



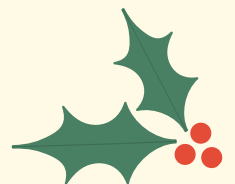
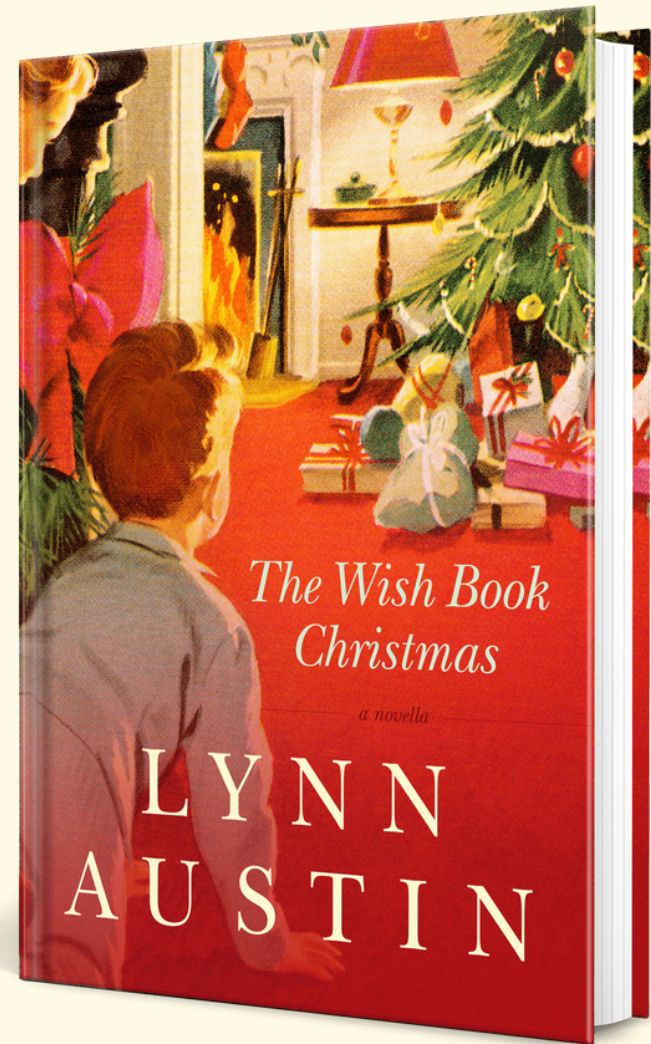
The Wish Book Christmas

Book Club Kit

Best friends Audrey Barrett and Eve Dawson can't wait for their first Christmas in America. They are thrilled about starting new traditions with their five-year-old sons, even daring to hope there might be fresh beginnings ahead for both of them, too. But when the 1951 Sears Christmas Wish Book arrives and the boys start obsessing over every toy in it, Audrey and Eve realize their most important task is teaching them the true meaning of the holiday by giving presents, not just asking for them. The heartwarming tale that unfolds reminds us all that sometimes, the most meaningful gifts are the ones we least expect and often don't deserve.

"A lovely standalone tale . . . this charming book will be a delight for inspirational readers looking for a feel-good Christmas story." *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

Lynnaustin.org





Dear Readers,

I'm so excited that your book club has chosen *The Wish Book Christmas* to read together. Books are so much more fun when we share them and talk about them with friends, aren't they? I hope you enjoy this story and that this book club kit is helpful to you. Most of all, I hope my novella helps you enter the Christmas season with some refreshing new ideas to try—such as becoming “Smart Kings” like the boys in the story do and spreading the love of Christ with everyone you meet.

Please drop me a note on Facebook, Instagram, or my website to let me know what your group thinks of the book and how your discussions go. I look forward to hearing from you.

Merry Christmas!

Lynn



"Recipe" for a Perfect Book Club

Set the stage for your book club discussion by creating a fun ambiance that ties to the novella.

• TIPS COURTESY OF LYNN AUSTIN •

Music:

Some tunes from the era's favorite crooners might also help you feel festive. Find or create a playlist on YouTube that includes some of the following:

"White Christmas" by Bing Crosby

"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by Judy Garland

"I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" by Jimmy Boyd

"I'll Be Home for Christmas (If Only in My Dreams)" by Frank Sinatra

"O Holy Night" by Perry Como

"It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas" by Dean Martin

"Silent Night" by Frank Sinatra

"I Wish You a Merry Christmas" by Bing Crosby

Décor:

Whether you're meeting in person or virtually, wear any small item to put you in a Christmas state of mind—a Christmas sweater, gloves, hat, etc. . . . If you're able to meet together, put out a small manger scene, a Christmas tree, a bowl of ornaments, or just decorate with tinsel—that was a popular choice for tree decor during the fifties!





