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# Introduction

**W**hat was it about her, dammit?

Almost from the moment she made her debutante turn at Hammersmith Farm in 1947, it was obvious that the elegant sylph known simply as “Jackie” possessed something enviable, intangible.

A true “American Idol,” she represented a standard that many women have tried to copy, from her clothes to her gestures. But it was her cloak of unusual dignity that earns her the greatest admiration. You can’t help but want to be like her. Who can resist such effortless, multilingual poise? People the world over have long marveled at how she handled the jagged, painful turns of the Kennedy legacy and the Onassis years. And how, beneath those iconic pillboxes, she never seemed to sweat.

Which brings us to the point of this book. Dozens of works have sought to portray the “real” Jackie, and fix her mark on events historic. Yet no book has applied Jackie’s day-to-day philosophies to your life, or

extrapolated her timeless coping skills for the twenty-first-century woman. With the public's interest in all things Kennedy hardly abated, it seems appropriate—even necessary—to now view Jackie through a more modern prism. To connect the dots of her richly textured life and distill them into a practical, instructive guide.

Over the last four decades, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis has attracted almost as many writers as fans. Her public life as a young mother in the White House, followed by more Garbo-like periods in Greece and New York, continue to fascinate people who knew only her photograph. Her allure, and her example, go well beyond the printed page: When New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art displayed her White House finery in a 2001 costume exhibit, it attracted an international sell-out crowd. And two Sotheby's auctions featuring items from her estate and her homes yielded dizzying bids.

Still, the somber words and the artifacts are not enough. We are ever fascinated by this private woman—our royal equivalent—who will always be the pinnacle of beauty and wisdom. *What Would Jackie Do?* explores the alchemy of Jackie's timeless living arts to show what it takes to be a creature of true substance today. The first book of its kind, it aims her famous gaze in the readers' direction through advice, insight, and humor (Jackie did, after all, possess quite the wicked wit).

At a time when classic smarts have gone missing in our fractured popular culture, this book is meant to serve as the print equivalent of having Jackie herself analyze—indeed, make over—your life. *What Would Jackie Do?* will show you how to be steely yet soignée—a tonic that the Jennifer Anistons and J.Los (starlets with only fleeting fame)—crave. With the Elegant One as your personal advisor, you can acquire some of that Jackie O magic, be it of the heart, the mind, or the home.

You'll know, for example, when a designer is worth his couture costs, and when you are better off with a good knockoff. You'll learn to deftly approach everything from mating rituals to office politics with as much savoir faire as Jackie did in her time. If she could make guests both plain and privileged feel at ease in the White House, how can you do the same in your own home? As for her famously strict and

successful child-rearing ways, how might you translate and apply similar methods? And how can you interpret for your own purposes her complex ability to handle powerful men?

By definition, this is a work that must straddle the lines of history and myth, observation and advice, reverence and irreverence. We also suggest what Jackie might do today in a world where the rules of social conduct are ever more fluid. Would she e-mail thank-you notes? Use a BlackBerry to deliver bad news? Consign old clothes? Try Pilates? Withhold sex until the second date or fifth? Fly the kids first class or coach?

*What Would Jackie Do?* takes its cues from dozens of original interviews, as well as biographies, historical references and documents, articles, oral histories, photographs, and other previously published works. As a reality check, let us underscore two key points. First, Jackie, for all her gemlike facets, was hardly without flaws. To that end, this book will help you understand what she knew all too well: How best to transform your weaknesses into strengths. Second, most women lack the financial resources and/or social connections to lead the life that she did. With that in mind, we reveal how even Jackie cut corners and pinched a few pennies.

In summary, this book is designed to give you a solid yet whimsical foundation from which to draw inspiration and advice. To compel you to ask, when confronted with matters sartorial, ethical, practical: *What Would Jackie Do?*



## Chapter 4

# The Art of Attachment:

## *Lessons on Sex, Marriage, and Men of Consequence*

*“I don’t think there are many men  
who are faithful to their wives.”*

—JBKO

**A**s the daughter of a rakishly handsome bon vivant and as the wife of two husbands with the means to philander on multiple continents, Jackie knew men. She could intuitively court them, befriend them, summon them to her various causes. Some within the Kennedy clan may have jokingly called her “the Deb,” but Jackie—who could tease out the playful side of characters as disparate as Nureyev, Kissinger, de Gaulle, and Brando—often managed to have the last laugh. A demure interloper, she navigated a masculine world with greater skill than most men.

