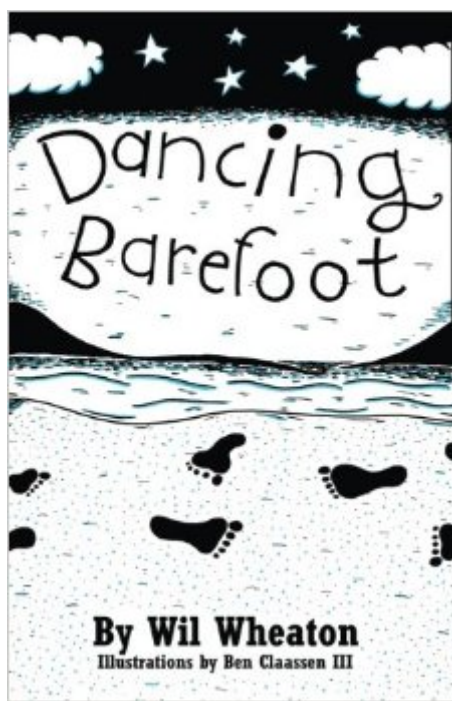


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Dancing Barefoot



Synopsis

Wil Wheaton--blogger, geek, and Star Trek: The Next Generation's Wesley Crusher--gives us five short-but-true tales of life in the so-called Space Age in *Dancing Barefoot*. With a true geek's unflinching honesty, Wil examines life, love, the web, and the absurdities of Hollywood in these compelling autobiographical narratives. Based on pieces first published in Wil's hugely popular blog, www.wilwheaton.net, the stories in *Dancing Barefoot* chronicle a teen TV star's journey to maturity and self-acceptance. Far from the usual celebrity tell-all, *Dancing Barefoot* is a vivid account of one man's version of that universal story, the search for self. If you've ever fallen in love, wondered what goes on behind the scenes at a Star Trek convention, or thought hard about the meaning of life, you'll find a kindred soul in the pages of *Dancing Barefoot*. In the process of uncovering his true geeky self, Wil Wheaton speaks to the inner geek in all of us.

The stories:

- Houses in Motion* - Memories fill the emptiness left within a childhood home, and saying goodbye brings them to life.
- Ready Or Not Here I Come* - A game of hide-n-seek with the kids works as a time machine, taking Wil on a tour of the hiding and seeking of years gone by.
- Inferno* - Two 15-year-olds pass in the night leaving behind pleasant memories and a perfumed Car Wars Deluxe Edition Box Set.
- We Close Our Eyes* - A few beautiful moments spent dancing in the rain.
- The Saga of SpongeBob VegasPants* - A story of love, hate, laughter and the acceptance of all things Trek.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (143 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

If you've read the other reviews, you've probably noticed that a lot of them plainly admit that they

gush about Wil's book because he's "one of us." But I personally put more stock in comments such as, "he's a very compelling writer." So the question is, is he? The answer I have for you is this: if you can rip out the sentimental, sugary 4th story -- which is only 2 pages long -- it's a fine, fine book. That story, titled "We Close Our Eyes," is cliché and hamfisted. But even it reveals some talent: Wil paints a picture well. He might make a good screenwriter. What about the rest of the stories? Yeah, there is a bit of cliché, rosy-colored-glasses fawning over his lost youth (sigh), but he does have a talent for words. I actually cried a little as I finished the first story, and it didn't feel cheap, as if he'd deliberately tried to get that reaction. Instead, it felt like I had read something real, and persuasive, and I felt genuinely affected by what I read. The Spongebob Vegaspants story is much hyped, and doesn't fail to entertain. But there are also parts that tire me. For example, after William Shatner snubs Wil Wheaton, Wil talks to someone about it, and that person says nasty things about Shatner. Then Wil talks to someone else, who also says nasty things about Shatner. Then Wil talks to someone else, on and on, each person taking a pot-shot at Shatner. In the end, after Wil has written about how 10-15 of his friends think Shatner is a jerk, I had to wonder: am I reading a funny story or an attempt at character assassination? I was able to get through it, and there really IS a great story in there. But it took a bit of effort to overlook the more petty parts.

The hardest thing to believe about "Dancing Barefoot" is that these are stories jettisoned from his upcoming book "Just a Geek". They scan like they were intended to be read together. The first four stories, vignettes really, tell of the universal feelings of love, loss, embarrassment and acceptance. While the last story, "The Saga of SpongeBob VegasPants", brings it all together at a Star Trek convention. "SpongeBob VegasPants" is the highlight of the book. It lasts more than half of the book's 117 pages and reveals more about the author than some autobiographies have done in five times as much space. Wil really has it all out here and the result is an honest, touching portrayal of a man coming to terms with a cultural phenomenon he loved and then betrayed him. Wil grew up loving Star Trek. Just imagine being cast on a television show that puts you on the bridge of the USS Enterprise. For a geek, not many things can match that. In fact, your character, is the only one that legendary Star Trek creator ever named for himself (Wesley was Gene Roddenberry's middle name). And yet, the writers couldn't really do much with your character. He soon became a 1 dimensional intergalactic know-it-all who would serve as a Deus ex Machina everytime the writers wrote themselves into a corner. The fans that didn't hate you at the start quickly join the chorus of "I Hate Wesley" and boo you offstage at Star Trek conventions. This is where Wil came from. But it's not what Wil Wheaton is. He has become a very powerful writer, one who transcended his past and

is now earning the respect of the people who booed him long ago while also picking up new fans. That's the true power of Wil Wheaton.

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