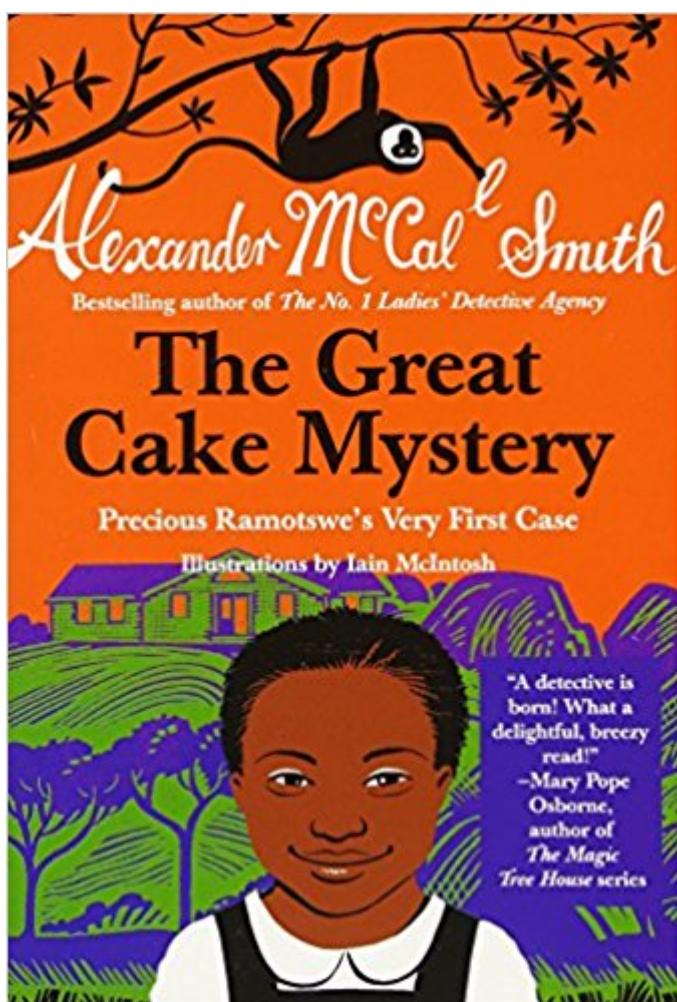


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# The Great Cake Mystery: Precious Ramotswe's Very First Case (Precious Ramotswe Mysteries For Young Readers)



## Synopsis

THE NO. 1 LADIES' DETECTIVE AGENCY - Young Readers Fans around the world adore the bestselling No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, the basis of the HBO TV show, and its proprietor Precious Ramotswe, Botswana's premier lady detective. In this charming series, Mma Ramotswe navigates her cases and her personal life with wisdom, and good humor—not to mention help from her loyal assistant, Grace Makutsi, and the occasional cup of tea. Have you ever said to yourself, Wouldn't it be nice to be a detective? This is the story of an African girl who says just that. Her name is Precious. When a piece of cake goes missing from her classroom, a traditionally built young boy is tagged as the culprit. Precious, however, is not convinced. She sets out to find the real thief. Along the way she learns that your first guess isn't always right. She also learns how to be a detective.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 720L (What's this?)

Series: Precious Ramotswe Mysteries for Young Readers (Book 1)

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Anchor; Reprint edition (April 3, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307743896

ISBN-13: 978-0307743893

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.3 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 119 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #51,397 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa #355 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Girls & Women #413 in Books > Children's Books > Mysteries & Detectives

Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Adult fans of Smith's No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series will be queuing up to give this prequel of sorts to the children they know. This series starter introduces the

author's heroine, Precious Ramotswe, as a young girl solving her first case. Someone has been stealing treats from her friends at school, and suspicion swirls around a chubby boy named Poloko. Encouraged by her father, who has noted Precious' powers of deduction, the sleuth decides to follow her instincts and prove Poloko innocent. The story is simply told—Smith has previous experience with children's books with the *Akimbo* series—and it will work well for children new to the mystery genre. Adding to the appeal are McIntosh's wonderful graphic illustrations done in red and black. A map of Botswana and drawings of the flora, fauna, and settings mentioned in the text will give readers a clear picture of Precious' world. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Parents who devour the *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* books will likely foist this upon plenty of agreeable young readers. Those were international bestsellers; this could well have the same future. Grades 2-4. --Karen Cruze --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

“A detective is born! What a delightful, breezy read!” Mary Pope Osborne, bestselling author of *The Magic Tree House* series—“Told with an innocence that will captivate young readers, *The Great Cake Mystery* is a kind-hearted, feel-good story for all. Loved it!” Graham Salisbury, author of *Under the Blood-Red Sun* and the *Calvin Coconut* series—“Kids will love this kind and clever new detective. They’ll love the mystery, and they might even love the thieves. I look forward to more!” Patricia Reilly Giff, award-winning author of *Wild Girl* and other books—“Good for kids who like mysteries and stories about other cultures and friendship all packed into one.” TIME for Kids magazine—“Stunning artwork. . . . A compelling plot and interesting secondary characters, especially classmates who are quick to make unfounded accusations and their teacher, who provides wisdom just when it is needed, will leave readers wanting more. One case where an adaptation from an adult book is as much fun to read as the original.” Kirkus Reviews, starred review—“This mini mystery and its jaw-dropping illustrations will please proto-detectives, both large and small. . . . What [McCall Smith]’s done with *The Great Cake Mystery* is unique. . . . His fans will pluck it up like so many of his other books. . . . A really fun read.” School Library Journal—“Bold and striking, McIntosh’s chunky, two-color woodcutlike pictures present evocative images of the African setting. This is a story, and a heroine, with impressive dimension.” Publishers Weekly, starred review

