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Alexander McCall Smith

FAN BULLETIN

Fall/Winter 2008-2009

What's New:

A SPECIAL ONLINE SERIAL

Since September 2008, Alexander McCall Smith has been writing a special online-only serial novel for Telegraph.co.uk. Called *Corduroy Mansions*, the serial will feature new installments every weekday until February 13, 2009. Read the novel, hear Alexander McCall Smith talk about his work, and listen to an audio version of *Corduroy Mansions*, narrated by Andrew Sachs of *Fawlty Towers*, at www.telegraph.co.uk/onlinenovel.

THE NO. 1 LADIES' OPERA HOUSE

Alexander McCall Smith has combined two of his loves—music and Botswana—to establish the No. 1 Ladies' Opera House, a new organization dedicated to the production of small-scale operas in Gaborone. Working with music teacher David Slater, local singers participated in two opening concerts in June of 2008 and are planning a full-scale production in early 2009. The opera house also hosts a coffee shop, where you can order dishes such as Mma Makutsi Pancakes and Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni's Full Breakfast. To find out more, please contact Mrs. Lesley Winton at opera@mccallsmith.com.



MOVIE NEWS

THE NO. 1 LADIES' DETECTIVE AGENCY

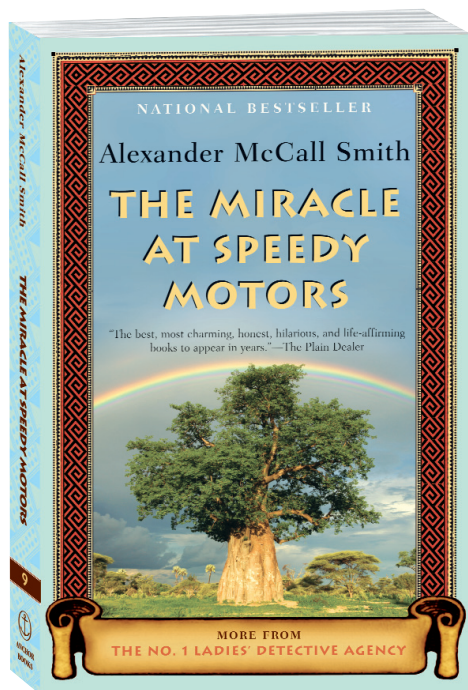
Good news for fans of Mma Ramotswe! On March 29, 2009, HBO will air the two-hour *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* film, directed by the late Anthony Minghella. In addition, the network has produced six one-hour episodes of the show, to be aired as a series on the network. The film's cast—which features soul singer Jill Scott as Precious, Anika Noni Rose as Grace, and Lucian Msamati as J.L.B. Matekoni—has reunited to film the new episodes. Residents of the United Kingdom got a sneak peek this past spring, as the BBC aired the two-hour film over Easter weekend to rave reviews.

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency is the last film ever made by Anthony Minghella, whose other works include *The English Patient* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. In an article for the BBC, Alexander McCall Smith spoke about meeting the filmmaker, saying, "I count myself immensely fortunate that he made this film, and that he made of it such a marvellous combination of humor and feeling."



Photos courtesy Edward Kastenmeier.

The New Books



THE MIRACLE AT SPEEDY MOTORS

Coming soon in paperback from Anchor Books in March 2009

Hardcover available now from Pantheon Books

In the ninth installment, Precious Ramotswe is doing what she does best—helping people with their problems and enjoying the simple pleasures of life.

In *The Miracle at Speedy Motors*, Mma Ramotswe finds herself helping a woman looking for her family. The problem is that the woman doesn't know her real name or whether any of her family members are still alive. Meanwhile, Mma Makutsi is the recipient of a beautiful new bed that

causes more than a few sleepless nights. And, at Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni has come under the influence of a doctor promising a miracle cure for his daughter's medical condition, which Mma Ramotswe finds hard to accept. Nonetheless, Precious Ramotswe deals with these challenges in her usual insightful and good-natured way, discovering in the end that the real miracles in life are often right in front of our eyes.

