

ON THE FLY: PLUME

# Have Books, Will Travel

MEG CABOT'S SUMMER READING RECS

**M**eg Cabot, author of more than 80 books and several *New York Times* bestsellers, says some of her best editing occurs in a floating deck chair in the pool at her Key West home. Her cat, Allie Cat, often sits on her, making typing “awkward,” but isn’t distracting enough to prevent Cabot from finishing her most recent books, *The Boy is Back* (William Morrow, 2016) and the upcoming *Royal Crush* (Macmillan, 2017). The avid traveler, perhaps best known for her *Princess Diaries* series, encourages all Floridians to stay overnight in the Dry Tortugas—and either pitch a tent or moor a boat, because the island has no sleeping accommodations. “You can see the Milky Way as well as fluorescent shrimp,” she says.

Here are Cabot’s reading recommendations for a starry night or a summer vacation, which she always hopes will be somewhere in Florida: “My very own bungalow at Little Palm Island, for instance,” she says.



## HEY MEG, WHAT BOOK SHOULD ALL FLORIDIANS READ?

“Bright Orange for the Shroud by John D. MacDonald (*Random House*, 1965). Like an ice-cold margarita, his novels featuring Fort Lauderdale private eye Travis McGee never go out of style.”

### **The Dutch Girl**

by Donna Thorland  
“I never thought the American Revolution could be sexy! This is historical fiction at its finest.”

(NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY, 2016)

### **Time Travel**

by James Gleick  
“A nonfiction exploration of our cultural obsession with time and time travel by the best-selling author of *Chaos*. I’ll be making time for this.”

(PANTHEON BOOKS, 2016)

### **Well, That Was Awkward**

by Rachel Vail  
“She writes awkward but achingly sweet teen romance better than any author I know.”

(VIKING, 2017)

### **The Fifth Season**

by N.K. Jemisin  
“Winner of the 2016 Hugo Award for Best Novel and raves from *The New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Washington Post* and NPR. I think this book about the world ending will live up to the hype.”

(ORBIT, 2015)

### **Alex and Eliza**

by Melissa de la Cruz  
“Can’t wait to read about the romance between young Alexander Hamilton and Elizabeth Schuyler that the musical *Hamilton* made famous.”

(G.P. PUTNAM’S SONS, 2017)

### **The Leaf Reader**

by Emily Arsenault  
“A teen’s hobby of reading her friends’ tea leaves seems harmless ... until it leads to romance, then murder. Vacation fun!”

(SOHO TEEN, 2017)

### **The Trespasser**

by Tana French  
“You don’t have to have read any of the previous books in French’s excellent Dublin Murder Squad series to enjoy this one. But afterwards, you’ll want to.”

(VIKING, 2016)



# ON THE FLY° PLUME

SUMMER READING SPECIAL

By Christina Cush

# Irish Eyes and BIG BLACK SUNNIES

SUMMER IS THE PERFECT TIME FOR LANGUISHING IN THE SHADE OR AC WITH A HOT READ, LIKE **JACKIE'S GIRL: MY LIFE WITH THE KENNEDY FAMILY**, THIS SEASON'S HIGHLY ANTICIPATED MEMOIR BY **KATHY MCKEON** (A NAPLES RESIDENT). AN EXCLUSIVE BOOK EXCERPT AND INTERVIEW WITH THE FIRST-TIME AUTHOR ON HER PALM BEACH DAYS WITH MRS. KENNEDY FOLLOW.

**T**he frozen half-smile the outside world saw in formal portraits and scores of magazine photographs of Jacqueline Kennedy never hinted at the girlish sense of humor I sometimes glimpsed in the privacy of her own world. Like my squeaky shoes, the unique circumstances of her life conspired to create some great slapstick comedy at times.

Seeing Madam's delight in those ridiculous moments made me feel a kinship I had never expected to, as if I had slipped inside a bubble that had a secret bubble within that no one on the outside could see. More and more, it was starting to feel not so much that I had taken Provi's place there but that I was finding my own. It was during those silly, spontaneous moments with the family that I felt most myself.

