

My Life With

Rarely Did Jackie Discipline Children

This is the eleventh article in a series that tells what it was like to work for Jacqueline Kennedy, by her former personal secretary.

By Mary Barelli Gallagher

As he learned to toddle around, John-John was emerging as an interesting personality and a mischievous little boy.

One day, I came into the sitting room to find him sitting near his mother, happily occupying himself by breaking up a whole container of cigarettes, one by one, and dropping them on the floor. Since his mother did not stop him, I didn't feel free to, either. But a week or so later, I came in to find him doing the same thing — and his mother was not there. I thought it wouldn't hurt to exercise a little authority. I tapped him on the shoulder and said, "John-John, you mustn't do that — that's a 'no-no'."

He looked at me in amazement, and I could understand why. Almost no one ever dared to tell him that things shouldn't be wasted.

In fact, in the whole White House, there was only one person I ever saw who was firm with the children — their nanny, Miss Shaw. Her word was their law.

I never saw Jackie reprimand or spank the children. If they became noisy or irritated her in any way, she would call out, "Miss Shaw, please come in and take them away."

Miss Shaw had such an effective way of rearing children that she could justly boast about not having to spank Caroline for misbehaving. With words alone, she could master the situation.

Miss Shaw and her mistress did not always agree on how the children should be raised. One of the greatest bones of contention between them was the matter of fresh air. Jackie was forever sending the children out with their nanny to get "fresh air."

Rushed Outdoors

They would hardly be up and organized before they would be rushed out, no matter if it was too cold or too hot outside, or whether the children wanted to stay in and play or build something exciting together.

So many times, Miss Shaw could come to me after one of her "sessions" with Jackie and say, "If only Mrs. Kennedy could realize that children do need some time to just settle by themselves, doing little things with their hands, using their minds on something they enjoy working at. They need that just as much as they need being out in the fresh air."

At 11 a.m. on November 21, 1963, I boarded Air Force One with President and Mrs. Kennedy on that fateful trip to Texas.

Jacqueline immediately went to the private compartment and sent for me shortly before landing in San Antonio.

She asked that I "help fasten the back of my dress."

The weather had turned much warmer and she asked, "Do you think I will need a coat?" We decided no. We also concluded that her mink hat would be much too warm. So she asked if I would please remove the grip-comb from it and transfer it to the band of another hat — and in a matter of seconds I was furnished a navy blue sewing kit. The job was soon done.

JFK Looks in on Jackie

Later, I was in Jackie's Air Force One bedroom with her when there was a knock at the door, and she asked me to see who was there. As I reached the door, it was opened by JFK who poked his head through the opening as he held onto the knob.

Jackie was in the adjoining alcove, brushing away at her hair and, when I told her that it was the President, she called out, "Yes, Jack, what is it?"

He stood where he was, calling back, "Oh, Jackie, just thought I'd check to see if you were alright."

Pressed for time, her hairbrush in mid-air, she answered impatiently, "Yes, Jack, I'm just fine. Now will you just go 'way?" He closed the door and left.

It was early morning, November 22, 1963, at the Texas Hotel in Fort Worth. I was in a frenzy of preparations for the day. In Jackie's bathroom a general state of disarray met my eyes. It was incredible that all these jars of cream, bottles of lotion, various cosmetics could be put into use for just an overnight stay!

Quickly scooping up various clothes and towels, I began packing. I was concerned for the poor maid who would be unpacking that evening at the LBJ ranch.

Seemed Pleased

Jackie, dressed in a shocking-pink and navy blue Chanel suit, with navy accessories, seemed pleased with her appearance. One last item remained to complete her outfit. From the neat selection of gloves laid out on the dresser, she asked that I choose "something appropriate" for her suit. I handed her a pair of short, spotlessly white kid, with tiny wrist button, which I happily noted met with her immediate approval.

Later that day I was to see one of those gloves again — on the bed of Jackie's bedroom compartment on Air Force One. No longer spotlessly white and soft as it was that morning; but now completely blackened by her husband's blood, dried and stiffened to the actual shape of her hand as she had removed it, finger by finger.

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TOMORROW: Parting of the Ways.

Jackie Kennedy'



Jackie and her two children, Caroline and John Jr., are shown leaving

Arlington National Cemetery this June after visiting JFK's grave.