

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



High Society

Donald Spoto

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About the Book

In just seven years (from 1950 through 1956), Grace Kelly made eleven feature films. They established her as one of the screen's iconic beauties, and as a performer of rare intelligence and wit.

Donald Spoto, a personal friend of Kelly's in whom she confided, is in a unique position to tell the story of her transformation from convent girl from Philadelphia to last star of Hollywood's Golden Age to European princess. In this revelatory biography, Spoto draws on interviews with those who knew her - from James Stewart and Cary Grant to Fred Zimmerman - as well as a series of taped interviews with Kelly which have never before been published.

About the Author

Donald Spoto was born near New York City in 1941 and received his PhD degree from Fordham University in 1970. He is the author of 22 books, including internationally bestselling biographies of Alfred Hitchcock, Tennessee Williams, Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe, Ingrid Bergman, Audrey Hepburn and Alan Bates. He is married to the Danish school administrator and artist Ole Flemming Larsen. They live in a quiet village an hour's drive from Copenhagen.

Also by Donald Spoto

Spellbound by Beauty: Alfred Hitchcock and His Leading Ladies

Otherwise Engaged: The Life of Alan Bates

Joan: The Mysterious Life of a Heretic Who Became a Saint

Enchantment: The Life of Audrey Hepburn

In Silence: Why We Pray

Reluctant Saint: The Life of Francis of Assisi

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis: A Life

The Hidden Jesus: A New Life

Diana - The Last Year

Notorious: The Life of Ingrid Bergman

Rebel: The Life and Legend of James Dean

Dynasty: The History of the Royal House of Windsor

A Passion for Life: The Biography of Elizabeth Taylor

Marilyn Monroe: The Biography

Blue Angel: The Life of Marlene Dietrich

Laurence Olivier: A Life

Madcap: The Life of Preston Sturges

Lenya: A Life

Falling In Love Again: Marlene Dietrich - A Photo-Essay

The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams

The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock

Stanley Kramer: Film Maker

Camerado: Hollywood and the American Man

The Art of Alfred Hitchcock

High Society

Grace Kelly and Hollywood

Donald Spoto

HUTCHINSON
LONDON

*for my sisters-in-law
Lissi Andersen and Hanne Møller,
with great admiration and loving gratitude*

Acknowledgments

My major debt of gratitude is to Grace Kelly Grimaldi, Princess of Monaco, who granted interviews without which this book would not be possible.

Many of those who knew or collaborated with her are no longer with us, but I was able to discuss Grace with the following before or during research for several other books. I acknowledge, therefore, the late Jay Presson Allen, Peggy Ashcroft, Anne Baxter, Ingrid Bergman, Herbert Coleman, Joseph Cotten, Hume Cronyn, Cary Grant, Tom Helmore, Alfred Hitchcock, Evan Hunter, Stanley Kramer, Ernest Lehman, Simon Oakland, Gregory Peck, Peggy Robertson, James Stewart, Jessica Tandy, Samuel Taylor, Teresa Wright and Fred Zinnemann.

All of Grace's directors, along with almost everyone who acted with her, are deceased. I am especially grateful, therefore, for the reminiscences of those actors and friends of Grace still available to supplement my interviews—among them, John Ericson, Rita Gam, Edward Meeks and Jacqueline Monsigny.

Thanks to Gary Browning, assistant visitor services manager at the Museum of Television and Radio, Beverly Hills, I was able to see many of Grace's television appearances. Mark Gens and the staff of the Archive and Research Study Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, made additional kinescopes of her performances available to me.

As so often, I was welcomed and helped by the dedicated staff at the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of

Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills—in particular by Stacey Behlmer and Barbara Hall.

Tom Smith provided research assistance in England, and Jonathan Boone in the United States; I acknowledge their thoroughness and alacrity.

In 2007, the Forum Grimaldi, Monte-Carlo, mounted a tribute in dozens of rooms of its vast conference hall—a celebration of Grace’s life and career twenty-five years after her death. For the first time, Prince Albert and Princesses Caroline and Stéphanie made public some very important documents, letters and photos.

Claus Kjær and Stine Nielsen at the Danish Film Institute, Copenhagen, provided important assistance during my research.