Once on a winter break in Palm Beach, Madam and her sister, Lee, were basking by the pool one afternoon while John, Caroline, and their cousins Anthony and Tina played in the water. The boys would have been maybe five or six then, and the girls a few years older. The Radziwill governess, Bridget, and I were getting ready for a rare night off in town. When

I first got to New York, I had spotted an ad in the paper for cosmetology school. I had always loved styling my friends' hair back home and experimenting with the latest fads, like using beer as setting lotion. Seeing that ad got me excited by the thought that I could maybe learn the trade by taking classes in the evenings and on my day off, and I immediately enrolled. I

**The elaborate hairdo I had constructed was now plastered down over Bridget's face.** It looked like she was being smothered by a mad otter.

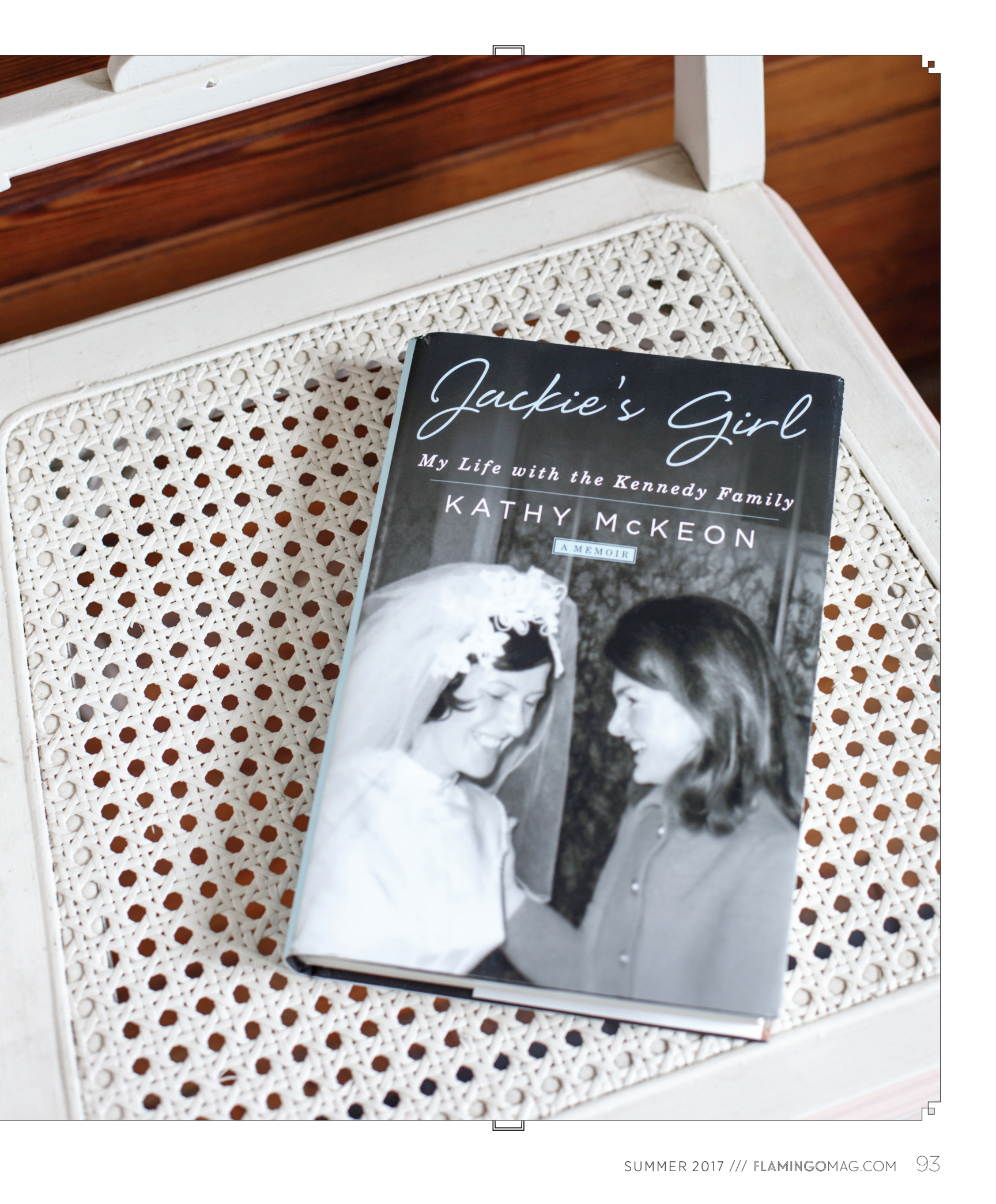
only made it to a couple of sessions before my overprotective Aunt Rose found out and put a stop to it, saying it was far too dangerous for a young woman to be riding the subways alone at night. I still enjoyed playing beauty parlor with willing friends and coworkers, though, and I had spent a few hours that afternoon in Florida setting, teasing, and styling Bridget's hair into a half-up, half-down beehive with a cute little flip at the ends.

