



What Love Means to You People

By NancyKay Shapiro

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What Love Means to You People By NancyKay Shapiro

A powerful debut about a young man whose denial of his past nearly destroys the new life he seeks

Shaking off his hellish adolescence in a nowhere Nebraska town (and leaving a beloved younger sister to fend for herself in the same hostile environment), Seth McKenna escapes to make a new reality for himself as a struggling artist in Manhattan. When he falls hard for Jim Glaser, an alluring older man who is astonished to find in Seth the second love of his life, it seems simpler to gloss over his old life in Drinkwater and the history he used to have. Jim, who expected to remain alone forever, is happy to start over, too, and theirs becomes a tender, sexy romance.

Although Seth seems to have successfully put his past behind him to become the man he wants to be---the kind of man Jim can cherish---his childhood rushes back unexpectedly and with a vengeance. When Seth's sister, Cassie, arrives in the city with significant secrets and plans of her own, Drinkwater's intractable demands force Seth to revisit his hidden past. What Jim learns about Seth's concealments threatens to destroy their new life together.

An engrossing contemporary drama of family ties both imposed and chosen, *What Love Means to You People* presents an indelible, illuminating look at the survival of the human spirit through willful reinvention and the power of love.

Advance Praise for *What Love Means to You People*

"A powerful debut novel--smart, sexy, and highly readable. NancyKay Shapiro's characters are subtly observed and movingly human."--Regina McBride, author of *The Marriage Bed*

"Profound and moving. Shapiro dares to reimagine suffering and takes us on a journey to love and back. Seth McKenna will get under your skin. I am touched."--Abha Daweser, author of *Babyji*

"NancyKay Shapiro's debut is a powerful and knowing look at what can happen to love when the past bubbles up into the present. Elegantly written, this is a moving and surprising novel that doesn't let you go."--Katharine Weber, author of *The Little Women*, *The Music Lesson*, and *Objects in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

With painstakingly detailed, passionate sex scenes balanced by plenty of insight into its characters' anguished inner lives, Shapiro's debut novel dramatically captures love's roulette of emotions: the electricity of possibility, the pull of youth, the weight of loss. Shapiro depicts the fraught relationship between two New York City men: 42-year-old ad exec Jim Glaser and 23-year-old pretty-boy and aspiring artist Seth McKenna. Pulled together by empathy and animal attraction, Jim and Seth must also navigate undercurrents of pain: Jim still mourns the death of his long-term partner, Zak, and Seth conceals a troubled smalltown Nebraska background that includes a fundamentalist Christian mother, an abusive stepfather and a horrifying teenage experience that has left him emotionally crippled. Afraid of Jim's pity, Seth paints a much cheerier picture of his upbringing, and when his younger sister, Cassie, suddenly shows up in New York, Seth is terrified she will reveal their history. Bitter that Seth escaped Nebraska and she didn't until now, Cassie also struggles with but quickly accepts his homosexuality. Fate temporarily calls Seth back to Nebraska, and he and Jim hit a painful low before Shapiro delivers a reassuring if improbable happy ending. (Mar.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Cooper Union grad student Seth "enhances" his background during a first date with Jim, 40, the assured, suave, power-suited ad exec Seth met while assisting on a photo shoot. We know where this is going, but the pleasure's in the process as experienced Jim, still grieving the loss of longtime lover Zak two years ago, forestalls the inevitable and spends months--months!--of quiet dinners and long, meandering walks before falling passionately into bed with the youth for four days of hot sex. The two seem soul-destined, but nightmares of Seth's abused, impoverished past follow them into Jim's well-appointed bed. For it's culture shock for the youth from Nebraska, whose slummy apartment consists of tiny bedroom, bathtub-in-kitchen, and a futon for the hooker roommate. Complications mount when Seth's sister, Cassie, arrives unexpectedly. This smoothly written gay melodrama on both the poignancy of first love and love the second time around cries for movie adaptation. *Whitney Scott*

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About the Author

NancyKay Shapiro lives in New York City's Greenwich Village. This is her first novel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patricia Henderson:

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Melinda Gregory:

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