

**Film Title and Release Date:** *The Babushkas of Chernobyl* (2015)

**Length of Film in Minutes:** 70 minutes

**Film Genre:** Documentary

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Einar A., 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Reviewed:** March 26, 2022

The Babushkas of Chernobyl is a documentary about the babushkas (old women) living in the restricted areas of Chernobyl. When the catastrophic nuclear accident happened at the Chernobyl power plant, every person within a ten kilometer radius was evacuated to other parts of Ukraine. Barbed wire and fencing were put in place to keep people out of the area, however this did not work, because soon after, many women came back. They crawled under the fences and barbed wire, and got back to where they lived. When this documentary was filmed, almost everyone out of the 100 people there were very old women. Many of them are 80 years or older, but they still grow their own food, raise animals for meat, and collect berries and mushrooms. About once a year, people come to measure the radiation levels, and that is the only time the women get company other than with each other. They have been advised by the authorities about the radiation levels, but they are allowed to stay because it is way more likely for them to die of old age than from radiation. Hanna Zavorotyna, who is one of the characters that is followed the most throughout the film, states that she is much more worried about starving than about radiation levels. Most of the babushkas had a very difficult childhood, and hunger is their worst enemy. However, they are self-dependent, and make their own moonshine and delicious meals that they feast on, living life to its fullest.

*How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?*

I found this film recently, because my mom had heard great things about it. We watched it one evening, and I found the plot very interesting.

*Did the presentation of information keep you interested?*

The presentation of information in the movie was very good, because it kept me interested the whole time. It had a nice mix between facts and seeing the lives of the babushkas in the forbidden zone.

*Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the film was a little slow, however, this made it feel more realistic. This is because the babushkas work all day because they are very old and slow, and you can imagine yourself being one of them, and this also made the movie more emotionally touching.

*What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?*

I think that this film is perfect for anyone in seventh grade and up. It has a moral lesson showing that happiness can be achieved no matter what situation you are in, and it is very inspiring, but younger kids may think it is very boring.

**Rating:**

I rate this film *4 stars: I enjoyed this film and found it worthwhile to watch*

I rated this film 4 stars because it shows you the lives of the babushkas in a very interesting way, showing you their opinion on life, and why they are some of the happiest people on Earth.