

MARTINA
COLE
BETRAYAL

**The following extract contains strong
language which may cause offence and
is not suitable for children**

1984

‘For fuck’s sake, Mum! He is a piece of shit!’

Reeva sighed dramatically as she listened to her eldest son rant about her latest lover. He was such a fucking prude in so many ways.

‘But, Aiden, he is *my* piece of shit and I love him.’

And that she did. She loved him very much. She just couldn’t see herself from her son’s point of view, see how the situation looked to the outside world, and especially to her children.

‘He treats you like a cunt, Mum.’

Her son might be telling the truth, but Reeva could not give up her new man. Tony Brown was everything she had ever wanted. He was big and black and he was handsome, and he told her he loved her – something she needed to hear. He fucked her properly and that was everything to her. She was a very sensual woman who mistook sex for love – she always had. Reeva was the fuck of the century but, other than that, she meant nothing to her paramours. They knew it even if she didn’t.

Her eldest son had sussed that out many years before and he knew exactly what was on the cards for her. He had lived it all his young life.

It was three o'clock in the morning and Tony Brown was trying to kick their front door in. It was the kind of drama Reeva revelled in, determined to cause a big upset because the man she thought she loved was not giving her what she wanted. Aiden had been here with her time and time again.

They both heard the splintering of the wooden architrave as the door was finally kicked into the small hallway. Rolling his eyes in annoyance, Aiden walked out into the hallway to try and head Tony off at the pass, though he didn't hold out much hope.

'Do you know what she's fucking gone and done, Ade? The fucking vicious whore!'

Aiden stood stoically in the irate man's path to try and deflect his anger. Reeva was half-drunk and, on top of the Valium she popped like sweets, she could not see for the life of her how inappropriate this entire scene was. The only thing on her mind was that she wanted Tony but he didn't want *her* any more. In Reeva's world that meant you fought back with any ammunition you had: in this case going around to Tony's home and spilling the beans to his wife of ten years.

Aiden stood his ground and Tony Brown, drunk and stoned as he was, realised that, whatever Reeva might have done, her kids should not be witnessing this scene.

He looked at the children standing on the stairs, especially the little girl, her eyes wide like flying saucers in her head. She was visibly trembling. Feeling the anger leave him, he said to Aiden quietly, ‘I’m sorry about this, Aiden, mate. But your mother caused me untold fucking aggravation today . . .’

Aiden had it in his heart to try and understand the man’s reaction. When his mother was hurt, she lashed out. And when she lashed out she went for it, big time, no half measures for her.

Agnes ran to her mother and grabbed at her legs, clearly frightened by the tension in the house. Reeva picked her up and then said loudly, ‘Go on then. Fuck off back to your ugly wife and kids! You were a useless shag, anyway. My Eugene’s got a bigger one than you . . .’

Aiden closed his eyes in distress as he knew that a man like Tony Brown was not going to take *that* lying down. The whole street was aware of the altercation and was listening to what was commonly called the ‘O’Hara Cabaret’. This was not a one-off – this was how all Reeva’s relationships ended. That’s if the man in question didn’t just disappear into the night, of course. The more cowardly ones tended to do that when Reeva got too hot to handle.

‘Coming from someone who’s had more men than she can fucking count, it’s a wonder you can feel anything down there. It’s like the Blackwall Tunnel!’

Aiden sensed this was on the verge of deteriorating

once more into a slanging match so he walked purposefully towards Tony Brown and nudged him over to the broken doorway.

Tony looked down at the boy and felt shame envelop him. Aiden was a good kid and he didn't deserve the shit Reeva seemed to revel in. He held his hands out in a gesture of supplication and said sadly, 'I'll get the door sorted in the morning, OK?'

Aiden smiled ruefully. 'Appreciate it, Tony. Now, you get yourself off. This lot have got school tomorrow.'

Tony made his walk of shame past the neighbours, who were all trying to get a glimpse of the action, and cursed himself for his escapade. But that woman could make a saint swear! Now he had to go home and face his wife – and try and repair the damage as best he could.

Reeva watched him go, holding her daughter tightly to her and crying into the girl's thick hair. The action made Agnes start to whimper. After attempting to put the front door back as best he could, Aiden took his sister and, giving her to Patsy, he walked his mum into the kitchen. Then, settling her on a chair, he lit her a cigarette and poured her out a large vodka and Coke.

Reeva watched her son as he ministered to her and she felt the tears come faster. *This* was the only man she had ever been able to depend on – her Aiden. Her boys were all so good to her. Patsy, bless him, had put the others back to bed and now there was a semblance of normality in the household once more.