Recipe: Snow Drops

Courtesy of Lynn Austin

Nothing puts you in the Christmas mood like sharing a warm, delicious plate of cookies. This is my grandmother's recipe—one of my favorites when I was a girl.

Ingredients:

$\frac{7}{8}$ cup butter	1 cup chopped walnuts
2 teaspoons vanilla	or pecans
1 teaspoon water	4 tablespoons powdered
2 cups cake flour	sugar
$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt	

Directions:

Cream butter thoroughly, then add vanilla and water. Sift flour and salt together. Add nuts and mix well. Chill overnight or until firm enough to shape with fingers. Form into small, date-shaped pieces. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes at 400 degrees. Roll in powdered sugar while warm. Makes about 60 cookies.





The Wish Book Christmas

TRIVIA

1. What is the name of Mrs. Herder's dog?
2. What grade are Harry and Bobby in at school?
3. How do Harry and Bobby know Alan Hamilton?
4. What did the boys have written on the cake for the party at the end of the story?
5. Audrey gets some surprising news about her father near the end of the story. What was his name?
6. When Audrey and Eve learn of the inheritance from Audrey's father, what do they buy for the boys?
7. What presents did Harry and Bobby pick out for their mothers at the end of the story?

ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE —————→





The Wish Book Christmas

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Cooper
2. kindergarten
3. He is their Boys' Club leader at church .
4. Happy birthday, Jesus
5. Alfred Clarkson
6. toy airplanes
7. Harry bought Eve a heart-shaped locket and Bobby bought Audrey a gold compact with flowers engraved on the side .



Discussion Questions

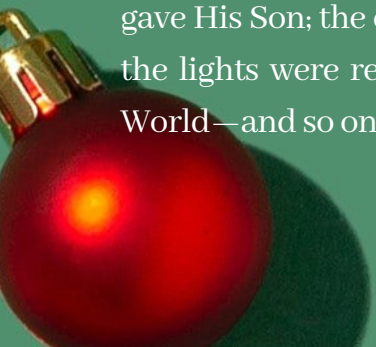
1. If Eve could have one wish this Christmas, it would be a home of her own. What prevents her from believing she can accept the home Tom wants to give her? Have you ever felt you owed someone a debt you had to repay or that you didn't deserve happiness for some other reason?
2. Despite growing up in great privilege, Audrey has been living humbly since moving to America. Why is she seemingly reluctant to accept a more extravagant lifestyle for herself and her son? In what ways does her independence embolden her? How does it hold her back?
3. What are some specific things Eve and Audrey fear their sons will miss out on by not having fathers? What does God promise in Psalm 68:5 and Psalm 146:9?
4. How do Eve and Audrey determine to teach their sons the true meaning of Christmas? Do you have any traditions of sharing the joy of Christmas with others?
5. When Audrey notices that her neighbor has taken down the gold star in her window, Mrs. Herder tells Audrey about how her grief for her son Michael had become a shrine and also a punishment. What does Audrey come to understand about her own grief and the freedom love offers?
6. Tom tells Eve that she needs to start seeing herself as God sees her: "a woman who is worthy of a second chance." Think about a time you were offered a second chance. How did you feel in that moment? Have you been given opportunities to extend second or third chances to others?
7. Audrey asks Eve: "Do you think God looks at our wealth and social class to decide who's worthy of His love?" Read Matthew 7:9-11. What does Jesus say about how parents treat their children? What kinds of gifts does God the Father offer?
8. Is Santa Claus part of your family's Christmas tradition? What did you think of Audrey and Eve's attempts to combat their sons' greedy wishes? How would you handle the desires of children like Harry and Bobby?

Questions & Answers with Lynn Austin

1. Do you have any favorite Christmas memories from your childhood? How about traditions you started with your children (or grandchildren) once you and Ken became parents?

In all of my childhood memories, going to church always played a central role as we celebrated God's gift of His Son. I also loved that both sets of grandparents were part of our lives, and they would join us for feasting and celebrating. Finding the perfect gifts for them was almost as important as choosing the gifts we were wishing for. I'm so glad that my parents emphasized the joy of giving as much as the fun of receiving.

