



Dear Mrs. Kennedy: The World Shares Its Grief, Letters November 1963

Jay Mulvaney , Paul de Angelis

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From the bestselling author of Kennedy Weddings and Diana and Jackie comes a powerful and moving collection of the condolence letters Jacqueline Kennedy received after the assassination of John F. Kennedy

In the weeks and months following the assassination of her husband, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy received more than one million letters. The impact of President Kennedy's death was so immense that people from every station in life wrote to her, sharing their feelings of sympathy, sorrow, and hope.

She received letters from political luminaries such as Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King Jr., and Charles De Gaulle. Hollywood stars like Lauren Bacall, Vivian Leigh, and Gene Kelly voiced their sympathy, as did foreign dignitaries including Queen Elizabeth II, the King and Queen of Greece, and the Prince of Monaco. Distinguished members of the arts and society—Ezra Pound, Noel Coward, Babe Paley, Langston Hughes, Oleg Cassini, Josephine Baker—offered their heartfelt condolences. And children, with the most heartbreaking sincerity, reached out to the First Lady to comfort her in her time of grief.

More than just a compendium of letters, *Dear Mrs. Kennedy* uses these many voices to tell the unforgettable story of those fateful four days in November, when the world was struck with shock and sadness. It vividly captures the months that followed, as a nation---and a family---attempted to rebuild.

Filled with emotion, patriotism, and insight, the letters are a poignant time capsule of one of the seminal events of the twentieth century. *Dear Mrs. Kennedy* offers a diverse portrait not only of the aftermath of the assassination, but of the Kennedy mystique that continues to captivate the world.

Dear Mrs. Kennedy: The World Shares Its Grief, Letters November 1963 Details

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From Reader Review Dear Mrs. Kennedy: The World Shares Its Grief, Letters November 1963 for online ebook

Linda Manwaring says

I'll confess I didn't finish it. It didn't hold my attention that well. Some of the history behind the letters was interesting. I found it astonishing that she received 1.5 million letters in the months following JFK's death and 45,000 in a single day, requiring a staff to help open and respond to the letters.

Holly (2 Kids and Tired) says

Americans connected with the Kennedy family in a way that they had never done with previous presidents. Perhaps it's was JFK's youth or his ideals. Perhaps it was his movie-star looks and beautiful, poised young wife. Perhaps it was the fact that technology had made it possible for a real-time look at the president. In November of 1963, while the world watched, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and many Americans were forever changed. Those who remember that day, remember where they were and what they were doing, much as those who experienced 9/11 remember what they were doing when the twin towers fell.

After the assassination millions of people, from around the world, sent letters of sympathy and condolence to Jacqueline Kennedy. Many are from famous people: actors and politicians and foreign dignitaries. Most are from every day Americans; people who had no connection to this man, other than respect for his office and shock and grief at his violent death.

After their initial reading, these letters remained largely untouched in storage and many are now being published and seen by the public for the first time. These letters are interspersed with commentary and explanations about the time and offer a compelling, poignant glimpse into a tragic period of American history.

I noticed some editing issues and towards the end it got a bit repetitive, but I still found it fascinating, although not very uplifting. I think JFK fans will enjoy it.

Graceann says

It's a bit difficult for me to review this work fairly, given that the thing that annoyed me most about it is something that can't be helped. It got to the point that the letters all seemed a bit "samey" to me, when of course that was bound to occur (especially with regard to letters sent from Heads of State, for instance). The text became boilerplate, and began to lose any of its meaning after a time. How many different ways can you find to say "I'm so sorry?" I have to think that it felt a bit like that to Mrs. Kennedy, too, though the sheer volume of correspondence would have (I hope) made her feel somewhat comforted.

The best letters, I thought, were the ones that deviated from the standard "my sincere condolences" script. For instance, Richard Nixon wrote a personal, touching letter that had none of the usual by-the-numbers text. He talked about how he and JFK were freshmen in Congress at the same time, and about the invitation that he and his wife Pat received to the Kennedy/Bouvier wedding in 1953. Warm, kind and free of overblown rhetoric. That's really the only one from another adult that I found memorable.

