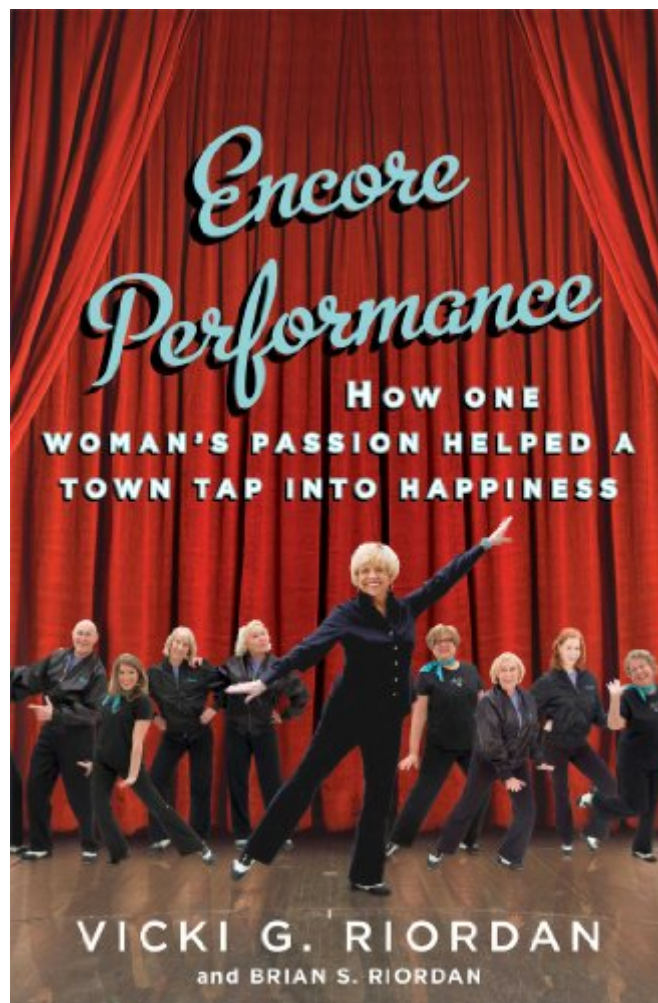


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Encore Performance (with Embedded Videos): How One Woman's Passion Helped A Town Tap Into Happiness



Synopsis

To enhance your reading experience, this edition of Encore Performance contains embedded videos of the Tap Pups performing. The inspiring true story of a woman who learned that it's never too late to live the life you want. As a young girl growing up in the 1950s in central Pennsylvania, Vicki Grubic Riordan idolized stars like Shirley Temple and Gene Kelly. She soon found her calling as a dance instructor, but like many baby boomers, she put her passion on hold to focus on starting a family. Only when her marriage ended and she was left with little means of support for herself and her two young sons did Vicki return to her first true love: teaching dance. In doing so, she found much more than a way to make a living: she found a way to make a difference. With her exuberant personality, infectious enthusiasm, and unwavering belief in the magic of movement to make even the darkest times better, Vicki has inspired thousands of women to do things they never dreamed possible. At the age of sixty-two, when her peers were thinking about retirement, Vicki opened the doors to what has become America's largest adult tap dancing studio. She has gone from teaching fifty students a year to teaching more than five hundred, and thanks to Vicki, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, has become the unofficial tap capital of the world and the home of her celebrated "Tap Pups." The majority of the women (and a handful of men) in her classes are in their fifties and sixties, but instead of yielding to the expectation that they'd be slowing down at this stage of life, tap has helped them to get in touch with their own natural rhythm. Tap helped Anni, 56, get through a difficult divorce with grace. It gave Betsy a newfound self-confidence, and at 57 she was inspired to wear eye makeup for the first time in thirty years. And when Jeanne, 62, was diagnosed with cancer, the Tap Pups rallied to offer their full support. Vicki's students come from all walks of life: teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, insurance agents, therapists, CPAs, retirees—married, divorced, single, and widowed—but through dancing together, no matter their innate talent or years of experience, Vicki's Tap Pups have found a potent source of friendship, vitality, and fulfillment. After years of putting everyone else first, these women know that now it's their time to shine. In Encore Performance, Vicki inspires readers of all ages to listen to the beat of their own hearts and dance through life as they were born to do.

