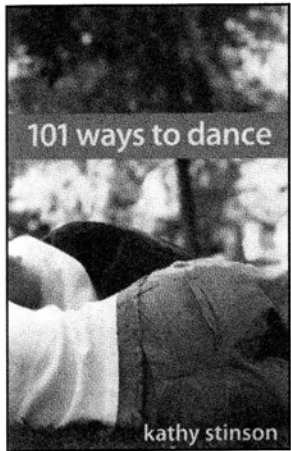


STINSON, Kathy
101 Ways to Dance
Second Story Press, 2006. 150p. Gr.
10-12. 1-897187-10-6 Pbk. \$9.95

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101 Ways to Dance is an anthology of short stories dealing with teenage sexuality. In the very first story, "Talking to Brownsville," two teenagers are hitchhiking to Brownsville where they hope to experience their "first real lay" with a girl named Gloria

and her friend Crystal. However, they are picked up by a strange woman who wants them to keep talking to keep her mind off her problems. In the end, the boys find out that her

14-year old daughter is pregnant. The shocking ending reveals that Gloria is her daughter!

The other stories are as varied as their characters. In "Between Mars and Venus," Melina and Susan discover that they are attracted to each other. In "Chicken," a teenager is attracted to the "bad boy" Bram. In "Everybody Loves a Clown," Joel, a teenager with terminal cancer, is attracted to another patient named Judy as he tries to make the lives of his fellow patients a bit better. Will he experience intimacy before he faces death? In "On Flaggpole Hill," Sarah tries to resist her sexual attraction to her cousin Rob. In "Getting Lucky," Amy lies to her boyfriend about who the father of her baby really is.

Kathy Stinson has been brutally honest in her stories. She pulls no punches in exploring issues which other authors might avoid. Her characters are teenagers on the brink of adulthood eager to explore their sexuality. Some are still in the initial stages of exploration like Joel, the teenager with cancer, in "Everybody Loves a Clown;" and others, like Amy in "Getting Lucky," are on the brink of parenthood. Stinson treats the subject matter with sensitivity, but does not shy away from the confusion of teenage life. In "Micheline and Renee," Erica is confused while reading a book about lesbians. "Was it possible - even if I had never before even thought about being with another girl? Surely not. I liked boys." (p. 71) Stinson also deals with some of the negative consequences of sexuality - teenage pregnancy, societal disapproval, and psychological issues.

The graphic depiction of sexuality will not be appropriate for younger readers. However, this book will appeal to older teenage readers of both sexes who are making choices about their own sexuality. Most of the stories are relatively easy to read, making the anthology accessible for readers who might be struggling with their reading. At the end of the book, readers will also enjoy Stinson's commentary about her writing process and the role of reading in her life.

Thematic Links: Relationships; Sexuality; Gender; Ability and Disability; Individuality; Censorship; Friendship; Love; Writing; Parent-Child Relationships

Myra Junyk