Lighting himself a cigarette, Aiden put the kettle on to make tea. ‘This has got to stop, you know, Mum. You frightened Agnes tonight and, as big a bastard as Tony Brown is, you shouldn’t have grassed him up to his old woman.’

Reeva wiped her eyes with the back of her hands and said sadly, ‘Why does this always happen to me, Ade?’

He was pouring out the tea as she spoke and he felt a constriction around his heart at the utter despair in her voice. She knew the answer to that question as well as he did, but he answered her anyway. Bringing the teas to the table he sat down beside her and, grabbing her hand in his, he said truthfully, ‘You always go for the wrong ones, Mum. You meet them and they move in within days. Then the fighting starts. You should have a rest from blokes for a while and wait for one who is right for you.’

Reeva smiled through her tears at her earnest son who was genuinely trying to give her advice. There were only fourteen years between the two of them, and that was never more evident than when they sat chatting like this. He was always trying to pick up the pieces of her life.

‘I tell you something, Mum. When I get married it will be to the right person, I know that much.’

Reeva smiled to herself. Even at fifteen he sounded so wise. Much wiser than her.

Hearing Agnes begin to cry her head off, Aiden

picked up his tea, kissed his mum on the cheek and hugged her for a few seconds. 'I'll bring her in with me and Patsy tonight, tell her a story.' As he walked into the hallway he said over his shoulder, 'And don't you go out anywhere, OK? Get yourself off to bed and forget about that bastard.'

Reeva didn't bother to answer him.

Frank James liked Aiden O'Hara. In fact, he liked all the O'Hara children, even though they were the bane of his life. He even liked the mother, Reeva, although he despaired at her lifestyle. But Aiden was a clever lad and he deserved the opportunity to go on to better things in life.

As he approached the O'Hara household, Frank was not even remotely surprised to see a workman re-attaching the front door and repairing the architrave around it. It wasn't the first time. He walked into the house, calling out Reeva's name, and he heard a scrambling in the bedroom – and whispering. In the kitchen, young Agnes was in a lobster-pot playpen watching him with huge solemn eyes. She was another beautiful child; Reeva did have exceptionally handsome children, he'd give her that.

Reeva came down the stairs in a short dressing gown that showed a lot of her long, slender legs, the ever-present cigarette in her hand.

'Oh, Mr James! I wasn't expecting you.'

She was smiling happily at him as she put the kettle on. Frank was quite happy to enjoy the view. She was a very good-looking woman and he appreciated beauty. He noticed that, other than the destroyed doorway, the rest of the house was, as usual, spotlessly clean.

‘I just thought I would pop around about Aiden.’ He sat down at the kitchen table before saying calmly, ‘As we’ve discussed before, he’s a very intelligent boy and I really think he could do well in higher education. University is certainly on the cards if he applies himself.’

Reeva puffed up with pride at the man’s words and she smiled at him in a friendly manner.

‘He is clever all right, Mr James. Must have inherited the brains from his old man because I’m as thick as shit, as you know.’

Frank closed his eyes. The one thing he would never get used to was the casual use of bad language by the children and the parents.

‘But you know my boy – all my boys, in fact. They will go their own roads. I mean, I encourage them. But that’s all I can do really.’

He took the proffered mug of tea and thanked her, unable to keep his eyes from her breasts that were still surprisingly firm considering she had given birth to five children. His own wife’s had mysteriously disappeared after their one and only daughter – not that there had been much there to start with.

Reeva sat down and crossed her legs in a very dignified manner and Frank felt hot under the collar. She

really was a disconcerting woman. She smelled faintly of sex. Sex and freedom – that was the only way he could describe it. She was a sensual being, it was in her DNA. It was who Reeva was. He had noticed that even when she had been at school, and he smiled wryly as he remembered how much trouble she seemed to attract.

‘I was wondering, Reeva, if I might talk to him alone and go through some options with him? I would hate for him to fall through the cracks.’ He sighed. ‘Aiden’s fifteen now and he is already becoming hard to handle. He needs to be taken in hand soon. Otherwise it will be too late.’

Reeva could see that the man was deadly earnest and that he had her son’s welfare at heart. But she was nothing if not a realist. If her Aiden didn’t want to work then no one or nothing would make him.

‘Oi, Reeva! The door’s finished.’

Reeva stood up and left the kitchen. Frank heard a door open and saw a man clump down the stairs wearing nothing but his boxer shorts, and pay the workman cash in hand. He felt especially embarrassed when Tony Brown walked into the kitchen as if he owned the place and poured himself a cup of tea.