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Customer Reviews

What a wonderful, heartwarming, touching and uplifting story. This is simply not a book about a woman teaching tap to older women in Harrisburg. This is about a woman doing everything she could to raise her two boys when faced with a husband who had issues with alcohol. This is about a son giving back to his Mother later in life when she wasn't sure what the next step would be. This is about a grandmother-raised during the Depression-who did everything she could to help her daughter deal with similar issues (from her husband) that she had dealt with her Dad. This is about women banding together for each other (some of them only meeting once) to face life's biggest battles...cancer, loss of a spouse, life-threatening surgeries, etc. For me, it's a cross between 'The Help', 'Billy Elliot', 'Steel Magnolias' and 'Mamma Mia'. Everyone can take something away from these stories...it's never too late in life to not only find your passion, but lead with it.

I'm biased. I know I'm biased. Because I tap with Vicki, and because she has taught and continues to teach me happiness through tap. But here's the thing -- this is the amazing-but-true, stranger-than-fiction story of how the we came to be, and it truly is Vicki's voicing the story of all of us in Tap Pups. Told in two timelines, the "now" storyline tells of putting on a massive 200-dancer annual Spring Show and the "memory" storyline details Vicki's experiences growing up, her family, and dancing. Also not dancing in some of her darker days. That's what makes the present day an encore performance, that Vicki was able to find her way back to her first true love. What a delight it is

that in so doing, Vicki built a community of adult dancers of wildly diverse backgrounds and dance experience, who not only come to class together, but become friends outside of class. Encore Performance will tap at your heartstrings until your toes start tapping too. Fair warning: there is no good place to put the book down until you are on your feet and dancing along with the video clips available via embedded QR code. So pass the Kleenex, and tie on your black-and-whites. It's time to dance.

There is something in this book that will strike a chord in everyone! All of us who grew up in the fifties and sixties will recognize something Vicki has written about and it will catch you in your heart and make you cry and then make you want to get up and dance--even those of you who are not dancers! I stayed up until 2 a.m. finishing this book; I could just not put it down. Each chapter in the book has three parts: What is happening at specific times of day during the Tap Pups Spring Show 2011, where Vicki is walking throughout The Forum and seeing her dancers. The chapter then morphs into a story about a specific dancer, which then makes her remember an event(s) in her life. This format makes each chapter startlingly real and fresh, but still goes back to Vicki's life story. Her story will make you cry, but will ultimately make you want to laugh with joy--and wish that you lived in Harrisburg, PA so you could join the Tap Pups! The book is well-written and literate. The story pulls you along easily, and all of a sudden, it will be 2 a.m. for you, too! HIGHLY recommended.

I will have to admit first.. that I too am biased. I tapped with the Tap Pups. And I have always admired Vicki. That out of the way, now let me be honest. The book was a page turner. I picked it up and couldn't put it down until I finished it. I loved how she used two timelines, the present and then her heart warming story. Vicki is an inspiration to us all. She brings joy to classes. You go there to dance, but come home with more than that. Hard for me to put into words what she gives to us .

Reading a review in the newspaper caused me to "just try a chapter or two" in the library, and I couldn't put it down. (Well, just long enough to check it out to take home.) Finishing it within a day or two, I found myself making a list of all my female friends who'll be receiving it as a present this year. Need one now for my home library, too. I never took tap as a kid, never really interested, but the female camaraderie and support in Tap Pups sounds so darn appealing I think I'm going to sign up for the Absolute Beginner class. Love the author's strength and courage in creating such an amazing second act for herself, and kudos to Brian for his part.

More than a story about the world's largest adult tap group, "Encore Performance," is the starkly honest and not always pretty tale of Vicki Grubic Riordan's determination to prevail despite personal loss, financial hardship, and the after-effects of an abusive marriage. Simultaneously set in a post-World War Two steel town and her hugely successful adult tap dance studio, Vicki's ability to describe her world captures the reader's attention from the first page. We quickly learn that Vicki Riordan is a woman of both immeasurable compassion and fierce drive. Raised as an only child of indulgent parents, Vicki could have easily become self-centered. However, from an early age, she demonstrated a rare level of compassion for others coupled with a desire to share her gift for tap dancing with them. With a warm heart and a keen understanding of people's challenges, Vicki has provided countless individuals with exactly what they need. And more often than not, it is a chance to dance--frequently for the first time in their lives. Indeed, "Encore Performance" is the story of the women (and a few men) who are very different from one another, yet inextricably joined by a passion for tap dance. I am fortunate to have met Vicki Riordan. Funny, warm, and immensely talented, I did not really know her until I read her absorbing and often surprising story.

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