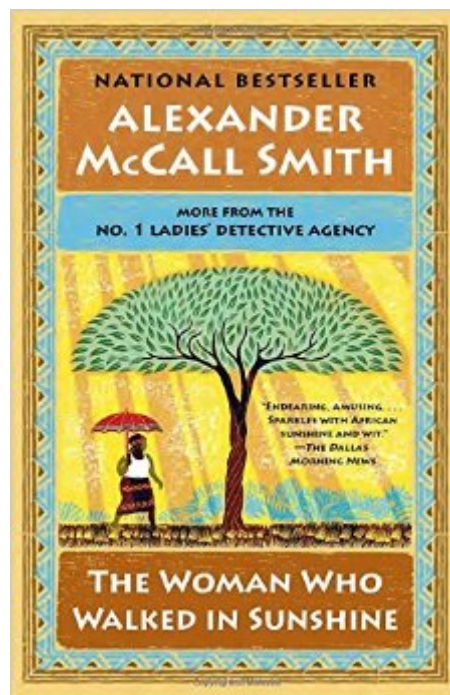


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The Woman Who Walked In Sunshine: No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency (16) (No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency Series)



Synopsis

Precious Ramotswe, the esteemed proprietor of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, now faces her greatest challenge yet: a vacation! Business is slow at the agency "so slow in fact that, for the first time in her distinguished career, Mma Ramotswe has reluctantly agreed to take a holiday. The week of uninterrupted peace is cut short, however, when she meets Samuel, a wayward young boy with a troubled past. Moreover, Mma Ramotswe can't help but wonder how the agency is faring in her absence. Her worries grow when she discovers that Mma Makutsi is handling a rather delicate case. Ultimately, the situation will require Mma Ramotswe to draw upon her kindness, generosity, and good sense, and will serve to remind them all that ordinary human failings should be treated with a large helping of charity and compassion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mma Ramotswe takes a holiday in this book, at the urging of her second-in-command Mma Makutsi, who claims she's perfectly capable of running The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency by herself for the duration. But Ma Ramotswe is secretly full of misgivings. After all, Mma Makutsi is a bit power hungry. Is this a takeover move? And the woman can be tactless. Will she end up offending clients? Office politics in Botswana proves to be funny and fascinating in this latest book on the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency. There's a difficult case to be solved, too, and Ma Ramotswe can't stop herself from getting surreptitiously involved. There are some unforgettable scenes. One involves Mma Ramotswe in combat. She has developed a hilarious method of self-defense using her

considerable body weight. Mma Ramotswe is rather proud of her traditional build, justifiably so in this instance. There is also an unforgettable metaphor. Mma Ramotswe compares basking in the love of her husband to walking in sunshine. Love is a big topic in this book, and it's handled with a delicate touch and without undue sentimentality. The plot is tricky in that appearances sometimes deceive. The plot twists come from unexpected directions. For all these reasons, I'd rank *The Woman Who Walked in Sunshine* among the best of these quirky Botswana mysteries.

We are back in sunny Botswana for the 16th instalment in the No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency series. While the initial books in the series were quite plot driven, it has evolved to a series that is much more about the characters with a thin, almost token, plot thrown in for good measure. Like the others, this is a charming book that left me feeling all warm and fuzzy about life, but I have to say that there isn't a lot to it. Precious Ramotswe is convinced by Mma Makutsi to take a short holiday from work. The idea is that she will have a quiet time relaxing at home, but she finds it difficult to let work go. When Mr Polopetsi comes to her asking for help with a work assignment, she cannot resist the temptation to get involved without Mma Makutsi's knowledge. If, like me, you occasionally find Mma Makutsi annoying, you will find her extremely irritating this time around, although by the end of the book you may be thinking about the risks of jumping to conclusions. There are also a couple of smaller sub-plots but each takes up only a few pages towards the end of the book, which then stops quite abruptly as if Alexander McCall Smith's editor had rung up and said "it'll be fine, just send it now please". What is lovely about these books is that reading them almost feels like taking a holiday. You are transported to a sunny and relaxed country where there is always time to exchange pleasantries or savour a cup of tea. There are also gentle lessons about trusting people and treating them well. The title itself refers to Mma Ramotswe's relationship with Mr J.L.B. Matekoni and how being loved and admired by him is "like walking in sunshine".

I had not read any of the previous books in this series, though my wife had read the first few and seen the HBO miniseries based on the books. It was therefore interesting to see how the author introduced characters and situations without a lot of "exposition". I was also familiar with long-running series getting stale and mechanical and wondered if that was happening here after sixteen books. I am delighted to say that I loved the book, the characters and the writing. There's no obvious exposition, but Smith drops enough clues that the newcomer (such as myself) doesn't feel lost. The story, like most in the series as I understand, is more about personalities and social context than "solving crimes". In fact, in this book there really isn't a crime to be solved - just an

investigation that takes Mma Ramotswe into situations that could be unpleasant but which she handles adroitly. If you have been a regular reader, I am sure you will love this latest book as much as the others. And if you haven't read the others, while I would not ordinarily recommend jumping this far into a series, you should find it enjoyable. Now I need to buy all the past books in the series and catch up!

I'm a longtime fan of the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series by Alexander McCall Smith. I'd read the first books religiously but have missed the last few in the series. It was a delight to read the 16th book, much like visiting with old friends. Precious Ramotswe continues in the distinctive voice, observant, kind, and practical. When her former secretary and former assistant pushes her to go on vacation while dropping hints about how dedicated co-detectives can prove themselves and be promoted further, Precious Ramotswe begins to suspect that Mma Makutsi seeks to edge her out of her own business. I admit that I felt much the same way and hoped that Mma Ramotswe would push back and put her former assistant in her place. The relationship between the two women is complicated and draws you in. But what keeps me fascinated by this world is Mma Ramotswe's big heart and how she loves so unreservedly - which we see often and well in this latest installment of the series.

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