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REVERENCE



Synopsis

The book tells the tale of a seven-year-old girl who starts to study ballet and dreams of reaching her goal as prima ballerina. She studied at the San Francisco Ballet and is encouraged to dance. She started in the opera when they needed a small elf to go on stage where Salvatore Baccaloni was sleeping under a tree, with this small elf poking him in the opera Falstaff. The blue lights were enchanting, and every minute was sheer heaven. This was the beginning of a profession that demands total dedication and love. It is filled with anecdotes, laughter, and tears. In writing this book, the author describes what goes on in a company that tours and dances every night on different stages. The author lives in San Francisco with her husband, John R. Upton Jr, as well as in the Napa Valley where John and his brother pioneered Three Palms Vineyard, once the site of Lillie Hitchcock Coit's Napa Valley home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had the honor and pleasure of being a student of Ms. Sassoon's when I was a child in San Francisco. She would always explain that anyone, with practice, could hold her leg straight up towards the ceiling in arabesque, but that type of perfection, in and of itself, did not a true dancer make. Instead, one needed not just the dedication to get every little scintilla of the technique correct; but, more importantly, she had to give the essence of the love of movement along with the steps: This nuance did a true dancer make. Under the tutelage and guidance of Ms. Sassoon, I had extraordinary experience of dancing with the American Ballet Theater and The Stuttgart Ballet (featuring guest dancer Rudolf Nureyev) when they toured San Francisco in the '70s before I

transitioned into a jazz, tap and modern dancer. Now, after having read Ms. Sassoon's book, I understand the derivation of this passion that burns within her, she having studied and performed with some of the greatest dancers of the 20th century. Those who have the great fortune to study with or be coached by Ms. Sassoon are getting the dances from someone who either learned them directly from their original choreographer or from someone who worked with the creator of the steps and, in turn, shared their precise placement with Ms. Sassoon. What a treat! By God's good fortune, I am still friends with Ms. Sassoon. This was especially fortuitous when I contracted viral cardiomyopathy, a type of congestive heart failure, and could no longer do any type of strenuous cardio workout. Via the phone, Ms. Sassoon taught me her barre which could be done lying on the floor, or even in bed, in order to keep some muscle tone. I couldn't believe that decades after being my teacher she would still take the time to assist me. I always knew that she was a fantastic dancer; now, after reading her book, I understand how she came to be such an exquisite human being.

A very interesting and well written book for either dancers or for people who love dancing, i.e. classical ballet. Janet Sassoon's book is a real page turner and never gets boring. She became a dancer during the years when it was quite difficult to become one and despite a lack of opportunities, such as exist today, she made her mark in the world of classical ballet. Her dedication and hard work and hard life is evident with every turning page of the book; especially standing out was the ordeal she went through when John Taras told her that her legs were not elongated enough and that she appeared too "muscular" to ever become a prima ballerina. More than a dancer, Janet Sassoon was a remarkable person as a human being. She was courageous, optimistic, forgiving and so intelligent. Even though she had a short career, sadly because of injury, she continued to fulfill her dreams and was totally dedicated to ballet as both a teacher and a coach for her entire life. She is a real role model and one can learn a lot from her, not only as a dancer but as a "mensch." (human)

This book is fascinating and compelling. Janet Sassoon gives wonderful insight into the world of ballet. Her extraordinary talent and vast experiences are extremely impressive. I thoroughly enjoyed this terrific book

The excitement and love of dance that fill this book are remarkable. The stories are well told, with humor and suspense. But what seems really important to me are the pieces of dance wisdom and heritage, gleaned from a full life as a passionately dedicated dancer and coach. If I meet any young

dancer or parent of a young dancer, I will suggest this book. They will learn helpful lessons about life and about having a positive, determined outlook.

Anyone who loves the ballet will enjoy this book but I did feel that the narrative covered a lot of years (necessarily) without a lot of detail about the actual process of preparing for and performing a ballet.

I really enjoyed this book. It is full of rich details that any fan of ballet history will appreciate. In particular, the behind-the-scenes glimpses into the worlds of the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas and the Berlin Ballet provide wonderful insight that isn't widely available in other ballet histories. So, read this book to learn Ms. Sassoon's own fascinating story, but also to learn more about these companies and their place in the history of 20th Century ballet.

Anyone who has any interest at all in Ballet should read this book. A great read even if you are not a great fan of Ballet as it tells the story of the passion and dedication to attain the top in a chosen field that is not easy to accomplish. Really enjoyed the narrative of Europe and the rest of the world, what it was like, after world war 2.

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