We came out to the pool to show off the final result. Madam looked up from the paper she was reading to rave over the hairdo. Bridget spotted Anthony running along the side of the pool and went to intercept him and make him slow down, but she was standing too close to the edge and he was moving too fast, and she ended up getting accidentally pushed in.

"She can't swim!" Anthony yelled, even as a Secret Service agent appeared like Superman out of thin blue air and dived in—dark suit, shoes, tie, sunglasses, gun, and all—to pull out the flailing governess.

The elaborate hairdo I had constructed was now plastered down over Bridget's face. It looked like she was being smothered by a mad otter. Bridget was unharmed but wailing and sputtering Gaelic curses. On her chaise longue, Madam was hiding her face behind her newspaper, but I could see the paper shaking like mad and could tell she was struggling mightily not to laugh outloud. Such a perfect lady, she could even carry off a soundless guffaw.

Excerpted with permission from *Jackie's Girl: My Life with the Kennedy Family* by Kathy McKeon (Gallery Books, 2017)



*Jackie's Girl*

*My Life with the Kennedy Family*

KATHY MCKEON

A MEMOIR



# ON THE FLY: PLUME

**K**athy McKeon emigrated from Ireland to New York in 1964 at the age of 19 to work as a nanny. She ended up working for one of the most famous American families at the time, the Kennedys, soon after President Kennedy's assassination. The fourth of eight children, McKeon has a genuine warmth and charm that then-young John and Caroline Kennedy adored, so she was hired as Jackie Kennedy's assistant and occasional nanny from 1964 to 1976. She remains close with the extended Kennedy family and is now a tennis-playing, kayak-paddling, bike-riding mother of three and grandmother of six (ranging in age from 18 months to 11 years old) who splits her time between Naples and New York. Below, McKeon gives *Flamingo* the exclusive scoop on traveling to Florida with one of the most famous women in the world and what it was like to have America's Camelot as her one-time home.

**PART OF YOUR JOB FOR MRS. KENNEDY WAS TO TRAVEL AROUND THE GLOBE WITH HER, SKIING IN COLORADO, HORSE-BACK RIDING IN NEW JERSEY AND LONG ISLAND, SWIMMING AND WATERSKIING AT THE KENNEDY COMPOUND IN HYANISSPORT. BUT DID MRS. KENNEDY ALSO INTRODUCE YOU TO FLORIDA?**

**KM:** Yes, that's right. We went a couple times. To Palm Beach, after Christmas break one year, and another time in the spring. The first time, we stayed at Joseph P. Kennedy's house. It had a swimming pool, and I know the kids were in the pool a

lot or down at the ocean. The second time, Mrs. Kennedy and Lee Radziwill, her sister, rented a villa in Palm Beach, and we stayed there with all the kids while the rest of the Kennedys were at the big house. They didn't have enough room there for all of us. The rental was very large, it was all on one floor, like a ranch. There was a wonderful swimming pool in middle of a garden lawn—that's where Anthony Radziwill pushed the governess into the pool! (Read the *Jackie's Girl* excerpt on page 92 for the full story.)

