

The monotonous drone of war

Still Bread to Eat

DO VAN RANST

Flanders, 1914. The war is approaching audibly. Young Nelle volunteers as a nurse in a hospital, seeing this war as a chance to become more than just a baker's daughter, a mother and wife. Her boyfriend Simon doesn't want to go to war, but he is pushed by his father, who is fascinated by heroism and the art of warfare, and he ends up in the trenches with his best friend Kamiel.

A paper monument that brings the past back to life

NRC HANDELSBLAD

In 'Still Bread to Eat', Do Van Ranst has written a confrontational, impressive adolescent novel that succeeds in various ways – by ingeniously alternating the narrative perspective – in drawing the reader into the horror of the Great War, but at the same time describing the everyday aspects of that war. Van Ranst captures the monotonous drone of a horrific war full of mud, hardship, death and destruction, in a story that slowly takes possession of the reader. This novel is a slap in the face: there is nothing romantic about a war; it is plain misery, fear and pain. But the book is about far more: it is about living and, above all, surviving. No one emerges from battle unscathed. With a clever ending, all the stories lines eventually come together. Even though love seems to triumph, it tastes 'damned bitter'.

An extremely strong book, a wartime childhood that can be taken as a reference

EDWARD VAN DE VENDEL



AUTHOR



Do Van Ranst's (b. 1974) books often deal with serious themes, and yet he succeeds in keeping the depressing aspects at a distance. He is working steadily to create a very personal and diverse oeuvre of children's books and YA novels. Atmosphere and structure are crucial aspects. With a great sense for details and vivid and striking dialogue, Van Ranst brings them to life. His work has earned him several prizes, including the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis.

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AGE 15+

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