

Pauliina Vanhatalo: *Living Without a Plot*

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In our youth, we build a self-narrative through our choices. Who am I? What do I want? Where do I belong? The biggest decisions shape the thrilling twists in the great story of our lives, until we run out of choices and the narrative begins to slip out of our grasp. This is when we step into unknown territory, where even the passage of time alters. We encounter the impulsive, determined, stargazing young adult whose choices were the building blocks of our current reality, and try to transform into people who are capable of living without continuously writing a narrative. This is no small challenge for someone who is attached to narratives, but there are few alternatives. One must learn to live without a plot.

Reviews:

“Now and again, you come across a book that cannot be read without a series of exclamations. At regular intervals you feel like putting down the book and talking or writing about it or, at the very least, posting snaps of extracts on Facebook. [...] Many of these books were written by a certain Norwegian dad, but the latest for me was *Living Without a Plot* by Pauliina Vanhatalo, which came out last spring. It is an accurate and identifiable description of being a forty-something parent, a phase in one’s life that is so full of repetition, of the same old same old, that it is difficult to shape into an attractive chapter in one’s life story. We live a first life, which consists of acquiring and amassing, moving forward. Our second life begins once the answers have been locked in.” Niklas Thesslund, *Image*

“This is an ordinary person’s voice, and therein lies the power of Vanhatalo’s writing. She [...] relies upon solid, basic language, honesty, and the stripping back of any redundancies. The recipe works. *Living Without a Plot* is as engrossing as any narrative fiction.” Juhani Karila, *Helsingin Sanomat*

“With her autobiographical book, Vanhatalo proved that her words can paint a touching and thought-provoking picture within the frame of ordinary life.” Sami Korkala, *Suomenmaa*

Synopsis translated by Eva Malkki, Evaberry Oy.