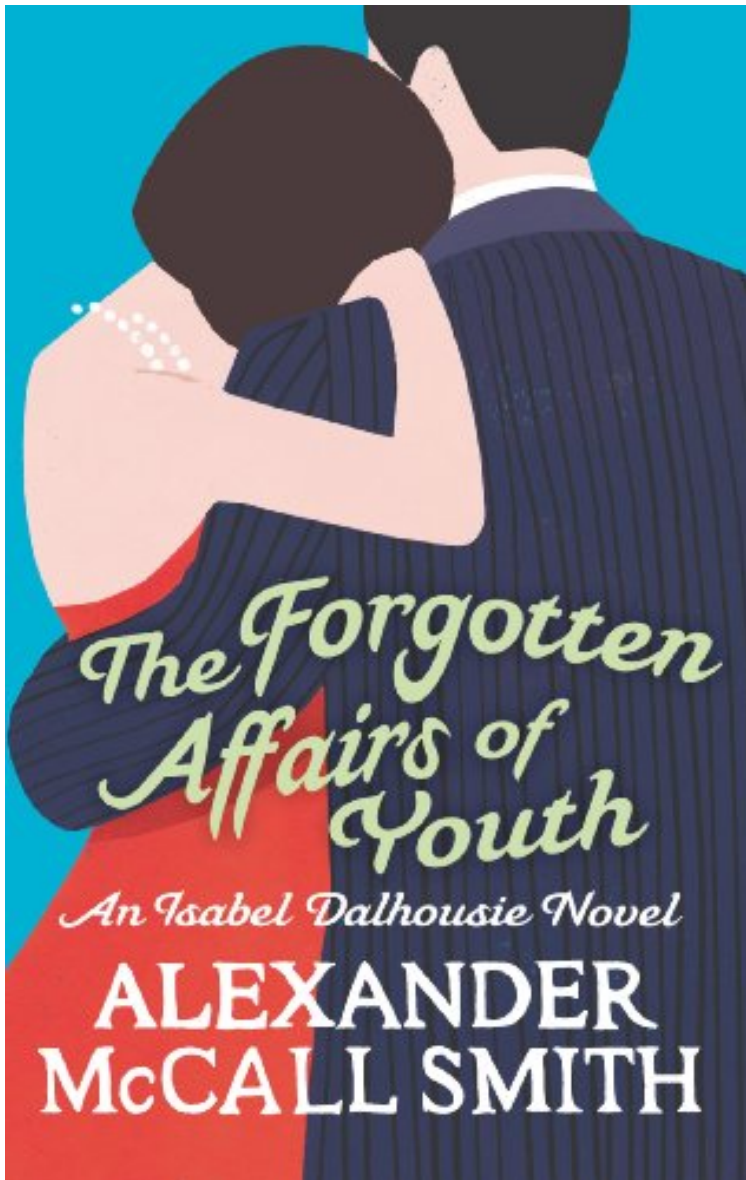


[Download free ebook] File size: 69.Mb

# The Forgotten Affairs Of Youth: An Isabel Dalhousie Novel



*Par Alexander McCall Smith*  
audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF /  
ePub / DOC

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #137952 dans eBooksPubli le: 2011-09-01Sorti le: 2011-09-01Format: Ebook Kindle

[Download free ebook] The Forgotten Affairs Of Youth: An Isabel Dalhousie Novel

**Par Alexander McCall Smith : The Forgotten Affairs Of Youth: An Isabel Dalhousie Novel** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Forgotten Affairs Of Youth: An Isabel Dalhousie Novel:

Download

Read Online

## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurHappy with her husband-to-be and beloved son, Isabel Dalhousie has feelings about parenthood that grow more tender daily. So when Jane, a visiting academic adopted and sent to Australia as a baby, asks for help in tracing her Scottish origins, she cannot refuse.However, habitually upright Isabel finds herself beset by temptation - for instance, to be suspicious of Professor Lettuce's latest subterfuge, and of her niece Cat's weakness for the wrong man. And when the search for Jane's parents turns troubling, she

can hardly prevent herself from interfering too forcefully in family secrets. As she steers a course between love and laissez-faire, our philosopher heroine succeeds in resisting all temptations but those which must be answered, and teases a solution from every problem. Extrait