Reeva lit another cigarette as she came back in and made the introductions, finishing with, ‘Mr James thinks that Aiden could go far. University, even.’

Tony leaned against the sink and sipped his tea before saying, ‘Don’t surprise me a bit, Reeva. He’s a good

lad, bright as a button. Good with numbers, I know that.'

Frank was surprised to find an ally and he leaped on it, saying seriously, 'All Aiden needs is a stable influence, Reeva. He really has the makings of a fine scholar. And his reading is exceptional. He's flown through Hermann Hesse!'

Reeva smiled with pride. 'Well, he is doing the Second World War. In history, like. But wasn't he a war criminal?'

Frank ignored her and ploughed on. 'I've spoken to your social worker and she agrees with me that Aiden needs some extra help. Now, there is a chance – only a chance, I admit – that he can go away to a private school that caters for children like him. Who would offer him a balanced environment and the chance to study without . . .' He looked around him and was suddenly lost for words. He also felt a sudden hostility surround him like electricity. Reeva wasn't smiling any more; she was staring at him with open hatred.

'What? You mean leave me? Leave this house?'

Frank tried to sound jovial as he said, 'Only during term time, Reeva. It's a wonderful opportunity for him, really.'

Reeva lit yet another cigarette and, blowing the smoke into Frank's face, she said harshly, 'Out.'

Frank was nonplussed for a few seconds. That one word had sounded like a declaration of war, which it was to Reeva. The thought of her Aiden being taken

away from her was anathema and she said as much. ‘You can tell that fucking social worker I will put her through the fucking wall before they take my boy off me. I swear that. Now, come on. *Out.*’

Tony Brown held up his hand and said sternly, ‘Hang on a minute, Reeva. I think this would be a good thing for Aiden. And, like Frank said, he will be home for the holidays. It’s a good opportunity, especially if it ain’t costing you a fucking penny.’

Reeva turned on him. ‘Tony, this is fuck-all to do with you, OK? My Aiden ain’t going fucking nowhere. No. Fucking. Where. And that is the end of it. Now, if you don’t mind, Mr James, I want to get back to bed with my boyfriend before either his wife turns up or the boys get back from school. So, goodbye and no thanks.’

Tony shook his head at Frank sadly, as if to say ‘I tried’.

Reeva saw the man out and slammed the door resoundingly behind him. Agnes had watched it all without a murmur. She just stared at them with her big eyes that looked like those of an ancient.

‘You’re out of order, Reeva. This is a wonderful opportunity for that lad – and he is clever. You should have bitten the man’s hand off.’

Reeva shook her head and held back the tears. She knew that Tony was right, but she couldn’t cope without Aiden. He paid the bills and sorted the money, he helped her get from one day to the next. He was

the brains of the family outfit and without him she would sink without a trace. But how could she explain that to Mr James? How could she justify refusing her son's education because without him, as young as he was, she couldn't even get through a day?

'He is going nowhere, Tony. I couldn't be without any of my kids.'

Tony walked over to her and held her tightly. He had come back last night with his tail between his legs because his wife would not give him house room. He knew Reeva would have him. 'You're a good mum, Reeva. But that geezer was offering Aiden a chance to get out of all this.' He gestured around him.

Reeva knew he was absolutely right. But she could not let her boy go.

Aiden looked at his headmaster calmly. He knew only too well what Mr James had witnessed at his home the day before and he was past being embarrassed about it. But, as he listened to Mr James talking of the wonderful opportunity he was being presented with, he almost allowed himself the luxury of getting excited about it. But he knew that he couldn't. The social worker, Marjory Smith, was a nice woman. True, she was scatty as a bag of bollocks, as his mother described it, but her heart was in the right place. He would have loved this chance, but he couldn't take it. Reeva would not last five minutes without him. She blundered from one disaster to the next – it was what she did. She didn't mean to, but in many ways it was as if she was still the kid.

So he shook his head vehemently. 'Why would I want to go somewhere like that? Away from my mum and my brothers and sister?'

Marjory Smith looked at the handsome boy with the high IQ and a mother who, though she loved her

children, had no moral compass whatsoever, and she could have cried for the waste of a young life. She guessed that Aiden was frightened to leave his mother to her own devices. Marjory admired him for that but it grieved her to see him give up such an opportunity because his mother couldn't control her sexual urges. Because that is all it amounted to at the end of the day: Reeve O'Hara and her next sexual conquest. They were frequent, they were passionate and they always ended in tears.

'Look, just think it over, Aiden, OK? Here's everything you need to know. Just look it over this weekend and if you change your mind you can call me. But we need to know soon – these places are very few and far between.'

