

Further Reading

Love and Ruin

Paula McLain (2018)

MCLAIN

The best-selling author of *The Paris Wife* returns to her fan-favorite subject, Ernest Hemingway, in a tale set on the eve of World War II that is inspired by his passionate, stormy marriage to a fiercely independent, ambitious young Martha Gellhorn, who would become one of the 20th century's leading war correspondents.

The Aviator's Wife

Melanie Benjamin (2013)

BENJAMIN

A story inspired by the marriage between Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh traces the romance between a handsome young aviator and a shy ambassador's daughter whose relationship is marked by wild international acclaim.

Loving Frank

Nancy Horan (2007)

HORAN

Fact and fiction blend in a historical novel that chronicles the relationship between seminal architect Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, from their meeting, when they were each married to another, to the clandestine affair that shocked Chicago society.

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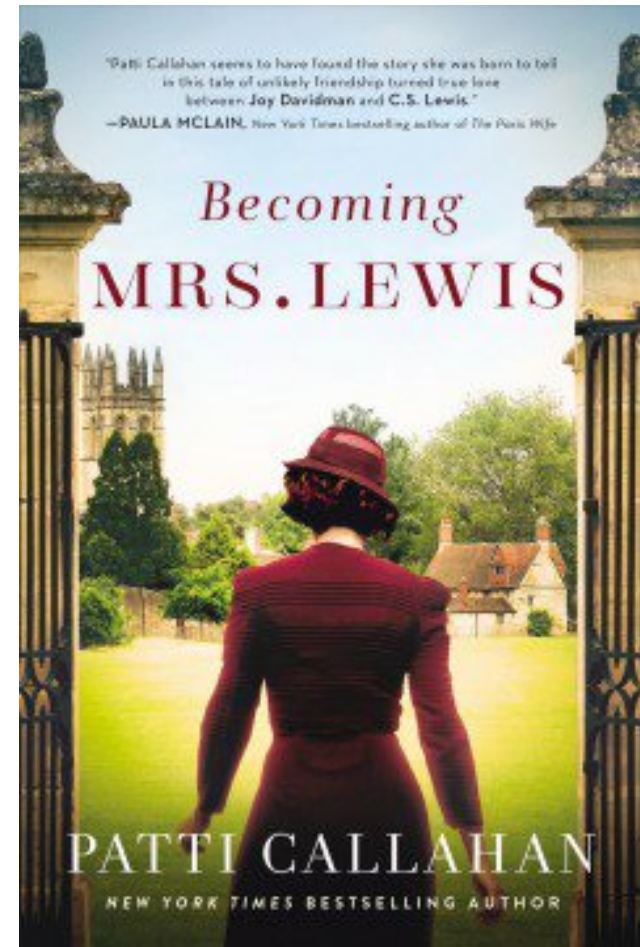
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Book Discussion Guide



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About the Book

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.

Discussion Questions

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?
2. When Joy's cousin, Renee moved into the house with her two young children, things began to change. How did their presence change the 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 and felt betrayed? Or was it because Renee was the "comparison" used all of Joy's 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 forbade 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 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?

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