As can you.

Some might find it reassuring to know that Jackie wasn’t always the picture of confidence—she suffered from a healthy dose of self-doubt early on. In high school she fretted that no one would ever marry her and that she’d be lost in a world of ordinariness. Upon graduating from Miss Porter’s, her life ambition as stated in the class yearbook was

“not to be a housewife.” Patrician looks, spiffy riding habits, and beautiful manners made her a girl to watch, but Miss Bouvier was as blind to her own charms as any young woman.

College, international travel, a stint as a photojournalist—and trysts in stylish automobiles—honed her natural talents with the opposite sex. On the surface, men were drawn to her whispery voice and geisha-like composure. On a deeper level, she learned to quietly wield her power as an intellectual equal. Such skills, however, couldn’t protect her from romantic hardship. As scenes of Camelot filled the national imagination, Jackie would have to compartmentalize her emotions to handle the constant specter of infidelity. While she didn’t always make choices other women could live with, she did stick to her convictions and carried on with strength and guile (albeit with a hint of “I’m watching you through my sunglasses” naughtiness).



*“You always hear these stories that Jackie spoke quietly  
so men would lean in. So I do that every now and again,  
just to see, are they going to? But no, they turn away!”*

—JOAN RIVERS, COMEDIENNE



## ACQUISITION TACTICS 101

Unlike her classmates at Vassar (which, mind you, was the all-female equivalent of Harvard or Yale in her day), Jackie had little use for giddiness when it came to men. A fierce competitor who accepted only winning, she treated the acquisition of suitable men as both an art and

a business—a discipline to approach with the utmost seriousness. One might fault her father, John “Black Jack” Bouvier, with giving her such an unromantic view of the male species.

Yet it was his cocktail of womanizing, drinking, money woes, and vanity that ironically prepared her for the less attractive side of men. In fact, her father convinced her that cheating was in a man’s DNA, a lesson that helped her never to take such behavior personally.

Jackie’s arsenal of wooing weaponry was vast. Among her more successful spearing techniques:

**Use flaws to your advantage.** Women today, obsessed with ridiculous beauty standards, often strive for a measure of sameness. Pity how these copycats don’t recognize—as did Jackie—an opportunity to leverage their beauty marks, Roman noses, and generous behinds as a way to stand out from the crowd. In an essay that won her a prestigious *Vogue* magazine prize, a young Jackie wrote, “I am . . . 5’7” . . . with brown hair and eyes so unfortunately far apart that it takes three weeks to have a pair of glasses made.” The lady doth protest too much. As we all know, Jackie would later become famous for wearing a pair of those supposedly awkward (sun)glasses. She also managed to turn her ugly-duckling hair into an international phenomenon, “the Swan.”

**Don’t spook men needlessly.** Although she was curious and well read, a young Jackie opted to deflate her smarts around bachelors, feigning nervousness, for instance, about exams or her ability to finish coursework. As she astutely understood, an independent woman can afford to reveal her true, strong self to a man over time. So don’t overwhelm your dates with early shock-and-awe tactics (trilling in Russian over dinner, for example, or gloating over high grades). Give them a chance to appreciate your other, more womanly arts first.

**Speak softly (and carry a good lipstick).** Jackie made a concerted effort to temper her conversational voice sometime during college. She willed herself to speak sotto voce—typically drawing out the S in words like “yessssss.” Gentlemen callers found the trait seductive; it

also afforded her the kind of attention a conspiratorial whisper can conjure. Even as a young man, admirers such as Thomas Guinzburg (a college-age friend of Jackie's and later her boss at Viking) "found that pretty attractive."

• PEARL •

Since this breathy technique compels a man to lean closer to hear you (thus bringing your mouth into greater focus), be sure to have your lips primed with a flattering—and preferably unflavored—color.

**Don't scoff at matchmaking.** Jackie was by no means a fan of the practice, but it is how she and Jack got together. Be particularly open to matchmaking overtures when the fixer-uppers know you and the gentleman equally well. To make the rendezvous worth your while, arrange to meet over lunch or dinner—not just drinks or coffee. After all, a girl's got to eat. And beverage-only dates are an early sign of commitment issues or, worse, cheapness.

