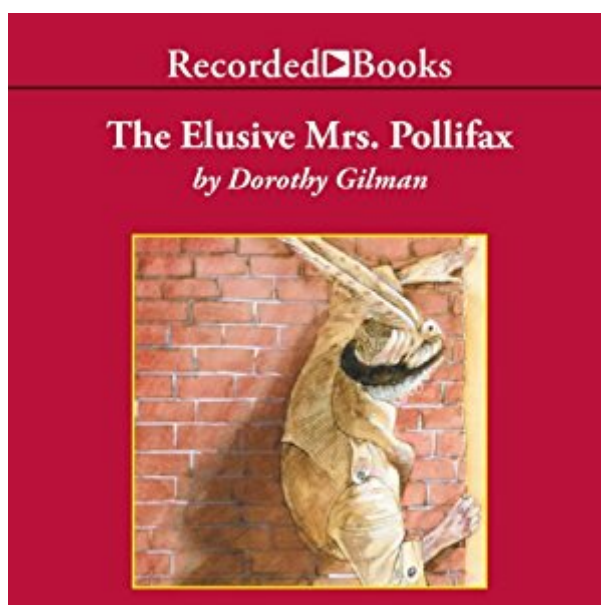


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The Elusive Mrs. Pollifax



Synopsis

Mrs. Pollifax has a new hat, and only she and Mr. Carstairs know it conceals eight false passports which she must smuggle into Bulgaria.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 6 hours and 15 minutes

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in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > British Detectives

Customer Reviews

The 3rd book written by Dorothy Gilman is another book filled with intrigue and heroism. Mrs. Pollifax, a widow who enjoys teas and garden clubs, sets out on her third courier job for the CIA, a mission which starts in Bulgaria. Mrs. Pollifax is a CIA agent assigned to smuggle forged passports into the country, for the use of some agents that have found themselves in need of escape. However, as in her previous two cases, no simple courier job ends up that way, and she also works to assist a group of college kids that find themselves in trouble. I was enthralled with the third assignment of Mrs. Pollifax, and enjoyed every moment spent with her on this adventure. Mrs. Pollifax is not a person that you would initially feel would make a good CIA agent. She is elderly, loves to wear outlandish hats, and finds a way to talk and get to know everyone around her. But it is just these qualities that make her so invisible in the world of spies, and even the most cynical of agents falls under her spell. I loved the fact that Mrs. Pollifax is learning karate (since she hates guns I worried about how she could plausibly protect herself) and that she was just as lovable yet determined as she was in the previous books. If you have not tried this series, pick up a copy of this book and the previous books, and join the millions of others who are charmed by this beloved character! The first book in the series is "The Unexpected Mrs. Pollifax". Enjoy! A Cozy Mystery

The newly-married Mrs. Pollifax is in the process of fixing up her new home in the country when Bishop appears on her doorstep and offers her another assignment for the CIA. Cyrus is out of town and Mrs. P. must give an immediate answer, so an hour later she is on her way to Hong Kong. Her mission is to contact Sheng Ti, whom she met in an earlier book and find out what is going on at Feng Imports where Sheng Ti is working for an agent named Detwiler. Detwiler's reports to the CIA have proved to be false, so he is suspected of being a counterspy and giving evidence to the enemy. Mrs. Pollifax meets some other interesting characters, including a psychic, and another old friend who is a reformed cat burglar while in pursuit of the truth about Feng Imports. She is captured and suffers from some unnecessarily harsh treatment, probably the reason this is not most people's favorite book of the series.

I go back a couple of books in the series now to this one, the third. Fortunately there are no significant references to prior books this time around. Anyhow, this time Mrs. Pollifax finds her way to Bulgaria. Supposedly she is only taking passports to the underground there, but her boss Carstairs is strongarmed into having her taking other items, sewn into her coat, along with her without her knowing it. Complications, unsurprisingly, ensue. She falls in with a group of travelling college students (and one in particular), and leaps in to help when one of them is held by the secret police. She leads both friends and foes on a merry chase as she travels around Bulgaria. It's got to be one of the more complex plots of any of the books I've read so far, and as a result one of the most gripping. Rosenblat again does a superb job with the voices.

This mystery pushes the boundaries of "cozy" mystery. There is more pain and death than I am used to in this mystery series. Still, it was a page-turner and a good story. Mrs. Pollifax is becoming more used to the world of espionage, even if her superiors think they are sending her into relatively safe situations. In this book we meet some old friends out in the field and I found the people are far more important to the story than the setting. I would give this book 4.5 stars if half stars were possible. I rounded it down because I think Mrs. Pollifax fans will find a couple of scenes a bit more disturbing than they are used to. However, if you like cozy mysteries, you'll like this book. While I suggest you read the earlier books first, it isn't strictly necessary as people are introduced with enough background that you can easily follow along.

Dorothy Gilman began writing Mrs. Pollifax quite a long time ago. This was the first book. Mrs. Pollifax still holds up today. She is the epitome of resourcefulness -- and she is in her 60s -- just like me. Once the head of the CIA decides to actually send her out as a courier -- after she has dropped into the CIA headquarters to volunteer her services -- the fun starts. Mrs. Pollifax gets into some really sticky situations and there are dark moments, but there is just enough humor that you are sure she will come out smelling just like a rose -- or at least as fresh as the flowers on her famous hats. This is a fun read. I decided to go back and read the series from the beginning. I highly recommend all the books. Some are better than others, but they are all worth your time. The only movie I remember being made from this character was one which starred Rosalind Russell -- in one of her last films --- and Darren McGavin, circa 1971. It was well done, and unfortunately, not available on DVD. It is titled, Mrs. Pollifax - Spy. It is available streaming from to rent or buy. I always think of Ms. Russell when I read the Mrs. Pollifax books.

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