



**THE SOCIAL CONTRACT PODCAST:  
SEASON 2 EPISODE 6  
GEORGIE & GIGI  
MEET  
JOHN F. KENNEDY**

**TAVIA:**

Hello everyone! You're listening to Season 2 of the award-winning podcast The Social Contract. I'm Tavia.

**GEORGE:**

I'm George.

**CLEO:**

I'm CLEO.

**MAYA:**

And I'm Maya. Welcome to this episode of the Social Contract—the new way to Saturday!

**TAVIA:**

*It is* the new way to Saturday, Maya! This season of The Social Contract podcast follows ten-year-old BFFs Georgie and GiGi as they travel through time on a magical skateboard, meeting U.S. presidents throughout history.

When we last saw the two G's, they were in the White House with President Franklin D. Roosevelt—and his Scottish terrier, Fala. It was December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and Roosevelt was preparing his famous “Day of Infamy” speech that he would give before Congress.

Immediately after the speech, Congress declared war on Japan, and the United States entered World War II.

In this episode, Georgie and Gigi meet a World War II hero who later became our 35<sup>th</sup> president, John F. Kennedy.

But first, I wanted to remind our listeners that George and CLEO's appearance on *The Chronicles of Podcast* is now online. I highly recommend checking out their in-depth – and highly entertaining – conversation with our friends from across the pond, Tom and Jamie, who host the UK-based *Chronicles* podcast.

And I'm thrilled that the book upon which this podcast is based, *Presidential Conversations for Kids*—as well as the “grown-up” edition, simply called *Presidential Conversations*—is now available in the UK! We like to think of it as our very own “Special Relationship,” which is of course a reference to the warm and historically important relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Now, onto one of our most beloved presidents, John F. Kennedy. Also known as JFK, President Kennedy only served from 1961 to 1963. But his impact on our nation's history is considerable.



The Kennedys were, and remain, a political family. As a young man, JFK returned home to Massachusetts after his heroic service in World War II and became a congressman, then a senator, and was elected president in 1960. JFK, his wife Jackie, and their two children, Carolyn and John-John, brought a sense of youth, glamour, and even fun to the White House. Fun fact: First Lady Jackie Kennedy is the one who began the tradition of selecting a theme for the White House Christmas tree.

They were the *first* First Family to be seen regularly on television. And now, kids, thanks to YouTube, you too can see clips of them and witness President Kennedy's intelligence, wit, and all-around coolness.

Even though the Kennedys family experienced its own challenges and complications, the Kennedy White House was nicknamed "Camelot"—a reference to King Arthur's fabled court, which really just means an era marked by idealism and happiness. Indeed, the Kennedy administration was filled with young, optimistic people who believed in our democracy.

John Kennedy was the youngest person to be elected president. He was 43. Sadly, his presidency lasted a little more than 1,000 days because he was assassinated in November 1963.

While he had so much left to accomplish, he inspired, and inspires to this day, generations of Americans.

On that note, I'd like to hand it over to George.

**GEORGE:**

Thank you, Tavia, for that beautiful introduction. I wanted to remind you, and all our young listeners, about something very special.

In our nation's capital, at Arlington National Cemetery, is where President Kennedy—along with so many American heroes—is buried.

At his gravesite, there is an actual flame that never goes out—literally an *eternal flame*—which gives me eternal confidence about our country.

Like that flame, I hope our reverence for Kennedy's legacy is never extinguished—as we remember that American greatness is always within reach.

**TAVIA:**

Well said, George.

Now, over to Stephen and the continuing adventures of Georgie and GiGi.

**STEPHEN:**

It was completely dark except for color bars illuminating the television screen.

"Wait, did that just happen?" asked Georgie.

“Yah,” GiGi nodded. “Unless we both had the *exact* same dream at the *exact* same time, which isn’t likely. Look!”

GiGi pointed to the red longboard, which was now on the floor directly in front of the TV. They stood up from the couch and slowly approached the magic skateboard. As they got closer, the color bars started getting wavy, as a familiar voice was transmitted through the television’s speakers.

*And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.*

Georgie and GiGi looked at each other.

“I think we’re about to meet JFK,” Georgie said. “Marie told me he was ‘the first television president.’ TV was still new back then, and he aced it.”

As if on cue, Georgie and GiGi reached down and touched the skateboard. Suddenly, the screen turned bright blue. Then, it spoke to them. “Don’t be afraid, children. Come on, dive in. The water is fine.”

The screen then enveloped them like an ocean wave. And, suddenly, they were atop the longboard, skidding to a stop on a flagstone path on White House grounds.

“Whooh, take it easy there,” a man’s voice said in a thick New England accent. And there was President John F. Kennedy, with his children, John-John, age two, and Caroline, age five.

“There’s no skateboarding at the White House,” the 35<sup>th</sup> president told them with a wink.

“Finally!” exclaimed George. “A president who knows what a skateboard is!”

President Kennedy and his children were feeding carrots and apples to a pony right on the White House lawn.

“Oh, he’s adorable!” said Gigi, petting the pony. “What’s his name?”

“Macaroni!” little Caroline cried out. “He’s mine!”

Kennedy invited the two G’s to sit with him on the terrace, as the Kennedy children were led

inside by their nanny. Georgie and GiGi noticed the president walking stiffly and holding onto his back, as if in pain.

“I’m always impressed by the vigor (he pronounced it *viguh*) of American young people,” JFK said, smiling. “I may be the youngest person ever elected president, but I certainly don’t feel it sometimes.”