My friend the actress Diane Baker first introduced me to the prolific French writer Jacqueline Monsigny and her husband, the actor Edward Meeks. At Grace’s request, Jacqueline wrote and Edward co-starred in Grace’s last film, *Rearranged*, which has remained unavailable to the public since its production not long before the death of the princess. Thanks to Jacqueline and Edward, I was able to see this remarkable movie several times and to treat it at length in this book. They were close friends of Grace for over twenty years, and my interviews with them have provided unique and valuable material.

Not for the first time, and surely not for the last, my brother-in-law John Møller devoted his time and considerable talents to several important tasks in preparing this book for publication. Once again, I salute his artistic and technical gifts.

In London, I am represented by Elizabeth Sheinkman at Curtis Brown Ltd. She and her assistant, Felicity Blunt, look after my interests with the utmost kindness and efficiency.

I am fortunate to be published again in the United Kingdom by my close friend and confidant, the estimable Paul Sidey at Hutchinson. He is a writer’s ideal editor—wise,

perceptive, of enormous good humor and ever encouraging. To his signal professional talents, Paul has enriched my life for three decades with the immeasurable gift of unalloyed friendship.

Also at Hutchinson, James Nightingale has provided cheerful and prompt daily assistance in a multitude of tasks. I am grateful for his consideration and kindly vigilance.

This book is dedicated to my sisters-in-law, Lissi Andersen and Hanne Møller, who have been as devoted to me as they have been enthusiastic followers of my career. They and their husbands, Søren Andersen and John Møller, welcomed me with open arms from my first day in Denmark, where I am blessed to share my life with Lissi and Hanne's brother, Ole Flemming Larsen. He watched Grace's movies with me, he listened patiently to portions of the manuscript, and he provided pointed suggestions for its improvement. Ole's artistic eye for detail and his amazing language proficiency are but a few of his many talents, and his commitment to me and to our life together means more than I can say. Grace, who always placed family first in her life, would have admired and loved Lissi, Hanne and Ole, as does . . .

D.S.
Sjælland, Denmark
January 2009

Introduction

During our last meeting, I asked Grace Kelly Grimaldi if she planned to write an autobiography or to authorize a writer to compose her life story. "I'd like to think I'm still too young for that!" she said with a laugh. Without any hint of a dark premonition, she then added, "Donald, you really ought to wait until twenty-five years after I'm gone, and then tell the whole story." I have honored her request for a delay: Grace left us in September 1982, and I started work on *High Society* early in 2007.

I spent many hours with this remarkable woman over several years, beginning with our first meeting during the afternoon of September 22, 1975; in a short time, she offered me a friendship that only deepened over the years. At our introduction, at her home in Paris, she was preparing to relocate from her apartment on the Avenue Foch to another residence nearby. There were packing boxes, and movers working with quiet efficiency, and my tape recording of that afternoon indicates that there were only three brief interruptions in our long conversation.

First, an elderly attendant, the only servant I saw that day, inquired what he might offer for refreshment, and Grace asked if I would like tea and biscuits. Then, a few moments after we began the interview, Grace apologized as she went over to a sliding glass door to the terrace, to admit her cat, eager to check out the stranger. Later, Grace's youngest child, ten-year-old Princess Stéphanie, emerged from her room to ask if her favorite yellow sweater had been packed.

My visit that day was an important part of the research for my first book, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, the first full-

length treatment by an American of the director's movies. Knowing that she gave interviews but rarely, I had not much hope when I wrote from my home in New York to her secretary at the palace in Monaco. Up to 1975, my résumé listed as my writing credentials only a few magazine articles and one essay in a book—hence I had little hope of being granted an interview by the princess, who was constantly besieged with requests. Two weeks after I sent a letter, however, I received a reply from her secretary, Paul Choisit, asking if I would like to meet with Her Serene Highness in Paris that September. You bet I would. I went to visit Grace shortly after spending two weeks with Alfred Hitchcock, while he was directing (as it turned out) his last film, *Family Plot*, that summer of 1975. I told him that I had an appointment to interview Grace. "That should be interesting," he said with a wry smile and his typical ambiguity.

Our first conversation that September afternoon was mostly about her three films for Alfred Hitchcock, which she had made between July 1953 and August 1954. Her memories were sharp, picturesque, amusing and full of telling anecdotes. She also told me about other directors, especially Fred Zinnemann and John Ford, mostly to compare their methods and manners with Hitchcock's. There was no doubt about her deep respect, affection and acute understanding of Alfred Hitchcock the director and the man. Later, she also spoke quite frankly to me about her life and about incidents for which she asked my confidence "as long as I'm around," as she said. I gave her my word.

