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The Company She Keeps by Georgia Durante

Life is expected to present challenges that a person hopefully learns from and grows. The life Georgia Durante led has indeed presented challenges. They were challenges that Georgia hoped to survive just so she would see another day.

Georgia Durante's life, as told in **The Company She Keeps**, took her from a loving home in Rochester, New York to the world of modeling in New York City. Her modeling career included a time as the nationally famous Kodak Summer Girl. Georgia's face and figure were seen in Kodak stores across the country.

During this journey she found herself in the world of The Mob. Just like in all parts of her life, Georgia stood out from the rest in the world of the Wiseguys. She became a trusted driver in a part of society where only men played the game.

Georgia's time in The Mob also brought to her the man that stole her heart. He later became the man that wanted to take her life. He was abusive. He was controlling. He was darkness in a human form. He was her husband.

The way that Georgia dealt with the abuse and fear, all while raising a daughter, and made her escape is a story that inspires and empowers all who read it. Georgia takes the old saying, "Watch out for that first step." and transforms it into a message of "Look for that first step." It was a first step that brought her back to a life of her own.

Georgia's escape from her abusive husband and the world of The Mafia led her to Hollywood. She couldn't resume her modeling career with so many people looking for her. Georgia relied on her driving talent to become a stunt driver. **The Company She Keeps** tells how Georgia went from being an employee to an employer by forming and

building her very own successful company, Performance Two, Inc.

Georgia Durante's story in **The Company She Keeps** takes the reader to many dangerous times and glamorous locations. You'll read about...

- What Mob Wars are really about
- The modeling world
- Georgia's rape by a brother-in-law
- How police once handled domestic violence
- Helping a child with a drug addiction

The Company She Keeps is a collection of experiences from the life of one woman that will inspire and help all who read them. It's full of more reality that teaches lessons of true survival than any television reality show you could ever watch.

The Company She Keeps

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About The Author:

Georgia Durante currently owns and operates Performance Two, Inc., one of Hollywood's most successful stunt and precision driving companies. Georgia also travels around the country to talk to women about surviving domestic violence and abusive relationships. Georgia lives in Southern California. Her website is www.thecompanyshekeeps.com



Kodak Summer Girl



Sammy G And The Gang



A Day At The Office



Stunt Double For Cindy Crawford



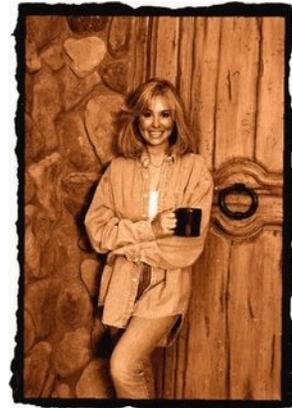
Georgia And Buddy Hackett



Georgia And Dom DeLuise

Georgia's Biography

Georgia Durante has packed a lifetime of lessons into her years. Those who have known her for the past twenty years as one of Hollywood's most successful female commercial stunt drivers have been shocked by the truth of her past.



Hollywood producers have known two Georgia Durantes: the steely-nerved stuntwoman with the skill to handle a three-ton high-performance vehicle in high-speed precision maneuvers; and the beautiful model and actress who, at seventeen, was considered the most photographed girl in the country.

They knew only those sides of Georgia Durante because that was all she chose to reveal. Only now does she share the full story of her life, in *The Company She Keeps*.

Compelling and terrifying, *The Company She Keeps* tells the true story of Georgia Durante's storybook beginnings in Upstate, New York when at the tender age of twelve, the radiant little girl began her national modeling career. At seventeen, Georgia Durante became the "Kodak Girl" immortalized with her life-size image displayed in more than 80,000 retail stores throughout the world.

Soon the magnetic smile that propelled Georgia's modeling career served only to mask the pain she endured from a brutal rape at the hands of her brother-in-law, her first brushes with mob violence, the birth of her daughter, and a failed marriage, all before she turned twenty.

The roller-coaster that had become Georgia Durante's life continued its downward ride as she met, fell in love with, and married Joe Lamendola, a respected businessman, but one with a dark secret and ties to the Syndicate.

Georgia Durante's retelling of the facts paints a picture of a victim hopelessly caught in a web constructed of her own emotions as well as the abuse and threats of the tyrant whose wife she had become.

