

Moving verse novel about the final days of the Second World War

What We Have Left

ALINE SAX

It's April 1945. Here and there, portraits of the Führer still hang on the walls of the ruins of Berlin, but the swastika flags are beginning to fray, and the Russians are close by. Henrike, a seventeen-year-old girl, lives with her mother and a whole host of neighbours in the cellar of their building. They are trying to survive in what remains of their city. Her younger brother still believes in victory, but she lost that hope a long time ago. When the Russians humiliate the German population by raping women and the central character is left to that same fate by her mother, she decides to flee.

Henrike tells a chilling, raw story in Sax' carefully chosen words and haunting images.

NRC

Through the eyes of a German girl, Aline Sax arrestingly describes the horrors of war. She does so in short, measured, rhythmical sentences that slow the reader down and increase the impact. In filmic images, a reality unfolds that stresses the moral ambiguity of war. This haunting novel in verse looks at human beings from every angle, as cruel, courageous, cowardly, hopeful, but above all resilient.

Aline Sax convincingly shows how words can be used to make the horror of war almost tangibly present in the reader's mind

MAPPALIBRI



AUTHOR



Aline Sax (b. 1984) wrote her first book when she was fifteen, about two German child soldiers at the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944. Many years and a PhD in history later, Sax is well-known in Flanders as a historical novelist. With her in-depth research and sober language, she brings the past to life like no other. *Photo © JuttaArt241*

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AGE 15+

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