

Book review

Do you find there are times when you need to escape from being trapped in Lockdown? I find a “feel good read” - nothing too serious or harrowing can fulfil that desire. However, that might be a rather disparaging comment for Alexander McCall Smith’s books which I have recently become hooked on. You may be familiar with his work from the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series. These have been broadcast on Radio and Television and are set in Botswana.

However, as an Edinburgh resident, he has written two series based on that lovely, old city. The series “44 Scotland Street.” is situated in a busy, bohemian corner of Edinburgh’s New Town. The characters are the flatmates living there. The books are dry, funny and extremely entertaining. As you start reading the first book, you are introduced to a variety of characters. Pat is in her second gap year and a source of worry to her parents. Does this sound familiar from our own student days or was it a case, as for my parents, ‘out of sight, out of mind’?

Bruce is a narcissist concerned with his looks and the impression he makes.

Irene, a dominant woman, who chairs a book club and creates a full timetable for her five-year-old son including Italian, saxophone lessons and visits to a psychologist. She is married to Steve, who mildly objects to the regime. Bertie longs to be 18 when he has freedom to choose.

Domenica has a mysterious job and is an observer of human nature.

Angus Lordie is an artist and is devoted to his dog, Cyril and regularly visits Big Lou’s coffee shop. She has a succession of unsuitable, it is thought by some, man friends. All these characters bump into each other in some way.

I get involved, vicariously with all the characters and can’t wait to find the next book when the Library’s reopened.

Rosemary Elliot