At that first meeting, Grace impressed me with her total lack of affectation and of anything like a regal manner. She wore a simple navy-blue suit and, as I recall, very little jewelry. She put on no airs: she was funny and ironic, she had an extraordinary memory for detail, she told some delightfully risqué tales of Hollywood, she was realistic,

completely unstuffy and as interested in my life as I was in hers. I was instantly at ease. We sat on a comfortable sofa, and we sipped tea and munched delicious little cookies, on and off, all through the afternoon until dusk.

But there was one enormous surprise for me as I prepared to depart.

As we came to the end of the afternoon, Grace asked if anyone was going to write a foreword or introduction to my book. I replied that I was a completely unknown, first-time writer, and that I had given no thought to the matter—I had been lucky just to find a small independent publisher. “I am constantly asked to endorse products,” she continued, “and to comment on books or to say something about a movie. I cannot do that, for many reasons. However, in your case, I would make an exception. If you will send me your completed manuscript, would you like me to write a foreword to your book?”

In December, I sent her the final draft of *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, and on January 16, 1976, a diplomatic courier arrived at my New York apartment, bearing her foreword and a charming cover letter: “I am enclosing the foreword,” she wrote, “as well as the galley sheets that I very much enjoyed reading. It will certainly be a great book about Alfred Hitchcock.” The book was published in August that year, with Grace’s remarks right up front. Thirty-three years later, the book is still in print: Doubleday soon purchased it from the original publisher; foreign translations appeared; and Grace’s foreword still honors my debut as a writer. Her generosity was a significant addition and brought the book attention from some who may otherwise have ignored it. And yes, she said, of course I could exploit both her words and her name in promoting the book.

In the summer of 1976, Grace invited me to the palace in Monaco, where I presented her with the second copy of the published book; the first, of course, went to Hitchcock. It

was a torrid, humid day, and she returned from her country house especially for our reunion. As I was shown into the family quarters, Grace was standing in an orange chiffon outfit, trying, with difficulty, to fasten a bracelet. "Oh, Donald," she said, smiling and extending her wrist as soon as she saw me, "would you please help me with this?"

"What shall we have to drink?" she said afterwards, as we settled onto a settee facing open French doors to a terrace and trying to catch a breeze. My throat was as dry as sand after the long train journey from Paris and the taxi ride from the local station to the palace. The account of what happened, both funny and touching, is found in the pages that follow. That day, I also met Princess Caroline, who came in, fresh and alarmingly beautiful, and briefly joined us. Her mother was proud to show off her intelligent, poised daughter, then a university student in Paris. I was booked into Grace's schedule for an hour in the late morning, but she insisted that I remain for lunch.

When Grace died, I was asked by National Public Radio in the United States to compose and broadcast a tribute to her. It was one of the most difficult assignments of my life, before or since. I spoke briefly of our friendship and our many conversations about the great and small things of life.

The book you are holding is the story of a working life, from Grace's days as a model and television actress to her final film, made not long before her death. Although that last movie has never been released, it leaves no doubt that Grace was one of the foremost talents of her time, our time, any time. I am fortunate to be able to treat this unavailable movie in considerable detail here, as well as a wide selection of her television appearances, which have been, up to now, ignored by biographers.

With very few exceptions, Grace's story has not, I think, been generally well served by writers. Apart from an astonishing array of factual errors and omissions, there has

been an accumulation of imagined events and fantasies about all kinds of things—love affairs particularly, most of which turn out to be utterly without basis in fact. She was, as I have written here, certainly a healthy, beautiful young woman with normal desires—and most of all, a deep capacity to love and to be loved. As she told me, she “fell in love all the time” before she married Prince Rainier of Monaco. But falling in love did not always mean falling into bed. I have tried to correct the record on this and other more important issues, without fudging the truth—she would have hated that.

Grace’s achievements were singular in several ways—not least, the sheer volume of her work within a very short period. She worked for two days on a film during the summer of 1950, and then—from September 1951 to March 1956—she appeared in ten films in just four years and six months. But there was a one-year hiatus during this period, so it is more accurate to state that she made ten films in forty-two months. By any standard of assessment, that is a formidable record. In addition, she appeared in no fewer than thirty-six live television dramas and two Broadway plays from 1948 to 1954.

