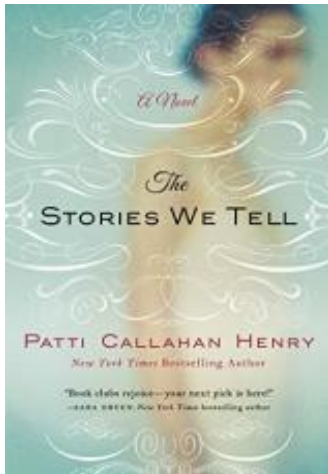


# The Stories We Tell

by Patti Callahan Henry

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## About the Book

Eve and Cooper Morrison are Savannah's power couple. They're on every artistic board and deeply involved in the community. She owns and operates a letterpress studio specializing in the handmade; he runs a digital magazine featuring all things southern gentlemen. The perfect juxtaposition of the old and the new, Eve and Cooper are the beautiful people. The lucky ones. And they have the wealth and name that comes from being part of an old Georgia family.

But things may not be as good as they seem.

Eve's sister, Willa, is staying with the family until she gets "back on her feet." Their daughter, Gwen, is all adolescent rebellion. And Cooper thinks Eve works too much. Still, the Morrison marriage is strong. After 21 years together, Eve and Cooper know each other. They count on each other. They know what to expect. But when Cooper and Willa are involved in a car accident, the questions surrounding the event bring the family close to breaking point. Sifting between the stories --- what Cooper says, what Willa remembers, what the evidence indicates --- Eve has to find out what really happened. And what she's going to do about it.

## Discussion Guide

1. The book opens with the narrator, Eve, telling us about her eye color changing. In what ways was this event a premonition of the other changes in Eve's life?
2. Let's talk about the title of this book --- THE STORIES WE TELL. What do you believe the author means by 'stories'? What are the stories we tell in a relationship as we come to know each other?
3. The art and craft of letterpress is an integral part of the story. What do you think about Eve's obsession with

typography, letterpress machines and fonts? How does it fit in with the notion of "stories"?

4. Creativity and art are healing balms for both Willa and Eve in different ways. How do you believe working has helped Eve and singing/songwriting has helped Willa? What is it about the creative process that helps people to heal?

5. Willa has a traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which affects her memory and her emotions. How do you think this injury affected Eve's willingness to believe Willa's version of that night? Were you able to trust Willa's story and perceptions?

6. Gwen is rebelling in different ways during the crisis, and Eve talks about adolescence meaning "a disturbance." How much do you think Gwen's behavior was a reflection of the tension in her parents' marriage?

7. Eve and Max have an obvious attraction to each other, yet both of them try to keep it professional. Do you think they could have avoided falling in love? Or can you avoid such a thing?

8. What do you think of the term "financial infidelity"? In what ways do you think this kind of infidelity breaches ethics? Or does it?

9. Image, family, and success appear to be of the utmost importance to Cooper. Do these ideas oppose each another? At what point in the story did you, as a reader, start to doubt Cooper's story?

10. The Ten Good Ideas came from Willa and Eve's childhood remodeling of The Ten Commandments. What ideas, both as a child and as an adult, would you include in this list? Which idea resonated the most with you?

11. The tagline for Eve's company is, "There's a story behind everything." Max often expressed himself with stories --- fables, folk tales and fairy tales. Willa expressed herself in songs and she also believed her dreams told her about her life. In what ways do you incorporate this kind of storytelling into your own life?

12. Eve's family plays a pivotal role in her life and in her beliefs. How do you believe this influenced her belief in Cooper? How do you believe this affected her final decision?

13. Savannah, as a city, seems almost like a character in the novel. In what ways does this distinct setting influence the story? Would this have been a different kind of story if it had been set elsewhere?

14. Did you have a sense of who was telling a "true story" throughout this novel --- and who wasn't? Did that change throughout your read? How did you think it would end?

## Author Bio

Patti Callahan Henry is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of several novels, including *SURVIVING SAVANNAH* and *BECOMING MRS. LEWIS*. She is the recipient of the Christy Award, the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer of the Year Award, and the Alabama Library Association Book of the Year. She is the cohost and cocreator of the popular weekly online live web show and podcast "Friends and Fiction." She lives in Alabama and South Carolina with her family.

## Critical Praise

THE STORIES WE TELL fearlessly explores the textures of the human heart, finding a path toward hope through a Savannah that is jagged with class issues, faith misused, and broken trust. Henry loses you in a landscape peopled with secret keepers, storytellers and liars, and proves that in the end, love is the only reliable compass. This is everything you expect from Patti Callahan Henry --- lyrical writing, characters worth rooting for, a sure-footed belief in the power of goodness --- plus a twisty plot that will keep the pages turning long into the night.

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