**Be detached, and tune out all reality "dating" shows.** Jackie's father had firm opinions about how a woman should capture a man: "Play hard to get!" he'd admonish repeatedly. She took his advice seriously, preferring to exude nonchalance rather than commit quickly or easily. Admirers complained that it was tough to get a chaste kiss out of her, let alone anything more. Women today, who often fret that their dates have an abundance of bed partners, should take heed. After JFK proposed to Jackie, she took off to Europe for several weeks to supposedly mull over the merits of such a union. Upon her return, the young Kennedy was waiting for her at the airport. Her refusal to let him take her for granted, even after a yearlong courtship, sealed the marriage deal.

**Make him the epicenter of your universe—at least until dessert arrives.**

Always appear intensely fascinated by the man you're with. Never look bored, never glance over his shoulder, and always draw him out with endless questions. The side benefit, and perhaps the real art, is that this tactic allows you as a woman to remain enigmatic by staying mum about yourself. And few men can resist such a flattering amount of interest. When all else failed, Jackie was able to hold forth on certain subjects—animals and art in particular—but her (soft-spoken!) reporter-like questioning was a strong offensive. So talented was she that Jackie even made a party crasher—writer Bob Colacello, who showed up at 1040 with Andy Warhol in the late seventies—feel special by sharing her glass of Perrier with him when the waiter couldn't be found. "It's *ours*," she purred.

**When three's a crowd, make it four.** Remind a roaming man that he isn't the only one with outside love connections. In early 1968, during her courtship with Ari Onassis, Jackie went off to Mexico with Roswell Gilpatric, an old acquaintance from her Washington, D.C., days—even though he was still married. (Subtext: As long as they are eligible, divorcing men are not necessarily off-limits.) They went so far as to kiss and flirt in public, and their exploits became fodder for a story in *Women's Wear Daily*.

**Cozy up to the family kingpin.** Many women seek to win over a man's mother while overlooking the parent who may well hold more influence over him (not to mention the reins of the family fortune). Thanks mainly to her grandfather, Jackie knew how to handle older powerful men—especially her father-in-law Joe Kennedy, who favored her and her smart spunkiness over his other daughters-in-law. She worked her magic on him, knowing how influential he'd be in getting his son to move toward a proposal. If a ring is your goal, get to know your prospective father-in-law's favorite sports teams, car models, liquor brands, and hobbies. Carry relevant periodicals and scalped tickets in your purse as necessary. Above all, dare to flirt a bit. Jackie did.

It isn't over until the altar. Practical to her core, Jackie had no qualms about keeping her options open during her first—yes, first—engagement, to John Husted in 1952. She went about town with, among others, a dreamy journalist who had been at the *Washington Times-Herald*. Was this good-girl behavior? Probably not. Did she follow her gut instincts, and eventually land a future president instead? You get the idea: An engagement is a quaint plan, yet one that is subject to change if you happen upon a more suitable mate. The real dance, dear, begins at your wedding reception.

## PICKING A DATE VS. A MATE (and Recognizing the Difference)

It is unwise to hook up with men who are merely outwardly eligible—i.e., the multitude of socially inept bankers and lawyers and admen who stuff themselves into custom-made Italian suits but have no interest in seeing Rome; or who purchase season tickets to the opera only to dash out at the first curtain. You'll do far better to choose a successful, broad-minded man who not only looks good (albeit not *too* good—more on that shortly), but can give you the platform you so richly deserve.

Business leaders, entrepreneurs, politicians, artists, and other (employed) intellectuals are all fine candidates. So, too, are emotionally balanced men with trust funds—as long as they have some cause or activity to keep their time, and minds, occupied.

Jackie understood these precepts perfectly. She judged men as much on their professional prospects as on their looks, their minds, and their bank accounts. She gave preference to suitors who had great physical presence (even if squat—Ari Onassis was nearly a head shorter than she) and were masters at flattery.