By the time she got back to the house, having been interrupted on the way back by bumping into a garrulous neighbour, the morning was already almost over. For Isabel, the watershed was always eleven-thirty; that was the point at which if nothing was achieved, then nothing would be, the point at which one had to think about lunch, now just an hour away. Since Charlie had started going to his playgroup, the mornings had become even shorter, as he had to be fetched shortly after noon, and it took ten minutes to get him back and another ten minutes to get him changed out of his morning clothes; by this time, he would be covered in finger paint, crumbs, pieces of a curious modelling substance much approved of by the playgroup authorities, grains of sand from the sandpit and, very occasionally, what looked like specks of blood. Boys, it seemed to Isabel, were magnets for dirt and detritus, and the only solution, if one were wanted, was frequent changes of clothing. Or one could throw up ones hands and allow them to get dirtier through the day and then hose them down metaphorically, of course in the early evening. Isabel opted to change Charlie, and so his morning clothes, once abandoned, were replaced with afternoon clothes. She decided that she rather liked the idea of having afternoon clothes, even if one were not a two-year-old. Changing into ones afternoon clothes could become something of a ritual, rather like changing for dinner which so few people did any more. And the afternoon clothes themselves could be the subject of deliberation and chosen with care; they would be more loose-fitting than ones morning clothes, more autumnal in shade, perhaps clothes that would reflect the lengthening of shadows and sit well with the subtle change in light that comes after three; russet clothes, comfortable linen, loose-fitting collars and sleeves. You thinking? It was Isabels housekeeper, Grace. She had worked in the house when Isabels father was still alive, and had been kept on by Isabel. It would have been impossible to ask Grace to leave even if Isabel had wanted to do so; she came with the house and had naturally assumed that the house could not be run without her. Isabel had felt vaguely apologetic about having a housekeeper it seemed such an extravagant, privileged thing to do, but a discussion with her friend, Peter Stevenson, had helped. What good would it do if you were to stop that particular item of expenditure? Peter said. All it would mean was that Grace would be out of a job. What would it achieve? But I feel embarrassed, said Isabel. Somebody of my age doesnt need a housekeeper. People will think Im lazy. Peter was too perceptive to swallow that. Thats not it, is it? Whats worrying you is that people will think that youre well-off, which you are. So why not just accept it? You use your money generously I know that. Carry on like that and forget what you imagine people think about you. Its not an actual sin to have money. The sin exists in using it selfishly, which you dont. Oh well, said Isabel. Exactly. Now Grace stood in the doorway of Isabels workroom, a bucket in hand, on her way to performing the daily chore of washing down the Victorian encaustic-tile floor in the entrance hall. Isabel was not sure that this floor had to be washed every day, but Grace had always done it and would have resisted any suggestion that she change her routine. Now Graces question hung in the air. She often asked Isabel whether she was thinking; it was almost an accusation. I suppose I am thinking. But not about work, I must admit. Isabel, who was seated at her desk, gave a despairing glance at the piles of paper before her. Im afraid that Ive accomplished very little this morning. Me too, said Grace. Ive done none of the ironing yet, Im afraid. All those shirts of Jamies. Leave them, said Isabel. Jamie can iron them himself. Its very therapeutic for men to iron. Therapeutic for women, that is. Grace shook her head. Ill do them later this afternoon. She put down the bucket. Where does the time go? Do you ever ask yourself that? Constantly, said Isabel. As most people do. She smiled. Mind you, how much of our time, do you think, is spent asking ourselves where the time goes? Isabel remembered that it was a Friday, which meant that Grace would have spent the previous evening at one of her spiritualist meetings. She enjoyed hearing about these, as Grace was always prepared to give a candid assessment of the visiting medium. The previous week the visiting medium had been from Glasgow and had made contact with spirits who voiced an interesting, if somewhat unusual, complaint. He said that there were a number of spirits trying to get through. He said that that they were all from Glasgow. Isabel had raised an eyebrow. Do spirits live in particular places? I thought that the whole point about being disembodied is that you rose above constraints of place. Have I got it wrong? Grace shook her head. Spirits often hang about the places that were special to them before they crossed over, she said. He said that these spirits wanted to get back to Glasgow because they werent happy in Edinburgh. A likely story! snorted Isabel. My feelings too, Grace had replied. Now, Isabel asked about the previous evening. Was the medium any good, or at least better than the man who contacted the unhappy Glaswegian spirits? Much better, said Grace. He was one of our regulars.

