



Old, Gay & Fabulous, a memoir

Ken Sofronski

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He's unabashedly frank. He's unrepentantly funny. In short, he's just the sort of person you hope you run into at the next cocktail party. Irreverent raconteur Ken Sofronski weaves wisecracks and wisdom in *Old, Gay & Fabulous*, his true account of one life lived defiantly out loud. As the old saying goes, there are eight million stories in New York. This one just happens to be worth hearing. With equal parts charm, cheek, and candor, this absolutely fabulous memoir looks back on his singular life, from high glitz to low times, and back to fabulous again. It's a story of survival, pluck, and a good dose of mischief that at once tears at the heart, lifts the spirits, and always entertains. His story begins with his earliest memory holding onto his mother's leg, and from there takes off on a wild and woolly ride through an uncommon Pennsylvania childhood with a lesbian mom and her girlfriend Vi, futile and fateful attempts at sports with the boys, as well as teenage homoerotic dalliances mixed with dating young girls. Yet, a star was born with *A Star is Born*, as Judy Garland shimmered on the screen and changed his destiny. At the age of eighteen, Sofronski takes on New York City, crashing with a born-again buddy of his brother, and setting his sights on the Great White Way. His formal training begins, including acting classes with Bill Hickey and the June Taylor School of Dance. The "school of life" is in session as well, as the young man frequents bars and bathhouses and dabbles in drugs of every stripe, from acid to pot to poppers. And, like many urban transplants adrift in the flood of humanity that is New York, our hero remains a lonely soul amidst the masses. At the onset of the 1960s, it's Hollywood here he comes, arriving on the scene feeling like Lana Turner. Soon, the dazzle dissolves to hustling and humiliations, eating cracker packets from cafeterias and getting nowhere fast. Once again, New York beckons, so he hatches a plan to head east with a borrowed car. Back in New York, he befriends a fellow named Jack, who works in the sheets department of Macy's, and finds his own long-term cash cow as a court reporter. From there, the good times, glamour, and shenanigans roll, with a cadre of pals Danny, Robert, and Bobby enjoying high times on Fire Island. Ultimately, he finds his way in a dive bar to Jim, his lover of eleven years. Affairs, arrests, and hijinx ensue throughout, with our able hero managing to land on his feet. Soon, fate hands him a double-edged sword, with a love affair with a woman, and the role of Sammy in *Mean Streets*. The latter turns out to be more of curse than blessing, as his career gets derailed by the role. An unexpected windfall comes with the death of his father. Through a good dose of anxiety, however, the fun goes on with Bette Midler's debut, lavish dinner parties, and a new home on Greenwich Street. Soon, however, AIDS takes the city, and many of his close friends. With AIDS, the ending of his acting career, and a raging mid-life crisis, a new phase begins. In the 1980s, Sofronski ramps up, then winds down his court reporting, attends Fordham University, and writes a full-length play. In the events of September 11, his life is spared once more. He takes this as an omen to sell his apartment, and start acting in student films. *Old, Gay & Fabulous* is for anyone itching for a tale wonderfully told by a singular sensational survivor, who, whatever life brings, is always up for a laugh.

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Robert Hicks:

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Diana Rush:

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