



Jackie, Ethel, Joan: Women of Camelot

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Jacqueline Bouvier. Ethel Skakel. Joan Bennett. Three women who married into America's royal family and became forever linked in legend. Set against the panorama of explosive American history, this unique story offers a rarely-seen look at the relationship shared among the three women -- during the Camelot years and beyond. Whether dealing with their husbands' blatant infidelities, stumping for their many political campaigns, touring the world to promote their family's legacy, raising their children, or confronting death, the Kennedy wives did it all with grace, style and dignity.

Jackie, Ethel, Joan: Women of Camelot Details

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From Reader Review Jackie, Ethel, Joan: Women of Camelot for online ebook

Christine says

This was one of the first books I've read about the Kennedys although they are still talked about today. It was interesting to learn all that these women had to endure in their position of power and how much they had to suffer as a result of the power the family held

KOMET says

Of all the books about the Kennedys I've read over the years, this is one of the most revelatory and personal that I've yet read. Jackie and Ethel Kennedy I had known about largely through the supportive roles both played for their husbands in the prime of their political careers. Then there was the "Jackie O" phase and Jackie Kennedy's later career as an associate editor for Doubleday in New York. Ethel Kennedy, for her part, became the keeper of her husband's legacy following his murder in 1968. And as for Joan, the wife of Senator Ted Kennedy, prior to reading this book, I knew very little about her. Of the 3 women, she was, by far, the most modest, shy, and self-effacing.

The book is well-researched and contains 68 pages of 'Acknowledgements and Source Notes.' I highly recommend it for any reader with an interest in the life and times of a family who had such a profound and lasting impact on the U.S. cultural and political landscape in the latter half of the 20th century.

Janice says

I liked this book. That being said, I questioned from the beginning the writer's purpose and his documentation. Granted there are facts that can be substantiated: birth, marriage, and death dates, etc., as well as audio and video recordings of the various Kennedys. Still, I have never come across a bibliography such as J. Randy Taraborrelli provides. The oral histories and seeping vagueness or biases of persons interviewed is merely, he said/she said; amounting to rumor, gossip, innuendo and speculation. While the book is interesting, for me it is historical fiction rather than factual biographies.

Cheryl S. says

This was pretty good considering I have already read quite a bit about these women. This was a different perspective, however, and I found it interesting how the almost forgotten days of pre women's lib affected the attitudes and decisions of these three famous women as well as Rose Kennedy and their Kennedy sisters in law.

vicky says

Ah, this was such a guilty pleasure read. All the glorious drama and destiny, scandal and tragedy, love, loss, and legacy!

Jolene says

Even though I'm a fan of all things historical, biographical, and specifically Kennedy, this was a little hard to get through due to it's size. Really interesting though, a TON of information and details that I'm sure the general public doesn't know (and maybe wouldn't be interested in?) but that I found really interesting. The author did a great job putting it all together though...I can't even imagine the time and research that goes into a project like this!

LemonLinda says

This was quite an interesting study on the connecting lives of the three Kennedy wives. I think these wives are even more intriguing than their husbands. I have read more about Jackie so that part was not really new for me but the insight on Joan and Ethel was just as intriguing. Each of them had to find their own coping mechanisms as life as a Kennedy wife of that generation was certainly not easy because of the roving eyes of their husbands and because each had to endure so many other tragedies.

Jackie was such a fierce and protective mother and found a way to raise her children with as much privacy and protection as possible. Ethel was such a devout Catholic so her religion served as a source of comfort and support. The story of Joan, however, was somehow the saddest of the three. She seemed to be so sweet and good and maybe life within the Kennedy compound was too much to handle finally driving her to the alcoholism that plagued her for years. But then she seemed to get it together. She was the one who had been convinced that there was a curse on the Kennedy family and with all that happened to multiple generations at the very least they were certainly unlucky as they had more than their share of tragedy and heartache from the assassinations, early demises, airplane crashes, so many miscarriages and stillbirths, etc.

Even though it has now been 50 years since the days of Camelot when these women lived in and frequented the White House, the interest in their lives then and after yet remains for me and for many others.

Joanna Mieso says

This book was just ok, a good one to read at the beach. There was nothing that I haven't read before, but the chapter on the Cuban Missile Crisis absolutely gave me chills. I was 9 years old at the time and can recall vividly air raid drills - never realized just how close the US came to WWIII.

The fictionalized dialogue was out of line - I simply could NOT see these women speaking this stuff - the only saving grace was the relief from gratuitous profanity.

Amanda says

This book read a bit like a gossip column...not that that's necessarily a *bad* thing, but when I finished, I didn't feel I'd really read a history book. It was fascinating, however, to read some of the intimate, lurid details of the family history, and to learn of the relationship among the sisters-in-law.

Four-stars seems a bit too much for this book, but I did really enjoy it. It was a relatively light, entertaining read about the Kennedy women.

Missy Cahill says

Well not as in depth as other books about the Kennedy woman, it was great to learn more about Ethel & Joan. I felt so sorry for poor Joan Kennedy about the way Ted treated her. I'm very curious to read the late Ted Kennedy's autobiography and see what he has to say for himself about those years.

