

Nonfiction

Waiter Rant: Thanks for the Tip—Confessions of a Cynical Waiter

The Waiter. Ecco, \$24.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-06-125668-4

The anonymous restaurant professional behind the Bloggie Award-winning WaiterRant.net expands on his postings in his first book. The result is an enjoyable if utterly unromantic personal exposé on the inner workings of the New York City-area restaurants that have employed him since 1999. To his first job, the Waiter brought abandoned dreams and ambitions for a religious vocation, an eventual psychology degree and employment experiences in a drug-rehabilitation center. That history proved useful in professional service, particularly a restaurant that, with its corrupt manager and dictatorial boss and despite its upmarket setting, clientele and business volume, was an example of the very worst in the industry. The narrative hangs on the author's professional development from restaurant newbie to jaded industry-spokesperson; he makes ample room for extended riffs on manners, money, morals and even meals. He catalogues the grime-and-gross-out factors (some obscene), so comparisons to *Kitchen Confidential* are inevitable. (Aug.)

Put on a Happy Face: A Broadway Memoir

Charles Strouse. Sterling/Union Square, \$19.95 (336p) ISBN 978-1-4027-5889-8

Three-time Tony Award-winning composer Strouse is best known for the musical *Annie* and his *All in the Family* theme, "Those Were the Days." While "wary of the ghosts that appear," he summons up memories of a career that spans decades, beginning with his Manhattan boyhood, study at Rochester's Eastman School of Music, touring the South with Butterfly McQueen and early collaborations with lyricist Lee Adams. His 1950s pianist gigs ran the gamut from strip clubs to musical theater classes at the Actors Studio: "Typically, I would have accompanied Kevin McCarthy and Marilyn Monroe in a scene from *Oklahoma!*" After his 1960 smash hit *Bye Bye Birdie*, there were plenty of happy faces and more long runs. Although he covers his film scores and music for TV



Janis Ian tells her story in *Society's Child* (below).

commercials, the book's best chapters center on the staging struggles of *Annie* and *Applause*, plus breaking racial barriers with Sammy Davis Jr. in *Golden Boy*. Many songs are cited, but the lack of lyrics is disappointing, Strouse instead regales with fascinating, sometimes surprising, anecdotes, such as Mike Nichols, clad in a new camel-hair coat, skidding about in his own vomit at an airport. Detailing desperate rewrites, insecurities of theater people, footlight failures and humiliations, as well as theatrical triumphs, Strouse's superb backstage memoir deserves a standing ovation. 16-page b&w insert. (July)

Society's Child: My Autobiography

Janis Ian. Tarcher, \$26.95 (384p) ISBN 978-1-58542-675-1

"I was born into the crack that split America," Ian writes, and her early immersion in the folk music scene of the 1960s helped shape her prodigious songwriting talents while she was still in her teens. The autobiography shares a title with her first hit, a song about a doomed interracial romance that was considered too controversial for many record labels and radio stations. The pressures of the music industry and her troubled family life drove Ian to a nervous breakdown at the age of 19. It was in the following long period of recovery that she wrote her most famous song, "At Seventeen." ("I'd never sing it in public," she says of her initial feelings about the song. "It was just too humiliating.") Soon after reaching that recording peak, her life was derailed by a series of troubles ranging from an abusive

marriage (to a man she first met because she was in love with his girlfriend) to massive tax liabilities to bouts with septicemia and chronic fatigue syndrome. The roller-coaster ride may be typical stuff for celebrity autobiography, but fans will appreciate the candor with which Ian discusses these hardships and her gradual path to happiness as an independent singer-songwriter in Nashville. (July)

★ **The Nice Girl Syndrome: Stop Being Manipulated and Abused—and Start Standing Up for Yourself**
Beverly Engel. Wiley, \$24.95 (272p) ISBN 978-0-470-17938-3

Engel (*Healing Your Emotional Self*), a psychotherapist and domestic violence expert, has sharp words for the "nice girls" of the world who care more about being perceived as sweet and pleasant than strong and self-protective. Drop the phoniness and passivity, she exhorts, arguing that while society superficially rewards nice girls, they suffer deeply in their intimate and work relationships by losing personal power and parading inauthentic selves. Avoiding conflict and playing naïve may seem to offer payoffs, Engel notes, but the payoffs aren't as big as the price women pay for not holding their ground—"They may get taken care of but they aren't respected. They may get special attention but from the wrong kind of people." Readers will find Engel's elucidation of the four causes of "Nice Girl Syndrome" and the "Seven Types of Nice Girls" (i.e., Doormat, Pretender, Prude, Enlightened One) deeply funny and familiar. Most useful for its thorough treatment for how "nice girls" are socialized and for Engel's concise antidote (the four "Power C's": confidence, competence, conviction and courage) this book will challenge, entertain and empower its readers. (July)

Managing Brand YOU: Seven Steps to Creating Your Most Successful Self

Jerry S. Wilson and Ira Blumenthal. Amacom, \$21.95 (256p) ISBN 978-0-8144-1068-4

What if individuals could harness the power of branding to improve their lives? Wilson and Blumenthal expound on the rewards of identifying and reinforcing a consistent individual brand in this pragmatic self-help book, which offers readers