Aiden took the proffered folder and left Mr James and Marjory together, knowing they were despairing of him and his refusal. But what choice did he have? He placed the folder in the nearest bin and went to round up his brothers. Tony Brown looked like he might be on the scene for a while and he wanted to warn them. Fucking Reeve, sometimes she did get on his tits.

Tony had asked Aiden to pop out with him, saying there was a couple of quid in it for him. Aiden agreed to go willingly – he was always up for getting an extra bit of cash. He knew that with Tony it wasn't going to be legal work but that didn't bother him either. He was fifteen and he knew his way around a fucking corner.

As they drove into Essex, Aiden looked out at the passing countryside, enjoying seeing the nice houses and the large gardens. 'I'll have a drum like these one day, Tony.'

Tony laughed. 'I reckon you will, Ade. I assume you know about the school they wanted to send you to?'

Aiden shrugged as if it meant nothing. 'I told them it was bollocks. I couldn't leave Reeva. She needs me.'

Tony Brown felt a terrible urge to stop the car and hug the deeply decent lad sitting next to him. But, of course, he didn't.

'It would have been a good opportunity though. I told your mum to run with it. But she said no.'

Aiden was grateful that Tony had tried on his behalf. It said a lot about the man. Sighing heavily, he said seriously, ‘She ain’t bad with money, but only if I explain it all to her first, you know? I work out what she needs to pay and what we need for the kids. She’s a blinding cook and we eat well. No processed shit in our house. She looks after us like that. But you and I know, Tony, that she is not a woman who should ever be left to her own devices. Without me, the drink and drugs would spiral out of control and she would eventually lose the other kids. But, saying that, I love her and she loves us. We look out for her and for each other.’

Tony Brown had never liked Aiden more. He had been forced to grow up at a young age and he didn’t resent Reeva for that, he loved her for keeping them together. Tony hoped to God that Reeva knew how lucky she was – his kids were like fucking leeches in comparison.

‘Do me a favour, Tony, will you? Don’t break her heart too much. Every bloke that leaves destroys her a little bit more. She ain’t a bad person. She’s just a girl who needs a lot of love, that’s all.’

Tony grinned and said sadly, ‘I’ll try, mate, but you know what she can be like.’

Aiden laughed. ‘You’re preaching to the converted, Tony!’

As they pulled into a farmhouse, Aiden looked in awe at the beautiful property that was reached through

electronic gates. From the mullion windows to the pristine blue of the pool the house said 'class'.

Tony stopped outside the front door and shut the engine off. 'This is the home of Eric Palmer. He is the biggest drug dealer in the South East and he's looking for a few lads to distribute around London using the train services. There's a good few quid in this if you do it right, and I have a feeling that you'll be shrewd enough to play this opportunity for all its worth. Now, you sure you are up for it?'

Aiden O'Hara smiled gamely. 'Is the Pope a Catholic?'

They laughed together and went into the beautiful house.

Eric Palmer was a small man with a big voice. He was self-made and a legend in East and South London with the reputation for being a good businessman – fair but hard – and outrageously ruthless. You only ever fucked up once and that was it.

He looked Aiden over and smiled disarmingly, displaying very expensive teeth as he said jovially, ‘You’re a big lad for fifteen. How’s Reeva these days?’

Aiden shook hands with him and said with careful nonchalance, ‘She’s my mother and she is doing well, thank you.’

The warning was clear and, instead of being insulted at the boy’s words, Eric Palmer immediately took a shine to the kid. He had heart and loyalty. Loyalty to his mother showed fucking true grit as far as Eric was concerned. Most men would have disowned that whore sooner rather than later.

‘Good on you, son. Remember, wives come and go but you only get one mum.’

Aiden smiled that handsome smile he had and Eric

Palmer decided that he liked him. He had something about him – something he could use to his advantage. He offered Aiden a cold bottle of beer and then he took them out to the patio around his swimming pool. As they sat down, Eric could see the boy looking around him in wonderment. He also saw the glint in his eye; this kid could be a grafter. A serious grafter. According to Tony, who wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, Aiden was a mathematical genius. And the younger you got them, the better, as far as Eric was concerned. You could mould them into what you needed for different jobs and, if they had the nous, they then went on to bigger and better things. If they couldn't hack it, they were taken out of the game in the early stages of play. That was the way of the world they inhabited.

‘So, Aiden, I need a lad to recruit for me a series of other lads who are too young to be nicked for serious crimes. I need product moved all over the Smoke and by public transport. The Filth never really take kids into the equation. I need you to be as silent as a fucking mute and, if by some extraordinary chance you *do* get a capture, you keep your trap shut no matter what the Filth might threaten you with. Because what they threaten you with will be nothing compared with what I will fucking do to you, OK?’

