

NYT

set designer. Columnists shill for her, Mike Nichols escorts her, paparazzi pursue her, and she is just possibly the most glamorous, best known, woman in the world, tastefully switched on, eternally chic, terrible in her effect on a thousand writers of women's news when she raises her hemline three inches above the knee.

She is also Mrs. John F. Kennedy, who, in a supreme misunderstanding, authorized a written history of a great and irrational tragedy, and then filed a suit to prevent its publication. Mrs. Kennedy is a formidable woman, with a great sense of privacy, and, more important, a clear idea of exactly how this privacy can be invaded.

Last Wednesday night, Mrs. Kennedy and Look magazine ended a dispute that began months before, but became a part of the public record only two weeks ago. Look wanted to serialize "The Death of a President" and Harper & Row wanted to publish it. Mrs. Kennedy objected. She said the book, the story of her husband's assassination, was tasteless and distorted. She said that publication would violate a written agreement between Senator Robert F. Kennedy and William Manchester, the author, and that, "as horrible as a trial will be," there was no alternative for her but to turn to the courts.

Few connected with Mrs. Kennedy's suit, which named Cowles Communications, the publisher of Look, Harper & Row and Mr. Manchester as defendants, thought it would go very far in the courts, or that a settlement could not be reached.

The agreement with Look finally came at midweek although negotiations were still continuing at week's end with Harper & Row, and further litigation was possible if the German magazine Stern, which paid \$72,000 for serialization rights, went through with its declared intention to print the original text.

But even after the editors on Look agreed to modify the passages to which Mrs. Kennedy objected, all of which dealt with herself or her children, it was apparent that there were still differences of opinion. On the night of the settlement with Look, a statement by Mrs. Kennedy said:

"I have been told there are his-

torical inaccuracies and unfair references in this book. That they have been written in is unfortunate. However, it was clear before bringing this suit that historical judgments, even if inaccurate, could not be properly suppressed by a court of law. In time, history will deal fairly with this period."

In turn, the statement from Cowles Communications said that the revisions in the serialization "in no way affected the historical accuracy or completeness of Mr. Manchester's manuscript." "Mr. Manchester's superb job of reporting," Cowles said, "remains intact."

Clearly, there were different appraisals of history made by Mrs. Kennedy and Look.

Compromise on 'The Book'

Who is Jackie, what is she? She dines at La Caravelle and dances at Ondine. She skis in Sun Valley, rides to hounds in New Jersey, and studies art with a Broadway