



Precious and Grace: No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency

Alexander McCall Smith

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Fans around the world adore the bestselling No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series and its proprietor, Precious Ramotswe, Botswana's premier lady detective. In this charming series, Mma Ramotswe--with help from her loyal associate, Grace Makutsi--navigates her cases and her personal life with wisdom, good humor, and the occasional cup of tea.

Mma Makutsi, who has recently been promoted to co-director, has been encouraging Mma Ramotswe to update to more modern office practices. An unusual case, however, will require both of them to turn their attention firmly to the past. A young Canadian woman who spent her early childhood in Botswana requests the agency's help in recalling her life there. Precious and Grace set out to locate the house that the woman lived in and the caretaker who looked after her many years ago. But when the journey takes an unexpected turn, they are forced to consider whether some things are better left in the past.

Mma Ramotswe dispenses help and sympathy with the graciousness and warmth for which she is so well known, and everyone involved is led to surprising insights into the healing power of compassion, forgiveness, and new beginnings.

Precious and Grace: No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency Details

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From Reader Review Precious and Grace: No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency for online ebook

Diane Barnes says

The 17th installment is much like the first sixteen, but this series still seems fresh to me. Not much to the mystery, as always, but I read them for the ongoing stories of Mma Ramotswe and Grace Makutsi, their families and co-workers, and the people of Botswana.

Phrynnne says

I love spending my reading time with Precious Ramotswe and Grace Makutsi, both of them delightful, intelligent women who are very faithful to their much loved home of Botswana.

In this, the 17th episode of the series, our two redoubtable main characters come as close as they ever have to a major falling out. They deal with several cases involving pyramid selling, drug smuggling, lost dogs and a lost past and of course everything works out in the end (although not always to their total satisfaction.) Beautifully written, entertaining and full of Mma Ramotswe's philosophies on life, love and humanity. Of course I loved it!

L.A. Starks says

While the pace of this novel is languorous, its theme of forgiveness is one of the most deeply moving in the series.

(And any book with a stray dog is a sure winner. Precious and Grace is no exception to the meme.)

As always, Smith handles characterizations with beguiling economy--a lifted eyebrow here, an almost-suppressed thought there, yet the reader turns the page and much has happened.

In particular, note how Precious understands, accommodates, and reacts to the Grace's occasional roughness.

As always, the country, its airlines and hotels, should give Smith lifetime free passes--he writes so endearingly about its culture readers will want to catch the next plane to Botswana.

Sep says

A lost dog, Mr. Polopetsi caught in a pyramid scheme, and a Canadian woman trying to recover a lost childhood but these are just the problems. The real theme is forgiveness, kindness, and contentment.

Laura says

Second Read

I never tire of this series. Alexander McCall Smith wrote them for me. And for you! It is the characters, more than anything else, that make this so special. Getting to know them, and the wonderful culture and beauty that is Botswana, through the sensitive writing of the author, is a real treat, and a cure for what ails you, what ails all of us, what ails the world, even.

Thank you, AMS. May your stories never end!

First Read

4.5 stars. These books are medicine, particularly for the sensitive, introspective soul. If what you really want is for everyone to be kind and love one another, and you want to spend time in the company of characters who do just that, without being cardboard cutouts or predictable, read this series.

In this world, we need 1000x more people like author Alexander McCall Smith, Mma Ramotswe, and all of these characters. Very sad to have read all of the books currently published in this series, although I know more are on the way.

I plan to go all the way back to the first book and reread this series for more soul medicine this summer. The audiobooks, which are all narrated by Lisette Lecat, are all six stars. You can't go wrong reading or listening to these books. Can't recommend them highly enough.

I'll close with a quote:

"Yes, she thought, no amount of wishful thinking could obliterate the hard facts of existence. There were those who prospered, and those who did not. There were those for whom life was easy, not a struggle at all, and those to whom daily existence was painful and humiliating. That was the pain of the world, and it was all around us, washing at the shores of whatever refuges we created for ourselves. She thought of Fanwell, a young man who had very little in this life, and of his dog, who had even less. She could turn away and say that they had nothing to do with her, or she could accept that they had somehow touched her skirt. For that was how she viewed it: we all had a skirt, and those who touched our skirt became our concern."