**HOW DID FLORIDA MAKE AN IMPRESSION ON YOU AS A YOUNG IRISH LASSIE?**

**KM:** I went shopping for Mrs. Kennedy at all the stores on Worth Avenue. The buildings and sidewalks were so clean and beautiful, and lots of trees. There were beautiful clothes in the windows, like I'd never seen, sundresses and stuff, with a round neck and no sleeve, and a little bow over the split on the sides at the bottom. You know those dresses? They were a name.

**DO YOU MEAN LILLY PULTIZER?**

**KM:** Yes. She had a couple of them over at the Cape. There's a photo

*Above:* The author on her wedding day with Mrs. Kennedy

of her in a red plaid dress—she got that dress in Florida. Caroline wore the same dresses going to church in the summer. I loved them.

**HOW DID JACKIE SPEND HER TIME IN PALM BEACH?**

**KM:** Jackie was a big reader, but not all the time. In the Cape, she went waterskiing, swimming, jogging, then she would go read. She loved magazines! She did those things in Florida, too. There was a ski boat. Most all of the Kennedys did that. I didn't wear sunscreen then, that's why I had so many sun blisters on my back. I put it on the kids, though.

**WHEN YOU WERE VISITING THIS LAND OF PALM TREES, FANCY SHOPS, BRIGHT DRESSES AND BEAUTIFUL BEACHES, DID YOU EVER THINK YOU'D LIVE HERE?**

**KM:** I never thought it. I never dreamt I would have a home here. We did bring our kids to Disney two times, and we did look at homes, not in Naples, but near Disney. But we said, "No, no, too expensive." I had no clue that we would end up in Florida. My husband Seamus had a business in New York. When I got a house in Florida, I'd go to Naples for two weeks, and then come back. I couldn't stay away long because of the kids. Now it's more like six months here, six months in New York. But I love Florida, it's beautiful here.

**DID JACKIE, JOHN OR CAROLINE KENNEDY EVER VISIT YOUR NAPLES HOME?**

**KM:** No, we bought it in 1996, after Jackie died, and the same year Michael Kennedy died in a skiing accident. John said, "Congratulations, I would love to come visit you someday." We told him to come any time.

**ARE YOU TYPICAL FLORIDIANS NOW?**

**KM:** Well, we spend our time playing tennis two days a week. We walk on the Isle of Capri or take our bikes out there or go kayaking. This year our boat's not going so well.



**SO YOU EMBRACE THE FLORIDA LIFESTYLE?**

KM: I guess so! We like to have friends over and go to their houses to dinner. There are some great places to eat on Marco Island like DaVinci's. On Isle of Capri there's a new place called Island Gypsi that we went to three times already. We also like Pelican Bend.

**DO FLORIDIANS UNDERSTAND YOUR IRISH BROGUE?**

KM: Southerners ask, "Is that English, Scottish, Irish?" They are a little confused. But, no problem. They love it.

**DO YOUR FRIENDS KNOW ABOUT YOUR HISTORY WITH THE KENNEDYS?**

KM: We went out to lunch recently, the 20 of us in my tennis group. And we had to tell a story that no one ever heard of about ourselves. And they went around the table and said such impressive things about their education and careers and accomplishments. I thought, shoot, how am I going to compete with that? When it was my turn I just said, I wrote a book about coming to the U.S. in 1964, and it's called *Jackie's Girl*. You can buy it and read about me. And they were frozen, like, is this a joke? They couldn't believe that I did this. Then they all bought it on Amazon, and I said, "Don't worry, I'll autograph it for ya's."

**WHAT DO YOU THINK JACKIE KENNEDY WOULD THINK OF YOUR BOOK?**

KM: Jackie would say, "You did a wonderful job, Kath. I'm very proud of you. If you wrote one book in your life, you did something wonderful." She is up there looking down at me. I wish she was around to see it. I'd love for John to be here to read it. I learned a lot and had a good life with them. I can't say a bad word about them. Every one of them was very nice to me. ☺

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