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- [Patricia Schultheis](#)
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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

- [Patricia Schultheis](#)

***What Remains* by Carole Radziwill** Scribner, 2005, 261 pp., \$25.95

What Remains, by Carole Radziwill, is the stunning memoir of her five-year marriage to a man who was a European prince, a Kennedy cousin and the godson of the thirty-fifth President of the United States. It also is the story of premature death and of transcendent friendships. **[End Page 163]**

At first glance, Carole Ann DiFalco seems like an unlikely wife for Anthony Stanislas Albert Radziwill, the nephew of Jackie Kennedy Onassis. A pan-of-pasta, can-of-soda Jersey girl, with one grandmother harboring a secret in the basement and another growing pot under a willow tree, Carole DiFalco had seized an internship at ABC News and parlayed it into a production assistant's position. She met Radziwill while assigned to the ABC crew covering the Menendez brothers' trial for murdering their parents. "He was handsome, bent over scripts in a hotel room," she writes, "and then he stood and reached for my hand."

Radziwill's storytelling technique is that of a meta-memorist. By manipulating tense, she telescopes time and observes herself in the act of observing. Within the same passage, she places herself both in the past and in the present, as when she watches, rather than remembers, her wedding party on her mother-in-law's Long Island estate. "The sky, if I were to step from under the tent and look up, is full of stars. The dark ocean, even, is lit up tonight, because my mother-in-law has thought of everything—has tucked lights into the foliage along the dunes." We see Radziwill's New Jersey uncles, one with an arm around a movie director, another with his around a senator. There's her niece, singing with the band. And the best man, John F. Kennedy Jr. They are all here. She continues: "I have the

vantage point of Fortune. Standing in the middle of this, I know how it all turns out. There will be love and loss and luck and fate—the tent is lousy with it."

Fate lurks throughout *What Remains*. Radziwill's appreciation of its seeming caprice, she admits, is born from hard experience and hindsight. Early on, youth, talent and the love of a prince colluded into making her think she could beat the cancer with which Anthony had been diagnosed prior to their marriage, and which recurred almost immediately after their wedding.

Even though he had undergone two operations before their wedding, and she knew that fibrosarcoma gives its victims five years, she believed, as he did, that a cure was just a treatment away. After all, other than his cancer, Anthony was robust with health. And he was a member of the Kennedy clan.

To her credit, Radziwill neither gossips about nor fawns over the constellation she married into. The John Kennedy she knew was simply her husband's cousin and best friend—the man who could, when Anthony was dying from an infection following his last chemo treatment, make him rally **[End Page 164]** by singing the song Jackie had taught them both as toddlers: "If you go into the woods today, you're in for a big surprise. . . ."

With John's wife, Carolyn, they form a plucky quartet, fighting the common enemy of cancer and supporting each other in public, unscripted roles. As Anthony's cancer progresses, Radziwill candidly admits becoming weary of her part as uber-organizer, of being the one to read the research, assemble the experts, book the flights, schedule the scans and MRIs and study the pathology reports. Carolyn Kennedy, also a Jersey girl trying her best to improvise a role, bolsters her with girlie distractions and a funny, self-dramatizing persona.

And then the midnight phone call comes. When the plane carrying John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife and her sister crashed into the sea off Cape Cod, the whole nation asked why. Only Carole Radziwill had another question: Who is left to help me now? Three weeks later, she didn't need an answer.