

## Pieces of Her by Karin Slaughter

4 stars

How well do you know your mother?

Life for Andrea (Andy) is conventional until she agrees to meet her mother and friends at a coffee shop at the time when a deranged shooter decides to commit suicide by cop - except Andy is not a cop. She is a dispatcher for the police wearing a similar uniform. So starts the plot which will take Andy all over the USA not knowing who she can trust.

Setting a story using two or more timelines seems to be very popular at the moment, and Karin Slaughter is no exception. The action in "Pieces of Her" is set in the present day and 1986. The Queller company is headed by father Martin and, amongst other interests, focuses on care homes for the elderly and those mentally challenged. It's a very successful venture, but success often comes at a price and a blurring of the boundaries between right and wrong, walking the tightrope between what is illegal and what is not.

Karin Slaughter is a well known and popular novelist who has avoided churning out undistinguished potboilers every six months or so. Her novels have innovative and unique storylines which keep the reader guessing throughout the plot. "Pieces of Her" is no exception.

The plot is essentially the chronicle of events of family members, close friends and lovers during the two time periods identified earlier. It's a bit like a jigsaw, and everything is totally confusing at the outset, and it's a race to try to fit all the pieces together before the end of the book. This has its disadvantages as I was totally at sea for at least the first two-thirds of the story, but it was fun trying to work out who was who.

The characters all feel like real people although I questioned whether some of their actions might be a little too improbable. The relationships between all the characters were complicated as well, so the readers have to keep their wits about them, and the switching between the timelines is equally confusing for reasons which become obvious. It's not possible to be more specific as it would spoil much of the mystery.

Mainly as a result of the confusion it's not Ms Slaughter's very best work, and as a result, it loses a star, but it remains a cracking story and one well worth reading. Highly recommended.

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.

