



My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry

by Fredrik Backman

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry

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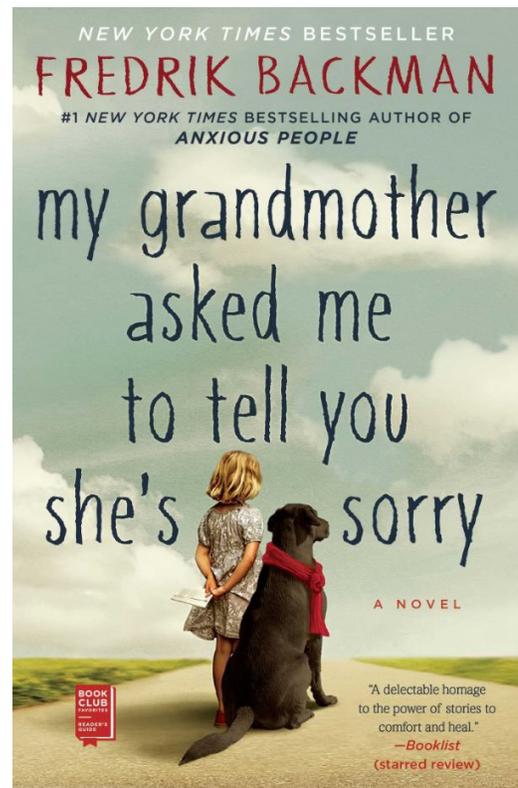
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Book summary

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



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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.

Source: Simon and Schuster
(simonandschuster.com/books/My-Grandmother-Asked-Me-to-Tell-You-Shes-Sorry/Fredrik-Backman/9781501115073)





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Meet the Author

Fredrik Backman is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Man Called Ove*, *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry*, *Britt-Marie Was Here*, *Beartown*, *Us Against You*, and *Anxious People*, as well as two novellas and one work of nonfiction. His books are published in more than forty countries. He lives in Stockholm, Sweden, with his wife and two children.

Source: Author's website. (fredrikbackmanbooks.com/fredrik-backman-about.html)





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Discussion Questions

1. *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* begins with the pronouncement, "Every seven-year-old deserves a superhero." (page 1) Do you agree? Why is it so important that children have heroes? Who were your heroes when you were a child?
2. Names play a significant part in Elsa's grandmother's stories. How do the various kingdom and heroine names from the Land-of-Almost-Awake (Miamas, Miploris, Mimovas, Wolfheart, the Chosen One, the sea-angel, etc.) inform your understanding of Granny's stories? Did you agree with how their real world counterparts were portrayed in the stories?
3. Elsa's mother grew up in a nontraditional family environment. Do you think this influenced her parenting style with Elsa? In what ways?
4. Were you surprised by the ways in which each of the apartment tenants were connected to the others? Which relationship surprised you the most? Why?
5. Granny is a polarizing figure in *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry*. Describe the way each of the characters reacts to her. Do you think their opinions of her are justified? Why or why not? What did you think of Granny? Do you know anyone like her?
6. Discuss the role that books, especially the Harry Potter novels, play in Elsa's life. Why do you think Elsa relates to the Harry Potter books more than other novels? When you were growing up, were there books you particularly loved? Which ones and why?
7. What did you think of Britt-Marie when you first encountered her? Did she remind you of anyone in your life? Where do you think Britt-Marie goes at the end of the novel?
8. Elsa believes that her "teachers are wrong. [She] has no problems concentrating. She just concentrates on the right things." (page 47) What kinds of things does Elsa concentrate on? How does this create problems for her? Do you think that Elsa is a good student? Why or why not?



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9. Which of the characters in *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* surprised you the most? Why?
10. Discuss Britt-Marie's marriage to Kent. Did you think they were well suited for each other? Do you think the marriage changed Britt-Marie? How can being in a bad relationship affect someone's personality?
11. Fairy tales can provide a way to teach children some fundamental truths about the world. How do Granny's fairy tales help Elsa understand the world around her? What lessons does Elsa take away from the tales her Granny tells her about life in the land of Miamas?
12. When her grandmother dies, Elsa is of course sad, but she also experiences a wide range of other emotions, including anger. Can you name some of the others? Consider how the loss of a loved one can lead us to have feelings that are much more complicated than sadness.
13. In this book, as in his previous novel *A Man Called Ove*, Fredrik Backman paints a vivid portrait of the relationship between an older person nearing the end of his or her life, and a young child. What can people at the opposite ends of life learn from one another? How are the very old and the very young alike? How are they different? When you were very young, was there an elderly person who played a significant role in your life? What did you learn from them?

Source: Simon and Schuster

(simonandschuster.com/books/My-Grandmother-Asked-Me-to-Tell-You-Shes-Sorry/Fredrik-Backman/9781501115073)



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Recipes

Swedish Dream Cookies

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter softened
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon crushed ammonium carbonate also called baker's ammonium
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 1/2 cups sweetened flaked coconut



Sift together flour and salt. Beat together butter and sugar with an electric mixer until pale and fluffy. Beat in ammonium carbonate and almond extract until combined well. Mix in flour mixture at low speed just until blended, then stir in coconut. Form dough into a disk and chill, wrapped in plastic wrap, until firm, about 1 hour. [You could probably skip the chilling, if you're short on time. A few comments said they didn't chill it and it made no difference. I chilled mine, but the dough was essentially the same consistency after an hour as it was before.]

Preheat oven to 300°F. Roll dough into 1-inch balls and arrange 1 inch apart on greased baking sheets. Bake cookies in batches in upper third of oven until pale golden around edges, 18 to 22 minutes. [Mine baked for 21 minutes.] Transfer cookies to a rack to cool.

Source: Hungry Bookworm

(hungry-bookworm.com/2016/09/01/my-grandmother-asked-me-to-tell-you-shes-sorry-swedish-dream-cookies)

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Mini Cinnamon Rolls

Dough

- 1 1/3 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt

Filling

- 4 tablespoons butter completely softened
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- Frosting
- 2 tablespoons butter softened
- 2 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- milk



Preheat oven to 375 and lightly grease a muffin pan. Add water, yeast, and honey to the bowl of a stand mixer fitting with a dough hook and stir to combine. Allow to rest for 5 minutes (mixture will rise and foam).

Add flour and salt to bowl. Turn the mixer on low and allow to mix until ingredients come together, then increase mixing speed to medium-low for 5 minutes. Remove dough from bowl and allow to rise for 10 minutes on a lightly floured surface.

While dough is rising, prepare the filling by whisking together sugars in a bowl.



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Use a floured rolling pin to roll dough into a 9x15 inch rectangle. Use a pizza cutter to trim off the sides if it isn't perfectly rectangular. Spread softened butter over the surface of the dough. Sprinkle cinnamon-sugar mixture over the butter.

Tightly roll one 15-inch side (the long side) of the dough toward the other 15-inch side to create a long log. Pinch the seam so it closes off the log. Use a very sharp knife or a pizza cutter to cut the ends off and then to cut the log into 24 equal parts. Place each cinnamon roll in the greased muffin tins. Bake 15-20 minutes until golden brown.

While cinnamon rolls are baking, prepare the frosting. Cream together butter and cream cheese. Mix in the vanilla. Gradually add powdered sugar and mix until combined. Add milk 1 tablespoon at a time [I ended up using 6 tablespoons] until frosting reaches a spreadable consistency. When cinnamon rolls are finished baking, drizzle or spread frosting over rolls and serve.

Source: Hungry Bookworm (hungry-bookworm.com/2016/08/15/sleeping-giants-mini-cinnamon-rolls)

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