Just Jackie Essay, Research Paper

Just Jackie: Her Private Years

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Like many other Americans, my fascination with Camelot and with the Kennedy family has been apparent since I first heard of the legacy. One of the most breathtaking and admiral women to grace the earth in the last century has been Jacqueline Lee Bouvier whom married the most famous of all the Kennedy?s, Jack. When Jack was inaugurated president in 1961 the White House and nation was brought a beautiful young wife and the first young children of the President in over half a century. As the ?First Lady?, Jackie brought beauty, intelligence, and cultivated taste.

Jackie born in 1929, was the daughter of John Vernon Bouvier and his wife, Janet Lee. Her early years were divided between New York City and East Hampton, Long Island, where she learned to ride almost as soon as she could walk. She was educated at the very best of private school. She learned to write poems and stories, draw illustrations for them, and studied classical ballet. Her mother obtained a divorce from Jackie?s father and remarried Hugh D. Auchincloss in 1942. The change brought Jackie and her younger sister Lee to a home near Washington, D.C. called, ?Merrywood?. Jacqueline was named ? the Debutante of the year? for the 1947-1948 season, but still after all her success socially she continued her education. As a young girl, Jackie?s father taught her that the way women gained power would be by associating themselves with powerful men. In many ways it seemed as Jackie and her father were more like confidants rather then father and daughter. Being the child of a verbal alcoholic father, Jackie had learned to block things out at a young age. She spent her adult life striving to do this and trying to please her mother. She spent her junior year in college in France as a Vassar University student and traveled extensively. These travels left her with a great acceptance and understanding for foreign countries, and their people. Finally Jackie Bouvier graduated from George Washington University. After her graduation from college, Jackie obtained a job in Washington as a photographer for a local newspaper.

Soon after Jackie started working for the newspaper she crossed paths with one of the most eligible bachelors in Washington. She slowly began a romance with Senator John F. Kennedy. Their courtship was very private until the two wed in a ceremony at Newport in 1953. Jackie had to adapt herself to the wife of one of the most up-and-coming political leaders in the U.S. Her publicity and ordeal with the media has been said to have had only been in comparison with Princess Diana. Part of this attraction was her interest in the arts; this new type of presidential family was publicized greatly by the press. It also inspired an attention to culture, which had never before been evident in a first lady. She devoted much of her time into making the White House a museum a museum of decorative arts as well as a home full of elegance and charm. It was said that Jack loved ceremonies of friends, especially beautiful women, politicians, reporters, entertainers, and intellectuals. Jackie was the producer of these parties while Jack was the consumer.

Jack and Jackie had many problems while trying to have children early in their marriage. Jackie had several miscarriages and she also gave birth to a stillborn child. But in 1957, she gave birth to a girl named, Caroline Bouvier. When Jack was elected president, Jackie was pregnant with the couples? second child, John Jr. In 1963, Patrick Bouvier was born prematurely and died shortly thereafter. She triumphed through the deaths of her children and produced what seemed to be the perfect American family. She defined her life as taking care of the president and raising her young children.

By 1963, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy has achieved the most sought after lifestyle. She was married to the most powerful man in the world; had a mansion filled with a staff of servants; limousines, airplanes, and helicopters; and a wardrobe catered to everything that a woman could want. But most importantly she had won the hearts of people worldwide. In November of that year the life of the Kennedy?s and of the world was shaken when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. After the death of Kennedy, Jackie told Theodore White, a journalist who spoke very intimately with the first lady, that she did not know how she would go without a man in her life. She was so devastated by her husband?s death that she spent the rest of her life thinking that there was something that was always something else she could have done.

In January of 1964, Jackie moved into a house of her own, and after two months of seclusion she was ready for company. She wanted the companionship of men whom she could lean on for support. The trouble was that if she ventured outside of her home with a man that people would begin to talk. There were tons of suitors over the years after Jack?s death, one of which was said to be Clint Hill a secret service man for the president. He had traveled with Jackie and served as an anchor for her after the assassination. But even if she were to do something unpleasing to the public, the press was sure not to take a picture doing so. There were several occasions when Ms. Kennedy got drunk with men such as Hill and even actor, Marlon Brando in public. The media bent over backward never to take such pictures of this American icon in a demeaning manner. It was even said that there was a relationship with Jack?s brother Robert Kennedy, he took Jackie with him wherever he went. Clearly Jackie fascinated Bobby, and Jackie was an important player in Bobby?s political plans.

