She Is Me

by Cathleen Schine



About the Book

At the point in her life when things should be easy, Greta's house and her hands are full. Greta's grown daughter, Elizabeth, has just arrived in town with her son and her boyfriend to write a screenplay based on **Madame Bovary**. Greta's mother, Lotte, has progressed far beyond being "a character" since her husband died, taking ever increasing amounts of Greta's time and patience.

And, most surprising and unnerving of all, Greta has fallen in love. Not with her sweet and devoted husband. But with someone who appeared unexpectedly through a side door and turned her life upside down.

She Is Me deftly portrays the wisdom, pain, and huge reservoirs of love that are intertwined through the lives of women. Knowing each other as only mothers and daughters can, these three weave a sweet-hearted comedy out of their mistakes, shortcomings, and attempts at growth.

This is the hilarious and heartbreaking book that admirers of **The Love Letter** and Cathleen Schine's other acclaimed novels have long been waiting for.

Discussion Guide

1. What motivates Greta's and Elizabeth's affairs -- love or lust? How do their lives mirror Madame Bovary's?

2. Lotte, Greta, and Elizabeth are all keeping secrets from one another. Why? Is it because what the others don't know can't hurt them,or is it because they are unwilling to admit their desires to themselves, let alone to one another?

3. Lotte's illness results in her disfigurement. How does her physical appearance affect her attitude? Do Lotte's fond memories of her vaudeville days keep her from facing the predicaments she and her family currently confront, or are

they the example on which she feels Greta and Elizabeth should model their own lives?

4. Where do the men fit into the lives of the mothers and daughters in **She Is Me**? Are Tony and Brett pushovers, or are they the backbone of their respective relationships?

5. What does Daisy Piperno offer Greta that Tony can't? Does Greta's love for Tony diminish when she discovers what she believes is true love with Daisy,or does Greta's love for Tony just become something different from what it was?

6. What do you make of Lotte and Kuogi's relationship? How is her friendship with him a source of strength or solace?

7. What keeps Elizabeth from marrying Brett? How would marriage change their relationship? Does Harry keep them together or put a wall between them?

8. How do the relationships between Greta, Lotte, and Elizabeth resemble relationships you have with your mother or sister? How are the relationships depicted in the novel different from yours?

9. Why is Volfmann so appealing to Elizabeth? What does her attraction to him reveal about her personality? How does it reflect on her relationship with Brett?

10. She Is Me discusses illness and adultery very frankly, but with an irrepressible sense of humor. Are most such crises inherently funny in some way?

Author Bio

Cathleen Schine is the author of KÜNSTLERS IN PARADISE, THE GRAMMARIANS, THE THREE WEISSMANNS OF WESTPORT and THE LOVE LETTER, among other novels. She has contributed to *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New York Times Book Review*. She lives in Los Angeles.

Critical Praise

"Well read by Patricia Kalember, the story is laced with comedy, irony, and drama, with entertaining and very diverse characters."

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