

Dean

Explore what Martyn thinks of Dean, giving details to explain why.

From the beginning of their relationship, it is clear that Martyn merely tolerates Dean, and that Dean actively dislikes Martyn. Martyn's passivity at first is linked to his feeling for Alex. This is also the reason that Dean mocks Martyn, as there is a rivalry between them, that will last until the end of Dean's life.

The first meeting between the two is more than awkward: Dean torments Martyn, for the stupidest of reasons, his name. He taunts him, 'Pigman'. This is done purposely to put Martyn down, but Martyn shows restraint, as he has learned how to. As he said about bullies in the first chapter, Wednesday, 'they usually get bored and leave you alone'. Dean's harsh words to Martyn show the reader that Dean clearly feels superior, and aims to belittle Martyn at every possible opportunity. Martyn retaliates in thought, and through the narrative only, 'Dean winked idiotically at me'. Martyn gains satisfaction from thinking what an idiot Dean is, but chooses not to inflame the situation, as Dean could make it very difficult for him to see Alex, and he values her above his pride.

Martyn's jealousy kicks in after he sees them in Boots. In denial, he debates with himself, 'It wasn't that I was jealous. Well, I suppose I was a bit jealous'. This shows that he contradicts himself, but he goes on to clearly state that Alex is too good for Dean. This reveals his feelings, and the way he cares for her.

Dean's appearance matches his awful personality: described as a pale faced, baggy eyed, lanky biker, Martyn's language shows how he despises him. Brooks uses a simile to describe Dean's annoying habit of swishing his hair, 'like a cow', in unflattering imagery. He is a repulsive and sickly looking individual, whom Martyn despises for his 'wannabe' ways, the fake leathers that are too new, and his unhealthy looks and ways. An ITgeek, Dean is a sinister gadget freak, and does not have the looks or behaviour of a real biker at all, in clothes that are too new. They are fake, like him.

Each time Dean appears in the narrative, his appearance is described, and in this way, Martyn's attitude toward him is revealed. At the door, he appears to be a 'dark figure'. He appears distorted, with a 'bulbous black head'. There is something sinister and oppressive about Dean's character. Martyn dwells on how unpleasant he finds him, 'like some kind of thin-legged, long-armed, dome-headed alien'. This triad of hyphenated insults portrays Dean as semi-human, in Martyn's eyes.

Dean attempts to add to his 'hard' image by smoking, a habit that Martyn despises as dirty. He knows it is just a part of Dean's pose to try and look cool, and sees straight through it. 'Dean lit a cigarette and blew smoke from the side of his mouth'. And in his judgement it is clear what a low opinion Martyn has of him: 'What he looked like was a twat'.

Dean's treatment of Alex means that his one friend leaves him. In his worst behaviour, Dean threatens to betray Alex and Martyn to the police over the tapes. He clearly places his blackmail scoop far higher in importance than his own girlfriend.

From this it is clear that he loves nobody but himself. He swears about her, using contemptuous language to describe how he feels about her to Martyn. 'Glad to see that back of her, the snotty little bitch'. He also insults Martyn in this way, implying Alex is not worth anything, when he is well aware of Martyn's feelings for her. Dean has an elevated opinion of himself, as he brags, 'There's plenty more where that came from'. His betrayal sparks Alex's fury; at the time in her tears, and later, her murder plan. She assassinates Dean for humiliating her, removing any chance of his blackmailing Martyn, and creating a space for her own plan.

In the long run, it is Martyn who keeps his cool, taunting Dean by showing him Dad's dead body. He knows it unsettles him, and reveals Dean's cowardice, to the point of making him physically sick. Martyn mocks Dean, 'I think he likes you'. Martyn outwits Dean's blackmail attempt, and Alex finishes him entirely. Dean is revealed as a completely unlikeable, amoral character, and whilst Martyn is shocked by Alex's actions, he admits 'if he had fallen off a cliff, or died of a disease I wouldn't have shed any tears'. It is the fact that Alex is a murderess that causes Martyn to be sick. Alex draws on soap opera story lines for her inspiration, 'cutting the brake lines', in order to get rid of 'a character'. She applies what she has learned from her mother's acting career to real life, which makes her both dramatic, and dangerous.

Dean's role in the book is to create sympathy in the reader for Martyn. He acts as a foil to Martyn's quick thinking, as he seems dopey and sly by comparison. Martyn seems far more worthy of Alex, with her lively ways and ambitions. His is the second death in the novel, and, like Dad, he seems dispensable, and one cannot help feeling that he received justice, however rough. He seems to illustrate part of Martyn's philosophy, 'Everything is determined' and illustrates the fateful twists in destiny.

Dean is unlucky, but seems to bring his fate upon himself by the low way he lives: a lying, cheating blackmailer who shows no love is not worth much, after all. His death adds to the dramatic sequence of events, revealed by the detectives at the end of the novel at the end of the chapter entitled 'TUESDAY'. This creates balance with the death of William Pig in the first chapter. It is clever structuring on Brooks' part. Most novels would kill off a minor character first, and work up to a major one last. By reversing these, Brooks creates major impact at the start of the work, and then Dean's death has more impact later, too, as he has been sustained for most of the novel. As with Martyn, the revelation of Dean's death comes as a shock to the reader at this point too. In this way, Brooks sustains high drama throughout the novel.