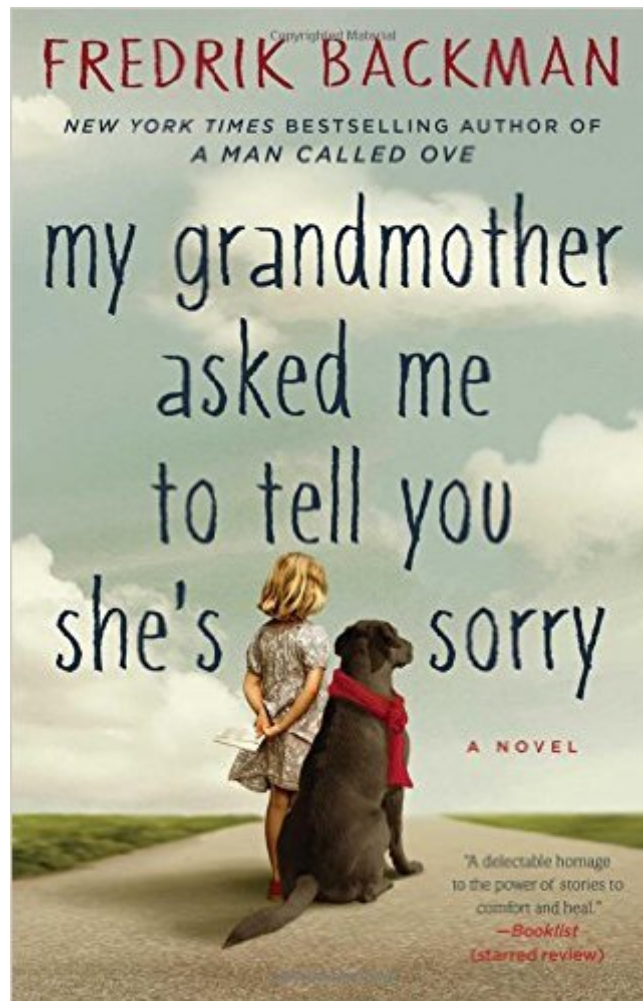


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My Grandmother Asked Me To Tell You She's Sorry: A Novel



Synopsis

A charming, warmhearted novel from the author of the New York Times bestseller *A Man Called Ove*. Elsa is seven years old and different. Her grandmother is seventy-seven years old and crazy—as in standing-on-the-balcony-firing-paintball-guns-at-strangers crazy. She is also Elsa's best, and only, friend. At night Elsa takes refuge in her grandmother's stories, in the Land-of-Almost-Awake and the Kingdom of Miamas, where everybody is different and nobody needs to be normal. When Elsa's grandmother dies and leaves behind a series of letters apologizing to people she has wronged, Elsa's greatest adventure begins. Her grandmother's instructions lead her to an apartment building full of drunks, monsters, attack dogs, and old crones but also to the truth about fairy tales and kingdoms and a grandmother like no other. *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* is told with the same comic accuracy and beating heart as Fredrik Backman's bestselling debut novel, *A Man Called Ove*. It is a story about life and death and one of the most important human rights: the right to be different.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book was an interesting read with a lot of emotional scenes that tug at your heart strings. Elsa is a seven-year old that is mature beyond her years. Her wacky but devoted grandmother is Elsa's best and only friend. Granny (a former globe-trotting surgeon) fills the lonely girl's world with adventures and stories about the make believe Land-of-Almost-Awake. When Granny suddenly dies Elsa finds that her grandmother has left her a series of letters that must be delivered to the other tenants that live in the same apartment building as Elsa. As written, the letters are apologies from

Granny, but they are really a way for Granny to build bonds of friendship between the lonely Elsa and the other tenants in the building. Through the letters Elsa also comes to realize that the make-believe characters in her grandmother's stories are all based on real people and real events. Overall I found the book a thoroughly enjoyable read. It was both funny and heartbreaking at the same time. But while I loved the middle and the end of the book, I found the beginning a little muddled. In the beginning I found it hard to relate to the wacky almost senile character of Granny, and the convoluted stories about the Land-of-Almost-Awake were confusing and difficult to follow. (I actually found myself skimming the sections about Miamas and the Land-of-Almost-Awake.) But after Granny's death all those random pieces started to come together in a very structured way. (At this point I had to go back and re-read the parts I skimmed). In the end I found that all of Granny's madcap actions had a reason, and all her stories had a point. So a very enjoyable read, just pay attention to all those stories that Granny and Elsa tell in the beginning. They really are important. On a side note there is one thing that still confuses me about the book: What was the deal with the Leaseholds? Why would the conversion from flats to leasehold make some tenants a profit and force other tenants out of the building?

What a book! What a crazy, goofy, wonderful book this is! It is a little difficult to read, but, once you get the hang of it, the author has really captured how a scared and angry little girl named Elsa thinks and feels if a child that age had the insight and vocabulary to do so. Of course, Elsa is "different." She is brilliant in ways children seldom are, and she acts out in ways that are clearly understood by the adults in her world. This writer is brilliant in evoking an emotion in a person as the reader responds to the little girl's responses to situations and then figures out what is actually going on through his clever weaving of clues. Elsa's grandmother dies and charges Elsa with delivering a series of letters that explain things about Elsa's neighbors and about life itself through her apologies, and as Elsa begins to understand the world around her, so do you. That is because it is a book that draws you into the heart and soul of the characters, and leaves you scratching your head as to how you actually got there. I love this book, and really admire this writer's talent. I read a lot. Some books are a nice story, some a nice adventure, and some will change your life. And here is a spoiler alert: this is a book that will change your life. Fredrik Backman is brilliant, and he dares to change lives through his writing. He makes it okay to be different, by finding the "different" in us all.

Fredrick Backman's novel *MY GRANDMOTHER ASKED ME TO TELL YOU SHE SORRY* (rendered all in caps or in lower case, depending on whether you

look at the book jacket or inside) calls forth an adjective I've never used in a review before: it's KOOKY! The basic premise seems sane and straight forward. Elsa is a very precocious almost-eight-year-old; her grandmother (who towards the beginning of the story is dying of cancer) is a retired surgeon, and in her younger days was "all over the map" saving the lives of children in regions ravaged by war and other disasters. Having neglected her own daughter, Elsa's Mum, Granny makes it up by turning her granddaughter into a confidante and "partner in crime". Together they develop the fantasy of six fairy-tale kingdoms and a "secret language" which they share. These kingdoms are in the "Land-of-Almost-Awake" which is accessed by riding cloud animals. When Granny is no longer able to conceal from the astute Elsa (who surfs the Net, continually accesses Wikipedia, and has read all the Harry Potter books so much she knows them by heart) that she is dying, she commissions her granddaughter to deliver a series of letters which Elsa will acquire in treasure-hunt mode. These letters bear apologies to numerous beings (mostly human, but one "worse" who, it turns out, are all residents of the building in which Elsa's mother, stepfather, and Granny herself all have flats. However, things rapidly escalate from the mundane to the weird as Elsa begins her "quest" after Granny's death, and each of the various characters' stories are told and woven together. The story, as viewed from the perspective of Elsa (though not a first-person narrative), intrigues with its mixture of worldliness and naïveté. As the story continues, the overlap between the fairy-tale world and Elsa's day-to-day existence becomes ever more intricate. The dialog is at times replete with gutter language, which Elsa takes in stride, but the context in which this is used is completely plausible and it definitely helps to round out character. I can't say I "couldn't" put this book down, but I CAN say that I didn't want to. I found it involving and fascinating from start to finish

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