Suspense and intrigue abound as Georgia recounts the fighter she became in response to her surroundings. She, alone, determined the fate of the madman who had stalked her and kidnaped her daughter.

Georgia Durante's constant search for meaning and the life she had always sought but could never quite find, manifested itself with many heartbreaking turns. Along the way, she's faced with:

- ◆ Tragedy in her life and those whom she loves
- ◆ The struggle of a child with a drug addiction
- ◆ Fortunes made and lost
- ◆ A confrontation with the "prince of darkness" which ends in death

The Company She Keeps is powerful and raw; a deeply personal account of one woman's life. Model, Mafia wife, victim and victor, Georgia Durante saw the worst that life had to offer and escaped it. She embraced the positive, but kept the negatives so as never to forget. "Life is what it is," Georgia writes. "How we deal with it is what matters." She has dealt with it the only way she knew how: with determination and courage.

With her company, Performance Two, Georgia Durante has performed in hundreds of national and international television commercial campaigns. Her clients include all of the major automobile manufacturers as well as many of the most recognized brands and products in the world. Additionally she has appeared in numerous feature films and network television shows. Georgia Durante continues to make her home in Southern California.

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The Company She Keeps

Chronology of Events

- ❑ By the time Georgia turned 17, as the Kodak Girl, she was considered the most photographed girl in the country.
- ❑ Months later she was raped by her brother-in-law (1967). Her childhood friend, Sammy G, who had risen in rank to the upper echelon of the Mafia, learns of Georgia's rape and wants to have the perpetrator killed. Georgia pleads for his life, and he is spared.
- ❑ Georgia goes to New York to pursue modeling. She meets Frankie, the owner of an after-hours club.
- ❑ While there, Georgia witnesses her first mob shooting. She drives the wounded man to the hospital in record time. Eyebrows were raised at how well she handled the wheel and it was the talk of the town for months to come.
- ❑ During this point in time, (1968 18 yrs old) Georgia meets with Carlo Gambino and starts her involvement as a courier and eventually driving get-away cars for the mob.
- ❑ By the age of 20, she has married, had a daughter, Toni, and divorced.
- ❑ On the night she leaves her husband Tom, she meets Joe Lamendola the same night, who becomes her second husband.
- ❑ Georgia witnesses Joe and two other men brutally kill a man, and are beaten by Joe to ensure her silence (1970- 20 years old).
- ❑ Georgia becomes a virtual prisoner. Joe would not let her answer a cry for

help from her former sister-in-law, which results in the murder of her sister-in-law and her 4 young children by her former brother-in-law. As Georgia stood in the cemetery surrounded by 6 caskets she becomes acutely aware of how close she is to dying the same kind of death.

- ❑ As part of Joe's continuing games of brutality, he plays Russian roulette with a loaded gun at Georgia's head and hangs her by her ankles from a two-story building.
- ❑ Sammy G sees bruises on Georgia's body and has Joe beaten near death in Georgia's presence.
- ❑ Georgia escapes from Joe, but he tracks her to Las Vegas, and takes her into the desert to murder her. She jumps from the car to escape; they are arrested for the night, but she is then released to Joe's custody (1974).
- ❑ In 1976 (Georgia is 26 years old) a mob war breaks out, Joe and Georgia flee to San Diego.
- ❑ In the face of excessive abuse, Georgia finally breaks the vicious cycle and escapes to LA with her daughter, a full tank of gas and \$7 and lives in her car.
- ❑ Then she meets Steve, who becomes obsessed with Georgia and begins to stalk her when she rejects him. She is hunted down by the mob, an abusive husband who wants her dead, the FBI and the crazed stalker--all at the same time.
- ❑ Steve kidnaps Toni. After seeking the help of the police, to no avail, Georgia enlists a hit man to eliminate Steve from her life, but only allows him to be beaten.
- ❑ Steve contacts the FBI to investigate Georgia. She turns the table on Steve and helps the FBI send STEVE to prison for five years.

