



# Grace and Power: The Private World of the Kennedy White House

*Sally Bedell Smith*

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## **Grace and Power: The Private World of the Kennedy White House** Sally Bedell Smith

*New York Times* bestselling author Sally Bedell Smith takes us inside the Kennedy White House with unparalleled access and insight. Having interviewed scores of Kennedy intimates, including many who have never spoken before, and drawing on letters and personal papers made available for the first time, Smith paints a richly detailed picture of the personal relationships behind the high purpose and political drama of the twentieth century's most storied presidency.

At the dawn of the 1960s, a forty-three-year-old president and his thirty-one-year-old first lady – the youngest couple ever to occupy the White House – captivated the world with their easy elegance and their cool conviction that anything was possible. Jack and Jackie Kennedy gathered around them an intensely loyal and brilliant coterie of intellectuals, journalists, diplomats, international jet-setters and artists. Perhaps as never before, Washington was sharply divided between the “ins” and the “outs.”

In his public life, JFK created a New Frontier, stared down the Soviets, and devoted himself to his wife and children. As first lady, Jackie mesmerized foreign leaders and the American people with her style and sophistication, creating a White House renowned for its beauty and culture. Smith brilliantly recreates the glamorous pageant of the Kennedy years, as well as the daily texture of the Kennedy's' marriage, friendships, political associations, and, in Jack's case, multiple love affairs.

Smith's striking revelations include new information about what drew Jack to his numerous mistresses – and what effects the relationships ultimately had on the women; about the rivalries and resentments among Kennedy's advisers; and about the poignant days before and after Kennedy's assassination.

Smith has fashioned a vivid and nuanced portrait not only of two extraordinary individuals but of a new age that sprang to life around them.

## **Grace and Power: The Private World of the Kennedy White House Details**

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# **From Reader Review Grace and Power: The Private World of the Kennedy White House for online ebook**

## **Linda says**

This book gave me a new admiration particularly for Jacqueline Kennedy and what she accomplished in restoring some of the grandeur and history to the White House rooms - and at such a young age.

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## **Matt says**

Never have I read so strong and thorough a biography of the Kennedys as the one Bedell-Smith put forth in this book. Not only does it touch on the key aspects of the presidency (the numerous women, Cuban Missile Crisis, and assassination), but it also delves into the lives of the POTUS and FLOTUS and their rocky marriage. She takes many interviews and spins them into strong stories, tied together with excellent narration.

So strong a book yet filled with the good and bad of the Kennedys, it leaves the reader to decide for themselves what they think and how it all comes out in the wash. From JFK and RFK's womansing to Jackie continual contemplation of leaving her family behind. Bedell-Smith illustrates a White House before the 24 hour news cycle, as both Kennedys head off to their own thing, with their own people.

Kudos Madam Bedell-Smith. My eyes are truly opened to the stars of Camelot.

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## **KOMET says**

Having finished this book a short time ago, I feel as if I've been put through the wringer emotionally. The lives of President Kennedy and the First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy seem to be the stuff of which epic novels and poems are made. Yet, they were very real people faced with many difficult challenges and tragedies. By her own admission, Jackie Kennedy once confided to a close friend that life without JFK would have "all been a wasteland, and I would have known it every step of the way."

The book begins with the moment of John F. Kennedy's election as President of the U.S. in 1960 and takes the reader through the thousand days of his Administration. The reader comes to be acquainted with a variety of people great and small who were either a part of President Kennedy's inner circle, worked closely with him or Jacqueline Kennedy on the various projects and endeavors that came to symbolize the achievements and legacy of the Kennedy White House, or knew the President on a deeply personal, intimate level. This book is no hagiography. Nor is it a scathing critique of the Kennedy Administration. It is, rather, a full, comprehensive, balanced and objective (inasmuch as any account of a great, historical figure's life as a biography can be) of what was a truly remarkable human being and President.

For any reader wanting to know more about JFK and the people whose lives were directly touched and influenced by him, the author has at least 100 pages of notes which amply attest to the amount of thorough research she carried out on her subject: the Kennedy White House years.

More than anything, "Grace and Power: The Private World of the Kennedy White House" has deepened my fascination with President Kennedy. He and his wife inspired Americans to be the best of what they could be, using their talents and labors to help build a better society through public service, encouraged the flowering of the arts and culture in a way that has seldom been done in this country, and spoke to the noblest aspirations of people the world over. Here was a leader with wit, a fierce intelligence, style, courage, great compassion, and class who, even in death, continues to inspire millions. President Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy cast a light across the firmament that continues to blaze brightly. This is a book that I RECOMMEND HIGHLY for anyone who wants to understand why they became special to us and remain so.

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### **Melissa says**

It's like walking around with the Kennedys as they go through the White House years. I've read one other book by this author and they've both been such detailed accounts but told in a way that you want to just keep on reading.

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### **Hank Pharis says**

Okay. Not that much new if you know the Kennedy's story. Says that Joseph Kennedy lied about what happened to Rosemary. Does reveal yet more about JFK's apparent sex addiction and says that he had a venereal disease.

