



Girl Singer: A Memoir of the Girl Next Door

Rosemary Clooney, Joan Barthel

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At the top of her form and topping the charts, Rosemary Clooney looks back at a life of triumph and tragedy more dramatic than any work of fiction.

Rosemary Clooney made her first public appearance at the age of three, on the stage of the Russell Theater in her hometown of Maysville, Kentucky, singing, "When Your Hair Has Turned to Silver," an odd but perhaps prophetic choice for one so young. She has been singing ever since: on local radio; with Tony Pastor's orchestra; in big-box-office Hollywood films; at the Hollywood Bowl, the London Palladium, and Carnegie Hall ; on her own television series; and at venues large and small across the country and around the world. The list of Clooney's friends and intimates reads like a who's who of show business royalty: Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Marlene Dietrich, Tony Bennett, Janet Leigh, Humphrey Bogart, and Billie Holiday, to name just a few. She's known enormous professional triumphs and deep personal tragedies.

At the age of twenty-five, Clooney married the erudite and respected actor Jose Ferrer, sixteen years her senior and light-years more sophisticated. Trouble started almost immediately when, on her honeymoon, she discovered that he had already been unfaithful. Finally, after having five children while she almost single-handedly supported the entire family and endured Ferrer's numerous, unrepentant infidelities, she filed for divorce. From there her life spiraled downward into depression, addiction to various prescription drugs, and then, in 1968, a breakdown and hospitalization. After years spent fighting her way back to the top, Clooney is married to one of her first and long-lost loves- a true fairy tale with a happy ending. She's been nominated for four Grammys in six years and has two albums at the top of the *Billboard* charts. In the words of one of Stephen Sondheim's Follies showgirls, she could well be singing, triumphantly, "I'm still here!"

From the Hardcover edition.

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