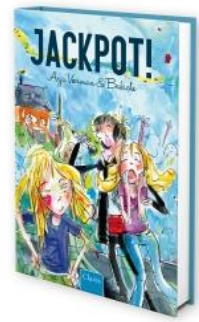


SYNOPSIS



Jackpot! (10+)

Author: Arja Veerman

What would you do if someone gave you a lottery ticket, when the only thing you really want is a Nintendo DS? Just to make life a bit more exciting, as your days are filled with 100% boredom. It happens to Doenja, when her Spanish granddad sends her a lottery ticket for her 11th birthday. But she never wins anything anyway! Not even when pulling strings at a fair. *“How pathetic can you be as an eleven-year-old girl?” she snorts.* So when her mother offers her to buy the ticket from her for 20 euros, she doesn't hesitate. Big mistake...

Because sure enough, Doenja's mother wins the jackpot: 13.1 million euros! She goes bananas. She buys a villa on the Spanish jet-set coast and the family moves to Spain. Her husband drives her around in a bright red Ferrari. They visit parties thrown by movie stars and top models in their own neighbourhood. Her mother even gets into plastic surgery: her biggest wish is to become a model herself. But what about Doenja? She is stuck in the house, together with her brother Manno and a nasty teacher, Miss Martha. This is *not* the life she expected, even though she enjoys the bright sunshine every day and she's got the hottest DS in town. To make things worse, her mother tries to force Doenja into laser therapy in order to improve her haircut. No way! She really needs to get out of there...

In the middle of the night Doenja escapes from the villa, together with her brother Manno. Is nobody following them? On foot, they rush through the mountains and barely survive a steep climb. At sunset their grandfather's beach house appears on the horizon. Finally! But, will he understand their problem and the hell they are living in? He might think they overreact: such wimps they are! Anyway, they don't have a choice. So they enter their grandfather's house...

Their granddad is baffled. How could these kids' parents be so cruel? The money should be taken away from them. Right now! But how? He calls in Dirk, his anarchist assistant and they devise a fake kidnap plan which should bring their parents back to their senses. Dirk nods: sure, he can be a kidnapper: *“It's all the money or the kids. You pay or they'll swim at the bottom of the sea before sunset...”*, he growls.

The text-message that Dirk sends to Doenja's mothers cell phone leaves her gobsmacked. She calls granddad and cries out: *“What will we do without our money? Our villa, our Ferrari, my career! I am just about to become a top model. Sure, we love the children. But don't you think that an amount of 1 million euros should do it?”* But granddad convinces her that that is not an option: *“The ocean indeed is very deep, you know...”*, he responds with a subtle smile.

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A midnight rendez-vous is arranged between Dirk and the parents. They meet at a dark mountain lake. But what about the police? What if Dirk is discovered? Doenja and Manno hold their breath while they wait in the bush. Finally they get a signal. It has worked out! Dirk disappears in the night. So does the money. Doenja and Manno run to their parents: they finally get to go home...

Back at school, boring as ever, Doenja is thinking about Dirk. He saved her life. How can she thank him? With an unexpected explosion in the classroom the story ends. That's when Doenja knows what to do: she will become an anarchist as well! Manno will get the DS. And her mother? Well, she will just need to get used to her. *She is who she is. Basta!*

Notes from readers | reviewers

- Original
- Rhythmic writing style
- Short sentences, dosed tension, high speed
- Morse code in chapters & appendix
- Lively illustrated by Babiche
- Sometimes funny, absurd at the end

"Jackpot! is a book that many children will love to read. It plays with the 'what if...' structure and is contemporary as well as original. Characters come alive through their characterisations and actions. No long sentences with descriptions are used. The slightly absurd, wish-fulfilling end of the story definitively completes the book." Susan Venings (child psychologist / cultural studies): www.kinderboekpraatjes.nl

Biography



Arja Veerman (1969) once was as a primary school teacher. She studied educational sciences. Then she wrote a Ph.D.-thesis about learning through the internet: a dull and difficult book. Her son tore up the pages as a toddler, her daughter scribbled on the cover. Their message was clear: it is time for fantasy! So she wrote her first children's novel *Jackpot!* and is planning to write a sequel in 2012.

Technical information

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