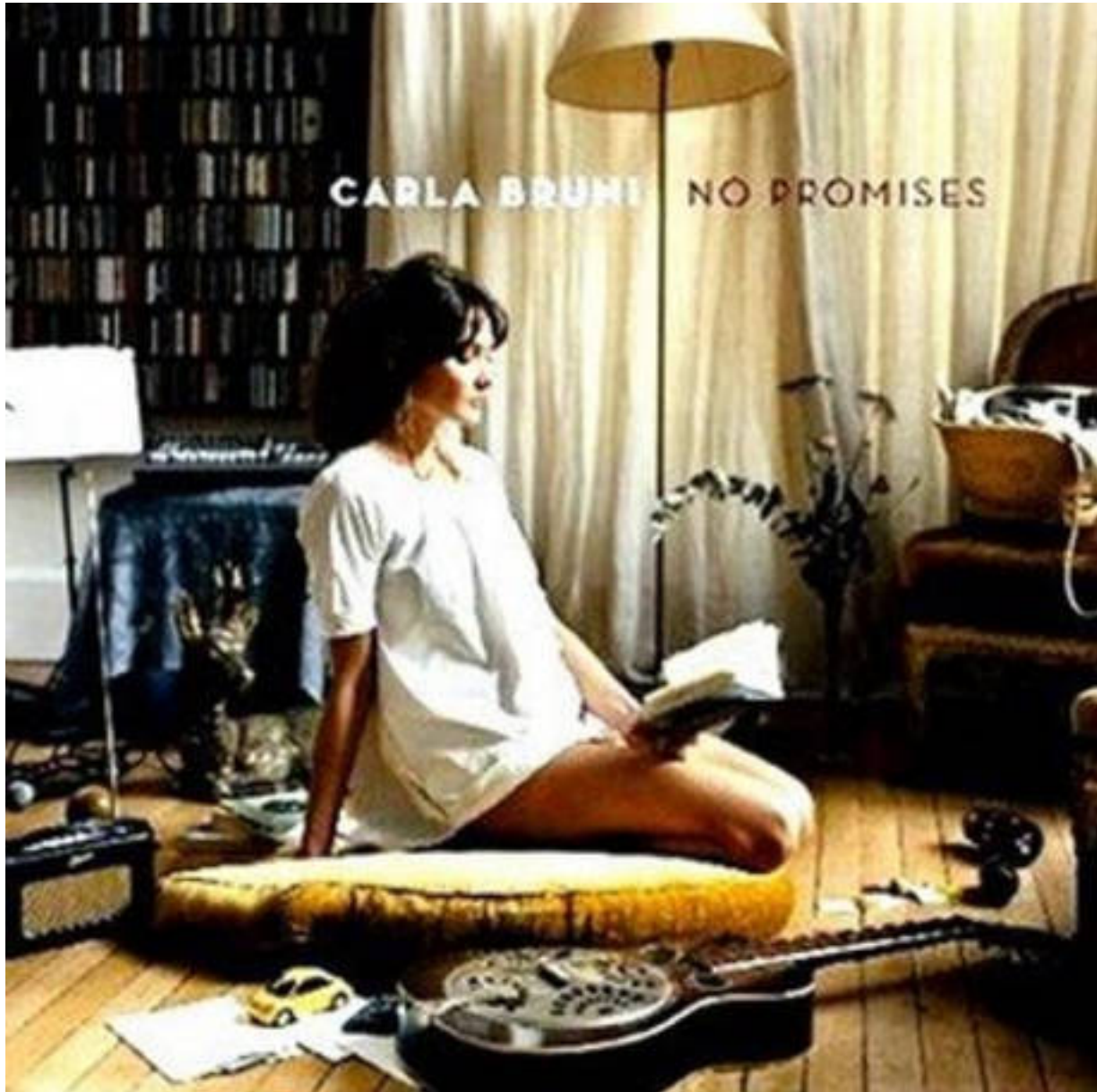


Carla Bruni, Old World Italian

Maria Laurino (February 20, 2008)



Who knew that former supermodel and the new First Lady of France was also an Old World Italian?



So Carla Bruni -- heiress turned supermodel turned singer turned wife of the president of France -- just turned Old World. It's hard to believe that the woman who has been romantically linked to Mick Jagger and Eric Clapton, and who has a son from her relationship with French philosopher Raphael Enthoven, would have a cultural - even spiritual - link with the granddaughters of Italian peasants.

But in an interview about her recent marriage to Nicolas Sarkozy, published in the French weekly L'Express just before Valentine's Day, Carla Bruni declared, "I am Italian by culture and I would not like to divorce."

Wow. This is the woman who once said, "I am faithful to myself! I am bored to death by monogamy." She's called herself a "cat" and "tamer of men."

But now she's culturally Italian, and in a move that would make even the pope proud, wants to stay married until death do them part.

Okay, I am among the legions of women who are a wee bit jealous of Carla Bruni. How, as a granddaughter of southern Italian peasants, could I not be? She represents the part of Italy that we cannot claim - the north that historically has produced tall Cinderellas with fair brown hair, high cheekbones, and fancy pedigrees. Bruni is the stepdaughter of an Italian tire magnate and classical composer, and her mother is a concert pianist. And she acts not like a dutiful Italian daughter but a free-spirited beauty who puts to music the poetry of Yeats and Emily Dickinson.

But just when I thought that Carla Bruni claimed roots from an Italy all together different than the Italy of my grandparents, she goes Old World on us. "I am Italian by culture and I would not like to divorce."

Maybe turning forty brought out Bruni's ancient roots. In any case, I'm ready to declare a cultural sisterhood with her.

Does that mean I could get her cheekbones?

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