When Ken and I became parents, we decided not to include the myth of Santa Claus in our children's Christmas celebrations but to keep the focus on celebrating Jesus' birth. We gave presents because God gave His Son; the evergreen tree represented eternal life; the lights were reminders that Jesus is the Light of the World—and so on. We always had a birthday party for



Jesus, including a cake and candles. And we still read the Christmas story from Scripture as we set up our manger scene the same way Eve and Audrey do in the novella. Here are some of the Scripture passages we use:

- The stable: Isaiah 9:6-7
- Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: Luke 2:1-7
- The shepherds: Luke 2:8-20
- The wise men: Matthew 2:1-12

2. Do you recall any toys that you were obsessed with getting as a kid? What about your own kids?

My sisters and I loved dolls, and we always wanted the latest one for Christmas—including some of the very first Barbie and Ken dolls. (I still have my Barbie after all these years, and my granddaughters play with her.) When my own kids were small, I remember running from store to store one year trying to find a specific Cabbage Patch doll for our daughter. And one of our sons asked for a Transformers toy at a time when people were storming the stores to find it. This was before the Internet, so I had to actually go shopping in overcrowded stores. But seeing the surprise on our children's faces was always worth it.

3. What advice would you give to parents of young children as they are working on establishing holiday traditions with their young families?

Don't let holiday stress ruin the season for you or them. Keep your traditions simple and meaningful rather than trying to create a perfect "Hallmark" holiday. The original Christmas included a simple stable and manger and a band of ordinary shepherds. Most of all, teach them that the birth of Jesus is central to the holiday.

Continued on the next page —————>



4. Was it difficult to write this next part of Audrey and Eve's story, or did you already have it in your imagination? Do characters stay with you after you finish writing a book?

I often think about my characters after typing *The End*, and in this case I did wonder what would happen next to Eve and Audrey and their sons. I'd hinted at the possibility of love between Eve and Tom, and I'd hoped that Audrey might find love again as well, so when I sat down to write this novella, I had fun picking up the story where it left off.

5. This was your first novella and first Christmas story. Were any aspects of those two things challenging? Can readers look forward to more in the future?

I love Christmas movies and stories myself, so I really enjoyed the challenge of writing one. Since most of my novels are quite lengthy, I wasn't sure I could write a novella, but by setting the timeline for a single month in December, I was able to keep focused. The biggest challenge was writing about winter during the hot summer months! I had to post pictures of snow all around my desk. (And yes, I would like to try writing one again someday.)

6.) What can readers look forward to next from Lynn Austin?

My next full-length novel, *Long Way Home*, will be out in the summer of 2022. It tells the story of a soldier who returns home from World War II but is unable to leave behind the horrors he experienced. His longtime friend tries to help him, and in the process, discovers a photograph of a pretty nurse who may hold the key.



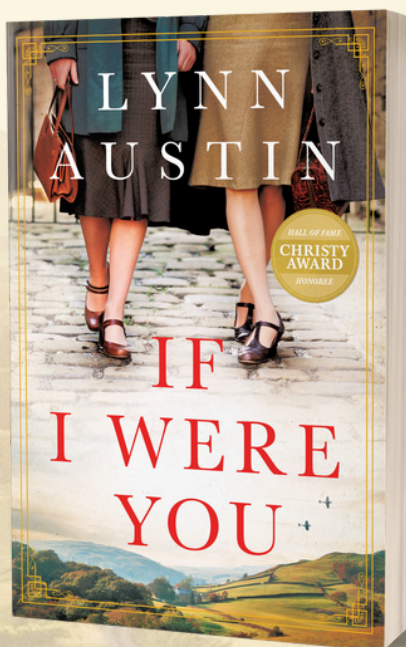
• COMING SOON •

Long Way Home

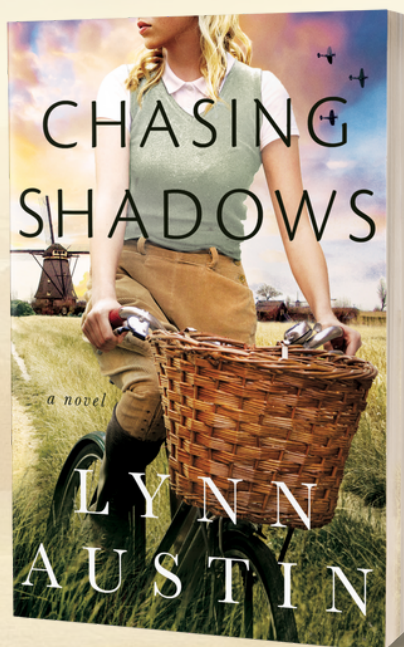
Bestselling author Lynn Austin returns with another gripping World War II tale of courage and faith, even when all seems lost.

• AVAILABLE JUNE 2022 •

Discover more great fiction from Lynn Austin



“Desperation and forgiveness are part of a classic upstairs/downstairs plot . . . [in this] tantalizing domestic drama.”
Foreword Reviews



“A must read for fans of WWII inspirations.”
Publishers Weekly,
starred review



Wilhelmina Brewster and Mike Dolan are two very different people—one is trying to figure out how to live, the other how to die.

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