



A Little Bit Wicked: Life, Love, and Faith in Stages

By Kristin Chenoweth

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A lively, laugh-out-loud journey from Oklahoma beauty queen to show biz sensation.

“Life’s too short. I’m not.”

You might know her as a Tony Award–winning Broadway star who originated the role of Galinda the Good Witch in the smash musical *Wicked*. Or you may recognize her from her starring roles on TV—*The West Wing*, *Pushing Daisies*, and *Sesame Street*. At four foot eleven, Kristin Chenoweth is an immense talent in a petite but powerful package. Through a combination of talent, hard work, and (she’s quick to add) the grace of God, Kristin took Broadway and Hollywood by storm. But of course, into every storm, the occasional drizzle of disaster must fall, and Kristin reflects on how faith and family have kept her grounded, even in tough times.

Filled with wit, wisdom, and backstage insight, *A Little Bit Wicked* is long on love and short on sleep. It’s essential reading for Kristin’s legions of fans and an uplifting story for anyone seeking motivation to follow his or her dreams—over the rainbow and beyond.

Featuring Chenolicious recipes, Kristin's advice for young actors, and much more!

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Currently seen as waitress Olive Snook in ABC's *Pushing Daisies*, the Tony Award–winning singer-actress Chenoweth looks back at her multifaceted career, which has encompassed recordings (*As I Am*), films (*Four Christmases*), television (*The West Wing*), Broadway (*Wicked*), solo concerts, animation (*Tinker Bell*), opera and Opryland. Beginning with the intriguing speculation that her unknown birth mother could be watching her career rise, she recalls her Oklahoma childhood and vocal training when she learned "[t]he music didn't come from notes and lyrics; it came from life and mileage." Personal revelations, such as her experiences with Ménière's disease, are balanced with bubbling backstage anecdotes. A chapter about her on-and-off relationship with writer-producer Aaron Sorkin includes a section written by Sorkin himself. With digressions, detours and words like "whack-a-noodle," the book is busy with show-biz flip quips and writing reminiscent of Julia Phillips's *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again* (minus the drugs and invective). Chenoweth has a frenzied, free-associative style; it's as if she's speaking breathlessly into a tape recorder between sitcom scenes. To use her phrase, this book is "a hoot and a holler"—a fast-paced frolic that her fans will appreciate. (Apr. 14)

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About the Author

Kristin Chenoweth is an award-winning musical theatre performer, opera singer, television and film actress, and an exclusively signed Sony Masterworks recording artists. Visit www.kristin-chenoweth.com for more information on Kristin and her recordings: *A Lovely Way to Spend Christmas*, *Let Yourself Go* and *As I Am*.

Joni Rodgers is the author of several books including *Bald in the Land of Big Hair*, a memoir of her own unlikely journey from cancer patient to celebrity memoir guru.

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overture

Los Angeles, California
February 8, 2008

I face myself in the full-length mirror, stability in one hand, sex in the other.

The white Armani gown is the dress every little girl dreams of. A lot of big girls, too. A line of blushing attendants, all picture-pretty, clutch their bouquets of roses and baby's breath, each on the arm of a dashing, tuxedoed counterpart. My best always-a-bridesmaid buddy Denny Downs is looking at me with wide, moist eyes, telling me how perfect it all is...but suddenly I'm not sure.

A moment ago, I was ready to commit myself to the faithful friend who's supported and stood by me all these years. Then Jimmy showed up, and everything became a question. Now, here I am at the eleventh hour, wondering what might happen, who will I be, if I allow my passion to be swayed by this dangerous bad boy. Crystallized moments like this one arise in every woman's life. Moments of truth in which she makes the choices that guide her destiny. Moments that ultimately write the story of her.

Sugar or spice? I agonize. Naughty or nice?

Sensible angels whisper in my ear, but the runaway bride in me is getting restless. I am a type A "leap and a net will appear" risk-taker, and if I trust that God made me this way for a reason, then I have to believe that the risk will be worth it in the long run. Experience has taught me that we all stumble and fall; faith assures me that He'll be there to catch me when I do. My heart speaks, and I listen.

I chose Jimmy.

Jimmy Choo, that is. A fabulous pair of four-inch platform slingbacks. Setting aside the safe-and-sane character shoes I was planning to wear onstage tonight, I cast my lot with the bad boy. Oh, I know what you're thinking, and, yeah, it's not exactly *Sophie's Choice*. But this is Oscar night. I'm about to step out onstage in front of thousands of people -- friends, colleagues, peers, people I hope and dream of working with -- plus my parents and everyone else watching the live broadcast on television.

People keep reminding me that billions -- with a *b* as in *bombastic* and *boy howdy!* -- yes, *billions* of people all over the world will be tuned in. Even in the coziest venues, performers can and do get hurt onstage all the time. There's a broken toe for every light on Broadway. But I'm not as concerned for myself as I am for the burgeoning cast of backup dancers. This is a huge shot of résumé adrenaline for most of these kids; I don't want it to turn into some tragicomic YouTube video labeled "Cheno Falls on Ass." On the other hand, when you're four feet eleven inches you get pretty comfortable in heels.