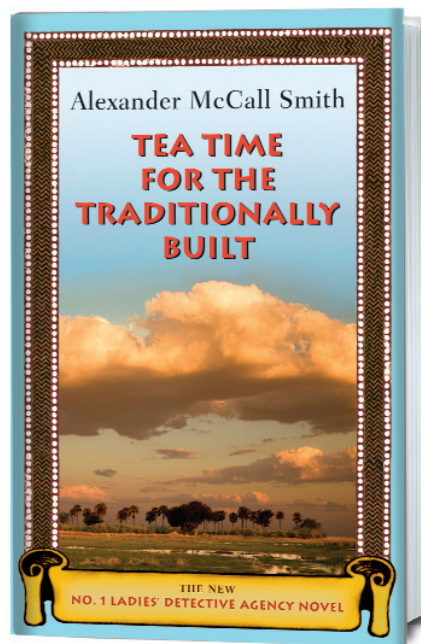
TEA TIME FOR THE TRADITIONALLY BUILT

The new novel, coming in hardcover from Pantheon Books in April 2009

The tenth installment of this universally beloved and bestselling series finds Precious Ramotswe in personal need of her own formidable detection talents.

Mma Ramotswe's ever-ready tiny white van has recently developed a rather disturbing noise. Of course, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni—her estimable husband and one of Botswana's most talented mechanics—is the man to turn to for help. Unfortunately, and without telling Precious, he sells the van and saddles his wife with a new, characterless vehicle. And so she sets out to find the van,

unaware, for the moment, that it has already been stolen from the man who bought it. In the meantime, all is not going smoothly for Mma Makutsi in her engagement to Mr. Phuti Radiphuti. And finally, the proprietor of a local football team has enlisted the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency to help explain its dreadful losing streak: surely someone must be fixing the games, it can't just be a case of unskilled players. As we know, there are few mysteries that can't be solved and fewer problems that can't be fixed when Precious Ramotswe puts her mind to it.



RECIPE CORNER:

Authentic African Tea Party

Plan an authentic African tea for your next No. 1 Ladies' book club meeting! Brew up a pot of red bush tea—commonly sold as rooibos tea—and bake these traditional South African rusks. They are perfect for dipping into your tea, and they'll keep in the cupboard for a crispy snack.

African Teatime Rusks

Adapted from a Tuningi Game Lodge recipe, South Africa

3½ cups flour
1½ cups bran flakes
1 tsp salt
1½ tsp baking powder
9 tbsp butter
¾ cup sugar
½ cup vegetable oil
1 egg
1 cup buttermilk

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Mix flour, bran flakes, salt, and baking powder in a large bowl.
2. Melt the butter, sugar, and oil in a saucepan. Stir until all the sugar is dissolved.
3. Beat the eggs with the buttermilk and add to the melted butter mixture. Add the butter and buttermilk mixture to the dry ingredients and mix well. Fill a greased loaf pan and bake for 50-60 minutes until lightly golden.
4. Remove from loaf pan and let cool. Turn the oven down to 200°F. Cut into slices about one inch thick. Place cut side up on a cooling rack and place back into the oven for eight hours.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISABEL DALHOUSIE



Anyone can have opinions...
Isabel Dalhousie has philosophies.

"She simply found it intellectually exciting to become involved. She wanted to know why things happened. She wanted to know why people did the things they did. She was curious. And what, she wondered, was so wrong with that?"

The Sunday Philosophy Club

"Chocolate involves major philosophical problems,' she said. 'It shows us a lot about temptation and self-control.' She thought for a moment. There was a lot that one might say about chocolate, if one thought about it, 'Yes,' she concluded, 'chocolate is a great test, isn't it?'"

Friends, Lovers, Chocolate

"We have to be aware of others. If we went about concerned with only our own little world, how would we know when there was trouble brewing on the other side of the line?"

