

# Shadowlands

A love story by  
William Nicholson

*Shadowlands* is a journey of the heart and faith of C.S. Lewis. The oxford don opens the play with a lecture about the useful purpose of pain and suffering. His knowledge on the subject is tested when American poet Joy Davidman walks into his life, becomes his wife and is diagnosed with cancer. He is faced with the reality of pain, suffering and a faith that has understood it intellectually.

Lewis deals very honestly with his emotions and his faith. He is unashamed to speak openly about his heart wrenching pain and how it effects his view of God and faith. In the end he reaches a place of acceptance. *Shadowlands* is a fictionalized and romanticized version of Jack and Joy's story, while remaining true to their journey of love, pain and suffering.

Jeff Berryman as Jack & Nikki Visel-Whitfield as Joy. Photo by Matthew Lawrence



~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
~ **Pain**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
~ We are like blocks of stone, out of which the sculptor carves the forms of men. The blows of his chisel, which hurt so much, are what make us perfect. No shadows here. Only darkness, and silence, and the pain that cries like a child. It ends, like all affairs of the heart, with exhaustion. Only so much pain is possible. Then, rest. So it comes about that, when I am quiet, when I am quiet, she returns to me. There she is, in my mind, in my memory, coming towards me, and I love her again as I did before, even though I know I will lose her again, and be hurt again. So you can say if you like that Jack Lewis had no answer to the question after all, except this: I have been given the choice twice in my life. The boy chose safety. The man chooses suffering. "

~ C.S. Lewis  
*Shadowlands Act II*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
~ **Love**

To Joy, from Jack:  
"I went to my wardrobe this morning. I was looking for my old brown jacket, the one I used to wear before- I'd forgotten that you'd carried out one of your purges there. Just before we went to Greece, I think it was. I find I can live with the pain, after all. The pain, now, is part of the happiness, then. That's the deal. Only shadows, Joy."

*Shadowlands, Act II*

"You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you. It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong and sound as long as you are merely using it to cord a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it?"

~C.S. Lewis,  
*A Grief Observed, p. 34*

# Clive Staples Lewis "Jack"

*B. November 29, 1898  
Belfast, Northern Ireland*

## Family

*C.S. Lewis was born on November 29, 1898, the son of Albert and Flora Lewis. They lived in Dundela Villas. A neighborhood near Belfast in Northern Ireland. Albert Lewis was a solicitor and Flora was the daughter of a clergyman. They had two boys, Warren Hamilton Lewis (called Warnie) and Clive Staples Lewis (nicknamed Jack.)*

*Jack's parents had very different temperaments. His father was sentimental and emotional, with a tendency to swing between emotions. His mother has a much more placid, steady personality. In 1905 the Lewis family moved to Little Lea, a newly built house on the very edge of Belfast. It was a huge rambling house, perfect for children to explore. Jack and Warnie made the most of it. Lewis described his childhood saying, "I am the product of long corridors, empty sunlit rooms, upstairs indoor silences, attics explored in solitude..."*

*In 1908, Jack's mother died of cancer. His father was caught up in his own emotions and unable to comfort his sons. Jack and Warnie became each others family, forming a bond between them that would last their whole life.*

*Jack wrote later about his mother's death, "...all settled happiness, all that was tranquil and reliable disappeared from my life. There was to be much fun, many pleasures...but no more of the old security. It was sea and islands now, the great continued had sunk like Atlantis."*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
~ *Albert J. Lewis (1863-1929) Father*  
~ *Florence Augusta Lewis (1862-1908) Mother*  
~ *Warren Hamilton Lewis (June 16, 1895) Brother*

## Education

*William Kirkpatrick was the tutor responsible for C.S. Lewis' education. He wrote once to advise Lewis' father that his son was brilliant, but he would have limited uses for his talents. "You may make a writer or a scholar of him," he cautioned, "but you'll not make anything else. You may make up your mind to that." Accordingly, Jack was sent to college at Oxford University where he very much hoped he would be able to get a job as a teacher.*

# Lewis As An Oxford Don

After his graduation he was hired as a "don" at Magdalen College. Jack was a don for all thirty years that he taught at Oxford. He later became a professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University.

At Oxford, the faculty is divided into professors and dons (also called tutors). Tutors spend all their time giving lectures and teaching students individually or in small groups of two or three. Professors spend less time teaching and more time writing or doing research. Jack's tutorials with his students always followed the same general pattern. Jack would assign reading for the week and the student would write about what they read. During the tutorial the student read their essay aloud and Jack critiqued their writing and discussed what they had read.

