



# The Occupied Garden: A Family Memoir of War-Torn Holland

*Kristen den Hartog, Tracy Kasaboski*

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*The Occupied Garden* is the powerful true story of a market gardener and his fiercely devout wife who were living a simple life in Holland when the Nazis invaded in 1940. During the subsequent occupation, Gerrit and Cor den Hartog struggled to keep their young family from starving and from being broken up in an era of intimidation, disappearances, and bombings -- until one devastating day when they found they were unable to protect their children from the war.

It wasn't until long after Gerrit and Cor's deaths that their granddaughters began to piece their story together; combing through Dutch archives, family lore, and a neighbor's wartime diary, den Hartog and Kasaboski have lovingly and seamlessly recreated their grandparents' wartime years. The result is an extraordinary tale of strife and hardship that contains moments of breathtaking courage -- a young mother's bicycle journey of two hundred miles to find food for her children, a brother and sister's desperate escape into unoccupied France, a pastor forced into hiding for encouraging acts of resistance -- with a cast of characters that includes the exiled Dutch royal family, Adolf Hitler, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill. But it is Gerrit and Cor who take center stage in what is ultimately a deeply moving love story of a man and woman who drew strength from each other throughout those difficult years.

Poignant and unforgettable, *The Occupied Garden* is a testament to the resiliency of ordinary people living in an extraordinary time, written by two sisters determined to keep their family history alive.

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