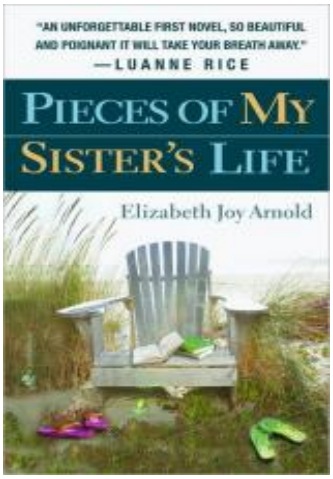
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Pieces of My Sister's Life

by Elizabeth Joy Arnold



About the Book

Twin sisters Kerry and Eve Barnard shared one soul, one language and one future, sailing the Block Island harbor with their father, shouldering each other's longing for their absent mother, and losing themselves in their neighbor Justin's stories about a magical world called Canardia. Until the tumultuous, tragic summer of their sixteenth birthday, when their father's death upends their world and they learn that what they both want is a future only one of them can have.

Thirteen years later, Kerry returns to her childhood home to comfort her terminally ill sister and to confront Justin, the husband she thought would be hers, and Gillian, the daughter who looks just like her --- hoping to finally bring closure to the dark secrets and cruel betrayals that tore the sisters apart.

Beautiful, heartbreaking, and insightful, this debut novel explores the passions that shape our lives, the pain of dealing with a loved one's illness, and the unbreakable bonds of sisterhood. The following questions are intended to enhance your reading of this captivating novel.

Discussion Guide

1. Kerry and Eve share the same issue of loneliness, parental abandonment, and loss, yet each sister deals with these issues differently. With which sister do you most identify, and why?

2. Kerry felt a true love for Justin at a very young age. How did Kerry and Justin?s relationship affect the tone of the story?

3. Who do you think is the stronger of the two sisters, Eve or Kerry? Which of the twins? characteristics do you admire most? Why?

4. After the twins get separate haircuts, Kerry has a sense of jealousy and feels a subtle separation between herself and her sister, while Eve seems happy to develop her own identity. Why is Eve?s act so important? Who is demonstrating maturity?

5. While looking at childhood photos of themselves, Eve asks, ?if we could go back, what would we tell them?? Kerry replies, ?They?ll turn out okay in the end.? If you could ?go back,? what would you tell your childhood self?

6. Could you have done what Kerry did for her sister at the end? Do you think Kerry?s actions are justified? In terms of abiding by the law, what actions should Kerry and Justin haven taken?

7. Kerry, wounded by her mother?s abandonment, decides to contact her about Eve?s illness. Did Kerry do this for herself, or for her sister?

8. Kerry and Eve store childhood possessions in their attic, essentially putting pieces of their childhood away. Why is this significant?

9. Many times in a story an evil twin exists. Do you think there is an evil twin in **Pieces of My Sister?s Life**?

10. Kerry believes she?d broken an invisible wall the night of Maclean's death. She says she ?pushed through an uncrossable boundary now open and waiting for me to cross again.? What does this statement mean to you?

11. Kerry says she doesn?t believe in heroes or villains, only in mistakes. What do you think about this declaration? Do you think there is a hero at the end of this story? Is there a villain? What does it take to be a hero in today?s world?

Author Bio

Elizabeth Arnold was raised in New York, and has degrees from Vassar College and Princeton University. She lives with her husband in Hopewell, New Jersey, where she is at work on her next novel.

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