Yes, that's it, exactly. Thank you, AMS, for your good work.

Susan Johnson says

I was so disappointed when I finished this book. It wasn't disappointment in the book but the fact that it was over. I miss the characters already. I think I would rather spend time with Precious than anyone else. She is truly happy in her life and feels blessed every day. I would just love it if she dropped over for some read bush tea. It would make my day.

This one is about a young woman from Canada who comes back to Botswana where she grew up. There's a stray dog and a powerful theme of forgiveness but the story really doesn't matter. It's the feeling you have when it's over like sitting in front of a roaring fire, drinking hot chocolate and feeling so happy to be alive.

I love this book and series.

Barbara says

The newest client of the "The Number 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" is Susan Peters, a Canadian woman who was born and raised in Botswana. Susan is nostalgic for her early life in the beautiful African country and - producing an old photo - asks Mma Ramotswe to find her childhood home and former nanny, called Rosie.

Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi put a piece in the newspaper asking Rosie to come forward and (of course) several candidates quickly show up. Mma Makutsi - acerbic and skeptical as always - thinks they're all phonies but Mma Ramotswe believes one woman might be the real deal. Inquiries, a house visit, and many cups of tea eventually help resolve the situation - which is a little different than it first appears.

Meanwhile Mr. Polopetsi, a chemistry teacher and part-time detective, has inadvertently involved himself in a ponzi scheme. The naive, good-hearted man has convinced several acquaintances to invest in a shady plan to buy and sell cattle, with the promise of 25% profit. When Mma Ramotswe and Mma Potokwane (director of the orphan farm) confront Mr. Polopetsi with the truth, he's crushed. But Mma Ramotswe tries to make things right - and keep Mr. Polopetsi out of prison.

Mma Ramotswe has one additional concern. Fanwell, who works as a mechanic for Mr. JLB Matekoni, has been adopted by a stray dog. The pooch, named 'Zebra' by Mma Ramotswe's foster children, needs a permanent home.....but where? Mma Ramotswe attempts to work it out.

As usual with this series, Mma Ramotswe uses her intelligence, insight, and compassion to solve problems and Mma Makutsi acts as kind of a Greek chorus - voicing her own quirky views. Some occurrences in the story lead Mma Ramotswe to ponder forgiveness.....a worthy act. However, when Mma Ramotswe avers she'd let criminals off with a warning, I'm taken aback. Perhaps Mma Ramotswe doesn't believe Botswana harbors murderers, rapists, or the like.

This story isn't as humorous as some other entries in the series but one 'problem' did make me laugh. Over time, Mma Makutsi has promoted herself from secretary, to assistant detective, to associate detective, to partner, and finally to 'Co-Director' of the agency (LOL). This leaves Mma Ramotswe with a dilemma. Can she still ask Mma Makutsi to take dictation, make phone calls, type letters, and so on? Mma Ramotswe frets about this continually, but the issue remains unresolved. I'm curious to see how it plays out.

The stories in Alexander McCall Smith's series' are always enjoyable. This book is recommended to people who like cozies, especially fans of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>

David Stone says

A Review by Violet Sephotho, Nominee for Botswana's Woman of the Year

This is Rra Alexander's 17th book about me even though I look younger than I did all those years ago at the Botswana Secretarial College, where I made my first big splash in the business world. I make an appearance in the very first chapter of Precious and Grace because, let's face it, there's nothing very precious or graceful about those two! Boring, big time! It's Violet Sephotho people want to read about!

You see, I have become a big time business consultant on TV and radio, leaving certain people and their No. 1 Ladies Disaster Agency in the dust on the Tlokweng Road. I don't ramble on about the price of cattle or tell boring old stories about Bobonong. To succeed in Botswana today a woman has to be ruthless and flashy, with a modern build. I get right to the point, and if I don't like you--you're fired!

