

*Becoming Mrs. Lewis*  
**BOOK CLUB KIT**



## PRAISE FOR BECOMING MRS. LEWIS:

"Patti Callahan Henry breathes wondrous fresh life into one of the greatest literary love stories of all time . . . The result is a deeply moving story about love and loss that is transformative and magical." —**Pam Jenoff, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Orphan's Tale***

"I was swept along, filled with hope, and entirely beguiled, not only by the life lived behind the veil of C. S. Lewis's books but also by the woman who won his heart. A literary treasure from first page to last."

—**Lisa Wingate, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Before We Were Yours***

"Profoundly evocative, revealing an intimate view of a woman whose love and story had never been fully told . . . until now . . . *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* is a tour de force and the must-read of the season!" —**Mary Alice Monroe, *New York Times* bestselling author**

"Patti Callahan has written my favorite book of the year . . . It is both a meditation on marriage and a whopping grand adventure. Touching, tender, and triumphant, this is a love story for the ages." —**Ariel Lawhon, author of *I Was Anastasia***

"Patti Callahan somehow inhabits Davidman, taking her readers inside the writer's hungry mind and heart. We keenly feel Davidman's struggle to become her own person at a time (the 1950s) when women had few options . . . An astonishing work of biographical fiction."

—**Lynn Cullen, bestselling author of *Mrs. Poe***

"Callahan keenly demystifies poet Joy Davidman's story and in the telling, shows us the power of a greater love. I was wonderstruck by this novel." —**Sarah McCoy, *New York Times* and international bestselling author**

"This book is a work of art. Intelligent. Witty and charming. I'm left as spellbound as the first time I met Aslan . . . with these characters now just as dear." —**Kristy Cambron, author of *The Ringmaster's Wife* and the *Lost Castle* series**

"Callahan crafts a masterpiece that details the friendship and ultimate romance between the real Davidman (1915–60) and Lewis (1898–1963). Readers may be familiar with Lewis's 'Narnia' books, but this historical novel of a love based on friendship and faith will not disappoint... Fans of Karen White and Mary Alice Monroe will enjoy this book. Callahan's writing is riveting and her characters spring to life to create a magical and literary experience that won't be soon forgotten."

—***Library Journal*, starred review**

"Callahan vividly enters the life of a woman searching for both God and romantic love in this pleasing historical novel about writer and poet Joy Davidman... Making full use of historical documentation, Callahan has created an incredible portrait of a complex woman."

—***Publishers Weekly*, starred review**

"Behind every great man is a great woman, as the saying goes, and for acclaimed author C.S. Lewis, that woman was writer Joy Davidman. Callahan brings to life the friendship turned romance between the two.... Readers familiar with the life and work of C.S. Lewis will relish learning about the woman who inspired some of his most famous books. Others will find the slow burn of the romance between the two mesmerizing. All fans of women's fiction, particularly works with religious themes, will appreciate reading about this vibrant and intelligent woman." —***Booklist*, review**

"Patti Callahan took a character on the periphery, one who has historically taken a back seat to her male counterpart, and given her a fierce, passionate voice. For those fans of Lewis curious about the woman who inspired *A Grief Observed* this book offers a convincing, fascinating glimpse into the private lives of two very remarkable individuals." —***New York Journal of Books***



