



# KENNEDY

by Daniel A. Wolf

## CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

John F. Kennedy (JFK): Chief protagonist of the play, JFK first appears as a freshman senator in 1953 courting the beautiful Jackie Bouvier (the future Mrs. Kennedy). We watch as he decides to seek the Democratic Party's nomination for President, his acceptance speech at the national convention, the televised debate with Richard Nixon, and his winning of the general election. In the midst of these events, JFK tries to allay Jackie's fears about the upcoming presidential campaign, confesses his love for his brother, Bobby and expresses his hopes and dreams for the years ahead as President.

Jackie Bouvier/ Kennedy (Jackie): We meet Jackie as a 23 year old highly competent though underpaid reporter for the Washington Times-Herald newspaper. Through this position she meets JFK, then a freshman senator. Though resistant at first, she falls in love with him catapulting her into the highly charged and competitive world of the Kennedy family. At the wedding reception Jackie is the quintessential blushing bride as both she and JFK promise "to remain and help each other through." On the night JFK wins the Democratic Party's nomination, Jackie expresses deep fears about the upcoming national campaign. Finally, we see her as the ebullient First Lady eager to make the White House "a wondrous place."

Robert F. Kennedy (Bobby): JFK's younger brother. We meet Bobby as a 28 year old at the Kennedy Compound in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts; playing football and being



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mercilessly teased by his older brother. Later, we see him as JFK's loyal and fiercely determined campaign manager; crunching numbers, giving last minute advice before JFK's televised debate with Richard Nixon, and exhorting his brother to "give it a little more" in the final two weeks before the election.

Joseph P. Kennedy (Joe): The rich and powerful patriarch of the Kennedy family, Joe is determined to make his son, JFK, President. His initial meeting with Jackie Bouvier reveals a man of dogged determination and frankness stemming from his days "as a poor boy from the back streets of Boston."

Hubert Humphrey: JFK's chief rival for the Democratic nomination in 1960. After losing the all important West Virginia primary, Humphrey conceded, paving the way for JFK to secure the nomination. A force in the senate, Humphrey was no match for the charismatic JFK on the campaign trail and especially on television.

Lyndon Johnson: Senate Majority Leader from Texas who became JFK's running mate. In the play, JFK chooses Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri as his running mate. However, as a courtesy, JFK meets with Johnson. A well seasoned politician, Johnson persuades JFK to drop Symington and place him on the ticket.

Stuart Symington: Senator from Missouri. In the play he is JFK's pick to run as his vice-presidential running mate having satisfactorily answered JFK's questions. However, he's dropped by JFK in favor of Lyndon Johnson.



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Richard Nixon: Vice President under Eisenhower and the Republican challenger in the 1960 presidential race. He enters the play at a television studio for the first Kennedy-Nixon debate where he decides to confront JFK on the issue of class and style.

Ted Sorensen: JFK's speech writer. Sorensen first appears as a 24 year old assistant to JFK, then a freshman senator. At the meeting in 1959 where JFK announces his intention to seek the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination, he offers a number of reasons why JFK should not run. Still, it is he who informs JFK that he's won the general election.

Arthur Schlesinger: Famed Harvard historian and advisor to JFK. In the play he is invited to the meeting in 1959 where JFK announces his intention to seek the Democratic Party's nomination. Though he expresses some reservations, he helps map out strategy for the upcoming primary season.

Janet: Jackie Bouvier's assistant. Though not historically accurate, Janet serves as a useful device for Jackie to recount her life experiences and reveal that she still hasn't "met the man I'm looking for."

Frank Waldrop: Editor of the Washington Times-Herald newspaper. As Jackie's employer, he assigns her to interview JFK. Though Jackie protests due to JFK's reputation as "the biggest playboy in Washington," Waldrop insists she conduct the interview.



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George Scott: Hubert Humphrey's campaign manager. Though he lost the all important West Virginia primary to JFK, Humphrey is determined to stay in the race. Scott, seeing the hopelessness of the situation, persuades him to withdraw.

Leonard Hall: Richard Nixon's campaign manager. Prior to the televised debate, Nixon informs Hall that he intends to confront JFK "on the issue of class." Hall is alarmed and advises Nixon to "drop it" to no avail.

Pat Kennedy/Lawford: JFK's younger sister. She is welcoming to Jackie when she visits the Kennedy family at Hyannis Port.

Eunice Kennedy/Schriver: JFK's younger sister. She possesses an acerbic wit and twists Jackie's words to make a joke at her expense. Still, she is happy to meet her future sister-in-law.

Peter Lawford: Hollywood movie star and JFK's brother-in-law. He sings at the wedding and tells JFK that "Hollywood is behind you" on the night JFK won the Democratic Party's nomination.

Edward M. Kennedy (Teddy): JFK's youngest brother. He "worked the Wyoming delegation all day" helping JFK win the nomination on the first ballot.

Larry O'Brien: JFK's political advisor. At the meeting in 1959 O'Brien offers several reasons why JFK should not seek the Democratic nomination. Still, along with Sorensen and Schlesinger, he maps out strategy for the upcoming primary season.



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Adlai Stevenson: Former governor of Illinois and twice the Democratic nominee for President. He introduces JFK at the convention.