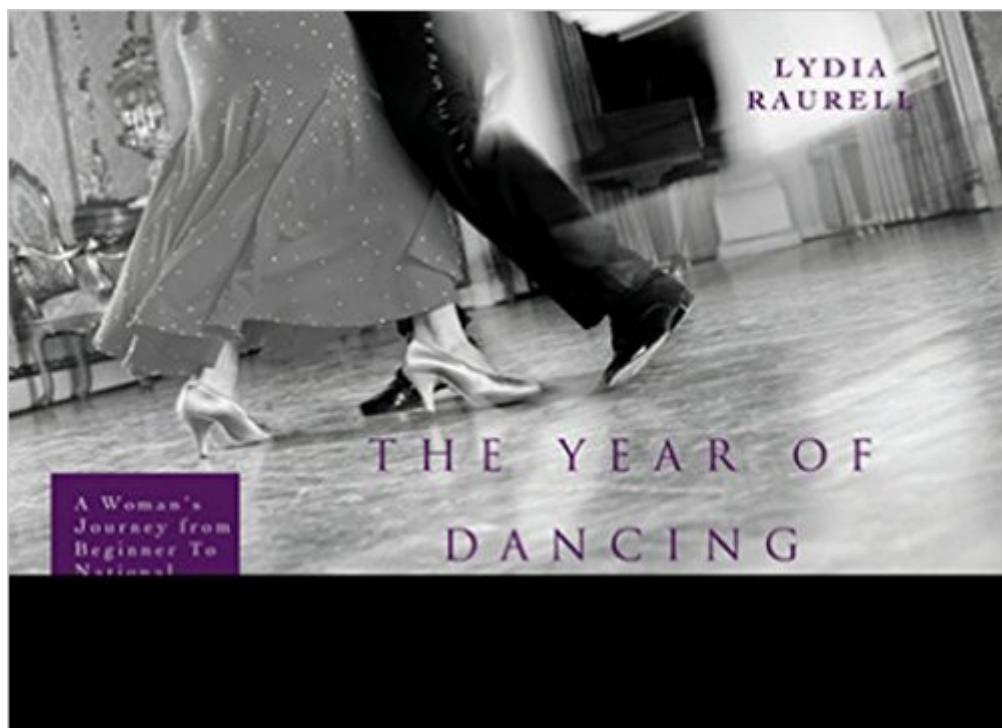


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The Year Of Dancing Dangerously: One Woman's Journey From Beginner To Winner



Synopsis

One morning, fifty-five-year-old Lydia Raurell stumbled across an ad in the local paper that read "Walk in Monday, dance out Friday." She did just that. A year later she reigned atop the national leader board--a first for a newcomer. This is her amazing story, recorded in her own words and in over one hundred breathtaking color photographs. For the first time ever, immerse yourself in the magical world of ballroom dancing--a world where the details count--the shoes, the many dresses, the hair and the makeup--and the competition is stiff. While shows like *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance* have introduced ballroom dancing to millions of Americans, very few of them know what competing in dance is like. By following Raurell across the country on her journey to the top, readers will gain intimate knowledge of what the competitions entail, and what it takes to succeed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've been an amateur ballroom dancer for many years and I was very disappointed in the way this book portrayed our sport. The author inaccurately listed things as rules or requirements that really aren't. For example, I've never had red toenails and there is no strict regulations on hairstyles. You don't need a different pair of shoes for each style you dance. Someone's sold her a bill of goods to make more money and she's bought it hook, line and sinker. She made statements in her book which said most dancer or all dancers as if she knew what other dancers think. She clearly stated in her book she and her instructor purposely keep her isolated from other dancer in case their comments would interrupt or disturb her dance mode. So there is no way for her to know what other dancers

