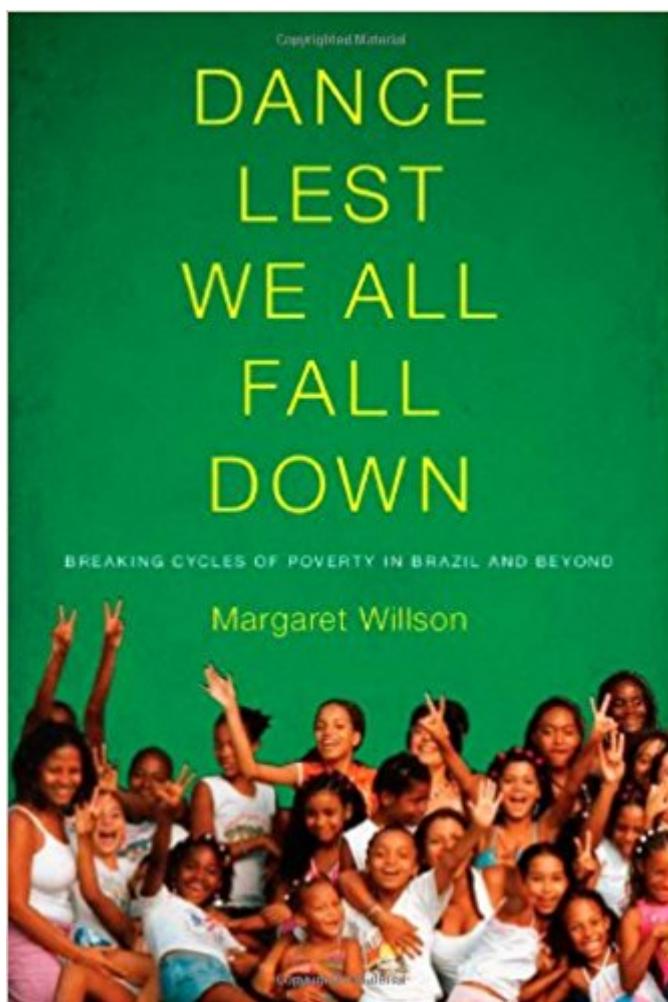


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Dance Lest We All Fall Down: Breaking Cycles Of Poverty In Brazil And Beyond



Synopsis

An unexpected detour can change the course of our lives forever, and, for white American anthropologist Margaret Willson, a stopover in Brazil led to immersion in a kaleidoscopic world of street urchins, capoeiristas, drug dealers, and wise teachers. She and African Brazilian activist Rita Conceicao joined forces to break the cycles of poverty and violence around them by pledging local residents they would create a top-quality educational program for girls. From 1991 to the graduation of Bahia Street's first college-bound graduate in 2005, Willson and Conceicao 's adventure took them to the shantytowns of Brazil's Northeast, high-society London, and urban Seattle. In a narrative brimming with honesty and grace, *Dance Lest We All Fall Down* unfolds the story of this remarkable alliance, showing how friendship, when combined with courage, insight, and passion, can transform dreams of a better world into reality. Watch the book trailer:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/UWashingtonPress#p/u/3/KVXj44o3rVE>

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: University of Washington Press; Reprint edition (August 12, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0295990589

ISBN-13: 978-0295990583

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #512,416 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #107 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Non-Governmental Organizations #218 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Social Scientists & Psychologists #562 in Books > Parenting & Relationships > Reference

Customer Reviews

"It describes many journeys between different worlds, both personal and public, without ever forgetting the delicacy of friendship and the triumph of overcoming barriers." -Nubia Bento Rodrigues --bahastreet.org/pix/Article-review.pdf "The book is accessible to a broad range of readers. . . Although *Dance Lest We All Fall Down* should not be read as an ABC of starting an NGO, the book certainly provides invaluable inspiration, reflection, and ideas on how to proceed." •Marit Ursin, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 44 2012 "An emotionally affecting

book. It makes a strong case for local empowerment. . ."•The Bookmonger"• Margaret Willson's story about founding a school for poor girls in a favela in Salvador, Brazil, combines Eat, Pray, Love's romantic self-discoveries with the can-do idealism of Three Cups of Tea."•Crosscut.com" a text written passionately, sincerely, and sentimentally; all in the very best sense of all these terms. To understand Bahia, one needs mandinga, mischievousness, and the ability to interpret the true meaning of a smile. Capoeira, a form of combat that is also a dance, is a fine metaphor for Willson's struggles to feel, to change, and to represent Bahia. Margaret Willson, Rita Conceicao, and the girls of Bahia Street became experts in how to learn and how to teach such lessons."•The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology

