

The Good Pilot Peter Woodhouse by Alexander McCall Smith

4 stars

A heart-warming wartime romance

A standalone novel by this popular author.

The Americans have entered WW2 which means that at the start of the book, Britain has been at war with Germany for two to three years and the population has come to terms with the regulations and rationing.

Val is a landgirl working for friendly farmer Archie; she lives with her Aunt Annie in the village, along with a distant cousin, Willy, who is a little slow. Willy hasn't been as lucky and is working on Ted Butter's farm where life is harsh and cruelty is never far away. It is through Willy that a mistreated dog, Peter Woodhouse, is liberated from Butter's beatings.

Then, the American airforce arrive with their tinned peaches and chocolate, and Archie is asked to provide a regular supply of eggs. Whilst delivering the eggs on her bike, Val meets the handsome pilot, Mike Rogers, and falls for his kind nature. When Mike's plane goes down over Holland, Val is left bereft.

Whilst any other author would take the reader into the sheer misery of war, McCall Smith is unerringly hopeful and most of his characters embody a fundamental decency.

Over the period of the war , and afterwards, relationships are formed in the most unlikely of circumstances, and all of the major characters connect in one way or another.

McCall Smith is particularly skilled in developing his characters and the reader is drawn into what is essentially a story of love and friendships.

An easy read, it is really enjoyable if you like a simple plot and a decisive ending. I would have awarded five stars had it not been somewhat soppy and unlikely at times!

Pashtpaws

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.