We had him about four months ago and he was really good. He saw somebodys husband clear as day, he said. I was sitting next to the woman and I comforted her. It was very moving. Isabel said nothing. The fundamental premises of Graces spiritualist meetings might not have withstood rigorous, rational examination, but there was little doubt in her mind about the solace that they gave. And what was wrong with anything that gave comfort to lives bereft of it? Yes, Grace continued. This medium hes called Mr. Barr; I dont know his rst name, Im afraid he works in a bank. In the back room, I think; hes not a teller or anything like that. Anyway, he has a real talent for getting through to the other side. You can see it in his eyes; he just has that look to him you know what I mean? Isabel did. The light Exactly, said Grace. Its the light that shines from the eyes. Theres no mistaking it and he had it. It was like . . . She searched for an analogy, and then decided, Like a lighthouse. Isabel struggled with the image. Lighthouse eyes would presumably send forth beams at intervals, which would create a rather odd impression, she felt, especially at night, and if such people lived by the sea . . . He said something very interesting, Grace continued. He said that he was getting a strong message from somebody who had been a stockbroker in Edinburgh in his lifetime. He was now on the other shore and wanted us to know that everything would be all right. Thats reassuring, said Isabel. I think he was talking about the countrys economy. He said that we shouldnt worry it was going to be all right. Isabel raised an eyebrow. I wonder how he knows? Grace assumed a rather superior expression. They know, she said. We may not understand how they know, but the important thing is that they know. Its to do with time. Time has a different meaning in the spirit world. Isabel did not contradict this; she knew there was little point. If asked to justify her claims about the world beyond, Grace tended to shelter behind the idea that there were some forms of knowledge that somebody like Isabel simply could not grasp. Skepticism closes the mind, she would say. Like a trap. Grace continued with her report. He became quite specific, you know. He mentioned a particular company that he said would do well. He said that all the conditions were right for this to happen. Isabel expressed her surprise. A tip? An investment tip? No, said Grace. It was not like that at all. The spirit was just sharing something with us. He was obviously happy that this company would do well and he wanted us to share his happiness. Isabel hesitated for a moment. Graces meeting must have been rich in comic possibilities, with the medium issuing what amounted to a stock-market prediction, and some of those attending, perhaps, discreetly writing down the details. What company? she asked on impulse. West of Scotland Turbines, said Grace. Youll see their shares in the paper. Look at the stock-market page. So they exist? Yes, of course they exist. I looked them up. They make turbines for hydroelectric schemes. Grace appeared to feel that they had spent long enough on turbines and went on to say something about needing new scouring liquid for the upstairs shower, which was becoming mildewed. She looked at Isabel slightly reproachfully, as if she were responsible for the mildew. Isabel thought: Its not my fault, but Grace will always blame me. Then Grace said, Oh, somebody phoned while you were out. I asked for her name, but she just left a number for you to call back. Its in the basket. Some people dont give their names, which is odd, I think. Its as if theyve got something to hide . . . She examined Isabel as if she were conniving in, or at least condoning, a whole series of anonymous calls. Then she continued, She sounded Australian. It was the woman whom Cat had met. Isabel glanced at her watch: there was time to return the call before she went off to collect Charlie. That would mean, of course, that she would have done no work at all that morning, and would probably do very little that afternoon. Did it matter? Would the world be changed if the next edition of the of Applied Ethics did not come out on time? The answer, of course, was that it would make very little difference a humbling thought. Isabel rose from her desk and made her way into the kitchen. If Grace wanted to leave her a note, there was a small basket on top of the fridge in which notes were placed. There was one now, with a number scribbled on it in pencil. Underneath the number, Grace had written: woman. Isabel smiled; she was reminded of her father, who had once said to her, Dont write or say any more than you have to. Just dont. Or think, perhaps? Isabel took the note back to her study. There she wrote on it West of Scotland Turbines, and then picked up the telephone. *Revue de presse* Praise for *The Forgotten Affairs of Youth* No matter the philosophical twist [Isabel] puts on her actions, it comes back to doing the right thing. McCall Smith has produced an endearing, intelligent and kindly character, which leads a reader to imagining him as having similarly charming traits, both human and literary. *Charleston Post and Courier* Because both Isabel and Jane are philosophers, discussions on the nature of truth also arise especially when that elusive creature seems to be antithetical to love. In McCall Smiths trademark voice, these conflicts play out in civil conversation, delivered in a naturalistic style that conveys both these womens priorities. . . . Readers get to soak up the cozy atmosphere of this Scottish university town and McCall Smiths gentle good will. . . . Isabel once again proves herself civilized company for cold winter nights. *The Boston Globe* This totally absorbing

novel has as its primary focus the grip of the past, as Isabel helps a woman given up for adoption find her biological father. Isabel is everything you'd want in a philosopher, but she is also quirky and witty and made more human by the longing she still sometimes feels for a beautiful but bad love in her past. Far from being Utopian, *The Forgotten Affairs of Youth* is filled with both spires and spikes, like Edinburgh itself. Booklist (starred review) You needn't be a series-long admirer of Isabel Dalhousie to be beguiled by this curious philosopher and casual sleuth . . . Isabel believes only the examined life is worth living, and fearlessly so . . . It makes [her] a heroine worth following, even through this quiet, more reflective foray. Publishers Weekly A look inside the hearts and minds of our friends in Edinburgh . . . A real treat. The Cleveland Plain Dealer The well-trod streets and worn stone walls of an ancient, elegant city are in Isabel's very DNA. . . . Gentle, humorous, charming Alexander McCall Smith invariably takes an unvarnished but kindly snapshot of modern society and the result, every time, is entertaining and enchanting reading about characters you think you know and wish you did. Las Vegas Journal Praise for the Isabel Dalhousie series A world where humor is gentle, suffering is acknowledged but not foregrounded, and efforts to do good are usually rewarded. It's a wonderful place to visit, even if we don't get to live there. The Washington Post McCall Smith's contemporary cozies have proved that crimes need not be punishable by death to provide a satisfying read . . . A genteel, wisdom-filled entertainment. Los Angeles Times Endearing . . . Offers tantalizing glimpses of Edinburgh's complex character and a nice, long look into the beautiful mind of a thinking woman. The New York Times Book McCall Smith's talent for dialogue is matched only by his gift for characterization. It's hard to believe that he could make up a character as complex and unique as Isabel. She is by turns fearless, vulnerable, headstrong, and insecure, but always delightful. Chicago Tribune From the Hardcover edition.