"Always poignant and often productively uncomfortable, *Dance Lest We All Fall Down* is a highly personal, beautifully written, and theoretically sophisticated ethnography of modern connections in Brazil's northeast that focuses on the successes as well as the shortcomings of non-governmental institutions and contemporary means of addressing social inequality."•John Collins, Anthropology, City University of New York"An ideal text for classroom discussions about the cultural politics of development. *Dance Lest We All Fall Down* illustrates both how transnational solidarity can improve livelihoods and how it is not free from the tensions and contradictions that have always accompanied outside efforts to "do good" in the Global South. This book gives proponents and skeptics of NGOs plenty to think about."•Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas and the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington"A very moving tale about race, gender, and class in the "Capital of Happiness" in Brazil, Bahia . . . and a powerful and personal account of succeeding against the odds in breaking the cycle of poverty for young poor black girls there. Beautifully illustrates that, yes, it can be done through local empowerment and determination."•Darius Mans, President, Africare"A classic in the making. Under the guise of an easygoing and well-written travelogue, we are taken away into the unbelievable story of Bahia Street. And we come out of it bewildered and refreshed. . . . If true, life anthropology can be this breathtaking, who needs fiction?"•Dr. Robert Boonzajer Flaes, Founder and Chair of the Atana Program, Amsterdam"Inspiring, unique, and perfectly honest. The idea that street girls can actually escape a life of poverty and destruction through schooling and education is as old as the world. Bringing this idea from a nineteenth-century Victorian fiction setting to the real life slums of a Brazilian favela at the turn of the twenty-first century is an adventure and at times enormously funny. Some books talk about life. Some books give you insight. And once in a blue moon you find a book like this that gives life."•Dr. Maaike

Verrips, director of De Taalstudio, Amsterdam

Got this for kindle cause require for my culture anthro. class, it is a GOOD read, but not always the easiest to know the concepts from the class and make sure the TEACHER knows it! If they want to put this on the class tell the teacher to plan discussing it, because not EASY to relate to things you should know, but as you learn them, they start to connect.

Required reading for a class. Surprisingly a very fast read that is at once informative and interesting. Written more like a novel/memoir than an ethnography it keeps the reader engaged throughout. I read it in a couple of hours.

good stuff

I couldn't finish this book. It was not what I thought it would be - the tone, storyline, how it is written is tedious reading for my liking.

I learned recently that some college Anthropology classes have begun using this as a textbook - if it had been my textbook during the semester during my freshman year when I was fascinated with anthropology, I can say pretty clearly that I might have majored in it. Later, when I got involved with my first nonprofit organization, I went looking for a handbook to grassroots organizing, and couldn't find one. This book serves on both levels - satisfying me academically, and as a community volunteer. The story is real, and genuinely told -- on several levels. There's raw poverty, but no paternalism; there's expected recognition of the challenges, and unexpected moments of joy. It's led me to ask new questions whenever someone solicits funds for their nonprofit from me such as: "How many of the people you serve are on your Board of Directors?" If the answer to that is zero, I contribute elsewhere. Small NGOs aren't easy to build, manage and operate; to find one that succeeds organizationally while remaining true to the ideal of serving the community from within, is rare indeed.

Adventurer, activist, anthropologist and storyteller Margaret Willson's book is compelling. Her story is true, but it's as engaging as if it were fast-paced fiction, with richly-drawn characters, authentic conversations, sadness, gladness, frustration and joy. A summary: she moves to Brazil, lives in the Salvador slums, studies capoeira, and befriends Rita Conceicao, with whom she launches Bahia

Street, a grassroots program that is changing the future for girls from the favelas. Willson's clear-eyed observations and intimate insights will both touch and inspire you. I loved it.

Dance Lest We All Fall Down is a wonderful book. I am a retired professor who wrote a textbook about global issues, including poverty, and worked in the field of development in four developing countries, including Brazil. I was so moved by this book that I gave \$1,000 to Bahia Street, the organization Margaret Willson and a Brazilian friend set up to educate girls from the slums of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, thus breaking the tragic poverty cycle they were caught in. I consider Willson's book to be one of the best books I have ever read.

Margaret Willson writes with love and amazing honesty about the founding of Bahia Street. It's a tale filled with action, from the martial arts/dance form of capoeira to the dangerous streets of Salvador, Brazil. But it is primarily a tale of the friendship of Margaret and Rita, and what these two women have accomplished for the forgotten African-Brazilian girls in the community of Bahia. This should serve as a model for giving on every level. By the end, I was profoundly moved. Read it.

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