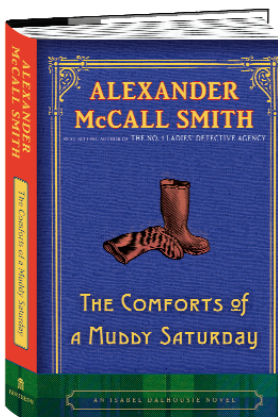
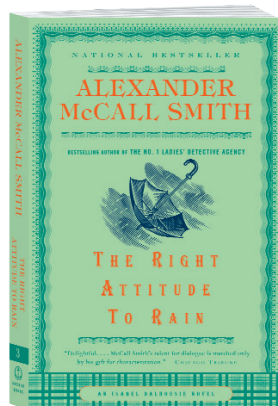
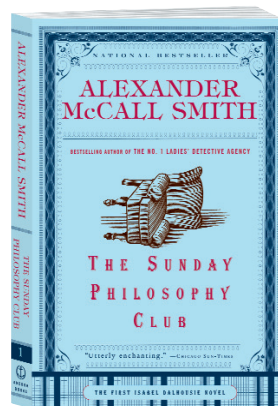
The Right Attitude to Rain

"That, in a way, was the burden of being a philosopher: one knew what one had to do, but it was so often the opposite of what one really wanted to do."

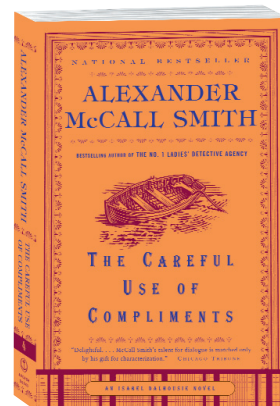
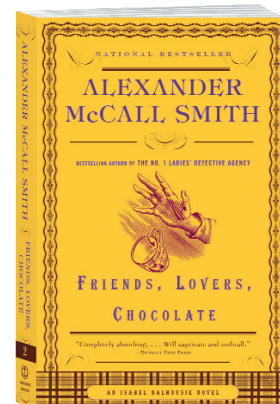
The Careful Use of Compliments

"Have the courage of your convictions, she thought. So what if you're an intermeddler? Intermeddle, and don't feel bad about it."

The Comforts of a Muddy Saturday

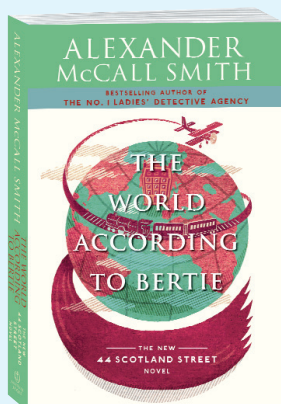


THE ISABEL DALHOUSIE NOVELS



44 SCOTLAND STREET NEWS

Now in paperback, *The World According to Bertie*, the new novel in the series which started as serials in *The Scotsman*. Meet some of the building's most colorful occupants, as only Alexander McCall Smith could have imagined them . . .



Bertie Pollock: A six-year-old prodigy who speaks fluent Italian and plays the saxophone like a professional but dreams of living a normal boy's life of fishing and rugby and not yoga and pink dungarees.

Irene Pollock: Bertie's fantastically pretentious and wildly ambitious mother, who has grand plans for him and her newest son, Ulysses.

Pat: A twentysomething art student who takes a job as a receptionist at the Something Special Gallery in order to make ends meet.

Matthew: The befuddled manager of the Something Special Gallery, still struggling to grow accustomed to his newfound wealth and his changing relationship with his employee, Pat.

Bruce: In between glances in the mirror, Bruce—a narcissistic, rugby-loving, philandering, yet infuriatingly handsome man—a floats from job to job.

To meet these and the other residents of 44 Scotland Street—including Domenica, Big Lou, Angus Lordie, Cyril, Dr. Fairbairn, and young Ulysses Pollock—pick up the latest novel in the series, *The World According to Bertie*, available now.