FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Romance

Love Waltzes In
Alana Albertson
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The definition of love itself is an underlying social issue explored in depth, though not addressed in a typically overt manner, throughout this touching story.

The exciting world of competitive ballroom dance sets the backdrop for this involved story of an old relationship renewed in the limelight of reality television. Behind the scenes is the rocky romance of a man and a woman with little in common other than shared talent—and an undeniable physical passion that transcends reason.

Ambitious and career-driven, Selena Marcil refused to put her life on hold to sequester herself in domesticated bliss, a banal fantasy without the lure of fame. Instead, she reached the top of her profession with a new partner and garnered the acclaim, as well as the riches, she desired. Bret Lord, practical and down-to-earth in comparison, sacrificed his chance at success in the performing arts for a career in the Marines. A decade later he returns to Selena's realm, accepting a financial offer he cannot refuse.

The pursuit of money may explain the rampant behavior of all characters in this somewhat familiar scenario: for a price, anyone can be talked into just about anything, perhaps. Yet the sincerity in this couple's interactions places what could have been a trite setup into a higher moral zone. Their love is real. Their performance on stage is unreal. The question is whether they know the difference between the two—an interesting premise for a Shakespearean tale of star-crossed lovers, set in an artificial environment, with cameras observing the highlights: "The couple walked on the floor, hand in hand. For once, they were equals. He smoothly guided her through the steps, his lead gentle, never pulling, nor pushing. She loved it. Perfectly in balance, she spun around him."

Alana Albertson has presented a stellar situation embedded with conflict, offering the classic line of combat. Her heroine must choose between a lover and a profession. A common

enough dilemma, yes. But this decision is still at the helm of the plot, even in a 21st-century romance. Though some may find this story-propelling technique a bit old-fashioned, elements of beauty can be found in this articulate author's descriptions: "Flitting, effortless, as if she were floating on clouds. Dancing around the room, she couldn't help but smile. This was how she danced in her dreams."

Albertson draws on her own experience as a professional dancer to enhance her scenes with authenticity. *Love Waltzes In* is the first novel of a three-book series.

Julia Ann Charpentier