

Jackie Beset by Parental



Jackie arrives at Logan International Airport in Boston with her children, John Jr. and Caroline, on the day her engagement to Onassis was announced.

Editor's Note: This is the third of a four-part series on Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

By SUSAN SHEEHAN

Jackie once remarked that "If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much." She has also said that if you turn your children over to servants to raise, you shouldn't expect to be happy with the results. Caroline and John have always had a governess, so that Jackie has been able to enjoy the upperclass mother's privilege of coming and going as she pleases, but she is much less of an absentee-mother than most women of her means.

Jackie is beset by the usual parental concerns—the children's manners (she has reputation as "a very loving mother but firm on discipline") and education: She worries that Caroline and John watch too much TV, visits their schools periodically to see what they're learning, would rather buy them books than toys, and invents games to interest them in geography, literature and history.

Both children's bedrooms are filled with mementos and photos of their father.

After having had their mother to themselves for five years, Caroline and John had a difficult adjustment to make when she remarried, but friends say that Onassis has been an attentive stepfather and that he and the children are now genuinely fond of each other.

"THE CHILDREN seem happier than they have in years," a friend says. "Caroline isn't as shy and John is less volatile and more talkable to." In New York, Onassis has taken Caroline and John to the World Series and when they are with him on the Christina, the Canadian frigate he transmogrified into a floating palace, he goes fishing and sailing with them.

A passenger recalls that on one recent Christina voyage, the children introduced Onassis to the game of musical chairs. He enjoyed watching Caroline, John and some of their friends scurrying for chairs when the music stopped, but as for himself, he preferred to be the one to control the phonograph needle.

A number of Jackie's friends and relatives were considerably more distressed by her marriage to the Greek tycoon than either the American public or the foreign editor of *Le Monde*, some for political reasons, others because their lives were so tied in with the Kennedys and the retrospective mystique of Camelot that the marriage altered not only Jackie's image but also their image of themselves.

Now, even the few who tried to talk her out of the marriage are reconciled to it.

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Their comments on Onassis's financial wheeling and dealing and his Parisian trysts with his old friend Maria Callas, verge on the libellous, but their opinions of him as a dinner companion or cruise host are enthusiastic.

"HE'S A GENEROUS, attractive enough man in an earthy way," a former New Frontiersman says. "It's difficult to keep your prejudices when you're with him. He does have a kind of wisdom that can only be learned in the arena."

When Jackie's acquaintances are asked why they think she married Onassis they mention Robert F. Kennedy's death as often as they mention Onassis's money. After John F. Kennedy's assassination, Jackie came to depend on Bobby for moral support and guidance. When she be-

Concern

came despondent, it was Bobby who took it upon himself to cheer her up. Bobby's murder in June 1968 was a staggering loss to Jackie. It was clear to those who knew her that someone would have to move into her life to fill the new vacuum created by his death.

Between November, 1963, and June, 1968, Jackie, with the inconsistency that is perhaps to be expected of a widow, sometimes said she hoped to marry again and sometimes said she doubted if she ever would. During those years she had numerous dinner and travelling companions—Lord Harlech, Roswell Gilpatric, and Aristotle Onassis among them—but no serious beaux.

ONASSIS HAD a serendipitous way of being on hand at the low points in Jackie's life. When her infant son, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, died in August, 1963, she had accepted his invitation to go on a Mediterranean cruise, and he was a houseguest at the White House on the weekend of JFK's death.

Jackie kept on seeing Onassis from time to time between 1963 to 1968—she was his guest on a Caribbean cruise in May, 1968, a month before Bobby's death—but Bobby continued to take a dim view of Onassis and to be exasperated by the relationship. With Bobby gone, Onassis sensed that Jackie's situation had changed. In July, 1968, he visited Jackie in Newport; in August, 1968, Jackie and Teddy went on a cruise with him on the Christina; two months later, there was a wedding on Scorpios.

Now that they are over the shock of Jackie's second marriage, her friends admit that Onassis was an inspired choice and that, being willful, she would probably have married him even if Bobby had lived, though in that case certainly not before the November, 1968, presidential election.

"John Kennedy and Ari Onassis may not have had any common social concerns," a friend says, "but both were men of accomplishment, over-reachers, heroes, if you will, and Jackie's always had an eye for the heroes. As a young girl, she didn't marry one of the blue-chip wasps in her set—the sort of man who's now in the fourth tier of the State Department or a partner in an investment banking firm. She made a bold and glittering marriage to the country's



During the Indiana presidential primary in 1968, Jackie visits the New York campaign headquarters of Sen. Robert Kennedy with her brother-in-law, Prince Stanislaw Radziwill.

most up-and-coming senator. She had enough sense of her own strength way back then to marry a man of superior strength."

FRIENDS say that it is no coincidence that both of Jack Bouvier's daughters have married older men who have attained the success that escaped their father.

Jackie hardly ever talks to journalists. When I asked to see her in connection with this piece, my request for an interview was politely refused by Nancy Tuckerman, Jackie's one-time White House social secretary, who now works for Onassis's Olympic Airways but still handles a few secretarial chores for her former roommate at Miss Porter's.

"If she makes one exception..." Nancy explained. I said I understood. Jackie—via Nancy—did cooperate to the extent of volunteering the names of a num-

ber of Jackie-sources she thought I might profitably consult and might not know about. She also assured a few Jackie-authorities I'd called, who had been reluctant to see me, that it was all right with Jackie if they did.

To write this piece I inter-

viewed close to a hundred Jackie-friends, relatives, employees, and ex-employees. The one thing that most members of this heterogenous group had in common was that they saw Jackie infrequently. Many people I interviewed hadn't seen her for months; those

who had seen her recently hadn't seen her for six or 12 or 18 months before that. Jackie, everyone agreed, was a loner.

(Next: Jackie: her moods, solitude, charms and her marriage.)

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