

# DOLLFACE: A NOVEL OF THE ROARING TWENTIES BY RENÉE ROSEN



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## From Booklist

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## Review

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### About the Author

Renée Rosen is the author of *Every Crooked Pot*, a young adult novel. *Dollface: A Novel of the Roaring Twenties* is her first adult work of fiction. She lives in Chicago where she is at work on a new novel.

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America in the 1920s was a country alive with the wild fun of jazz, speakeasies, and a new kind of woman—the flapper.

Vera Abramowitz is determined to leave her gritty childhood behind and live a more exciting life, one that her mother never dreamed of. Bobbing her hair and showing her knees, the lipsticked beauty dazzles, doing the Charleston in nightclubs and earning the nickname “Dollface.”

As the ultimate flapper, Vera captures the attention of two high rollers, a handsome nightclub owner and a sexy gambler. On their arms, she gains entrée into a world filled with bootleg bourbon, wailing jazz, and money to burn. She thinks her biggest problem is choosing between them until the truth comes out. Her two lovers are really mobsters from rival gangs during Chicago’s infamous Beer Wars, a battle Al Capone refuses to lose.

The heady life she’s living is an illusion resting on a bedrock of crime and violence unlike anything the country has ever seen before. When the good times come to an end, Vera becomes entangled in everything from bootlegging to murder. And as men from both gangs fall around her, Vera must put together the pieces of her shattered life, as Chicago hurtles toward one of the most infamous days in its history, the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre.

## **READERS GUIDE INCLUDED**

- Sales Rank: #469083 in Books
- Published on: 2013-11-05
- Released on: 2013-11-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x .86" w x 5.48" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 416 pages

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

27 of 27 people found the following review helpful.

Dollface: Chicago in the 1920's and the gangsters who made them roar.

By adam12

As a baby boomer I grew up watching the Untouchables on TV. Then came Mario Puzo and the Godfather book (made into movies by Francis Ford Coppola), and many movies with Al Pachino and Robert De Niro, et al, all of which defined and promoted our taste for books, movies and TV shows depicting the gangsters of the roaring 20's. However, throughout this genre, women are rarely portrayed.

In Renee Rosen's new book, Dollface, we are given a look at this era through the eyes of a "Nice Jewish Girl" who marries into the mob. It's a love story, it's a gangland expose, and it's a great read.

The author has certainly done her homework on Chicago in the roaring 20's. She also writes in a style that is a pleasure to read.

I recommend this book to men and women alike who want another reason to explore the 1920's and the gangsters who made them roar.

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

A Must Read For Roaring 20's Fans

By Silver's Reviews

It's the Roaring 20's.

Prohibition, speakeasies, gangsters, the rich and the poor. DOLLFACE portrays the life of those living in Chicago during this time. No one was exempt from what was going on.

Vera Abramowitz worked in the typing pool of an insurance firm and also as a telephone operator to make ends meet, and she still made next to nothing. She didn't want to do this for her entire life and then met Shep Green, a gangster. She also met Tony Liolli who also was a gangster. She began dating both men, even though she knew she was playing with fire by dating both of them at the same time.

Despite the danger she was putting herself in, she couldn't help herself. Tony was fun, Shep had power, and she didn't want to turn out like her mother....poor and still working in the slaughterhouse. Then something happened and she found out who the "real" man was and who the "real" slacker was.

DOLLFACE is written in an easy style that grabs you as you want to learn more about this time period. The characters are definitely authentic, and the activity at that time appears to be right on.

You will love following Vera from rags to riches and then through a rough time, but Vera was tough. You will be shocked at what she does as a woman in the 1920's as well as bite your fingernails as you see what risky things she gets herself into. Vera carries this fabulous story along even though it is difficult to like her or to agree with what she does.

I really enjoyed DOLLFACE. The reality of events was terrific. The author captured the perfect picture of this time period and did excellent research.

You will want to read this book if you are a fan of historical fiction and more specifically the 1920's. It was a great read. 5/5

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher in return for an honest review.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

A decent read, really picks up in the second half.

By ChinacatSun76

Source: ARC Kindly Provided by Publisher

I love pretty much anything dealing with the 1920's; the time period appeals to the rebel, rule-breaker in me. With the momentum of the Suffrage Movement and the 19th Amendment propelling them forward, women were finally beginning to demand attention separate from the men they were related or married to. There was jazz. There were flappers and mobsters. And there was fabulous excess. And Dollface has all of those things, though I wish it had more of them and that they appeared sooner in the story arc. The second half of this novel saved the read for me - but I do think wading through the first half, filled with weak women and love triangles, is worth it to get to the pay off at the end.

Dollface follows the young and idealistic Vera Abramowitz as she navigates (sometimes successfully and sometimes not so much) the New York scene in the days of prohibition and organized crime. She's moved out of her mother's house as soon as she possibly can and is one of the faceless many in the secretarial pool at an office downtown. She's sharing a room in town with her best friend and determined to make it on her own. And she's attracted the attention of two men and can't decide if she should think with her head or her libido.



My main problem with *Dollface* is with the first half of the novel. In that first half, Vera is independent in claim only. She is weak-minded, easily lead, believes that she's a strong independent woman, but falls short of that description time after time. The plot is primarily focused on Vera's inability to decide between the attentions of two rival mobsters. She's way too casual about sex (even in the 1990's my friends and I weren't as casual as she is about it) and seems to be nothing more than a dim-witted gold digger. It just wasn't what I was expecting from a novel of the Roaring Twenties, until...

...the second half of the novel kicks into gear. The second half of the novel really did save this read for me. I only wish Rosen had included some/more of all that made the second half good in the first half. And don't get me wrong, I realize characters are dynamic and have to start somewhere in order to change, but this was different. I felt like Vera did a complete about-face. And frankly, I was so thrilled to see it happen, I didn't question whether or not it was realistic or believable. I was just happy she was finally living up to the idea she had of herself. And in addition to Vera's change, the plot changed midway through - for the better. Gone was the focus on romance and a crazy love triangle, and in it's place was action, intrigue, and mobsters (Al Capone is a fringe, but vitally important, character). And I do love mobsters. ;)

Last Word: A well-researched, interesting novel. And yes, the first half is worth it for the Vera we meet in the second half.

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