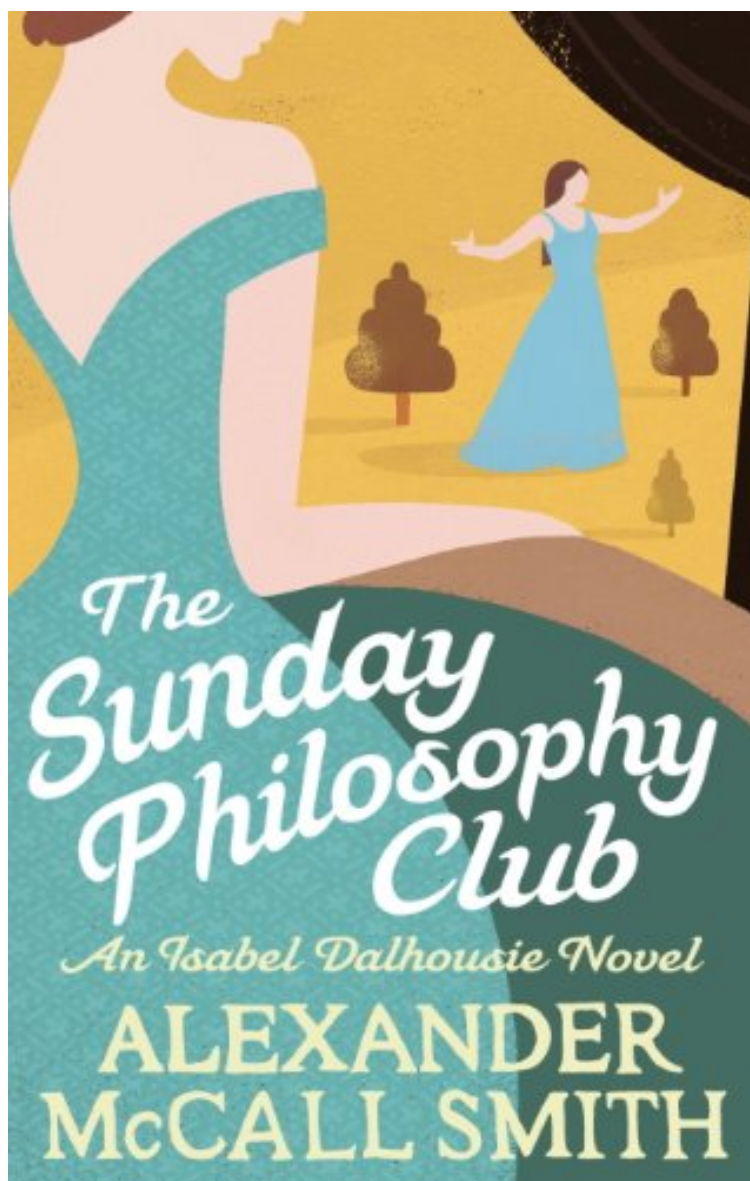


(Download pdf ebook) File size: 34.Mb

The Sunday Philosophy Club



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

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #119006 dans eBooksPubli le: 2008-10-02Sorti le: 2008-10-02Format: Ebook Kindle

(Download pdf ebook) The Sunday Philosophy Club

Par Alexander McCall Smith : The Sunday Philosophy Club before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sunday Philosophy Club:

Download

Read Online

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAmateur sleuth Isabel Dalhousie is a philosopher who also uses her training to solve unusual mysteries. Isabel is Editor of the of Applied Ethics - which addresses such questions as 'Truth telling in sexual relationships' - and she also hosts The Sunday Philosophy Club at her house in Edinburgh. Behind the city's Georgian facades its moral compasses are spinning with greed, dishonesty and murderous intent.

Instinct tells Isabel that the young man who tumbled to his death in front of her eyes at a concert in the Usher Hall didn't fall. He was pushed.With Isabel Dalhousie Alexander McCall Smith introduces a new and pneumatic female sleuth to tackle murder, mayhem - and the mysteries of life. As her hero WH Auden maintained, classic detective fiction stems from a desire for an uncorrupted Eden which the detective, as an

