

Dancing on the Volcano

Floor de Goede

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A gay couple deals with distance and temptation in Floor de Goede's graphic memoir *Dancing on the Volcano*.

Flo and Bas have been together for three years, but Flo is visiting the Aeolian Islands and will be apart from Bas for ten days. The separation proves difficult for Flo, preventing him from enjoying the trip to the fullest. As the story shifts to Flo and Bas's home, complications arise with the increasing presence of Tom, whose role as an intimate friend and possible lover confuses them. In the end, Flo and Bas realize that whatever other romantic interests they might entertain, their personal relationship will endure.

The first third of the book reads like a humorous travel journal, featuring Flo's whimsical encounters and observations, like his severe reaction to a sulfurous smell. Elsewhere, Flo's imagination sees the rocky coastline become a giant creature, and his loud, snoring traveling companion Sander is viewed as a pig, walrus, and elephant in turn. In the remainder of the book, romantic elements take precedence and a more serious tone emerges.

The artwork is superb, utilizing a cartoon style capable of portraying adult topics and sexuality without diminishing their impact. The book is full of subtle and evocative multiple-panel compositions, as with a series of reactions as Flo attempts to flirt with Tom in front of Bas.

A real-life account of the difficulties of maintaining a relationship, *Dancing on the Volcano* is a heartfelt romantic drama leavened with humor.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2022)

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