- ❑ Georgia cannot pursue modeling on a national level for fear she will be found. She notices how many car commercials there are on the air and realizes you can never SEE the driver. She seeks out Directors who shoot car spots and hounds them until they hire her, even though women were not doing that sort of thing in the 70's. They were putting wigs on guys. They immediately recognize her talent and she is on the way to a new career and life.
- ❑ Sammy G is murdered, blown up in his car, marking a closure of sorts for Georgia (1978).
- ❑ Georgia meets Richard, a wealthy businessman, and after a year, becomes a wife, for the third time (1979).
- ❑ Joe comes back into Georgia's life, forcing her to launder money for him.
- ❑ At the age of thirty (1980), Georgia becomes pregnant with a son by Richard. Nine days after giving birth to her son, she catches Richard cheating and discovers his addiction to cocaine.
- ❑ Georgia divorces Richard-1983. She meets an investment banker, Dennis, and falls in love with him. Months later, he is killed in a plane crash 1985.
- ❑ Georgia's daughter becomes addicted to drugs in the wake of being molested by Joe during weekend visits.
- ❑ Georgia forces Joe to be confronted by a therapy group, which Toni is attending. He is verbally torn to shreds. His ego is shattered; he flees to New York, becomes a recluse and eventually kills himself.
- ❑ After five years in hiding, everyone who wants her dead is now dead themselves. Georgia starts her own company, Performance Two Inc., (1986) with which she and her team perform stunts in hundreds of commercials, movies and television shows.

- ❑ While filming a stunt for a Bugle Boy Jeans commercial in 1993, driving a vintage Dino Ferrari, the stunt went bad. The vehicle left the road and flipped 3 times heading towards a 300ft drop off into the ocean, stopping just 40ft. short of going over the cliff. Georgia's only thought was of the car as she somersaulted toward her death. Never did she think of her life. When she returned home from location she made an appointment with a therapist to find out why her life was not important to her. The therapist suggested she write for 20 minutes a day in a journal.

The book, **The Company She Keeps** was born from that journaling. It has proven to help many women to take the negatives in their lives and turn them into positives. One woman decided not to kill herself after reading Georgia's story and another was saved from being murdered. Thousands have reached out to Georgia for direction.

Georgia has always felt the presence of angels in her life, but only now does she understand what God's purpose is for her. Her life's journey were the lessons she needed to do His work. She has learned her lessons well. Today Georgia travels around the country speaking at shelters for abuse women, helping others to find their way through her life story.

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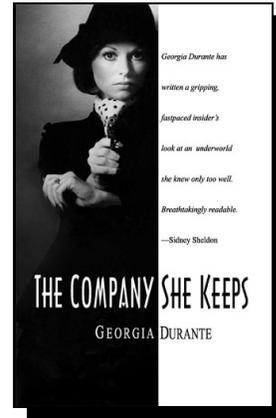
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What People Are Saying About The Company She Keeps

Georgia Durante has written a gripping, fast-paced, insider's look at an underworld she knew only too well. Breathtakingly readable.

Sidney Sheldon - best-selling Author



We've all heard of the Mafia, and read about mobsters, but Georgia Durante saw them up close. She lived with them. She experienced their violence. She survived their wars. In *The Company She Keeps*, she tells her fascinating story. Once you read it, you'll never forget it.

Jimmy Breslin - Pulitzer Prize winning columnist and best-selling Author

Georgia Durante's life exemplifies many of the strengths I've written about. She refused to surrender to abuse, and moved from being a victim to being a victor. She's an inspiration for any woman who feels her situation is hopeless.

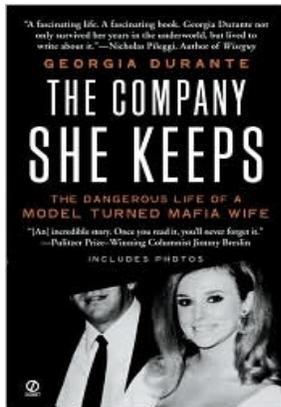
Susan Forward, Ph.D. - best-selling Author of Emotional Blackmail and Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them

Georgia Durante has had quite a life, and the courage it takes to live it. I would have never imagined all she's been through. She hides a lot behind that lovely smile.

Hugh O'Brian - Actor

I spent a lifetime chasing gangsters out of the lives of decent people with the help of my colleagues in the FBI. Georgia Durante chased them out of her life by herself. She should have worked with us. This is an exceptionally intriguing book with eye-opening lessons for everyone.

