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The Winner: A Ballroom Dance Novel



Synopsis

The most prestigious ballroom dance competition in the United States. Two dancers need to win. Only one can. Nina Fortunova wasn't supposed to end up almost thirty, divorced, with her dreams of winning shattered. She teams up with Jorge Gonzalez, a Latin dancer, to reinvent the flashy Smooth style. When the Chairman of the Judges offers to throw the competition in their favor, Nina must decide how far she will go to win, even if it means losing Jorge. Carly Martindale is doing everything she's been taught not to do "placing her happiness first by dancing with Trey Devereux, the former three-time champion who's returned to competition for mysterious reasons. Carly becomes obsessed with Trey and allows him to control her every move at great risk to her physical and emotional health. How far will she sacrifice herself, so Trey and she can win? Co-workers, then friends, and now arch competitors, Nina and Carly face off to determine who will be the winner. Bright, emotive, and told through dual narrators, *The Winner* examines the costs associated with winning, the internalization of parental ambition, and the effect of gendered roles on and off the dance floor. *The Winner* is a literary romance that's perfect for readers who love *Dancing with the Stars*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, and the classic elegance of *Fred Astaire* and *Ginger Rogers*. The Winner contains a fact-versus-fiction section at the end. • Educational, enjoyable, and engrossing • Midwest Book Review • The Winner is a winner • Goodreads Review • Rousing, bittersweet, and heartbreakingly beautiful • Review • Allows the novice to discover the world of ballroom dance, the professional to get reacquainted with similar experiences, and both to follow a game of love and ambition through the lens of dancing • Review

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Customer Reviews

Ballroom Dance fan or not, this is a great read. Comedic in parts, it was also filled with the pathos and complexity of real life. Even though my dancing experience is almost nil, I enjoyed and easily followed the adventures of the two main characters: one woman just entering the dance world, and the other a veteran of that world. The author brought the NYC setting to impressive life, including its ethnic roots. Love in many forms - whether it involved parents and children, romantic lovers and friends, rivals and competitors - were explored in exquisite detail. Meanwhile the story pace was fast, and kept me turning the pages well into the night. The author, Erin Bomboy, is a wonderful talent. Her descriptions were especially on point (yes, pun but true.) The dialogue reflected the background and experiences of every character, male and female alike. Reading this book was like watching a movie in my mind, a wonderful movie in all its technicolor glory. I like independently published books because I dislike the cookie-cutter plots that are so prevalent in regular publishing today. My faith in the Independents is absolutely confirmed and even surpassed by the quality of this book. Thank you, Erin Bomboy. The writing and presentation of THE WINNER blew me away. It deserves to be a NYT best-seller.

A very well written novel. The story is unconventional and not your typical predictable love story. The author has a way of making you feel the characters' pain, joy and dilemma - just like real life except this happens on the dance floor. Although I know zilch about dancing I found this book enjoyable and easy to follow. In fact I learned quite a few things about dancing from this book. I finished reading it in 2 days because I just couldn't wait to find out how it ends for Nina and Carly. This novel shows sometimes in life we've to lose some before we can win or rather find ourselves - how true.

The *Winner* is a winner! Engaging, exciting, and easy to read! This book is a page turner, whether or not you know (or care) anything about ballroom dance. Although the book is quite lengthy, it moves quickly. The short chapters and alternating character views give it a driving pace. I soon found myself absorbed into an alternative world of dramatic dancing, fierce competition, and sometimes sinister relationships.

A page turning drama with delightful details that bring New York City, dance, and more than a few varietals of wine to life. The characters are fully realized and seem to be people you'd actually meet about town. While the tale grows dark with depressingly real circumstance it remains at its core an enjoyable read.

Before I began reading *The Winner*, my knowledge about ballroom dancing was very limited. I had no idea that this particular dance was still very popular or that there were plenty of competitions where people could compete professionally. The couples I always saw swirling gracefully across the dance floor in the movies always gave me the impression that ballroom dancing was an easy thing to do and could be achieved without much practice. Of course this book proved to me how wrong I was as I read page after page about all those hours of practice and hard work that were necessary in order for someone to dance gracefully and I learned about all the sacrifices someone had to do in order to just be able to participate in a professional competition. Ballroom dancing was inherently social, but steps replaced words and beats ironed out pauses. The shy, the awkward, and the weird found a home where good rhythm or a barn of a memory vanquished their shyness, awkwardness, and weirdness. The story is told by two point of views, Carly is a young dancer who has just entered the world of ballroom dancing and her life is full of endless possibilities, on the other hand Nina has been a dancer for a very long time and as her body slowly begins to fail her, it becomes quite obvious that she won't have many chances as a professional competitor. The two heroines due to various circumstances end up in desperate need to win the same competition in order to achieve their dreams. This book might be 350+ pages but I have to say I didn't notice its length at all, the story flowed very nicely and the alternations between points of view were done at the right time to keep things interesting and the pace fast. Not once did I feel bored reading about the struggles each heroine had to face, it was so intriguing to witness the changes in Carly's and Nina's character who not only have to face the physical and mental impact their harsh training has in them but they also have to navigate their relationship with their dancing partners with whom they become more and more

romantically involved, the longer they keep dancing. I witnessed so many life changing events happening as the fervor each heroine had for the winning position consumed her, that by the end of the book their transformation was so tremendous that I felt as if I didn't see just a small glimpse of their time but their entire life. I voluntarily reviewed the free copy that I received via Reading Alley.

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