



★ **The City of Good Death**

Priyanka Champaneri

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A mysterious death brings chaos and clarity in Priyanka Champaneri's novel, *The City of Good Death*.

To die in Kashi is to be freed from the endless burden of reincarnation and rebirth. Pramesh, who manages a hostel for dying pilgrims, confronts grief and loss on a daily basis. But when death touches his own family, his comfortable life turns sour. A relentless ghost takes up residence at the hostel, forcing Pramesh to confront the past he has long tried to bury.

Kashi is steeped in the supernatural, but this does not lessen the impact of the hauntings at the hostel. Tension rises like the sacred Ganges as the restless specter threatens to destroy Pramesh's livelihood and family. And Pramesh, ever more desperate for answers, does everything he can to rid his home of the spirit—except for the one thing he must: make peace with his past.

Pramesh is not the only one who struggles to put the past to rest. There is Bhut, a police officer still haunted by a childhood tragedy; Mrs. Chalwah, an elderly neighbor who watches the world from an upstairs window; and Shobha, Pramesh's wife, who can no longer hold back her curiosity about the in-laws she was never allowed to meet. Their plot threads are woven together, resulting in a chilling story.

Lush prose evokes the thick, close atmosphere of Kashi and the intricate religious practices upon which life and death depend. Rumor and superstition hold sway over even the most level-headed people, twisting what's explainable into something extraordinary—with tragic consequences. The resolution is like a sigh of relief after the previous intensity, promising new starts and peaceful futures.

The City of Good Death is a breathtaking, unforgettable novel about how remembering the past is just as important as moving on.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (January / February 2021)

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