Another side of her life was her relationship with her sister Lee. Lee had stayed by Jackie?s side every minute for the months after Jack?s death. Jackie hated to share the spotlight with her sister Lee, and Lee was afraid that she would spend her entire life in the shadow of her sister. It seemed as if Lee and Jackie remained in competition for their whole lives and at times it was hard to see which sister was more jealous then the other. Lee blamed Jackie for meddling in her life, which created a part between the two sisters, which was never healed.

From 1965-1966, Jackie was linked with John Carl Warnecke, an architect who

had designed Kennedy?s gravesite. The relationship was blown off as just a friendship for a long time, but the two realized their friendship was growing into something much more. Warnecke had made quiet an effort to replace Jackie?s late husband. But Jackie didn?t want to vanish from the public eye and that was what Warnecke wanted. As her relationship was calming down with John Carl, another man was taking interest in Jackie.

Aristotle Onassis was infatuated with loving famous women. From the moment he heard of Kennedy?s death, Onassis had lost his interest in Lee, (Jackie?s sister, who had once had an affair with) and started to pursue Jackie. This love didn?t sit well with Lee at all and cause more problems between the sisters. Ari (Onassis?s name to friends) was a wealthy Greek businessman, who was known as a ?skirtchaser?. Jackie fell completely under his spell, and he fulfilled her need for a man who could rescue her from her needs of helplessness. He surrounded her with attention and admiration. This was exactly what she had been searching for since the death of her husband, even though people (her own mother mainly) were shocked by the fact that she could be with a man such as him. Ari represented a side of Jackie?s dead father?s character that she had loved. Jackie told her friends that she could really count on Onassis to be a part of her children?s life and that he was very protective of them, this was important to her. Her one concern that if she were to marry Onassis, a divorced man, she would be disconnected from the Catholic church. This she feared could tarnish the Kennedy?s and hurt Bobby?s chances for a nomination.

On October 20, 1968, Onassis and Jackie wed on a yacht in Greece. Alike Jackie?s family and the Kennedy?s?, Ari?s two children were very displeased with their father?s decision to marry Jackie. He was 23 years her senior and was seen very unattractive by the world; the press had a field day with the two when they honeymooned in New York. They resided in Skorpios, where Jackie painted, meditated, read, and walked. John and Caroline went to private boarding schools in New York and spent vacations with Jackie and Ari in Greece. Ari gave Jackie expensive jewelry and lavished attention on her and her children.

A few years after their marriage, Jackie?s new husband had been linked to an old flame, Maria Callas, and she threatened to leave her husband. To her friends surprise all the old defense mechanisms she had developed with her alcoholic father, had come back with the thought of a cheating husband. After all, the two discussed there differences and decided to work thing out. In 1963, the death of Onassis?s twenty-four year old son, Alexander, transformed Ari. Jackie could find nothing to interest her husband anymore. She had neglected her children and traveled with Onassis, but nothing she could do would cheer him up. The loss of his son effected his personal life greatly and also reversed the success he had once seen in the business world. He had become impossible for Jackie to deal with.

Ari Onassis died in Paris, while Jackie was in New York in March of 1975. And Jackie returned to her old life in New York, as the woman she was before, the problem was that she was a different now. The bad blood with her sister was still apparent though. Lee became an alcoholic after the death of her husband and Lee?s daughter had retreated to Jackie?s home. This made Lee even more angry towards her sister, and the tension between the sisters grew.

Jackie had been linked with a man by the name of Maurice Tempelsman, a jeweler and force in the Democratic Party. Mainly he aided Jackie in her investments and helped her to become a much wealthier women, more so then she already was. In the 80?s, Jackie became very involved in the Municipal Art Society and a man named Pete Hamill, who represented some of her past. He was a reporter and an accomplished novelist and painter. This inspired Jackie to take the position as a part time editor of Doubleday in New York, in 1981. But after the relationship ended she went back to her friendship with Maurice. As a single woman in her fifties, Jackie became confident in her ability to make decisions. In the mid 80?s she began to age quite drastically because of some drugs she had been prescribed for gynecological reasons. At that point Jackie had the first of her three face-lifts.

Late in her life Jackie took care of Caroline?s children in Martha Vineyard, a retreat for the Kennedy?s?. She also spent time with Tempelsman who was said to be the only man whom she could really be herself around. In 1993 the doctors diagnosed Jackie with non-Hodgkin?s lymphoma. Maurice and Jackie told John Jr. and Caroline together, this devastated her children. The chemotherapy treatment was very hard for Jackie; she was unable to keep her illness a secret any longer. Her cancer did not cease and her illness only got worse as time progressed. In May of 1994, at the age of 64, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis died in her Fifth Ave home in New York.