

# Come Back Grandma



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From School Library Journal Kindergarten-Grade 2-Whenever her parents and friends were otherwise engaged, Bessie always had Grandma. The woman had speckled eyes, freckles, bendy thumbs, and, most of all, time. As a loving portrait of a grandparent, this picture book succeeds. It runs into trouble, however, when it tries to explain the woman's death and to give comfort. Bessie grows up and becomes the parent of a baby who, as she grows older, has many of Grandma's traits. Along the way, there is an attempt to make the deceased woman a part of nature and even to invoke the Hindu belief in reincarnation through a rather contrived introduction of a friend named Krishna. Although the soft watercolor and pen-and-ink illustrations are soothing, the plot is too mechanical. Some readers may anticipate the final revelation-that Rose is just like Grandma-before it is disclosed. A moderately satisfying title in the growing genre of books for young children about loss and death. Harriett Fargnoli, Great Neck Library, NY Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Ages 3-8. "Grandma always had time for Bessie." Intimate line and watercolor illustrations and a spare text show the special relationship between a small, sturdy girl and her grandmother. The silver-haired woman is warm and lively; she's as good at hopscotch as she is at taming birds, but Bessie's favorite game is Count Grandma's Freckles. When Grandma dies, Bessie misses her and can't forget

her. After all the pictures of joyful affection, a double-page spread shows the child alone and downcast at the graveside. Several illustrations show her with loving family and friends, still missing Grandma. Then comes the surprise: the story leaps ahead to when Bessie grows up, marries, and has a baby--who looks and acts \"just like Grandma, only a little girl.\" The grief is heartfelt, and so is the quiet sense of renewal. Without heavy messages, this will help children to deal with loss and to look forward. Hazel Rochman See all Editorial Reviews"

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