## A Note about Deflowering

The lone—albeit unsubstantiated—account on this topic is that Jackie lost her virginity at the age of 20, in France, to the son of a famous writer. The Paris interlude allegedly took place in a stalled elevator (or *ascenseur calé*, which sounds far more glamorous). Her reaction to the business: “Oh, is that all there is to it?” Whether it was a romantic myth of her own or others’ creation, the lesson is the same: If you have yet to yield your maidenhood, remember that it’s best done in memorable fashion. Boozy post-prom encounters are out of the question. After all, this is an occasion where pomp and storytelling count. Details of the rite (time, place, duration) are key. Given our digital age, so, too, is your partner’s potential “Google factor.” This demands you choose your man with posterity in mind. When typing his name into a search engine twenty years from now, you don’t want to recoil at what pops up (worst-case scenario: “Your search did not match any documents”).

### ◆ Know Where the Boys Are ◆

As Jackie didn’t much believe in matchmaking, she would probably subscribe to the dictum “sell thyself.” It is therefore recommended to get on a meaningful social rotation. The following are some choice venues, along with symbols to denote the financial implications for each.

\$\$\$ Onassis bucks, or super connections, required

\$\$ Worth saving for

\$ Jackie on a budget

**Swell parties.** Defined, for these purposes, as those events likely to draw a group of people who are more attractive than boorish, and are worth knowing for at least three hours. Soirees with dancing—a seductive art Jackie mastered through lessons—make particularly good pickup places. Men love a woman who sways her hips to a good rap or rumba beat (the latter was Jackie’s fave). \$\$

**Concerts.** Meaning those staged in auditoriums with plush seats—not the plastic kind typical of sports arenas. The logic here is simple: A higher seat fabric grade is likely to attract a higher grade of man. The ballet, opera, and symphony pack in a wealth of connected, cultured types. (Jackie was a trustee of the American Ballet Theatre.) And yes, these bastions of old money are fast attracting more young and single fans. To make the best use of intermission time, bring opera glasses and do a quick pan and scan before the lights go down. \$

**Smart cafés** (particularly those in foreign cities). There’s nothing like the roar of a Ferrari pulling up to an Italian café—especially when the object of the driver’s attention is you. Wear dark shades, tote plenty of reading material, and cross your legs, ladylike, at the ankles. Lap up pastries and other local delicacies (as did Jackie) as a way to express your appetites to those foreign swains. And do so in the before- and after-work hours and on weekends, when the *employed* swains surface. Incidentally, Starbucks does not qualify as a “smart” café, which must always have table service. \$\$

**Any embassy.** As Jackie discovered in India, it is easy to stand out in places populated by people with different accents, cultural norms, and complexions. If international travel isn’t imminent, embassies and consulates are good bets. The diplomatic service attracts adventurous single men who are gifted in several tongues, and functions held at these splendid places often have favorable male-to-female ratios. Getting in shouldn’t be a big problem. Shoot for a holiday fete, such as Sweden’s pre-Christmas St. Lucia festival. The partying natives will be flattered to indulge your curiosity for their unusual customs. (In this

instance, singing Swedish Christmas songs as a flaming-candle wreath burns atop one's head.) §

**Church events.** The Catholic Church was central to Jackie's strict upbringing. Assuming the blue-haired crowd at the after-service coffee hour just depresses you, head for off-peak and noncumenical events sponsored by the church. If your own place of worship doesn't have a healthy roster of pottery classes and John Donne poetry readings, it's okay to recreationally stray—to a church in a wealthier zip code. §

**Schools you couldn't get into.** Finding a good man is like discovering precious ore—you have to pan from the richest tributaries. No need to let campus boundaries hinder you, then. Since Vassar was a women's college at the time, Jackie and her crew naturally made social forays to other learning labs. (Her favorites were Yale and Harvard.) Cross-campus dating permits you to discreetly try on multiple men for size while never being too available (i.e., seen at the library every night). Crashing foreign gates also puts you in the ranks of “the other woman,” driving your female competition wild and making you a bit of an exotic catch to men. §

**Antique fairs/auction houses.** Not just haunts for gay men, these places are a magnet for straight art-history types with a taste for finer things—i.e., furniture and *objets* of the pre-Pottery Barn era. With any luck, you just might bag a diamond dealer like Maurice Tempelman, Jackie's loyal, post-Ari companion. §

**At and around the office.** Throw away the company manual on this one. If Jackie used her work environment to cast about for a mate, why shouldn't you? She viewed her first paying job, as the *Times-Herald's* “Inquiring Camera Girl,” as a great way to seek out men. Of course, she kept her lens well trained outside the scope of the newsroom. They don't call her favored reporting technique the “man-on-the-street interview” for nothing. §

