



Undoing I Do: A Novel

Anastasia Royal

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Tobin hands me a letter.

The words that shred me are: I am no longer in love with you.

The world stops.

Ten years ago, we stood before an altar and looked into each other's eyes.

There was so much we didn't see...

Undoing I Do is a poignant novel about the convergence of love and divorce. Claire McCloud, musician, artist, actress and eccentric free spirit, suddenly finds herself a single mom in the new traditional American family--the divorced couple with two children.

Wild, hilarious, and unconventional, Claire never thought she would meet anyone who could domesticate her. She never imagined a man who could be her partner forever. But then came He Who Wears Scarves in Summer: a handsome German artist named Tobin Kleinherz. It's the 1980s, and he claims Claire's heart and soul at a hip gallery opening. After a whirlwind courtship, Tobin proposes and Claire amazes herself by accepting.

Years later, after a beautiful wedding, two adorable children and countless adventures, Claire and Tobin come face to face with their marital demons. Claire moves from morning sickness to mourning sickness as she realizes her dashing Tobin is leaving, and she must face her future alone. After her marriage unravels, Claire revisits the crucial moments when love and dreams began to shatter and spiral out of control.

With refreshing humor and the hard-won wisdom of a survivor, Claire grapples with lawyers, an empty bank account and myriad jobs to make ends meet. Almost miraculously, she pulls a new life from the wreckage and starts again on the road to happiness. Through a unique structure of interlocking vignettes, *Undoing I Do* examines the demise of love, uncovering its early symptoms, mysterious connections and powerful conclusions.

This beautiful novel is much more than the anatomy of a divorce. It's the compelling tale of one woman's struggle to transcend a bitter break up, protect her children from the fallout, and live life on her own terms. Using humor and a distinctive lyrical writing style, Anastasia Royal has created a soul-baring story that will have you laughing, crying, and enjoying every beautifully crafted sentence.

"With her debut novel *Undoing I Do*, [Royal] paints a funny, poignant and realistic portrait of what happens when a golden couple's marriage unravels." --*Chicago Sun Times*

"Royal limns the raw depths of Claire's suffering with both disarming candor and delicate subtlety. Poignant, painful, lyrical, Royal's treatment of this lamentably common condition is astonishingly uncommon in the sheer force of its sympathetic honesty." --*Booklist*

"In this poignant novel, Royal tells of a marriage gone wrong, a hostile divorce, and the pain of single

motherhood so beautifully that you won't know whether to cry for her character's broken heart or swoon over the lyrical prose." --*Redbook*

Advance Praise for *Undoing I Do*

"Few have picked up the pieces of broken love with more élan than Claire McCloud, divorce-casualty, struggling mom, and a let-it-all-hang-out iconoclast who will shock and delight you...shaping so iridescent a tale from divorce's dark matter takes a special writing gene, and evidently, Anastasia Royal has whole strands of it." -- Arthur Plotnik, author of *Spunk & Bite: A Writer's Guide to Bold, Contemporary Style*

"Calling Anastasia Royal's stunning and supple roman a clef a "first novel" is like calling the Hope diamond a shiny little rock. As savage and sharp as it is lovely, with as many facets as life itself, *Undoing I Do* is a perfect gem of a book. Told with a surgeon's eye for detail, the narrative employs all manner of prose and poetry to slice through the telling episodes of a marriage coming undone. It tackles big themes, and at times put me in mind of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, but the things that linger most are the tiny sensual details. A new, important voice in literature is born." --Jay Bonansinga, national bestselling author of *Twisted, Frozen* and *The Sinking of Eastland*

"As with every unhappy family, every unhappy marriage is unhappy in its own way, and Anastasia Royal has given us splendidly unhappy marriage. By turns heartbreaking and hilarious, *Undoing I Do* is ultimately an uplifting tale of the determination and strength of an indomitable woman's spirit." --Binnie Kirshenbaum, author of *An Almost Perfect Moment*

"A rollicking ride through love, marriage, and unhappily ever after...alternately poetic, ribald, tragic and comic. Mostly comic, thank heaven." --Tim Kazurinsky, actor and former *Saturday Night Live* cast member

"*Undoing I Do* is an astounding, brilliant and unforgettable story that introduced me to characters I will never forget. No short blurb can do justice to the poetry, the passion, the rage and the humor of this novel that had me laughing out loud one moment and weeping the next. Welcome first-time novelist Anastasia Royal to the front ranks of American story tellers." --John D. Callaway, Host and Senior Editor of WTTW's Chicago Stories program, professional journalist for 45 years, and winner of the Peabody Award and twelve Emmys

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