



# My Mother's Chamomile

*Susie Finkbeiner*

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## **My Mother's Chamomile** Susie Finkbeiner

Desperate for the rains of mercy... Middle Main, Michigan has one stop light, one bakery, one hair salon...and one funeral home. The Eliot Family has assisted the grieving people in their town for over fifty years. After all those years of comforting others, they are the ones in need of mercy. Olga, the matriarch who fixes everything, is unable to cure what ails her precious daughter. She is forced to face her worst fears. How can she possibly trust God with Gretchen's life? A third generation mortician, Evelyn is tired of the isolation that comes with the territory of her unconventional occupation. Just when it seems she's met a man who understands her, she must deal with her mother's heartbreaking news. Always able to calm others and say just the right thing, she is now overwhelmed with helplessness as she watches Gretchen slip away. They are tasting only the drought of tragedy...where is the deluge of comfort God promises?

## **My Mother's Chamomile Details**

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# **From Reader Review My Mother's Chamomile for online ebook**

## **Michelle Alvarez says**

I fell in love with these characters. I wanted to be a part of their family, pray for them, shared in their grief (a lot). These characters so beautifully written left a lasting imprint on my soul. I want to visit them, have some tea with them and see how they are doing.

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## **Kristi says**

This story is told, in alternating chapters, by Olga (the grandmother of the family) and Evelyn (the adult granddaughter). The author does an excellent job of distinguishing between the voices of the two women. There's never any doubt about who's telling their part of the family's story.

That aside, this is an absolutely wonderful book. Since it centers around a family who runs a funeral home, there are times when it would behoove the reader to have a box of tissues handy. Each death/funeral, though not a major plot point in the main story, is handled so beautifully by the author (and, therefore, the characters). Ms. Finkbeiner uses these moments to display caring and mercy in heart-breakingly beautiful ways.

I won't tell any of the story, because I think the reader needs to take that journey with this family. Suffice it to say, you won't regret a moment of it.

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## **Susie Finkbeiner says**

All I'm saying is it's really strange to sit and read a book you wrote. Very, very strange.

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## **Janie R. says**

A most compelling, moving story! Poignant characters with powerful emotions and feelings, and very real experience of death, loss, and wrenching grief. They did, however, experience mercy, hope, faith, love, compassion, and healing.

I was touched deeply by this story, I felt like I was there right along with them. It makes one ponder on the frailty of life.

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## **Rachel Watson says**

If I was asked to retitle this book (which isn't necessary but let's just pretend), I would call it The Heartbreaking Facts of Life. Or something like that. I ugly-cried all the way through because all of the

sorrows -- and joys -- the Eliot-Russell family experienced felt like they were happening. Directly. To. Me. And my family. It's been years since I've read a novel in which the characters felt so real, like they were people I know and love dearly. I could picture them all clearly, in crisp detail. (Good job, Susie Finkbeiner!) To say that their pain broke my heart, over and over again, would be an understatement. The last 30 pages destroyed me. Ha! So if you want to read this book, I highly recommend reading it either by yourself or in a room filled with people who've already witnessed your ugly cry and love you anyway. And bring a Kleenex box.

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### **Jocelyn Green says**

The most original piece of fiction I've read in years. My Mother's Chamomile is the contemporary tale of a family in the funeral director/mortician line of work. It is not sensational in any way, but it is so real it just might turn your heart inside out. This is one of those books that isn't just a good book, but an important book. It challenged and blessed me. I read it in two days.

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### **Angie Moore says**

Beautifully written novel told from the views of Olga & Evelyn (grandmother & granddaughter) I love the deep love between Olga & Clive! Oh how they love each other even though they are 'old' it made me choke up just thinking about it! Definitely a must read book.

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### **Suzy Parish says**

Susie Finkbeiner pulled off what all writers want to achieve. She placed me, the reader, smack in the middle of the heart of each character. From the introspective matriarch of the family, Olga, to Evelyn who is just beginning the journey of her life. My Mother's Chamomile captured the personality of each character and gave us a peek at life through their eyes. The warmth of the family was endearing. A good book to read to ponder what are really the valuable things in life.

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### **Shelana Ferris says**

Susie's second novel is very different from her first but just as well written. Like her first novel her chapters are broken up by the two main characters, Olga and Evelyn. I love how you see the story from the two different characters point of view. I quickly got wrapped up into the lives of their family. Susie made the story seem so real to me and I empathized with the characters in their heartache. Yes, it is a Christian fiction novel but not to the point where a non Christian wouldn't enjoy it. The book is full of faith, love and hope which is what our lives as Christians should be like.