The most touching letters came from children. One young lady sent candy along for the first lady to cheer her up. Another gave addressing instructions for sending letters to the slain President in Heaven ("be sure to use air mail"). Finally, a little boy in Poland offered, along with his siblings, to host the Kennedy children at his house over the Summer so that they could play games and have fun and forget their troubles for a while. I can only imagine that some of these helped Mrs. Kennedy to smile a little.

There were plenty of terrible letters, ones that celebrated Kennedy's murder and sought to inflict pain rather than soothe it, but they are almost completely absent from this volume (as is appropriate). However, at the end of the Heads of State section, and before the Children's section begins, there is one three-line letter reproduced in handwritten copy, without context or explanation, a vile missive that only asks how many women that President Kennedy had [been with]. There was no reason for that letter to be present, by itself, with no explanation as to its provenance. Either it should have been left out entirely, or made a part of a separate section that had other negative correspondence in it, with appropriate context. It feels as if a sneaky printer just plunked it in there to see if anyone would notice.

Kennedy was murdered five years before I was born, so I don't have that "where were you?" moment that others do. Reading this helped me to understand just how important it was to people to have seen Mrs. Kennedy carry herself as she did during those four grisly days, and all the days that came after. It was a useful, if somewhat repetitive and in the case of that one letter, confusing, addition to other materials on Mrs. Kennedy's grit and grace.

Niki says

This book examined Mrs. Kennedy's grief through the eyes of the people that knew her. For that, it's a pretty good read. However, the organization of the material is hard to follow. The tidbits of history and the people who knew the couple mixed with their letters make it really hard to get through as, often, the tidbits of history provided offer no real context and the people discussed are a bit redundant as the author goes over their careers, life, and relationship to the couple even if it is of little consequence. It just got to be overwhelming and made this book seem far longer than it actually is in a bad way.

Ann says

I was serving a tour of duty in Africa when Kennedy was assassinated and did not return to the USA until a year later. Communication was a challenge in that place at that time so I missed seeing all the images on TV. This book gave me a good sense of how Mrs. Kennedy carried on at this difficult time. I also found the book a quick history of that time. I loved the letters from little children, especially from the boy from Poland. The world leaders condolences were amazing. I especially liked the one from the Julius Nyere. He saw the humanity in Kennedy. I would recommend this book to Pres and Mrs. Obama. I think that they could learn a lot.

Jennifer says

4.5 Stars

From my book review blog Rundpinne.Dear Mrs. Kennedy by Jay Mulvaney and Paul De Angelis takes the reader back to 1964 and the world's outpouring of love to the Kennedy family after the assassination of

President John F. Kennedy. In an emotional and poignant manner, the authors select from telegrams, and notes from over a million people from all classes and cultures from around the world that were sent to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy in 1964. Rather than merely selecting several letters to allow the readers to get a sense of what the world felt, the authors went a step further to reconstruct those four horrific days in Jacqueline Kennedy's life and the months following through various letters ranging from dignitaries to average citizens. Dear Mrs. Kennedy is a beautiful, historic treasure, a time capsule in book form of how the world was in the days following President John F. Kennedy's assassination touching on poignant memories, historic moments, and a tremendous outpouring of grief, shock and support. I would recommend Dear Mrs. Kennedy to anyone who enjoys historical books.

Jill says

After President Kennedy's death, Letters of sympathy poured in to Jackie and her children. As the authors report, "by the time the official collection of condolence correspondence ended in early 1965, it totaled some 1,250,000 pieces." Most of them have never been shared with the public until now. The authors reprinted representative samples of letters to demonstrate the depth and breadth of emotion evoked by the killing of the President.

This book gives an inside look at the world's response to a shared sense of grief. It will probably mean the most to those who lived during the Kennedy years, and who will always remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news...

Rating: 2.5/5

Laura says

A rather sad book filled with letters to Mrs. Kennedy after the President was assassinated. From political and Hollywood types to common people, all shared their sadness and grief with the First Lady. A poignant book that is rather depressing.

