



Zolang er leven is: het tweede geheime dagboek van Hendrik Groen, 85 jaar

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Zolang er leven is: het tweede geheime dagboek van Hendrik Groen, 85 jaar Hendrik Groen Nederland leerde Hendrik Groen kennen door zijn dagboek *Pogingen iets van het leven te maken*. Samen met zijn vriend Evert en de andere leden van de Oud-maar-niet-dood-club, probeert Hendrik zijn laatste levensjaren in een verzorgingshuis in Amsterdam-Noord zo aangenaam mogelijk te maken. Van tijd tot tijd valt het Hendrik zwaar om de moed erin te houden. Gelukkig heeft hij de pen weer opgepakt. Met de hem zo kenmerkende charmante, ironische humor neemt hij de medebewoners, de directie, zijn vrienden en de ouderdom in het algemeen op de korrel, waarbij hij zichzelf zeker niet spaart.

Zolang er leven is: het tweede geheime dagboek van Hendrik Groen, 85 jaar Details

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Mari says

Oh neid pisaraid, mida ma lugedes valasin...

Dawn says

Bij vlagen ontroerend maar vooral vol droge humor. Weer een pareltje van Hendrik Groen. Naar mijn mening nog net iets beter dan het eerste deel, een derde deel zou ik dan ook zeker met open armen ontvangen. Ik heb begrepen uit dit tweede deel dat er een roman aankomt, ook niet vervelend! ;)

SueLucie says

Review copy courtesy of Penguin UK, Michael Joseph via NetGalley, many thanks.

When I was given the opportunity to read this sequel to The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83¼ Years Old I hurried to read the first book before I embarked on the second. Wondering now whether the second would work as a stand-alone I am inclined to think it would but a great deal of the poignancy of Hendrik's story would suffer. When On the Bright Side opens, one of his friends has died and one is suffering from dementia and has been moved to a different part of the home. His friendships with both continue to be very important to him and that doesn't quite come across in the sequel. Nor do the experiences he has already shared with the other members of the Old But Not Dead club. Read the first one first is my advice.

Hendrik and his friends are still keen to have as much fun as they can manage given their advanced years and infirmity, and I found their camaraderie and exploits endearing. "Stop spending so much time studying life's instruction manual. Just do it!! Yes, you may fall down a few times, but so long as you get up again, you'll be ahead of where you were." Hendrik writes with humour, insight and charm about often painful subjects - quite an achievement - and hints that his next project is to be a novel, I can't wait for its publication.

I think I enjoyed this book more than the first, though it is considerably darker in tone - the future of the home is insecure for one thing and that uncertainty affects the residents deeply. Hendrik also writes more about political issues, internal Netherlands preoccupations (especially where care of the elderly is concerned) interspersed with tragic overseas events, the refugee crisis in particular. I'd recommend it highly, though for readers of retirement age (as I am) the situation it describes might be just a little too accurate for comfort.

Rebecca Carter says

On the Bright Side - The new Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 85 years old, is the follow up to the super funny first diary of Hendrik Groen aged 83 1/4 years old.

Readers of the first book will be relieved to hear that a second book means the sweet and funny Hendrik is

still around.

We also get to find out what the other loveable characters are up to, and whether life has changed for the residents of the care home.

Although this is the second book in the series, I don't think it's imperative that you need to read the first book to read the second. Hendrik starts his diary with a catch up of the characters from the first book, which brings old readers up to date and brings new readers into the loop.

It's really difficult to say too much about the story without giving much away; it's written in a funny, yet touching and moving way. It is insightful into the life of many elderly people, and although I'm quite a long way off retirement, it does make you ponder slightly about your future care and of your parents/grandparents.

There are funny anecdotes galore; from pieces of fruit turning up in peculiar locations; a mysterious apple in the aquarium, a tangerine in the lift, a pineapple in the "gym", to Mrs Schansleh's creative proverbs.

Hendrik is such a warm and genuine character - you do really feel for him. I can only hope there is a third diary; you do begin to care for Hendrik and hope he has many more tales to tell and adventures to go on.

Many thanks to NetGalley and Penguin U.K - Michael Joseph for the opportunity to read this ARC, in return for an honest and unbiased review.

Gary says

This is the 2nd book in the Hendrik Groen series following the octogenarian as he records his escapades throughout the year. After reading and enjoying the 1st book in the series I was always going to read this one. These books are certainly different from the normal books I read and they bring on lots of different emotions while reading, mainly joy but also a touch of sadness.

Hendrik records the goings on inside the care home and also his thoughts on the world outside. Hendrik is a lovable old man who has a streak of devilry and his writing gave me many laugh out loud moments as he recounts his exploits with the aptly named group of residents called 'Old-But-Not-Dead Club'. This book is at times sad as he writes about the autumn years of him and his friends but it is often hilarious as he encounters new adventures.