One of Jack's students described the teaching style of Oxford saying that the tutors "did not strictly 'teach.' In the mornings and evenings of term they were visited in their rooms by their pupils, who 'read the subject with them.' It was not exactly an egalitarian society, but there was a sense of fundamental equality and unity, divided into ranks and stages. I had no doubt, at the age of eighteen, that for all the differences of temperament, intelligence, ability, learning, repute, and age between me and this distinguished, jolly man, we were nevertheless of the same kind, engaged in the same pursuit."



"And the reason I felt this was no doubt because that was how Lewis treated me. I was not a schoolboy to be taught and disciplined, not a "student," but a "man" in his college, who came to "read with him," and he treated me more or less as a equal without thinking about it."

## T H E I N K L I N G S

At Oxford, Lewis formed many acquaintances and friends among the faculty. In particular a group of Oxford men who became known as the Inklings. This was an informal club of writers and scholars, among them Warnie Lewis, Hugo Dyson, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams, and J.R.R. Tolkien. The group met twice a week. On Thursday evenings in Lewis' rooms at Magdalen, and Tuesday mornings at a pub in Oxford officially named the "Eagle and Child," but affectionately dubbed the "Bird and Baby." At each gathering the members read aloud from whatever piece of writing they were working on currently and received criticism from the rest of the group. At one time Lewis was asked whether the writers in the group influenced each other's writing. Lewis replied, "Charles Williams certainly influenced me and I perhaps influenced him. But after that I think you would draw a blank. No one ever influenced Tolkien...He has only two reactions to criticism; either he begins the whole work over again from the beginning or else takes no notice at all."

Over the years the group expanded to include other Oxford faculty, and several former students of C.S. Lewis. One of these, John Wain, wrote a description of the meetings: "I can see that room so clearly now, the electric fire pumping heat into the dank air, the faded screen that broke some of the keener draughts, the enamel beer jug on the table, the well-worn sofa and armchairs, and the men drifting in (those from distant colleges would be later), leaving overcoats and hats in any corner and coming over to warm their hands before finding a chair. There was no fixed etiquette, but the rudimentary honours would be done partly by Lewis and partly by his brother, W.H. Lewis...Sometimes when the less vital members of the circle were in a big majority, the evening would fall flat; but the best of them were as good as anything I shall live to see..."



# Surprised by Joy

*Joy walked into Jack's life and changed him forever. His spirit was alive and he experienced life for the moment. Lewis' book *Surprised by Joy* was written at the brink of their friendship. He wrote the book as a reflection on his life of faith, however he would later find out the significance of the title.*

*"He took in more, he felt more, he remembered more, he invented more... His writings, record an intense awareness, a vigorous reaction, a taking of the world into his heart... His blacks and whites of good and evil and his ecstasies and miseries were the tokens of a capacity for experience beyond our scope..."*

*~Austin Farrer*

*Through the Shadowlands, p. 180*

*"Not my idea of God, but God. Not my idea of H \*, but H. Yes, and also not my idea of my neighbor, but my neighbor. For don't we often make this mistake as regards people who are still alive- who are with us in the same room? Talking and acting not to the man himself but to the picture- almost the *précis*- we've made of Him in our own minds? And he has to depart from it pretty widely before we even notice the fact. In real life- that's one way it differs from novels- his words and acts are, if we observe closely, hardly ever quite 'in character,' that is, in what we call his character. There's always a card in his hand we didn't know about."*

*~C.S. Lewis*

*A Grief Observed, p. 79*

*\* H refers to Helen Joy*

*During his final illness, Jack had composed and dictated an epitaph for Joy that was inscribed on a cruciform plaque and placed in the crematorium*

*Remember  
HELEN JOY  
DAVIDMAN  
D. July 1960  
Loved wife of  
C.S. Lewis*

*Here the whole world (stars, water, air,  
And field, and forest, as they were  
Reflected in a single mind)  
Like cast off clothes was left behind  
In ashes, yet with hope that she,  
Re-born from holy poverty,  
In lenten lands, here after may  
Resume them on her Easter Day.*



Jeff Berryman as Jack & Nikki  
Visel-Whitfield as Joy.

