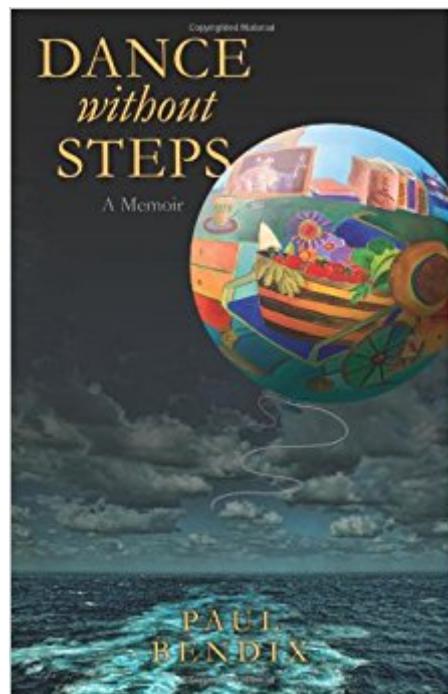


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# Dance Without Steps



## Synopsis

AT AGE 21, PAUL BENDIX WAS SHOT in a street robbery and paralyzed-and in Dance Without Steps, he takes us on a journey through the next four decades of his life. We stand at his elbow as he makes pea soup with one unfeeling hand. We share his self-conscious wheelchair journeys through suburban downtowns, and we learn the perils inherent in simply taking a shower. Yet Dance Without Steps has no room for self-pity as its author looks straight at the life he has been dealt and at the fierce complexities that have come with it. There is nothing Bendix is afraid to look at, nothing that unsettles his humane equanimity and philosophic poise, not even when he looks back unflinchingly at the shooting itself that was to leave him able to use only one arm and one leg. If not with ease, then with humor, dignity, and grace, Bendix makes the most of a life of never-ending accommodation. His disability worsens over the decades, yet his life expands-as in his building a good marriage and balancing the roles of helped and helper. He travels with his beloved wife, gardens assiduously, observes the curiosities of the world around him-and, always, he writes. As a boy, the only responsible figure among a weak father, younger brother, and profoundly neurotic mother, Bendix gained the habit of indispensability to others, along with the tolerance, generosity, and forbearance that were to remain his through life. The disaster that befell him would have crushed others, but his own courage is boundless-not only when he is shot but again, years later, when his wife dies of cancer and leaves a hole in his life the size of half the earth. In his ability to observe without judging, to suffer without self-pity, and to laugh without derision, Bendix is in the company of Chaucer, Swift, and Beckett, all the while writing in a limpid style akin to those of a Joseph Addison or E.B.White. His book is a unique and clear-eyed journey, brave beyond imagining.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Paul is learning a foreign language with me. He sings in the same choir as one of my other students. I learned by her that he became paraplegic after having been shot when he was a teen. I discovered he had a blog (thanks to Google and my curiosity). This book is a compilation of his blog entries. He never told me about the night of his shooting and we still do not talk about it. All I know is that he is a writer. We have our French lesson at his home. I turn the pages of the book for him, I write for him. Unfortunately, I cannot walk and move my arms for him because 50 years ago, 2 men decided one evening to exercise their right to keep and bear arms .... I would recommend this reading to all who consider that the Second Amendment of the US Constitution is sacred. "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." Matt. 26:52

Thoughtful essays that illuminate life from the perspective of a wheelchair. Worthwhile.

Young, gifted and ready to launch a bright career, Bendix found himself the victim of a senseless and violent crime which redirected his life's path. In this memoir he describes, miraculously without bitterness or self-pity, the experience of life as a quadriplegic, the love story of his marriage, and world travels as witnessed from a wheelchair. Bendix writes with humor, insight and in your face reality. A study in perspective.

Paul Bendix uses autobiographical snippets of his life to convey the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. His style combines subtle humor with honest self-reflection and feelings through which the reader can experience the author's life in everyday situations that most of us take for granted. At the same time, his narration connects us to our own feelings encountered in everyday experiences. Reading the book is a joy.

Some see this as an inspirational book all about courage in the face of calamity. Well, yes, it may be such a book. But I want to recommend it for its sheer entertainment value. His narrative crackles with dry wit. I laughed out loud many times. The wonderful opening soup recipe is just a teaser of delights yet to come. Read and enjoy!! And, if you must, be inspired, too.

fun, more pain, more heart than one might expect from a life with such physical limitations. Paul so clearly and matter-of-factly shares the complicated process of living a (very) full life with dignity and passion and, frequently, humor from the perspective of a wheelchair.

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