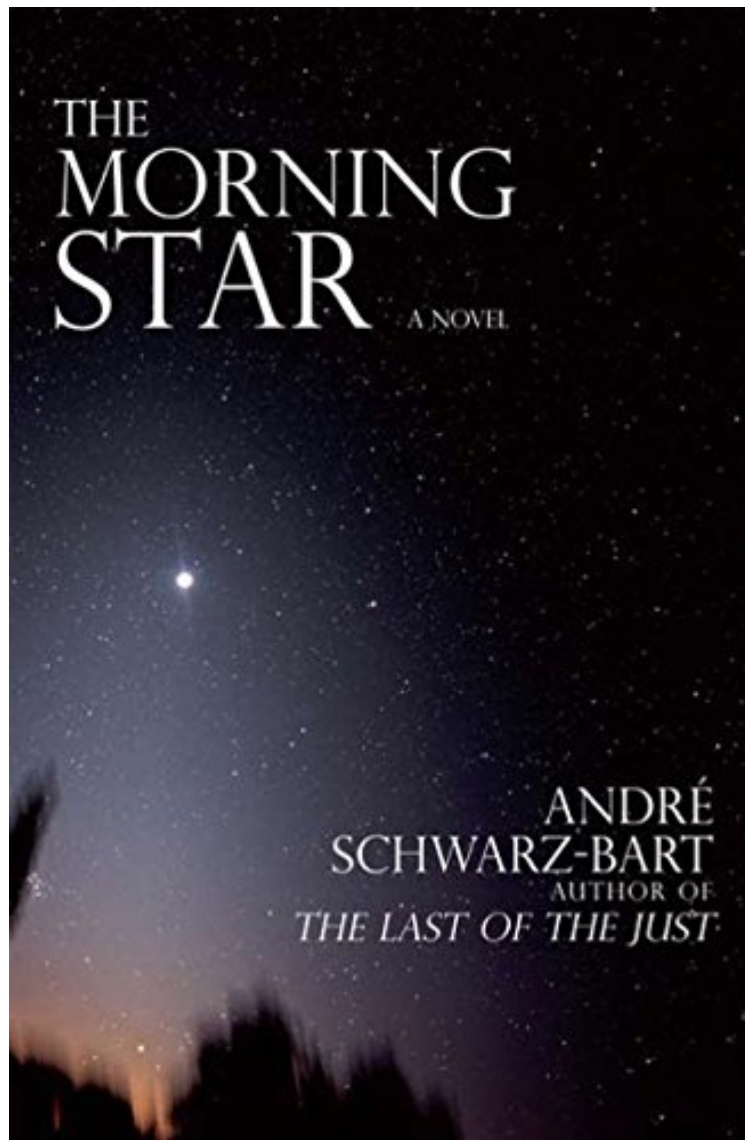


(Free pdf) The Morning Star: A Novel

## The Morning Star: A Novel

*Andre Schwarze-Bart*

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**Andre Schwarze-Bart : The Morning Star: A Novel** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Morning Star: A Novel:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Important and astonishingBy BookreporterIt's difficult to be critical of Holocaust literature; readers and reviewers alike can become emotionally invested in the stories like few other genres. Thankfully, from the most devastating of circumstances, much genius work has been penned. THE MORNING STAR by André Schwarz-Bart is no exception. It tells the story of Haim Lebke, a Polish Jew, and through

