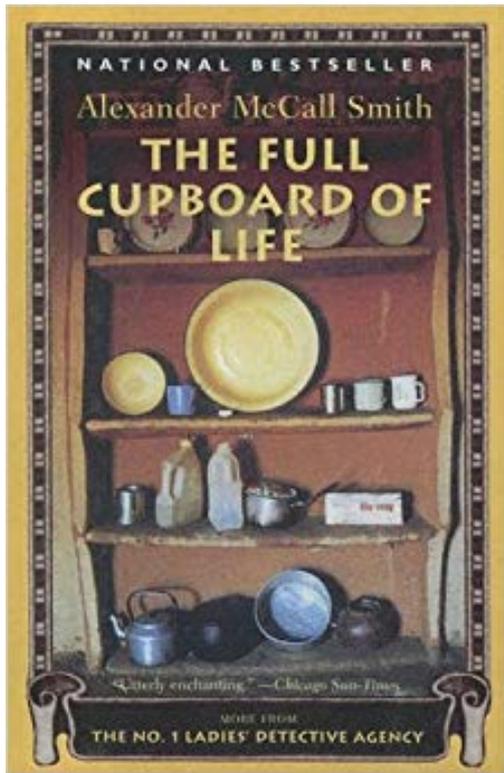


The Full Cupboard of Life (No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency) by Alexander McCall Smith



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Worrying about her upcoming marriage, Precious Ramotswe is confronted by the challenges of running her No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency and an investigation into the would-be suitors of a wealthy woman to determine if any are fortune hunters.



Reviews of the **The Full Cupboard of Life (No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency)** by Alexander McCall Smith

WtePSeLNaGayko

This is a great series, the author is so talented, and the characters are so lovable, but this one isn't my favorite. For one thing (I noticed this in every book of the series I've read), the younger apprentice's character is barely developed (I think they only even mention his name once in the entire series).

There's also (imho) a theme of women submitting to men. Although the women protagonists are smart and strong, when the "good" men in the series make mistakes, the women are typically

expected to fix everything and/or stroke the men's egos. It's unusual for the men to ever admit they were wrong (I can't recall them explicitly saying so in the series).

The author talks a lot about how women manipulate men, which is at times funny, but it can get old. Many conflicts in the books involve women undoing another "manipulative woman's" effect on a "good man." It's as if it's a woman's job to protect men from other women, and that being manipulative is a characteristic of women.

Although there are countless times that men are manipulative, if they're "good men," their manipulations are typically overlooked, excused, and sometimes the women even submit to it BECAUSE the manipulative people are "good men."

Being manipulative is part of the human condition & has nothing to do with gender. There are people who are that way, and people who tend not to be, and there are people of every gender that are manipulative for "good" reasons, versus those who manipulate others to achieve bad/evil ends.

The author makes it more about gender (imho) and seems to excuse it in men if they're "good."

If you like the series, you'll probably like this book. I love the series, but this one isn't my favorite.

Tygralbine

As if this series weren't already replete with characters we love, this volume introduces Mma Grace Makutsi's enthusiastic new dance partner/admirer, Phuti Radiphuti, a stutterer with two left feet with whom nobody else will dance. It's nice to see some romance enter Mma Makutsi's life.

Vareyma

In this series, Alexander McCall Smith establishes a peaceful, hot, beloved corner of Africa. He clearly has a love for Africa. The protagonist is wise and in possession of wiles to get the best result for her clients, and for the community at large. But like all of us, she has some blind spots to her own faults. These books are funny and pleasant to read. I look forward to going to Mma Ramotswa's world, where human folly is problematic, but understandable. These are a palate cleanser for those who love mysteries, but tire of gritty, violent, depressing ones all the time. (I still go back to the g, v, depressing ones, too.)

Vivaral

The 6th entry in this series has plenty of humorous scenes, but they are tempered with some poignant considerations of what life is like for those slightly on the edge of popularity.

Two new characters are introduced. Mr. Popoletsi is hired as a new employee of Speedy Motors and proves himself a worthy addition to our more familiar group of friends. The relationship between Mma Rakutsi and Phuti Radiphuti is told with both tenderness and restraint.

If you're looking for a gentle but interesting book, try any of this series. They always have a calming influence, and help the reader understand what is truly important in life.

Rias

I discovered this series only recently and I can understand why, as I found out, it is such a world-wide success and why Mma Ramotswa has become such an icon. It is not great, ponderous literature -- it is much more than that! The plots are simple but well done; the writing very pleasant. However, in my opinion neither plot nor style, perfectly unobjectionable as they are, are these books' main attraction. The characters are, and their interaction. The people come to life all the time: wise, funny, loyal, weak -- completely human. There are great life lessons to be learned in these apparently simple books, from love for humanity, to the need for forgiveness and respect. Objects, and the land, also play an important and unforgettable role. I barely knew where to find Botswana on the world map before, and now it is so vivid in my mind as if I lived there for ever. One warmly given suggestion: read these books chronologically. You will enjoy them even if you read them in an hapazard order, but if you read them as they were written you will be drawn even more into this jewel of a world.

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