Blue Shoes and Happiness

Why Hasnt Alexander McCall Smith Won Awards For These Books?

In this seventh installment in the internationally bestselling, universally beloved series, there is considerable excitement at the shared premises of the No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency and Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors.

A cobra has been found in Precious Ramotswe’s office. Then a nurse from a local medical clinic reveals to Mma Ramotswe that faulty blood-pressure readings are being recorded there. And it looks as though Aunty Emang, the advice columnist in the local newspaper, may not be what she seems.

It all means a lot of work for Mma Ramotswe and her inestimable assistant, Grace Makutsi, and they are, of course, up to the challenge. But there’s trouble brewing in Mma Makutsi’s own life. Her greedy uncles are demanding an extra-large bride price from her well-to-do fiancé, a man of substance, Phuti Radiphuti, and though money may buy her that fashionably narrow (and uncomfortable) pair of blue shoes, it won’t buy her the happiness that Mma Ramotswe promises her she’ll find in simpler things – in contentment with the world and enough tea to smooth over the occasional bumps in the road.

My Personal Review:
A reader, who is unfamiliar with the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series, to his own detriment, may pick up one of these books and dismiss it based on its marketing or cover. After all, it is natural to judge books by their covers. It is sold as a mystery book but I am not sure if that is the best categorization for these delightful books. Blue Shoes and Happiness, like the rest of the books in the series, will not disappoint readers. It is simple, yet filled with wisdom and authors wit and humor.
Blue Shoes deals with many issues from blackmail to dieting and shopping. I am amazed how much is packed in this fairly short book that can be read in one day. Blue Shoes, like the rest, is delightful. If you are new to this series, you could certainly start with any of these books since the author fills the readers with important events that happened to the main characters. However, I recommend starting in the beginning. What is amazing is that despite the setting of the book in Botswana, a country that few in the US are familiar with, the issues are incredibly familiar and are universal.

Whether you are interested in philosophy, psychology, traveling or are merely looking for an entertaining read, you will not be disappointed with Blue Shoes or any of the other books in this series (I have not read the Husband one yet). Having raved about this book, I must admit that the series is getting repetitive and perhaps it is time for Smith to move on. I understand he needs to refresh readers memories by repeating what happened in the past but as the books keep getting added on (he has written 8 so far), this gets more and more tedious. Smith is such an outstanding author that he appears to do this effortlessly but still I wish he would get done with the series.

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