“Why not?” asked GiGi.

“Oh, just a war injury.” Kennedy recounted that during World War II in the South Pacific, he had captained an 80-foot torpedo boat called PT-109. A Japanese destroyer sliced through it, splitting the boat in two. Kennedy and his surviving crew members held onto the remains of the boat for 11 hours, hoping to be rescued.

When no one came to help, he decided that they had to swim to the nearest island, which was three miles away. It took them *four hours*.

After being stranded on the island for many days, Kennedy had the idea to scratch out a message on a coconut: “11 ALIVE...NEED SMALL BOAT...KENNEDY.” He sent the coconut off with island natives, and JFK and his men were rescued soon after. He returned home a war hero, then became a congressman and eventually a senator from Massachusetts. And then, he became president.

“And you wrote the famous book *Profiles in Courage*! I read it!” exclaimed Georgie. “Well, the Young Readers Edition. I even got an A on my book report.”

“And you started the Peace Corps!” added GiGi. Then, as if reciting something she’d memorized: “The Peace Corps is a program of the United States that trains and deploys volunteers—nurses, teachers, construction workers—to help people all around the world.”

Kennedy marveled at his young visitors, “You children certainly are well-informed.”

“Yah, we have a *really good* history teacher,” GiGi said. “She rules,” added George.

“May I run something by you?” JFK asked as he flipped through a stack of papers. “I’m working on a speech I’m set to give at the American University in a few hours. And I find young people’s minds to be the most open, and young people themselves to be most direct in their feedback.”

“Cool beans!” said Georgie.

“What is your speech about?” asked GiGi.

“It’s about...peace. I want to be known as the president who made peace with our arch enemy the Soviet Union. While I will keep our United States military strong, I will do everything in my power to avoid war. Here’s the passage I want to run by you.”

*In the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future. And we are all mortal.*  
The president looked up to see his young audience’s reaction. Georgie and GiGi nodded and smiled. JFK continued:

*The United States, as the world knows, will never start a war. We do not want a war. We do not now expect a war. This generation of Americans has already had enough—more than enough—of war and hate and oppression.*

*We shall be prepared if others wish it. We shall be alert to try to stop it. But we shall also do our part to build a world of peace where the weak are safe and the strong are just.*

After a moment, the kids started applauding. This made the president chuckle. They spent the rest of the afternoon talking and laughing.

Neither Georgie nor GiGi had the heart to tell their newfound friend about the fate he would meet just a few months later on a November day in Dallas.

**TAVIA:**

Ah, there’s so much I love about the story at the heart of this episode. JFK is the first president we’ve encountered who actually knows what a skateboard is! (As we’ll find out in a later episode, President Obama actually skateboarded himself as a kid.) And I appreciate Georgie and GiGi’s shoutout to their history teacher.

Now, Maya has a trivia question for us.

**MAYA:**

Okay, John F. Kennedy was especially close to one of his younger brothers, Robert F. Kennedy—everybody called him “Bobby.” They were so close that JFK appointed him to his cabinet. It was the only time a president had a family member in his cabinet.

What position did Bobby Kennedy have in JFK's administration?

- a) attorney general
- b) secretary of state, or
- c) vice-president

As we'll find out in our next episode, Lyndon Johnson was JFK's vice president. So "c" is definitely out.

The correct answer is "a": Robert F. Kennedy served as attorney general in his brother's administration.

**TAVIA:**

Good one, Maya!

I have one too: In 1962, President Kennedy said America could accomplish something truly *out of this world* by 1970. Was it:

- a) Discover life on Mars
- b) Send a man to the moon, or
- c) Have his kids, Caroline and John-John, take a trip on a flying saucer.

The correct answer is "b," send a man to the moon! JFK's goal was achieved on July 20, 1969, when Apollo 11 commander Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon's surface and said: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

And now to CLEO's Corner, where she'll unveil the Word Art that inspired this episode. Remember, kids, you can find illustrated transcripts for all our episodes at [myTSCpodcast.com](http://myTSCpodcast.com).

**CLEO:**

The Word Art that inspired this episode is COURAGE.



JFK's book *Profiles in Courage* was published in 1955 when Kennedy was a United States Senator from Massachusetts. The book shares true stories about eight American heroes throughout history.

As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of President Kennedy's assassination this November, he is now considered an American hero.



**TAVIA:**

I love that you chose COURAGE for JFK. It reminds me of a quote of his: “The stories of past courage...can teach, they can offer hope, they can provide inspiration.” You certainly inspire us, CLEO.

That brings us to the conclusion of our sixth episode.

We welcome you to follow The Social Contract wherever you find your favorite podcasts. Remember, new episodes drop on the last Saturday of the month—it's the new way to Saturday.

We hope you'll catch us next on July 29, when Georgie and GiGi travel to Texas to meet President Lyndon Baines Johnson and his wife Lady Bird, where they'll catch a ride aboard a magical train called "The Lady Bird Special."

In the meantime, check out our website at myTSCpodcast dot com, and remember to catch George and CLEO's *Chronicles of Podcast* episode; we'll stick a link in the show notes.

The Social Contract podcast is created by George S. Corey and CLEO. Produced and hosted by Tavia Gilbert. Music courtesy of liCten audio. Mix and master by Kayla Elrod. Additional dialogue editing by Cathleen Conte. Additional editing and production coordinator for Talkbox Bryan Wilson. Social manager Suzette Burton. Production supervisor Tatiana St. Phard.

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On behalf of George, CLEO, Maya, Stephen, and me, Tavia, thank you for listening!