



[Home](#) > Abomination

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# Abomination

Books Reviewed:

[Abomination](#) [1]

Issue:

[111](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Nikki Gamble](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

2

Robert Swindells returns to a subject explored in an earlier novel, **Unbeliever**. This time he writes for a younger audience about the impact of belonging to an extreme religious sect on children and their families. Martha's life is dominated by the rules of the Brethren. She is different from the other children; friendless, until she meets Scott, a new boy at school. But she knows she must never invite him home in case he finds out about the terrible secret in the cellar - Abomination. We are shocked to discover that the family's 'shame' is the six-year-old illegitimate son of Martha's older sister. And that he has been kept caged in the cellar from birth. As is characteristic of Swindells' fiction, an impact grabbing title invites us in to the book and short pacy chapters propel the action forward. This is a good page turner but is not to my mind Swindells at his best. There is an uneasy tension between the chilling gothic elements of the story and the contemporary realist mode of telling. I was disappointed with the treatment of this controversial subject. In previous work, **Stone Cold** and **Unbeliever**, Swindells has explored the psychology of his deviants by allowing them a voice either through first person narration or presentation of multiple viewpoints. In this instance the story is told almost exclusively from Martha and Scott's perspectives and they are insufficiently mature to provide real insight in to the adults' behaviour. The final resolution suggests rather optimistically that once the child has been rescued he will be rehabilitated with no lasting ill effects.

Running Order:

20

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[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/abomination>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/111>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/nikki-gamble>