



# Grandpère

*Janet Romain*

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## **Grandpère** Janet Romain

Anzel, a widow in her sixties, lives quietly on her small farm with her ninety-eight-year-old grandfather, a Carrier elder from Northern BC. Grandpère and Anzel pass the time playing fierce cribbage games, cutting firewood and tending the vegetable garden.

As the days pass Grandpère tells Anzel his life story, sharing heartbreaking memories: the death of his family in a devastating epidemic, growing up alone within a white community, his son's murder at the hands of a horse thief, and his battle with and eventual triumph over alcoholism. When their extended family comes to visit on holidays and weekends, Grandpère, with the tenderness of an elder, tells the children of the Carrier traditions and values. Their days together are simple and happy, and when Anzel meets Jim, a caretaker at the local pensioners' home, life seems complete.

But one day a taxi arrives from town. Its passenger is Angel, a frightened thirteen-year-old stranger who claims to be Anzel's granddaughter. Her father, she says, was Anzel's youngest son Ben, who was killed in a car crash fourteen years prior. Angel's mother, alone and pregnant with Ben's child, ran away to the city to raise the child far from the disapproving eyes of her family. But after years of poverty and loneliness, she succumbed to the streets of Vancouver. Angel, neglected and abused at the hands of her mother's new boyfriend, followed the trail to her father's family. When Anzel takes in this unknown granddaughter, she and her family must act quickly to protect her.

Romain's first novel, Grandpère is a tender story of determination, loss and family love.

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