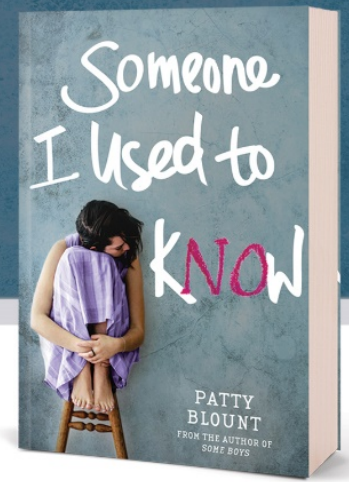


Someone I Used to Know

by PATTY BLOUNT



Let's Talk...

Trigger Warning: Boys will be boys is never an excuse...

A Note From Author Patty Blount → Thank you for considering *SOMEONE I USED TO KNOW* for your book club. I know this novel presents some tough issues, so I prepared this Book Talk Packet to make discussing this novel easy and enlightening. Did you know *SOMEONE I USED TO KNOW* is a Junior Library Guild 2018 Fall Selection? Here's what reviewers are saying.

"This book provides a nuanced look at the toxicity of rape culture and the long-lasting and harming aftermath of sexual assault. VERDICT: Recommended for all YA shelves." ~ Danielle Jacobs, School Library Journal

"A beautifully crafted look at the complications of returning to 'regular life' after a devastating sexual assault. Fierce in its unapologetic dissection of rape culture, toxic masculinity, and athletic entitlement, Patty Blount does not hold her punches with respect to how difficult healing can be for an entire family. This book is thoughtful and thought-provoking, and ultimately very hopeful for survivors and those around them." -Christa Desir, author of FAULT LINE and BLEED LIKE ME

Themes

From the societal perspective, *rape culture* is covered in depth and illustrated in the text through several examples such as a car wreck in which the driver of an expensive car is blamed for the crash, and a Pinterest board of ads showing hyper-sexualized content. *Entitlement* is explored, especially as it pertains to athletes, sports. *Justice* is examined...specifically, the startling lack of justice when it comes to crimes like this.

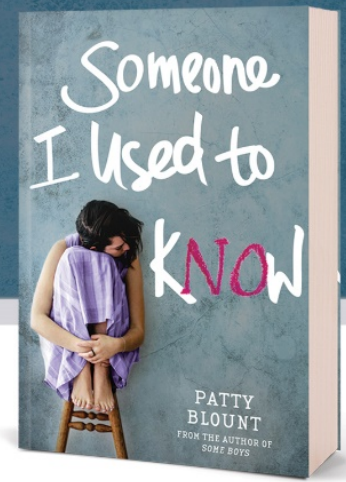
From a family perspective, the novel dives deep into the wounds 'secondary survivors' suffer after rape and sexual assault. I suggest discussing what **secondary survivor** means in this context and discussing why readers think I included it in the novel. PTSD, healing, and what we mean by 'trigger' play large roles in the book. Perhaps the most critical themes are *forgiveness* and *hope*. I absolutely believe the novel is *hopeful* because we see Ashley willing to look forward, not back.

Questions to Discuss

The following questions are included in the novel and are posted to my website. You're welcome to use these or develop your own.

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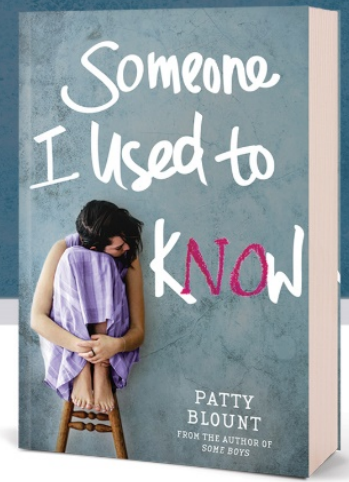
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1. In navigating the issue of society's responses to rape and sexual assault, Patty Blount uses two main characters, siblings Ashley and Derek. How does their relationship magnify those responses? Why do you think the author chose to have two narrators tell this story?
2. How have additional characters in this book reflected societal responses to rape?
3. We see both Ashley's and Derek's reactions to the team scavenger hunt. How would you react to such an activity? How would your opinion change if you were Derek? If you were Ashley? If you were Sebastian?
4. The #MeToo movement exposes just how many untold stories of rape, abuse, and assault there are. How do you respond to the real accounts you're exposed to? How has reading *Someone I Used To Know* changed the way you'll respond in the future?
5. How does a person's gender influence their responses to stories like *Someone I Used To Know*? How about to #MeToo accounts? How can a novel like this change minds?
6. In terms of theme, *Someone I Used To Know* deals a lot with *fault* and *blame* and how the person at fault isn't always the person blamed. How is this distinction exhibited in the siblings' relationship, as in Question 1?
7. Throughout the story, the author refers to a number of real-world examples of rape culture like inappropriate messages in advertising. What other examples of rape culture can you identify in the novel? What about in your life? Can you think of ways to fight those examples, as Ashley did with her pledge form and later, her Pinterest board?
8. *Someone I Used To Know* has a somewhat complicated structure in which the chapters not only alternate between Ashley and Derek, but the timelines flash back and forth between *now* and *before*. What did you think about Ashley and Derek's relationship *before* the rape? What about *after*? How do you think the siblings have changed by the end of the book?
9. Characters from an earlier Patty Blount novel make appearances in this one. What similarities do you see between Grace (*Some Boys*) and Ashley? How about between Ian (*Some Boys*) and Derek? What about Zac (*Some Boys*) and Victor?
10. In both *Some Boys* and in *Someone I Used To Know*, organized sports is used as a backdrop. How does the importance we attach to sports and to athletes contribute to rape culture?
11. *Some Boys* was inspired by the Stuebenville, Ohio rape trial. What true events do you see reflected in *Someone I Used To Know*?
12. One of the most important themes in *Someone I Used To Know* is *forgiveness*. What is its significance to Ashley? To Derek? To the rest of their family?

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Activities You Can Try

I asked some librarian friends for activity ideas and it was unanimous – share *Ashley's Before & After* Pinterest board. I have and here's the link: <https://pin.it/crkl5iww6lm36b>

Encourage your book club to use the internet to find additional examples of ads and headlines that objectify people or perpetuate the sort of excuses made in the novel and how they'd correct them.

Also, encourage your readers to tag me in tweets calling out examples of rape culture. I may not be able to respond to all, but I will see them.



Internet Crawl

Throughout the novel, I mention websites like Grace Brown's *Project Unbreakable* and actual rallies like *Take Back the Night*. Visit these sites and discuss their importance not just to the story, but to society.

Though *Raise the BAR* and *GAR* are fictional, see if your club can find real examples of similar movements. Would any of your book club members consider supporting the movements they find?

Play List

Use Spotify, iTunes or YouTube to create a playlist of songs you think represent the themes in this novel. Defend your selections.

Non-Fiction Tie-ins

Some readers like their books to be **non-fiction**. What non-fiction books, blogs, websites, podcasts, etc. can you find that align with the themes presented in *Someone I Used to Know*?