



Not All Tarts Are Apple

Pip Granger

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In 1953, the dark alleyways of Soho, London, teem with crooks, fortunetellers, cardsharks, and ladies of the night. But even the toughest racketeer has a soft spot for Rosie, the adopted daughter of the whole neighborhood and resident ray of sunshine in the local caf?. A doorstop orphan, her world is filled with a menagerie of neighbors come to nosh and gossip. But as her Uncle Bert and pillow-y-plump Aunt Maggie work to make Rosie's adoption legal, she learns that the woman she has always known as "The Perfumed Lady" is not only a professional tart, she's also a gin addict and Rosie's mum. As the real story unfolds and Rosie becomes the target of a plot, the neighborhood's response will delight readers and leave them hungry for the future titles in this charming new series, which "Maeve Binchy fans will enjoy" (*Booklist*).

Not All Tarts Are Apple Details

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Author : Pip Granger

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Carly says

Seeing the world through little girl Rosie's eyes is hilarious! And so is the British English! Rosie is telling her history in this book, as a grown woman, but she tells it how she remembers it, how she saw it all happen: from a girl's not-so oblivious and innocent, but very inexperienced and curious perspective.

Very cute story about the very abnormal, but absolutely loving "family" that Rosie grows up with. Interesting perspective, and interesting characters. Funny how, depending on the story, you can actually love and admire a mob boss and his henchman, a seedy lawyer, and a mystic. Throw in a couple of tarts, a huge Italian family who loves getting in everyone's business, and a "can you adopt me and raise me in your cafe, too" Auntie and Uncle, and man - Rosie is a lucky little girl to have such a big, happy family.

Not all is perfect, though - there's just enough intrigue, an icky-enough bad guy, and a few painful realities to keep it from being too Pollyanna-ish.

P.D.R. Lindsay says

This is one of those nice easy reads about salt of the earth people in London's Soho area. Set just after WWII and told by a six year old, Rosa called Rosie, it is a view of her life at the Cafe.

It's well written in that Rosie tells the reader everything but quite clearly only understands part of what she knows. The plot is thickened by the query over who Rosie's mother really is.

Historical detail is a nice touch. People who remember the Coronation, the first TVs, the end of rationing will enjoy a nostalgic read.

I'm surprised the novel and sequel haven't been snapped up by TV or a film company. It would make hilarious family viewing.

Anyone in need of a heart warming and cheery read would enjoy this. It might make a great Christmas read for difficult elderly relatives!

Kate MacKinnon says

2.5 Stars

This was ok. Not great, not bad, just ok.

The story was rather flat with no real depth.

While I became attached to the characters, the story was not especially engaging.

The story was told from the perspective of a child, which can work well, but in this case it just got a bit

tiring.

There was such a variety in the characters personalities & backgrounds, this probably would have been a great story to tell from multiple perspectives.

Anyway, it was the title and author's name that initially drew me in, then the jacket description further interested me but the result was just a bit flat.

Cleo says

In 1953, London's alleyways are full of all sorts of shady characters. But seven-year old Rosie has a spot in everyone's heart. She lives with her Uncle Bert and Aunt Maggie, and one day she learns that "The Perfumed Lady" is really Rosie's mother. And there is a plot afoot that Rosie is the target of. She rallies the whole neighborhood to her aid. This was a whimsical book. It had a really British writing style, with a lot of British terms and a sort of British feel to it, which I enjoyed. Also, I loved all the characters: fortune-tellers, card-sharks, crooks, who are all good people in their way, as well as Rosie's family. And Rosie herself was a great character, an indomitable, cheerful, seven-year old who narrates the book throughout, never allowing herself to be beaten down or intimidated.

Michele Bolay says

This is a word-of-mouth book that is hard to describe but easy to love. The characters are unique and unforgettable (especially young Rosie) and the writing is quirky, sassy, funny, and affectionate. I wasn't in London in the 1950s, yet this feels like such a true slice-of-life from that period and that location. You fall into Granger's world and won't ever want to escape. Just like a good apple this delicious treat is satisfying and easy on the palate but will linger long after you are finished.

Lorraine says

I must confess I bought this book mostly because of the cover. I thought it was adorable and well it is a Penguin book. I have an affinity for Penguin books for some unknown reason.

A cute story set in a Soho neighborhood in London in the 1950's it's centered around an adopted girl named Rosie. Her mom of which the colorful title gets its name drops off Rosie as a baby with her friends and they become her Uncle Bert and Aunt Maggie and her guardians. They own the cafe on the block that is host to all the quirky characters that come in as regulars. When Rosie's mom pops in and it's discovered someone is following her all chaos breaks loose in humorous mayhem.