Melanie says

This book was amazing! Not only did the author explore the relationship between the women, but he also delved into their individual personalities. After reading the book, I understand what motivated each woman to behave as she did and how the traumatic events each went through affected her. J. Randy Taraborelli does an outstanding job of explaining each woman's feelings and reasons for her actions, and does so without making excuses for their missteps. In addition to having a greater understanding of the three Kennedy women, I have come away from the book with an even deeper respect and love for all three women.

Ea Solinas says

Dozens of books have been written about Jacqueline Kennedy, the stylish wife of the late president. At least this one has some new information -- J. Randy Taraborrelli also explores the other Kennedy wives in "Jackie, Ethel, Joan: Women of Camelot." The problem is Taraborrelli's talent for making stuff up.

Jackie was a confident debutante who impressed (or irritated) people with her charm and refined sensibilities. Ethel a religious, exuberant gal who fit in with the rough'n'tumble Kennedy family. And Joan was a fragile, confidence-free waif who was troubled by alcoholism and her perpetually philandering husband Ted.

Taraborrelli explores their childhoods, early relationships, marriages and lives with their husbands, which peaked in the glory years of the so-called "Camelot." Then everything went downhill: Jackie and Ethel's husbands were assassinated, Joan's was permanently disgraced, and the three women went through nightmares of publicity, family deaths, miscarriages, remarriages and alcoholism.

The Jackie stuff in here is nothing new, nor does Taraborrelli have any new spins on it. In fact, she seems a bit dull beside the vibrant Ethel and tragic Joan, both of whom are revealed in all their tarnished glory. In fact, it's the information about those two ladies that keep this book from being a total loss.

Unlike prior biographers have done, Taraborrelli seems interested in the many facets of Ethel and Joan's personalities: Ethel was both ruthless and compassionate, utterly loving and very rough. Rather than portraying the forceful woman as a harpy, as others have done, Taraborrelli focuses on her complexity. And Joan is shown as a sweet, almost ideal girl who succumbed to a family disease as she was humiliated in front of the entire world.

So long as he sticks to the facts, Taraborrelli is a capable biographer. Unfortunately, he launches into obviously fictional anecdotes and conversations, scuppering much of his credibility, and often fiddles with the facts to make the Kennedys seem like one big happy family, despite all the cheating and infighting. Since when was everyone so fond of the prudish, cold Rose?

The information about Ethel and Joan Kennedy is outstanding, and actually makes these underrated ladies seem more interesting than their legendary sister-in-law. But Taraborrelli's little "conversations" should have been saved for a novel.

Jen says

Camelot: where the women are whiny witches and the men are slimy cads.

I feel like I needed to take a shower after I listened to this book. Not much more than a gossip rag, it was peppered with too many "perhaps" and "maybes" and "probablys" to take it seriously. I need to read some other stuff about the Kennedys because this was far from scholarly and unbiased. It also assumed that you know all about the Kennedy history...like the Chappaquidic accident, etc. Unless you want a dose of gossip, I'd skip this one.

Erin says

4.5 Stars

Behind every great man, there's a great woman.

Over the years I've read a lot of books about the Kennedy's, some great and some awful. My favorite books tend to be about the woman behind the men. Jackie Kennedy is the most famous of the Camelot wives, we'll call her the Beyonce. Ethel has a special place in my heart(I mean she raised 11 crazy kids alone), she's the Kelly of the group.

And then there's poor Joan. The Michelle.

Jackie, Ethel and Joan were very different women and had they not married the three Kennedy brothers, its doubtful they would have ever met let alone been friends. Jackie came from a dysfunctional family and

learned at a young age that marrying rich was her only purpose in life (and she did quite well both times). Ethel grow up obscenely rich and very religious. She nearly became nun before deciding to marry Robert Kennedy. Joan grow up normal, with a normal family. Unlike Jackie & Ethel, Joan actually had a career. She was a model and musician. Joan was not built for life as a Kennedy wife. It hurt Joan that her husband cheated on her nonstop and took her for granted. Money and fame weren't enough for Joan, she wanted a happy life. I feel so sorry for Joan, she has battled alcoholism for 50 years and for the first 20 years nobody tried to help her, they just ignored it and tried to keep her out of sight.

John, Bobby, and Ted may have been the famous politicians but none of it would have been possible without Jackie, Ethel, and Joan. They raised the kids, dealt with the nonstop infidelity of their husband's, became style icons and persevered through overwhelming tragedy.

Jackie, Ethel, and Joan is one of the great Kennedy books. If you've never read a book about this family, this is a definitely a good starting point.

Highly Recommended!

Around The Year In 52 Books: A book from the first 10 books added to your TBR list.
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Julie says

I loved this book! I grew up in the Kennedy era so as I looked at the pictures and outfits, and I remembered seeing them on the television or Life Magazine in those outfits. The book gave many behind the scenes accounts of life as a Kennedy and particularly as a wife of a Kennedy. If you want some juicy details about the family and like history, you'll like this book. ""Jackie, Ethel, Joan: Women of Camelot" is a perfect read....historic and informative while being entertaining and glitzy. By the way, the chapters about the wives' dealings Marilyn Monroe alone are worth the price of admission" (review on Amazon)