Photo by Matthew Lawrence

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## A Screen Writer Emerges from the Shadows

*"I didn't ever have a notion that I would become a screenwriter. I wanted to be a novelist, actually, in fact I was trying very hard to be a novelist."*

*"And the mounting failure of my novels led to a sort of desperation in me, and when somebody in the BBC, said to me; look, I gather you like writing. I want to direct. And another friend said to me I want to produce dramas...All documentary people, all dreaming of a greater life. So they said, why don't you write it and I'll direct it and I'll produce it. And honestly, we cooked this thing up out of nothing, and I wrote it, and it was about Martin Luther...And I wrote this thing very quickly, without giving it much thought, whereas my novels I agonized over every comma. And I truly think, as I look back, that was part of the reason I started to become a decent writer, instead of being a kind of constipated wanker which is what happens if you sit and write great English Literature...And that's how it started. And then people started saying that this was good. And I hadn't had anybody say anything I'd done was good for about 12 years, you know. Not since my mother had stopped saying I was good."*

*"And so we made this thing, and then we got together and said, 'that was fun, let's do it again.' And the second thing we did was Shadowlands. And that won all the awards, and suddenly I was being paid more writing for the screen than I was for being a documentary maker."*

### Filmography

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>Gladiator</i> (2000)                      | Credited re-write     |
| 2. <i>Firelight</i> (1998)                      | Director/Screenwriter |
| 3. <i>Grey Owl</i>                              | Screenwriter          |
| 4. <i>First Knight</i> (1995)                   | Screenwriter          |
| 5. <i>Nell</i> (1994)                           | Screenwriter          |
| 6. <i>Shadowlands</i> (1993)                    | Screenwriter          |
| 7. <i>Sarafina!</i> (1992)                      | Screenwriter          |
| 8. <i>Shadowlands</i> (1989)                    | Playwright            |
| 9. <i>Race for the Double Helix, The</i> (1987) | (TV)                  |
| 10. <i>Sweet as You Are</i> (1987)              | (BBC TV)              |
| 11. <i>Shadowlands</i> (1985)                   | (BBC TV)              |

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**Studied  
English  
Literature,  
Cambridge  
University**

**BBC Director/  
Executive  
Producer  
1970s-1980s**

**Lives in Sussex  
England with  
wife  
Virginia & 3  
kids.**

# Storytelling

## By C.S. Lewis

- The Chronicles of Narnia**
- The Lion, The Witch & the Wardrobe*
- Prince Caspian*
- The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*
- The Horse and His Boy*
- The Silver Chair*
- The Magician's Nephew*
- The Last Battle*

## Fiction

- Out of the Silent Planet*
- Perelandra*
- Voyage to Venus*
- The Tortured Planet*
- The Dark Tower*
- Phantastes*
- The Screwtape Letters*
- Till We Have Faces*
- The Great Divorce*

## Non-Fiction

- A Grief Observed*
- The Problem of Pain*
- Surprised by Joy*
- Mere Christianity*
- The Abolition of Man*
- The Four Loves*
- Grand Miracle*

"We love stories because actual life is very frightening and unpredictable and messy and unjust and things don't happen in the right way, and anyway we can't tell what's going to happen. And that's extremely scary. So what we do is, and have done forever, is we create stories that take our experience and give it meaning, that shape it, so that things that things that the good guys win and the bad guys lose is the obvious simple thing. But also, events become meaningful. And everything that happens has a place in the structure and leads towards a conclusion. And that's not real life, but it's, we've got a hunger for that and I've certainly got a hunger for that."

-William Nicholson

## By Joy Gresham

- Letter to a Comrade*
- War Poems of the United Nations*
- Anya*
- Smoke on the Mountain*

**Contributed to the Anthology:**  
*Seven Poets in Search of an Answer*

## About C.S. Lewis

*C.S. Lewis: Through the Shadowlands*  
By Brian Sibley

*Lenten Lands*  
by Douglas Gresham

*Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis*  
By George Sayer

## About Joy Gresham

*And God Came In*  
by Lyle W. Dorsett

*C.S. Lewis: a biography*  
by Walter Hooper

# Shadowlands

C

*C.S. Lewis ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Jeff Berryman*

A

*Joy Gresham ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Nikki Visel Whitfield*

*Major Warrnie Lewis ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Don Brady*

S

*Christopher Riley ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Ken Holmes*

*Harry Harrington ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Marquam Krantz*

T

*Douglas ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Ian Walcker & Addison Sims*

*Dr. Oakley/Ensemble ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Rick May*

*Alan Gregg/ Ensemble ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Zachary Brown*

*Registrar/ Woman ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ May Marcinek*

*Nurse ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Brooke Hills*

*Director ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Karen Lund*

*Scenic Designer ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Mark Lund*

*Sound Designer ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Mark Lund*

*Props Designer ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Mark Lund*

*Costume Designer ~ ~ ~ Jeanette deJong*

*Costume Shop Manager ~ ~ Kendra Rai*

*Lighting Designer ~ ~ ~ ~ Andrew Duff*

*Stage Manager ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Jen King*

*Assistant Stage Manager ~ ~ Eric Grimes*

*Dramaturge ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Sonja Lowe*

*Directing Intern ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Phyllis Wilson*

*Sound Intern ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Carlo Dakar*

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