Don't Call Me Grandma

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Great-Grandmother Nell is scary. She does not like to be hugged or kissed, and most of all, she does not want to be called grandma. Her great-granddaughter loves her grandma and doesn’t care that she seems scary or prickly. This touching picture book helps the reader see that just because Great-Grandmother Nell isn’t a touchy and soft grandma, there is still a lot of love between the adult and child.

Elizabeth Zunon’s illustrations are colorful and capture the great-grandmother’s feelings and personality. The author is able to portray a complex relationship between an adult and a child and show that the love of a child is innocent and forgiving. We see throughout the book how the grandmother rejects affection from her granddaughter, but the child never gives up. She expresses her love for her grandma by sneaking in a kiss while she is sleeping. There is a reference to alcohol. The granddaughter notes that her grandma drinks something every day that “looks like apple juice” and her grandmother says it is her “heart medicine.”