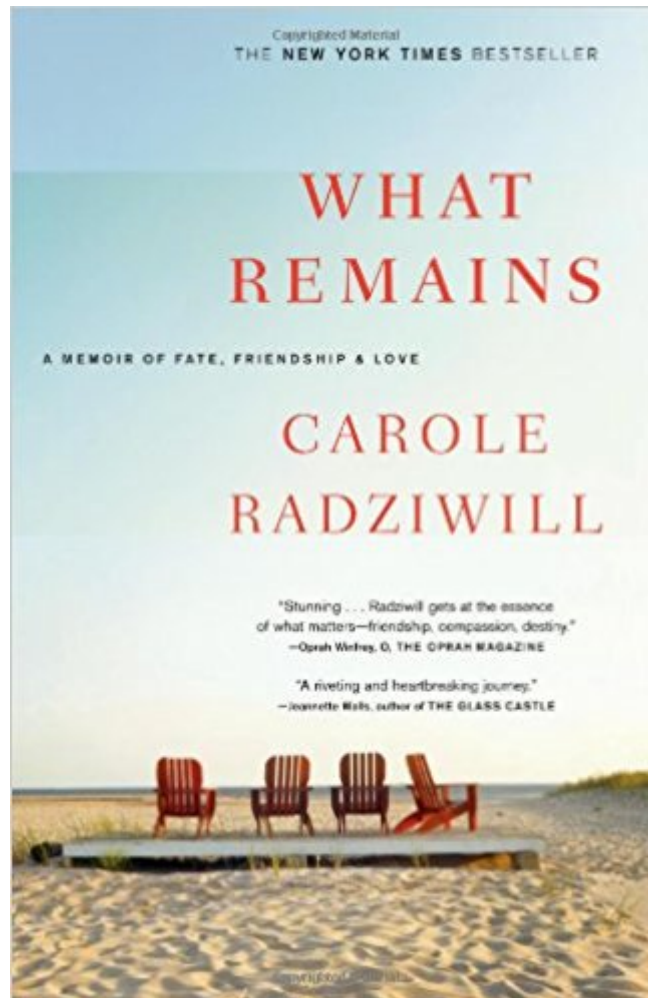




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# What Remains: A Memoir Of Fate, Friendship, And Love



## Synopsis

A stunning, tragic memoir about John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife Carolyn Bissett, and his cousin Anthony Radziwill, by Radziwill's widow, now a star of *The Real Housewives of New York*. *What Remains* is a vivid and haunting memoir about a girl from a working-class town who becomes an award-winning television producer and marries a prince, Anthony Radziwill. Carole grew up in a small suburb with a large, eccentric cast of characters. At nineteen, she struck out for New York City to find a different life. Her career at ABC News led her to the refugee camps of Cambodia, to a bunker in Tel Aviv, and to the scene of the Menendez murders. Her marriage led her into the old world of European nobility and the newer world of American aristocracy. *What Remains* begins with loss and returns to loss. A small plane plunges into the ocean carrying John F. Kennedy Jr., Anthony's cousin, and Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, Carole's closest friend. Three weeks later Anthony dies of cancer. With unflinching honesty and a journalist's keen eye, Carole Radziwill explores the enduring ties of family, the complexities of marriage, the importance of friendship, and the challenges of self-invention. Beautifully written, *What Remains* "gets at the essence of what matters," wrote Oprah Winfrey. "Friendship, compassion, destiny."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Here's a very sad story: a middle-class girl is working as a reporter at ABC, where she meets a handsome man from a famous family. They court, marry and become best friends with the

husband's first cousin and his new wife. Abruptly, the reporter's husband is diagnosed with cancer. He dies, but not before the cousin and his wife (and her sister) die, too, in a senseless plane crash. This would be a heartbreaking story even if it weren't about Anthony Radziwill, nephew of Jackie Kennedy Onassis, and about his and Carole's friendship with John and Carolyn Bessette Kennedy. But because its publisher (and, presumably, the author) have decided not to market it as a "Kennedy book" but "a memoir of fate, friendship and love," it begs consideration on its literary merits. So here goes: Radziwill is a serviceable, if sentimental, writer. She is brave, especially when she describes how cancer became the third party in her marriage, and how she briefly flirted with infidelity. She also knows how to convey the essence of a person with small scenes and quotes (JFK Jr. holding his dying friend's hand and softly singing a song from their childhood; director Mike Nichols not calling but just coming to the hospital and handing out sandwiches to the nurses). Still, perhaps in Radziwill's effort to further the myth of its non-Kennedyness, much of this already short book feels padded with scenes from the author's childhood and medical details about Anthony's treatment. Otherwise, much of Radziwill's writing approaches melodrama, particularly when she recounts that July 1999 night when the plane crashed. At one point, Radziwill scoffs at the "tragedy whores" who luxuriate in Kennedy trauma, and yet she seems to have been unable to resist contributing some crumbs to their feeding frenzy. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A moving testimony to the tenuous nature of love and life." -- USA Today "Stunning...Radziwill gets at the essence of what matters -- friendship, compassion, destiny." -- Oprah Winfrey, O, the Oprah Magazine "A riveting and heartbreaking journey." -- Jeannette Walls, author of The Glass Castle "A stunning memoir of love and loss...Carole Radziwill is a natural storyteller." -- O, The Oprah Magazine "One of the best memoirs...a small masterpiece...devastating and beautifully written." -- New York Post "Powerfully affecting...a highly compelling read." -- Vogue "Bittersweet and tender." -- The New York Times Book Review

I rarely write reviews on books because I feel that books are very subjective - they transport each of us to different places. But I felt compelled to write a review after finishing this book because I know that had I read this book when it was released, I would have given it one star...but a few life altering years later, I now give it five. I understand the reviews indicating that the book seemed self-congratulatory and that her feelings toward her husband seemed glib, if not downright cold.

