



Artichoke Hearts

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

~~New Talent~~

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This unusual novel is about the process of dying. 12 year-old Mira's Grandmother, Nana Josie, has a terminal illness and her family experience with her each stage of the trajectory to death. As a counterpoint to this intense and unflinching account (drawn from personal experience?) of how a dying woman faces her end and says goodbye to the world, her friends and her family we have Mira's response to this inevitable loss, her growing strength and ability to occupy her own place on the earth more confidently. Along the way Mira is helped by a creative writing class in which exploration and discussions of all kinds are encouraged.

Nana Josie is an artist and the opening pages of the novel confront taboos about death head-on as we see her, with Mira's help, decorating her own coffin with bold images of the things that are important to her. Nana has lived an unconventional life and her quirkiness and humour permeate the narrative. She also has wisdom to impart and although the novel sometimes teeters on the brink of sentimentality, in the main Brahmachari carries it off.

Young readers who have experienced bereavement will find this novel touches them on many levels while for others, it may help them reflect on a subject many find it hard to think about, let alone discuss, and feel less afraid.

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