



Why Jackie Fought

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Jackie Kennedy's controversy over the Manchester book discloses one of the little-known aspects of her life.

The public knew Jackie as the most glamorous First Lady ever to occupy the White House—beautiful, charming, vivacious, evoking the cheers of Vienna and the plaudits of Paris and, with it all, demure.

But Jackie also had a will of her own. At times she could be imperious. She had experienced some stormy scenes with her late husband which perhaps contributed to this. Twice before he became President she left him. And after he became President love did not always follow a serene path in the White House. Memory and remorse obviously flooded Jackie's mind as the head of her dead husband lay in her lap after the tragedy of Dallas; and some of it poured out to William Manchester during 16 hours of taping Jackie's story.

Some of the bitterness toward the Vice President from Texas who had urged her husband to go to Dallas also came out during the tense hours after the assassination. And one incident in the book relates to a conversation in Fort Worth when the raised voices of LBJ and JFK could be heard from behind closed doors arguing over Texas politics. Afterward, Jackie quotes the late President as telling her that he didn't believe Lyndon; that if Lyndon told you one thing he meant another.

Incidentally the book also reports that Bobby Kennedy, consulted by his brother before making the trip to Dallas, joined Vice President Johnson in recommending that he go.

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Jackie commissioned Manchester to write the book—or as she expressed it, "hired" him—in February, 1963, three months after the assassination, when she was still remorseful about herself, still bitter about the Johnsons.

Living in Georgetown after the assassination, with the street in front of her house jammed with tourists, and photographers lying in wait when she dined at the Jockey Club with Marlon Brando, Jackie continued remorseful and bitter.

This is why she moved to New York. Then in a city of 8,000,000 she could have more privacy; there she regained her composure and perspective. The litigation over the Manchester book has reversed all this. Once again the public spotlight is on Jackie. Once again her memories go back to the tragedy of Dallas and the days before and after.

I doubt whether those days before were any more stormy with John F. Kennedy than with most married couples. Jackie did not at first want him to run for President and she entered the White House with some reluctance. But once she got there she loved it.

Her refurbishing of the White House and her rummaging around the attic for old furniture made her famous as an amateur historian. Her husband was enthusiastic.

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But though Jackie did a great job as First Lady, she also did what she wanted to do. She called the tunes, not her husband. When she wanted to fly a stallion from Pakistan by Air Force plane, she did it.

And when she accepted a \$100,000 diamond, emerald and ruby necklace from the president of Pakistan, she resented the press comment that Mrs. Roosevelt had given a jewelry gift from the president of Brazil to a museum.

And when the president of Ecuador arrived in Washington with his wife at the official invitation of President Kennedy and was told Mrs. Kennedy could not be present because of illness, it did not help U.S.-Latin American relations when he saw front-page photos of Jackie water-skiing at Cape Cod.

Yes, Jackie Kennedy was a glamorous, charming and very effective First Lady. But she was *the* First Lady, and no one, not even her husband, could tell her what to do when she didn't want to do it.

You have to know this to understand why Mrs. Kennedy, a widow who has shunned public attention and wanted to live quietly with her children, was willing to have all her memories revived and the public's attention rekindled by the row over this book—a book she initiated and which probably gives a fairly accurate portrayal of a tragic event in the history of the nation.