Again, feelings I would have shared upon the book's release. Now, I choose to applaud Ms. Radziwill for her candor and honesty. I watched my mother battle and succumb to a terrible rare, but deadly illness. Our lives were very much the same as Anthony's - one step forward, two steps back. But this is not about my situation, but rather, the lens I was able to use while reading it. This is a story of a woman who achieved a great deal of professional success and was on the cusp of the proverbial fairy tale. But life dealt her marriage a terrible blow with this devastating cancer that plagued them. It didn't come & stay...it came & went, again and again and again. I believe that, in & of itself, is terribly sad. You have dreams, you dismantle your dreams, you believe in them again, they are shattered again. Yes, I know many people face these difficulties & other hardships, but she is trying to explain how she lived and coped in her own personal way. I had deep appreciation for her willingness to discuss her gamut of feelings throughout those years. When an illness overwhelms your life personally, or by proxy, it is all consuming. It's 24/7. She gave a voice to the spectrum of emotions she felt. It was no secret that John Kennedy Jr. was her husband's cousin and best friend, so I'm astounded by the number of people who choose to view her relationship with Carolyn in a negative manner. She was illustrating a shared kinship of two girls from remarkably similar backgrounds who ended up royalty (actual and American) in the most fabled and studied family in modern America. I, personally, enjoyed how she humanized Carolyn, gave her a voice, let us get to know who she was. I loved their friendship and their support network. This, ultimately, is a book written by a woman who is grieving the loss of her husband and the sudden loss of her best friend. I honestly think that if you have not experienced one or the other that you will not fully appreciate this book, that you will, perhaps, "side" with the negative reviews. She states quite clearly that when you are grieving, what remains are your memories and your stories. Her catharsis is to share hers. As someone who watched the person I loved more than anyone else ravaged by a terrible illness for many years, I appreciated her candor. As someone who relied on my friendships to get through that time, I appreciated her willingness to tell her stories with Carolyn. I can't imagine losing the entire foundation of my personal life within mere weeks of each other. It's a beautiful tome to love, loss, and friendship - it's a book that sticks with you. I think it's a book that can be read and re-read at different times in our lives and appreciated in different ways. To me, that's the mark of a five star book.

I read this book for a book club project. I believe it well written, but recognize it as a "grief work" book. This real story is written by Carole Radziwill after losing her husband, her husband's cousin, her best friend and best friend's sister, who happen to be Prince Radziwill, John F. Kennedy,

Carolyn Bessette Kennedy and Lauren Bessette. The author married into royalty, literally and figuratively, while she herself is from much humbler background. Mrs. Radziwill is a very talented and successful news journalist and through her own brilliance and hard work, made a name for herself and rose above her small town self, but...she never truly assimilates into the world of her new spouse and friends. You feel her frustration in her words. A silver spoon ceiling that she cannot rise above. She loves Carolyn Bessette, another amazing person from a humble background, who marries into the exalted Kennedy family. I felt she grieved Carolyn's death more keenly than that of her husband or John's. This author took a gamble with marriage into such an exalted, albeit cursed, family, and lost.

Beautifully written, honest and heartbreaking. Yet she still finds time to makes us laugh! I almost wish I had met grandma Millie and had a sleep over in the loft. I lost my Dad to cancer and like Carole's husband, my Dad went through the ups and downs of surgeries after which we were told "we got it all" only for the tumors to return, My sweet father didn't make it 5 years, he was almost 70 when he was diagnosed and he fought hard for 2 1/2 years. The battle with cancer is one taken on, not only by the patient, but by those closest to the patient. I appreciated that Carole talked about feeling like she was falling apart and wondering why no one noticed and hoping someone would offer to take over. That is why she had such a strong connection to Caroline. Caring for someone who is dying is gut wrenching and heart breaking and it leaves you feeling like you have hit by a truck. Any time you find yourself wishing for even a minute of normalcy, day dreaming about doing things, you feel guilty because you know your loved one is suffering and they are counting on you. I applaud the fact that Carole was brutally honest and didn't pull any punches. I can not imagine how difficult it was to lose her best friends and support system weeks before losing her husband, That is a deep heart break that not many bounce back from. This is one you will read again and again and recommend to friends.

This is so well written and engaging that I was unable to put it down. Honestly, I was not expecting much given the author's Real Housewife status, but I was wrong. Her intelligence, artistry, loyalty and humanity shine through. It took courage to share this, but all readers are sure to feel richer for walking through this life. It has made me want to get back in touch with old friends of quality with whom I've lost touch. In the end, those connections are all that matter, whatever your place in society.

What a well written book. My friend told me about this book and I couldn't put it down. Carole Radziwill is a multi-faceted gem. I am still enjoying this book and looking forward to reading anything else she writes.

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