Cherie' Schier says

I went to this book expecting to get a view of how the world experienced the Kennedy assassination through different perspectives. I did enjoy reading the letters from a wide array of people, but I cannot understand why the authors of the book chose certain letters over others. Often, it seemed like they were including selections just to try and fit in their own personal narrative, but the inclusion seemed forced. Other times they mentioned letters that I would have found more interesting; however, instead of including them the author went for yet another 3 line telegram. The book just didn't flow as well as I felt it could.

I wanted to read the letters- and I enjoyed them. I felt it had the variety I was looking for to glimpse the world at the time. The commentary and contribution from the authors I did not enjoy. I don't feel they added anything and often just got in the way.

Susan says

The photographs of original letters are disappointing, especially considering the quality that technology today can produce. I have anthologies that include original notes from Emily Dickinson and letters from hundreds of years before her where the artifacts have been so well captured it feels like you are holding the originals. This collection deserves that treatment. The organization was thoughtful but there is no index. If you want to find a letter from a specific person you will have to guess which category that person will be under and then thumb your way through. The thoughts added by the editors are interesting however, you know it is bad when you are tripping over poor wording in the first paragraph of a book. I hope that someday these letters and this moment in history will be anthologized with the honor they deserve.

Liz says

Heartbreaking. So many people all over the world were shocked and saddened by the senseless assassination of JFK. One Russian immigrant wrote to Jackie: "Why is allowed to carry guns? Why is permitted to sell weapons to ex-convicts? Where in the civilized World will you find such "freedom" to kill. It seems to me thousands of men are dying on the streets in U.S.A., victims of the criminals."

Why, indeed.

Megan says

3.5 Stars

I went into this book with high, high hopes. It was not what I originally went to the library to pick up. I had ventured to my down town library to procure Letters to Jackie as the online catalog said the book was "in." When I got to the library and went in search of the book I learned that it was no where to be found so I picked this one up instead as it appeared quite similar.

Now I haven't read Letters to Jackie yet, but I hope it is more engaging than this particular book. This book is not necessarily bad, the correspondence contained within it's pages are intriguing despite how edited they clearly are. My biggest issue is how few of the letters we actually get to read and how the book is mostly comprised of random facts and the authors musings about the letters that ARE included.

I did enjoy how the book was split up into sections in terms of who the letters were from. I think it is amazing how the grief over one individual brought the world together for one brief moment. I especially enjoyed the letters from the worlds children and teens. It was those letters that were usually the most heartfelt and profound.

I was disgusted by some of the letters that were sent to the former First Lady with a veneer of sympathy and underneath the writer is attempting to get the newly widowed woman to get something for them.

An interesting book if you want a quick overview, but not if you are looking to immerse yourself in the spirit of this great lady and the outpouring she received after her husbands death.

Becky Cain jech says

Takes you to the time

Well thought out and takes you to the time as is happened, what the country was going through together. How all generations grappled with the tremendous loss and how they needed to give support, how they felt the loss and how to give thanks for the time they had

Kristen Dutkiewicz says

I have watched and read several accounts now related to the JFK assassination, and several addressing the events of days following. This book highlighted letters addressed to Jackie after her loss of her husband, the nation's presidents, and several people's hero.

It was heartbreaking to read at times, particularly I found the letters from children so sincere and honest. However, parts seemed redundant. Overall a wonderful collection though, that proves JFK was so very well liked and admired.

Britni says

When was the last time you sat down and wrote and mailed a real letter? Try one million letters. Ever since I visited the American History Museum in DC last year I've had a small fascination with Jacqueline Kennedy. Maybe it's because she was beautiful or a style icon, or maybe because her husband was killed. One way or another after seeing her pictures and hearing a little bit of her story I jumped at the chance to review a new book called, Dear Mrs. Kennedy: The World Shares Its Grief Letters, November 1963, by Jay Mulvaney and Paul De Angelis.

The book is a compilation of a portion of the million letters that Mrs. Kennedy received in the few weeks after JFK's assassination. Letters from men, women, children, family members, political leaders, celebrities, and anyone else you could think of. Letters that tell the story of what happened in those months following his death.

Am I glad I read this book? Yes. Did it satisfy my Kennedy fascination, somewhat. Would I recommend this book to others? Yes. It was a quick, though slightly repetitive, read and gave me insight into one of the most compelling events and one of the most compelling families in American history.