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### **April McGowan says**

“The courage to take a meager step some days exhausted me. But bravery could bring glory to my Lord. I just had to believe it.” ~Olga

The Eliot family owns a three-generation run funeral home. The mark of Christ-like love and grace they've made on their community is indelible. But, as often in the case of the most compassionate, they are overlooked because of the job they provide. Simply, no one wants to think about death and they make people think about it. Because of this, deep and lasting friendships are rare and dear. This is especially true for Evelyn, one of the granddaughters. She's felt ostracized because of her family's profession, and yet, chose to carry it on anyway. It's painfully difficult to face other's loss and pain, to face death, but the call she has to help other's and face her fears wins out. The vivid insights the reader gains through Olga (the grandmother) and Evelyn about the passage of our lives, and that final passage, are both touching and heart-wrenching. When tragedy strikes one of their own, the town reaches out to them and meets their needs, showering them with blessings and sympathy in times of deepest need.

Books don't usually make me cry—but this one had me sobbing in empathy for the characters not once, but multiple times. The heartfelt reality of these characters struck deep chords—and as their hearts broke and healed, so did mine. Highly recommended!

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## **Nancee says**

"My Mother's Chamomile" is the depiction of a family of morticians in Middle Main, Michigan.. For 50 years the Eliots have assisted families through the most difficult stage of life..... death. Years of dealing with death and grief places them in a state of loneliness in the community. People are uncomfortable with thoughts of their own mortality. The Eliots exhibit a strong faith in God, and a powerful compassion for others. Their competence, sensitivity and quiet strength bring comfort to the families they serve.

Susie Finkbeiner has exhibited a depth of wisdom and sensitivity beyond her years in this remarkably written narrative of life and death, and the emotions that accompany the final phase of life. Her choice of words is poetic and evokes powerful emotions and poignancy. The book is written with tenderness and reverence, and qualities that project the intimacy of the death experience.

Much research went into the composition of this book. The author visited with funeral directors in order to gain the insight and integrity necessary to write so that the reader can absorb the process of life to finality, and the grief that follows. The progression of life through the Eliots is remarkably personal and tender. The members of this remarkable family are created with depth of perception for humanity. individualism and believability.

I read this book slowly in order to absorb the tenderness and compassion contained within, allowing myself to soak in the spirit of life, death and the aftermath of grief. I highly recommend this masterfully written novel. It is filled with spirituality, benevolence and empathy. I was so impressed with this book that I immediately read it again. Please pick up a copy of this book and allow yourself an opportunity to be swept into a world of love, the beauty of family, as well as the frailty of life.

Quote - "Out of the corner of my eye, a lanky chamomile flower danced in the wind. It grew up wild among the other flowers. Tall, green, spindly legs under heads of yellow and white."

Disclaimer: I purchased this book with no expectations for a review of any kind. All opinions stated are my

own, and no compensation was received for this review.

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### **Peggy says**

Felt part of this very loving, Christian family. This book was thought provoking, humorous at times and so touching. Loved the portrayal of Olga & Clive's relationship. Susie Finkbeiner wrote a very real book. Loved it!

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### **Susan oleneack says**

**Wonderful and heartfelt**

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This is a true reflection of the journey through grief and I have experienced just that. I don't know how it could have been written without the grace of God. Sensitive and beautiful storytelling.

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### **Beki says**

This story drew me in from the very beginning. I felt like a part of this family, a part of the story. Death is something we all want to push away and hope we won't have to face. Whether sudden or gradual, the loss of a loved one is extremely difficult. Susie Finkbeiner captures these emotions beautifully, helping us feel them along with the family...and acknowledging that we must face them ourselves. True and honest, My Mother's Chamomile is a thoughtfully written story of mercy, grief, and comfort.

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### **Peter DeHaan says**

My Mother's Chamomile takes place in a unique setting, showing the interworkings of a family in a profession most of society misunderstands and ignores -- until we need them, and sooner or later we are all going to need them.

Aside from the amazing insight My Mother's Chamomile provides into the struggles and motivations of a funeral home family, it is also a love story, but not so much in the way you'd expect. Read it to discover a deeper love when a family who comes together in a time of need.

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