Alexander McCall Smith is most famous for his "No. 1 Ladies Detective Series." However, Smith has been writing books for children for a very long time. Always a terrific children's book writer, Smith decides this time to show the origins of his most popular and famous protagonist. In this wonderful children's book, Alexander McCall Smith goes backward in time to reveal the very inception of Mma Precious Ramotswe's origins as the great detective that she became. In this book, Mma Ramotswe's very first detective case is described. Apparently, the famous female detective had long been thinking about her future, even before this mystery found its way to her field of vision. In this book Precious (as she is not really a "Mma" yet, but only a child in school, finds herself trying to figure out who is stealing other children's sweet treats. Several incidents of theft have occurred in the schoolhouse. The children are quick to blame a "rather round boy" for the thefts. Yet, Precious Ramotswe is not so quick to place blame. She believes it is important and even necessary for one to have proof of an indiscretion before jumping to a conclusion as to who the thief may be. In accordance with her beliefs, Precious designs a plan to catch the thief. It is a plan of great originality and more than that, it works. The culprit is exposed. Yet as is usual for Mr. Smith's books of mystery and imagination, he does not neglect his ethical elements which are always a concern for this brilliant author's books. As an expert in ethics, Smith concentrates on the ethical or unethical behavior of some children. After all, children who act unethically will probably grow up to be unethical adults. Therefore, why not look to the very roots of ethical and appropriate social behavior at tender ages to try and figure out why some people turn out to be unethical adults. This book is truly no exception and Mr. Smith not only takes great care and pains to illustrate this in his story, but in an unusual "Note" to his readers at the end of the book, he makes this aspect of his plot perfectly clear; just in case a reader may have missed it while reading this wonderful children's story. He explains that "... of course the issues that arise in that context are the same as those that arise in an adult mystery: honesty and dishonesty, friendship, suspicion and so on." While all of Smith's books pay attention to ethical behavior, it is continually surprising that so many readers and reviewers seem to overlook this aspect of this brilliant author's novels. But in the context of this children's story, Smith makes it near impossible to miss these elements. And for those who actually still miss it, he writes his note to the reader at the end of the book so it is just not possible for them to have overlooked the aspects of ethical behavior in life at all ages and in all places. The book is very highly recommended to readers of every age, from 4 years old to 104 years old. In addition, the book has tremendous appeal because of the extensive success of his "No. 1 Ladies Detective Series" which was even made into a television series on cable TV. For those readers who enjoy mystery stories

and for those readers who have enjoyed Alexander McCall Smith's adult novels and mysteries, this book puts everything in perspective. For lest we forget, in the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah states: "... and a little child shall lead them." Do not miss the opportunity to read this book to yourselves as well as to your children and grandchildren. It is a wonderful story with terrific ethical lessons to teach.

Love all of these Precious Ramotswe's stories for young readers! I have all of the adult Precious stories and savor them. These stories will encourage children to be curious about the world around them and also show that KINDNESS is always the best path to follow!

Even for pre-adolescents, McCall Smith never disappoints. I love his writing style, for younger readers, which still preserves the excellent form able to be executed only by AMcS: descriptive, intriguing, and gently amusing. I was surprised that the whole thing was over in about the time it took to read only a chapter of one of his regular books. I had hoped to get a more lasting experience for \$6. I suppose that for a beautiful, giftable, hardback book with lovely African etching prints such a book would be well worth the price; mine, however, was simply a Kindle download. When I buy more of these, they will all be the hardback versions, if possible.

I didn't realize this is a children's book until after I ordered it, but it's perfect for a young relative. A cute story - of course I read it.

Lovely story! Great for teaching children they shouldn't tease others in a hurtful manner. This is our Precious as a child--already caring about others and already realizing she was a detective. If you have read the books about Precious Ramotswe, you will enjoy this short tale. Read it to your children and grandchildren.

Here's a gentle tale told for children - but which age of little girls? It's a mystery whose clue is given in its illustrations. Precious is the star in this moral story set in a Botswanan school. I got the feeling that the author would love to go back to the time and the place of his younger days. "Don't draw wrong conclusions based on too few clues", I hear him say. The end is a tiny surprise, but most of the problem-solving is pretty well spelled out. The author must have had a special child in mind when he told the story. But who is its reader?

Having read and loved all of Smith's books for adults, I decided to purchase the Kindle version to read with my 7 year old daughter. We were not disappointed. The book is short, but very well written and a nice introduction to a setting unfamiliar to her. Young Precious is perfectly depicted, and the mystery itself has a fun and creative solution. Highly recommended, as are all of this wonderful author's writings. (If you have not seen his website, do look! You can sign up for an email list to receive periodic updates about his fascinating and extraordinarily busy life! It is hard to believe one person can accomplish as much as Smith does!). The cute illustrations showed up nicely on the Kindle, though I haven't seen the paper version so have no basis of comparison.

Alexander McCall Smith's series "No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency" books are among my very favorite books. Now he's done it for young readers. Okay, so I'm not young. I don't care. I hurried to purchase this book because I am such a fan, and now I will start my grandkids on the series (only after I read it first!). Underneath the simple and entertaining plots in all McCall's books of this genre are some of life's great pieces of wisdom. And that's what calls me to a book or a series -- let there be wisdom underneath entertainment, a few good laughs and a few good cries, and I am happy. I am definitely happy now.

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