High Society: Grace Kelly and Hollywood is a life story within the context of her prodigious accomplishments, which—even before she assumed her duties as Princess of Monaco—comprised a career “precious beyond words for me,” as she confided. To exploit a cliché: Grace was far more than just a pretty face.

“The idea of my life as a fairy tale is itself a fairy tale.”

Grace Kelly Grimaldi,
Princess of Monaco,
to Donald Spoto

Part I: Fade-In

(1929-1951)

1

Off the Main Line

“I never really felt pretty, bright or socially adept.”

Grace

IN THE LATE 1920s, the Hahnemann Medical College, at the corner of Broad and Vine Streets in Philadelphia, was one of the largest private hospitals in the United States. Unusual luxuries characterized the private rooms: a telephone and radio were installed at every bedside; nurses could be summoned and addressed by call-buttons and two-way speakers; and high-speed elevators whisked visitors to the wards. Although Hahnemann accepted emergency cases from every socioeconomic class, it catered, unofficially but famously, to the demands of the rich from the counties of eastern Pennsylvania.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, November 12, 1929, John B. Kelly escorted his wife, Margaret Majer Kelly, to Hahnemann, where, after an unexceptional labor, she bore her third child and second daughter. On December 1, the Kellys took the baby to St. Bridget’s Roman Catholic Church, a three-minute, half-mile drive from their home in the upscale neighborhood of Philadelphia known as East Falls. The infant was baptized Grace Patricia, in memory of an aunt who had died young, but also (so Grace Kelly believed) “because I was Tuesday’s child”—who, according to Mother Goose, was “full of grace.”

On the banks of the Schuylkill River, East Falls has always been a quiet residential neighborhood, known for its easy commute to downtown Philadelphia. The most respected, established families—Protestants with “old money” like the Drexels, Biddles, Clarks, Cadwaladers and Wideners—lived across the river, in western suburbs along the so-called Main Line, in eighteen communities (among them, Overbrook, Merion, Wynnewood, Ardmore, Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Rosemont and Radnor). The river was very like a social dividing line.

But membership in Philadelphia’s social élite depended more on history than geography: one was “in society” only if a family could be traced back to colonial times, before the War of Independence. The class distinctions were so immutable that the Kellys knew they would never be accepted into high society, no matter the extent of their wealth. The Kellys were Irish, Roman Catholic and Democrats; Philadelphia society was English, Episcopalian and Republican. “We could have been members of the social register—the so-called ‘Four Hundred’—if we’d wanted to,” Grace Kelly’s mother said. “But we had other things to do.” If she really believed this, she was astonishingly naïve. Her husband knew otherwise; instead, he set out to “do well” in business, athletics and politics.

When Grace was born, the entire country was in the throes of the worst financial crisis in its history. At the end of October, the stock market was in almost total collapse, signaling an economic disaster that led to the Great Depression. Scores of banks failed overnight; companies past counting shut their doors; and many millions of Americans were suddenly homeless and jobless, pitchforked into abject poverty and facing a future without prospects. Every city, town and hamlet in the United States was thrown into despair, and newspapers reported an epidemic of suicides.

Some families, however, were untouched by the gruesome facts of national life, and Grace's was among them. Her father, John B. Kelly, had never speculated in the stock market, and his wealth—achieved in the construction trade during the boom time after the Great War—was held in cash and government bonds. His seventeen-room brick mansion at 3901 Henry Avenue was set amid lush, undulating lawns, and the property featured a tennis court and elaborate recreational equipment for active children. The house was mortgage-free, like Kelly's seaside vacation home in Ocean City, New Jersey. The family sailed through the Depression, enjoying a genteel, privileged life: the Kelly children attended private academies; there were household servants and workers to tend the grounds and gardens; and the children were outfitted with the finest new seasonal wardrobes.

