



## Shadowlands

*William Nicholson*

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William Nicholson's Tony nominated stage adaptation of his award-winning BBC Teleplay relates the story of shy Oxford don and children's author C.S. Lewis and American poet Joy Gresham. *Shadowlands* shows how love, and the risk of loss, transformed this great man's relationships, even with God.

An L.A. Theatre Works full-cast performance featuring: Arthur Hanket, Harriet Harris, Nicholas Hormann, Martin Jarvis, Christopher Neame, Kenneth Schmidt, W. Morgan Sheppard

## Shadowlands Details

Date : Published November 28th 1991 by Plume (first published 1989)

ISBN : 9780452267329

Author : William Nicholson

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## From Reader Review Shadowlands for online ebook

### **Jeff Grogan says**

I enjoyed this play, though to do so, one must be able to put aside any background knowledge of the main character, Jack Lewis, as Nicholson's information and portrayal of that character is flawed. Aside from this, and from now on treating Lewis as an original character created by Nicholson, the play was well-written and gripping.

I find much appeal to a sense of higher intelligence throughout this play, in both the sparse use of comedic allusions that only intellectuals would properly understand and the amount of information that must be drawn from between the written lines. Much of the action, in fact, due to Lewis's character, happens between words and in silence. To fully appreciate the drama, one would need either the facial expressions and movements of the characters acted out in front of them, or deep understanding and inference making abilities.

The language Nicholson used was both accessible and realistic for men of Oxford, without sounding pretentious. The plot was direct, simple, easily understood, and yet nuanced enough to allow the active reader great enjoyment in delving deeper into imagery and meaning. I believe the romance created between Joy and Lewis is highly unique in this age of countless sex, and enjoyed the refreshing angle this provided of love.

After reading more on Lewis the man, I was incredibly disappointed at the disconnect between the man and character, especially in the character's flaw to release his hold on his faith through this ordeal, where the man became the stronger in it. This nearly ruined the play, in that the play completely failed to capture the essence and utter reliance that Lewis had on his faith above all circumstances. Even so, I still can see Shadowlands as I saw it initially: beautifully refreshing, and straightforward. These qualities hold even in the disappointment of the main character.

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### **Bethany Baldwin says**

A masterful play, really, though not my favorite piece of literature. I would love to see it performed to get the total feel of it.

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### **William says**

I was more familiar with Richard Attenborough's film, starring Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger, which was a wonderful experience to watch. For years after, whenever I would read C.S. Lewis, I would hear Hopkins reading it in my head. The play makes Lewis breathe for us. It doesn't rob him of his faith, but it shows him as human, and illuminates the question of how time and terrors shape our faith and shape us.

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### **Sherilyn says**

I found it very interesting and much more engaging than I anticipated.

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## **Tracy says**

I honestly felt this play was pure genius. It was a quick read, only taking an hour or two to finish. The staging was written in a way to allow the reader easy visual pictures. There is a part in the middle where Douglas's gift of a magic apple is intertwined with the marriage of Joy and Lewis, and I thought never in a millions years could I put these pieces together so beautifully.

Even though I felt the story was at times overly predictable, I remained interested through excellent character developments and insights. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and cried my eyes out for at least half of the story.

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## **Bettie? says**

not so much

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## **Daisy Leather says**

This is a work of art. Heartwrenchingly painful, funny, witty, real. Beautifully written and has very quickly stolen my heart. one of the best plays I have ever read. reduced me to tears. the way that joy and jack \*know\* each other is stunning and their relationship is gorgeous - true kindred spirits. now leave me alone to cry, I'm fragile.

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## **Laura says**

*FRom BBC Radio 4 - Saturday Drama:*

*Adaptation by Archie Scottney of the play by William Nicholson. The moving true story of the 1950s relationship between Oxford don and author CS Lewis and divorced American writer Joy Gresham.*

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## **Paul LaFontaine says**

C.S. Lewis and his romance with a young woman who revolutionizes his world view, even though their time together is short.

I was charmed by this play. In it the older man is brought out of his conservative worldview through a developing romance. It is solid writing and a well constructed experience.