Aiden shrugged and said intently, ‘I’ll keep my mouth shut, Mr Palmer, as long as you make sure my mum gets a decent wedge every week.’

Eric looked at Tony and the two men began to laugh their heads off. ‘Oh, Tony, I think this kid will do.’

Aiden took a pull on his beer and then joined in the laughter. He was going to university all right, the University of Life. He wondered where this would take him and he hoped it would be somewhere he wanted to be.

In the car on the way back into London, Tony said seriously, ‘You did well there, kid. You could really bring in a good wedge, you know.’

Aiden nodded and said quietly, ‘Don’t worry, I intend to.’

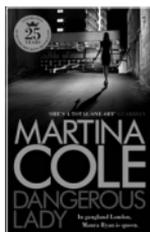
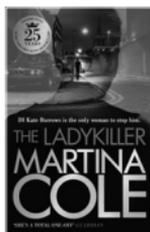
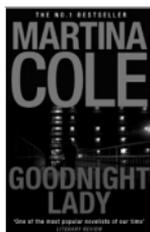
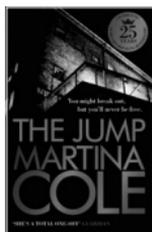
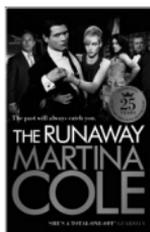
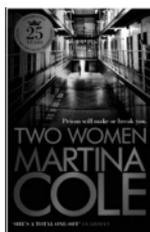
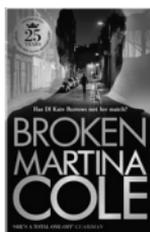
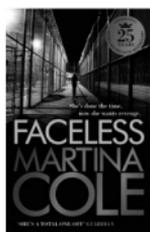
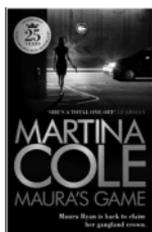
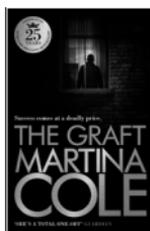
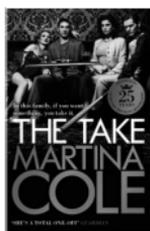
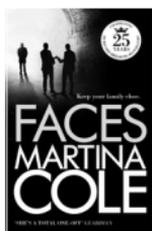
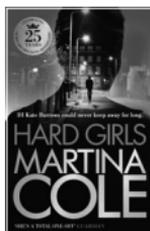
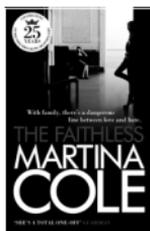
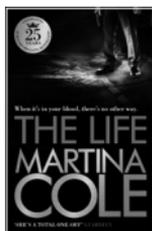
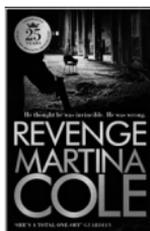
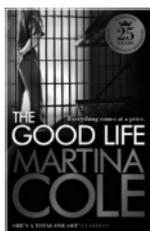
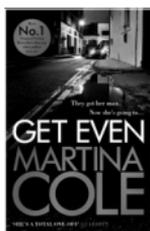
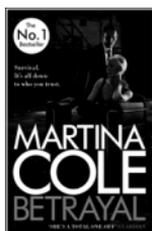
Keep your eye on Facebook
f/OfficialMartinaCole
to hear more about BETRAYAL
and other Martina Cole news



More information about Martina Cole and all her books
can be found at www.martinacole.co.uk

Copyright © 2016 Martina Cole

The right of Martina Cole to be identified as the Author of
the Work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright,
Designs and Patents Act 1988.





stanstedexpress.com



CAN'T WAIT TO GET AWAY FOR A GOOD READ

FASTEST



ROUTE

JUST

47

MINUTES

EVERY

15

MINUTES

→ FASTEST ROUTE BETWEEN CENTRAL LONDON AND STANSTED AIRPORT

⊖ DIRECT CONNECTION TO THE LONDON UNDERGROUND

📶 FREE WI-FI ONBOARD

FOR BEST PRICES
BOOK ONLINE AT
STANSTEDEXPRESS.COM

stanstedexpress

LONDON STANSTED AIRPORT ↔ CENTRAL LONDON

Average scheduled journey time 47 mins between London Liverpool Street (36 mins Tottenham Hale) and Stansted Airport, every 15 mins.