Grace had two older siblings: Margaret ("Peggy"), born in September 1925; and John, Jr. ("Kell"), born in May 1927. The family was complete with the birth of Elizabeth Anne ("Lizanne") in June 1933. "I wasn't a strong child like my sisters and brother," Grace said years later, "and my family told me they thought I was practically born with a cold—I was always sniffing and sneezing, clearing my throat and fighting some kind of respiratory ailment." Her mother reserved the juices of the family roasts for fragile young Grace, spooning them into her mouth in a constant effort to improve the child's strength and stamina. "My other children were the strong ones, the extroverts, but Gracie was shy and retiring," her mother recalled. "She was also frail and sickly a good deal of the time." The girl filled the hours of her frequent confinements by making up stories and plays for her collection of dolls. "Grace could change her voice for each doll, giving it a different character. She loved attention but didn't cry if she didn't get it."

Thin and withdrawn, Grace preferred to read myths, fairy tales and books about dancers and dancing; indeed, her

favorite dolls were fashioned like tiny ballerinas, complete with pointe shoes and delicate tutus. She also loved to read poetry and tried her hand at her own verses:

I hate to see the sun go down
And squeeze itself into the ground,
Since some warm night it might get stuck
And in the morning not get up!

Grace was largely indifferent to physical activity: “I liked to swim but did my best to avoid other sports and games.” This attitude made her something of an outsider. Her father had been an Olympic athlete, her mother a champion swimmer and physical education teacher, and their children were strongly encouraged—indeed, expected—to excel at competitive sports. Grace’s preference for books and imaginative games did not go down well with her father, a man who had little interest in cultural or intellectual matters.

Born in 1889, John B. “Jack” Kelly was the youngest of ten children born to Irish immigrants. Quitting school in early adolescence, he worked in the family firm as a bricklayer while perfecting his skill at sculling (rowing on the river), and during army service in World War I, he became a champion boxer. Returning to civilian life, Jack rejoined his father’s company, Kelly for Brickwork, and the postwar building boom of the 1920s quickly made him a millionaire. He did not, however, achieve this on his own, as he often implied, nor was he a self-made American success story. “They’ve latched onto the bricklayer theme and won’t let go of this Horatio Alger idea,” said his brother George, who directly confronted Jack’s self-glorification. “What’s all this talk about you getting callused hands laying bricks? The only times I remember you having calluses were from long hours of scull practice on the Schuylkill River!”

Wealth freed Jack to spend those long hours rowing. After winning six national championships, he headed for the Henley Regatta in England, the most celebrated event in the sport of sculling. But his application for inclusion in 1920 was rejected at the last minute when the judges determined that his years of manual labor and muscular development as a bricklayer gave him an unfair advantage over “gentleman” athletes. The true reason for his dismissal, however, was that the English authorities did not want to risk giving a prize to an Irish-American Catholic. The consequential outcry was so loud that by 1937 the rules at Henley no longer excluded manual laborers, mechanics or artisans as unfit for the competition.

More determined than ever after this rejection, Kelly proceeded to the 1920 summer Olympics at Antwerp, Belgium, where he won a gold medal in the single scull and, half an hour later, a second gold medal in the double scull, in which he rowed with a cousin. His family later swore to the truth of the rumor that he mailed his racing cap to King George V with the message, “Greetings from a bricklayer.” Four years later, during the summer of 1924, Kelly and his cousin repeated their success at the Paris Olympics—an achievement that made “the Irish bricklayer” the first rower to win three Olympic gold medals. With that, he became one of the most famous athletes of his generation, his name included in the United States Olympic Hall of Fame. Later, he was appointed National Physical Fitness Director by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who regarded him as a good friend.

Before his Paris triumph, Kelly renounced bachelorhood (but not his avocation as a womanizer) when he married Margaret Majer on January 30, 1924, at St. Bridget’s Church. She was nine years his junior and as strikingly beautiful as he was darkly handsome. They had first met at a swim club, where she successfully competed; she was also one of Philadelphia’s most successful cover-girl models. Margaret,

who had attended Temple University and took a university degree in physical education, was the first woman to teach that field at the University of Pennsylvania and at Women's Medical College. She converted from Lutheranism to her fiancé's religion just before their wedding.

"I had a good stiff German background," Margaret said years later. "My parents believed in discipline and so do I—no tyranny or anything like that, but a certain firmness." Proper appearances, unflinching decorum, the importance of manners—these were almost religious observances for Margaret Majer Kelly. She trained her children to control themselves, to hide pain and disappointment, to suppress their emotions in public, to disguise effort and to strive for perfection without seeming to do so. Her tutoring was more successful with Grace than with the others.

