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Long After Midnight At The Nino Bien: A Yanqui's Missteps In Argentina



Synopsis

After moving to Argentina on a whim, Brian Winter, a young American reporter, embarks on a crusade to learn that devilishly difficult dance that demands both discipline and passion: the tango. While he dances the night away in the milongas with the fiery denizens of Buenos Aires, the country around them collapses, gripped by inflation, street riots, and revolution. In a book that is part travelogue and part history, the author evokes his immersion in a dark underworld. He visits old dance salons, brothels, and shacks on the dusty Pampa, searching for the tango's shady origins in the hope that understanding may help him dance better. Along the way, he discovers that the tango, with its tales of jealousy, melodrama, and lost glory, may hold the secret to the country that is inexplicably disintegrating before his eyes.

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Customer Reviews

Books and blogs by women about their tango experiences/epiphanies in Buenos Aires proliferate yearly. (OK, so I'm one of those women.) It's refreshing to read a story about a foreigner in Buenos Aires written by a man. Sure, we've had the cheap and disgusting *Kiss and Tango* by Marina Palmer, and the interesting pre-crisis *Bad Times in Buenos Aires* by Miranda France, among many

others, but now we have something entirely different: Brian Winter's Long After Midnight at the Nino Bien; a Yanqui's Missteps in Argentina. Not a memoir, but rather a well-written attempt to make 21st century readers understand the why-and-wherefores of the Buenos Aires of today. It's not an excuse for the author to delve into his emotional past, or to write about sexual encounters, nor does he do any reflection--the main aspect of a memoir. It's an impressionistic travelogue with fantasy characters--think Wizard of Oz or Star Wars set in South America with lots of illuminating and witty historical citations. Young Mr. Winter (a recent college grad who floats to Argentina hoping to find a job) also writes about his experience as a tango dancer wannabe. He relates preposterous scenes with fictitious milongueros, but I believe these scenes, while accurately conveying feelings and emotions if not truths, are not from his experience but from research and imagination. He is a fantastic researcher, as well as a hell of a writer. And he's funny, too! He wanted to write an essay about Buenos Aires, and how then could he leave out tango, even if he knew nothing and cared less about it? His Mafia round table of wise old milongueros allow for exposition and stories about Argentina's history, the influence of the gauchos, the corruption of the politicians, the legacy of Peron and Evita.

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