



Pieces of a Life

Diane Kellogg Pelletiere

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You see two very different families, the Merediths and the Kelloggs, when Ruth and John meet in 1926. You watch their recent family history unfold, centering on their parents and grandparents. Ruth's early diaries and John's autobiography form the underpinnings of their story. Ruth at twenty and John at twenty-seven are from different worlds. John Webb Kellogg was born into wealth, son and grandson of engineers in Buffalo, New York. John's money and future disappear, it seems, when his father dies, leaving little but a sixteen-room house to his second wife, a young Irishwoman, and their two children, John and Dorothy. John is driven to succeed, much like the Scottish-English Kelloggs who preceded him-impatient, quick-tempered. He feels cheated out of the lifestyle he enjoyed as a child. He works his way through the University of Michigan, riveted on making money and living well. Just out of Austin High in Chicago, Ruth Viola Meredith is a sweet, kind girl who worked very hard to graduate. She loves making clothes, going to movies, and playing games with her girlfriends. She dreams about a steady beau, but no one appears. Ruth, her brother, Jimmie, and her parents live in blue-collar Austin, a neighborhood on the west side of Chicago. Her father came from a farm in Berrien County, Michigan, as a young man. Her mother's side came from the East Coast in the mid-1800s. Ruth's roots are English, Dutch, and Welsh.

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