(Note: I'm stingy with stars. For me 2 stars means a good book. 3 = Very good; 4 = Outstanding {only about 5% of the books I read merit this}; 5 = All time favorites {one of these may come along every 400-500 books})

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### **Sommer says**

This is a well researched and interesting account of the Kennedy Administration. It also deals a lot with the complex relationship between Jackie and JFK. I would recommend it for anyone wanting an intimate glimpse into the Kennedy years. Just be prepared to cry...you know the end, but it still gets you. The author spares no detail in describing the death of JFK and it breaks your heart all over again.

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### **Lee says**

Well this book is certainly taking me a while to finish. I was surprised at the amount of little details in this book that I did not know about. For example, I remember something about the size of shoe Jackie wore. Also it was amazing to see Jackie's detailed oriented character and impeccable taste throughout the book. In addition, you also saw the private side of Jackie meaning how she would pick and choose the different events that she attended or did not attend during her tenure in the White House.

In regards to Jack you really learned the type of person he was as well as several the challenges he faced

through the numerous campaigns and finally the presidency. I also did not know the little details about his funeral that Jackie and planning this really wanted it to be a happy occasion and reflect the true person that Jack was. This was very apparent when she stated that she did not want a eulogy at the funeral more so she wanted famous quotes or passages that he had used throughout his life. What touched me the most was not using the 23rd Psalm but yet Ecclesiastes. I also find it interesting that at the graveside service both Ted and Bobby were scheduled to give some remarks and both were stricken by grief that the remarks went unspoken.

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm a sucker for pictures when it comes to books and the pictures in various sections throughout this book never cease to amaze me. They have a way of really capturing who the people were and I commend the author for that.

Finally the thing I like most about this book is in both the beginning and the end of the book you get a list of people that had a huge impact on the Kennedys. When the book starts out you learn who the person is and how they were involved in the Kennedy group and then when you finally get to the end of the book you learn what happened to that person after the Kennedy Administration had come to an end.

So overall this was one of the better Kennedy books I have read and I liked it for all its intimate details and the true reflections of the people.

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### **Rosa says**

It was interesting and an eye opener. But the political talk makes it drag. It took me longer than usual to finish. Still a good read.

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### **Crystal Hammon says**

When John F. Kennedy was assassinated, I was three years old—too young to really remember the tragedy or study his legacy in school, too old to be ignorant of the influence he and his wife had on Americans. *Grace and Power* reveals how history intersected with the couple's relationship to a coterie of intellectuals, policy makers, family, friends and each other. If you enjoy history and biographies and like having a book on your nightstand that is easily sandwiched between other books you're reading, this one fills the bill. Reading *Grace and Power* is like watching *The West Wing* of the early 1960s, witnessing the decisions, debates, triumphs, tragedies, extravagancies, indulgences and shenanigans of the Kennedy White House years. The author also illuminates Jackie's influence on a badly needed White House renovation and the complexity of her relationship with her husband—a marriage marred by JFK's insatiable and undeniable appetite for smart, beautiful women. This is a story of two learned, privileged people and how they captivated the world together.

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### **Joseph J. says**

This is one reason why I look forward to Sally Bedell Smith's new book on Prince Charles. I really enjoyed her book on the Kennedys in the White House. This is a subject too often exploited and sensationalized.

Smith's book is honest and cites faults where they exist and the admirable when they triumph. Much was packed into the 1000 days in the White House. This is a clear, well written and truly balanced account of two remarkable lives in a brief period of history-which we still feel today.

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### **Eva Shillair says**

The author did a splendid job in capturing their lives, interactions with each other, as well as with the white house staffs, the president's cabinet, family friends, and their children. The more you read the more you get to know JFK and Jackie as their own person and marvel at the strength and grace that Jackie had shown throughout their marriage.

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### **Caroline says**

I've always had a thing for the Kennedys. I was a huge assassination buff in my teens and whilst I've grown out of that I'm still fascinated by the image of glamour and youth and excitement that they projected. I think America lost something the day JFK was assassinated and they've not got it back yet. But anyway, I digress. This is very good book, nothing earth-shattering or ground-breaking, but it focuses much more on Jack and Jackie's private life, their relationships with their friends, family and each other, than it does on the political side of things. It's not an obsequious read either - it doesn't gloss over JFK's infidelities, for example. It's perhaps longer than it needs to be and I could have done with less detail about Jackie's clothes, but you can't have everything, I suppose!

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### **Sheri Johnson says**

Very good but very long. Glad I stuck with it. I read this during the summer when my dad was very sick and I can remember reading parts to him. ?

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### **David Elliott says**

I knew Jack was a ladies man, but I had no idea to this extent. Still considered him a very good president. Very impressed with Jackie also. Quite a lady.

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### **Christina Abel says**

This book was well written, and gave me an insight into the private lives of the First Couple. Smith did a very good job researching the book by speaking with many of the people who were included in the Kennedy's social circle(s). I had never heard of Jacqueline Kennedy restoring the White House before reading this book, and I was fascinated with the detail with which Smith resurrects this information. I was also unaware that the Kennedys included a school in the White House for their children and their children's friends. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in learning more about the Kennedys and their

lifestyle(s).

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