him, beautifully reveals Eastern European Jewry before, during and after World War II. Haim is one of several sons of a drunken cobbler. He lives in a town where the Jews are under constant threat from the Poles, and the young people, led by his own brother --- the charismatic and strong Schlomo --- are becoming increasingly drawn to Zionism. But before they can emigrate to Palestine, the Nazis arrive, and Haim's parents and Schlomo are murdered. Haim, not yet 13 years old, gathers up his younger brothers and heads for the woods. There they survive together before finding their way to the Warsaw ghetto. The ghetto proves to be the death of Haim's brothers, and he is alone. But Haim survives the war and lands in France, part of a community of survivors who all have their own ways of coping with the destruction they witnessed and experienced. Schwarz-Bart draws on traditional Jewish folktales and religious myth, and thus interweaves the fantastic and miraculous into his story of trauma, violence, redemption and survival. The narrative swings between dreamy fantastic and hyper-realistic. Yet the novel is successful in its pace, storytelling and character formation. Years later, the aging Haim is married to a young woman named Sarah, and together they travel to Israel and then to Poland. This journey, marked by the birth of his own child and his return home, is just as miraculous for Haim as the tales of holy visitors and mystical events that pepper the novel. The powerful simplicity of Haim waking beside his pregnant wife in a hotel room near Auschwitz with a prayer on his lips is a brilliant contrast to the background story of Haim Lebke's ancestor, Haim Yaacov, who channels the sacred through his violin. Like Haim Yaacov, Haim Lebke has a musical gift that provides solace to those around him; but the holiness of these men (and the others like them) cannot save their people from pogroms and genocide. As Haim Lebke ages and the Holocaust moves into the realm of history (his wife is the daughter of survivors), the danger looming is not just the nuclear bombs that will be dropped in the future, but the danger of forgetting the Holocaust itself (perhaps allowing for another such event and dishonoring the dead by failing to remember them).

THE MORNING STAR was an unfinished manuscript when Schwarz-Bart died and his widow Simone completed the work on the novel. It is framed by an odd story about a woman, Linemarie, who is descended from the only survivors of a nuclear war on Earth. Drawn to the story of her ancestors thousands of years in the past, she uncovers their lives back to Haim Lebke and the town of Podhoretz, Poland. While Linemarie's part of the book is an interesting opening to the story, it is not fully realized at the end and so the novel feels abruptly resolved. However, Schwarz-Bart's tale is so compelling, horrific, imaginative and mesmerizing, the flaws of the final product are easily forgiven. Haim Lebke is a fascinating hero: poetic and philosophical, yet totally grounded and relatable. The other characters here are often quite finely drawn as well. Schwarz-Bart, himself orphaned during the Holocaust at the age of 13, has contributed an amazing novel, not just to collections dedicated to the Holocaust, but also to world literature. Deeply personal with so many points of overlap with his own life, Schwarz-Bart's final work is nothing short of important and nothing less than astonishing. ---

Reviewed by Sarah Rachel Egelman 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Association of Jewish Libraries Reviews By AJL Reviews Rather than calling this book a novel, it might better be described as a meditation on God and man, on the Holocaust, and on life and death. Poetically written, it was produced from the papers left after the death of the author and published posthumously by his widow Simone. Set in the year 3000, after a nuclear holocaust that has destroyed planet Earth, it takes us back to the Nazi Holocaust, viewed from the perspective of one thousand years later. This device does not work well; the pendulum swinging between past and future appears to blur rather than blend these two. What results is yet another look at the Holocaust which Schwarz-Bart treated magnificently in his powerful earlier novel *The Last of the Just*, published in English in 1960. It is clear that André Schwarz-Bart wrestled with the memory of the Holocaust throughout his life, writing and destroying over and over, until at his death in 2006, it was left to his widow to bring forth this work out of the notes he left behind. Of the few flaws in the English text, some may be attributed to the author, others to the translator. The misuse of the verb "lie" and "lay" is irritating. The term *hachsharah*, meaning a training farm for Jews preparing for immigration to Israel, is rendered erroneously as *harcharah*. While this brief, belated sequel to his earlier novel does not reach the heights of his former work, it is a moving legacy from a gifted writer, whose tortured, life-long search for meaning in the Holocaust ended with a resounding yes to life, to human dignity and to God as expressed in the *Kaddish*. Susanne M. Batzdorff

This story begins in the aftermath of a nuclear war that has reduced our world to ashes. Luckily, a few found their way to the stars and into immortality. In the year 3000, nostalgic for the past, they return to earth in an effort to reconstruct the loves of the people who lived there. *The Morning Star* flows between the poetic, the fantastic and the realistic as it weaves the tale of the Jewish people from Abraham to the Holocaust and into the future.