Margaret's discipline was apparently unremitting: Kell nicknamed her "the Prussian general" for her heavy hand, and Grace recalled her mother's insistence that her daughters learn not only the fine points of competitive sports but also those of sewing, cooking, dressmaking and gardening. "My mother was the disciplinarian in our family," she said. "My father was very gentle, never the one to spank or scold. My mother did that. But when my father spoke—boy, you moved." Life among the Kellys was to be enjoyed by the constant development of new skills and by the quiet assumption of responsibilities, and Margaret's chief occupation became the training of her children. Jack, meanwhile, was involved in local politics, business, sports and a social (and amorous) life that excluded his family.

When Jack was home, famous athletes from all over the world frequently called at Henry Avenue. For the parents and for Peggy, Kell and Lizanne, these people were stimulating visitors; for Grace, they were tiresome and left her feeling more alienated than ever. "I never really felt pretty, bright or socially adept, and all that talk of sports, politics and business left me cold." People often mistook

Grace's shyness for an attitude of superiority and, later, of snobbery. The truth was that, in addition to her quite different interests and hobbies, she was exceedingly nearsighted: without her hated glasses, very little was clear and she could not recognize people. "She was so myopic she couldn't see ten feet in front of her" without glasses, recalled Howell Conant, who was later her favorite photographer.

Grace's estimation of herself was also formed by her father's favoritism, and this, as with any child, caused her some insecurity. "My older sister was my father's favorite," Grace reflected years later, "and then there was the boy, the only son. Then I came, and then I had a baby sister, and I was terribly jealous of her. I loved the idea of a baby but was never allowed to hold her. So I was always on my mother's knee, the clinging type. But I was pushed away [by my mother], and I resented my sister for years."

"Of the four children, Peggy was Jack's favorite," recalled Dorothea Sitley, a longtime family friend. "Grace was the introvert, the quiet, serene one, and she felt left out. It was always Peggy and her father together." Jack admitted his preference for his oldest daughter: "I thought it would be Peggy whose name would be up in lights one day. Anything that Grace could do, Peggy could always do better."

"According to him, Peggy was destined to be the star of the family," recalled Grace's close friend and publicist, Rupert Allan (later also the Monégasque consul general in Los Angeles). "He never paid much attention to Grace—he accepted her, but he never understood her. But she adored him and always sought his approval." Jack Kelly was "a very nice man," recalled Grace's friend Judith Balaban Kanter Quine, "but he was a man without much sensitivity."

As much as she must have been aware of her father's preference for Peggy, Grace longed for her older sister's approval as much as her father's. "I used to help my sister sell flowers to passers-by to raise money for my mother's

pet charity, Women's Medical College and Hospital of Pennsylvania. Naturally, most of our customers were the neighbors. Little did they know that some of the flowers came from their own gardens. I used to be sent by my big sister Peggy to raid the nearby gardens at night, and quite unashamedly we sold these same flowers back to their owners next morning."

Just as she tried to befriend her sister, "Grace admired her father," according to her close friend, actress Rita Gam. "But she thought he really never appreciated her. He always preferred Peggy and never approved of Grace's career—and her mother was a very tough lady, rather critical and not terribly warm. Both her parents said they were surprised and puzzled by Grace's later success. When she talked about this, there was a certain wistfulness, but she was an extremely loyal person and very protective of her family." What might be called Grace's marginal status in a family of hardy, rah-rah competitors evoked a touching desire for demonstrative affection: "As a child," recalled her sister Lizanne, "she loved to be held and cuddled and kissed." This longing for physical tokens of affection increased with the years.

Grace and her father remained virtual strangers to each other until his death in 1960. She never addressed the topic directly, but she said that her father liked to be with rough, self-confident children who could tumble on a playing field and bounce right back up. The implication was clear: that was not a description of Grace at any age, and she felt outside the orbit of his approval. Judy Quine agreed: "Jack Kelly didn't cozy up to Grace. He understood business, politics and sports. He knew what these things were about, but he never 'got it' about Grace. Toward the end of his life, he accepted her. He saw her impact on the world and he showed her some respect. That's what they shared at the end of his life—deep respect."