do or think. I feel sorry for her, there is no joy in her dancing. She says she loves it, but other than those statements, there is nothing in her book to indicate the joy that dancing should bring. She talks a lot about the physical toll dancing takes on her body. Of course if you are doing 160+ entries at a competition you are doing too much. It's not worth killing yourself to be top female student. It doesn't mean you're a good dancer, just a prolific one. You get points for entries, doesn't mean you dance well, just that you've spent a ton of money on entries. I'm normally in the top 10% of female students and I only do a few competitions a year. It's meaningless. It doesn't mean I'm not competitive, but there is only so much money and I have a life outside of dancing. I love dancing too, but it doesn't consume my life. It's a hobby, she should be having fun. To my mind she is really not part of the dance community when she shields herself from other dancers. Perhaps they know something she doesn't perhaps being friendly with other dancer will help her nerves and give her some camaraderie she now lacks. This book is NOT a good representation of the dance community. Skip this book if you want facts about the ballroom dance world. This book is very few. The author has no standing as an authority on ballroom dancing and does a great disservice to the sport.

I can't help but read any book about social/ballroom dancing, but it is rare for me to find one that stimulates questions and provides a unique perspective. Unfortunately, this book doesn't do that. It is pretty much like most others books with a similar theme: woman seeks and finds something more in life through the world of dance. She touches on the same benefits of dance that other authors reiterate, but she adds nothing new or fresh to the discussion. Having recently read Janet Carlson's "Quick, Before the Music Stops", which I couldn't put down and ended up reading in one day, I found this book to be somewhat boring and lackluster. Those who have been dancing for a while and have already heard this story multiple times will most likely not find much stimulation in this book. However, the author communicates her thoughts well and shares her journey with enthusiasm, so perhaps the ultimate beginner will be able to relax and enjoy her story.

As a new competition dancer, I looked forward to learning from this book. Unfortunately, the author is not accurate on too many items and cites no resources for some statements that she refers to as rules. I also found it annoying that she speaks repeatedly to the fact that she is so prudish that she could not cope with an open backed dress or her partner touching her skin, yet in the next paragraph jokes that she threatened to "kick him in the balls". Is she really so socially inexperienced that she needs to quote every corny moment that she shares as though each was the highlight of her life? The book was far too much an ego trip for the author and not enough information.

I have met Lydia and watched her dance at numerous ballroom competitions. She is a beautiful human being - inside and out - and her book attests to this. The photographs are wonderful, and the text truly inspiring. I recommend this book to those who dance, those who love to watch, and those who appreciate a story of faith, dedication, and success. And I look forward to seeing her dance again in the future. Elizabeth Colledge

Lydia Raurell begins her story with a verse from Ecclesiastes 3:1-4, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born,...and a time to dance." Raurell's struggle to achieve her lifelong dream to dance demonstrates that it is never too late, even though many difficulties postponed her progress toward that goal. When Raurell was nine, her dance instructor told her mother that her ankles would never hold up to the rigors of ballet. Lessons at the beginning of her second marriage ended when she realized that her family took precedence. Twenty years later, when the time was just right, she saw an ad that said, "Walk in Monday, dance out Friday." She walked in and her dance instructor, Angelo Caruso, introduced her to competitive ballroom dancing, where she waltzes, foxtrots, tangos, and slides with us on her way to realizing her dream. Weaving her experiences with definitions of dance styles and explanations of competitive dance terms, Lydia describes her second year of dancing, in which she discovers that she may be a finalist for Top Female Student. Propelled by this possibility, Lydia and Angelo dance dangerously through six regions, dancing in twenty-two competitions in forty-five days. At the last competition before the final ball, Lydia comes down with the flu, and complications from the antibiotics sideline her with an inflamed Achilles tendon. Has she lost the title, "Top Female Student"? This inspirational and educational book, beautifully written by a dancer who is also a writer, will motivate anyone who reads it. The story is accompanied by beautiful color photographs that swirl and dance the reader through the chapters. Anyone who has a dream will be encouraged by Lydia's effort, determination, and courage. by Susan M. Andrus for Story Circle Book Reviews

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