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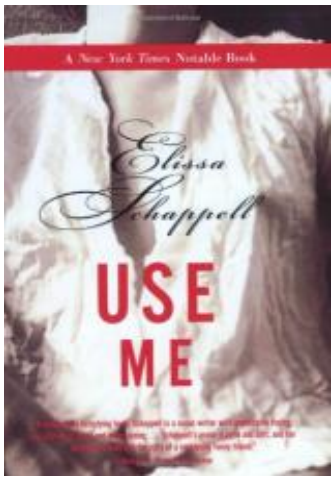
Use Me

by Elissa Schappell



About the Book

The exquisitely artful fiction debut of Vanity Fair columnist Elissa Schappell is a novel told in ten stories that resonate with the most profound experiences in the life of a young woman -- friendship and rivalry, the love for a man, the birth of a child, and the death of a father.

Discussion Guide

The first story in the book, "Eau-de-Vie," sets up Evie's loss of innocence and sexual initiation. How would you describe Evie's relationship to her father? For example, what is going on when he puts his younger daughter on his shoulders and doesn't touch Evie? What do you make of the symbolism of the title, "Eau-de-Vie," and of the pear in the bottle?

"Novice Bitch" introduces Mary Beth McEvoy. How do you think Mary Beth's home life has influenced her sexual behavior? Do you like Mary Beth despite her behavior, or do you like her because of it? Why does Evie like her?

In "Sisters of the Sound," Evie goes on a retreat to a convent. What is her motivation for going? Why is she so upset by the priest's quotation of Sartre, "If there is no God, then everything is permitted"?

Elisabeth Kübler Ross, in her famous 1969 book, **On Death and Dying**, said a person passes through different emotional stages when facing death. What are the stages that Evie goes through in dealing with her father's illness and death?

The title story "Use Me" is one of the most sexually provocative in the book. What motivates Evie's behavior? What happens when Evie "confesses" to Michael about her sexual proficiency? Do you think she is telling the truth?

Sex is frankly described in **Use Me**. Why do you think Elissa Schappell included these scenes so frequently? Do you

think high school students should read this book? Why or why not?

Author Bio

Elissa Schappell writes the "Hot Type" column for Vanity Fair and is a founding editor of the new literary magazine Tin House. She received her MFA from the Creative Writing Program at New York University. She has been a senior editor at The Paris Review and has contributed to numerous magazines, including GQ, Vogue, Bomb, Bookforum, and Spin. She lives in Brooklyn.

Critical Praise

"It's the rock-hard honesty beneath the gem-bright hilarity that make this a debut collection to savor"

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