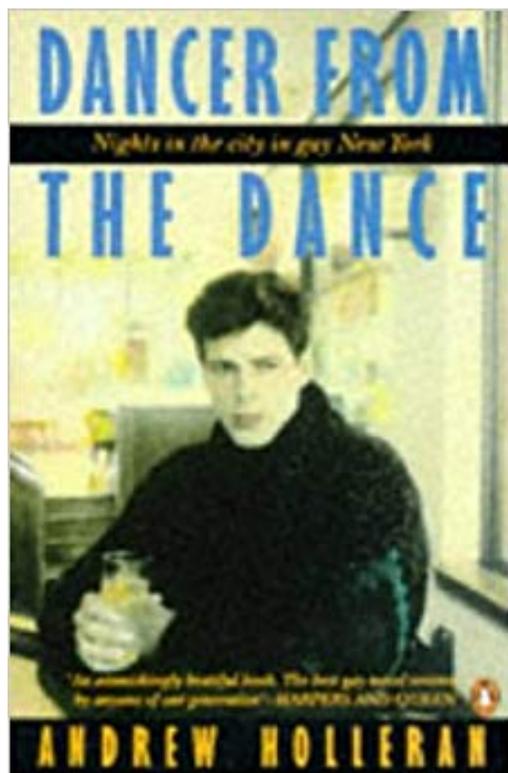


Dancer from the Dance *by* Andrew Holleran



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Reviews of the **Dancer from the Dance** *by* Andrew Holleran

Zulkishicage

"What lover could possibly have matched what Malone had stored up in his imagination?"

I read somewhere that Edmund White compared *Dancer from the Dance* to *The Great Gatsby*, and it really is an apt comparison in so many ways.

The setting places us in the midst of New York's emerging gay scene in the 1970s, and Malone is our *Gatsby*. Fewer than 20 pages in we are told what kind of story this will be: it's about "doomed queens," about "why life is sad," and "what people do for love—gay or not."

Like *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator is an unnamed person observing the beautiful and larger-than-life Malone. Malone is taken under the wing of Sutherland, a seasoned "queen" who watches over him and cares for him as a best friend. At first, Malone romanticizes the idea of falling in love, but soon becomes jaded, realizing that this is nothing more than a hopeful delusion, and resigning himself to a life of shallow hedonism.

Life for Malone and Sutherland is one big party, filled with sex and drugs and dancing. But just as Fitzgerald exposed the dark heart of the glamorous 1920s, Holleran reveals the undercurrent of hollow melancholy and futile longing beneath all the surface beauty and carnal pleasures.

The writing is gorgeous and evocative, the story tender and wistful. It's a beautiful work of fiction about two best friends living the only life they know.

Feri

Holleran is 'old school' gay writer. He can write an excellent gay novel without any graphic sex! The story he tells is everything!

Touching sensitive novel of a man called Malone, who comes from wealth and privilege and carves out a niche for himself as a successful, hardworking lawyer. His work is everything but leaves him empty and alone.

Then one summer, our lonely virgin, Malone, helps a gardener every day after work...and enjoys it. Why then is Malone tearful and mournful when the gardener leaves?

He has an epiphany!! He is gay! This beautiful untouched man decides to experience gay life and gay men. He quits everything and moves to New York.

Malone, (the man who doesn't know how beautiful he is), is an enigma in New York...polite,gay, beautiful,sweet,hot and nice to everyone.

Holleran has a wonderful literary gift of putting out phrases that can sum up the feelings of gay men in terms that are easy to understand.

eg."Remember that the vast majority of homosexuals are looking for a superman to love and find it very difficult to love anyone merely human, which we unfortunately happen to be."

"The point is that we are not doomed because we are homosexual, we are doomed only if we live in despair because of it.."

He describes the life of gays in New York and their favorites haunts where they were happiest..Fire Island in the summer, the Everard Baths, the discoteques before they were discovered, the endless round of parties that you could never go to until at least 2am!

Holleran depends upon his words and turns of phrases to appeal to not only the homosexual but hetero females like me and makes an excellent well-developed story.

I love Holleran's writing! They draw the reader into the enigmatic world of gays...their codes,their lifestyle,their mantra and even their cruelty toward each other.

Sensitive,stunning,cruel,loving..the world of the gay man in 70's New York is not easy..but Malone makes it look easy.

Fordrekely

I first saw "Dancer from the Dance" at a bookstore in a mall in Modesto California, an agricultural town in the heart of California's big valley. The cover had a blonde man wearing jeans, and a smile; he was shirtless. I remember being nervous, yet excited by the prospect that this might actually be about gay people; I was 21 years old, and there were few if any gay men I wanted to emulate, it was 1979. I was searching for my people, a way of life, a path to take: I realized that I wasn't alone. I was a bit self-conscious at my boldness as I placed the book on the counter, but the cashier was nonplussed. As I read, I entered a world that was completely foreign to me, and although I didn't aspire to be any of the characters in the novel, I wanted a life vastly different than the one I had, and I was shown that I had not only options but 'family' waiting for me. I have read 'Dancer' so many times that I have lost count. I would purchase the book and then give it to others to read. Holleran's prose is astonishingly gorgeous; perhaps the best in American writing. He has an eye for detail, an open heart and a wit to match his writing talent; NOBODY writes better: they may write differently but not better. His prose is hypnotic, and one is held prisoner by it so much so that it haunts the reader, even after one puts the book down. He recites a tale, and through his descriptive expertise, we are able to feel it, imagine it, acquiesce to it, and live it right along with him; "Dancer" is a living, breathing work; age only makes it better. It is graphic, it is unsparing, it is timeless: Dancers leave the floor, but new ones appear and this still goes on long after the 70's, long after the initial horrors of A.I.D.S., long after a fashion from that time has gone, replaced by something trendy. What isn't trendy is the human heart, and the need to love and be loved in return; desire, passion, longing, disappointment, inadequacy, and spirit still define humanity. In "Dancer", Andrew takes us to New York City in the 1970's, and we are able to feel it's pulse, and smell it's garbage and be exhilarated by the dreams and ambitions of the people who populated it then, and do so now. I have read all his books, many of his essays and adore his short stories, as well; I just checked out "Nights in Aruba" today at the library, to read again. Andrew is my favorite writer and after spending so many decades with him, rereading his work feels like a visit with a dear friend.

greatest

This is a wonderful book - a powerful, moving, and insightful take on gay male life in a big, party-loving city a couple of decades ago. Not an author I knew of, but I'm glad I discovered him. I'm neither gay nor male, but I spent some of my early and mid-twenties doing a lot of clubbing and partying... And this book very eloquently captures both the glamour and appeal, and the hollow desperation and frenzy, of those endless nights. Beautifully written.

Akirg

I read this 30 years ago - I sent this to a friend.

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