"A nice pair of Jimmy Choos never hurt anyone," I tell my friend Denny, but I take the precaution of having the soles rubbered for slip-resistance. (Faith is fine, but the Lord helps those who help themselves, right?)

I'll be performing "That's How You Know," one of three Oscar-nominated songs written by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz for Disney's frothy fairy tale *Enchanted*. As Tilda Swinton collects the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *Michael Clayton*, the backstage cavern turns into an anthill of scurrying crew members preparing for my number, which is being staged in full-on Broadway showstopper style. Joining me on the sweeping two-story set is a village-size cast including half a dozen dancing brides niftily accessorized with dancing grooms, quick-stepping waiters, acrobatically inclined construction workers, happy townies, multiculti mariachis, and (putting us indisputably over the top) a marching band. Against a miniature backdrop of Manhattan, a battalion of gorgeous guys will form sort of a hunkpowered elevator and pass me bodily off an ornate, ten-foot-tall bridge.

A great song. A magical night. Gown by Armani and travel by hunk-o-vator. I am in grave danger of thinking it doesn't get any better than this when someone tells me, "George Clooney is on the front row." I don't ask who else is on the front row. *Is there anyone else?*

George Clooney needs to know that he and I are perfect for each other. We would be instantly matched on eHarmony.com. I can already see us in that ad campaign, oozing adorable, giddily telling the story of our first kiss. Happily ever after, cue Chaka Khan, roll credits. He is my Mr. Right. The problem is, I'm still in love with Mr. Writer, a man who is more likely to show up in a "Falls on Ass" video than an "Everlasting Love" commercial. Truth be told, eHarmony would not encourage me to share so much as a cab uptown with this guy. But of course this is precisely what makes him irresistible.

Never for a moment did I even fantasize that Aaron Sorkin was Mr. Right. From the day we met, he was Mr. Sets My Brain on Fire, then he evolved for a long, lovely spell into Mr. Makes Me Sing REO Speedwagon in the Shower, but there was always an undercurrent of Mr. You Are Seriously Pushing Your Luck Here, and I eventually found myself doing the ol' step-ball-change with Mr. Why Am I Banging My Head Against This Wall? Instead of coming up with a cutesy Hollywood powercouple name for us -- "Sorkoweth" or "Chenorkin" -- the tabloids wearily call us "on again/off again," which means we periodically put each other through a wrenching spate of separation, but I keep reinstating him as Mr. Might Actually Be Worth the

Trouble. We are now "off again," and it's painful to not share this amazing moment with him. I love the man, and whatever happens or doesn't happen between us in the long run, I always will.

"It's in God's hands," I tell my father whenever he shakes his head about it.

The only thing I can say with utter certainty is that come what may, my feelings for George Clooney will remain unsullied. Whatever curtains rise and fall, the "Kristlooney" dream lives on.

Hosting the Oscars tonight is Jon Stewart, who's been onstage riffing about the bitter writers' strike that was recently resolved. His wry, wisenheimer humor is good medicine for our cruel but tenderhearted community.

"Welcome to the makeup sex," he said at the start of the show, and I felt a twinge of knowing exactly what he was talking about.

Aside from my periodic reunions with Mr. If Loving You Is Wrong, I Don't Wanna Be Right, I've been holding my breath through the strike, terrified for the fate of *Pushing Daisies*, this beautiful baby bird of a TV show I've been doing. With the strike ended, we are all breathing again and anxious to get back to work this summer. Before I resume shooting the show, I'll spend the spring in New York, shoot a movie in Minneapolis, squeeze in some family time with my far-flung loved ones in Texas, Denver, and Oklahoma, do a concert with the Chicago Symphony, and give a special benefit performance for a friend in Manhattan -- all of which keeps me pleasantly occupied and comfortably distanced from L.A. with all its potential complications and painful reminders.

I make my way backstage in my Jimmy Choos. I'm getting nervous. This doesn't happen to me much anymore. Like everyone around me, I'm a seasoned pro. Stage fright is a thing of the past. But tonight, as I prepare to step onstage, a hollow, little ice cube of doubt forms in the pit of my touchy stomach. I close my eyes. *Heavenly Father...*

I don't have to say anything else. He knows.

Adding one last dash of adorable to the *Enchanted* number is Vanessa Williams's little daughter Sasha, so Vanessa is here, helping her get ready. She gives me a good-luck scrunch and tells me, "Sasha's going to be right there when you look at her."

It's good to have another Broadway girl backstage. There's no unnerving a woman who's conquered the pageant circuit and delivered eight shows a week. She's a glam-cat paragon of strength and calm. Sasha's learning early what it took me years to understand.

Crew hands hustle out the set pieces. The hunks and I brace ourselves for places.

Deep breath.

Jon Stewart catches my eye.

"You're going to knock it out of the park," he assures me.

"I feel like I could pee my pants."

Jon smiles at me without a trace of wisenheimer. "Just get out there and do what you do." Copyright © 2009 by Kristin Chenoweth

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thad Whitehead:

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