

Characters and strong association



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel *The Wars*, by Timothy Findley, the protagonist, Robert Ross, is shaped and developed by the story's setting. In the beginning of the story, Robert is characterized as a compassionate and kind man, which is shown by the fact that he cares so deeply for his sister and refused to kill the injured horse or his sister's rabbits. As the story progresses, we see Robert develop a shorter temper, as he tries to cope with his sister's death. Finally, we see Robert slip into madness because of all of the terrible things he has witnessed during his time overseas. All of these things are dependent on the setting of the novel and they shape the man that Robert was at the beginning of the novel and the man that he had become at the end.

At the beginning of *The Wars*, we find out that Robert has just enlisted in the army because he wants to escape the feelings of guilt that he has after his sister's death. We also learn that Robert is opposed to the war in some ways, but he feels as though enlisting is the only way to escape the feelings that he has, as well as the accusations that his own mother has been making against him. Therefore, it is the setting at the family's house that initially turns Robert into a soldier, but also what has made him into such a compassionate character.

As the story continues, Robert begins to develop an extremely short temper, as he lashes out at others and sees his relationship with his mother completely disintegrate. He also pushes his father away, as although they get along, they have differing opinions on a number of things and cannot be together all the time. The wartime setting also adds to this anger, as Robert feels as though human lives are not highly regarded during a war and he sees the worst that humanity has to offer everyday. When Robert kills the German soldier, even though the soldier let him and his troops lives, we can

still see how unnatural this role is for Robert, but it is a role that the setting has forced him into.

As the novel draws to a close, we see Robert drift towards madness, as he is unable to come to grips with all of the horrible things that he has experienced. He wishes that someone could teach him to be a killer because he does not understand how other people can do it so easily. At this point we can see the psychological damage that the war has done to Robert, as it has completely changed the person that he is and he never gets the chance to be himself again, as he dies as a result of injuries sustained in a fire.

This novel shows the effects that traumatic experiences like losing a loved one and war can have on an individual, even a seemingly nice and compassionate man like Robert. These settings shaped the person that Robert was at the beginning of the novel and the person that he became at the end. Robert is truly a product of his environment in *The Wars*, as he is forever changed by the various settings that he encounters both at home and during the war.