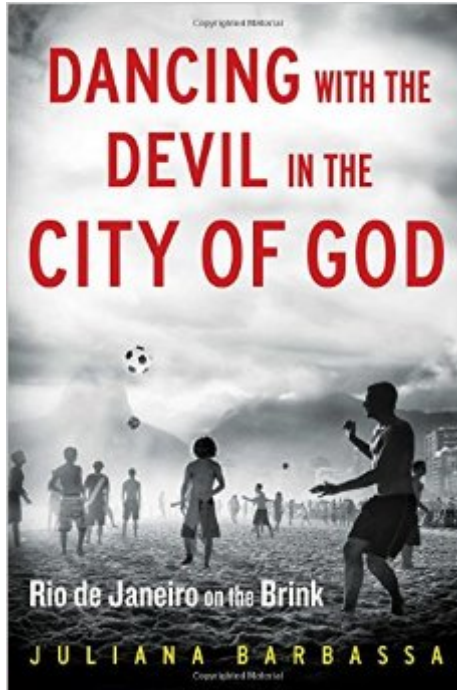


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# Dancing With The Devil In The City Of God: Rio De Janeiro On The Brink



## Synopsis

In the tradition of *Detroit: An American Autopsy* and *Maximum City* comes a deeply reported and beautifully written biography of the seductive and chaotic city of Rio de Janeiro from prizewinning journalist and Brazilian native Juliana Barbassa. Juliana Barbassa moved a great deal throughout her life, but Rio was always home. After twenty-one years abroad, she returned to find the city that once ravaged by inflation, drug wars, corrupt leaders, and dying neighborhoods was now on the precipice of a major change. Rio has always aspired to the pantheon of global capitals, and under the spotlight of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games it seems that its moment has come. But in order to prepare itself for the world stage, Rio must vanquish the entrenched problems that Barbassa recalls from her childhood. Turning this beautiful but deeply flawed place into a predictable, pristine showcase of the best that Brazil has to offer in just a few years is a tall order—and with the whole world watching, the stakes couldn't be higher. With a cast of larger-than-life characters who are driving this fast-moving juggernaut or who risk getting caught in its gears, this kaleidoscopic portrait of Rio introduces the reader to the people who make up this city of extremes, revealing their aspirations and their grit, their violence, their hungers and their splendor, and shedding light on the future of this city they are building together. *Dancing with the Devil in the City of God* is an insider perspective into a city on the brink from a native daughter whose life, hopes, and fortunes are entwined with those of the city she portrays.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Most of the plentiful action reported in this book takes place between the years 2007 and 2013.

Those very years happen to have seen the first and last of my own five visits to Rio de Janeiro, so perhaps I can add a little more detail to Juliana Barbassa's powerful narrative. My own visits were family occasions, not journalistic. The first in 2007 was to Ipanema, the next three were to Santa Teresa, and the last, to Angra dos Reis, was over the Christmas and New Year period 2012/3. Over the whole 5 or 6 years I took one trip to Paraty and Ilha Grande, one to the little holiday resort island of Paqueta and another to the former Finnish outpost of Penedo in the interior. These excursions were by road and ferry: another, by air, was to the Iguacu Falls which are outside the scope of this book or this review, except for the significant detail that the journey to and from Galeao International Airport brought me into close proximity with the former gangster headquarters in the favelas of Alemao and Vila Cruzeiro. Take a look at Juliana's map. Obviously it's the same story for any of the millions of tourists commuting between the airport and downtown, but I wonder how many really understood (I didn't) where they were or what sometimes happened there. Rio only gets a certain amount of news coverage in England, but the recent World Cup and the looming 2016 Olympics have brought it more into the frame, and some very recent civil unrest would have achieved that anyway. The picture that I can give you is that the favelas are everywhere. On my first trip I caught my breath at the beauty of the ocean outlook from a corner of the Rua Prudente Moraes where I had a small self-catering apartment in a gated modern condo.

• *Dancing with the Devil in the City of God*, by Juliana Barbassa  
Book Review August 5, 2016 By George Fulmore  
This book will give one insight into Rio de Janeiro. It's written by a journalist who was born in Brazil, then moved several times, but retained her fluency in Portuguese. She returned to Rio as a journalist to work for the AP before the World Cup in 2014, then stays afterward to continue her insights leading up to the Olympic games. Perhaps her ultimate insight comes near the end of the book when she says that having the Brazilian soccer team humiliated in the World Cup by a German team in the semi-finals stripped the pillars of the Brazilian *façade*, that being that samba, soccer and Carnival were enough to sustain the nation's image in the world. But, now, with much of that gone, it would be time for discussions on what was failing in Brazil and how the country could move on. But the bulk of the book is a series of themes, built from areas of expertise and real experiences of the author living and writing in Rio. She reviews the economic hard times of the 1980s in Brazil, and tells us that in 1982, Brazil was, essentially, broke. This was followed by the economic boom that happened in the first decade of the new century and even during the period of the Great Recession in the U.S. Brazilian banks had done better than those in the U.S., plus China was buying raw materials from Brazil to continue its growth. There are several chapters on the gangs and

the favelas and the pacification of such by the police and armed forces. She also tells us of the incredible red tape involved with leasing an apartment in Rio.

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