



Radio Dreams, The Story of an Outlaw DJ and a Cosmic Cowgirl

Synopsis

This dual memoir invites readers into the unique and private world of platinum-selling songwriter and recording artist Kimmie Rhodes and her soul mate, beloved radio personality Joe Gracey, who died in 2011. Weaving her own poetic prose with wry and witty words from his journals, Rhodes returns him to the conversation to tell the fascinating story of their three decades together. Her trippy songwriter's tales and his hilarious and poignant writings will take you on a time-machine adventure from Saturday mornings spent watching country-and-western stars on TV to the wild '70s era in which the hippies, weary from protesting the raging Vietnam War, joined the rednecks to kick back and play some music in the "Groover's Paradise" of Austin, Texas. Riding with fellow outlaws Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Cowboy Jack Clement, Emmylou Harris, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Doug Sahm, and other famous—and infamous—characters, they help turn Austin into a scene and outlaw country into a sound before facing Gracey's final cancer battle. Through triumph and tragedy, grief and gratitude, their story speaks of the extraordinary life and inspiring love they shared.

Born in 1950, Gracey had become a renegade early on. Rejecting expectations that he would follow his father and grandfather into the legal profession, he pursued his passion for radio, beginning his broadcasting career at a station in Fort Worth, Texas, while still in his teens. Dancing to the beat of the freak-redneck revolution, he later became the celebrated Pied Piper of Austin's early music scene as an award-winning disc jockey, journalist, talent coordinator for the TV show *Austin City Limits*, and popular local crooner of country songs. Sadly, just as his star was rising on a recording career, fate dealt a cruel and ironic blow with aggressive head and neck cancer, leaving him alive but unable to speak, forever silencing the deep, rich, iconic voice of a genre that had become known internationally as progressive country.

Rhodes was born in 1954 and raised in Lubbock, Texas, the windblown, much-romanticized town that gave the world Buddy Holly. Her father, a Depression-era orphan adopted by a hoochie-coochie dancer, became a carnie. He taught Rhodes to sing when she was six. Like a real-life version of the father-daughter duo in the film *Paper Moon*, he would employ her talents to distract car salesmen and their customers while he checked in on the dealership's back-office bookmaking operation. By the 1970s, she had become a street-savvy hippie chick. Enticed by Grace Slick's "one pill makes you larger and one pill makes you small" chant, Rhodes, like Alice, fell down a rabbit hole that eventually landed her in Austin's Electric Graceland Studios, where Gracey had found a new way forward by positioning himself on the other side of the glass as a recording engineer, record producer, and independent label entrepreneur.

With Rhodes as his interpreter and Gracey as her "everything," they embarked on a synchronistic adventure as lovers and muses, while successfully traversing the wilds of the music business as critically acclaimed artists and writers. Then Gracey's cancer returned 2009, and despite heroic attempts to save his life, he passed away. Rhodes dropped down yet another rabbit hole: the long, dark tunnel of grief. Her honest and inspirational account of how she climbed out to explore a new world offers comfort and hope to others whose lives have been affected by cancer.

To learn more about Kimmie Rhodes and Joe Gracey, or to purchase the audio documentary companion to this book, please visit kimmierhodes.com.