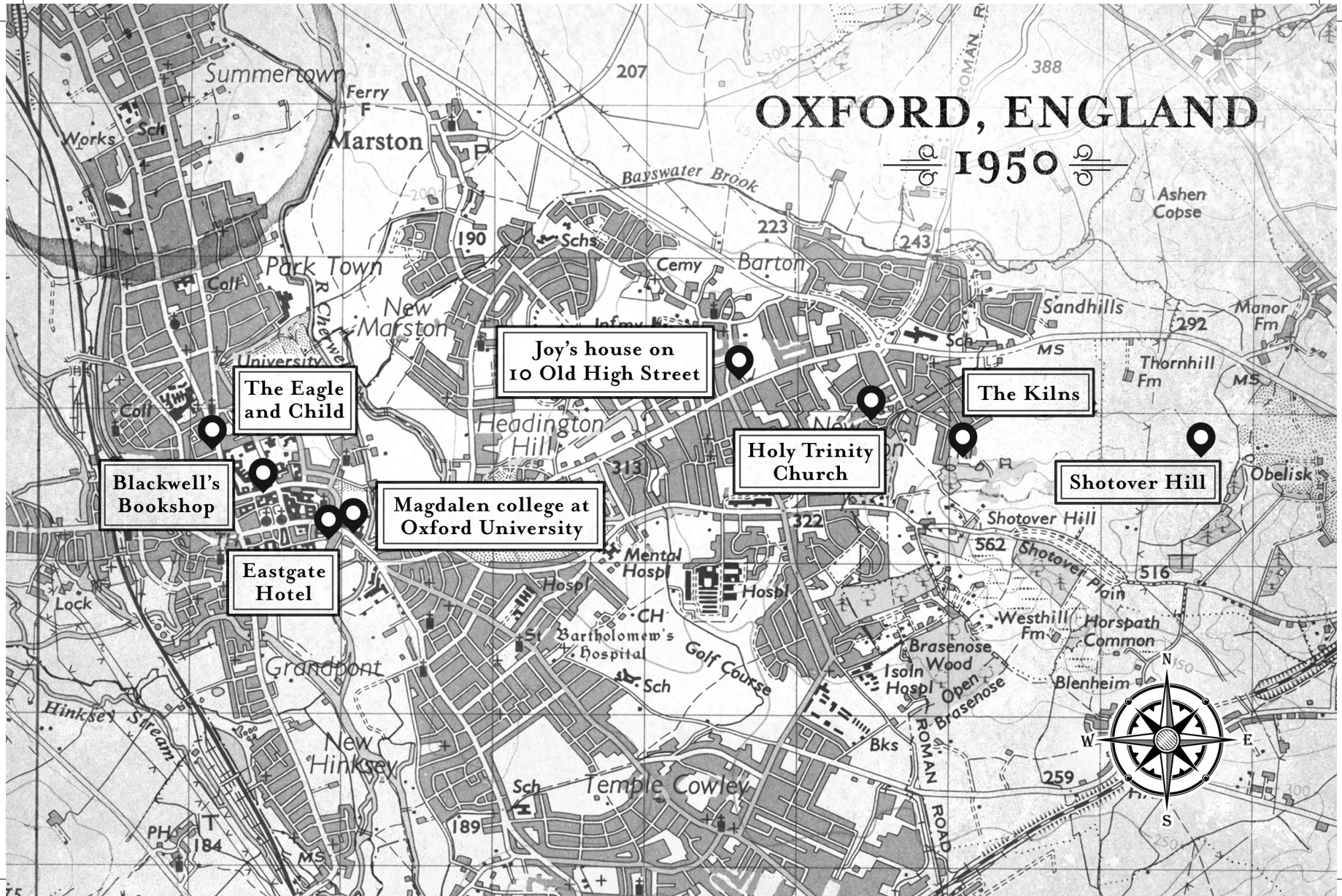


## PATTI CALLAHAN

(who also writes as Patti Callahan Henry) is a *New York Times* bestselling author. Patti was a finalist in the Townsend Prize for Fiction, has been an Indie Next Pick, twice an OKRA pick, and a multiple nominee for the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance (SIBA) Novel of the Year. Her work has also been included in short story collections, anthologies, magazines and blogs. Patti attended Auburn University for her undergraduate work, and Georgia State University for her graduate degree. Once a Pediatric Clinical Nurse Specialist, she now writes full time. The mother of three children, she lives in both Mountain Brook, Alabama and Bluffton, South Carolina with her husband.



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# JOY & JACK

## JACK

- Born in Belfast, Ireland — 11/20/1898
- Announces his name is Jacksie — 1900
- Mother dies — 8/23/1908
- Attends Campbell College in Ireland — 1910
- Attends Malvern College — 1913
- Moves to Surrey and is tutored by "The Great Knock" — W. T. Kirkpatrick — 1914
- His imagination is "baptized" by George MacDonald's Phantastes — 1916
- Begins studies at Oxford — 1917
- Joins army — 6/8/1917
- Wounded in action — 4/1918
- Returns to Oxford to study at University College — 1919
- Tutor at University — 1924
- Publishes poem *DYMER* under the name Clive Hamilton — 1926
- Elected to a fellowship in English at Magdalen College — given three rooms in the New Building — 5/1925
- Meets J. R. R. Tolkien — 5/11/1926
- Father dies of cancer — 1929
- Jack returns to Theism — Trinity term 1929
- The Inklings begin meeting — 1930's
- Talk with Tolkien at Addison's walk on true myth — 9/19/1931
- Returns to Christianity in the sidecar of Warnie's motorcycle — 9/28/1931
- Moves into The Kilns — 10/11/ 1931
- Pilgrim's Regress* — 1933
- Allegory of Love* — 1936
- Out of the Silent Planet* — 1938
- The Personal Heresy* — 1939
- The Problem of Pain* — 1940
- A series of twenty talks on the BBC radio — 1941
- The Space Trilogy* — 1942-1944
- The Screwtape Letters* — 1942
- Perelandra and The Abolition of Man* — 1943
- That Hideous Strength and The Great Divorce* — 1945
- Chad Walsh publishes article about Lewis in *The Atlantic Monthly*, which eventually prompts Joy to contact Walsh — 1946
- Appeared in *TIME* Magazine (which Joy read) — 9/1947
- Miracles and edits with others, Essays to Charles Williams* — 1947
- The Chronicles of Narnia* — 1950 - 1956
- Began pen-friendship with Helen Joy Davidman Gresham — 1950