It was perhaps inevitable, then, that a senior family servant named Godfrey Ford became something of a father figure. Addressed as “Fordie,” he was the Kelly chauffeur and factotum, evoking enormous affection from all the youngsters—and especially from Grace. “He kept their cars polished,” recalled the Kellys’ childhood friend, Elaine Cruice Beyer. “He could serve, put on a big party, supervise bartenders and buffets and keep the gardens in beautiful condition.” Grace’s respect and fondness for the African-American Fordie instilled in her a lifelong hatred of racism.

On Thursdays, when the children’s nanny was off-duty, Fordie was entrusted with the task of putting the children to bed. “Gracie asked my opinions about this and that,” he recalled years later. “I’d tell her what I thought, and she’d usually follow my advice.” Later, he gave her driving lessons in front of the house and in the long driveway, “but she was never good at parking.”

Just before Grace marked her sixth birthday, in November 1935, she began her education, joining Peggy at the Ravenhill Academy, a convent school for girls less than a half-mile away on School House Lane. Built in the nineteenth century as a family home by the millionaire William Weightman, Ravenhill is a grand High Victorian Gothic mansion with dark paneling, ornate fireplaces, dramatic staircases and formal parlors. Weightman’s daughter later donated the vast residence to the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Philadelphia, and when Dennis Dougherty was appointed archbishop in 1918, one of his first acts was to invite the Religious of the Assumption—an order of teaching nuns with whom he had worked as a bishop in the Philippines—to come from Manila and establish a school for girls at Ravenhill, which they did in 1919. Admission was strictly controlled, and at its peak there were but fifty students in the entire first through twelfth grades.

“They were remarkable women,” Grace told me, “and I was enormously fond of them. They were strict about our studies but also very, very kind. Their long black habits were only the formal garb of an exceptional group of teachers, and however rigorous their religious life, the nuns understood young girls and devoted themselves completely to our educational and spiritual welfare.” The nuns insisted, among other elements of proper decorum, that the girls wear white gloves to and from school—a convention already familiar to Grace from her mother’s home training.

At Ravenhill, Grace’s teachers encouraged her wide reading, her drawing, her hobby of learning to arrange flowers for classroom and chapel, and her custom of filling a notebook with simple lyrics:

Little flower, you’re the lucky one—
you soak in all the lovely sun,
you stand and watch it all go by
and never once do bat an eye
while others have to fight and strain
against the world and its every pain
of living.

But you too must have wars to fight
the cold bleak darkness of every night,
of a bigger vine that seeks to grow
and is able to stand the rain and snow
and yet you never let it show
on your pretty face.

In 1943, Grace began four years of high school at the nearby nonsectarian Stevens School. At that time, it was unusual for a Catholic family to send a child to a non-Catholic school, especially after the years at Ravenhill. But the Kellys were not particularly devout. “Aside from going to Mass on Sundays and saying our prayers before going to

bed, we didn't do anything else," Lizanne recalled. "We didn't eat meat on Friday, but even then Mother wasn't too demanding. She said, 'If you happen to be visiting someone and it's Friday and they serve meat, eat it. I don't want them feeling uncomfortable because of you.'" To Margaret's credit, this was good religious common sense—and it was not the common practice of the day among American Catholics.

"My dad was not a very great religious person," Kell said years later. "He attended church more for the children, my sisters and myself, rather than for great sincerity in his beliefs. My mother, of course, was not a Catholic until she married my father. She went through the routine and did the basic minimum, but she is not an active Catholic today [1976]. People who don't know her are inclined to think she is [devout]. But she is not upset over my separation from the Catholic religious point of view—except that it makes her look like something less than a perfect mother." As for Grace, thanks to both her family and the commonsensical nuns at Ravenhill, she never had the neurotic, haunted sense of guilt that often afflicts the scrupulous. However, throughout her life she took her faith seriously—even more so as demands and disappointments crowded in.

At fourteen, she had nearly reached her full adult height of five feet, six inches; blue-eyed, lithe and poised, with blonde hair turning light brown, she had mostly outgrown her childhood respiratory ailments, but they had left her with a flat, nasal tone it would take years to counter.

As local hospitals were crowded with World War II casualties, volunteers appeared from every station in life, and many schoolgirls devoted several hours each week to helping overworked nurses and aides. Shy and sensitive, Grace was nevertheless coolly efficient when dispatching indelicate chores in the wards. In addition, she quickly understood how much her presence meant to the young