



From Both Sides of the River: A Family Portrait

Anne Cutter Mikkelsen

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Anne Cutter Mikkelsen grew up in a boisterous Irish Catholic family in Anoka, Minnesota, on the banks of the Mississippi River. In awe of her larger-than-life parents—Mary Helen, a radio soap opera writer who later transformed herself into assistant to Simone (Simca) Beck in the South of France, and Darrah, a dashing WWII Navy flier and war hero who became an attorney and gentleman farmer—Anne and her seven siblings enjoyed an idyllic childhood. That is, until Anne turned sixteen, when her father vanished in the wilds of the Arctic. Inspired by her mother's indomitable spirit, Anne goes on to study classical French cooking, and becomes a restaurateur and host of a TV cooking show. But despite her career success and pleasure in raising her four children, her father's mysterious disappearance casts a profound shadow over Anne's life. Two decades after losing her father, Anne discovers a record of her parents' relationship—handwritten journals, letters, and one cryptic short story, which mystically appear when Anne needs them most. Seeking answers to what really happened to her father, Anne revisits her parents' marriage, and is caught between what is memory and what is truth... and all that lies between. *From Both Sides of the River* is both an intimate portrait of a family, and the exhilarating story of how one woman's journey into the past did indeed shine a new light on the people she loved. In illuminating her family's story with tenderness and compassion, Anne helps us see our own.

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