## JOY

- 4/18/1915 — Born in New York City
- 1919 — Brother, Howard is born
- 1929 — Graduated from Evander Child's High School at fourteen years old
- 1930 — Begins at Hunter College at Fifteen years old
- 1930 — Editor for Hunter College Literary magazine, *Echo*
- 1934 — Begins MA from Columbia University in New York
- 1935 — Master's degree in English from Columbia — thesis on Lord Orrery
- 1936 — Publishes poems in *Poetry Magazine*
- 1938 — Russell Loines Award for Poetry
- 1938 — Won Yale Younger Poet's Award for her collection, *Letter to a Comrade*
- 1938 — First summer at Macdowell writer's colony
- 1938 — Joined the Communist Party after seeing a woman commit suicide
- 1939 — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer screenwriter in Hollywood
- 1940 — First novel, *ANYA* is published
- 1941-43 — Book Reviewer and Poetry editor for *New Masses Magazine*
- 8/2/1942 — Married novelist, William Lindsay Gresham
- 3/27/1944 — David Gresham born
- 11/10/1945 — Douglas Gresham born
- Spring, 1946 — A mystical conversion experience
- 9/1946 — Bill's novel *Nightmare Alley* is published and eventually film produced with Tyrone Powers
- 9/1946 — Chad Walsh's article comes out in the *Atlantic Monthly* - *Apostle to the Skeptics* about C. S. Lewis
- 1947 — Buy Farmhouse and land in Staatsburg, upstate New York
- 1948 — Joined the Presbyterian Church
- 1949 — Befriended Beloit Professor, Chad Walsh, who had written an article about C. S. Lewis titled *Apostle to the Skeptics*
- 1949 — Series of articles in The New York Post titled *Girl Communist* about Joy Davidman and her involvement and then rejection of communism.

## JACK & JOY

- 1/1950 — Received first letter from C. S. Lewis
- 1950 — *Weeping Bay* — a novel — published by MacMillan/ Starts writing articles on the Ten Commandments
- 1950 — Presbyterian Life publishes articles about Joy and her novel, *Weeping Bay*
- 1951 — Conversion essay in *Longest Way Round* published in anthology titled *These Found The Way*
- 4/1951 — Receives money for writing articles on Ten Commandments for *Presbyterian Life Magazine*
- 8/1951 — Trip to Vermont with Walshes
- Early 1952 — Cousin Renee and children arrive to live with Gresham family
- 8/1952 — First and solo trip to England on SS United States
- 9/4/1952 — First meeting with C. S. Lewis at Eastgate Hotel
- 12/1952 — Spends Christmas at The Kilns with Warnie and Jack
- 1/1953 — Returns to New York and family
- 11/1953 — Moves into Avoco House in London
- 1/1954 — Douglas and Davy attend Dane Court Preparatory School
- 1954 — *Smoke on the Mountain: An Interpretation of the Ten Commandments* published
- 8/1955 — Moves to Oxford/Headington
- 4/23/1956 — Marries Jack in a civil ceremony
- 8/188/1956 — Falls and is diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer
- 3/21/1957 — Marries Jack in hospital by Anglican priest
- 1957 — Moves into The Kilns as Mrs. Lewis and receives news that the cancer is in remission
- 12/1959 — Joy's cancer returns
- 7/13/1960 — Died (Forty-Five years old)
- 7/13/1960 — Loses Joy
- 1961 — *A Grief Observed* under pseudonym
- 1961 — *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*
- 11/23/1963 — Death at home
- The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe* — 1950
- Prince Caspian* — 1951
- Voyage of the Dawn Treader* — 1952
- Mere Christianity* — 1952
- The Silver Chair* — 1953
- The Horse and His Boy AND English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (O.H.E.L.) — 1954
- The Magicians Nephew*. Becomes the Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge. His inaugural address is "De Descriptione Temporum", which Joy attended. Publishes *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* — 1955
- The Last Battle* — 1956
- Til We Have Faces* — 1956
- Marries Joy Davidman in Civil Ceremony — 4/23/1956
- Marries Joy in hospital by priest Peter Bide/she is prayed over — 3/21/1957
- Reflections on the Psalms* — 1958
- The Four Loves; Studies in Words* — 1960
- 1961 — *A Grief Observed* under pseudonym
- 1961 — *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*
- 11/23/1963 — Death at home