Bill Fleming, Special Agent - (Retired)Federal Bureau of Investigation



The Company She Keeps could very well be the woman's version of my biography, “Wiseguy.” A truly unique and insightful dimension to the underworld, written with bone chilling detail. Very well done.

Henry Hill - Wiseguy/ Witness Protection Program

Georgia Durante has great skill as an author. Her warmth, her daring and her intelligence make this book a great adventure. I couldn't put it down. Read this book! You'll be amazed, you'll be excited. You'll be grateful I made you do it.

Buddy Hackett - Entertainer and Comedian

It's one of those stories that makes you want to write a better critique than anyone else's. But Georgia has written the best one of all. You'll agree with me tomorrow morning when you still haven't put The Company She Keeps to bed.

Morton Downey, Jr. - Network Talk Show Pioneer

The Company She Keeps is the high-interest, quick paced account of life in the fast lane. At the heart is the love of danger and excitement which is, for Georgia, almost a fatal flaw. Fortunately, a love of autos and an uncanny ability to control high-horsepower cars led to an unexpected escape route. Hers is a story well worth reading.

Samuel Hallock duPont, Jr. - Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

Quite unreal, really. What a life.

Graham Nash - Musician; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

Once you start reading this book, you cannot put it down. This book covers everything from flashy show-people, to the mob, to ordinary everyday people. There's a surprise on every page and a twist and turn in every chapter.

Dick Van Patten - Actor

Georgia Durante has an adventurous spirit and has led a glamorous life. She honestly shares painful experiences in this fascinating and entertaining book.

Stella Stevens - Actress

The Company She Keeps is a story of today. Women will relate to Georgia's inner strength that enabled her to overcome obstacles; and men will relate to her courage and admire her perseverance.

Marty Allen - Entertainer and Comedian

The Company She Keeps is a superbly written autobiography about a lovely young woman's struggle and victory. What a struggle; what a victory; and what a woman! Georgia is one of a kind, and so is her book.

Alan Young - Actor and Author

In The Company She Keeps Georgia Durante, not only survived her years in the underworld, but lived to write about it. A fascinating life. A fascinating book.

Nicholas Pileggi - Best selling author of Wiseguy (Goodfellas) and Casino

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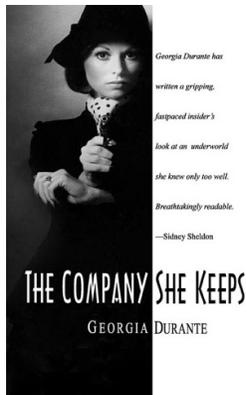
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An Excerpt From The Company She Keeps

He kicked me in my side, knocking the wind out of me, and dragged me into the bedroom. Frantically, I struggled to breathe.

“I’ll show you!” he screamed, kicking me again.

I still hadn’t recovered from the last blow. I lay helplessly doubled up on the floor. Wide-eyed, I watched him take the gun from the drawer. He grabbed me by my hair and knocked my head against the dresser.

“Where are your friends now, dear?” was the last thing I heard.

I don’t know how long I was out, but upon waking I was wet, my hair was wet. Had he shot me? No - just some water he threw on me to bring me back, only to torture me some more. He was taking the bullets out of the gun now.

“You didn’t answer me...I said, where are your friends now?”

He placed one bullet back in the chamber and gave it a whirl. He then placed the gun at my temple.

“What are you doing?” I cried.

“I’m gonna find out once and for all how badly you really want to leave,” he snarled.

“Please, Joe...don’t.”

He brought his face within inches of mine. All I could see were his eyes. I watched in horror as demonic possession took place. In a voice that I didn’t recognize, he spewed, “Are you sure you want to leave?”

Paralyzed with fear, I couldn’t talk. He pulled the trigger. Click. My life passed before my eyes. I saw my daughter, my parents, Babe and Billie.

I'm going to die.

"Do you remember now what I said I'd do if you ever left me? Well, the time has come." He was crying, too.

"I won't leave! I'll stay! Please don't kill me. What about Toni? Oh my God..."

He considered this for a moment, then dismissed it. "You're lying again. I don't believe you." He pulled the trigger again.

Click.