

## Tango's Tales

**Lisa Kopel**

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*This story succeeds at creating almost a new subgenre: erotic humor.*

*Tango's Tales*, by Lisa Kopel, tells the story of an adventurous, middle-aged, sexually voracious woman. The story captures what it's like for today's woman who wants to have sex with no strings attached. This romp contains erotica and humor in equal measure while exploring themes of online dating, sex with married men, expectations partners have for their lovers, and depression.

The titular Tango remains at once bitingly caustic yet unafraid to show her vulnerable side. Despite her prowess between the sheets, she's relatable as she wonders how to impress first dates and navigate the complicated emotions she experiences with her partners. Kopel further adds to the protagonist's realism as Tango speaks frankly about the effects of depression and bipolar disorder. With an honest, almost flippant, tone, Tango matter-of-factly describes being laid low by each illness while hunting for the correct medication. "Then, without warning, Effexor bailed on me. One morning I woke up and couldn't get out of bed. ... It was like a horrible breakup. Mr. Effexor stuck with me for three years ... and kicked me to the curb." She keeps a hands-on approach to her mental illnesses and insists that they not define her.

Although billed as erotica, the book provides more than sexual satisfaction for character and audience. Since one gets to know Tango as a whole person instead of just a female fueled by sex, the story succeeds at creating almost a new subgenre: erotic humor. In the following passage, the main character describes hunting for something lost inside her during sex: "I gathered my weapons—a magnifying glass and some tweezers—and retreated to the bathroom. ... I looked and I looked and I looked...nothing. I bore down, like I was giving birth, except instead of expelling an infant I was hoping to expel a condom." As in typical erotica, descriptions of sex acts abound, but such scenes are not written in a way to make neophytes feel embarrassed. The author's adeptness at combining sexiness and silliness eases newbies into the genre while at the same time entertaining long-time lovers of sexy stories.

The book's division into short, punchy chapters in various formats keeps the novel moving briskly. Some are Tango narrating in first person, while others represent her commenting on e-mails she receives. Still others read as though the protagonist writes a newspaper column. Although the novel contains little direct speech, this is not a problem; because the book's tone is chatty, it reads like Tango is addressing the audience. The scarcity of direct dialogue makes the direct quotations that do exist truly stand out.

Female erotica lovers of any age will devour this book. Hopefully Kopel's bold step into erotic humor will encourage other authors to join her.

JILL ALLEN (September 15, 2015)

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