This book is so well written and although its subject is perhaps difficult to imagine being so entertaining and witty, the author brings it to life with charm.

I would like to thank both Net Galley and Penguin UK for supplying a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Paromjit says

It is a huge pleasure to return to the endearing company of 85 year old Hendrik and his coterie of friends and companions at the Amsterdam care home for their second outing. We learn through Hendrik's diary that the Old But Not Yet Dead club is in rude health and it's comforting to find that our elderly cohorts are hellbent on enjoying life no matter what. They go on enlivening day trips, visits to restaurants and more. Evert, Hendrik's best friend continues to shock, and there is mischief and mayhem involving the two friends. Hendrik remains a charismatic and thoughtful character imbued with depth. The travails of old age hit harder than before with declining health, infirmity, cancer, and the ever looming presence of death, rendering this

book a darker, and more sorrowful read whilst highlighting the strength that friendships provide. The care home itself is under threat and global contemporary issues such as the harrowing refugee crisis are raised.

On the Bright Side continues to raise the profile of a sector of the population that is often considered invisible and does it with humour, verve and wit. The realities of getting older cannot be escaped in their inevitability and are represented with authenticity and the accompanying sadness and grief that ensues. This is an engaging, moving and emotionally touching read with a strong sense of joie de vivre. Hendrik continues to provide a strong role model on how to live life as you get older. Long live Hendrik! Many thanks to Penguin Michael Joseph for an ARC.

Maureen says

Book 2 in the Hendrik Groen Secret Diary series, and this octogenarian doesn't let age deter him from keeping his diary up to date - and making plans for the future, not to mention having great fun along the way.

For those of you not familiar with Hendrik, he's now 85 years old and lives in a care home in Amsterdam, where he's one of the founding members of the Old But Not Dead Club! They're a determined bunch, arranging day trips and sampling fine dining at various themed restaurants, amongst other things. They also cause mayhem within their care home, resulting in some hilarious moments. Hendrik and his friend Evert are akin to a pair of naughty schoolboys - the proverbial pain in the posterior of the care home manager. Evert doesn't care what others think of him, and comes out with the most outrageous (though amusing) comments. Hendrik on the other hand has a more gentle, caring side, and displays a charm that's something of a rarity today. He's made a pledge to be more assertive but he remains a thoughtful, giving person and he and Evert complement each other perfectly.

It's only natural that a book about octogenarians will have its share of sad and moving moments, but the main message it conveys is that however limited life expectancy is, the Old But Not Dead Club will do its utmost to enjoy it!

It's been a privilege to share another year in Hendrik's life, and I've experienced a whole range of emotions with him, from the laugh out loud outrageous escapades, to the inevitable sad farewells along the way. Hendrik possesses a level of humility and dignity that brings a lump to my throat, and he makes the invisibility of old age a little less so. Bravo Hendrik!!

Thank you to Netgalley and Penguin UK - Michael Joseph for my ARC in exchange for an honest review

Brenda says

Hendrik Groen is 85 years of age in this, his second episode of life in the slow lane, living in the care home in Amsterdam and writing in his diary daily with his various exploits. The Old-But-Not-Dead Club is still going strong, although one or two members have left – a couple of new things have also been added to their agenda. Going to different restaurants every three weeks for a culture change; and the planning of a trip away, where the eight elderly members will stay overnight in a hotel for two nights.

Hendrik and his best friend Evert continue to get up to mischief – their stirring of trouble delights the group. Well something has to brighten their day, doesn't it! With death getting closer to them all, a lot of the

residents spend time going to funerals. But Hendrik no longer goes – he'll be at his own soon enough he thinks!

Light-hearted and humourous as well as sad and sometimes depressing, Hendrik shows everyone that age is only a number – live each day to the fullest (then rest the next day to catch up before starting all over again) *On the Bright Side* is an entertaining and enjoyable follow-up to *The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83¼ Years Old* which I recommend.

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for my digital ARC to read and review.

Linda says

Dit is een boek wat je in 1 zitting uit kan lezen, en in die zitting een hele mix van emoties kan beleven. Verdrietig om de kwaaltjes die komen bij het ouder worden, verontwaardigd om de ouderenzorg hier in Nederland, gelukkig door de verhalen van de OMANIDO club en vooral geamuseerd door de droge humor van Hendrik en niet te vergeten Evert! ♥?

Louise Wilson says

This is the sequel to *Hendrik Groen 83 and a quarter years old*. Hendrik keeps a diary. He is determined to grow old with dignity and to rise up against the care homes director. He dreams of escaping the confines of his care home.

Hendrik Groen is a marvellous character. He is like a naughty schoolboy. There are some very funny parts in this book but it is also very touching. I could actually see some of the events playing out in my head as I was reading some of the antics Hendrik and the members of the Old-But-Not-Dead club got up to.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Penguin UK, Micheal Joseph and the author Hendrik Groen for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Marije says

Lieve Hendrik, wil je mijn bonus-opa zijn? Wat een mooi,puur, ontroerend, verdrietig, krachtig maar vooral betoverend boek! Ik heb genoten, met een lach en een traan.

