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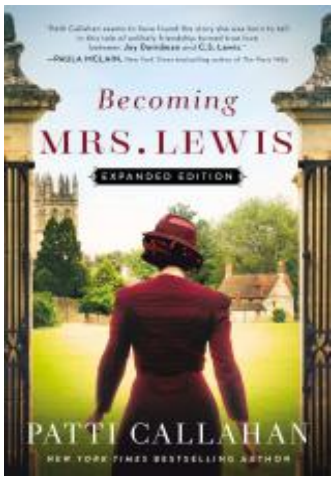
Becoming Mrs. Lewis

by Patti Callahan Henry, writing as Patti Callahan



About the Book

In a most improbable friendship, she found love. In a world where women were silenced, she found her voice.

When poet and writer Joy Davidman began writing letters to C. S. Lewis --- known as Jack --- she was looking for spiritual answers, not love. Love, after all, wasn?t holding together her crumbling marriage. Everything about New Yorker Joy seemed ill-matched for an Oxford don and the beloved writer of *Narnia*, yet their minds bonded over their letters. Embarking on the adventure of her life, Joy traveled from America to England and back again, facing heartbreak and poverty, discovering friendship and faith, and --- against all odds --- finding a love that even the threat of death couldn?t destroy.

In this masterful exploration of one of the greatest love stories of modern times, we meet a brilliant writer, a fiercely independent mother, and a passionate woman who changed the life of this respected author and inspired books that still enchant us and change us. Joy lived at a time when women weren?t meant to have a voice --- and yet her love for Jack gave them both voices they didn?t know they had.

At once a fascinating historical novel and a glimpse into a writer?s life, BECOMING MRS. LEWIS is above all a love story --- a love of literature and ideas, and a love between a husband and wife that, in the end, was not impossible at all.

Discussion Guide

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?

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.

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