

## Restless reader

— Celia Storey

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Gotta Tango: Argentine Tango Anywhere, Anytime By Alberto Paz and Valorie Hart (Human Kinetics, 2207 ) 185 pages with DVD, \$ 27. 95. What is this ? A gift idea for anyone who loves to dance. The book beautifully describes the history and structure of tango and how to begin to learn to dance it; the companion DVD provides a visual glossary of the moves. The tango ? Isn't that when an angry man is mean to a woman wearing a slit dress and tosses her violently around the dance floor ? Uh, no. If all you know about the tango is based upon Bugs Bunny cartoons, take a second to click over to youtube. com and search for "Argentine tango." As in many formal dances, volcanic sexual tension swells just beneath the surface of graceful, studied steps that mark a shifting embrace. The woman dances around the man; the man dances around the floor.

The man does not lead, the woman does not follow, but in effect the man carries the woman. He marks all her steps and she doesn't move until he marks them. If he's not adept, she doesn't move at all.

The book, which offers a great deal of historical background, suggests that tango's association with danger arises from its fiery Argentinian politics of the 20 th century. During the 1930 s, anti-government political gatherings met in social clubs using the tango as a cover. But the music also arose from city streets surrounded by overcrowded apartments, so it was a commoner's dance beloved by ordinary people.

"The attraction of the tango is human connection," the authors write.

So there is just one way to dance the tango ? No, these authors have developed their own ballroom style based upon historical methods they like, and that's what they teach. They call it "a structure based on a logical grouping of a finite number of movements that could be executed in an infinite number of ways." Can a reader learn to dance from a book ? Probably not, but if you already are taking lessons somewhere, reading could be a help. If you aren't taking lessons, the book will make you want to.

Who are the authors ? Owners of Planet Tango in New Orleans; they produce the annual TangoFest there. Paz grew up in Argentina; Hart was trained as a ballerina and has been a dancer in off-Broadway and summer stock theater. They have been business partners since 1995, traveling the nation to teach tango.

Hurricane Katrina and the flooding of New Orleans delayed the book's publication. They were in Florida teaching a workshop when the storm hit and found themselves unable to return for four months. After traveling from state to state as refugees and teaching where they went, they rewrote their manuscript, enriching its romantic, humorous, passionate voice.