I have to warn you that as usual there are a lot of mysteries to be solved before you get to the exciting Violet stuff. But I learned a few good ideas here from Mr. Poloptese about how to attract investment. And just when you're about to nod off a puff adder strikes and gets your hopes up! I skipped the parts about that dog Zebra. Dogs always seem to growl at me.

Of course, I give the inside of this book five stars even though the title should really be Violet and More Violet. And please don't forget to vote for the most important election of our lifetime, Botswana's Woman of the Year. I have a feeling that this year of all years is my time to get 98 percent of the vote and to put a certain lady with large eyeglasses in her place!

Smitha says

17th book in the series of No.1 Ladies Detective Agency.

This is my comfort read series.

Mma Precious Ramotswe and Mma. Grace Makutsi and their underlings act as quick pick me up whenever I find life tough or depressing.

Have read the initial few books in the series in order .. after that jumped on to this one as I managed to buy it first hand from a flipkart sale for nearly one third the price.

And I love reading paperbacks.

The cover art is beautiful, and intermittently I would stop reading to gaze at it.

In this instalment, a Canadian lady approaches the agency to find the whereabouts of her childhood Nanny. she just remembers the approximate address of her house and her ayah as Rosie.

In 30 years, everything has changed and Botswana has become modern .

Precious and Grace set about the task.

Rather than the main story I love the various parallel incidents in their lives which are anything from hilarious to moving .

I also like the small doses of wit, wisdom and moral education imparted in a simple language by Mma Ramotse .

if I am truthful and Grace only the fist of the story I would have to give it 3 stars.

But all the embellishments make me give 2 more ..

And of course my partiality has a role to play.

♥?♥?♥?♥?♥?

Ivonne Rovira says

In this, the 17th book in a series that began with *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, Botswana's sole detective, Precious Ramotswe, is faced with two difficult assignments: to hunt down the African nursemaid of a white woman who was born in Botswana but returned to Canada with her Canadian aid worker parents as a young child, and to get to the bottom of an apparent Ponzi scheme which has ensnared the hard-working but naïve Mr. Polopetsi, high-school chemistry teacher and part-time employee at the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency.

My sister-in-law and I impatiently await each new volume in this series, and *Precious and Grace* lived up to the anticipation. All the old favorites make an appearance: Precious' kind and loyal husband, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni, Silvia Potokwani, the redoubtable matron of the orphan farm; Charlie and Fanwell, the garage's one-time apprentices; and, of course, Grace Makutsi, the determined and proud recipient of the Botswana Secretarial College's 97 percent distinction, now a wife, mother, and agency co-director. Rounding out the novel are Grace's memories of her late father, the long-suffering and wise Obed Ramotswe, and an encounter with Grace's nemesis Violet Sepotho, who is up to yet more mischief.

As always, the best way to savor Mma Ramotswe's adventures is by listening to the audiobook narrated by Lissette Lecat —always a treat!

Jacki (Julia Flyte) says

This is the 17th installment in the long running series about Precious Ramotswe and her No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency in Botswana. Whenever I start one of these books, the sensation is reminiscent of easing myself into a warm and relaxing bath. Life slows down and my mind turns to idly contemplating subjects as random as whether dogs have souls or the curative power of a cup of tea.

The main storyline in *Precious and Grace* concerns a Canadian woman who spent some of her childhood in Botswana and who comes to the agency hoping to make contact with people that she knew in her childhood. Mma Ramotse and Mma Matkutsi have a difference of opinion as to whether the person that they find is the woman's former nursemaid or an imposter. There are also secondary storylines about Mr Polopetsi becoming involved in a pyramid selling scheme and Fanwell from the garage finding a stray dog. In the last couple of books in this series I felt that the sub-plots had been tossed in almost as an afterthought, but this time they were all worked through well and tied back to the central theme. I was genuinely unsure how the main storyline would resolve itself and interested in what was going to happen.

It strikes me that this series is a kind of updated Aesop's fables, with gentle moral lessons integrated into the story (in this case the focus is on forgiveness and on righting wrongs), but not in such a way that it becomes preachy - rather, it's a gentle approach that just makes you think. Kind of like yoga for the soul.

