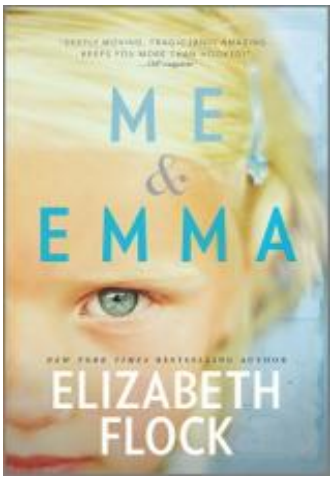
Me & Emma

by Elizabeth Flock



About the Book

In many ways, Carrie Parker is like any other eight-year-old-playing make-believe, dreading school, dreaming of faraway places. But even her imaginative mind can't shut out the realities of her impoverished North Carolina home or help her protect her younger sister, Emma.

By turns achingly naive and utterly pragmatic, Carrie has been shaped by the loss of her beloved daddy, and mired by a drunken stepfather and emotionally absent mother. Charting an astonishing course of survival for herself and Emma, she hopes to transform their life into one more closely resembling the story books she treasures.

But after the sisters' plan to run away from home unravels, their world takes a shocking turn-and one shattering moment ultimately reveals a truth that leaves everyone reeling.

Narrated with the simplicity and unabashed honesty of a child's perspective, **Me & Emma** is a vivid portrayal of the heartbreaking loss of innocence, an indomitable spirit and incredible courage--a story that will resonate with readers of all ages and experiences.

Discussion Guide

1. The epigraph in **Me & Emma** quotes Walt Whitman's **Leaves of Grass** and it reads, "It is by ourselves we go down to eternal light." Why do you think author Elizabeth Flock chose this passage? How does it relate to **Me & Emma**?

2. Discuss the effects Daddy's murder has on various characters: Carrie, Emma, Momma and Gammy. Compare and contrast Carrie and Momma's lives and personalities before and after Daddy's murder.

3. As little children we tend to believe our parents are perfect and it is only as adults we begin to see their human flaws.

How does that affect us? To Carrie, her Daddy was the perfect father. But in reality he was not the perfect husband. What do we learn about Daddy and the reason for his murder? How do you think this affects Carrie?

4. The author is careful not to reveal what year or decade the novel is set. When do you think this story is supposed to take place? On what clues did you base your decision?

5. Do you think Carrie is typical of girls her age? In what ways? How does she differ?

6. Momma, Miss Mary, Gammy and Miss Ueland are all products of a similar social and economic environment. What do you think about the roles of these women in this story? How has circumstance differentiated them? What does each of them represent to Carrie?

7. In chapter eight, during a violent scene with Carrie, Richard begins to cry. What is the catalyst for his breakdown? Do his emotions make him more human? Did you find yourself more sympathetic toward him?

8. Based on Mr. White's memories of Momma, what is your impression of Momma as a teenager back in high school?

9. Momma seems not to care about the abuse Carrie suffers, yet some might argue that she was as much a victim as her daughter. Discuss ways in which Momma tries to protect Carrie from Richard.

10. Carrie is a very sympathetic character, yet there are times when her actions make her unlikable (when she kicks Brownie, for instance). What do you think this says about her?

11. What so you think about the way children are portrayed in the story? Consider Carrie and Emma, Orla Mae, Forsyth, George Godsey. Are these realistic characters?

12. What do you think the future holds for Carrie and Momma? Do you see the ending as hopeful or bleak?

Author Bio

Former journalist Elizabeth Flock reported for *Time* and *People* magazines before becoming a television reporter and anchor in San Francisco, California. After moving to New York, Flock became an on-air correspondent for CBS News covering breaking news both in the United States and abroad. Notably, reporting from Havana, Cuba, for Pope John Paul II?s visit with Fidel Castro; reporting from London following the death of Princess Diana; and reporting from Hong Kong where she covered the handover from the British to the Chinese.

Flock's acclaimed first novel, BUT INSIDE I'M SCREAMING, a fictionalized account of a journalist's fight for sanity, was published by MIRA Books in 2003. Reviewers called the novel "riveting," "insightful," and, in the words of the *Oakland Tribune*, "hard to put down." But INSIDE I'M SCREAMING has since been translated into six languages and has sold nearly a quarter of a million copies.

In 2005, Flock's second novel, ME & EMMA (MIRA Books), spent six consecutive weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Called "a triumph" by bestselling author Kathleen DeMarco, ME & EMMA has been compared to TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, and was referred to as "haunting?not soon forgotten," by *Booklist*. *Kirkus Reviews* wrote,

"Flock captures [the main character's] powerlessness and resourcefulness beautifully?tremendously touching." ME & EMMA was chosen as one of the "Best Books of 2005" by *Booksense* and was a *Highlight* Pick of the Year. In addition to being a bestseller in the UK, ME & EMMA has been published in 10 countries, translated into seven languages and has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide.

EVERYTHING MUST GO (MIRA Books, 2007), Flock's third novel, is set in the Connecticut of her childhood. *The Dallas Morning News* wrote, "in Ms. Flock's talented hands, [Henry] becomes someone readers will keep rooting for long after it would seem the game is over," and *Booklist* wrote, "another strong characterization from Flock, who uncannily immerses herself in [the main character's] vulnerable, yet stalwart, psyche." On the show Sunday Papers, WGN-Radio's Rick Kogan called the main character "one of the most interesting characters in contemporary fiction."

Elizabeth Flock lives in New York City and Northeast Harbor, Maine.

Critical Praise

"From the first page, Elizabeth Flock takes you inside the mind and heart of a young woman of promise, about to be destroyed by her own past. A riveting, fast-paced tale by a first-time novelist with a gift for breathing life into her characters."

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