Recommend

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## **B the BookAddict says**

The wonderful story of the relationship between C.S. Lewis and his American wife Joy Gresham written by Joy's son William Nicholson. I have to admit that I am a addict of the movie version as well, starring Sir Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger. 5★

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### **Becca brown says**

I found this book a quiet interesting. I loved the theme—this life is only a shadow of the next; only a shadow of the world to come. It ended a little sad, but the story line was sweet. It kinda reminded me of the book/movie “love comes softly”, though it was a lot different.

I thought it was interesting to discover some things about C. S. Lewis. I've always been interested in learning more about his life so I greatly enjoyed reading about him in particular. I liked seeing how he ‘slipped into love.’

There's a quote I really liked that was kind of the theme of the book. The whole thing is good so I'll just share all of it:

“God loves us, so He makes us the gift of suffering. Through suffering, we release our hold on the toys of this world, know our true good lies in another world. We're like blocks of stone, out of which the sculptor carves the forms of men. The blows of the chisel, which hurt us so much, are what make us perfect. The suffering in the world is not the failure of God's love for us; it is that love in action. For believe me, this world that seems to us so substantial is no more than the shadow lands. Real life has not begun yet.”

Good huh? I just love that. It makes me wish I could get my thoughts and feeling down on paper like that....it's so beautiful.

Over all, I really liked this book. If it was like a longish novel sorta thing I probably wouldn't have read it, but because it was really short--and also a play, which was interesting to see how the director would show feelings and thoughts through dialogue--I think this book is worth the small amount of time it takes to read it.

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### **Jennifer Steinhoff says**

I love this play. I remember sitting in the theatre while watching it, sobbing my heart out. I love all the characters (even Christopher, who can be so Christopherish) and they all work so well together. I love how Jack falls in love with Joy; so easy and natural. I love how she understands him and helps him accept the fact that with their love comes pain and sorrow -- that's the deal. So good. Read it -- or better yet, see it.

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### **Sawsan says**

Great play based on a real love relationship between CS Lewis the english author and Joy Gresham the american poet

CS Lewis was middle aged, academic lecturer with strict behavior and thoughts when Gresham entered his life, she was generally different from him but matching him intellectually

when she was diagnosed of terminal stage of cancer after their marriage, realize that they will soon be losing each other. only then he knew the meaning of suffering which he never experienced before getting into suspicious thoughts of god, love, life and death.

why we love, if losing hurts so much, is pain part of the happiness? that's the deal of life.  
at the end, Lewis was trying to reconcile his beliefs with the grief of his loss

Without real experiences whether good or painful, our opinions and judgments in life remain just theoretical words

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### **Bill says**

As the rating says, I thought the play was only ok. The thing I'm having trouble with is really defining *why* I didn't enjoy it all that much. I didn't think the characters were terrible, and I actually like the fact that the ending isn't very happy (wow that makes me sound like a terrible person). I just mean that the way the book ended provided much more room for thought and discussion than it would have if it ended perfectly. And I don't mind that there is no "action," so to speak. I don't mind stories that purely character based at all.

So why am I not head over heels about it? I think it may be because I just don't feel like I got much out of it, honestly. Which I'm sure will earn me more than a few comments from people who will say I just didn't get it, or am not smart or open-minded enough to understand the issues the play raises. It's not that at all; I was actually interested in the ideas it presents about faith, suffering and how tragedies can shake previously firm beliefs. And it's not like I'm some enlightened guy that has already pondered these things and come up with the ultimately right and true viewpoint. It's just I felt like that Shadowlands didn't add any new perspectives or viewpoints to those ideas. I have heard and thought about those concepts before (they were pretty common for example, in philosophy class), and while it's certainly never a bad thing to revisit things like this and reconsider your personal beliefs, I didn't really feel like I added anything to my understanding of those topics because of the book, and that's what disappointed me I guess. But that's only me, and it shouldn't dissuade others from reading it.

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### **???????? says**

If you got a serious illness; all of you want someone who cares about you, someone who accepts your heart .. your soul .. your mind to face a lot of troubles in this world with you, Someone stands for you ..

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