



Rose Kennedy: The Life and Times of a Political Matriarch

Barbara A. Perry

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“An insightful portrait of this paradoxical woman.”—*People*

In her compelling and intimate portrait, presidential historian Barbara A. Perry captures Rose Kennedy’s essential contributions to the incomparable Kennedy dynasty. This biography—the first to draw on an invaluable cache of Rose’s newly released diaries and letters—unearths the complexities behind the impeccable persona she showed the world. The woman who emerges in these pages is a fascinating character: savvy about her family’s reputation and resilient enough to persevere through the unfathomable tragedies that befell her. As a young woman, she defied her father, Boston mayor John Fitzgerald, by marrying ambitious businessman Joseph Kennedy. During Joe’s diplomatic career, she began carefully calibrating her family’s image, stage-managing photo shoots and interviews of her nine children and herself. After husband Joe’s isolationist views on the eve of World War II made him a political liability, Rose took to the campaign trail for son Jack. Her perfectionism, initially a response to the strictures imposed on Catholic women, ultimately created a family portrait that resonated in modern politics and media.

Perry’s account looks past the fanfare, poignantly revealing the matriarch’s vulnerability. Rose sought solace from crushing personal tragedies and a philandering husband in prayer, habitual shopping, travel, and medication. Initially ashamed and afraid of daughter Rosemary’s mental disability, Rose ultimately shined a light on the affliction, raising millions of dollars for disabled children. An indefatigable campaigner for Jack, Bobby, and Teddy, she had an unshakable Catholic faith that informed their compassionate social policies and her daughters’ philanthropies.

The definitive biography, *Rose Kennedy* provides unequalled access to the life of a remarkable woman who witnessed a century of history and masked her family’s more inconvenient truths while capturing the American imagination.

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