THOMAS NELSON  
Since 1798



# HELEN JOY DAVIDMAN LEWIS



## THE WOMAN BESIDE C.S. LEWIS

*Joy was a firecracker of a woman.*

*She was a brilliant writer, a multi award-winning poet, a child prodigy, a novelist, a critic, a protégé of a famous artist and much more. She was also an ex-Jew, ex-communist, ex-atheist, and married, living in upstate NY.*

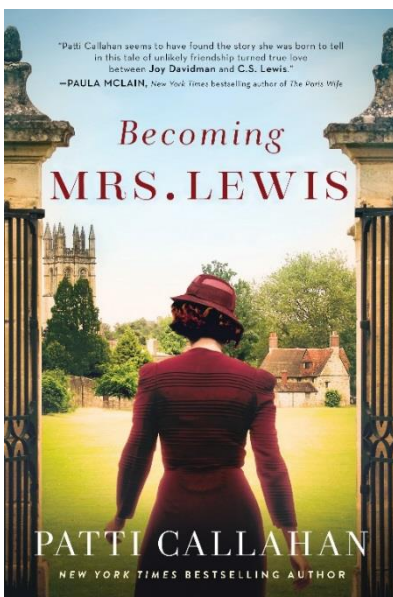
*Her relationship with C.S. Lewis was a most improbable love story.*

*“What in the world would become of us if we should ever grow brave?”—Joy*

### SEASONS OF JOY



### HER VOICE, HER STORY



2

SONS  
DOUGLAS &  
DAVID GRESHAM

45

LOVE SONNETS  
JOY COLLECTED  
& DEDICATED  
TO C.S. LEWIS

45

JOY'S AGE WHEN  
SHE DIED OF  
CANCER

### THE MUSE OF C. S. LEWIS

*After reading several works of C.S. Lewis, Joy was so moved that she wrote him in England. The two were long-distance pen pals for three years before they met in person. Joy eventually moved to England and they married in 1957.*

*C.S. Lewis called Joy his “whole world (stars, water, air, and field, and forest, as they were reflected in a single mind).”*

*Joy influenced some of C.S. Lewis' most significant works. He was so enraptured with her that her death in 1960, nearly destroyed him—and his faith.*







## BECOMING MRS. LEWIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

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1. Joy's early life was fraught with sickness and rigid family expectations. How did these years shape her love life moving forward? How did these early years influence her newfound friendship with Jack? How did she overcome them to love?
2. When Joy's cousin, Renee moved into the house with her two young children, things began to change. Have you sheltered family members in a time of need, and how did that change your family dynamics? What were your first reactions to Renee moving in?
3. Joy's heartbreak at Bill's announcement that he and Renee were in love was painful. Do you believe it was because she loved Bill? Felt betrayed? That Renee was the "comparison" used all of her life and now that memory surged forward from childhood? Have you ever been in a similar circumstance where old heartbreak was relived in a new form?
4. Joy expressed distress about how some of Jack's friends didn't approve of her or appear to like her. Why do you think this was true? How did this affect their friendship?
5. Many of Jack and Joy's friends talk about their intellectual compatibility, of Joy's ability to keep up with Jack and how they both had incredible photographic memories. Did this bring them together? Did this help love grow? How?
6. Joy made tough decisions about moving to England and taking her sons from their father. How did this affect Davy and Douglas? What do you believe she could she have done differently?
7. Bill fought to have his sons return to America as Joy appeared to be on her deathbed. Jack wrote a scathing letter and forbid it. How did this change the boys' lives from that point on?
8. One of the most heartbreaking scenes in the novel is when Joy discovers she has terminal cancer at the same time that Jack admits his true love and desire to marry her. How does this affect her recovery? How does this *eros* change what happens next?
9. Joy wonders about Jack's relationship with both Janie Moore and Ruth Pitter. How did his relationships with these women affect his heart and love for Joy? Was Joy jealous or curious? How did it affect her view of him and their relationship?
10. What part of this story touched you the most? What part of this story changed you the most?

**To View Patti's Research Videos Visit:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr-4TYDWwEvSO\\_ssCYefNhw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr-4TYDWwEvSO_ssCYefNhw)**

