

Stone cold by robert swindells



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Stone Cold by Robert Swindells Stone Cold is an absorbing novel by Robert Swindells which follows 'Link', a sixteen year old boy from Bradford, England. The novel tells you about his life over the past two years, how he leaves his violent home and lives on the street, first in Bradford and then in London, where the story starts to take shape. The novel also follows 'Shelter', an ex-military man who served for twenty nine years, discharged on medical grounds. In my essay, I will aim to analyse Swindells' success in writing an absorbing novel. In 1991, when Link was fourteen, his father ran off with a receptionist.

He told us how that 'mucked up' his school work for quite a while. He goes on to say that that is not the cause for him being where he is now, the streets. He tells us that it was in fact his step-father, Vince, who was the real cause. He recalls coming back from a friends one night, to find that the door to the house had been locked by Vince. Vince wouldn't let Link in, so he had to go round and spend the night at his sister's, Carole. When he went home the next day, Vince started slapping him around the head for 'going off' and worrying Mum.

He decided to make himself homeless. Now on the streets, the novel gives us a real taste of what it is like to be on the streets. " So you pick your spot. Wherever it is (unless you're in a squat or a derelict house or something) it's going to have a floor of stone, tile, concrete or brick. In other words it's going to be hard and cold. " 'Ginger' is a very good friend of Link's. After being robbed and kicked out of his doorway, Link found Ginger and instantly became friends. Ginger is Link's first friend on the streets.

Ginger also shows Link the basics to being on the streets, like the best places to beg and good places to eat. We meet Gail further on in the book, after losing Ginger. As Link is sitting in a cafe, he sees ‘ the best looking dosser’ he’s ever seen. Gail is Scottish and not just a dosser. She’s actually a reporter looking for a story on what it’s like to be homeless. Gail came over to sit next to Link, every eye in the place following her. He describes how he feels as Gail sits next to him. “ I was acting so cool it was unbelievable but that’s all it was – acting.

In the real world the blood was pounding in my ears and it was as much as I could do to keep from goggling at that fantastic face. ” ‘ Shelter’, the ex-military man, is portrayed mainly by his use of speech. His speech is presented very ‘ to the point’, army like. “ Daily Routine Orders ...” is how Shelter always starts his part of the story, suggesting he lives his everyday life in a militaristic lifestyle. In many of his sections, shelter dwells on his days in the army, and how things like national service would take the dossers and ‘ teddy boys’ and turn them into real men.

The story definitely gave the message to never judge somebody you see on the street, as everyone has their side of the story. I think Robert Swindells is very sympathetic towards homeless people, particularly young homeless people as it affects their future, as in jobs, social, familyetc. The ending is quite a depressing ending as you find out that Gail has been using Link as a piece for an article on homelessness. This leaves Link feeling betrayed and angered.