Marianne says

On The Bright Side is the second instalment of *The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen*, written by Dutch Care Facility resident, Hendrik Groen, alias Dutch librarian, Peter de Smet. Hendrik is now eighty-five and, after a year's hiatus due to grief over the passing of his good friend, Eefje Brand, he has once again decided to note down the year's events, starting in January 2015.

The Old But Not Dead Club gets back into swing, with two new members replacing one deceased, and one now in the dementia ward. In addition to their usual outings, they resolve to enjoy ethnic dinners on a regular basis, and make another International foray. Despite Director Stelwagen's efforts to minimise all pleasure while maximising her control over all residents, Henk and his cronies manage to stage an almost-complete coup of the Residents' Committee.

As well as events of note in his daily life, Groen also remarks on current affairs, including the antics of politicians, the salaries of executives, elections, corruption, the King, the Middle East, and news in the sphere of care facilities. Sometimes the anecdotes are probably funnier if the reader is familiar with Dutch personages, but often the commentary is applicable universally: just change the names.

Of course, one hazard of living to a ripe old age like 85 (apart from the organ recital, in which those around you detail their ailing organs) is that friends and acquaintances begin to drop off the perch. Not unexpectedly a member of the Old But Not Dead club gets an adverse diagnosis. But perhaps most worrying for the club and the Residents Committee are the empty rooms, usually filled post-haste, but now unoccupied. Do these spell the closure and demolition of their abode?

Amongst the spate of books about the elderly in care facilities that are meant to amuse or divert, (Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg's *The Little Old Lady Who...*, Jonas Jonasson's *Hundred-Year-Old Man Who...*) this one requires the least suspension of disbelief. It is realistic and funny without being far-fetched, making it the best of that bunch. Flawlessly translated from the original Dutch by Hester Velmans, this moving sequel again has humour, heartache and plenty to think about.

Rebecca says

The first Hendrik Groen book was a joy, but this one felt like it would never end. It's way too long, by at least a third. Did we really need an entry for every single day of 2015? The format means that readers hear about the planning for an event, the immediate preparations for it, and then how it went – so instead of one entry every occasion gets three. With that sort of pattern, the content is bound to start feeling repetitive. Hendrik and his Old-But-Not-Dead club of Amsterdam nursing home buddies keep up a regular schedule of visits to ethnic restaurants and even manage a trip to Belgium, but one member's terminal illness inevitably puts a damper on the fun. They're also worried by their home's change in management and the increasing number of empty rooms – could there be a secret plan to close the place?

Once again there are some amusing little incidents involving the other residents, such as the designation of one cafeteria table as an "ailment-free zone" for conversations, but these seemed like feeble attempts to rehash the original. I don't remember laughing much, if at all. Despite Hendrik's attempts at dark humor (e.g. "Stoically waiting for death whilst enjoying a nice cup of tea"), this is a bleak picture of old age. Perhaps if I hadn't read the first book and wasn't constantly comparing this one to it in my mind, it wouldn't have felt like a letdown.

Stephen Clynes says

The New Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 85 Years Old is his diary for 2015 detailing his life in a care home in Amsterdam. This book follows on from *The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83 ¼ Years Old*, which was his 2013 diary. Hendrik did NOT publish a diary for 2014. This book can be read as a stand-alone and covers

similar ground to the first book.

I found *On the Bright Side* an easy book to read. There is some humour about life around the care home and I particularly liked the saga of the appearing fruit. I can imagine what havoc some fruit appearing at random would cause in my father's care home in Cardiff.

I liked how things were put into perspective by how Hendrik swapped his daily entries from pressing global and international issues to the very parochial trivia that consumed the residents of his care home. The joviality of the first book was still there in places but the overall take I got from this book was of a sadness brought about by coping with declining health, death of residents and a negative outlook on old age. The optimism of the first book has gone and I felt like the residents were just hanging around waiting to die.

A lot has changed for Hendrik in those 2 years. He still tells a good tale but this is not a comfortable and cosy read. The first book was quite bright and happy but this book although realistic is a shade depressing. Hendrik is clearly not enjoying his old age as much in 2015 as he did in 2013.

I found *On the Bright Side* to be a GOOD read and pleased that I have read it. I liked Hendrik's world view of things and how different generations react to everyday life. However, I did not enjoy it anywhere near as much as I did the first book. I read for pleasure and *On the Bright Side* gave a rather negative view of old age. It makes you think that although life expectancy is increasing, what little have we to look forward to as our health declines and we may be awaiting our death. *On the Bright Side* does leave some fond memories but all the sadness including the pet dog made this a GOOD yet 4 star read for me.

Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher Penguin Random House UK for giving me a copy of this book on the understanding that I provide an honest review.
