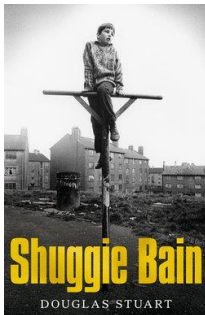


Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart

Reviewed by Donna



Shuggie Bain is set in 1980s Glasgow. Glasgow is a town on its knees amid the policies of the Thatcher era, her attacks on the working classes and the closure of the mines.

Shuggie Bain is the story of the unconditional love between a mother and her son and the struggle of a family dealing with poverty and alcoholism. It's grim, it's bleak, gut-wrenching, heart-breaking, deeply sad, funny and unflinching – all of these things, but it is such a brilliant portrayal of love and compassion that it is a must-read.

Agnes Bain has been abandoned by her taxi-driver womanising husband. It is a cruel time for many working class women– a time of Valium and vodka, cigarettes and daily beatings. Agnes tries to rise above it all, with her make-up, beehive hair and perfect false teeth, but the drink claims her. As she descends further into chronic alcoholism her children try to save her. One by one, they too are forced to abandon her in order to save themselves.

Shuggie holds out the longest. Shuggie, who is bullied at school and tries but never manages to fit in. Shuggie, the effeminate boy who the men didn't know how to treat and the women said he's 'no right'. Each day brings a new battle to save his mum, a hope that this day will be different. But in the end, he too must leave.

Shuggie Bain is the winner of the 2020 Booker Prize. Douglas Stuart says that Shuggie Bain is a diverse novel, it's win 'a great thing for Scottish voices, for queer voices, for working-class voices'. It is a truly great novel and I highly recommend it – you won't forget it.

Interested in this title! Reserve your copy [here](#)