Rita says

Disappointed

I have been with this series from the very beginning and it has always been a go to series when I needed something that would make the world seem to be a better place. I didn't have that feeling when I finished "Precious and Grace. I felt disappointed.

Alexander McCall Smith writes so many series that he is entitled to not be up to par all the time. The #1 Ladies Detective Agency has been a long series so it is entitled to have one book not be as good as all the others.

"Precious and Grace" was more negative than the rest of the series. The case they were working on for a woman who was from Canada but was born in Botswana and had spent her early childhood in Gaborone, didn't make a lot of sense. In fact it seems as if most of the cases worked on were on the negative side with pat solutions.

Mma Ramotswe was even not quite sure what to do about Mma Makutsi's superior attitude. Mma Makutsi seems to have conveniently forgotten that Precious Ramotswe had founded the agency. There seemed to be more tension than usual between the two.

There is a more recent book in this series that I will need to read sometime before deciding if maybe this series has deteriorated. This is the first book in the long series that I have not been pleased with so I certainly wouldn't write off these books yet.

Marianne says

Precious and Grace is the seventeenth full length novel in the popular No.1 Ladies Detective Agency series by Scottish author, Alexander McCall Smith. This audio version is narrated by the wonderfully listenable Adjoa Andoh. With Grace Makutsi's status in the No.1 Ladies Detective Agency elevated and Precious Ramotswe no longer being her boss, as such, Mma Ramotswe finds her considerable skills of diplomacy and tact are more often required in their case discussions and client meetings.

This is indeed so when a client who has travelled from Canada presents with a somewhat unusual request: Precious and Grace agree to approach the case from quite different angles. Both get results, and both are surprised.

But this is not Mma Ramotswe's only concern: garage mechanic, Fanwell has taken on the care of a dog without the space or means to do so; Mr Polopetsi is involved in a business scheme that has alarm bells ringing in Mma Ramotswe's head; and it seems that Mma Makutsi's nemesis, Violet Sepotho is up to more tricks.

As always, Mma Ramotswe muses on the problems and challenges of life, making wise observations and comments to those near and dear. She philosophises about people we know: family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances and even enemies; about the past; about trusting one's feelings; about whether animals have

souls; about lists. “Lists, she thought, are the stories of our lives; they give a picture of who we are and what we do every day”

“...she reflected on the possibility that young men were a completely alien breed, and that however much you tried to get them to see things the way you saw them, you were destined to fail. And that perhaps part of the secret of leading a life in which you would not always be worrying about things, or complaining about them, was to accept that there were people who just saw things differently from you and always would”

On souls, Mr J L B Matekoni has an opinion: “Old cars have souls. Modern cars ... well, I think the Japanese don’t put souls into them. They save money, perhaps, by not putting in a soul”

This instalment sees some character development in Fanwell, Charlie and even the dreadful Violet. Apart from the rather determined dog, this instalment also features Mr J L B Matekoni’s favourite stew, a puff adder, fat cakes (and some creative rationalising surrounding them), a newspaper story featuring Grace Makutsi, and the obligatory fruit cake. Mma Makutsi’s garrulous shoes are noticeably absent. Another delightful dose of Bostwana.

Precious thoughts on the past: “There were too many people who took the view that the past was bad, that we should rid ourselves of all traces of it as soon as possible. But the past was not bad; some of it may have been less than perfect – there had been cruelties then that we had done well to get rid of – but there had also been plenty of good things. there had been the old Botswana ways, the courtesy and the kindness; there had been the attitude that you should find time for other people and not always be in a desperate rush; there had been the belief that you should listen to other people, should talk to them, rather than spend all your time fiddling with your electronic gadgets; there had been the view that it was a good thing to sit under a tree sometimes and look up at the sky and think about cattle or pumpkins or non-electric things like that”

Una Tiers says

It's nice to sit under a tree and drink tea with this pair of ladies.

Marianne says

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