



2013

The Heavenly Village

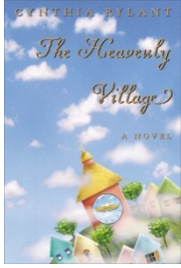
Brandon Holst
kahun.small123@gmail.com

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Author: Rylant, Cynthia

Title: The Heavenly Village

Year of Publication: 1999

Publisher: Scholastic

ISBN: 9780439040969

of pages: 95

Rating: Significant Shortcomings

Reading/Interest Level: Young Adult

Keywords: Afterlife; Fantasy; Novel; Heaven; Death

Review:

The Heavenly Village is a collection of vignettes of seven residents who have died and instead of returning to be with God, they chose to stay in the Heavenly Village. In the village each of the residents contributes in their own way. From the doctor listens to the residents to the child with a pet dog who has a special mission to save people from accidents each individual must complete their own journey until they are completely ready to leave earth behind.

As the story changes from one resident to the next, Rylant opens up a discussion of how each resident got there, why they are there and if they ever move on. The sparse picture she paints of the village helps readers to envision a peaceful afterlife. Her approach also helps remind readers about the wonders of the gift of life and evokes memories of departed loved ones. Although the book is intended for a younger audience, the themes and approach of this novel are more likely to appeal to adults. Their life experience will make adults are more likely to be able to understand the entirety of the book, while children will likely wonder what is going on. Rylant has created beautiful vignettes for adults but the book is weaker for an audience of children who most likely will only want to read it if their parent can sell it to them.

Reviewers Name: Brandon Holst

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