agent of God, can return to us. But then Isabel, being a philosopher, has a thing or two to say about God as well. Extrait Chapter One Isabel Dalhousie saw the young man fall from the edge of the upper circle, from the gods. His flight was so sudden and short, and it was for less than a second that she saw him, hair tousled, upside down, his shirt and jacket up around his chest so that his midriff was exposed. And then, striking the edge of the grand circle, he disappeared headfirst towards the stalls below. Her first thought, curiously, was of Auden's poem on the fall of Icarus. Such events, said Auden, occur against a background of people going about their ordinary business. They do not look up and see the boy falling from the sky. I was talking to a friend, she thought. I was talking to a friend and the boy fell out of the sky. She would have remembered the evening, even if this had not happened. She had been dubious about the concert—a performance by the Reykjavik Symphony, of which she had never heard—and would not have gone had not a spare ticket been pressed upon her by a neighbour. Did Reykjavik really have a professional symphony orchestra, she wondered, or were the players amateurs? Of course, even if they were, if they had come as far as Edinburgh to give a late spring concert, then they deserved an audience; they could not be allowed to come all the way from Iceland and then perform to an empty hall. And so she had gone to the concert and had sat through a first half which comprised a romantic combination of German and Scottish: Mahler, Schubert, and Hamish McCunn. It was a warm evening—unseasonably so for late March—and the atmosphere in the Usher Hall was close. She had come lightly dressed, as a precaution, and was glad that she had done so as the temperature in the grand circle inevitably climbed too high. During the interval she had made her way downstairs and had enjoyed the relief of the cooler air outside, eschewing the crush of the bar with its cacophony of conversation. She would find people she knew there, of course; it was impossible to go out in Edinburgh and not see anybody, but she was not in the mood for conversation that evening. When the time came to go back in, she toyed for a few moments with the idea of missing the second half, but she always felt inhibited from any act suggesting a lack of concentration or, worse still, of seriousness. So she had returned to her seat, picked up the programme from where she had left it on the armrest next to her, and studied what lay ahead. She took a deep intake of breath. Stockhausen! She had brought with her a set of opera glasses—so necessary even in the moderate heights of the grand circle. With these trained on the stage so far down below, she scrutinised each player one by one, an activity she could never resist in concerts. One did not stare at people through binoculars normally, but here in the concert hall it was permitted, and if the binoculars strayed to the audience once in a while, who was to notice? The strings were unexceptional, but one of the clarinetists, she noticed, had a remarkable face: high cheekbones, deep-set eyes, and a chin that had been cleaved, surely, by an axe. Her gaze dwelt on him, and she thought of the generations of hardy Icelanders, and Danes before them, that had laboured to bring forth this type: men and women who scratched a living from the thin soil of upland farms; fishermen who hunted cod in steel-grey waters; women who struggled to keep their children alive on dried fish and oatmeal; and now, at the end of all this effort, a clarinetist. She laid aside the opera glasses and sat back in her seat. It was a perfectly competent orchestra, and they had played the McCunn with gusto, but why did people still do Stockhausen? Perhaps it was some sort of statement of cultural sophistication. We may come from Reykjavik, and it may be a small town far from anywhere, but we can at least play Stockhausen as well as the rest of them. She closed her eyes. It was impossible music, really, and it was not something a visiting orchestra should inflict on its hosts. For a short while she considered the idea of orchestral courtesy. Certainly one should avoid giving political offence: German orchestras, of course, used to be careful about playing Wagner abroad, at least in some countries, choosing instead German composers who were somewhat more . . . apologetic. This suited Isabel, who disliked Wagner. The Stockhausen was the final item on the programme. When at last the conductor had retired and the clapping had died down—not as warm as it might have been, she thought; something to do with Stockhausen—she slipped out of her seat and made her way to the ladies' room. She turned on a tap and scooped water into her mouth—the Usher Hall had nothing so modern as a drinking fountain—and then splashed some on her face. She felt cooler, and now made her way out onto the landing again. It was at this point, though, that Isabel caught sight of her friend Jennifer standing at the bottom of the short flight of stairs that led into the grand circle. She hesitated. It was still uncomfortably warm inside, but she had not seen Jennifer for over a year, and she could hardly walk past without greeting her. Isabel made her way through the crowds. "I'm waiting for David," Jennifer said, gesturing towards the grand circle. "He lost a contact lens, would you believe it, and one of the usherettes has lent him a torch to go and look for it under his seat. He lost one on the train through to Glasgow and now he's done it again." They chatted as the last of the crowd made its way down the stairs behind them. Jennifer, a handsome woman, in her early forties—like Isabel—was wearing a red suit on

