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# Old Friends



## **Synopsis**

Ninety-year-old Lou quit school after the eighth grade, worked for the rest of his life, and stayed with the same woman for nearly seventy years. Seventy-two-year-old Joe was chief probation officer in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, holds a law degree, and has faced the death of a son and the raising of a mentally challenged daughter. Now, the two men are roommates in a nursing home. Despite coming from very different backgrounds, the two become close friends. With an exacting eye for detail, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Tracy Kidder examines end-of-life sorrows, joys, and unexpected surprises with poetry and compassion. Struggling to find meaning in the face of mortality, Joe and Lou experience the challenges that come with aging—“with a grace and dignity that’s sure to inspire.” About the Author: Author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning 1981 nonfiction book *The Soul of a New Machine*, detailing the development of the first computers at Data General Corporation, Tracy Kidder is a best-selling literary journalist and Harvard graduate with an MFA from the University of Iowa. He has written several other nonfiction works that have received critical acclaim, including *The Road to Yuba City: A Journey Into the Juan Corona Murders*; *Strength in What Remains*, the account of a man who survived the Burundi genocide; and *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, a biography of physician, anthropologist, and humanitarian Paul Farmer. He was the first A.M. Rosenthal Writer-in-Residence at the Harvard Kennedy School’s Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy in 2010.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Tracy Kidder is one of my favorite authors. His writing makes you understand and really feel for the characters. The story resonated with me for many reasons. I think I enjoyed this book so much because it was set in western Massachusetts (where I grew up) and my dad was in a nursing home for a short period of time until he passed away. I wanted to find out what happened to Lou and Joe after the book ended though... Kidder's books have always made the reader truly understand the characters. One of the reasons why I enjoy his books so much.

I was in a nursing home after a stroke. I left it as soon as I could because it was filled with people like the patients of Linda Manor. I didn't find the people at Linda Manor quaint. I found them unpleasant ranging from tyrannical ( bob, earl ) to know it all's like Lou ( who I think was a racist, being unforgiving in his treatment of the kitchen staff; who traditionally in institutions like this are primarily made up of blacks and Hispanics ).the book is incredible well written. Mr. kidder paints a picture with words accurate down to the smell of Linda Manor. if your thinking of choosing a nursing home for yourself or a loved one read this book then think three times.

He writes about his subjects so gently and with love. He does a wonderful job of showing us that inside the ever growing number of old people who have become increasingly limited with age are people who have lived dynamic lives and deserve respect and humane treatment as their lives wind down. This is not an expose - the facility is a good one and the people there form a community for themselves. It is more a reminder that unless accident or disease get us first, old age awaits all of us.

The best of Tracy Kidder, his story is called "narrative nonfiction

Tracy Kidder, once more, captures real life, and in this case those who are reaching the end of it. Poignant, thoughtful, sobering and funny, Kidder does not disappoint, keeping to his usual depth

and insight. I read it to better understand my 86 year old father's world and why he is adamant about staying clear of a retirement home. Kidder managed to aid me with both.

My first book on Kindle, I may have enjoyed it more in a real book. It was informative but not terrifying, and might be a useful introduction to a family of someone who is about to enter a nursing home or assisted living. There are a lot of characters but they are not too hard to organize in your mind's eye.

Great writing. Highly recommend Kidder's book on Farmer/Kim/Dahl's Partners in Health (PIH.com) in "Mountains Beyond Mountains". PIH is a charity you will support with 94-96% of all donations going to actual their work.

My Father spent eleven years in a nursing home. This work brings back so many memories to me of his time spent there. Clear of mind, but with a body paralyzed by a massive stroke, my Dad managed to turn his time in the nursing home into what he called his "last hurrah." This book tells the stories of unique individuals who fight the good fight with humor, dignity and grace.

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