

PRESS RELEASE

YA novel *Don't Betray Me – the secret of Amsterdam*

March 2025 – Following the moving and powerful presentation of *Verraad Mij Niet* on March 1st, the new book has now been released: ***Verraad Mij Niet – The Secret of Amsterdam***

This year, the Netherlands commemorates the 80th anniversary of its liberation from German occupation. Reading is an act of remembrance, and this historical novel for young readers — a blend of true events and a fictional storyline — aims to contribute to that remembrance, year after year. It is based on the childhood memories of the author's father, now 88 years old.

Thanks to the many sponsors who supported a crowdfunding campaign on Voordekunst.nl to promote reading and remembrance, the book has already been sent to more than a hundred schools. During the launch at De Witte Olifant primary school in Amsterdam — the school the author's father attended as a seven-year-old — special attention was given to the many Jewish pupils who never returned. While 544 children were enrolled in 1941, by 1943, after the final raid, only 5 pupils and 2 teachers remained. A presentation by the artists who created the school's memorial connected the book to the lived reality of the Second World War.

Don't Betray Me – the secret of Amsterdam

The historical youth novel *Don't Betray Me* is based on true events and written for readers of all ages, though especially for those around twelve. The illustrations are by Cecile Reijnders.

Biographical fiction

The experiences of the young boy Pieter are those of the author's father. He was six years old on 23 May 1943. After an Allied plane crashed onto their home, the family had to move to Amsterdam's Jewish quarter. They ended up living in a house whose former occupants had been deported not long before. What might have happened if someone had been left behind? That question became the starting point for Melinda Braaksma's story. The girl Felice, whom Pieter meets, did not really exist. *Don't Betray Me* is a work of fiction — but it could easily have happened just one street away.

Don't Betray Me – the plot

It is 1943. Pieter knows that the Germans are after the Jews, but there are not many Jewish families in Amsterdam-West. When a plane crashes onto Pieter's house, he and his family have to look for another place to live. They find a house on the Oudeschans in the heart of Amsterdam's Jewish quarter. One day, a dark-haired girl suddenly appears in his room, claiming that Pieter is living in *her* house. From that moment on, the harsh reality of war begins to blur with his imagination. The girl gives him an secret and important task. But time is running out: a harsh winter is approaching, there is no food, and the war is growing grimmer by the day. Can Pieter find what the girl is searching for before the Germans get their hands on her?



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YA novel Don't Betray Me – the secret of Amsterdam

Reading-promotion crowdfunding: 1 book for you and 1 book for a school

Don't Betray Me is the debut novel of writer and teacher Melinda Braaksma (Amsterdam, 1968). Through www.MelVertel.nl, she aims to contribute to promoting reading among young people. To ensure that the book is read in as many classrooms across the Netherlands as possible around 4 and 5 May, a successful crowdfunding campaign was launched on Voordekunst.nl: [Verraad Mij Niet – Don't Betray Me by Melinda Braaksma](#) — one book for you and one book for a school. Thanks to the donations, the book was sent to more than 100 schools. Melinda also reads to school classes wherever possible and shares the historical background behind the story.

In the back of the book a colour insert is included with pictures and historical information about the neighbourhood and the Jewish families who lived there.

Don't Betray Me was published in both Dutch and English.

Available through Centraal Boekhuis (CB)

ISBN: 978-94-6266-754-9 *Verraad Mij Niet* hard cover Dutch original

ISBN: 978-94-6266-753-2 *Don't Betray Me* paperback Engels version

ISBN: 978-94-6266-746-4 e-book Dutch (via MelVertel.nl and soon via KOBO))

~ End of press release ~

Note to editors: The publisher and author would greatly appreciate coverage of the book in your publication. For more information, interviews, high-resolution photos, or illustrations from the book, please contact:
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