A quick fun read when wanting something light and easy breezy.

How I acquired this book: The Book Depot, Pittsburg, CA

Shelf life: Three months

Deb says

Liked this new-ish series very much. Reminded me of my favorite Jane Duncan "My Friends" series, but set in Cockney London just after WWII.

Monica says

The word cozy was made for stories like this - a warm nostalgic glance back at a small slice of Soho in the summer of Elizabeth II's coronation. There is a cast of lovable working class (and working girl) eccentrics, the villains are easily thwarted and a good cuppa will cure almost anything. It's guilt free pleasure.

Phoebe says

Beloved little Rosie is a child truly raised by a "village"--the tightknit community of London's seedy SoHo in the post WWII years. Her mother is a drunk and a prostitute, but with a mysteriously posh past, and Rosie is the foster child of cafe owners Uncle Bert and Aunt Maggie.

Lively characters make this book a wonderful treat, seen through the innocent, yet sharp, eyes of Rosie. Haven't read such a great book in a long time.

Alannah says

Loved this book and the others in the series! Reminded me of the stories my Nan used to tell me from her childhood. (Some if it...not the prostitute mother etc) a warm story of community, good people and lots of love.

jennifer says

It's the early 1950's and seven year-old Rosie lives in Soho with Aunt Maggie and Uncle Bert, who are her parents even though she's dimly aware that they really aren't. Rosie knows that her mother left her behind in their cafe when she was a newborn, and Maggie and Bert kept her for their own. Their family is rounded out by the crooked lawyer, the medium and the hooker who all live next door.

Written as a memoir, this book goes on aimlessly until about fifty pages from the end when suddenly there's a kidnapping and everything is about Rosie's mother, whose situation has been clear pretty early on. I can't say that the writing is bad, because I've seen so much worse, but it isn't good, especially when the cover proclaims this book to be a prize winner for fiction. The author relies heavily on cliches and takes the reader into situations that seem pointless and meandering.

Oddly, this was published by Poisoned Pen Press here in Scottsdale, which I thought worked only in mystery and crime. Though the story includes crime, it's seen through the eyes of a child and couldn't be called a

"crime novel" in any way. 2.5 stars

Joanne says

Listed as a mystery I only found one mystery – Who was 7 year old Rosie's father? I think I figured it out, but...

Anyway the title of this book intrigued me and figured a good fall / Halloween mystery was ripe for the season. Bobbing for apples anyone?

This was a cute quick read that takes in Great Britain in 1953. Neighbors of Uncle Bert and Aunt Maggie's tavern enjoy fun times centered on erratic Cassandra and her daughter Rosie. Rosie is always eavesdropping on the adult's conversations. Filled with unique characters that live on the wild side of gossip, gangs, low morals and prostitution it makes for an interesting storyline. Cassandra's background is from the finer side of the tracks, but she has experienced some misfortune during her teen years and has vanished from her privileged lifestyle. The British humor is witty and amusing.

Kathy Davie says

This is the second in the Soho series (chronologically) and picks up seven years after *Trouble in Paradise* with the focus centered on Rosa, the baby Zelda foresaw as coming into Bert and Maggie's life.

While *Tarts* doesn't have that intense pull that *Paradise* did, I still couldn't put it down for all the drama that rose up around our Rosa. Charlie Fluck is back and he's the main source of the threats against her as well as one of the methods by which we learn of Cassandra's background. I can see this background and the corporate control it teeters over continuing onto a third novel...please??!?!?

I suspect most parents would find Rosa's childhood absolutely appalling and, I cannot disagree that Rosa learns a lot about the seamy side of life that I would prefer children never learn but she is being raised with such an incredible amount of love by a huge circle of friends that I can only wish that more kids had her opportunities. She is loved. She is cared for. She is protected by a neighborhood. Kids today should be so lucky.

Keilani Ludlow says

I quite enjoyed this book. Sure, it wasn't four star status, which is about the highest I ever give, but it was definitely an amusing read. I think a max of 2 f-bombs and no other real swearing, which is a surprise considering that the Brits take their swear words even easier than half the US does. Also, some shall I say, interesting, characters. A hooker, an underworld mobster's relative, etc. A little lower grade of people but enjoyable and likeable none the less. Told from the perspective of a seven year old girl with bits and pieces that she "overhears" which give an adult perspective and then her take on what she hears or observes which gives and amusing spin to the activities.

Kathleen says

What a charming, delightful read! Pip Granger is able to transport anyone back to an English childhood, even those of us born in the USA. Clever, engaging and much too short. Well done!