which she had pinned a large gold brooch in the shape of a fox's head. Isabel could not help but look at the fox, which had ruby eyes, and seemed to be watching her. Brother Fox, she thought. So like Brother Fox. After a few minutes, Jennifer looked anxiously up the stairs. "We should go and see if he needs help," she said irritably. "It'll be an awful nuisance if he's lost another one." They took a few steps up the short set of stairs and looked down towards the place where they could make out David's back, hunched behind a seat, the light of the torch glinting between the seating. And it was at that moment, as they stood there, that the young man fell from the layer above—silently, wordlessly, arms flailing as if he were trying to fly, or fend off the ground—and then disappeared from view. For a brief moment they stared at each other in mutual disbelief. And then, from below, there came a scream, a woman's voice, high-pitched; and then a man shouted and a door slammed somewhere. Isabel reached forward and seized Jennifer's arm. "My God!" she said. "My God!" From where he had been crouching, Jennifer's husband straightened up. "What was that?" he called to them. "What happened?" "Somebody fell," said Jennifer. She pointed at the upper circle, at the point where the top layer joined the wall. "From up there. He fell." They looked at one another again. Now Isabel moved forward to the edge of the circle. There was a brass rail running along the parapet, and she held on to this as she peered over. Below her, slumped over the edge of a seat, his legs twisted over the arms of the neighbouring seats, one foot, she noticed, without a shoe, but stockinged, was the young man. She could not see his head, which was down below the level of the seat; but she saw an arm sticking up, as if reaching for something, but quite still. Beside him stood two men in evening dress, one of whom had reached forward and was touching him, while the other looked back towards the door. "Quickly!" one of the men shouted. "Hurry!" A woman called out something and a third man ran up the aisle to where the young man lay. He bent down and then began to lift the young man off the seat. Now the head came into view, and lolled, as if loosened from the body. Isabel withdrew and looked at Jennifer. "We'll have to go down there," she said. "We saw what happened. We had better go and tell somebody what we saw." Jennifer nodded. "We didn't see much," she said. "It was over so quickly. Oh dear." Isabel saw that her friend was shaking, and she put an arm about her shoulder. "That was ghastly!" she said. "Such a shock." Jennifer closed her eyes. "He just came down . . . so quickly. Do you think he's still alive? Did you see?" "I'm afraid he looked rather badly hurt," said Isabel, thinking, It's worse than that. They went downstairs. A small crowd of people had gathered round the door into the stalls and there was a buzz of conversation. As Isabel and Jennifer drew near, a woman turned to them and said: "Somebody fell from the gods. He's in there." Isabel nodded. "We saw it happen," she said. "We were up there." "You saw it?" said the woman. "You actually saw it?" "We saw him coming down," said Jennifer. "We were in the grand circle. He came down past us." "How dreadful," said the woman. "To see it . . ." "Yes." The woman looked at Isabel with that sudden human intimacy that the witnessing of tragedy permitted. "I don't know if we should be standing here," Isabel muttered, half to Jennifer, half to the other woman. "We'll just get in the way." The other woman drew back. "One wants to do something," she said lamely. "I do hope that he's all right," said Jennifer. "Falling all that way. He hit the edge of the circle, you know. It might have broken the fall a bit." "No, thought Isabel, it would have made it worse, perhaps; there would be two sets of injuries, the blow from the edge of the circle and injuries on the ground. She looked be... From Publishers Weekly Murder and moral obligation mingle in this whimsical new series from the author of the smash hit *The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency*. McCall Smith's new heroine is Scottish-American philosopher Isabel Dalhousie, a single woman of independent means who edits the esteemed *Journal of Applied Ethics* and presides over the titular club. When Isabel witnesses fund manager Mark Fraser fall from a balcony after a performance at an Edinburgh concert hall, she feels obliged to investigate the gentleman's demise. "I was the last person that young man saw," Dalhousie tells her beloved niece, Cat. "The last person. And don't you think that the last person you see on this earth owes you something?" Given her affinity for applied ethics, questions of conscience are a daily concern for Isabel, and the more she thinks about Fraser's fall, the less accidental it seems. Among those who might have pushed him: his shifty roommate, his colleague's scheming spouse and a disgruntled broker with a craving for cash. Fans of Botswanan heroine Precious Ramotswe are sure to embrace Scotsman McCall Smith's plucky new protagonist, who leads a cast of delightfully quirky characters that includes Toby, a dapper bachelor with a dubious understanding of fidelity, and Grace, Dalhousie's morally upright housekeeper, who sizes up society's reprobates in two syllables or less. Scotland's climate may be misty and cool, but McCall Smith's charming prose warms every page of this winning series debut. Copyright Reed Business Information, a

division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.